SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ITS APPLICATION TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THIS DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract- Social networking is a social structure that allow user to interact and work collaboratively with other users. Today social networking websites are most popular as well as widely used among people of all age group to share interests, information, activities, ideas, thoughts, experiences, or real-life connections. Online social networking platforms have given a new direction in promoting library products and services. However, most of the organizations, including libraries have realized the need of social media networking in their organizations so that social media networking can be used inside the organizations. Now it is time for LIS professionals to embrace a new embedded technology into their day-to-day activities. The aim of the paper is to assess the role of librarians and information science professionals relating to the use of social networking sites in the libraries. This paper deals with concept of social networking and its application to Academic library services for a pro-active awareness and training to educate the LIS professional and the Teaching Faculty, Students and Research Scholars on the invaluable importance of utilizing social networking in academic library services in digital environment.

Keywords: Social Networks, Academic Libraries, Face book, Twitter, YouTube, Del.icio.us, Digg, MySpace

1. INTRODUCTION

The changing technology, explosion of information and the transition of academic libraries from print to electronic have influenced the user behaviour. Most of the libraries, especially academic libraries are continued to be hybrid (print and electronic) libraries. Compare to other libraries, academic college libraries need special attention in developing collection, systems and services, keeping the needs and information seeking behaviour of the users. The present study has undertaken a survey for assessing the exiting situation, perception and expectations of users in academic college libraries in India. Imagine a time when social network media becomes an integral part of life. In fact, there is no need to imagine anymore, as Face book and Twitter use soars beyond the combined total of900 million users. Social network media is now main stream. Many businesses, cultural organizations and other institutions are leveraging social network media to achieve their strategic goals.

While many libraries already have a social network media presence via Face book and Twitter, how are academic libraries considering social media as part of their core communication and engagement strategies? How are libraries preparing their LIS professionals to communicate and engage professionally using social network media through the inclusion of social media in library strategic plans? In short, how is libraries future planning for the inclusion of formal social media roles in their institutions? Some of the social media websites: Social Bookmaking. **(Del.icio.us, Blink list, Simply)**Interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people's) Social News. **(Digg, Propeller, Reddit)** Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them B) Social Networking. **(Face book, Hi5, Last.FM)** Interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions. c) Social Photo and Video Sharing. **(YouTube, Flickr**) Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions. d) Wikis. **(Wikipedia, Wikia)** and also **MySpace, Facebook, Hi5.Friendster,Orkut, Bebo and Tagged** Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.

II. IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The advent of information technology has resulted in reducing the size of libraries. In fact, these small modern academic libraries have rich potential of information. It has been possible due to the digitization of information. The digital and electronic information is based on digitized data/information, which has gradually replaced paper-based records.

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As the visual information system in comparison to text-based information system is getting more and more popular these days, the traditional libraries are becoming hybrid libraries as they are in the process of doing digitization of their documents and moving towards to become digital libraries. Internet has become an unavoidable requirement for every educational institution of higher learning.

III. SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING AND TEACHING

The social networking literate librarian is capable of teaching these skills to library patrons and peers. This includes guiding and training patrons through targeted aspects of social networking sites that arise in their use as resources and tools, teaching about the use of social networking sites for scholarly purposes, and teaching faculty and instructors about the role of social networking sites and considerations for issues affecting their students' work. Social networking sites are extremely popular across age groups and are central forums for accessing and sharing information. LIS Professionals are responding to the popularity of social networking sites and their expanding role in the creation, use, and sharing of information by engaging them as a central medium for interacting with library patrons and providing services to meet their information needs.

Especially in this digital Environment academic LIS professionals need a new branch of skill sets specific to utilizing and leveraging social networking sites to provide quality services and maintain their role as information experts in a Web2.0 world. The following competencies are a suggested set of skills that Academic LIS professionals should possess as social networking literate information professionals capable of implementing library services and utilizing information within social networking sites. These include skills for interacting with patrons within the sites, understanding and articulating the nature of social networking sites and their potential roles related to library services, creating presences and content, evaluating and applying information, and having the ability to assist patrons with gaining and applying these skills.

Academic LIS Professionals possessing these skills are capable of efficiently and effectively navigating online social networking sites and applying their expertise to services with and within this now central realm for interacting with information.

3.1 TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Technology is transforming the traditional methods of teaching and learning in the classrooms of the 21st Century. The goal is to create students who can become active, independent and lifelong learners rather than passive recipients of information. This new approach to education takes the student beyond the traditional textbook and requires students to develop a combination of skills in computer technology, critical thinking and information's seeking strategies. The classroom teacher is the key to the success of an education program that promotes these qualities. Society has long viewed librarians as the acknowledged information experts. As modern-day librarians we represent a professional group that long ago learned to bridge the gap between the traditional methods and the modern technological techniques used in the organization, management and retrieval of information.

3.2 MEANING OF SOCIAL NET works:

Social networking has become one of the most important parts of our daily life which enables us to communicate with each other. Social media is a great way to protect and build our digital reputations. Social networking tools make it possible for us to be proactive in maintaining, building and protecting your personal brand and help spread word-of-mouth about our books. Social networking is very informative, entertaining and it also aware us about various situations or events which are going on in the society or in the world at large (Paul, Kumarjit. 2014, p.53-55). Social networking facilitates us to also enhance our viewpoints as it enables us certain interactive learning activities also. A social networking is an online service, platform or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social network or social relations among people who share interests and activities. Social networking often involves grouping specific individuals or organizations together. Social network provides a quick, low tech method to generate, maintain web based subject guides and act as communication tools to enable social interaction among LIS Professionals. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet. They interact, share and exchange resources by social networks. It promotes free flow of information and sharing of resources beyond boundaries.

IV. SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:

Social networking tools helps academic librarian to share information with Research Scholars and students in the easiest way for academic library environment. Academic Librarian can use in three broad categories for serving the user in library and information services. The major three are Information communication, Knowledge distribution and knowledge organization.

4.1 INFORMATION COMMUNICATION:
In the Digital era academic librarian can keep constant touch and effective interaction with Teaching Faculty, Students and Research Scholars in online collaborative environment.

a) **MySpace:** MySpace (http://www.myspace.com) and Face book (http://www.facebook.com)are extremely popular social networking sites which primarily have a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources.

b) **Face book:** one of the best social media site frequented by students, Face book is librarian **friendly. Group communication among patrons can be possible in web 2.0.**

c) **Ning:** Librarian can use this tool to get connected with students, Academic library associations, and more. You can also use it to share information with many people at a time.

d) **Blog:** By creating a blog, you'll be able to 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.

e) **Meebo:** Network and assist students on Meebo, no matter what IM client they use. Online hating or virtual reference service in library can impacted by professionals to clients.

f) **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.

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

4.2 INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

Information dissemination and sharing is the major part and crucial area where Academic LIS professionals should looks seriously while considering and designing library activities in modern digital age. User Satisfaction is first priority by providing right information at the right time in a right way.

a) **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 reorganised with in the campus. You can create image sets with metadata, as well as take advantage of the many plug-in available for Flickr users. Flickr users can also help gather missing information about images.

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

c) **Teacher Tube:** Teacher Tube, which is a YouTube for teachers, presents an excellent opportunity for instructor-librarian collaboration. Instructors can guide students to helpful library resources, and vice versa.

d) **Second Life:** On Second Life, you can create a virtual library with streamed media, discussions, classes, and more.

e) **Wikipedia:** Wikipedia is an online encyclopaedia updated by users. You can use this tool to share your knowledge by editing, or simply point library patrons in the right direction. You can also host your library websites on wiki software like PBWiki.

f) **PBwiki:** PBwiki is the world's largest provider of hosted business and educational wikis. It encourages collaboration from students, a way to showcase work, and offers a central gathering point for information. PBwiki offers controlled access, so you can give some editing privileges, while others can only read.

g) **Footnote:** On Footnote, you'll get access to original historical documents, and can update them with your own content and insights. You can even find personal anecdotes and experiences you won't find in reference books.

h) **Community Walk:** Community Walk offers a geographical way to interpret text and events. You can use it for instruction, such as showing someone where to find a book, or walk them through a historical and geographical timeline.

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

j) **Digg:** Digg is a great way to find useful content that you wouldn't come across in traditional ways. Find stories here, then share them with others using Digg's blog function.

k) **Stumble Upon:** Another way to find great content is with Stumble Upon. You can channel surf the Internet to find useful content, research tools, and more.

l) **Daft Doggy:** If you've found a particularly good resource, you can use Daft Doggy to create a website tour with instructions, pointing out useful references and items of note.

4.3 KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION

Social software can helps the professionals in KO environment for getting handy information which can be accessible with the social networking technologies in web 2.0 milieu. The below mentioned tools cab effectively in library and information centre for patrons as:

a) **aNobii:** Social networking site like aNobii helps book lovers to share reviews and recommendations. It also prepare due date alerts, lending, and discussions.

b) **Del.icio.us:** With this social bookmarking tool, you can create custom directory for library patrons. Teach them to search by your tags, and it will be easy to find useful Internet research links.

c) **Netvibes:** In Netvibes' new Ginger beta, you can create a public page that can be viewed by anyone. You can use it to help guide patrons to helpful internet sources, news feeds, and more. It can be integrated with many of the tools mentioned here, like Flickr and library blogs**.**

d) **Connotea:** Connote a is a great reference tool, allowing you to save and organize reference links and share them with others. They can be accessed from any computer and offer integration with lots of other tools.

e) **LibraryThing:** This social cataloguing network is great for librarians, and you can catalo along with Amazon, the Library of Congress, and more than 300 other libraries around the world. You'll get recommendations and easy tagging as well.

f) **lib.rario.us:** Another social cataloguing site, you can put media such as books, CDs, and journals on display for easy access and tracking (Hupp, 2008).

V. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL NETWORK IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Use people to find content, but also use content to find people. If they are understood better relationships and knowledge flows can be measured, monitored, and evaluated, perhaps (for instance) to enhance organizational performance.

5.1 BENEFITS

➢ *To identify the individuals, teams, and units who play central roles.*
➢ *Discern information breakdowns, bottlenecks, structural holes, as well as isolated individuals, teams, and units.*
➢ *To make out opportunities to accelerate knowledge flows across functional and organizational boundaries.*
➢ *To strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of existing, formal communication channels.*
➢ *To raise awareness of and reflection on the importance of informal networks and ways to enhance their organizational performance.*
➢ *Leverage peer support.*
➢ *To improve innovation and learning.*
➢ *To refine strategies.*

5.2 ADVANTAGES OF FACE BOOK FOR ACADEMIC LIS PROFESSIONALS

➢ *The primary function of any Academic library is to acquire, store and disseminate the information, in the same way Face book also explores the information variously.*
➢ *Face book helps students or research scholar to develop practical research skills that they need in a world where knowledge construction and dissemination make increasing use of online information network.*
➢ *Face book works as a tool to mobilize the Academic library services among younger generation of Academic Library Professionals.*
➢ *To get aware of the users about new arrivals of Academic library have make notices, in the same way Face book also shows new information in the form of notification.*
➢ *Teaching faculty of Library and Information Science may get share information with their students on social Networks, Face book that will help to embark their wide knowledge to the student's community outside the classroom.*
➢ *Face book can work as a tool for interaction among the students and teachers.*
➢ *The popularity of social networks is increasing among the educated people especially adult youth in college and universities and by LIS Professionals.*

5.3 DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

➢ *Too many social media tools to learn*
➢ *Lack of time to use social media*
➢ *Lack of privacy and identity theft*
➢ *Confidentiality of information*
➢ *Lack of knowledge how to use it*
➢ *Inadequate funding for libraries*
➢ *Inadequate library staff*
➢ *Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media*
➢ *Inadequate training opportunities for library staff*
➢ *Electricity failure*
➢ *Slow speed of Internet*

VI. CONCLUSION

A suitable plan and strong evaluation needs to be look while implementing social networking tools in libraries. The possible implication of social networking tools can be successful by conducting maximum research and experiment on social networking from different point of view on libraries. In libraries, librarians' or library authorities are the sole custodian to accomplish the task of planning and implementing of social networking on libraries. Library users should have possess some knowledge of using social networking and sufficient training should be provided to library staffs also to accomplish the task of successful implementation of social networking in libraries. LIS professional should also be aware of the cyber laws as they can provide awareness program relating to the effective use of the social networking.

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