

Use of Social Networking Sites Tools and Services by LIS Professionals for Libraries: A Survey

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ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNS) are widely used by the library information science professionals for libraries for various purposes due to their characteristics, facilities and connectivity. This study provides views of library and information science professionals regarding usages of SNS tools and services for their libraries. It was discovered from the study that maximum number of library and information science professionals who responded in this survey were associated with academic libraries have known about SNS tools and services since more than four years from internet/search engines, use SNS several times in daily, for interacting with the users and getting feedback from the users, used SNS namely 'Facebook', for marketing of library services and products but did not have policy for using SNS into their libraries and lack of credibility of SNS tools and services emerged as major barrier to use SNS for libraries. Apart from this, maximum number of respondents said that SNS tools and services will be used for libraries in full extend in future.

Keywords: Library and information science professionals, social networking sites (SNS), libraries

1. INTRODUCTION

Advent of Internet technologies especially world wide web (WWW) facilitates to the people to use different social networking sites (SNS) for different purposes. These SNS tools and services enable users to connect, contribute, share and get feedbacks of their posts. Though, different SNS tools and services differ each other but most common thing in these SNS tools and services is to provide platforms to connect, contribute, collaborate post and get reflections for their inputs free of cost. The most important feature of social networking sites is to facilitate user's to make their social networks and build connections worldwide with ease, Huan & Eric¹ added. Being above said facilities, SNS have presented great impact on every kind of users and society. However, people who resided in any corner of the world have access and use these SNS tools and services as per their interest and purposes. Boyd & Ellison² defined that SNS are web-based services which permitted individual to develop a public profile, express/share to a list of users who are connected with him/her. But there is vagueness in the term SNS, sometime this term is used as social media or Web 2.0 owing to containing some social networking tools and services. Due to deeper impact and wide use of SNS by the users, the libraries are thinking seriously towards shifting their traditional services on SNS platform. Worldwide the library and information science (LIS) professionals who are working in different libraries are connecting themselves and their libraries with the SNS sphere and delivering different types of library services to the target users worldwide. The LIS

professionals who are working in diverse libraries are exploring potentials of different SNS tools and services regarding how these tools and services can be used for libraries effectively to disseminate library services to the users in social networking environment. Therefore, an attempt is made to know different views regarding using SNS tools and services for their libraries for diverse purposes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Diverse issues related to social networking sites, social media were covered by different studies conducted by various authors in which Shiri & Rathi³ study mainly covered one of the SNS tools and service component, namely 'Twitter' in particularly public library perspective and discovered that Twitter may be used for diverse information services and knowledge management practices in public libraries. Further, this study was also categorised Twitter contents through scheme specially for information services offered by public libraries. Jeyshankar⁴, *et al.*, conducted a survey for access and use social networking sites among the post graduate students of rural based college of Tamil Nadu, India and revealed that most of respondents contain skills of SNS for resources sharing and communication. Ayiah & Kumah's⁵ study focussed on link to SNS on library's webpage particularly for African libraries and revealed that presence of social networking sites on library webpage can be helpful in building collaboration between academic community and libraries. Vitaki⁶, *et al.*, made the balance between audience and privacy of data as well as affects of

privacy on audience while using SNS for different purposes. Young & Rossmann⁷ demonstrated the ways about how social networking sites may be helpful building library community. Mannheimer⁸, *et al.*, proposed library specific privacy ethical framework for conducting social networking sites research. Chen⁹, *et al.*, study focused on how libraries can make interaction with users by using social networking sites. This study further stressed on necessities for libraries to coordinate diverse types of SNSs with regard to improve the efficiency of interacting with users on social networking sites. Zohoorian-Fooladi & Abrizah¹⁰ argued about the social media presence in Malasiyan academic libraries setting and also discovered that the librarians are using social media for promoting library services, organising knowledge and for getting feedback from users against their inputs. Phillips¹¹ discussed perceptions and attitudes of librarians towards using social networking sites tools and services effectively not only for libraries but also for other young users for various purposes.

Jacobson¹² measured the use of Facebook as a library tools whether it meets intended goals of a library in terms of perceived and actual use of Facebook. Gaha & Hal¹³ investigated the sustainable use of social media particularly in the context of marketing libraries. Gupta¹⁴, *et al.*, examined the awareness and use of selected social networking sites by library staff of thirteen power sector organisations through a survey and found that library staff who did not aware about social networking applications was not have understanding to use social media applications in the libraries and library staff was also suffering from lack of adequate training on social media applications. Aras¹⁵ stressed on to build an effective policy for use social networking sites for a university library in order to meet expectations and requirements of both libraries and users. Dahibhat & Patil¹⁶ highlighted the impact of social media on library services in present and future perspectives and also discussed the challenges and skill required for library and information science professionals for using social media for enhancing library services. Johnson & Kaye¹⁷ examined the credibility of social networking sites through an online survey. Choi's study¹⁸ urged to the libraries to be prepared for social media librarian.

Islam & Habiba¹⁹ examined the use of social media in forty six libraries through an online survey and discovered that majority of libraries are using social networking sites for marketing library services and products.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate the awareness, sources, frequencies and reasons to know and use SNS tools and services by LIS professionals for their libraries
- Assess the types of SNS tools and services and library services are using by LIS professionals

- Identify barriers and policies to use SNS tools and services for libraries
- Get opinions of LIS professionals about the future use of SNS tools and services in libraries

4. METHODOLOGY

For doing this study, a survey was conducted using an online questionnaire which consisting of total 11 questions in which five multiple choice and six single choice questions were incorporated on various issues connected to use of SNS tools and services by library and information science professionals for their respective libraries. To know views of LIS professionals towards use SNS tools and services for libraries, the online questionnaire was circulated to 100 library and information science professionals who are working in different libraries on their personal e-mail ID(s) through electronic mail e-mail. In response to questionnaire sent to 100 LIS professionals, 80 completed questionnaires were received. The responses received were recorded and tabulated in MicroSoft Excel-2007 and analysed. This survey was conducted from 1 June 2016 to 28 June 2016.

5. ANALYSIS

It was found that highest number of respondents (92 %) who participated in this survey is working in academic libraries in contrast to public libraries and special libraries. But lowest number of LIS professionals who participated in this survey are working in equal number (4 % each) in public libraries and special libraries respectively.

5.1 Awareness about SNS Tools and Services

Majority of LIS professionals (97.5 %) know about SNS tools and services which may be due to popularity of SNS tools and service around the world and these tools and services provide facilities to connect, post and get reflections against their posts in online mode. On contrary, only (2.5 %) LIS said that they do not know about SNS tools and services.

5.2 Means to Know about SNS Tools and Services

Figure 1 shows the means to know about SNS tools and services. It can be seen from Fig. 1 that in comparison to other seven means, maximum numbers of LIS professionals (60 %) opined that they knew about SNS tools and services by internet/search engines which are the reservoirs and popular media to find any type of desired information. Kaushik²⁰ in his study found that library and information science professionals used e-resources and search engine to know about massive open online course (MOOC). Besides this, from professionals colleagues, from e-resources and from friends also discovered as useful medium in contrast to other four means in which among rest of four means, 'from readers' used by minimum (5 %) LIS professionals only.

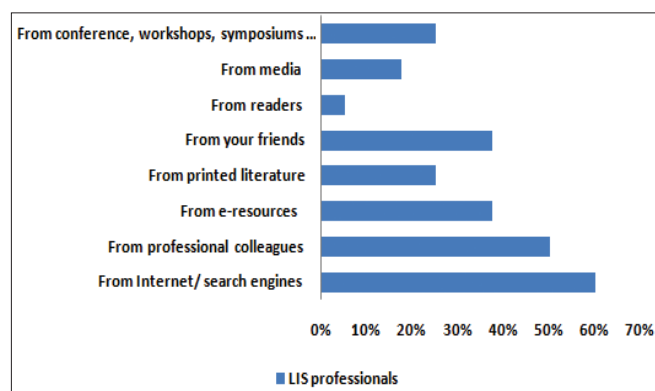


Figure 1. Means to know about SNS tools and services.

5.3 Use of SNS Tools and Services

Figure 2 shows that majority of library and information science professionals are using SNS tools and services from more than four years for libraries in comparison to other time slabs as mentioned in the Fig. 2, may be reasons for getting popularity of some SNS tools and services in academic arena. On contrary, equally only (2.5 %) LIS professionals are using SNS tools and services for library for one year and two years, respectively.

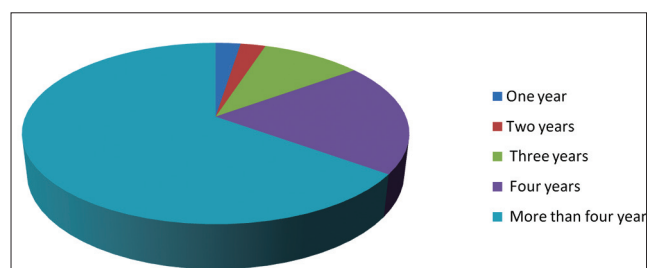


Figure 2. Use of SNS tools and services.

5.4 Frequencies to Use SNS Tools and Services

While question asked from respondents regarding frequency of use SNS tools and services for libraries, the responses received from respondents presented through Fig. 3 in which maximum (60 %) LIS professionals said that they use SNS tools and services several times in daily in contrast to other four frequencies. This may be happened because LIS professionals would like to keep updates and get reflections for their inputs many times in a day through SNS tools and services as well. Further,

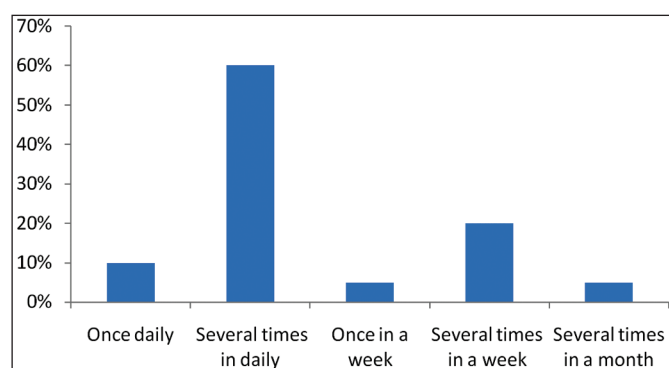


Figure 3. Frequencies to use SNS tools and services.

two frequency, viz., several times in a week and once daily are being used by twenty percent to ten percent LIS professionals respectively. Whilst, equal number of LIS professionals (5 %) are using SNS tools and services on basis of once in a week and several times in a month, respectively.

5.5 Status of Social Networking Policy

Most LIS professionals (65 %) who are using SNS tools and services don't have any social networking policy in their respective libraries which is a mandatory mechanism for using for SNS tools and services into libraries without any doubt and hesitation. Chitumbo²¹ study focused on make policy for social media tools to provide guidance on access and use of social media tools on the institutional network. But, on contrary, it is found that only few number of libraries (35 %) have social networking policies.

5.6 Reasons to Use SNS Tools and Services

It can be noted from Fig. 4 that in contrast to other three reasons, two reasons namely 'for interacting with the users' and 'for getting feedback from the users' in majority opined by equal number of LIS professionals (83.7 %) as these are main motives of LIS professionals to use SNS tools and services for libraries, followed by reason 'for communicating information' with (75 %) LIS professionals.

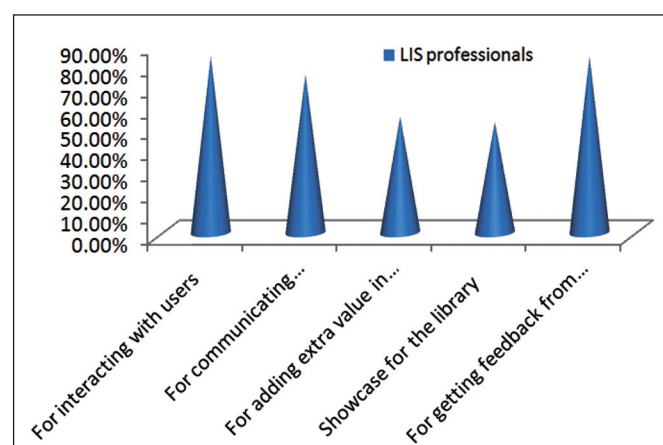


Figure 4. Reasons to use SNS tools and services.

Sahoo & Sharma²² presented different views regarding use of social networking sites tools and services and identified areas in which SNS tools and services may be incorporated in libraries by using examples of various SNS tools and services. While, very slight difference was observed in between two reasons 'For adding extra value in library services' and 'Showcase for the library' in terms of number of LIS professionals.

5.7 Types of Library Services Clubbed with SNS Tools and Services

It is necessary to know about which library services are providing to targeted users through SNS tools and

service. Figure 5 presents responses got from the respondents in which majority of library and information science professionals are using SNS tools and services for 'marketing of library services and products', followed by 'for library news and updates' with (82.5 %) respondents as these are important services which not only attracting the users but also keep inform them in advance about happening of the libraries.

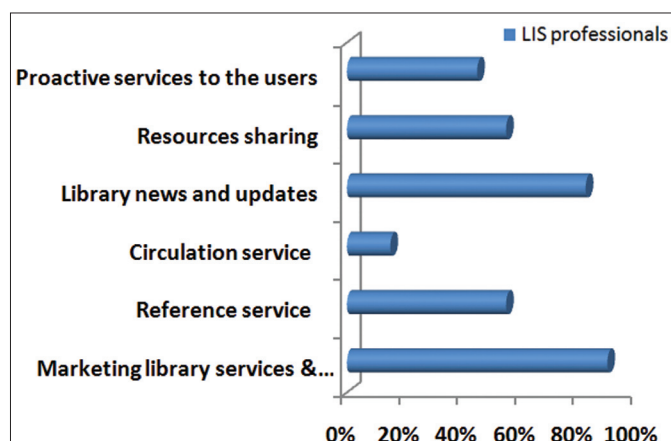


Figure 5. Library services clubbed with SNS tools and services.

Sriram²³ investigated how different social media tools and services may be used effectively in terms of marketing the library services and products by experience of KN Raj Library Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. Apart from this, two services namely 'reference service' and 'resources sharing' respectively were opined by equal percentage of library and information science professionals with (55 %). On the contrary, among six services, 'circulation services' was responded by only (15 %) LIS professionals at minority level.

5.8 Barriers to Use SNS Tools and Services.

In contrast to five barriers mentioned in Fig. 6, three barriers namely lack of credibility of SNS tools/services, lack of security and privacy and lack of policy to use SNS tools/services were responded by highest number of library and information science professionals

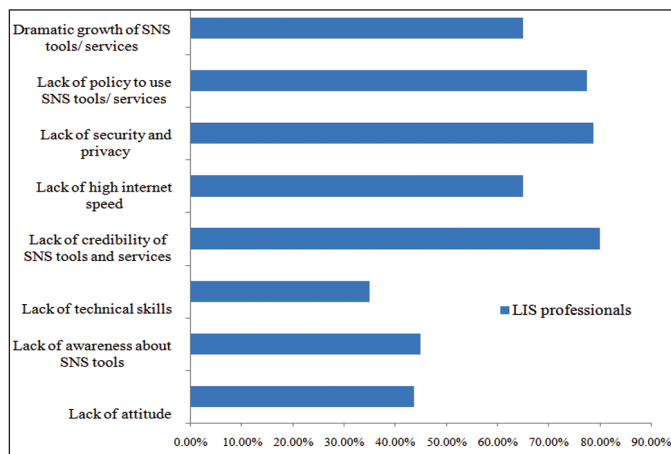


Figure 6. Barriers to use SNS tools and services.

and slight difference was noted among above said three barriers because security and privacy of data as well as credibility are the major issues as far as use of SNS tools and services in any domain, are concerned. Ezeani & Igwesi²⁴ pointed out challenges faced by Nigerian libraries to use social networking sites into their libraries and also provide some readies for these challenges. Further, barriers, viz., lack of high Internet speed and dramatic growth of SNS tools/services respectively pointed out as another important barriers by equal number of LIS professionals. On contrary, among three barriers, one barrier such as 'lack of technical skills' suggested by lowest number of LIS professionals (35 %) only.

5.9 Types of SNS Tools and Services use

While asking question about to use types of SNS services and tools for libraries, it is found from Fig. 7 that majority of LIS professionals (92.5 %) are using

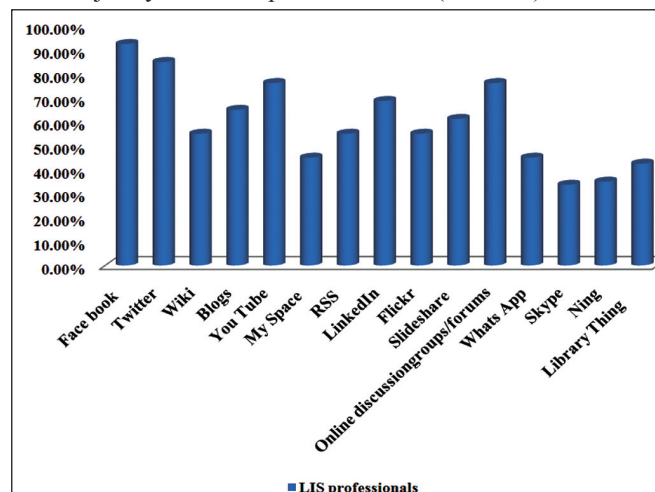


Figure 7. Types of SNS tools and services use.

Facebook, followed by Twitter with (85 %), and You Tube and online discussion groups/forums both are with equal 76.2 % LIS professionals respectively because above said SNS tools and services are the established SNS tools and services in open sphere and widely used by almost every user in every domain. Chu & Du²⁵ examined the usefulness and challenges, and factors influencing decisions to use or not to use of social networking tools in academic library context through an online survey and Facebook and Twitter were found as most used SNS tools in university libraries. Besides this, among eleven SNS tools and services, LinkedIn, Blog, Slideshare, Wiki, RSS, Flickr are also discovered as another important SNS tools and services for libraries. Rest of five SNS tools and services using by less than 50 % LIS professionals wherein Skype using in minority level only by (33.7 %) LIS professionals.

5.10 Future Perception about SNS Tools and Services

In response to question regarding use of SNS tools and services in future for libraries, the responses received from respondents were depicted in Fig. 8 in which majority

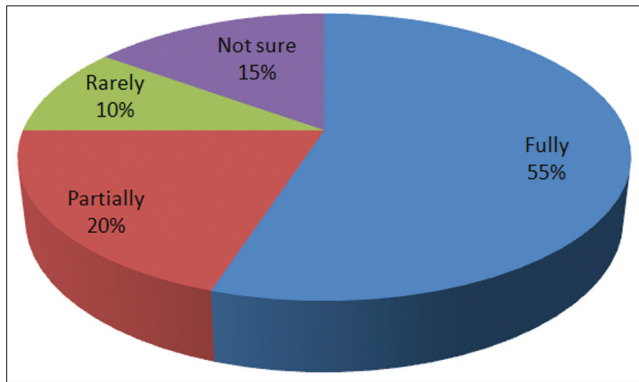


Figure 8. Future perception about SNS tools and services.

of LIS professionals (55 %) said that SNS tools and services will be fully used for the libraries in future in comparison to other indicators, such as 'partially', 'rarely', and 'not sure'. Collins and Quans-Haase²⁶ investigated the adoption rates of social networking sites in academic libraries and suggested that more social networking sites should be used by the librarian in future in connection to create more contents as per user's interest. But, exact five percent difference was observed among indicators, viz., 'partially', 'not sure' and 'rarely' respectively.

6. FINDINGS

The following findings were found from the study: Large number of LIS professionals who responded in this survey belonged to academic libraries in comparison of other type of libraries.

- Most of LIS professionals know about SNS tools and services.
- Majority of LIS professionals use internet/search engine for knowing about SNS tools and services.
- Large number of LIS professionals use SNS tools and services from more than four years for libraries.
- Massive number of LIS professionals use SNS tools and services LIS several times daily.
- Large number of library and information science professionals use SNS tools and services for libraries without having policies for the same.
- To use SNS tools and services for libraries, two reasons—'for interacting with the users' and 'for getting feedback of users' were given by most of LIS professionals.
- Most of LIS professionals use SNS tools and services for marketing of library services and products.
- Lack of credibility of SNS tools/services, lack of security and privacy and lack of policy to use SNS tools/ services were discovered as appropriate barriers for using SNS tools and services for libraries.
- Among 15 SNS tools and services, Facebook used most of LIS professionals.
- SNS tools and services will be used in libraries in future.

7. SUGGESTIONS

The following are some of the suggestions on the basis of findings of this study:

- LIS professional should participate in every type of surveys conducted time to time on different topics to provide their insights and experiences.
- LIS professional must know about SNS tools and services which may be connected to libraries for different purposes.
- Most appropriate mean should be discovered and used by LIS professionals for knowing about new SNS tools and services.
- LIS professionals should use trusted SNS tools and services to establish them as reliable media for libraries.
- LIS professionals should use SNS tools and services as per need.
- Every LIS professionals should make proper policy prior to use SNS tools and services for their libraries for different purposes.
- LIS professionals should discover appropriate reasons for using SNS tools and services and also incorporate these reasons in their SNS policies with proper justifications in connection to convince authorities explicitly to use SNS tools and services for libraries.
- LIS professionals should explore possibilities to provide other library services to the users through SNS tools and services.
- LIS professionals should make remedies to overcome all barriers in use SNS tools and services for libraries in connection to use full version and facilities of SNS tools and services in libraries and for their professional growth.
- LIS professionals should explore possibilities in which other SNS tools and services can be used for libraries in most efficient manner.
- LIS professionals must think on how to make most effective use of SNS tools and services for libraries to enhance their services in demanded formats, achieving goals and building library image among academic community.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides the different views of library and information science professionals regarding use of SNS tools and services for libraries. It is discovered from the results of the study that majority library and information science professionals are aware about the SNS tools through Internet/ search engines and using SNS tools and services for interacting with users and for marketing of library services but do not have policy regarding use of SNS tools and services for their respective libraries which may create question and confusion to use SNS tools and services effectively for libraries. On the other

hand, results of this study also revealed that credibility, privacy and security of data on SNS tools and services are big question marks for using these tools and services for libraries for different purposes. Therefore, it is suggested that diligent and explicit policies should be made for using SNS tools and services for the libraries on the basis of their requirements, users and goals of the library where privacy and security of data as well as trust on use of SNS tools and services must be considered and included after thoroughly examining the characteristics, nature, platforms and impact of SNS services and tools. Apart from this, libraries which are providing library services through the SNS tools and services should also provide proactive services and regular feedback should be taken from targeted users and necessary improvement should be done accordingly. Moreover, it is prime duty of LIS professionals to think seriously to make SNS tools and services as a reliable medium for libraries.

The further study may be carried out on the following issues:

- Growth and patterns of SNS tools and services in LIS sphere.
- Impact of SNS tools and services on libraries in future perspectives.
- Evaluation of SNS tools and services by using different parameters.
- Trust and security of SNS tools and services in LIS domain.

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