SOCIAL MEDIA: CATALYST FOR EFFECTIVE DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract:
In this age of information explosion, technological advancement and the increasing demand for information, no single library on its own can effectively meet the information needs of users. This has called for the need to provide information and reference services to (various) numerous users or patrons and as well encouraged libraries and ventures into creation of many innovative services and media linking new technologies with traditional library information services. Social Networking sites are one of the new technologies offering libraries the opportunity to reach out to its clients. The use of this platform has affected the operations and service delivery of all organizations. The idea of having a social networking site linked to a University library's website is to enable patrons' have a live discussion with a professional on issues pertaining to the use of the library and also allow the libraries to advertise their programmes and activities.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Technologies, Academic Libraries, Information delivery.

Introduction

The growth of knowledge and the popularity of Internet have helped libraries to embrace technology-driven concepts and practices that provide users with quick access and dissemination of information. Sadeh (2007) noted that developments in web technology are creating more friendly, social and fun environments for retrieving and sharing information and one of such is Social networking websites. These sites according to him enables users to create a "profile" describing themselves, exchange public or private messages and list other users or groups they are connected in the same way. Some of the most popular social networking websites are: Academia.edu, Flickr, Facebook, Friendster, Hi5, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, YouTube, Myspace. These platforms are used for social activities by organizations such as Libraries, academia and the general public.

The library as an organization is a collection of information resources both in print and non-print format with the specific purpose of obtaining, preserving and making available recorded

knowledge. The efficiency and effectiveness of the library as a tool for research and learning is determined by the success of providing users with relevant and timely information.

Previously, libraries measured their successes based on completeness and balance of collection. However, in recent times, the focus has changed towards technology-driven service delivery. Today, libraries are using the latest technologies and trends to make their services popular and user friendly. The rapid changing concept of library identifies the library as a social cyberspace where users can access information, communicate and contribute to existing knowledge irrespective of location. This is because the modern library of the 21st century is characterized by collective knowledge creation and enabling technologies. Due to a shift from the old stereotype, conventional and one directional library services to users to a more dynamic, two-way communicational network environment characterized by open access, content creation, collaborative and participatory social space where users are free to access and contribute content. It is against this background that academic libraries in Nigeria need to adjust their operations to suit the changing trends of their clientele and society.

Some notable characteristics of social Media to libraries include as stipulated by Dube (2015);

- Social media has granted library users the opportunity to actively engage in the construction of knowledge rather than being passive consumers of content.
- Through social media network users are kept abreast of the latest developments and thus have open access to knowledge;
- Social network enables knowledge sharing, communication link with experts that allow users to develop a team working skill.
- Social Media is inspiring, interesting and users can be engrossed in the use of its network sites; some users access information with these sites in an easy and unencumbered manner.
- Easy content creation and sharing, easy to update files and personal contact.

The application of social media network for effective diffusion of information may boost the efficiency of libraries. Social media network is a form of media technology designed as a result of information superhighway. It delivers all kinds of electronic services, sound and video, text, data to household and business (Hassan, 2013). These media tends to interact with people so as to create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

However, the rapid growth of social media in information delivery led to discussion on quick access of information and dissemination of information clientele in an easy manner. This would enhance libraries effectiveness and efficiency.

Furthermore, the uses and gratification theory (UGT) of social media propounded by Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974 discusses how people actively seek out specific media content for particular purposes and intentional goals. UGT establishes an active, rather than passive, audience member who has the ability to consciously examine and evaluate media in order to accomplish specific outcomes (Wang, Fine, & Cai, 2008). UGT embodied a functional shift of communications scholarship, from examining not what media did to people, but to what people could do with media. Hence UGT provides a framework for understanding when and how individual media consumers become more or less active and the consequences of that increased or decreased involvement as stated by West and Turrner (2007). UGT embraces media technology that supports clients towards searching for information at their convenient

time. This prompted the researchers to study social media: catalyst for effective diffusion of information in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem
As knowledge increases, the popularity of Internet has helped libraries to embrace technology driven concepts and practices that provide users with quick access and dissemination of information. Social Media is a form of media technology designed as a result of information super highway. They facilitate open communication leading to enhanced information discovery and delivery (diffusion). Despite the enormous benefits with the impact of social media in libraries, librarians and users (patrons) still face some challenges such as; lack of awareness, bandwidth problem, unreliable power supply and poor staff training.
This study is been conducted to expose the hindrances faced by librarians and users for social media use for effective information diffusion in Nigeria and the forms of social media network sites used my librarians and library patrons. It is on this note that the study is set to look at how the interplay of these challenges affect the librarians and users in using social media.

Concept of Social Media
Social Media is a form of media technology designed as a result of information super highway. It delivers all kinds of electronic services: sound and video, text, data to household and business (Hasan, 2013). These media tends to interact with people so as to create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Accordingly, (Hasan, 2013) states that the impact of the more sophisticated, more glamorous and more "powerful" electronic media is gradually transforming society, thus, making more complex compared to the traditional media system. The introduction of films helps to convey contemporary messages visually; radio programming sends messages to the generality of citizens more efficiently, and now the new media crowns it all by making it more individual, on the spot and efficient especially doing away with censorship (Usman, 2014). The use of internet via personal computers, android phones, iphones, palmtops and other technological gadgets by individuals both at home and work place enables them log into a library's website and seek for information relating to their daily life activities.
According to Kaplan & Haenlein, M. (2010), social media is a group of Internet-based applications that is built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user generated content. They are computer-mediated tools that allows people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. It is a relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tool that enables anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships, Murthy (2013). Social Media introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between businesses, organizations, communities, and individuals.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) defines social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, to view and navigate their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Powell (2009) defines social networking as a community in which individuals are somehow connected through friendship, values, working relationships, idea and so on.
Seufert, A., and Bash, A. (1999) explain social networking in terms of knowledge networking as signifying a number of people, resources and relationships among them, who are assembled in order to accumulate and use knowledge primarily by means of knowledge creation and transfer processes, for the purpose of creating value. The concept of social

networking is one of the tools of Web 2.0, which also forms the basis of library 2.0. It can be seen as a web platform where people from different cultural settings can connect and interact with each other. It is any website designed to allow multiple users to publish content of them. The information may be on any subject and may be for consumption by friends, mates, employers, employees and generality of the people.

Social Networking Opportunities for Libraries
Social network presents some important opportunities to libraries in order to market their services particularly reference and information services.

Reference and Information Services: The use of social networking tools enable librarians to identify library patrons on the social cyberspace and pro-actively provide the type of information that would normally result from reference service. Social networking tools are not only being used as a vehicle for promoting services, programs and new resources but they are also used for reference service. Patrons can use tools like Ask a Librarian, and twitter to ask questions in "real time" (Steiner, 2009, p.5) and this will assist in promoting the library as a relevant, efficient and helpful place. Social networking tools like Instant Messaging (IM), Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) could be used to achieve a successful and sustainable reference services in an online social space by engaging in an online face-to-face interaction. This is particularly useful for distance patrons who may call in from any part of the country with reference queries. Reference interaction has always been a conversation (Lankes, 2008); moving towards reference in the social environment is therefore a natural development that has been shown to be not only practically viable, but also to benefit the researcher. Using social networking tools for making the reference act a participatory one means that the client can be served by multiple sources and a variety of authoritative, scholarly perspectives resulting in an enriching wealth of information and experience (Lankes, 2008; Miller, 2006). Ezeani (2010) observed that for librarians to effectively deploy these social media for reference purposes they must be versatile and knowledgeable in different subject fields to be able to match patrons with desired information.

Forms of Social Media Used by Libraries and Librarians
Libraries and Librarians are exposed to varieties of social media forms to aid in effective information and service delivery to its users. Aichner (2015) ascertaining that social media technologies are in different forms explained the following as some of these forms:
a. **Facebook:** This is the most popular social media site because it is librarian- friendly, with many applications like Journal storage (JSTOR) search, World Cat, and much more. With Facebook `librarians can interact with users to know their information need. The Facebook page on the library's web site acts as a portal to the library. Academic libraries use Facebook to market the library and the services available with a library fan page. Through facebook libraries advertise opening hours, location, and other relevant information pertaining to its services. Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities; even a basic Facebook page can serve as a reminder to use the resources available at an academic library (Chu and Meulemans, 2008 and Farkas, 2007a). In Academic institutions, libraries have taken advantage of MySpace site to post calendars, custom catalog search tools, and blog features to improve their presence.
b. **Web Blog:** Blogs provide an avenue for librarians to periodically post messages; share information on a particular subject or issue, and allow users to contribute to content. They can write articles, news on topical issues and expect an instant reaction from their users. Boxen (2008) ascertains that Blogs are web pages that consist of user-supplied content in chronological order. Wikis is a free online encyclopedia that

gives a background knowledge and definition of concepts. It offers a platform for users to access, edit and contribute to content. This is a collaborative web page for developing web content. Wikis are open web pages that allow approved users to add and alter a page's content. They allow for higher use, participation and collaborative activities. With wikis Academic libraries can create subject links to resources on a chosen topic or for a particular class, including information regarding relevant databases and search tips tailored to that subject.

c.   **Twitter:** This is a micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections. Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status update. Librarians can use this platform to give users firsthand information on the ongoing national elections. Users can send Instant Messages (IM), complaints, re-share content or ask questions on a particular issue and get a feedback on the spot using Twitter's re-tweet.

d.   **LinkedIn:** Through LinkedIn librarians can get patrons connected with specialists in their particular field of interest. Librarians can use this platform to render specialized services such as Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), While YouTube allows individuals and organizations to post original videos. The site also enables users to embed their videos unto other web sites,

e.   **Flickr:** Librarians and other library personnel can use Flickr to share and distribute new images of library collections. Cover page of new arrivals of both books and journals can be disseminated to users via Flickr. Flickr allows users to post photographs and to create discussion groups. While Flickr is known largely as a photo sharing web site, it also allows users to post videos. Academic librarians post photos of the library and its staff to provide a virtual tour of the library itself while simultaneously putting a human face to the building. Farkas (2007b) collaborate that "general search of Flickr reveals that most academic libraries use Flickr to post pictures of the library building and its staff". Academic libraries can also post material from special collections on a Flickr (Andrea, 2010).

f.   **YouTube:** YouTube allows individuals and organizations to post original videos. The site also enables users to embed their videos unto other web sites.

g.   **Library Thing:** A tool that enriches the library online public access catalogue (OPAC). Once an account is created, a list of books with ISBN is sent to Library Thing which sends back a piece of code which is pasted into the footer of the Library OPAC. Librarians can utilize this to send a list of current publications to users.

Social Media Use for Information diffusion in Nigeria

Social media is a very broad term that includes a wide variety of media vehicles. It is the "how" of how we socialize on the new Web 2.0. It is the vehicle used to share information with our social network, and it includes all social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. These are among the most popular social media sites. Facebook (as of August 2011) has reached 750 million members and comes in as the number one social networking site. There are many other social media sites and they use a wide variety of formats. For example, Blogger and WordPress are two of the most popular general blogging sites. The possibilities are endless depending on the information being exchanged and the intended audience. Social media covers all the tools we use for social networking. According to Ezeani & Igwesi (2013), social networking sites are mostly used to:

a.   Announce programs of the library.

b.   Give patrons the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to the use of the library.

c.   Teach basic search tools;

d.   Paste new arrivals like books on the wall to inform the library community;

e.   send brief updates to patrons;

f.   ask a Librarian; i.e. make enquiries

Benefits Derived From the Use of Social Media for Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services

Social media have become a dependable platform for the dissemination of information, forum for feedback mechanism, for research and of course for promotion. It is therefore not surprising that libraries all over the world have not failed to embrace social media for promoting their services. Apparently, social media has become the catalyst for effective information diffusion thus projecting library and information resources, services and maintaining relationships with users. As librarians are yearning to remain relevant in a digital society, social media can be seen as the tool to help libraries entice and retain their users through promotion.

The benefits of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries are:

a.   **Building Brand Loyalty:** Promoting library and information services with social media helps libraries to not just advocate the library but to make library users become library advocates. Social media is a centre for engagement that would enhance two-way communication like never before. This in turn builds the library's image. Using social media in university libraries increase reliability on the library thereby building brand loyalty. In line with this, Gall (2010) explained that in this age of social media, libraries have created their own personal brands for years just like how celebrities and media cementers have done. University libraries generally do not have a direct sales function, but they do have a history of building lasting relationships with different stakeholders, including university administration researchers, instructors and students. Indeed, one of the most important things that a good academic library can offer is a long term relationship with the people who use library services.

b.   **Saves Time:** Social media have helped libraries in providing quick updates to users and provide a forum for quick and speedy feedback from library patrons. More so, social media make it easier to reach a large number of library patrons in the most effective manner. Although there is a wide perception that social media marketing takes a lot of time and energy for it to be worthwhile. Street (2013) has argued that the biggest benefit of social media marketing is the simple fact that delivery online content can be the most cost effective and time-effective part of the marketing mix.

c.   **Enhances fast Two-Way Communication:** One of the most important tenets of customer service is to be responsive to users concerns. This shows that the library is interested in and cares about the concerns of its patron. There is no controlling of what is said about a library but librarians can influence the message that comes back. This is where social media come to play as social media create a forum for feedback in library promotion. Pierson (2011) notes that monitoring the comments and questions of library users give the library immerse power to offer clarification on issues and potentially make improvement. This is a form of promotion that boosts the library's image. This is why, Villoldo (2012) affirms that communication with the library user is the service that has most benefited from the implementation of social media. The creation of profits on social networking websites, the use of digital signage and thematic blogs etc are just some of the ways in which librarians are now communicating with patrons. Social networking sites have audio and visual capabilities consisting of web-blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, media sharing spaces, RSS Feeds, microblogging sites, Facebook, LinkedIn having capabilities to promote synchronous or asynchronous interactions and communication (Hussain, 2012).

d.   **Saves Costs and Increases Revenue:** Villoldo (2012) categorically states that many of these social media technologies cost next to nothing. Using social media for marketing library and information services allows for a vast reach yet having very low cost. In fact, using social media to market library services does not cost a single kobo. A library can perform actions/activities on social media like Facebook, blogs, twitter about products and services without investing a dime. Also promoting libraries through social media increase revenue. Promotion of library resources and services through social media is becoming a necessity if librarians wish to raise revenue from stakeholders and the management of the university.

e.   **Increases Library Users:** The online community is opened to all as long as there is internet connectivity. In Facebook, for instance, the activities of a friend or fan of a library page are known by friends connected to that friend or fan. Hence, when a fan of a library page comments or likes a status/post put up by the library, others can come to the knowledge of the promotional activities carried out in a library. This can motivate a friend of a library fan to join the library. Also, social media can increase library patron's satisfaction with the library. This is not to say that the services rendered in the library should not be effective otherwise promotion of such services would not attract more library users.

Challenges Facing Social Media Use as Catalyst for Information Diffusion in Nigeria
The social media though useful for effective diffusion of Information in Nigeria have posed some challenges on the users and the society. Among the common challenges is the credibility of sources. Information on the social media can be posted by any person. Nowadays people with Internet connection have turned into journalists. Thus, it becomes difficult to establish source credibility concerning information found on the social media forums. With the use of mobile phones, people create fictional face book identity and post information and visuals with long lasting damages on the net. Authenticity of content is another vexing challenge. With source's credibility doubted, the authenticity of the content may also be doubted. There is also security concern posed by social media especially considering the increase in the occurrences and number of cyber crimes. Political messages initiated by insurgents/terrorists can be spread via social media. Sense of diversity/complexity is another challenge paused by the new media. The traditional media provides some homogenizing trend previously to all age categories. Young and old shared experience reflecting on accepted social patterns, but today's social media cleared this veil and provide more individualistic vogue alien cultures.
There is also the shake weight challenge paused by the social media according to Eisenberg (2013). This form of media and mobile revolution is about data, real time velocity and variety of data sometimes unstructured (pictures, videos, sentimental analyses, etc) from desperate sources which causes indigestion and confusion. Sorting out the information and acting on it so as to meet up with the demands of the public and organization it serves is actually a concern. On the part of the users, Internet access is the major challenge. In Nigeria, some people avoid the social media because they do not have access to the internet. In some areas, no internet access is available thereby making it impossible for them to use the social media. Users may also find it difficult to retrieve information from the social media especially where not downloaded and saved. This affects subsequent storage and reference.
However, academic libraries face numerous challenges associated with the use of social Media for information dissemination. Some of these challenges include but not limited to the following:

a.   **Lack of Awareness:** Many librarians in Nigeria are probably not aware of social networking services, as may be applicable in library even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive uses of these sites for library services.

Library users are also not aware of the protocols involved in social communication. Many library patrons and particularly professionals may be unaware that they can interact with other subject specialists in their discipline through social media. It is important for librarians to initiate contacts that connect patrons, and experiment with developing a "public self" (Horizon Report, 2007). But unfortunately several social media like Facebook is usually seen as a vehicle for unserious communication

b. **Bandwidth problem:** Libraries have limited bandwidth to support this social network practice. Poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation.

c. **Technophobia:** Many librarians and patrons are afraid of handling computers. They make the traditional library services their comfort zone and are not eager to embrace change.

d. **Lack of maintenance culture:** Maintenance culture is seriously lacking in most of our institutions and libraries. The few available technologies are in moribund conditions that may not support remote access to information.

e. **Unreliable power supply:** The inadequacies associated with supply of electricity discourage people from participating in the online forum, hence create a challenge to libraries and librarians in advertising their resources for effective service and information delivery to its patrons.

f. **Lack of training of staff:** Most librarians lack the 21st century skills that could be required to adopt the social networking tools for effective library services. For government ministries and agencies, their restrictive rules and regulations mitigate against the philosophy of free access and dissemination of information that underlies social networking activities and practices.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

Librarians are responding to the popularity of social networking sites and their expanding role in the creation, use, and sharing of information by engaging them as a central medium for interacting with library patrons and providing services to meet their information needs.

Libraries play important roles in providing information for access to knowledge. In order to stay relevant in the socially networked environment and meet the growing needs of their users, libraries therefore need to pro-actively embrace the new technologies and face the challenges for better service delivery. The ways in which people communicate, acquire and share knowledge, will inevitably have an impact on the library, its services and its staff. Librarians should follow the public conversations, posts, updates, and key events in the library community, and pro-actively offer advice, resources, and help. They should act as an active participant of the social space and be able to identify the needs of the members of the library communities and to proffer solutions by offering information links to the websites that are relevant to their information needs; and even direct offers of help. There is an urgent need for libraries to adopt the new social networking tools in their services as a strategy to embrace change while promoting a participatory role for library users in knowledge creation. The growing use of social networking tools calls for librarians to develop 21st century skills on digital technologies. Libraries can connect their social networking sites with their library Websites to links to their catalog, chat reference pages, research guides, calendar of events, news etc. Some of the roles of the social networking librarian include: understanding and articulating the nature of social networking sites, creating webpage and content, establishing friendly user interface over the network, creating online database management, evaluating and applying information, and assisting users with skill acquisition. Other skills for a social networking literate librarian include: searching and navigating the web, creating social network space, teaching, and providing quality online library services.

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