Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing via Facebook Groups: Analysis of Postings of Library and Information Science Community

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ABSTRACT

Social networking sites are visibly the latest trend and have changed the way the 21st century communicates each other. Its usage becomes more and more in the world of information, its presence in the library and information science becomes challenging and exciting. The aim of this study was to know the trend of posting, sharing, commenting and like a Facebook post, to understand the participation level and response against Facebook group post, and also to explore the type of content generated by library and information science community through Facebook Group. Group postings/contents of four different Facebook group pages (LIS Group, LIS-XPRESS, S.M.I.T. library students, students of LIS), operating and use by LIS community during February 2012 - February 2015 are collected, read and analysed. The analysis of those contents found that sharing photos, links and statuses are major types of group posts in every group and members hardly posting videos and create events for the community.

Keywords: Social networking sites; LIS community; Facebook group; Knowledge sharing; Collaboration; Group posting; Photo sharing; Sharing videos

1. INTRODUCTION

Brown[1] has described social networking is visibly the latest trend and has changed the way the 21st century communicates each other. Social networking is a web based software which enabled people to interact and collaborate each other online. Farkas[2] has mentioned in his book, the concise definition by Tom Coates, 'Social software can be defined as software which supports, extends, or derives added value from human social behaviour - message boards, music taste-sharing, photo-sharing, instant messaging, mailing lists, social networking'.

Social networking, in general, allows users to join, create user pages (necessary information with a profile picture), invite and accept friendship requests from other users of the system as a social friend. It also allows users to share ideas, thoughts, user generated contents (texts, file attachments, photos, videos, music, links, etc.) with others. It also allows professionals to exchange information, opportunities, and ideas. Professionals stay abreast of the recent trends in their profession.

Suraweera[3], *et al.* have highlighted that mentors and tutors are continuously trying to expand the classroom discussions beyond boundaries, by way of posting home works and checks using social networking sites to support students during their home assignments. These benefits not only the students but also parents to make queries and clear doubts without personal appearance.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social networking usage becomes more and more in the world of information, its presence in the library and information science becomes challenging and exciting. Even though different studies have aimed at Facebook use and its impact on various sectors of the society, but very few have focused on Facebook usage by library and information science (LIS) professionals. The recent study seeks to add to the literature to understand how LIS community uses Facebook for collaborating, sharing and discussing their professional activities through different Facebook groups.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW
3.1 Facebook Groups and Communities

Online interpersonal sites, for example, Friendster, MySpace, and the Facebook have met an unprecedented growth since inception. The security and user privacy of these sites have been raised, despite communicating in a smart way and striking interaction. The study by Acquisti & Gross[4] explored that majority of its uses are well known about the security concern of social sites and are affecting them.

Clare[5], *et al.* explored that students joined Facebook pre-registration as a medium of creating new friends at academia, and can continue to communicate with friends and family at home. Collaboration through online mode becomes easy with social media technologies. Learners can team up for project related activities by using spreadsheets, PPT slides, and Google Docs. Faculty members are cashing on the developing prevalence and occasional blogging by utilising online journals

as extra educating/learning assets. Baruah[6] has mentioned that gathering and regrouping of individuals, the game plan of gatherings, spreading of data, and measuring sentiments through online networking are especially simple, least expensive approaches to accomplish through social network technologies.

Schroeder & Greenbowe[7] have highlighted the Facebook and other social cooperation devices have the potency to be used as an examination board or even as a notice board to post announcement. Kelley[8], *et al.* have investigated suggested control of access, concerns relating to privacy and security decisions and sharing of contents through Facebook.

An evaluation by Greene[9], *et al.* on the contents of Facebook groups dedicated to diabetes revealed that forum like features of Facebook provides a platform where people had diabetes can sharing their experiences, ask questions, and collect feedback and suggestions.

Asking questions in online forums and answering services offer the opportunity to satisfy personal information needs directly. Also, one may build up knowledge by engaging in ongoing conversations with peers. Key aspects are types of knowledge user's aim for and pragmatic intents of questions, knowledge-related characteristics of posts and also the success. The investigation by Griesbaum[10] found that knowledge creation predominantly follows a socio-cultural paradigm of knowledge exchange.

3.2 Facebook for Library and Information Profession

Villiers[11] described Facebook is one of the most favourite social networking site (SNS), where one meets his/her friends, write 'walls' of each other's and renew the friendship. It is a site where one can able to see his/her friend's latest pictures and activities. To know the use and pattern of Facebook in American libraries Aharony[12] has found that public libraries are using its wall and upload photos as the preferred way to share information than academic libraries. However, it also found that both types of libraries use Facebook for passing information to users, rather than use as a discussion forum. The libraries and information organizations are using social network sites widely and are a more practical tool to communicate with library users, and also help the individual libraries to outreach its services. Suraweera[3] have pointed Facebook, Myspace, Orkut, and likes are good examples of some social networking sites, which can put to use for this and are more helpful to develop a good relationship with friends.

Vassilakaki & Garoufallou[13] have critically presented a series of standard practices for creating and managing a profile page on Facebook for information professionals. They identified 12 different information professional specific features (like group posts, wall posts, events, and friends, etc.) are used and also the way librarian put into use.

Showcasing library facilities has dependably been a remarkable passion for libraries. Through showcasing techniques, a library can hope to enhance its ability to perceive and picture, in this way drawing in more clients to use its materials and facilities. Xia[14] has analysed group activities and performances about the marketing of library facilities in Facebook.

Young LIS professionals find it easy to share knowledge and collaborate with others through Facebook, and its unique features help to create groups, collaboration dynamically, publishes, exchange, share and cooperates any information. Professionals are also using SNS for creating awareness, socializing, making friends and for topic discussion and metadata linking. Parveen[15] also shown evidence on the use of Facebook by LIS professionals for not only in sharing knowledge, experience, views but also to create a network of professionals for collaborating each other by posting contents in a virtual community. Facebook proved as the most popular social site and have a great prospect for promoting health. Zhang[16], *et al.* analysed the messages of an active Facebook diabetes group and found that users can communicate with people of similar conditions in local languages as well. Sharing personal experience, knowledge, emotions and sentiments, lifestyle and medical information are the major types of contents of Facebook group members.

3.3 Facebook for Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

The concept of 'collaboration' and 'knowledge sharing' leads to the exchange of information between more than one people. The term 'collaboration' in academic settings, generally the connection with the assignments, discussions or joint activities of learning and its related works of a student. And 'knowledge sharing' mainly emphasises on sharing of knowledge between individuals, team, and organisation. Zach and Agosto[17] examined the theoretical base of online learning techniques for collaboration to teach library and information science students. They also presented framework model for online course design to maximise the benefit of online collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Gaal[18] investigated the ways of sharing expertise and knowledge for professional development using in-house social media technologies and also use of other technologies available in public domain as well. Their study also recommended organizations should encourage employees for sharing their expertise and knowledge using social media technologies. Suwannatthachote and Tantrarungroj[19] have investigated the use of Facebook for collaborative work during the group project by adding team members, using real-time chat, and sending personal messages to contact between members of the group.

Baresch[20], *et al.* has examined that, Facebook users post the links to external content, such as; written materials with photo, link to video social network sites, news and general information and sports/arts/entertainment, etc. To answer the types of knowledge sharing and interaction pattern among the Malaysians, Din & Haron[21] have revealed that the culture is Facebook is related to sharing knowledge as a way of life. Kurtz[23] investigated that how the use of two platforms – a Facebook group and a course website – affected student's awareness of learning and participation. They found that discussion and learning could be possible through Facebook as a virtual environment.

Using social media as the wealth of knowledge sharing is

the latest trend nowadays. Suebsom[24] has presented the pattern, attitude, and perception of students using it. Also students using it to discuss and share knowledge in higher education classroom and used as a tool for teaching and learning. Villiers[11] & Karnik[25], *et al.* in their study examined the use and gratification of some features of Facebook. Participants revealed data concerning a music activity with four different enjoyments as; contribution; discovery; social interaction and entertainment. To test the Facebook as a possible alternate of a learning management system (LMS), Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, & Pieterse[26] have attempted and used the Facebook group as a course site. The students uttered satisfaction with the learning content and interaction with Facebook. To explore the category and effect of user generated content posted by the user of the open access institutional repository (DSpace) on Facebook. Kurian[27] has analysed the personal and professional information posts by the members of DSapce group on Facebook. Contents posted by users requested, greetings, status-up-date, and announcements and there has been the significant increase in the posting during the study.

The review of the previous study clearly indicated that none of them examined the content shared through Facebook group posting by LIS community. This study focused on the analysis of user generated content for collaboration and knowledge sharing through the Facebook group.

4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The target of the study is to get how LIS community uses the Facebook group for collaboration and knowledge sharing by analysing the posts.

- To explore the trend of posting by LIS community in the Facebook group.
- To know the trend of sharing, comments and likes by LIS community against the group postings.
- To understand the level participation and response by the LIS community in the discussion of issues/queries.
- To explore the type of group posting and content generated by LIS community in the Facebook group.

5. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was an analysis of how LIS professional community uses Facebook? The study emphasis is on sharing of information from a user (the 1st person who posts content) to other users (successive readers, commentators, the person who share others post, etc.). Analytics of Facebook group and pages was the approach used in this study. Group postings/contents of four different Facebook Group Pages (LIS Group, LIS-XPRESS, S.M.I.T. Library Students, Students of LIS), operating and use by LIS community during the period February 2012 to February 2015 are collected and analysed.

6. DATA COLLECTION FOR THE STUDY

All four Facebook Groups are a public group in nature, information shared by these groups can be accessed and analysed without joining the group. But 1st authors is a member of all these groups and have been posting contents since many years related to the professional matter. Different administrators and moderators manage these community based groups, and

there are more than 21000 single members have joined since created. In the first phase, the Facebook group link has fed into the social media analytics tool called www.sociograph.io to analyse the group postings/contents. Study date has set in the tool for extracting analysis data from the tool. The content of group posting are classified as follows:

Content types	Details of content on Facebook
Photos	Pictures, images and photos related to profession or interest of group members.
Videos	Videos and play related to LIS profession. It may be direct video or an external link to video sites.
Links	Any link that contains LIS profession related matters.
Status	Its is a short message that depicts the current situation of the group. "Status" are the small posts by the users of Facebook to present their situations and feelings as said by Hum[27], *et al.*
Events	Invitation to occasions and happenings related to LIS profession with date, time and venue of the particular event.

In the second phase, of the study the report was generated and extracted to Excel file using 'Export in XLS' option available in the tool. Later the exported data was arranged as per the objective of the study and data were analysed using Microsoft Excel.

7. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

7.1 Facebook Groups Created by LIS Community

The analysis based on Table 1 presents the finding with a tabular representation of demographic data. The Facebook groups under study were created almost in the year 2011 except S.M.I.T. Library Students have created in the year 2012. LIS Group is more popular among all with 12,094 no of individual members have joined the group, where as S.M.I.T. Library Students group stands 4th regarding no of members have joined. LIS-Xpress tops with 3533 total posts and 2.18 posting per day on an average. Again S.M.I.T. Library Student's group is less active than others.

7.2 Trend of Posting by LIS Community in Facebook Groups

The analysis in Fig. 1 clearly shows that LIS professionals are very much active and using group posts (6518 total posts) for discussing professional matters through Facebook. The figure also indicates that members of LIS-Xpress group have participated in discussion with highest posting (1230 in the year 2012) in every year as compared to other groups, whereas posting through S.M.I.T. Library Student's group are less (8 in the year 2013).

7.3 Trend of Share, Comments and Likes by LIS Community Against the Group Post

Table 2 displays year wise data about the trend of share, comment and likes per post. The data and the growth of numbers clearly indicate that LIS professionals are mostly using the

Table 1. Demographic data on Facebook groups created by LIS community

Group name	Created on	No of members	Total posts	Authors	Frequency of posting / per day
LIS Group	13-Feb-2011	12094	2810	564	1.58
LIS-Xpress	27-Jul-2011	1147	3533	148	2.18
SMIT library student's	4-Feb-2012	131	93	13	0.07
Students of LIS	9-Sep-2011	7686	1919	328	1.22

Facebook group for posting professional related problems, topics, etc. Posting from LIS Group has received the highest number of likes (with 3500) per post and also received (294 shares & 599 comments) per post in the year 2015. Posting from Students of LIS received the highest number of comments (with 1500) per post. At the same time, SMIT Library Student's group received the lowest number of response for its posting.
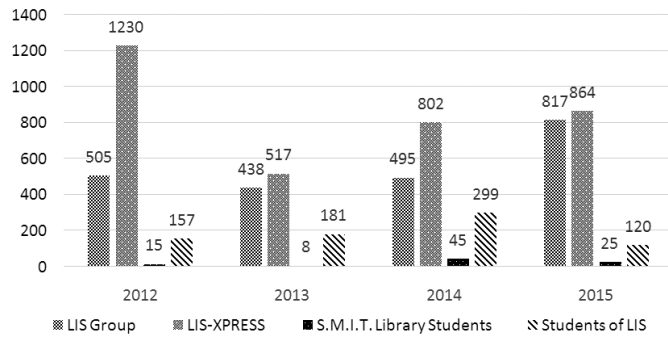

Figure 1. Trend of group posting in Facebook

Table 2 explains that professional are more interested in like against group post rather than sharing. Members of this group are reasonably posting comment against group posts. It also indicates that the sharing, commenting and liking a post are increasing day by day. Table 2 describes that members of this group are like more against a group post. Same time members are moderately give comments and sharing for further reading.

Table 2 presents the members of this group are not much active to comment & like the group post. The chart also show that from 2013 number of like against group post slowly increased. Table 2 tells that upto 2014 comment & sharing of group post was similar pace, after that members are more interested in comment than share.

7.4 Level of Participation and Response by the LIS Community in Discussion of Issues/queries.

Table 3 presents breakdown of group posts on the wall during the study. It show that the author of LIS-Xpress (23.87 posting/author) are more active for posting professional related matters. Likers from Students of LIS Group likes an average of 1.33 likes /per post and also received 0.57 comments/post.

7.5 Type of Group Posting/content Generated by LIS Community using Facebook

Figures 2-5 presents the year wise breakdown of type of posting/content by members of each group, which were categorised as; photos, videos, links, statuses, and events. Sharing photos, links and statuses are major types of group

Table 2. Year wise trend of share, comment and likes by various LIS Groups

	LIS Group		
Year	Share/post	Comments/post	Likes/post
2012	31	336	705
2013	41	303	677
2014	110	166	1300
2015	294	599	3500
	LIS-Xpress		
Year	Share/post	Comments/post	Likes/post
2012	12	384	2100
2013	32	177	1300
2014	174	260	3200
2015	197	140	3200
	SMIT library student		
Year	Share/post	Comments/post	Likes/post
2012	0	4	6
2013	1	7	8
2014	2	12	86
2015	1	0	73
	Students of LIS		
Year	Share/post	Comments/post	Likes/post
2012	4	167	288
2013	14	64	110
2014	36	816	827
2015	66	1500	979

posts in every group. Surprisingly all four groups have not posted much content related to videos and events, which are just above 1per cent of the total content in both cases.

In terms of sharing photos (including pictures and images) were represented 19.42 per cent of the total content by Students of LIS and is highest among the studied groups. In the case of posting links were represented 55.91 per cent of the total content by SMIT Library Students and is the highest among all groups. While in the case of posting status (short message that depicts the current situation of the group) were represented 57.86 per cent of the total content by students of LIS and is the highest among all groups. Table 4 shows that, among all categories of content, links and statuses are represented the most leading form of posting with 55.91 per cent (by SMIT Library Student) and 57.86 per cent (by Students of LIS).

Table 3. Level of participation and response in Facebook group

FB groups by LIS community	Posting/ author	Likers/ posting	Commenters/ posting
LIS Group	4.98	0.77	0.20
LIS-Xpress	23.87	0.18	0.05
SMIT library students	7.15	0.44	0.12
Students of LIS	5.85	1.33	0.57
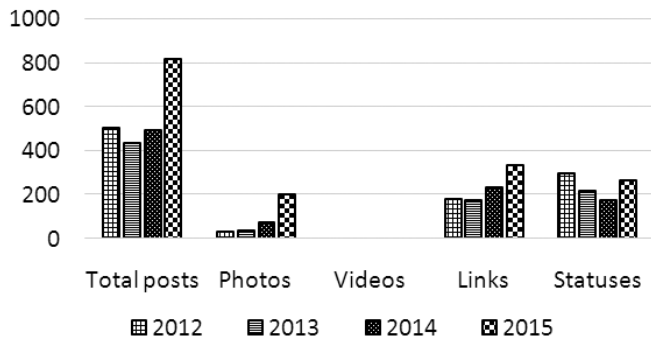
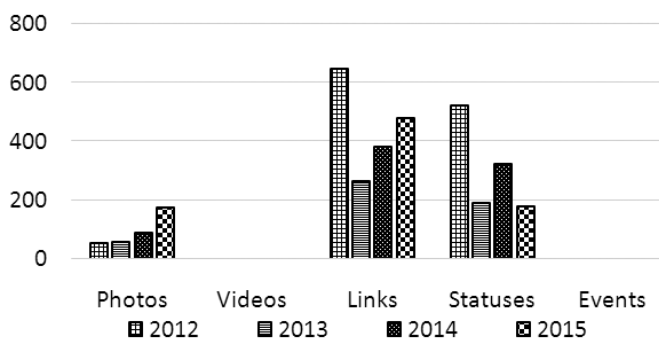**Figure 2. Types of posting/content by LIS Group.**

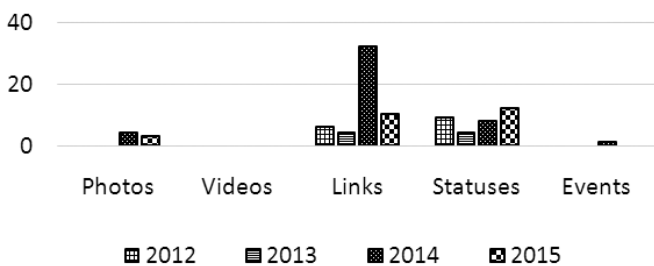**Figure 3. Types of posting/content by LIS-Xpress.**

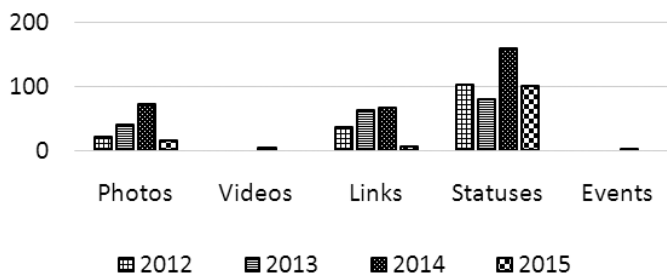**Figure 4. Types of posting/content by SMIT library students.**

Figure 5. Types of posting/content by students of LIS.

Table 4. Type of content posted through Facebook (in %)

Group names	Photos	Videos	Links	Statuses	Events
LIS Group	15.43	1.11	40.93	42.57	0.31
LIS-Xpress	11.08	0.41	52.09	35.66	0.23
SMIT library student	07.53	0.00	55.91	35.48	1.08
Students of LIS	19.42	0.40	22.19	57.86	0.13

8. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to know the trend of posting, sharing, commenting and like a Facebook post, to understand the participation level and response against Facebook group post, and also to explore the type of content generated by LIS community through Facebook Group. Four Facebook groups (i.e. LIS Group, LIS-XPRESS, S.M.I.T. Library Students, Students of LIS) are all created and use by Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals are considered for this study. This study showed that LIS professionals are active on Facebook group for sharing their knowledge and collaborating with others. LIS professionals are very much interested in collaboration through Facebook group, and sharing knowledge through Facebook posting, as per the Table 2 number of comment and like against group posts are much higher than sharing those posts. As per the data on Table 1, the number of members in a particular group affects the rate of posting content through Facebook.

Kurian[28] described that Facebook be likely to fulfill the need of users for information, medium for develop good relationship and sharing of knowledge. This study was found that LIS professionals engaging in sharing, commenting and liking group post, which clearly shows that they are using Facebook group for sharing and discussing professional problems and topics. This study also observed various types of content generated by Facebook group members. Those posts were based on the default options available for posting content in Facebook group like; photos, videos, links, statuses, and events. The analysis of those contents and found that sharing photos, links and statuses are major types of group posts in every group and members hardly posting videos and create events for the community.

The current study based on the four LIS community based groups of Facebook, in future a related study on the other groups/community will be required to know the member generated content at micro level. Moreover the study may be extended to examine the level of communication pattern in order to know the role played by social networking sites as an effective and fruitful medium of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

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Contribution in the current study he is working in the social networking and other social media for knowledge sharing. This study is a part of the PhD.

Prof. R.K. Mahapatra is presently working as Associate Professor DLIS, Tripura University (A Central University), Tripura; His areas of experience include Information Processing, Information Seeking Behaviour, Knowledge Management, Research Methods, Library Automation & Networking and Digital Library Initiation. He has published 85 research papers in journals and conferences and chapters in books and festschrift volumes, reviewed books and co-authored more than 4 books.

Contribution in the current study he supervised for the above study and actively engaged in this research area also involved in use of social media, and other SNS tools for academic/ educational purposes.