

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS AND LIBRARY SERVICES IN UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The research work was on social media tools and library services in universities in Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 23 librarians working in the university of Uyo library. A checklist and structured questionnaire were used for collection of data for this study. The instruments were subjected to face validation and were also subjected to pilot test using Cronbach Alpha which gave a reliability coefficient value of 0.92. Data collected from the study were analyzed using mean scores. The study found that online information services, e-mail services, current awareness services, and internet services were the available library services in university of Uyo. Also, the available social media tools for library services in university of Uyo are Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, and Library thing. Moreso, the extent of utilization of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo was high on Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, Instant Messaging (IM), and Rich Site Summary (RSS). Similarly, the challenges faced by librarians in utilizing social media tools for library services in university of Uyo are inadequate funding to procure social media tools for library services, insufficiency of ICT infrastructure, erratic power supply, poor maintenance culture on social media tools, and poor support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services. Furthermore, the solution to the problems affecting librarians in using social media tools for library services in university of Uyo are adequate funding to procure social media tools for library services, sufficiency of ICT infrastructure, good power supply, routine maintenance culture on social media tools, and subsidized cost of data to use social media tools. The study concluded that social media tools have been so helpful and have served as a reliable platform for university libraries to provide library services to her users. The study recommended that there should be availability of e-learning resources like e-content, e-library, and dedicated e-learning portal to speed up the utilization of social media tools for library services

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Utilization, Social media tools, Library services, Users

INTRODUCTION

Libraries as social institutions have been charged with the responsibilities of acquiring, organizing, storing, preserving and making available for use information contained in human intellectual records. They are foster education, research and information. Libraries serve different categories of users regardless of occupation, gender, age, and ethnic affiliation (IFLA in Eze, 2012). This has promoted the need for libraries to support remote learning and reform her traditional library instruction and reference services to users who rely on libraries services to help get new and current information. The need to move with the times has made libraries to incorporate the use of new media and technology (ICT) for information service delivery; fallout of which brought about the use of social media.

Social media is a virtual information sharing space which compliments face-to-face interaction and relationships between individuals. Chitumbo and Chewe (2015) defined social media are online tools whose principal aim is to offer social interactions and exchange of items, ideas, products and services among people of common interests. Relatedly, Fang, Hu, Li, & Tsai (2014) defined social media tools as computer and mobile-mediated tools that facilitate interaction and sharing of information in text, visual, audio and video forms in an online networking environment. Examples of social media tools include the Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Youtube, Blogs, Wikis, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Flickr, Orkut among others. These social media tools are used in libraries to adapt with the current time towards enhancing her library service delivery.

Library services are services that the library offers to her users to enable them achieve their information needs and satisfaction. Such library services are user education (orientation/instruction), inter-library loan/connection, abstracting and indexing services, bibliographical services, reference services, and circulation services. Other library services are photocopying services; compilation of reading list and bibliographies; and publishing (Ifidon, 2004). However, these library services as provided by libraries are usually presented in a format that aid easy access by library users. Therefore, with social media's presence, the vision of the library within the last few years has been that library services should go to users not necessarily that users should come physically to the library (Collins & Quan-Hasse, 2012). This has been enabled through applying social media tools

Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog have come to stay and they are already having their impact on library services in this 21st century. For example, the era of printing leaflet and flyers for people to pick, pasting information on the bulletin board as ways of advertising library products and services coupled with the use of fax messages, e-mails, even text messages has been replaced with these social media platforms (Chu & Du, 2013). In spite of the advantages and merits of social media, most libraries do not apply it for their library services. Reasons cited were that there is poor funding, low user literacy on ICT usage as well as poor power supply. Most libraries do not have available social media tools with an enabling network service to provide library services to their patrons (Agim, Obiekwe & Eneh, 2020). Some libraries do not utilize these social media tools due to poor skills or knowledge of the library staff. Regrettably also is the fact that most library materials are not readily available for processing into social media format. Therefore, this research will examine social media tools and library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to examine social media tools and library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The specific objectives include to:

1. Find out the library services provided in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state
2. Examine the availability of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state
3. Determine the extent of utilization of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state
4. Find out the challenges faced by librarians in utilizing social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state
5. Find out the solution to the problems affecting librarians in using social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media refers to a group of online and electronic tools that include blogs, social networking sites, and video-sharing sites. Social media network sites are online platforms through which individuals, groups and organisations create presence and share information through texts, photos, music videos etc (Ladan, Haruna & Madu, 2020). Social media are networked information services, designed to support in depth social interaction, community formation, collaborative opportunities and collaborative work (Bruns & Bahnisch cited in Chhiato, 2018). Social media operate in dialogic transmission where there may be many sources to many receivers of information, pictures, images and other resources. Examples of social media applications include the Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, You tube, Blogs, Wikis, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Flickr, Orkut among others.

Social media is a fusion of sociology and technology that transforms monologue (one-to-many) into dialogue (many-to-many), and is the democratization of information that transforms people from content readers into publishers (Quadri & Idowu, 2016). A common position in all the definitions is that social media are online tools whose principal aim is to offer social interactions and exchange of items, ideas, products and services among people of common interests (Chitumbo & Chewe 2015). Social media are also 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 (Kaplan & Haenlein cited in Chhiato, 2018).

Social media as a Web-based channel of information dissemination is rapidly permeating all aspects of library and information services (Agim, Oraekwe, Chivuzo & Emenari, 2020). Also, it is observed that social media is rapidly becoming the most preferred means of establishing social/professional networks among librarians, while it is also being used to communicate with potential library users, as well as extending the information services to other remote users particularly in the academic community (Quadri & Idowu, 2016). In the information profession, particularly in libraries, universities, and colleges, social media tools serves as the platform mostly suited for individuals to interact, disseminate, and share information among themselves (Sahu, 2013). Librarians in Nigerian universities as well as all tertiary institution libraries are now realizing the potentials of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, and Google+, and other social tools found in the study, and are making efforts to integrate them into library services such as library orientation, new arrival of library resources, references services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), and customer services in general.

The availability of social media tools mostly MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, Blogs, Wikis, Youtube, Podcasts, Academia.edu and Hi5 has enabled libraries to connect their users. The availability of these social media tools has allowed librarians to adopt a new role by placing themselves into a social realm with users (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012). By reading blogs, group postings, and message boards, the librarian becomes an active participant, who is able to anticipate and advise patrons as needs arise. Linking to patron profiles also keeps the library within the consciousness of users, which can potentially increase interaction (Courtney, 2007).

Studies done by Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) and Atuloma and Onuoha (2011) revealed that Facebook is the most commonly available site. One of the primary uses of Facebook by academic libraries is to market the library with a library fan page. By linking to the library's website, the Facebook page acts as a portal to the library (Farkas, 2007). Blogs and wikis have been recognized as ideal sources to disseminate news and information. Blogs in academic libraries are tools to reach out to students. Coyle and Vaughn (2008) in their survey found out that blogs were overwhelmingly used to market the library service. Twitter is a real-time communication platform. It allows users to create an account, post and receive messages to a network of contacts, as opposed to send bulk email messages (Musibau et al, 2011). There are libraries which use Twitter to connect themselves with important information sources (Milstein, 2009). The availability of these social media tools and its networking sites help establish a cordial relationship with users while attracting them to the library environment.

The availability of social media tools has increased the libraries us of Facebook and Twitter to connect, communicate as well as collaborate with users in an innovative way, and providing the needed services to users. De Rosa et al (2007) admit that librarians make use of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter with the purpose of "being part of their communities". In contributing to the availability of social

media tools for library services in 21st century, Suraweere et al (2011) admit that the availability of online social networks by libraries and information organizations is increasingly prevalent and a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) add that social media tools sites are two way transparent communications that encourage a feedback mechanism; connecting people with shared interest. Furthermore, in citing Steiner, Ezeani and Igwesi states that the availability of social networking tools enables librarians to identify library patrons on the social cyberspace and pro-actively provide the type of information that would normally result from reference service. Social media tools are not only being available for promoting services, programs and new resources but they are also used for reference service. Libraries have also provided available platforms such as Ask a Librarian, meebo and twitter for students to use and to ask questions in “real time and this is assisting in promoting the library as a relevant, efficient and helpful place.

On the availability of social media tools for library services, Lehtinen (2007) found that different interaction rituals can be performed on social media for reconstructing the established social networks. Popular activities include updating personal information and locations (“status”), sharing photos and archiving events, getting updates on activities by friends, displaying a large social network, sending messages privately, and posting public testimonials. These enable libraries to add value to library services in social networks by creating knowledge repositories on Wikis, developing bibliographies through social bookmarking sites, building historical and cultural collections through media sharing applications, and forming relationships with like-minded individuals in social networking communities (Kroski, 2007). Availability of these platforms can help libraries to be harvesting information from individual users for improving online services, and research, etc. (Chu, Cheung, Hui, Chan & Man, 2010).

Libraries as social institutions have considered the relevance of social media in information service delivery and concluded that it remains one of the relationship marketing that creates conducive atmosphere for interaction between library users and librarians as well as for facilitation of means of paying dividends in the form of user loyalty (Fernandez, 2009). The availability of social media also enhances two-way communication which afforded libraries to be in tandem with their users’ changing needs and expectations. From the various studies conducted in both the developed and developing nations of the world, it is apparent that social media are being used as platform of information service delivery to the patrons in libraries (Borders, 2009; Harinarayana & Kaju, cited in Otulugbu, 2019). Availability of social media tools in libraries act as information resource while supporting collaboration between students and libraries. Succinctly put, social media tools are rebranding the academic library and re-establishing their worth as key players in information dissemination and knowledge creation.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey design is a study that aims at collecting data on something and describing it in a systematic manner. This involves collection of data on a representative population of the target audience, on which generalization is made. The area of the study is university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. The population of the study was 23 librarians working in the university of Uyo library. A checklist and structured questionnaire on a four (4) – point Likert scale were used for collection of data for this study. The instruments (checklist and questionnaire) were subjected to face validation and were also subjected to pilot test using Cronbach Alpha which gave a reliability coefficient value of 0.92. The researchers used direct method of data collection to distribute and collect the data from the respondents at the university of Uyo library. Data collected from the study were analyzed using mean scores

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Question 1: What are the library services provided in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state?

Table 1: Observation Checklist on the availability of library services in university of Uyo

S/NO	Items	Status	Decision
1	Online information services	√	Available

2	E-mail services	√	Available
3	CD-ROM searching	√	Available
4	Current awareness services	√	Available
5	Abstracting and indexing services	√	Available
6	User education	√	Available
7	Referral services	√	Available
8	Bibliographical services	√	Available
9	Reference services	√	Available
10	Circulation services	√	Available
11	Photocopying services	√	Available
12	Compilation of reading list	√	Available
13	Publishing services	0	Not Available
14	Document delivery services	√	Available
15	Bibliographic instructions	√	Available
16	Selective dissemination of information	√	Available
17	Repackaging services	√	Available
18	Facsimile services	0	Not Available
19	Internet services	√	Available
20	Binding services	√	Available

The table 1 above discovered that online information services, e-mail services, current awareness services, referral services, reference services, circulation services, photocopying services, compilation of reading list, document delivery services, bibliographic instructions, selective dissemination of information, repackaging services, CD-ROM searching, abstracting and indexing services, user education, bibliographical services, binding services, and internet services were the availability of library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. However, library services such as publishing services, and facsimile services were not available in university of Uyo library

Research Question 2: What is the availability of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: Observation Checklist on the availability of social media tools for library services

S/NO	Items	Status	Decision
1	Facebook	√	Available
2	Whatsapp	√	Available
3	Twitter	√	Available
4	Instagram	√	Available
5	YouTube	0	Not Available
6	GoogleMeet	√	Available
7	Zoom	√	Available
8	Flickr	√	Available
9	Instant Messaging	√	Available
10	Blogs	√	Available
11	Rich Site Summary (RSS)	√	Available
12	Library thing	√	Available
13	Ning	0	Not Available
14	Pinterest	0	Not Available
15	Podcasts	0	Not Available

In Table 2, the available social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state are Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Google Meet Zoom, Flickr, blogs, Instant Messaging

(IM), Rich Site Summary (RSS), and Library thing. However, YouTube, Pinterest, Podcasts, and Ning were not the available as a social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state

Research Question 3: What is the extent of utilization of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state?

Table 3: Extent of utilization of social media tools for library services

S/NO	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Facebook	3.11	High extent
2	Whatsapp	3.16	High extent
3	Twitter	3.09	High extent
4	Instagram	2.95	High extent
5	YouTube	2.02	Low extent
6	GoogleMeet	3.14	High extent
7	Zoom	3.10	High extent
8	Flickr	2.13	Low extent
9	Instant Messaging	2.88	High extent
10	Blogs	2.74	High extent
11	Rich Site Summary (RSS)	2.66	High extent
12	Library thing	2.39	Low extent
13	Ning	2.15	Low extent
14	Pinterest	1.62	Low extent
15	Podcasts	2.14	Low extent

In Table 3, the extent of utilization of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, was high on Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Google Meet, Zoom, blogs, Instant Messaging (IM), and Rich Site Summary (RSS). However, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Podcasts, Ning and Library thing were utilized on a low extent

Research Question 4: What are the challenges faced by librarians in utilizing social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state?

Table 4: Challenges faced by librarians in utilizing social media tools for library services

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Inadequate funding to procure social media tools for library services	3.14	Agree
2	Insufficiency of ICT infrastructure	2.82	Agree
3	Poor confidence of librarians in the use of social media tools	3.05	Agree
4	Erratic power supply	3.12	Agree
5	Poor maintenance culture on social media tools	2.80	Agree
6	High cost of social media tools	3.15	Agree
7	Low usage literacy of social media tools by students	3.02	Agree
8	Poor ICT policy	2.70	Agree
9	Lack of technical support	2.82	Agree
10	High cost of data to use social media tools	2.91	Agree
11	Lack of incentive to change librarian's readiness to adopt social media tools	3.10	Agree
12	Low students' acceptance and attitude to the use of social media tools	3.00	Agree
13	Poor training of librarians in use of social media tools for library services	2.90	Agree
14	Poor librarians' attitude towards use of social media tools	2.85	Agree
15	Poor support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services	2.71	Agree

In Table 4, the challenges faced by librarians in utilizing social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state are inadequate funding to procure social media tools for library services, insufficiency of ICT infrastructure, erratic power supply, poor maintenance culture on social media tools, high cost of social media tools, low usage literacy of social media tools by students, poor ICT policy, lack of technical support, high cost of data to use social media tools, lack of incentive to change librarian's readiness to adopt social media tools, low students' acceptance and attitude to the use of social media tools, poor training of librarians in use of social media tools for library services, poor librarians' attitude towards

use of social media tools, and poor support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services.

Research Question 5: What are the solutions to the problems affecting librarians in using social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state?

Table 5: Solution to the problems affecting librarians in using social media tools for library services

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Adequate funding to procure social media tools for library services	3.23	Agree
2	Sufficiency of ICT infrastructure	3.12	Agree
3	Confidence of librarians in the use of social media tools	3.15	Agree
4	Good power supply	3.02	Agree
5	Routine maintenance culture on social media tools	2.90	Agree
6	Low cost of social media tools	3.05	Agree
7	High usage literacy of social media tools by students	3.12	Agree
8	Effective ICT policy	3.02	Agree
9	Adequate technical support	3.22	Agree
10	Subsidized cost of data to use social media tools	2.98	Agree
11	Adequate incentive to change librarian's readiness to adopt social media tools	3.00	Agree
12	Positive students' acceptance and attitude to the use of social media tools	3.06	Agree
13	Regular training of librarians in use of social media tools for library services	2.97	Agree
14	Positive librarians' attitude towards use of social media tools	3.15	Agree
15	Good support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services	3.11	Agree

In Table 5, solution to the problems affecting librarians in using social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state are adequate funding to procure social media tools for library services, sufficiency of ICT infrastructure, confidence of librarians in the use of social media tools, good power supply, routine maintenance culture on social media tools, low cost of social media tools, high usage literacy of social media tools by students, effective ICT policy, adequate technical support, subsidized cost of data to use social media tools, adequate incentive to change librarian's readiness to adopt social media tools, positive students' acceptance and attitude to the use of social media tools, regular training of librarians in use of social media tools for library services, positive librarians' attitude towards use of social media tools, and good support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services

Summary of findings and Conclusion

From the study findings, it can be observed that online information services, e-mail services, current awareness services, referral services, reference services, circulation services, photocopying services, compilation of reading list, document delivery services, bibliographic instructions, selective dissemination of information, repackaging services, CD-ROM searching, abstracting and indexing services, user education, bibliographical services, binding services, and internet services were the availability of library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. Also, the available social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state are Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Google Meet Zoom, Flickr, blogs, Instant Messaging (IM), Rich Site Summary (RSS), and Library thing. Moreso, the extent of utilization of social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state was high on Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Google Meet, Zoom, blogs, Instant Messaging (IM), and Rich Site Summary (RSS). Similarly, the challenges faced by librarians in utilizing social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state are inadequate funding to procure social media tools for library services, insufficiency of ICT infrastructure, erratic power supply, poor maintenance culture on social media tools, high cost of social media tools, low usage literacy of social media tools by students, poor ICT policy, lack of technical support, high cost of data to use social media tools, lack of incentive to change librarian's readiness to adopt social media tools, low students' acceptance and attitude to the use of social media tools,

poor training of librarians in use of social media tools for library services, poor librarians' attitude towards use of social media tools, and poor support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services. Furthermore, the solution to the problems affecting librarians in using social media tools for library services in university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state are adequate funding to procure social media tools for library services, sufficiency of ICT infrastructure, confidence of librarians in the use of social media tools, good power supply, routine maintenance culture on social media tools, low cost of social media tools, high usage literacy of social media tools by students, effective ICT policy, adequate technical support, subsidized cost of data to use social media tools, adequate incentive to change librarian's readiness to adopt social media tools, positive students' acceptance and attitude to the use of social media tools, regular training of librarians in use of social media tools for library services, positive librarians' attitude towards use of social media tools, and good support of administrators towards the adoption of social media tools for library services

In view of the forgoing, it can be concluded that social media tools such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Podcasts, Flickr and blogs, Instant Messaging (IM), Rich Site Summary (RSS), Zoom, GoogleMeet have been so helpful and have served as a reliable platform for university libraries to provide library services to her users. with the explosion of information and the need for the library to move with the emerging trends, they will have to utilize these social media tools to speed up library services to her users in the most convenient and fastest way without these users coming to the physical library or totally depending on the librarian to assist them to access and retrieve their information needs. In this view, some library users who are handicapped or vulnerable due to obstacles that militate against their effective use of the physical library can leverage on these social media tools such to access and acquire their needed information at ease.

Recommendations

In a bid to enable the continuous usage of social media tools for library services in university libraries, the following are recommended:

- i. There should be availability of e-learning resources like e-content, e-library, and dedicated e-learning portal to speed up the utilization of social media tools for library services
- ii. Librarians need to be trained with relevant skills in the use of various social media tools such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Library thing, etc. to enable them apply them for library services
- iii. There should be adequate power supply to enhance the utilization of these social media for library services
- iv. there should be provision for free campus network and data for students to log in to the social media and access library services
- v. there should be bandwidth availability with a fast data connection to enhance exploration of social media and e-library services
- vi. There should be proper motivation of librarians by their institution to enable them get motivated to effectively utilize these social media tools for library services

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