

User's Opinion on Social Networking in Library Services: Evidence from Field Survey

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ABSTRACT: Social Network sites play a deterministic role in sharing information in the knowledge based era. The growing ICTs have further enhanced the importance of SNS in ordinary business life. In the library services, the SNS roles are immense and many students are using the same to exchange information quickly. The paper attempts to examine the importance of SNS in sharing of library services and knowledge sharing. The study found that there is positive responses from the students/researchers and faculty members in using SNS in their academic life. Students opined that they exchange or receive information quickly due to SNS.

Keywords: Social Network Sites, Facebook, Whatsapp, Correlation Analysis

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1. Introduction

The advancement of mobile network speed and wireless network coverage has increased the popularity of smart phones, tablets, and other mobile intelligent terminals among the academic library users. For more than a decade, the social networking sites (SNSs) have witnessed an unpredicted growth in number and popularity. In fact, the growing communication technologies in the modern IT-based world, so is the popularity and number of SNS increase. Many studies have found the significant importance of Social Network in the academic development and library services (Duggan et al. 2015; Panek et al., 2013; Olufadi, 2015). The SNSs has occupied a prominent role in the way people communicate and connect with each other; and is been used by people for several reasons. Meanwhile, many authors had found that excessive use of SNS have brought negative effects on individual efficiency (Shaffer et al. 2004; Griffiths, 2005, Echeburúa and de Corral 2010). One of the primary functions of using the SNSs is connectivity (Ji et al, 2010). Indeed, all other functions like communication, seeking information, and content sharing etc. are directly or indirectly linked to connection. For instance, when an individual communicates or share something with another person on the SNSs, there is an element of connection inherent in the communication or content shared because the person is trying to reach out to someone.

There are evidences that some of these needs are satisfied when people connect to the SNSs. For example, the cognitive related needs of people (e.g., students) may be achieved through posting of some difficult homework questions on the sites. Similarly, the social needs are met through connecting with others like friends and family. Ellison et al. (2007), found that Facebook use was motivated primarily by social gratifications, which include maintaining existing social ties and being able to reconnect with friends from the past. In an earlier study by these researchers, they found that Facebook was used primarily to help university students keep in touch with high school friends, who are often geographically distant, and to learn more about new people they have met

offline (Lampe et al., 2006). These likely reasons (e.g., social, stress, emotional etc.) were kept in mind when generating items for use in the development of our instrument. For instance, one of the reasons people may decide to use the SNSs is stress-related (e.g., emotional stress). In this context, the present study examines the use of social networks sites in using library service. The survey has been taken from students / Researchers/ Academicians from University of Madras.

2. Past Studies

Mobile social media enables users to maintain and foster social connections with members of a social network. Moreover, they can conduct real-time communication anytime, anywhere via a portable mobile device enabling the inexpensive exchange of text, video calls, and voice chats. Social media are also easily accessible and immediate because the user always has the mobile device. Essentially, mobile social media services provide an “always-on” environment for information exchange among members of social networks. This concept draws on Counts and Fisher’s (2010) definition of mobile social networks. In recent decades, technological developments have led to a global social media revolution, which has led to the advancement of many social networking services (SNSs).

Today, the use of social media in libraries is widespread (Jahan & Ahmed, 2012; Kim & Abbas, 2010; Linh, 2008; Si, Shi, & Chen, 2011). Studies demonstrate that some university library digital resources and services are fully utilized and developed through social media tools (Harinarayana & Raju, 2010; Liu, 2008). Numerous studies indicate the benefits of social media in reference services and promoting library resources and services, and that librarians view the new technology positively. Social media is also reported to aid library staff in keeping up-to-date with resources and activities in their profession (Chu & Du, 2013). Some researchers have noted that challenges and obstacles in the process of using social media tools (Arif & Mahmood, 2012; Chu & Du, 2013), while other studies investigate the use of social media websites in libraries (Ayu & Abrizah, 2011; Chua & Goh, 2010; Mansor & Idris, 2010). Bhatti and Amjad (2013) identified the frequency and purposes of using social media websites—Twitter, Wikis, Blogs, Flicker, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Stumbleupon among library and information studies (LIS) students at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Tay, Glass, and Chew (2013) implemented the use of Foursquare, a location based services (LBS) App that can engage users and promote library activities and events.

The reviewed studies demonstrate the importance of social media in spread of knowledge and communicate everyone in the communication network. Many studies reveal the importance of Social Network sites in sharing or exchanging information between a group of users.

3. Definition of Social Networking Site

Social networking site or SNS is a phrase used to describe any web site that enables users to create public profiles within that Web site and from relationship with other users of the same Web site who access their profile. Social networking sites can be used to describe community based web sites, online discussions forums, chat rooms and other and other social spaces online. According to computing dictionary (2011), social Networking site as any website designed to allow multiple users to publish contents of them. The information may be on any subject and may be for consumption by friends, mates, employers, employees just to mention few. Boyd and Ellison (2007) stated that social networking websites allow individuals to: (1) construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. They also noted that these websites vary in terms of features and members. Some websites allow photo/ video sharing, while others allow blogging and messaging. Participation blogs has been regarded as social networking because blogs support formation of social connection through blog-roll activities. Boroughs (2010) stated that social networking websites allow users to share interests and communicate with others. Barsky and Purdon (2006), on the other hand, pointed out that social networking websites collect data about members and store user profiles that are meant for sharing. These websites are offered for free and allow users to create personal pages filled with content like images, music and video easily. These social networks also allow members to share Web pages with friends and search for new friends who have similar interests. Taylor-Smith and Linder (2009) stated that wikis, blogs, chat rooms, instant messengers, message boards and social bookmarking are technology applications that have been used to facilitate members’ interaction, and thus have been referred to as social networking tools. Seufert et al (1999) defines 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.

Item	Level of frequency (N)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Messages	8	21	98	224	216	4.09	0.907
Groups	16	24	87	240	200	4.03	0.964
News feed	19	23	110	235	180	3.94	0.987
Photos	17	57	151	222	120	3.65	1.016
Chat room	41	51	130	192	153	3.64	1.177
Share	44	87	175	180	813	3.29	1.126
Activities	39	109	226	142	51	3.10	1.031
Applications	166	171	160	56	14	2.26	1.061
Tools of find friends	165	170	173	49	10	2.24	1.022
Notes	240	165	124	28	10	1.95	0.999
The average score for the functions of Facebook						3.21	1.046
<i>N</i> = 167							

Source: Field Survey.

Table 1. Use the functions of Facebook (FB)

Item	Level of frequency (N)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Promotion of new book announcement	2	7	59	266	233	4.27	0.723
Announcement of open and close hours	6	19	108	250	184	4.04	0.863
Promotion of library activities	3	9	96	316	143	4.04	0.730
Promotion of lecture course	4	9	111	300	144	4.01	0.749
Promotion of keynote speeches	5	10	116	278	158	4.01	0.796
Promotion of image and sound	2	11	137	283	134	3.95	0.765
Information of personnel recruitment	6	16	142	241	162	3.95	0.862
Promotion of e-book	4	10	145	275	133	3.92	0.787
Promotion of reading	3	13	141	294	116	3.89	0.763
The publicity of library service	3	12	139	310	103	3.88	0.738
Promotion of periodical	3	24	161	264	115	3.82	0.820
Promotion of library instruction	6	23	178	257	103	3.75	0.833
The information of database	7	26	209	230	95	3.67	0.850
Information of library space planning	8	40	186	232	101	3.67	0.898
The information of past exams	15	45	183	196	128	3.66	0.997
Promotion of newspaper	8	55	230	203	71	3.48	0.883
Statistical information of library collection	23	101	234	161	48	3.19	0.963
The average score for the need of information						3.84	0.832
<i>N</i> = 167							

Source: Field Survey.

Table 2. Need for using Social Networks

4. Methods and Materials

In order to examine the opinion of library users regarding social networks such as face book, whatsapp, linkden and other social networks sharing media in exchange of knowledge and information, the study has collected data from the 200 students/ Researchers and faculty members in University of Madras. The study hypothesized that there is no distinct quality in using the social networks in library services. further, the researcher has applied likert scaling pattern to measure the respondents opinion. The lower scaling value indicates strongly disagree and higher values implies strong agree.

5. Result & Discussion

Out of the 200 respondents, only 167 questionnaires have been received with complete information. And, the remaining 33 questionnaires were incomplete and therefore not considered for analysis. Within the 167 responses gathered, the library users included undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members 46 males (27.5%) and 121 females (72.5%). The results of the study reveal that library users use the functions of Facebook, and following the functions of Facebook, the most commonly used function is “Like”. The results of the study reveal that among various information needs for using library Facebook, “Announcement and promotion of new books” is rated as the highest information need, and “Sharing of new books” is rated as highest interaction need. Table 1-3 summarizes the research findings. Table 4 indicates that patrons’ use of Facebook functions is significantly correlated with the information needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.403, p = 0.000$) and interaction needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.510, p = 0.000$); while the information needs of library Facebook are significantly correlated with the interaction needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.773, p = 0.000$).

Item	Level of frequency (N)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Sharing of reading books	1	2	3	4	5		
Sharing of knowledge	5	14	124	279	145	3.96	0.808
Sharing of academic activities	5	8	135	285	134	3.94	0.780
Discussion about writers	4	10	138	295	120	3.91	0.763
Reference service questions	4	16	146	279	122	3.88	0.797
Comments on library collections	5	11	166	267	118	3.85	0.798
Sharing of reading and learning	11	19	181	276	80	3.70	0.823
Comments on library service	7	27	205	240	88	3.66	0.840
Comments on library personnel	11	26	194	264	70	3.62	0.844
Sharing of personal reading reflection	16	40	211	241	59	3.51	0.877
Personal opinion on library services	13	47	264	179	64	3.41	0.879
The average score for the need of information	79	158	226	85	19	2.66	1.003
N= 167						3.57	0.853

Source: Field Survey.

Table 3. Interaction of Social Network users and its impact

Category of assessment	Use of FB function	Information need	Interaction need
Use of FB function	$r = 0.403$	$r = 0.510$ $p = 0.000***$	$p = 0.000***$

Information need	$r=0.773$
Interaction need	$p=0.000***$

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4. Correlations analysis information need and interaction need

6. SNS tools in Library Environment

Social networking helps librarian to share information with patrons and students in the easiest way for digital library environment. Librarian can use in three broad activities in library and information services. The major three are Information communication, Knowledge distribution and knowledge organization. Information Communication: In this process librarian can keep constant touch and effective interaction with staff, patrons, and faculty in online collaborative environment. The social networking tools that can be practiced by the library for the aforementioned purpose are:

Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) is extremely popular social networking site which primarily has a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources.

Blog: By creating a blog, you'll be able disseminate information to lots of people at one time. Whether you're updating students on new collections, or just conversing with library staff, blogs are a powerful tool, especially when combined with RSS.

LinkedIn: This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. Whether that's you, faculty, authors, historians, or other sources, they can find them in your LinkedIn network.

Twitter: Use Twitter, a microblogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival current content services of library.

Flickr: This image distribution tool is a great way to share new image collections. Library can share photo collection of workshops; conference and different programme that are organized within the campus. You can create images sets with metadata, as well as take advantage of the many plugins information about images.

YouTube: Library video and e-learning tutorials, events and others video library services can be effectively promote and webcast through YouTube.

Wikipedia: Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia updated by users. You can use this tool to share your knowledge by editing, or simply point library patrons in the direction.

SlideShare: Encourage faculty, staff, and students to share their slideshow presentations for the greater community to access on SlideShare, It's a great way to disseminate information among research community to the field of research and development (R & D) activities.

7. Conclusion

There is a great deal of potential inherent in social networking softwares (SNSs) for professional development and professional networking purposes. This is particularly true for the library and information industry. However, at the same time, there is a significant level of confusion, skepticism, resistance and even fear surrounding the use of these technologies within the workplace by many librarians, and not just the baby boomers. A suitable plan and strong evaluation needs to be look with pioneering social networks in library. Users required to aware and sufficient training should be imparted to staffs to accomplish the task of planning social software in library. Last but not the least large encouragement and user empowerment on technologies to be given the prime priority at thinking on implementing social software in library may be possible. The possible

implication of social networking can be successful by conducting maximum research and experiment on social networking from different point of view on library. Librarian is the sole custodian to accomplishment the task of planning, organizing and implementing social networks in library and information centre. In this context sufficient training and more expertise need to be gain by him to furnish an absolute shape to social networks in the library.

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