

# **The Efficacy of Social Media in Library Services**

**Dipanwita Ray**

Librarian, Gushkara Mahavidyalaya, Gushkara, Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal, India

*dipanwita826@gmail.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

*The paper deals with social media applications in the library field. I have dealt with the advantages of using social media in the library field. The librarians are using social media to attract potential users. They are marketing the library products and services with the help of social media. The users on their end are finding it easier to communicate with the librarians and among themselves through the use of social media. The different challenges of using social media in libraries have also been dealt with. Some of them are lack of training on the part of library professionals in using social media, slow internet speed, confusion of the users and the libraries in choosing the right social media for the libraries, fear of the users of losing privacy, the virus attack and the like.*

**KEYWORDS:** Social media, IT, Mobile social media, Social networking service.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The proper organization of knowledge or information is a prerequisite for the optimum utilization of information or knowledge. The present-day information explosion has made the organization of information more critical. The term “Information Technology” is vital to every activity related to the seamless dissemination of information. The world has become a global village and the information superhighways have been created with the internet facilities. The library services have undergone profound changes as a result of the technological developments in electronics, computerization and telecommunications. The concepts of digital library, OPAC, and teleconferences are the results of the technological advances in library services. So, the application of IT denotes all types of electronic infrastructure and facilities that are employed in a library.

The development of IT has changed the arena of libraries to a great extent. There has been a shift from the traditional to hybrid libraries. The concepts of digital library, electronic library, virtual library, the concept of Library 2.0 in the web environment are the outcomes of the amalgamation of computing, telecommunications and networking.

### **CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

According to the Wikipedia (2021) “Social media are interactive digitally-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing/exchange of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks”.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”

Social media are web-enabled software programs that allow users to interact with each other and work collaboratively. These can invite friends to chat, share videos, comments, blogs and the like.

Mobile social media means the use of social networking on mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. It is popular because of its ubiquity that is one does not have to be static in one place using a desktop. One can access the social networks anytime and anywhere using the mobile devices.

### **LAUNCHING OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK**

SL. NO.	YEAR OF LAUNCHING	NAME OF SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA
1	1995	Wiki
2	1997	Weblogs
3	1999	MSN Messenger
4	2003	LinkedIn, MySpace, Delic-ious
5	2004	Flickr, Facebook (not open to all)
6	2005	YouTube, Windows Live Messenger (re launch of MSN messenger)
7	2006	Twitter, Facebook (open to all) slide share

Source: Zhiwei and Muhammad (2021)

### **USAGE STATISTICS**

The list below enumerates the most popular social networking services in respect of active users in January 2024 as per ‘Statista’.

SL. NO.	NETWORK	NO. OF USERS(MILLIONS)	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
1	Facebook	3,049	United States
2	YouTube	2,491	United States
3	WhatsApp	2,000	United States
4	Instagram	2,000	United States
5	TikTok	1,526	China
6	WeChat	1,336	China
7	Facebook Messenger	979	United States
8	Telegram	800	Russia
9	Douyin	752	China

10	Snapchat	750	United States
11	Kuaishou	685	China
12	Twitter	619	United States

Source: Zhiwei and Muhammad (2021)

### **IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media have gained much importance in the library field. Facebook is the most popular social networking service in the field. The librarians can create web pages to reach their potential users. Social media can bridge the gap between the librarians and the users. The librarians can take the help of social networking services to market their products and services. They can also anticipate the needs of the users with the help of the social networking services. Social media help them to provide virtual services to the doorsteps of the users.

### **ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. Social media help to reach the potential users.
2. They enable the librarians to have a visibility of their users.
3. They help create a network of library users.
4. Social media help in the marketing of library services and products.
5. They allow the users to participate in interaction among them and with the librarians and thus also share information.
6. They help the users to discover new library resources.
7. They attract the students and the other new users to visit the library.
8. Social media offer additional options for rendering services other than the conventional ones.

### **CHALLENGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. Users fear of losing privacy and theft of identity while using social media.
2. Various social networking services are available as a result of which the users get confused in selecting the appropriate social networking service.
3. The users are reluctant to be trained by the library authority.
4. They have apathy in using the social media because of the slow speed of internet.
5. The library authorities are not always able to choose the right social networking service for their library to offer the service to the right users.
6. The librarians and the staff are not always trained in the use of social media.
7. Any negative comment from any user in the social networking site can harm the reputation of the library.
8. The librarians have to face problems due to user authentication, organizational politics and computer and network security.
9. The hackers can attack the library webpage in the social networking site and commit nuisance as a result of virus attack.

## **CONCLUSION**

The advent of social media has changed the society in many aspects. The libraries are not exceptional for this type of change. Both library professionals and the users are taking advantage of the social media in the library field. The librarians are trying to reach their potential users through the use of social media. The users can also communicate with the librarians and discover the library resources through the library webpage on a social networking service site. The librarians are taking full advantage of social media in marketing their products and services.

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