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*Special Issue on*  
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Dr. SANDHYARANI .P.S  
ANTHONY MOSES  
Dr. SHIVARAJU C.D  
VIVEK CHARLES



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## SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ARE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES- AN OVERVIEW

**KAVITHA.J.N**

*Librarian, Library & Information Centre  
Sri Adichunchanagiri First Grade College, Channarayapatna*

### Abstract

The rapid rise of social media provides numerous possibilities for academic institutions to use it to extend its learning and teaching endeavors. Academic Library Users Social networking sites could be effectively used to disseminate information and promote pleasant professional relationship among librarians and library users. It encourages academic collaboration. This media improved teacher learner communication, out of the class sharing of information and knowledge resources and improved delivery of education. It has also improved sharing of learning resources in rural areas and difficult hilly terrains. Because of wide spread accessibility from mobile phones, use of social media for sharing scholarly information is on the increase. It has improved connectivity among learners, increased participation and collaboration and sharing of information including text, pictures, audio, video, etc.

**Keywords:** Face Book, Twitter, Library, Social Networking, Reference Service, YouTube, Flickr, Blog, Web 2.0 Technology.

### Introduction

Social networking site should be introduced to attract them to the library environment. Social networking sites would help establish a cordial relationship between librarians and patrons; market the library's services Social networking website provides great opportunities for Library professionals to interact with their users as it places them in the digital social space of their users. Library professionals can get first hand information about the user through interacting with them. They can then understand the behavior of the user and design services to meet the needs accordingly. Social networks are a great way to test your commitment to open communication.

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 of 900 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.

**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. Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them
- ❖ Social Networking. (Face book, Hi5, Last.FM) Interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions.
- ❖ Social Photo and Video Sharing. (YouTube, Flickr) Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions.
- ❖ Wikis. (Wikipedia, Wikia) and also MySpace, Facebook, Hi5.Friendster,Orkut, Bebo and Tagged Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.

Table 1 :- Date of Launching of various social Networking Media

YEAR OF LAUNCHING	NAME OF SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA
1995	Wiki
1997	Weblogs
1999	MSN messenger
2003	LinkedIn, MySpace, Delicious
2004	Flickr, Face book (not open to all)
2005	YouTube, Windows Live Messenger(re launch of MSN messenger)
2006	Twitter, Face book (open to all) slide share

**Benefits of social Network in Academic Libraries**

The real utilization of social media is based on active human networks. Technology is an enabler; one should have IT literacy skills, its social dimensions and where to use know-hows. Creation and application of knowledge are only possible when collaboration, communication, and consolidation happen. The following are some of the key benefits of social network in academic libraries:

1. To identify the individuals, teams, and units who play key roles in academic activities.
2. To contextualize knowledge and to make out opportunities to accelerate knowledge flows across functional and organizational boundaries.
3. To form study groups, encourage research based projects and even help with academic support for distance education.
4. To strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of existing, formal communication channels and improving library's weaker areas

**Review of Literature:**

- In the Huang study, Taiwanese students' online habits were studied longitudinally over a two and a half year period, with little change in their usage of MSN messenger, email or chat room usage, possibly indicating that the technologies had been adopted to saturation levels, and that further development of the software is required to ensure its further growth.
- BarskyandPurdon (2006), on the other hand, pointed out that social networking websites collect data aboutmembers and store user profiles that are meant for sharing. These websites are offered for free andallow users to create personal pages filled with content like images, music and videos easily. Thesesocial networks also allow members to share web pages with friends and search for new friends whohave similar interests.
- Seufert et al (1999) defines social networking in terms of knowledge networking assignifying 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. The concept of social networking is one of the tools of Web 2.0, which also forms the basis of library 2.0.

### Objectives

This study has been conducted keeping in view the following objectives:

- To find out the Academic libraries' websites which have social networking/ web 2.0 application; and
- To identify types of web 2.0 technology that is applied in central universities libraries' websites.

### 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 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.

### Application of Social Media in Academic Libraries content communities

Library encourages to share on some particular kind of content. They differ according to the type of content (text, photos, videos, power point presentations, etc.) they share. Some of them have earned a great popularity as it is capable of content organization and sharing. As for example,

- Text Sharing—Book Crossing.
- Photo Sharing—Flickr, Picasa, Photo Bucker.
- Video Sharing—YouTube, Daily Motion, Metcafe.
- Presentation Sharing—Slide Share, Prezi, Scribd.

### Social Networking

**(i). Myspace:** - Here library users can use html to customize their profile and they can add new graphics and videos on it.

**(ii). Face book:** -With the help of Face book, library users can be informed with different upcoming events and share the information about their new arrivals and editions of books. Face book mainly helps in marketing of services and products. Photo can be tagged through the use of it. Ask-A Librarian service can be exploited by using it.

**(iii). Twitter:** - Twitter is a free social networking used to send and read messages known as tweets. At present librarians share all kinds of news regarding library through the use of twitter. Librarians can highlight new materials, new groups, meetings and more with some of these suggestions through twitter.

**(iv). LinkedIn:** - It is a professional networking site. It can be used by the librarians to create professional connections and to market library services among other library professionals spread all over the world and can also share their ideas and professional experiences.

(v). **WEB 2.0:**- The term was coined by Darcy DiNuccie in 1999 and the term was popularized by Tim O'Reilly<sup>4</sup>. The term includes weblogs, wikis and syndications. It is nearly synonymous with social media.

(vi). **Blog:** - Libraries can use Blogs to keep their users aware with the latest developments in the field of library related matter. Blogs can be subscribed through RSS feeds. Blogger and Word Press are the examples of blog. In addition to this blog can be used as follows—

(vii). **Wikis:** - The most recognized wiki is Wikipedia. A few other wiki services are wikia, wiki how, wiki dot, Wikimedia, wiki news, PB works.

#### **Use of Social Networking Sits in the Libraries**

Many libraries are using social networking platform to interact and reach out to their patrons or clients. It has also become a level playing ground for academics and students to interact on issues pertaining to course work. Students also use this platform to share information amongst themselves on any subject and topic. The use of these tools has been affirmed by Bell (2007), that Academic libraries do not only use social media for communication purposes, but had adapted their research strategies to this environment. Libraries with social networking wall. The walls are mostly used to:

- Announce programmes of the library
- Give students the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to the use of the library
- Teach basic search tools
- Paste new books on the wall to inform the University Community
- Send brief updates to patrons
- Ask a Librarian

Academic Libraries can also respond to the needs of modern day patrons by applying efficient technologies such as social networking, mobile application, and online check in/check outs to their service delivery. These developments in the operations of library service delivery should encourage libraries to reinvent itself to respond adequately to this call by investing in technologies that have direct effect on the operations of the library. To achieve this, libraries must upgrade library staff skills in information Technology (IT) so as to be able to understand and use Social Networking sites to their maximum.

#### **Social Networks and its Possible Implication in Academic Libraries**

Social media sites become one of the massive online platforms in the world for sharing real time information. Academic libraries are now engaged on social media in order to connect with diverse community groups and move beyond the traditional bounds of the library. The need of the hour is how best LIS professionals can exploit the disruptive changes for the societal benefit. In the US libraries have been using social media tools to connect with users and to market programs and services. It is observed from the literature that the most frequent type of postings in social media was related to announcing upcoming events held in libraries.

Posts about community news or emotionally inspiring messages elicited much engagement from users and posts having an image or images tend to receive more user engagement. Facebook use by libraries falls into five areas of interest; "how-to" kind of studies, library-centered case studies, student-based research, service-provided analysis and perceived-use study. Academic Librarian can make use of social networks in three ways,

- A. **Information Communication:** By using social media platforms academic librarian can keep constant touch and effective interaction with teaching faculty, students and research scholars in online collaborative environment. MySpace, Facebook, Ning, Blog, LinkedIn and Twitter are some of the best applications for information communication.
- B. **Knowledge Organization and Access (KOA):** Social software can help professionals in KOA environment for getting handy information which can be accessible with the web 2.0 social networking technologies. For example, aNobii, it helps book lovers to

share reviews and recommendations. It also prepares due date alerts, lending, and discussions. Delicious - it uses a non-hierarchical classification system in which users can tag each of their bookmarks with freely chosen index terms. Netvibes, Library Thing and Librarians are other examples.

- C. **Information Dissemination:** Information sharing is the major part and crucial area where LIS professionals should think seriously while considering and designing library activities in digital environment. End user satisfaction should be given first and foremost priority by providing right information at the right time in a right way from anywhere. Some of the critical tools used for information distribution are; Flickr, YouTube, Teacher Tube, Second Life, Wikipedia, Footnote, Community Walk, SlideShare and Digg.

### **Role of Librarian while using Social Media in Libraries**

Due to advent of internet, the librarian of the 21st century, popularly known as Librarian 2.0, can understand the web users deeply in terms of their goals and aspirations, workflows, social and content needs, and more. Librarian 2.0 is where the user is, when the user is there. For the utilization of social media, a librarian—....Social media are dynamic and can change rapidly as the technology is changing faster.

However in near future librarian may have to track how the web users use library profiles or how their users access the library catalog or do something else that librarian cannot anticipate presently. So the librarian needs to change their role accordingly in the hi-tech digital environment of 21st century to continue to deliver their services for the web users.

Adopts the new communication mode of choice - telephone, Skype, IM, SMS, texting, email, virtual reference, etc. Cannot avoid traditional cataloging and classification and chooses tagging, folksonomies, and user-driven content descriptions to inform the web users about OPAC as and when necessary. Combines e-resources and print formats.

- ❖ Connects people with web technology in the LIS domain.
- ❖ Connects the web users with subject expert for discussions, conversations
- ❖ Uses the latest tools of communication for sharing of information.
- ❖ Uses and caters everything from laptops to PDAs to iPods.
- ❖ Develops targeted federated search and adopts the open URL standard.
- ❖ Embraces non-textual information and graphics, moving images, audio, and video.
- ❖ Encourages user driven metadata and user developed content and commentary.
- ❖ Learns the power of the Web 2.0 opportunities.

### **Challenges**

To choose and keep a constant track on a wide range of social media tools, we may have to define the criteria for evaluation of these tools and content they carry. It is important to choose a platform, which our customers frequently use and identify. There are several challenges involved when adopting social networking tools in library and information centres, like;

- ❖ **Lack of Awareness and Skills:** Most librarians lack the IT skills that could be required to adopt the social networking sites for effective library services. Some librarians are not even aware of useful features of social networking tools; even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive uses of these for library services.
- ❖ **Weaker Network Bandwidth:** Several institutions have limited Internet bandwidth to implement social media platforms. Poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation and interaction with users.
- ❖ **Technophobia:** A number of librarians and users are afraid of handling new technologies. They keep on stick to traditional library services, their comfort zone and are not willing to embrace the change.
- ❖ **Unreliable Power Supply:** The interrupted supply of power discourages people from participating in the social media activities.



- ❖ **Copyright Issues:** The free access to information where people copy, paste and edit content without acknowledging the original author is a serious challenge to copyright management.
- ❖ **Lack of Time and Resources:** The biggest challenge that libraries face is lack of time to spend on social media. This is mainly due to smaller staff size and also due to lack of focused approach while using social media tools.
- ❖ **Difficulty in Quantifying and Accountability of Social Media Efforts.**

#### **Social Networking sites are changing Library Environment**

Academic library and information centres are applying the new technologies and trends to build their library services popular and user friendly. The present idea of a library as substantial place where users can visit to get information is quickly changing to a social cyberspace where users contact, communicate and contribute to existing information. The potentials of the new technology offers the open access protocols which present the opening for free access, free interaction, free communication and contribution to knowledge. Library services through modern technology are making new instinctive tools, continuous change, flexibility and evaluation while encouraging user posting, sharing, cooperation, communication, and personalization. Social networks provide enhanced right to use information. It puts the library where the users are. It enables users to share their knowledge and in turn, helps bring others into the library. It helps simply to post future events or book exhibition. These types of postings rapidly increase when users share the information with their friends through their social networking sites channels. This opportunity helps to promoting library services and activities. A social network has several ways to invite user group to present feedback and to engage with others in online area

#### **Conclusion**

Social media surfaced in a variety of social networking platforms such as, blogs, vlogs, instant messaging, social bookmarking and virtual communities. Social networking is evolving and is *sin qua non* to modern life. It has been doing different roles such as communication, teaching, promoting etc. Social media encompasses many forms such as social networking sites like blogs, vlogs, instant messaging and virtual communities. Among the social media, Facebook appeared as a major platform and emerged as a winner because of its large user base. The rapid rise of social media provides numerous possibilities for academic institutions to exploit this media to extend its learning and teaching endeavors.

The Social networking is a medium that lets the users to interact and work collaboratively with others, including the ability to browse, search, invite friends to connect and interact across the globe. Several opportunities have been emerged for academic libraries in augmenting their basic objectives like identifying right users communities, their need and proactive teaching learning services to its users. Social software in the web 2.0 world not only enhances the practical usability in the library but also helps the diminishing librarian's role through value addition to profession itself.

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