

Use of Social Media by Librarians for Professional Development and Service Delivery in University of Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of social media by librarians in the University of Uyo for professional development and library service delivery. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A total population of 83 professional and paraprofessional librarians were used for the study. A census study was carried out and data was collected using a questionnaire. A response rate of 96.4% was obtained. Percentages and Frequency counts were used for the data analysis. Findings from the study revealed that the most popular social media tools used by librarians include; Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. It was also revealed that University of Uyo librarians make use of social media to meet their professional development needs such as; information about emerging technologies in LIS, information about upcoming conferences, call for papers for scholarly publications among others. They also make use of social media to meet the information needs of their clientele such as selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, reference services etc. Inadequate ICT facilities, technophobia and unverified information sources were some of the challenges faced while using social media. The study recommended among other things that awareness and trainings should be carried out for librarians on ways of using social media for professional development and library service delivery. The study also recommended that librarians need to explore more recent social media platforms for their professional development and library service delivery.

Keywords: Social media, Library Service Delivery, Librarians, Professional Development

Introduction

The use of social media and social networking sites has become a part of the day-to-day activities of business owners and professionals. In recent times, social media has been used by professionals for continuous professional development in order to boost their work competence. Social media applications offer boundless opportunities for users to learn while also contributing to the knowledge of others (Onuoha, 2013). Macmillan Dictionary (ND) defines professional development as the process of obtaining the skills, qualifications and experience that allows you to make progress in your career. Therefore, individuals can seek to increase their level of knowledge, refine or learn new skills, and apply these in the workplace. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) asserted that social media networks are useful tools for sharing knowledge in an open access platform. Hence, people with common interests are able to share information with each other through a variety of social media platforms created solely for information creation, sharing and communication in a simple and effective way. Library professionals are not left out in this trend that has become very popular in the last few years. Akporhonor (2015) opines that a formidable means through which librarians and libraries can make their work and services more effective as well as maintain relevance is through a platform like social media.

Social media also plays a very important role in library service delivery. According to Chitumbom (2015) the use of social media gives librarians platforms to render services and meet the demand of users as it is popular among students and the younger generation. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as an Internet-based application built on the ideologies of Web 2.0. These applications allow users to interact freely, share and discuss information using a multimedia combination of personal words, pictures, video and audio. Chitumbom, (2015) also defined social media as an online tool whose major aim is to offer social interactions and exchange of items/products between or among people with common interests. Social media systems have created new ways of interaction between individuals in terms of communicating and sharing information with a wide audience (Palmer 2014). Wegmann, Stodt and Brand (2015) posit that social networking sites are virtual communities where users can create individual profiles and interact with others.

Today, libraries are using the latest technologies and trends to make their services popular and user friendly. The concept of a library as a physical place where one can visit to get information is rapidly changing to a social cyberspace where users access, communicate and contribute to existing knowledge (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Lack of proper information and skill has hindered the professional growth of academic librarians. Access to relevant information has gone beyond the prints because relying solely on the old media in a changing environment may lead to redundancy. Secondly traditional library service delivery hinders access to library services remotely which also makes it difficult to attend to the information needs of library clientele who want to make use of library resources but do not want to visit the physical library. Librarians

need to improve on traditional library and information services to take care of its limitations and inadequacies to meet the demands of their users, remain relevant, and retain their place as information providers in this technology age as well as to meet their professional needs. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the use of social media by librarians for professional development and library service delivery in the University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the Use of social media by librarians for Professional Development and Service Delivery in University of Uyo, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the level of use of social media platforms by University of Uyo Librarians
2. Find out the type of information searched for by University of Uyo Librarians
3. Determine the type of services rendered to patrons via social media by University of Uyo librarians.
4. Know the challenges of finding information needs and rendering library services by University of Uyo librarians.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do University of Uyo librarians make use of the various social media platforms to seek for information?
2. What type of professional development information do University of Uyo librarians search for on social media?
3. What type of library services do University of Uyo librarians render to patrons on social media?
4. What are the challenges of professional development and service delivery on social media?

Methods

As the spread of librarians in the University of Uyo is not considered unwieldy, a census survey was used for the study. Therefore, all librarians and library officers in the University of Uyo were used for the study to make for a more accurate representation and provide better results. University of Uyo has a total of 83 academic librarians and library officers made up of 27 Academic Librarians and 56 library officers. A total of 80 questionnaires were returned and used for this present study. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for data analysis through simple percentages (%) and frequency counts.

Results

Table 1 Demographic Variables

S/N	Variables	Label	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	28	35
		Female	52	65
		Total	80	100
2.	Variable Qualification	Label	Frequency	Percentage
		PhD	8	10
		Masters	28	35
		BLIS	24	30
		Diploma	20	25
		Total	80	100
		3.	Variable Years of Experience	Label
0-5 Years	6	7.5		
6-10Years	22	27.5		
11-15Years	31	38.7		
15-20Years	10	12.5		
20years and above	3	3.7		
Total	80	100		

Table 1 above shows the demographic variables of the respondents. The table reveals that the study had 28 (35%) male respondents and 52 (65%) female respondents. The table also shows that the respondents possessed the following qualifications: PhD 8(10%), Masters 28(35%), BLIS 24(30%), Diploma 20 (25%). The study also indicates that the respondents had the following years of experience; 0-5 years (7.5%) 6-10years (27.5%), 11-15 years (38.5%), 15-20 years (12.5%), 20 years and above (3.7%).

Librarians use of social media platforms to seek for information.

Table 2: Level of use social media platforms by University of Uyo Librarians

Social Media Tools	Always	%	Frequently	%	Occasionally	%	Never	%
Facebook	57	71.2	13	16.2	6	7.5	4	5
Instagram	40	50	13	16.2	5	6.2	22	27.5
LinkedIn	45	56.2	12	15	3	3.7	20	25
Twitter	21	26.2	19	23.7	35	43.7	5	6.2
YouTube	43	53.7	25	31.2	8	10	4	5
WhatsApp	40	50	22	27.5	10	12.5	8	10
Pinterest	6	7.5	10	12.5	12	15	52	65
Snapchat	5	6.2	11	13.7	8	10	56	70

Table 2 presents the frequency of social media use by librarians in University of Uyo library. The table reveals that 57 (71.2%) of the respondents indicated that librarians

use Facebook always. The table also indicates that 40 (50%) make use of Instagram always to search for information. Forty-five respondents (56.2%) make use of LinkedIn always.

However, majority of the respondents indicated that they have never used social media platforms like Pinterest and snapchat with frequency and percentage of 52(65%) and 56(70%) respectively.

Types of professional development information librarians search for on social media

Table 3: Searching for Professional development information on social media

<i>Professional Devt Information</i>	<i>VHE</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>HE</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>LE</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>NE</i>	<i>%</i>
Emerging Technologies	32	40	30	37.5	12	15	6	7.5
Conferences/workshops/Trainings	42	52.5	20	25	8	10	10	12.5
Call for Papers for Scholarly Publications	35	31.2	28	35	9	11.2	8	10
Collaboration and Networking	22	27.5	30	37.5	15	18.7	13	16.2

Table 3 shows a summary of professional development information searched for on social media by the respondents. The study indicates that 32 respondents (40%) use social media to get information about emerging technologies in the field of library and information science to a very high extent. The study also revealed that 42 respondents (52.5%) indicate that they make use of social media to search for upcoming conferences to a very high extent. Thirty-five respondents (31.2%) agreed that they make use of social media to search for information for call for papers for scholarly publications to a high extent. While only 22(27.5%) respondents agreed that they use social media to collaborate and network to a very high extent.

Types of library services librarians render to patrons on social media.

Table 4: Type of Library Services University of Uyo librarians render to patrons on social media.

<i>Services</i>	<i>VHE</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>HE</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>LE</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>NE</i>	<i>%</i>
Posting of library events	37	46.2	32	40	5	6.2	6	7.5
Current Awareness Services	32	40	37	46.2	6	7.5	5	6.2
Reference Services	42	52.5	22	27.5	8	10	8	10
Book lending/Reservation	22	27.5	28	35	17	21.2	13	16.2
Orientation	20	25	32	40	22	27.5	6	7.5
Selective Dissemination of Information	40	50	20	25	10	12.5	10	12.5

Table 4 shows the types of services rendered to patrons through social media by the respondents. The table indicates that 37 (46.2%) of the librarians posted library events to a very high extent. 32(40%) of the respondents indicated that they also provide current awareness services to a very high extent. The table also reveals that 42(52.5%) provide reference services to a very high extent. 40(50%) of the respondents revealed

that they provide selective dissemination of information services to a very high extent. This study reveals that librarians in University of Uyo provide library services to patrons to a very high extent.

Challenges of professional development and service delivery through social media.

Table 5: Challenges of professional development and service delivery through social media

Challenges	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
Unnecessary Distractions	40	50	13	16.2	5	6.2	6	7.5
Technophobia	21	26.2	19	23.7	35	43.7	3	3.7
Unverifiable Information Sources	40	50	21	26.2	8	10	11	13.75
Network Fluctuation	36	45	24	30	5	6.2	5	6.2
Lack of ICT Facilities	30	37.5	30	37.5	12	15	8	10

Fifty-three of the respondents (50%) and 13 (16.2%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that librarians faced the challenge of unnecessary distractions when using social media for professional development and service delivery. 21 (26.2%) and 19 (23.7%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that technophobia was a challenge. 40 of the respondents (50%) and 21 (26.2%) each strongly agreed and agreed respectively that unverifiable information sources was a challenge. Thirty-six respondents (45%) and 24(30%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that network fluctuations was a challenge. Furthermore, the study revealed that thirty respondents (37.5%) and 30 (37.5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that lack of ICT facilities was a challenge.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that Facebook was the most frequently used social media platform by professional and paraprofessional librarians in University of Uyo. This is in line with a study by Adewoyin et.al (2017) on Social Media Use and Service Delivery by Librarians in Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The study revealed that a high percentage (64.4%) of librarians make use of Facebook to seek for information. This study also revealed that social media tools such as Pinterest and snapchat are hardly used by librarians in University of Uyo. This could be as a result of lack of awareness of these social media platforms by the librarians.

The finding of this study also revealed that Librarians in the University of Uyo make use of social media platforms to get information about upcoming conferences and workshops as well as information about emerging technologies in the field of library and information science. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Islam and Tsuji (2016) which revealed that information professionals use social media to share professional information in newspapers, magazines, television, professional events like trainings, workshops and conferences. Saidu and Sani (2022) which revealed that

social media helps library staff in academic libraries to keep pace with technologies and compete effectively with the developed world.

Librarians post library events, provide current awareness services, reference services and selective dissemination of information services through social media to a very high extent. as indicated in the above findings. This corroborates a study by Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) on the use of social media by librarians for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The study revealed that some of the university libraries in the zone use the social media for dissemination of information in their libraries.

The study also indicated that unnecessary distractions, technophobia, unverifiable sources of information, network fluctuation and lack of ICT facilities were some of the challenges faced by University of Uyo Librarians in using social media for professional development and service delivery. This is in line with a study by Omini and Ayalande (2019) which stated that low level of technology penetration, network problems, and privacy concerns were some challenges identified in the study. Adewoyin et.al (2017) in a study on social media use and service delivery by librarians in Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria, a number of issues were identified as constraints to the use of social media for service delivery by librarians. These constraints include erratic power supply, lack of finance, poor Internet access and inadequate ICT facilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Awareness and trainings should be carried out for librarians on ways of using social media for professional development.
2. Library users should be trained on how to access library services through social media platforms.
3. ICT facilities should be provided, and maintenance culture of these facilities must be fully imbibed.
4. Librarians should explore more recent social media platforms for their professional development and also for effective service to their patrons.
5. Professional bodies such as Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and Nigeria Library Association (NLA) should make use of social media platforms for virtual trainings, workshops, and dissemination of information.

Conclusion

From the study, it has been observed that librarians are gradually embracing social media technology for library service delivery as well as for personal and professional development. Librarians need to fully embrace all the benefits that social media has to offer in order to be able to cater for the 21st century library users and also become world class librarians.

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