



Reimagining the Library: Marketing Strategies for the Digital Age

Folasade Busayo Oguntoye, Cecilia Oyebola Olafimihan
and Oluwaseun Oluropo Ajibare

Lead City University, Ibadan. Oyo State, Nigeria.

oguntoye.folasade@lcu.edu.ng

cecilia.olafimihan@lasu.edu.ng

ajibare.oluwaseun@lcu.edu.ng

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Abstract

Library and information centres have begun to realize that by using marketing principles and techniques, they can understand better their user's needs, justify finding, communicate more effectively with a variety of internal and external audiences and achieved greater efficiency and result in delivering product and services that meet the identified needs of their client. With the recent advances in digital technology, the nature of libraries has changed, drastically. As more information has become available to the public through a wide range of media the traditional concept of the library is being redefined. The library has long since ceased to be a mere repository or search tool for physical collections; instead, it now houses content using the most advanced technologies, including digital collections, social media, and multimedia resources. Consequently, librarians must redefine their profession and must demonstrate the ability to embrace change. It was concluded that effective marketing be used to promote access to library and information services as a panacea towards sustainable Nigerian libraries in the digital age.

Keyword: Marketing, Libraries, Digital Era.

Introduction

In the age of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) where users want a fast, technological based solution to everything including in the use of the library, E-learners and traditional learners now have access to a universe of digital information through the information superhighway. This has thrown challenges to the librarians to re-evaluate the way they develop, manage, deliver and promote resources and services. The digital revolution has fundamentally altered the mechanisms by which information is accessed and consumed particularly among the tech savvy generation of library patrons. There is an unparalleled competition encountered by libraries from a myriad of online resources. To sustain the relevance of the libraries, which were once the repositories of knowledge, and flourish within the dynamic milieu, libraries are compelled to implement innovative marketing strategies. These days, most students and researchers no longer want to visit the library for a few hours of quiet reading instead, they want a quick and technology-based solution to everything. In this digital era, information seeking behaviours is constantly changing and the younger generations need to be sensitized on the use of libraries through newer, more interesting means. To remain relevant to the current generation of tech-savvy library users, the marketing functions are to be given a high priority among other library activities. To address this challenge, Librarians can no longer confine themselves to the physical library rather they need to invent new ideas that can help in promoting the library usage. As more information has become available to the public through a wide range of media, the traditional concept of the library is being redefined. According to (Pannekoek & Ally, 2008), the library has long since ceased to be a mere repository or search tool for physical collections instead, it now houses content using the most advanced technologies, including digital collections, social media, and multimedia resources. Consequently, librarians must redefine their profession and must demonstrate the ability to embrace change in promoting library resources, services and its use to patrons. However, marketing of library and information services is a nascent development in developing countries. Dike (2009) in Horsfall (2020) observed that marketing involves advocating for libraries, publicizing resources and services, convincing people of the value and relevance of the library.

Marketing libraries is a means to promote library services and products to attract more patronage from the public. It is needed to make libraries visible to the community of local and global users thereby enhancing the reputation of the library in the eyes of its users. Marketing of library products and services is very important because it is a sure means through which people get to know about the library, its programmes, activities, functions and services. It provides opportunity for prospective users to be aware of what the library has in stock.

This study aims to explore the diverse marketing strategies that libraries may utilize to effectively engage and connect with audiences in the digital age by scrutinizing the benefits, challenges and opportunities endangered by the digital landscape. This research aspires to furnish insights into how libraries can harness technology and

innovative methodologies to amplify their visibility, draw in users, and ultimately fulfil their mission of providing access to information and knowledge.

Literature Review

Promoting library services is a crucial component of service delivery. For libraries and information services to remain feasible in any environment, they must adopt promotion strategies to meet organizational mission, goals and objectives. If they want their promotion strategies to work, libraries need to determine their remote clients' wants, needs and demands, and to create and distribute relevant library materials and other services more effectively (Mandrekar & Rodrigues, 2020). Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) opined that if librarians and libraries must survive, then marketing must be seen as a necessity.

Dictionary of Information and Library management (2006) defined market as the number of people wishing to buy a product or the area of the world where it is sold. Also, Business Dictionary (2019) website, defined "Marketing as the management process through which goods and services move from concept to the customer, it includes the coordination of four elements called the 4 p's of marketing; (1) identification, selection, and development of a product, (2) determination of its price, (3) selection of distribution channel to reach the customers' place, and (4) development and implementation of the promotional strategy".

Marketing as defined by Singh and Shukla in Ukwoma (2014), is a means of ensuring that libraries, librarians and librarianship are integrated into the emerging global culture. Marketing to them is referred to as those instruments through which information is transmitted to its members. Marketing is a belief in service, trying to achieve customer's satisfaction, an ability to assemble and interpret information for the benefit of the user (Das and Karn in Ukwoma 2014). The Institute of Marketing in Britain defined marketing as 'the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customers' requirements profitably'. Likewise, Akinawo (2018), defined marketing as the process by which individuals or groups obtain what they need by creating, offering and exchanging products and services with others. Komolafe-Opadeji and Haliso (2012) in Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) pointed out that marketing is an important weapon for handling competition and that for academic libraries to remain relevant to the academic community, marketing concept must be embraced, and this applies to all types of libraries. Marketing is the way to acquire the objectives of any association and organization. According to Ramadevi, (2018) in Baquee and Sevukan (2019), marketing is an essential aspect of organizations irrespective of profit-making and non-profit making and the library is not an exception to it. Library patrons no longer want to visit the physical library rather they want to get things at their fingertips by clicking on the devices.

Gamit, Patel and Patel (2021) in their paper mentioned about the innovative digital marketing strategies for academic library services in global era and the paper had described and scrutinized digital marketing in academic libraries. The authors mentioned about the need of the libraries to escalate their presence in digital

environment and the need on the part of the librarian and users to explore effective digital campaigning and promotional activities so as to get closer to the user community for offering better services and make them aware of the digital marketing services and resources of an academic library. The authors mention that users are more techno-savvy and due to this, libraries need to reorient themselves and library services. Obi (2023) in his paper done a study to investigate the effect of library marketing indicators on students' patronage of information service in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The researcher developed the questionnaire for data collection from 783 students. In his paper the author done a study to determine the influence of awareness creation and branding on student patronage of information services in federal universities libraries in South-South Nigeria. The author mentioned about adopting marketing strategies for remaining relevant and the study is based on the hierarchy of effect theory of Russell Colley. The author advocates for adoption of marketing strategies like awareness creation and branding which has influenced the student's patronage of information services in federal university libraries in South- South Nigeria.

Sewwandi and Suraweera (2022) in their paper carried out study on Information Product and Information Service marketing in 15 state university libraries in Sri Lanka to understand the current situation of information product and information service marketing in university libraries of Sri Lanka, to identify the strategy used and to identify barriers and challenges in Information Product and Information Service marketing in Sri Lanka. The study finds that the current circumstances are such that the librarians have appropriate knowledge of information marketing, but they do not have a specific information marketing policy. The authors identified among major problems in marketing of information product and information service which include lack of trained manpower, a lack of public relation skill of university library staff, lack of needs assessment, less attention to promotion methods, and lack of clear picture of the library in society.

Marketing in the library setting is an ongoing conversation with the target audience, which combines promotion, publicity, public relations (PR), and advertising in an organized and strategic way. Marketing of library resources and services has become vital in recent times because of the invasion of and competition from other information-providing entities (Ofori, Markwei & Quagraine, 2020).

Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016) described the rapid growth of internet that it has drastically changed and transformed the way and manner which library and information product and services are offered and as well put the libraries and librarian at the center of hyper-competition.

However, Edoka (2000) states that the library has the responsibility of ensuring that its resources and services are used. The library can effectively do these by involving actively in the marketing of its services like other organizations. The marketing programme will enable the library to reach more potential users, encourage and promote the use of library resources and work towards becoming the indispensable information centres where modern information disseminating equipment are functional.

Occasionally, digital age can be used interchangeably with computer age or information age. It is a period that is characterized by evolution in ICT (Agbo & Anozie, 2017). Marketing concept is widely applicable in Library and Information Science (LIS) environment. In this digital age, librarians are introduced to the concept of branding and rebranding its products, marketing strategies and different online platforms are open to design and market products and services to remain relevance in their role. Marketing of library and information services is absolutely a necessary agenda to librarians, situation or activity for all kinds of libraries all over the world.

According to the American Marketing Association Board of Directors, Marketing is the activity, set of institution, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offering that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large. A Planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving and gaining support of specific user group in a manner that furthers the goals of the library and the organization that supports it. However, Hansen, sees marketing as the process of discovering and translating consumers wants into product and service specification and make it possible for more and more consumers to enjoy products and services. Bhatt, (2011) as cited in Horsfall (2020) opined that marketing of library and information services can be effectively managed to advance the position of information literacy in sustaining library services in the digital age.

Marketing Libraries in the Digital Age

In this digital age, librarians are introduced to the concept of branding and rebranding, its processes, marketing strategies and different online platforms are open to design and market products and services to remain relevance in their role. Marketing of library and information services is absolutely a necessary agenda to a person, situation or activity for all kinds of libraries all over the world. It is a very important area for library and information science professionals. It shows that librarians are not book worms, they maintain a competitive air over other professional. They adopt social management principles, stand and face the individual with facts and figures, [making self-services]. They possess the knowledge of identifying the information needs of clients (client-oriented), and have effective communication, interviewing, and presentation skills, as well as managerial skills and good sense of humour. It must be emphasized that marketing and communication become as important as delivering the services. Horsfall (2020). More so, marketing library and information services can be effectively managed to advance the position of information literacy in sustaining library services in the digital age. It helps to achieve organizational goals by determining the needs and wants of target audience, in other to make them satisfied provide information for the interest group. Libraries and librarians can create awareness through marketing of LIS by advertising [advertising is important for promoting library services. (Horsfall, 2020)

Need for Marketing of Libraries in the Digital Age

Librarianship is experiencing rapid change and many factors are reshaping the role of libraries, thus several things have compelled librarians and information professionals to learn about marketing and using it. Marketing of library and information services has emerged as an increasingly important area for libraries and information centres. The challenges of budget cuts, increased user base, the rapid information explosion, rising costs, networking demands, competition by database vendors, and complexity in information requirements are forcing the librarians to adopt marketing to improve the management of library and information centres. Adekunmisi (2013) opined that libraries and information professionals must learn to effectively market and advertise their services because of the following reasons:

1. Libraries are no longer the only information services industries. The mega-bookstores, online book dealers, information consultants, the Internet services providers, free web access providers and individual customers will not hesitate to market to potential library customers or users.
2. Libraries of all types have to compete with other organizations or department for funds. Marketing library services and products benefits as libraries are able to get supports from patrons and others. For instance, academic libraries have to compete with faculties and other university units and projects for funds, so also special libraries find their allocation decreasing when the parent organization budgets are cuts.
3. Libraries have to market because of the need to maintain relevance and remain connected to the communities they serve and have some bearing on the present day event and real-world issues.
4. Librarians have to market their services and products in order to improve the image of their libraries and themselves. For instance, libraries have to be unique in the kind of access and services they provide. Librarians also have to change the perception of users and others toward them as being information experts.
5. Librarians are and should be regarded as essential and valuable community resources. In essence, there is the need for the librarians to make people to be aware of the services and products they provide and their comparative value. Librarians should see themselves as resources people go to for information and should be well prepared and equipped themselves as experts in the field.
6. Libraries depend on the supports of people they serve for their survival. A library should therefore communicate and work with its customers and funding authorities to provide information about what the library is doing and to enable the library to learn about the community its serve.
7. Library users expect recognition, attention and appreciation for their individual information needs. As customers always have ever-changing needs and wants, there

is the need for librarians to market as dynamic as retail markets and thus create an environment in libraries that foster customer consciousness and satisfaction among employees.

Strategies for Marketing Libraries in Digital Era

Strategy is a mechanism for coping with a complex and changing environment. Generally, the concept of strategy relates to corporate/organizational strategy that guides the corporation or organization as a whole towards the attainment of its goals. Marketing strategy is a written plan on how to promote information and services of libraries and information centres in order to project the image of the libraries and attract more library users. In order to implement a good marketing strategy, Edom and Edom (2019) opined that the librarians working in the academic libraries must have in-depth knowledge of the library users who are students, and faculty members, non-academic staff and researchers from outside academic environs; a good knowledge of these users will not only help the librarians to implement their marketing strategies but will also inform the users as well as sustain their patronage. The goal of library marketing is multifaceted. Firstly, it aims to increase user awareness of the library services, ensuring that patrons are knowledgeable about the diverse resources, services, and programs available to them. Meduna (2022) posits that by effectively promoting these resources, libraries can expand their user base, reaching new demographics and engaging with individuals who may not have previously utilized library services. Secondly, library marketing seeks to foster user engagement and interaction. Libraries are no longer viewed solely as repositories of books; they have transformed into dynamic hubs of information, learning, and community engagement. Through targeted marketing efforts, libraries can encourage users to actively participate in library programs, events, and workshops, fostering a sense of belonging and ownership within the library community. Moreover, library marketing plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and attitudes towards libraries. By communicating the library's value and impact, libraries can challenge misconceptions, dispel stereotypes, and highlight their relevance in the digital age. Library marketing efforts can position the library as a vibrant, innovative, and indispensable institution that goes beyond traditional notions of borrowing books, Stephens (2021). In order to develop effective library marketing strategies, a deep understanding of user preferences, interests, and needs is essential. Libraries must conduct thorough audience research, considering demographics, interests, and digital habits, among other factors. This knowledge enables libraries to tailor their marketing messages and channels to effectively reach their target audience and resonate with their specific interests. The digital age has opened up new avenues for library marketing, with digital platforms and social media playing a crucial role in reaching and engaging users. Libraries can leverage social media platforms to share information, promote events, and engage in two-way communication with patrons. Additionally, libraries can utilize digital advertising techniques to target specific user segments and optimize their marketing efforts. This development has brought about innovative changes in the mode of service delivery in many academic libraries all over the globe.

Bamigbola (2013) stated that marketing strategy is a well-structured plan that highlights the organization's goals and quest and the specific process of achieving those set of goals.

Libraries can effectively market their services through the following ways;

1. **Showcasing Services and Collections:** A library web page provides an ideal platform to highlight the range of services and collections available (Ke et al., 2005). This includes digital collections such as E-books, audiobooks, online journals, and databases that patrons can access remotely as well as special collections like rare books, local history archives, and unique digital exhibits.

2. **Enhancing Accessibility and Convenience:** An online presence makes the library's resources more accessible (Online Catalogues and Reservations, Users can search the catalogue, reserve books, and manage their accounts online)

3. **Author of the month:** Every month a particular author may be promoted. To start with, popular authors may be highlighted, and slowly new authors may be introduced so that users can get to know about the new authors and their area of writings and can get attracted to read more books by these authors. Also, a link to the author's page may be given so that the users can get more information if they wish.

4. **E-books:** Libraries can build a collection of E-books then the link of the actual book may be given so that users can access the books online via e-reader. Also, login based access may be given. There are quite a few free e-books collection available online which may be linked with the library webpage. For making the library interesting few e-readers may be procured so that young generation users feel at home when they come to the library.

5. **Reader corner:** There may be a provision for the users to share their views about their reading. Also, recommendations from the users about any book/author may be included in the webpage. A virtual reader group may be formed and a physical meeting may be organized to read and discuss on a certain interval. Library should be equipped with Tabs and other new technology gadgets to attract readers for this session. A facilitator may be there (may be some author) to make the reader group interactive. The pictures of the reader group (with prior permission from them) with their views may be published on the webpage to make it more interesting. Users can recommend some books through this reader corner to their friends. Libraries should be in a position to lend the book digitally to the requester.

6. **Virtual Reference Service:** It may be a good idea to incorporate a virtual reference service on the web page.

7. **Ask a Librarian** concept may be introduced so that users can interact via their mobile/tab/laptop/desktop with the librarian from anywhere to get the required information quickly.

8. Data and AI Literacy: Since the 1970s, libraries and academic institutions have focused on the importance of information literacy, generally defined as a set of skills needed to locate and use information for problem solving and decision making. In 1989, the American Library Association made a formal proposal to ensure that information literacy be included in research, curriculums, and public policies across the nation. As the formats and delivery methods of information have transformed, more dimensions have been added to the original information literacy concept. The additions include Resource literacy, Research literacy, Computer literacy and more. Today, the literacy objective of libraries and library professionals takes aim at data literacy and AI literacy. Whereas data literacy deals with learning how to locate, understand, and think critically about data, AI literacy entails an understanding of its function, logic and limitations, and potential impacts. When libraries help patrons gain AI literacy, they provide the skills needed for people to confidently participate in and engage with a society that is employing more artificial intelligence tools and processes each day. Library marketing strategy (Acharya & Vagdal 2023)

Social Networking tools for marketing Library Services

Social media includes web-based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Enabled by ubiquitously accessible and scalable communication techniques, social media has substantially changed the way organizations, communities, and individuals communicate. The use of social networking tools in marketing library services by library staff has a lot of benefits to both the academic libraries and their users. Ayiah and Kumah (2011) opined that libraries can benefit in social networking through collaboration, promotion and meaningful engagement with their patrons. It can also help as avenue in receiving and responding to users' queries. Some specialized social websites like Researchgate, Academia.edu and LinkedIn among others are also available for librarians to use in rendering library services to professionals in all fields of human endeavours (Tella, Olarongbe, Akanbi 2013). Ayiah and Kumah (2011) stated that the use of social networking tools is easier and does not require high technological equipment except computer, internet, connectivity and a trained professional. It is sometimes expensive to utilize other means of communication like phone calls, SMS, Radio, Newspapers and Television to inform library users about services that they render. But with the availability of ICT tools, the use of online social networking tools in library services will be advantageous and cost effective (Omeluzor, Oyovwe & Abayomi, 2016).

Library marketing on social media platforms leverages digital tools to engage, inform, and connect with diverse audiences. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn offer avenues for libraries to share resources, events, and initiatives. Visual content, such as images and videos, captures attention and promotes library services effectively. Furthermore, interactive features like polls, quizzes, and live sessions encourage audience participation and foster community

engagement. Strategic use of hash tags increases visibility and expands reach to wider audiences interested in relevant topics. Regular updates and timely responses to inquiries demonstrate the library's commitment to user satisfaction and community involvement. Collaborations with influencers, partners, and local organizations amplify the library's message and extend its impact.

Social media marketing empowers libraries to stay relevant, adaptive, and accessible in the digital age, driving awareness and utilization of their resources and services. Social networking tools provide opportunities to reach the communities of users of the library, targets specific audience and give users a chance to interact with librarian. Academic libraries can market their services and products using different social media platforms for exchanging, advertising their information resources through Facebook and WhatsApp. Different programmes such as conferences, seminars and workshops can be advertised by uploading the fliers and posters and even videos of the outcome events on the YouTube. The pictures of different library events and services can be shared using Flickr. Blogs can be used to market library services among distance learners. Twitter and instant massaging can be used to market a library's reference/ research services. Using such tools, academic libraries can publicize widely acquired materials and create service alerts (Khan and Bhati, 2014). The most widely used social networking tools are as follows:

Facebook: According to Nesta and Mi (2011), Facebook, as a marketing tool, can provide a savvy firm with feedback, serving as a free, daily focus group that must be immensely valuable. Some focus on their customers' comments, others present static, advertisement-like posts from company headquarters and others interact with their users. Facebook serves as a powerful medium for marketing libraries in the digital era by leveraging its vast user base and targeted advertising capabilities. Libraries can engage with patrons through regular posts about events, new acquisitions, and community programs, creating a dynamic online presence. Live streaming events and interactive sessions foster a sense of community and accessibility. Additionally, Facebook groups provide a space for specialized discussions and book clubs, enhancing user interaction. The ability to share multimedia content, such as virtual tours and author interviews, makes the library experience more engaging. Moreover, Facebook's ad services help libraries reach a broader audience Overall, Facebook offers libraries a versatile and effective platform for digital marketing and community building.

Twitter: Twitter is an effective medium for marketing libraries in the digital era due to its real-time communication capabilities and broad reach. Libraries can use Twitter to share quick updates, event announcements, and new acquisitions, keeping followers informed and engaged. The use of hash tags helps libraries join relevant conversations and increase visibility. Twitter's retweet feature allows for the amplification of important messages and community events. Engaging directly with patrons through replies and mentions fosters a sense of community and accessibility. Additionally, Twitter polls can be used to gather patron feedback and preferences. By participating in trending topics and library-related hashtags, libraries can attract a wider audience. Overall, Twitter's dynamic and interactive nature makes it an ideal

platform for library marketing and community engagement. The ease of posting and sharing information on twitter makes it an essential tool for libraries to reach their users (Waddell & Barnes, 2012).

Instagram: This is a powerful medium for marketing libraries in the digital era, using their platform, which is cantered on images, to engage a large audience. Libraries can use Instagram to tell a visually attractive story by showcasing forthcoming events, new book arrivals, and behind-the-scenes photos. Short, interesting material that can immediately pique users' interest, such as event highlights, book recommendations, and lessons, can be included on Instagram Stories and Reels. Because the platform is primarily visual, libraries can use it to draw attention to their distinct places and atmosphere. Libraries can reach a wider audience and establish connections with local communities and wider readers by utilizing hashtags and geotags. User-generated content, such as photos from library patrons, can foster a sense of community and participation. With its focus on visual engagement and storytelling, Instagram offers libraries a vibrant and interactive way to market their services and connect with patrons in the digital age.

YouTube: YouTube is one of the world's major websites for uploading and sharing videos, creating personalized channels and providing direct broadcast service to YouTube users. Social media has now become a part of the content creator's job and marketing plan to connect with their fans/user and receive feedback. The library can become known as a knowledge hub by using instructional videos, such as lectures and how-to manuals, to draw in a large number of students and researchers. Events like book readings, workshops, and panel discussions can be streamed live, giving libraries the opportunity to interact and involve their community in real time. Users can easily locate relevant films by organizing content by theme or interest with the help of carefully crafted playlists. Through improving the names, descriptions, and tags, libraries can improve their visibility on the platform and attract more viewers. Overall, YouTube's versatile and engaging format provides libraries with a dynamic tool to market their services, showcase their resources, and connect with patrons globally in the digital age.

LinkedIn: LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally. Libraries can draw in and include professionals looking for information and expertise by publishing articles, whitepapers, and case studies. LinkedIn groups offer libraries a venue to promote conversations, hold seminars, and ease networking among individuals who share similar interests. Libraries can also showcase their services and achievements through company pages, enhancing their credibility and visibility. Collaborations with educational institutions and industry leaders on LinkedIn can further extend a library's reach and influence.

TikTok: It offers libraries a creative and engaging medium for marketing in the digital era, especially to younger audiences. Libraries may generate quick, interesting content like book recommendations, library tours, and behind-the-scenes looks with its short-form video format. To become more visible and reach a larger

audience, libraries might take part in trending challenges and use well-known hash tags. By facilitating discoverability, TikTok's algorithm assists libraries in establishing connections with users who share their interests. Quick history lessons or interesting literary facts are examples of educational content that can be both amusing and educational, making it popular among TikTok users. Engaging with followers through comments and duets fosters a sense of community and interaction. Additionally, TikTok's potential for virality can significantly boost a library's online presence.

Blog: This is an important social networking tool that enables academic libraries to market and promote their activities and services. Ekoja (2011) expressed that blogs are very helpful in promoting library services like new acquisitions, opening hours of the library, library events and programmes, online discussions etc. Dickson and Holley (2010) added that library staff can post news about the library as well as events occurring in the library. This implies that there is need for consistent updating of the blogs in order to keep the library staff as well as users abreast of available library resources and services.

WhatsApp: This is another social networking platform or tool that allows interaction between library staff and their users. WhatsApp features include one-on-one chat, group chat, push notifications, sending and receiving both video and audio links (Shambare, 2014). WhatsApp can be an effective medium for marketing libraries in the digital era, leveraging its widespread use and direct communication capabilities. Libraries can create broadcast lists to send updates about new arrivals, events, and services directly to patrons' phones, ensuring high visibility and engagement. Group chats can be used to facilitate book clubs, discussion groups, and community interactions, fostering a sense of community among patrons. WhatsApp's status feature allows libraries to share daily updates, event highlights, and behind-the-scenes content in a less formal, more personal way. Multimedia messages, including images, videos, and PDFs, can be shared to promote library resources. The platform's end-to-end encryption ensures that communications are secure, making it suitable for sensitive information like library account notifications or personalized reading recommendations.

Instant Massaging: This is one of the real time electronic consulting and reference services offered by academic libraries via specific software running on the internet platform. Academic libraries use Instant massaging to enhance their reference service delivery processes because it allows them to respond instantly to queries from their clients (Chua & Goh, 2010; Harinarayana & Raju, 2010) which they can market their products and services.

Web OPAC: In the library page OPAC (on line public access catalogue) must be incorporated. This should be a real time catalogue and should be accessible from web/mobile/tab etc. The page may include the new books on display (images of the books should be there). Users can easily search and get to know if any particular book is available in the library or not. If the book is out in that case one should be able to reserve the same online. When the book is back to the library an SMS/email alert may be sent from the system itself. An online demo may be placed on the site

to help the users to search the catalogue of the library. Online Search Techniques may be added in the demo.

Flickr: By displaying visual content and interacting with the community, Flickr is a useful marketing tool for libraries in the digital age. Flickr can be used by libraries to: Highlight Events: Post images from workshops, community events, and library activities. It showcases collection, Exhibit pictures of unique collections, historical records, and rare books. It can be used to promote library services.

Library Portals: Portal is a platform for sharing information with users, a portal having information related to their profession. Some library professional portals are Lis Target, Lis world, Lis Links. These portals provide information about jobs, webinars, seminars, refresher courses, training, and other libraries' professional-related information. These portals keep us up-to-date on what is happening around us.

Benefits of Marketing Libraries in Digital Era

Libraries use various forms of social networking tools to provide and share knowledge of their collections for the benefit of the users. According to Omeluzor, Oyovwe and Abayomi (2006), the use of Flickr as a social networking tool beneficial for sharing and distribution of new images of library collections. The author is of the view that the cover pages of newly acquired library resources can be snapshot and sent online to users through Flickr. It can also facilitate notifications of users on current issues as they emerge. Tang, Gu and Whinston (2010) argued that the benefits of participating in social networking have exceeded the simple sharing of information with press to helping them build their career opportunities while generating money. Library marketing helps in the following dimensions:

1. **Enhanced Accessibility:** Through digital marketing, library resources are available around-the-clock, removing restrictions related to location and schedule.
2. **Wider Reach:** Libraries can attract more users by using online platforms to reach a worldwide audience.
3. **Enhanced Visibility:** An improved web presence raises awareness of the resources and services provided by the library.
4. **Involvement in the Community:** social media and dynamic websites help to build closer ties with the community.
5. **Promotion of Digital Resources:** Makes the most of databases, e-books, and online journals by highlighting them.
6. **Effective Cost-Management:** Compared to traditional marketing strategies, digital initiatives frequently need lower expenditure.
7. **Real-Time Communication:** Email newsletters and social media provide instantaneous information and engagement with customers.
8. **Personalized Experiences:** Customized content and recommendations based on user behaviours and choices.

Challenges of Marketing Libraries in Digital Age

Marketing libraries in the digital age presents unique challenges that require innovative strategies and a keen understanding of evolving user needs and technological trends. Gupta, Koontz and Massisimo (2013) outlined several factors militating against the effective marketing of library and information resources and services, such as poor marketing strategy, absence of marketing policies, lack of skilled manpower and infrastructural constraints. Furthermore, other key challenges faced by libraries today include the following:

1. Lack of marketing strategies: this has posed challenges to librarians/libraries that do not have the strategies to market library and information services in the digital age.
2. Lack of ICT infrastructure: a lot of libraries do not have up to date ICT infrastructure
3. Non-computerization and non-automation of library operations and services: Asemoah-Hassan (2002) reported that very few libraries are fully computerized and automated. As a result of inadequate telecommunication facilities, low level of computer literacy among library staff, dearth of computer gadgets and poor level of internet capabilities, clumsy and error-prone manual procedures are seen as threats in marketing libraries.in digital age,
4. Resource Constraints: Budget, personnel, and technology infrastructure issues are common in libraries. Investments in technology, education, and experience are necessary for putting digital marketing tactics into practice. Libraries should look for innovative solutions, such using open-source software, working with other organizations to share resources, and giving staff training in digital marketing a high priority.
5. Adapting to New Technologies: Libraries must continuously adopt and integrate new technologies to stay relevant, which can be costly and require ongoing training for staff.
6. Privacy and Data Security: In order to protect user privacy and data security, libraries must handle sensitive user information. Libraries must create strong data protection policies and adhere to all applicable laws. Users should be informed openly about data collection and usage so that they may have control over their privacy settings.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. Development of marketing unit for libraries: this will enable libraries to develop marketing plans and strategies that suit its peculiar environment. It will also ensure proper management or procurement of infrastructure for promoting library use.
2. Adequate provision of fund for procurement and maintenance of infrastructures for marketing. Fund can also promote dynamic community involvement which is of great benefit to marketing.
3. Regular and up to date training of library staff; particularly in the digital era where social media platform needs to be utilized for marketing.

Conclusion

Marketing libraries in the digital era requires a multifaceted approach that addresses technological, financial, and social challenges. Libraries must continually innovate, educate, and engage with their communities to demonstrate their relevance and value in an increasingly digital world. By leveraging digital tools and platforms, libraries can enhance their visibility and continue to fulfil their mission of providing access to information and fostering lifelong learning.

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