Use of Social Media in Marketing of Library and Information Services in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is to discover the use, purpose, importance and problems faced by the library and information professionals in Bangladesh in marketing through social media. For this study public universities (17), private universities (24) and special (5) libraries in Bangladesh were selected as a research sample. The findings of this paper showed that most of the libraries use Facebook and LinkedIn for marketing of library and information services. Most of the libraries use social media for marketing library product and services, for sharing library news and events, video conferencing, advertisement, and research purpose. An online version of the questionnaire was distributed in the respective libraries in Bangladesh. Library professionals also provided necessary suggestions and opinions about ways of enhancing library services through using social media.

Keywords: Social media, social networking site, library marketing, Web 2.0 marketing, social media, marketing, Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has the possibility to help much closer relationships between library and information centres and their customers wherever users are based, and how they choose to learn about and access library services and resources. In the present time, libraries and information institutions are facing unprecedented change and challenge. This is very difficult for library professionals to manage and share their resources with others manually. For solving these problems, many technological development has been discovered and creating new forms of information, new sources of information and new ways of providing information bypassing traditional institutional like libraries. Now, the actual challenge for information professionals is not to handle the collection, staff and technology, but to turn these resources into services. The concept of services has also changed, from basic to value- added, from personnel-assisted to self-service, from in-house to outreach, from free to priced, from reactive to pro-active, and from mass customisation of individualised service[1]. Libraries have always connected people with information, Social media is beginning to play an important role in marketing of information to library users and in branding the library as a community hub[2] where marketing is a key function of social media[3].

In the recent time, Web 2.0 applications in libraries have acquired growing reputation worldwide, it appears that the library must think about marketing its services more regularly through the internet, taking advantage of Web 2.0 applications to get better access to its users and to promote information services. Social media is a powerful new form of communication[4]. These applications have been widely used for information dissemination and gathering, collaborative learning and online social and professional connections[4]. Use of social media is increasing rapidly. Online social networking sites (SNSs) hold great opportunities and challenges for transforming education in countries like Bangladesh[6].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media applications help their users to acquire interconnections among the library members and remix the library services and products to brand them visible in a wider way[7]. Tools such as Facebook,

LinkedIn, Blog, and Twitter are being used to erect relationships, connection and sharing knowledge with user groups, to enhance libraries and to provide information services. Social networking sites were being used by a number of academic libraries and were perceived to be helpful in promoting library services and interacting with students. However, the implementation of these sites by library staff was found to be challenged by limited time and perceived inadequacy of the staff to keep pace with the development of technology.[8]

With the manifestation of new technologies and increasing competition in the digital age, marketing within Web 2.0 is a crucial factor for survival and library professionals are aware about the concept of marketing with new technologies and tools. Most public libraries (20) are using Facebook as a platform for marketing themselves and their services and to uplift their collections. The exploration and use of social networking sites applications help to enhance library services and also support library marketing and the teaching of Social media literacy, which will help library and information professionals by giving them knowledge about these applications and how they can use them in library and their services.4

In a survey of ARL libraries, Mahmood & Richardson[9] stated that 76 libraries were using some form of Web 2.0 technologies, i.e., RSS, blogs, social networking sites, wikis and instant messaging were found the most used technologies as these were used in more than 80 % of academic libraries. Kumar[10] observed that majority of Sikkim University students expressed the use of the internet for SNSs and its resources and were enthusiastic in improving their skills in the use of SNSs.

Social network advertising has potential to be a cost-effective means of marketing academic libraries and library should have a Facebook page with a large number of fans that is beneficial to an academic library's marketing effort[11]. But the LIS professionals in Nigeria have not completely comprised these social networking sites in library and information services.[12] Khan & Bhatti[13] reported that the respondent's behavior towards the use of social media for marketing of library resources, services was positive and suggested that libraries should be connected with the internet services and develop their web page and social media page.

A SNs linked to a university library's web page is to enable users' have a live conversation with a library personnel on issues relating to the use of the library and also allow the libraries to market their programs and operations[14]. Libraries can publish in their Facebook pages, such as new additions to their collections, library news and events, links to articles, videos, user information, the soliciting of feedback and responses to people[15]. But libraries are lacking in their promotional activities. Library websites are not totally used by LIS professionals as a marketing toolkit and an enabler to spread out to the community for advertising of information services and collections. Social media in marketing of library and information services will help to encourage exchanges across worldwide[16].

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

(a) Investigate the present status of using social media for marketing of library resources and services in Bangladesh;

(b) Assess the problems faced by library professionals in utilising social media in libraries; and

(c) Provide the opinions of library professionals to improve marketing of library services and information products through social media.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study sampled library professionals working in the universities approved by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh and some selected special libraries. The total numbers of library professionals (55) were considered as the research population. An online version of the questionnaire was distributed in the respective libraries. The data collection for this study began in October 2014 and continued through December 2014. Out of these 55 questionnaires, 46 were returned with complete details. Library professionals were asked to evaluate each questionnaire item from 1–'lowest' to 5–'highest', corresponding to a five-point Likert scale.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected by various method is analysed and interpreted and presented in tables. Total 46 library professionals took part in this study. Based on the demographics and other personal background information obtained, a majority of the respondents were male 30 (65.22 %) and only 16 (34.78 %) were female. Out of 46 library professionals, the majority were tenured either as a Library officer (15, 32.61 %); Assistant librarian (14, 30.43 %); or Deputy librarian (10, 21.74 %). Most of the library professionals were working in private university libraries 24 (52.17 %) and other library professional were working in public university libraries 17 (36.96 %) and special libraries 5 (10.87 %). Most of them were from age group both of 25-30 years and 31-35 years (23.91 %). Private university libraries are developing day by day comparatively other libraries in Bangladesh.

Table 1. Frequency of using social media in libraries

Frequency of using social media	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Public university libraries	16 (34.79)	1 (2.17)	17 (36.96)
Private university libraries	23 (50.00)	1 (2.17)	24 (52.17)
Special libraries	5 (10.87)	0 (0.00)	5 (10.87)
Total	**44 (95.66)**	**2 (4.34)**	**46 (100)**

5.1 Libraries using Social Media

Social media is used for marketing of libraries is the way of advertising library, its product and services via various modern technologies. Table 1 shows that out of the 46 public, private universities and special libraries, 44 (95.66 %) libraries are using social media for marketing their library product and services and only 2 (4.34 %) are not using social media. Though they are not aware about these social media but they are interested to use these media as marketing tools for the development of their library and information centres.

5.2 Types of Social Media used by Libraries

Studies in recent years have placed Twitter and Facebook as the most used social media tools in academic libraries, but in Bangladesh the evidence from the results showed Table 2 that, the majority of the respondents (out of 46) was frequently using Facebook with (44, 95.75 %) and LinkedIn with (40, 86.95 %) in their libraries. This finding supports the results of the study conducted by Hussain & Ahmad[17], Gul & Islam[18] and Perveen[19]. As a social networking tool, Facebook is most popular in Bangladesh than other tools.

Table 2. Types of social media used by libraries

Social media	Frequency (%)
Facebook	44 (95.75)
Twitter	33 (71.73)
MySpace	10 (21.73)
You Tube	25 (54.34)
ResearchGate	15 (32.60)
RSS	34 (73.91)
Delicious	21 (45.65)
Wikis	27 (58.79)
Blogging	32 (69.66)
Library Thing	22 (47.82)
Slideshare	36 (78.26)
Online groups/ Forums	12 (26.08)
Flickr/Picassa	13 (28.26)
LinkedIn	40 (86.95)
Orkut	11 (23.91)

5.3 Social Media Usage Trends in Libraries

In developing countries like Bangladesh, libraries are gradually using latest trends to market their services. Out of 46 respondents 36 (78.26 %) agreed that social media usage trends in Bangladesh have expanded 8 (17.39 %) recommended that in Bangladesh social media usage are growing slowly followed by 2 (4.35 %) responded agreed as stay low. Khan & Bhatti[13] claimed that due to the meager resources of libraries, their poor fiscal condition, insufficient awareness and training opportunities in Pakistan, respondents believe that use of social media in libraries will grow slowly.

5.4 Importance of Social Media in Marketing of Library Resources and Services

Most of the libraries in Bangladesh are using social media for advertising their activities. Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation (SD) of library professionals' perceptions on importance of social media in marketing of library resources and services on a five-point scale. It suggests professionals are overwhelmingly agreed with the importance of social media as all ratings are above four except the statement on 'it helps libraries in building collaborative networks with the users'. Another study revealed that social media permits user to create, converse and share information and help library and information centres to get closer to the users, helps distance learning and knowledge sharing[13].

Table 3. Importance of social media in marketing of library resources and services

Statements	Mean	SD
Social media is important to market library resources and services	4.74	0.491
It helps students, faculty and researchers to use library and its resources	4.70	0.553
It helps library professionals to create, connect, converse, to contribute and share information to other libraries	4.26	0.648
Process of exchanging knowledge and information will be more convenient	3.98	0.745
It helps libraries to get closer to the users	4.59	0.717
It helps libraries in building collaborative network with the users	3.80	0.687
Location and time constraints in communication will overcome	4.11	0.849
It helps library users in locating library resources	4.70	0.628
It facilitates knowledge sharing	4.89	0.315
It helps to feed user with information about new arrivals and events of the library	4.02	0.774
It helps in promoting distance learning	4.52	0.752

5.5 Purposes of Using Social Media

The respondents were asked to reveal the purpose of using social media in their libraries. Table 4 reveals the mean and SD of library professionals' opinion for purposes of using social media in libraries. It suggests professionals are awesomely agreed with the purposes of using of social media in libraries as all ratings are above four except the opinion on 'research work'.

5.6 Problems of Using Social Media

Though social media usage trends are growing rapidly all over the world, there have been a lot of problems regarding using these media in Bangladesh. Table 5 shows the mean and SD of library professionals' views on problems in using social media in libraries. It suggests professionals are overwhelmingly agreed with the problems in using social media in libraries as most ratings are above three except the statement on 'website is difficult to understand and use'. It supports the

Table 4. Purposes of using social media in libraries

Statements	Mean	SD
For marketing of library product and services	4.50	0.658
Modernising the library image and e-reputation world wide	4.26	0.743
Sharing useful links	4.20	0.859
Sharing library news and events	4.37	0.711
Tagging related resources	4.04	0.788
Building discussion groups and collaborative work	4.04	0.729
For video conferencing	4.37	0.771
Advertisement	4.35	0.766
Research work	3.87	0.842

Table 5. Problems of using social media in libraries

Statements	Mean	SD
Too many social media tools to learn	3.54	1.345
Website is difficult to understand and use	2.41	1.275
Available information is not authentic	3.43	1.241
People can post whatever they want	3.70	1.171
Lack of knowledge how to use it	3.76	1.233
Low interest of librarians in learning and utilising social media	3.87	1.046
Inadequate training opportunities for library staff	3.98	1.022
Electricity failure	4.41	0.617
Slow speed of internet	4.63	0.488
Difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites	3.91	1.062
Lack of security and privacy	4.43	0.655
Lack of advanced IT skills	4.43	0.688

findings of Khan & Bhatti[13] that in Pakistan, voltage problem is the greatest problem in social media for marketing library and information services.

5.7 Social Media Practices for Marketing of Library Resources and Services

Social media applications help the library professionals to possess interconnections among the library members and remix the library services and resources to market them visible in a broader way. Table 6 shows the mean and SD of library professionals' views on social media practice for marketing of library resources and services on a five-point scale. It suggests professionals are overwhelmingly agreed with the social media practice for library marketing as all ratings are above three.

Table 6. Social media practices for marketing of library resources and services in Bangladesh

Statements	Mean	SD
Libraries can promote services, collection, events, resources by using Social media	4.04	0.788
Publicise new acquired material and service alerts through Social media	4.26	0.743
Create Facebook pages to enable their users to search library activities	3.76	0.794
SlideShare can be used for sharing presentations	4.46	0.585
Wikis for collaboration and sharing of work	4.04	0.842
LinkedIn for sharing professional experiences, skills and interests	3.96	0.759
Instant messaging for chat reference assistance	4.11	0.767
RSS and Blogs as a tools for promoting distance learning	3.85	0.816
Flickr/Picassa to upload library images	4.50	0.691
YouTube can be used to share videos conferences, workshops and library events	3.96	0.788
Twitter for communication with their users	4.39	0.744
Blogs to keep current with developments in the field of librarianship	4.00	0.816
Social bookmarking web sites to tag and develop online catalog of library resources	4.30	0.726

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Out of the 46 libraries, 44 libraries are using social media in Bangladesh. The majority of the respondents (36) agreed that social media usage trends in libraries have expanded quickly. It was also found that, the majority of the libraries uses Facebook (44), LinkedIn (40) and SlideShare (36) for marketing their activities. Respondents agreed that social media is important to market library resources and services; it helps students, faculty and researchers to use the library. They also agreed that

social media also helpful for knowledge sharing.

Most of the libraries use social media for marketing library product and services, for sharing library news and events, video conferencing, advertisement and research work. It was also shown that, respondents were faced problem while using social media for electrical failure, for security and privacy, for lacking of advanced IT skills personnel and for the slow speed of internet. Moreover, it was also observed that, respondents were not agreed that they faced problems such as, website is difficult to understand and use. Respondent's behaviour towards the use of social media for marketing library services and resources was positive. Though a number of libraries in Bangladesh are not using social media tools, but they indicated positive impressions towards social media and plan to adopt them. Libraries should have solved their problem and library staff should be trained and educated regarding social media use for marketing library resources and services in the developing countries like Bangladesh.

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