

Challenges Librarians Encounter in the use of Social Media for Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Bakporhonor Blessing Amina, PhD
Department of Library and Information Science
Abraka

Olise Florence Nwanne
Delta State Polytechnic
Ogwashi-Uku

Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The study population comprised of 471 professional and para-professional librarians in 9 selected university libraries from states of South-South, Nigeria. Three hundred and four (304) librarians were used from the population of the study. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Frequency counts and mean were used to analyze the data collected. The study revealed that privacy concern is the major challenge librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services, other challenges are low level of technology penetration and network problem, lack of awareness, lack of funds, hence recommendations were made, these include finance should be adequately and promptly provided by the parent institutions to further enhance the use of social media to promote library and information resources and services, also librarians using social media to promote library and information resources and services should be very careful and mindful of what they post on social media because once a content is shared online, it might be very difficult to take it offline again and it will remain there for everybody to see.

Introduction

University librarians offer library and information resources and services to all library users – staff and students. They offer to the clientele books, magazines, information and reference services, lifelong learning, cultural and social activities, special services, online materials and services amongst host of other resources and services. According to Bassey (2006), library and information services provided by libraries and librarians should correspond with the need of its users is the very reason for the existence of the library, library and information services are also expected not only to inform but to influence attitude. Most times, a library's profile is judged based on nature of library and information services they render.

These services rendered are lending services, referral services, reference services, indexing and abstracting services. Library resources, on the other hand are information materials which include print and non-print formats.

Library and information services are resources should satisfy the need of library users. However, the extent to which resources and services satisfy the needs of users will be determined by the extent the users are aware of such resources and services.

A potent means in which librarians and libraries can optimize for their work and services as well as maintain their relevance is through a medium like social media. According to Cumber (2004), the most important conditions for effective library services is to support continuous enriching dialogue between the library and society by agreeing upon quality targets, which relate to the maintenance or improvement of quality standard. With the promotion of library and information services, this can be achieved.

Promotion in library and information services has a never meaning, it finds deep roots in social media, it is a set of techniques which is aimed at reinforcing the basic values of the library in a changing environment at the same time meeting the need of the library clientele. Unfortunately, a number of challenges militating against the effective utilization of social media in Nigerian university libraries.

Literature Review

University libraries, today, have discovered the need to promote their service and services and social media have given them new options in promoting their resources and services. Libraries now advertise the resources and services on their facebook pages, twitter and blog etc. social media provide more opportunities to reach the library users and give them a chance to interact. Social media allow patrons to promote program and events of the library by rating, reviewing and sharing with their friends and neighbours.

No doubt, social media are potential tools for promoting university library resources and services in the 21st century. Librarians must fully utilize social media therefore. If the library must not go in the way dinosaurs, unfortunately, a number of challenges militate against their effective utilization of social media in Nigerian university libraries. Below is an explanation of the various challenges.

Epileptic Power Supply

It is embarrassing that stable power supply in the country is still a mirage till date. The scenario is very sad, virtually all social media applications are powered by electricity but the supply of electricity in Nigeria is nothing to write home about.

Supporting this, Adomi (2007) state that power outages is a problem militating against information/internet provision and use in African countries. Similarly Ossai-Ugbah (2012:28) claims that this “power outages increases the general overhead and running cost thus having a negative impact on the use of social media for marketing library and information services in Nigerian university libraries, how then can university libraries be able to effectively use social media for promotion in a cost-effective manner”. In yet another line of thought, even when the electricity is available, the current is either too high or too low. It was in this light that Akonu (2005) asserts that erratic power supply in Nigeria has resulted in the burning of some components which could not be easily replaced. Besides, the unstable and epileptic power supply in Nigeria discourages librarians and users from participating in the online forum.

Lack of Awareness

Most librarians in the developing nations are not aware of social media services even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive users of these sites for library services. Users are also not aware of the protocols involved in social communication. Many students are possibly unaware, even some of the academic staff may be unaware that there is a subject specialist in their discipline. It is important for librarians to initiate contact with clients and experiment with developing a public self. Getting student and facebook users (Librarian inclusive) to move beyond the social aspect of facebook to use it for more serious and productive outcome is a challenge in Nigeria. In fact, there is a general slogan in Nigeria that says “leave facebook and face your book”. This shows that facebook is usually seen as a vehicle for unserious communication (Ezeani and Igwezi, 2012). Also, till data, some librarians do not see the need to promote library and information services.

Privacy Concern

Privacy concern need to exist at the helm of potential risk to any user participating in online social networking, including student and staff involved with university libraries (Hutton, 2008). This should be because a significant number of individuals experience mental or physical harm because of the abuse of personal information in online social media. Social media poses increasingly online security risk because library users’ personal information on social media can be used for financial cronies.

Explaining this, Sund (2007:68) argues that just a name, address and birth date (let alone a social security number) provides more than enough ammunition for criminals to hack into financial records and compromise a user’s personal information. In another vein, series of advert messages on online social networks sometimes irritates some users. Having this in mind, librarians are faced with a challenge of most stalking library users with constant advertisements or promoting messages on online social media. Also, social media can also expose the plans of the library and aid competition.

Morale and Peterson (2010) comments in this regard that “in today’s digital environment more and more of our personal information exist online, available and vulnerable to anyone with prying eyes and access to a computer. They make individual control over a library’s personal information a vital privacy concern.

Low level of Technology Penetration

There is a general inadequacy in the level of technology in the nation. This can be attributed to high cost of tariffs in the control and government negligence. Nigeria look forward to a time when each home and every office would be connected to the internet at little or no charge as it is in developed nations. Sadly, internet connection in the country is most times available only to the rich. Emenari (2004) writes while citing the Guardian report that currently out of the world’s 6.3 billion population, only 6.5 million have access to the internet, even though there would be an increase in the number of people with internet access presently, Nigeria still lags behind. It is sad to know also that very few online desktop computers are seen in university library offices in Nigeria.

Network Problems

There is always online network problem or a cable network problem. It is either there is a cable network problem. That is when cables that connect different parts of a network are cut or shorted or a connectivity problem, that is when there is a malfunction of a connectivity component like a hub, a router or a switch. Other network problems that can arise are excessive network collusions, software problems and use of the same IP address. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) add bandwidth problems to this, noting that most institutions have limited bandwidth to support this practice. Poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation.

Other problems encountered in the use of social media for promoting library and information product and services are lack of technical knowledge and expertise, high cost of ICTs, corruption and negligence, little government intervention, resistance to change and a host of others.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore librarians use of social media for promoting their library and information resources and services in university library and the specific objective is to find out the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services.

Research Question

What are the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study because it is appropriate to collect data from a large sample in order to describe the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services. The population consisted of 47 librarians which consist of 18 university libraries in the six (6) states of South-South, Nigeria. The university includes federal, state and private universities in South-South, Nigeria.

The sample of this study was 304 librarians, both male and female in 9 selected university libraries in three selected states in South-South, Nigeria.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select three states which have the highest number of librarians in South-South, Nigeria. The selected states were cross river, Edo and River state on the other hand census sampling was adopted for the 304 librarians which constitute the entire librarians in the university libraries in the three selected states.

The purposive sampling technique was used because it enables the researcher to select the sample on the basis of specific characteristic or qualities (Nworgu, 2005). The use of the entire librarians in the three states conforms with the view of Egbule and Okobia (2001) that the entire population can be studied when the population is not large.

Table 1: Sample Size

University libraries	Population (Librarians)
University of Calabar library, Calabar	67
Cross river State University Library (CRUTECH)	21
John Harris Library, University of Benin, Benin	81
Ambrose Ali University Library, Ekpoma	32
Igbinedion University Library, Okada	9
Benson Idahosa University Library, Benin	11
University of Portharcourt Library (Uniport), Portharcourt	41
River State University of Science and Technology Library (RSUST), Rumu	3
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Library, Portharcourt	12
Total	304

Source: office of the university librarians

Procedure of Administration

The researcher adopted person-person method of questionnaire administration and collection with the help of two research assistants. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to three hundred and four (304) respondent in 9 selected university libraries in Cross River, Edo and Rivers states in a person to person basis. The completed copies of the questionnaire were collected on the spot after administration. This ensured a high retrieval rate of distributed questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The simple percentage was used to analyze the respondents' personal data, while the mean was used to answer the research questions and criterion mean for this study was placed at 3.00.

Response Rate

Table 2: Questionnaire Response Rate

University libraries	Copies of questionnaire administered	No of questionnaire returned	Percentage (%)
University of Calabar library, Calabar	67	65	21.4
Cross river State University Library (CRUTECH)	21	21	6.6
John Harris Library, University of Benin, Benin	81	80	26.3
Ambrose Ali University Library, Ekpoma	32	32	11.5
Igbinedion University Library, Okada	9	9	2.96
Benson Idahosa University Library, Benin	11	11	3.6
University of Portharcourt Library (Uniport), Portharcourt	41	40	13.1
River State University of Science and Technology Library (RSUST), Rumu	30	30	9.9
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Library, Portharcourt	12	12	3.9
Total	304	300	98.6

From Table 2, it could be clearly seen that out of the 304 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 300 copies were returned which amounted to a 98.6% response rate. This percentage of questionnaire response rate is considered adequate because most research in social sciences and education, the acceptable response rate is 60%.

Analysis of Demographic Data

The distribution of the respondents by their personal data is shown in this section. Data were analyzed using simple percentage

The data in Table 3 is used to show the gender of respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by their Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	135	45
Male	165	55
Total	300	100

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

From Table 3, it could be seen that majority (165/55%) of the respondents are females (55%) while males are 135 (45%). This means that there are more female librarians in university libraries in south-South, Nigeria.

The data in Table 4 is used to show the ages of respondents

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 29	70	23.3
30 – 39	101	33.7
40 – 49	89	29.7
50 years and above	40	13.3
Total	300	100

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents that is 101 of them (33.7%) fall within the age bracket of 31 – 40 while age bracket 50 and above ranked lowest, that 40 respondents having a percentage of 13.3. it can be inferred therefore that, most librarians in the region are relatively young.

The data in table 5 is used to show the educational attainment of the respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
DIPLOMA (OND)	30	10
B.SC/B.ED	159	5.3
MLS, MSC, M.ED	105	35
PHD	6	2
Total	310	100

It could be seen from Table 5, that majority of the respondents, that 159 respondents (5.3%) have a B.Sc or B.Ed qualification, Also 105 respondents (35%) had either MLs/M.Sc or M.Ed, 30 respondents (10%) were Diploma holders while the remaining 6 respondents (1.9%) had Ph.D. it is quite interesting to know from the data analyzed that majority of the librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria are library professionals.

The data in Table 6 is used to show the years of experience of respondents

Table 6: Distribution of the Respondents by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5	33	11
6 – 10	135	45
11 – 16	95	31.7
17 years and above	37	12.3
Total	300	100

Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents 135(45%) have been working for 6 – 10 years while 33 respondents (11%) ranked lowest having working for between 1 – 5 years. Evidently librarians in this region have some years of experience to their credit.

What are the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media in promoting library and information resources and services?

Table 7: Challenges Librarians Encounter in the Use of Social Media in Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services

Challenges	Strongly Agreed		Agreed		Disagreed		Strongly Disagreed		Neutral		Total		X
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Network problem	116	38.7	100	33.3	40	13.3	44	14.7	---	---	300	100	3.96
Lack of social media skills	15	5	40	13.3	147	45.7	97	32.3	21	7	300	100	2.87
Lack of awareness	23	7.7	49	16.3	84	28.0	129	43	15	5	300	100	2.78
Lack of funds	30	10	31	10.3	71	20.3	80	26.7	98	32.7	300	100	2.38
Privacy concerns	92	30.7	175	58.3	24	8	9	3	---	---	300	100	4.16
Erratic power supply	---	---	3	1	151	47	80	26.7	76	25.3	300	100	2.23
Low level of technology Penetration	73	24.3	184	61.3	26	8.7	14	4.7	3	1	300	100	4.03

Criterion mean 3.00

As indicated in Table 6, privacy concerns is the major challenge librarians encounter in their use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services having a mean score of 4.16. Other challenges are low level of technology penetration ($x = 4.03$) and network problem ($x = 3.96$). Lack of awareness ($x = 2.78$), lack of funds ($x = 2.38$), lack of social media skill ($x = 2.87$) and erratic power supply ($x = 2.23$) were not significant challenges since they had a mean score below the criterion mean of 3.00 for this study.

Alasa and Kelechukwu (1999) study showed that poor power supply is a general constraint against internet usage in Nigeria. However, erratic power supply was not indicated as a challenge, perhaps because the university usually has an alternative power supply medium in terms of generator sets.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study investigated the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. From its finding, this study concludes that the challenges encountered by librarians in their use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria were privacy concerns, low level of technology penetration and network problems. The recommendations made by the research in order to enhance effective use of the social media for promoting library and information resources and services in the libraries are:

1. Adequate technology and internet facilities should be made ready available in all the offices in the university libraries. The library management can liaise with philanthropic bodies or the university management and even the TETFund for the purchase of modern computers and internet subscription in their libraries.
2. Finance should be adequate and promptly provided by the parent institution to further enhance the use of social media to promote library and information resources and services in South-South, Nigerian libraries.

References

- Adomi, E.E. (2007). Overnight Internet browsing among cybercafé users in Abraka, Nigeria. *Journal of Community Information*. 3(2), 1-7
- Akonu, C.I. (2005). Blogs and Library service provisions: Implication for Nigerian Libraries. *Delta Library Journal* 5(1&2), 1-5
- Bassey, B.A. (2006). Users-Satisfaction of services in three academic libraries in Cross River State: a comparative study. *Gateway Library Journal*, 9(2), 23 & 24
- Emenari, O.G. (2004). Internet broadcasting: challenges. In Uwakwe O. (Ed). *Media technology. Issues and trends*. Enugu. Afrika - Links books
- Kumbar, R.D. (2004). The importance of marketing and total quality management in libraries. *Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship* 5(2-3). Retrieved 13th March 2013 from <http://Southernlibrarianship.icaa.org/content/v0502/Kumbar-ro1.html>
- Hutton, G. (2008). Privacy and online social networks. A proposed approach for academic librarians in university libraries, *Dalhousie Journal of Interdisciplinary Management* 4,2-13
- Egbule, J.F. & Okobia, D.O. (2001). *Research Methods in Education for colleges and university*, Onitsha. Kmensuo educational publishers
- Ossai-Ugbah, N.B. (2013). Power outages and library services at University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria, *DeltaLibrary Journal* 6(1):25-30
- Sund, C. (2007). Towards on International road-map for cyber security. *Online information Review*, 31(5) 566-582, doi 10.1108/1468452 0710832306
- Moral and Peterson (2009). National Public awareness campaign helps. Library patrons understand privacy rights in the digital age
- Nwaorgu, B.G. (2006). *Educational research basic issues and methodology* 2nd ed. Enugu University Trust Publishers
- Ezeani, C.N. & Igwesi, U. (2012). Using social media for Dynamic library service Delivery. *The Nigerian Experience: Library Philosophy and Practice* 814, Retrieved 3rd December, 2013 from <http://www.digitalcunions.un/edu/libphiprac/814>