USING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN LIBRARY SERVICE DELIVERY: AVENUES FOR INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND BUILDING USERS' CONFIDENCE IN LIBRARY

BY

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Abstract

This research paper focused on 'Using Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery: Avenues for Information Dissemination and Building Users' Confidence in Library'. It is a conceptual research article which adopted systematic literature review, a method that entails critical review of relevant scholarly publications in order to collect relevant data. National and international journal articles, conference papers & proceedings, textbooks, online information sources etc. were accessed and reviewed accordingly. Findings on research objective one revealed that SMPs are known and widely used for library service delivery, especially, among the academic and national library clients. On research objective two, findings show that various types of SMPs are involved in library service delivery, which include social networking sites, media sharing networks, discussion forum, blogging and publishing networks, messaging and private community platforms and visual bookmarking & curation sites. On the third research objective, findings revealed that users build confidence in using library where SMPs are integrated to library service. However, this is more prominent among the digital native. On the fourth research objective, findings revealed that, as adoption of SMPs to library service delivery has certain challenges and consideration. For instance, inadequacies in connectivity infrastructure, issue of training librarians, issue of user privacy, cyber bullying, fraud and addiction. It is recommended that other type of libraries should adopt SMP in library service delivery. Adopting SMP relevant to peculiar need of the library is recommended. Adoption of SMP among libraries should be encouraged and sustained.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, Library Services Delivery, Information Dissemination, Users' Confidence in Library.

Introduction

Using social media platforms have become a habitual part of everyday life in our contemporary world. Social media platforms have taken over the conventional means of communication among people and established institutions, because of their efficiency. According to Olugbenga, Zubairu, & Hamzat (2022) social media platforms are modern interactive communication channels through which persons with common interest, reach out to one another to share knowledge, experiences, messages and information. The distinctive nature of social media platforms from conventional method of communication is their interactive ability which allows users to communicate from anywhere and anytime via internet connection with smart devices. Social media platforms provide avenue to create, share or exchange message, ideas, pictures and videos in virtual communities and networks.

Social media offers libraries real-time avenues for disseminating information, promoting resources, and fostering trust among users by making services more transparent, interactive, and user-centered. Libraries, as information hubs, are increasingly adopting social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn to engage users, promote services, and enhance visibility. By leveraging on these platforms, libraries can disseminate information faster, attain wider coverage and maintain strong connections with users. Anari (2013) stated that libraries utilize social media platforms to provide services to visitors and to create an environment of mutual interaction in order to create avenue for sharing views, experiences, ideas and opinions with users. Emergence of social media has expanded the operational status of libraries towards effective library service delivery. More importantly, consistent engagement, transparency, and responsiveness through social media can build users' confidence in library. Thus, the integration of social media into library operations not only enhances visibility but also reinforces the library's role as a trustworthy and dynamic information provider. Hence, Librarians are expected to take advantage of the technology to share knowledge and provide effective and efficient library services to meet information needs of library users, especially the digital natives.

Ilesanmi & Mabawonku (2020) stated that library services are activities carried out in library to satisfy information needs of its users. Such services include user education, reference service, current awareness and document delivery among others. Library services could be delivered to the users through the use of social media platforms. Individual, groups of people and organisations have been using social media space for different purposes such as breaking news, advertisement, send and receive Microsoft office files, portable document format and images attachments, send and receive links to mention a few on personal ground, corporate level or both.

For effective service delivery, social media platforms, according to Chakrabarti (2016) bring library closer to the users and build a collaborative platform for the users, ease users' registration. Through social media platform, Librarians can generate reading list and promote reading culture among their client. It gives room for users to update, modify and place/hold on, a material needed via their mobile phone or other smart devices, users can get answers to specific queries by using social media, it enhances reference service.

Objective of the Study

The broader objective of this research paper is to produce opinionated position on 'using social media platforms in library service delivery: avenues for information dissemination and building users' confidence in library'. However, the specific objectives of the research are to:

1. Determine Concept and Definition of Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery
2. Determine Types of Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery
3. Ascertain Using Social Media Platforms in Building User' Confidence in Library
4. Find out Challenges and Considerations in Using Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery

Literature Review

The practice of information dissemination and technology enhanced service delivery in organizations, have raised motivation to adopting technology platforms for improving services delivery in order to meet up with the demands of the 21st Century users. With the explosive growth in the number and use of social media in everyday communication method for individuals and organizations, there has been a corresponding increase of its incorporation in teaching and learning especially in education industry. Hence, using social media platforms for library service delivery can significantly improves user engagement, increases the visibility and accessibility of library resources, and allows for dynamic, real-time communication. This leads to greater user satisfaction, broader awareness of services, and the ability to provide information outside of physical library hours. Studies have shown that awareness and perception constitute important factors in the use of emerging technology for personal use with paucity of literature on the use of social media platforms for library service delivery (Ilesanmi & Mabawonku 2020).

The use of social media is relevant to information service delivery and knowledge sharing which could lead to enhanced effective service delivery in the library. Library/information services can be delivered to users through conventional, virtual or hybrid methods. To Ishola (2014), university libraries rendered translation, registration, abstract and indexing, documentation, and current awareness services, among others. For library service delivery, social media platforms are not too new technologies in academic libraries in Nigeria. For instance, Kenneth Dike Library - University of Ibadan operates a Facebook and Twitter handle to disseminate

information to their users and so do other libraries like UNILAG, LAUTECH and the likes. Aina, (2014) identified library services rendered by librarians to include: library notices, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), loans, reservation, registration, dissemination of information, current awareness and reference service. Other library services are library orientation, information literacy programme and electronic resources. Although, pertinently put, social media platforms have shifted the idea of library services from consumption base to more interactive and collaborative one, creating opportunity for interaction between the library and users, hence, increase user convenience and confidence in sustained library service demand and utilization.

However, it is observed that social media platforms, as contemporary technologies being adopted in library practices present a lot of challenges to librarians. Librarians must be mindful of use of social media platforms. Information shared on social media platforms can be used by clients, other professionals and the public to form opinions. Some librarians are not really familiar with social media platform other than Facebook and Twitter. When they do, they use it mainly for social interaction and sharing personal information with friends instead of professional purposes. This could be attributed to factors like poor awareness, inadequate internet access, lack of ICT literacy skills and lack of computer skills.

Methodology

This paper is a conceptual research effort. Hence, the researchers adopted systematic literature review, where critical review of relevant and related literature from various scholarly publications was embarked upon. This effort is geared towards collecting relevant data to the study, especially on 'concept and definition of social media platforms in library service delivery', 'types of social media platforms in library service delivery', 'using social media platforms in building users' confidence in library' and finally, 'challenges and considerations in using social media platforms in library service delivery'. Therefore, local, national and international journal articles, conference papers & proceedings, textbooks, online information sources etc. were searched, accessed and reviewed and acknowledged in accordance with research ethics.

Result and Discussion of Findings

Concept and Definition of Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery

Social media platform is really a set of technology based 'Apps' that have re-engineered what the Internet could always do, which allow people to share thought, message, information, idea and knowledge. Social media platform allow people to communicate more easily, sharing ideals, video and other related materials which might be form elsewhere or their own user-generated contents. Some of the social media sites prominently used by librarians in delivering library services to users include Facebook, Twitter, Blog, WhatsApp, Flicker, LinkedIn and YouTube. In the opinion of Akagha (2021), information can be shared among people through various medium, and one important way is through social media, given the reality of our time, where questions, situations, issues and challenges are handled, addressed and solved electronically within a space of time. Generally, social media platforms can be regarded as a means or medium used to transmit and communicate ideas, views, opinions, videos and pictures from persons, groups to either or both. They are mediums used in transmitting, interacting, collaborating and sharing of information to users irrespective of their location and it usually during reference services delivery in the library.

Types of Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery

Akagha, (2021) stated that library service can be accomplished through various so call media platforms such as **Facebook -** most popular social media platform implored by users for interaction and sharing of information and used by libraries to create awareness and market library resources and services. **Blogs -** used to broadcast news and market library resources and services. **Twitter -** used to send messages to friends, colleagues and friends easily and fast. It can be used to create library services alert and library users can also use it to interact with librarians. **WhatsApp –** use for instant messaging, send audio messages, photos, videos, documents, images etc. Mohd and Aditya (2017) stated that WhatsApp has been found very useful in the promotion of relevant communication among library staff and between library staff and library users where it helps in getting useful feedbacks from patrons. **Pinterest -** use to organise and share resources and for marketing the library and its contents (Gallardo, 2013). Dudenhoffer (2014) reported that libraries can create their own profiles where they pin photos of the library/events or quotes encouraging the use of the library for promotional display. Pintrest can be used to pin book covers; showcasing historic archives, learning-related infographics, creating reading lists, sharing new acquisitions, craft projects, etc., promoting library activities (add fliers, etc.), collecting ideas, materials, library displays, etc. highlighting library staff and, showing off things in the local community/library

pictures. **Library Thing -** enriches the library OPAC. Once an account is created, a list of books with ISBNs 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 usersm (Egbukole, 2017).

Olugbenga, Zubairu, & Hamzat (2022) highlight different types of social media platforms commonly used among people, especially in Nigeria to include: Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Blog or otherwise called web blog, Google+, LinkedIn and Instagram.

- **Facebook:** a free social networking website which gives users opportunity to create profiles, upload photos, videos and receive messages thereby remaining connected with friends, families across the world.
- **Twitter:** allows users to send, receive and read short character messages known as "Tweets". **WhatsApp:** allows people to exchange messages free of any SMS charge. This service is available and accessible via smart devices.
- **YouTube:** Use for posting videos especially in marketing library resources.
- **Blog or otherwise called web blog**: is an informational or discussion site on the web. It consists of posts (discrete entries) where the most recent appears first.
- **Google+:** It consists of group of friends/colleagues who are interested in thought leadership and technology and not purely friends or business contacts (as in Facebook or LinkedIn respectively).
- **LinkedIn:** Allows users to manage list of contact details within people in the same level of connections, especially in academic and research.
- **Instagram:** Permit users to send visual images and photos that offer stylized filters for photographs and images.

Using Social Media Platforms in Building User' Confidence in Library

Use of social media encourage greater social interaction via electronic devices providing greater access to information and information sources, encourage creativity between individuals and groups, creating a sense of belonging among users of common media tools, proving more choice to promote engagement among different individual and group. Reducing barriers to group interaction and communication such as distance and social/economic status and increasing the technological competency levels of frequent users of social media. For instance, Jain (2013) stated that Flicker is a good marketing tool use to sensitise library patrons on the resources and services offered by the library and to update patrons on current developments regarding stock, services and events in the library and render Strategic Dissemination of Information (SDI) services. Also, Potter (2013) posit that flicker provides great opportunity to users to own library contents by allowing them to upload pictures to a particular collection and curate a collection of user pictures on a particular subject. This promotes the sense of belonging on the users with the feeling of been a true stakeholder of the library and thus enhances usage and communication. It also creates room for archives permits libraries to "to generate new means of access to an interaction with their patrons, as well as broaden the knowledge of such heritage to a larger and more diverse audience.

Challenges and Considerations in Using Social Media Platforms in Library Service Delivery

There is much benefit from connecting with people through social media, whether to network, promote a product or service, or to keep abreast with the latest news (Bell, 2014). According to Rose (2020) social media platforms have facilitated libraries to reach out to large audience that may not be physically present, advertise their services and collections. However, highlighted that lack of adequate internet connectivity, bandwidth, and reliable power supply can hinder effective social media use. Librarians may need specific training in using social media tools for service delivery. Libraries must carefully manage user privacy and ensure equitable coverage of all user groups and subject areas.

In addition, while attempting to employ social media platforms, libraries are running into additional issues according to Oluwatosin and Adeyemi (2022). Some of the issues include a lack of time to utilize social media, a lack of knowledge and abilities, a lack of time to acquire new technologies, etc. In order to deploy some social media platform such as Wechat and expand library services, a third party is required. Tion, Ilo, and Beetesh (2019) identified a number of issues associated with using social media platforms especially in university libraries, as poor internet, a lack of qualified staff, inadequate skills, and staff conduct that makes it challenging for libraries to use social media efficiently.

Conclusion

The advent of social media has brought about a paradigm shift in the communication landscape. Facebook, Whatsapp and X (formerly Twiter) are the most accessed and utilized social media applications. The effects of using social media platforms vary including negative as well as positive effects. It was

found that most users have become addicted to the social media such that they now access the new media on a daily basis. Today, accessing and using social media platforms have become a thing of socializing where users build and solidify online relationships. This is evident that it has become very acceptable among people. However, library and information professionals embrace social media platforms to facilitate effective information service delivery.

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