

Social Networking Tools for Library Services

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ABSTRACT

Today, in the age of information technology the library users are more techno savvy and need micro information about the subject. The paper describes the social networking in library affairs. Now a days everyone is connected with each other by means of various social networks like Orkut, Google, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. This became an effective medium to share the knowledge and skills of the users and library professionals. From the traditional searching process for the books in the libraries the interactive usage of social networking can be now addressed as part of the library system. Social Networking sites are one of the new technologies offering libraries the opportunity to reach out to its clients. The number of libraries which adopt SNSs is increasing.

Keywords: Social Networking, Social Networking Sites, Social Networking Services, Use of SNS in Libraries and Social networking tools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The exchange of thoughts, messages, or information as by speech, signals, writing, or behavior is called communication. Information and communication technology are added advantages in the hands of library professionals in the current scenario. Information and Commutation Technology (ICTs) has ushered in a histrionic change in the realm of information communication in the recent time. The evolution of internet and World Wide Web has transformed the whole globe and present a new way of communication. The limitless connectivity and potential to create an open social order and system of interaction and collaboration have been made possible only because of information and communication technology. We can see the impact of ICT in every walk of life. As everyone needs information pinpointedly and timely manner.

As organizations worldwide thrive on modern technologies, the application of web 2.0 domain in the field of Library information and communication has no exception. The web 2.0 domain has

been introduced as an experimental field to be accepted and implemented for rendering virtual digital library services to patron.

Social networking is going to become not only regional and national but also international in its character as communication facilities become cheaper and widely acceptable. Social networking websites usually have open membership this means that anyone become a member, it's a process of building relationship among a group of who have a common interest. The ICT has made made a possible for the transmission of information to all by using various electronic channels. Social Networking Sites are very popular in the society; it allows users to share ideas, pictures, posts, interests with people in their network. It provides an innovative and effective way of connecting users all over the world. SNSs such as LinkedIn, Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs set up personal communities allow users to view profiles of their friends which is widely used worldwide and very popular in India too.

2. WHAT IS SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking is a composition of individuals or organization, which are attached with one or more individuals such as friend, neighborhood, small communities etc. In the professional field, especially in the workplace, university and colleges, it is most fashionable online networking site among the individuals. This is because of the widely spread of internet in the work places like colleges, universities and other work places the individuals gather and share their first hand experience and information among them.

2.1. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE

A social networking site is an online portal, or web service, which induce to building social relations among group of individuals. It connects the feelings, emotions, sharing information, and other activities of real life situation among peoples. The service of the social network site consists of a representation of each people, his/ her social links, and a range of additional services. A social networking site are web-based and provide variety of service for users to interact over the internet, i.e. E-mail, Instant messaging etc.



There are many social networksites are available, FACEBOOK, Orkut, Twiter , My space, Linked etc are most popularamong them.

2.2 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE

Social networking site or SNS is a phrase used to describe any web sitethat enables users to create public profiles within that Web site and form relationships with other users of the same Web site who access their profile. Social networking sites can be used to describe community-based Web sites, online discussions forums, chatrooms and other social spaces online.

Various definitions of social networking websites exist.

According to **Computing Dictionary** (2011), Social networking site as any website designedto allow multiple users to publish content of themselves. The information may be on anysbject and may be for consumption by friends, mates, employers, employees just to mentiona few.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) stated that social networking websites allow individuals to: (1) construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whomthey share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by otherswithin the system. They also noted that these websites vary in terms of features and membership.Some websites allow photo/video sharing, while others allow blogging and messaging. Participationin blogs has been regarded as social networking because blogs support formation of social connectionthrough blog-roll activities.

Boroughs (2010) stated that social networking websites allow users to share interests and communicate with others.

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.

Taylor-Smith & Lindner (2009) stated that wikis, blogs, chat rooms, instantmessaging, message boards and social bookmarking are technology applications that have been used to facilitate members' interaction, and thus, have been referred to as social networking tools.

Seufert et al (1999) defines social networking in terms of knowledge networking as signifying 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.

Deducing from the above definitions, the term social networking can be referred to as a web platform where people from different cultural settings can connect and interact with each other.

3. TYPES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES

SNS covers the two main formats-sites that are primarily organized around users' profiles and those that are organized around collections of content. However it is important to remember that services differ and may be characterized by more than category.

➤ Profile-based SNS

Profile-based services are primarily organised around members' profile pages –pages which primarily consist of information about an individual member –including their picture, interests, likes and dislikes. Bebo, Facebook and MySpace, are all good examples of this. Users develop their space in various ways, and can often contribute to each other's spaces –typically leaving text, embedded content or links to external content through message walls, comment or evaluation tools. Users often include third-party content (in the form of "widgets") in order to enhance their profiles, or as a way of including information from other web services and social networking services.

➤ **Content-based SNS**

In these services, the user's profile remains an important way of organising connections but plays a secondary role to the posting of content. Photo-sharing site Flickr is an example of this type of service, one where groups and comments are based around pictures. There are many people who have "empty" Flickr accounts –people who have signed up to the service in order to view their friends' or families' permission-protected pictures. Shelfari is one of the current crop of book-focused sites, with the members "bookshelf" being a focal point of their profile and membership. Other examples of content-based communities include YouTube.com for video-sharing and last.fm, where the content is arranged by software that monitors and represents the music that users listen to. In this instance, content is generated by the user's activity. The act of listening to audio files.

➤ **White-label SNS**

Most social networking services offer some group-building functionality, which allows users to form their own mini-communities within sites. Platforms such as PeopleAggregator (www.broadbandmechanics.com) and Ning, which launched in 2004, offer members a different model, based on the creation and membership of users' own social networking sites. These sites offer members the opportunity to create and join communities. This means that users can create their own “mini MySpaces”, small-scale social networking sites that support specific interests, events or activities. Setting up and running a social networking service also means increased responsibility/liability of the individual creator or host for onsite activity.

➤ **Multi-User Virtual Environments**

Sites such as Second Life and World of Warcraft, online virtual environments, allow users to interact with each other's avatars –a virtual representation of the site member. Although the users have profile cards, their functional profiles are the characters they customise or build and control. Friends lists are usually private and not publicly shared or displayed.

➤ **Mobile SNS**

Many social network sites, for example MySpace and Twitter, offer mobile phone versions of their services, allowing members to interact with their friends via their phones. Increasingly, too, there are mobile-led and mobile-only communities, which include profiles and media-sharing just as with Web-based social networking services. MYUBO, for example, allows users to share and view video over mobile networks.

➤ **Micro-blogging/Presence updates**

Micro-blogging services such as Twitter and Jaiku allow you to publish short (140 characters, including spaces) messages publicly or within contact groups. They are designed to work as mobile services, but are popularly used and read on the Web as well. Many services offer “status updates”—short messages that can be updated to let people know what mood you are in or what you are doing. These can be checked within the site, read as text messages on phones, or exported to be read or displayed elsewhere. They engage users in constantly updated conversation and contact with their online networks.

➤ **People Search**

People search is another important web development. There are various kinds of social and people search, but sites like Wink generate results by searching across the public profiles of multiple social network sites. This allows search by name, interest, location and other information published in profiles, allowing the creation of web-based “dossiers” on individuals. This type of people search cuts across the traditional boundaries of social network site membership, although the data that are retrieved should already be public.

4. USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN THE LIBRARIES

Social Networks can be used for providing user centric service in social library environment. User attitude towards library is changing day by day. User wants most practical and speed information in e-learning age. But providing quick and easy retrieval information to user is a great challenge to library. Therefore library should find and search some new techniques for

impacting valuable information to the user. The impact of SNS in libraries is growing day by day. 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.

5. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES TO LIBRARIES

Social networking sites have its own advantages to Librarians and Clients. Some of the benefits are as follows:

- Social networking sites will facilitate collaborations and promote effective communication between Librarians and their patrons.

- It will generate a flow of information excluded from search engines and LibraryCatalogues.
- Some writers as cited in Scale (2008) suggest that social networking sites will lead future delivery of information to meet search queries.
- The crucial aim of librarians is to make library resources available to patrons so if social networking sites will help achieve this goal then it should be pursued vigorously.
- Social networking sites wall linked to a library's web page has the potential of reaping great results by attracting and serving Distance Education Students. Watts etal (2002) stress that it is through social networking sites that any person is capable of communicating and delivering a message to a distant target person.
- It will help Librarians and Libraries to keep pace with technologies and compete effectively with the developed World.(Ayiah and Kumah, 2011)

6. SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATION IN LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT

Social networking helps librarian to share information with patrons and students in the easiest way for digital library environment. Librarian can use in three broad activities in library and information services. The major three are



Information communication

Knowledge distribution

Knowledge organization.

Information Communication: In this process librarian can keep constant touch and effective interaction with staff, patrons, and faculty in online collaborative environment.

The social networking tools that can be practiced by the library for the aforementioned purposes are:

- MySpace: MySpace are extremely popular social networking sites which primarily have a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources.
- Facebook: Another social media site frequented by students, Facebook is librarian friendly. Group communication among patrons can be possible in web 2.0.

- Ning: Librarian can use this tool to get connected with students, library associations, and more. You can also use it to share information with many people at a time.
- Blog: By creating a blog, you'll be able to disseminate information to lots of people at one time. Whether you're updating students on new collections, or just conversing with library staff, blogs are a powerful tool, especially when combined with RSS.
- Meebo: Network and assist students on Meebo, no matter what IM client they use. Online chatting or virtual reference service in library can be impacted by professionals to clients.
- LinkedIn: This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. Whether that's you, faculty, authors, historians, or other sources, they can find them in your LinkedIn network.
- Twitter: Use Twitter, a microblogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival, current content services of library.

Information Distribution: Information sharing is the major part and crucial area where professionals should look seriously while considering and designing library activities in digital age. Patron's satisfaction should be given first and foremost priority by providing right information at the right time in a right way from anywhere. Library professionals should rethink for implementing web 2.0 technologies in library services from early period.

- Flickr: This image distribution tool is a great way to share new image collections. Library can share photo collection of workshops; conference and different programmes that are organised within the campus. You can create image sets with metadata, as well as take advantage of the many plugins available for Flickr users. Flickr users can also help gather missing information about images.
- YouTube: Library video and e-learning tutorials, events and other video library services can be effectively promoted and webcast through YouTube.
- TeacherTube: TeacherTube, which is a YouTube for teachers, presents an excellent opportunity for instructor-librarian collaboration. Instructors can guide students to helpful library resources, and vice versa.

- **Second Life:** On Second Life, you can create a virtual library with streamedmedia, discussions, classes, and more.
- **Wikipedia:** Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia updated by users. You can use this tool to share your knowledge by editing, or simply point library patrons in the right direction. You can also host your library websites on wikisoftware like PBWiki.
- **PBwiki:** PBwiki is the world's largest provider of hosted business and educational wikis. It encourages collaboration from students, a way to showcase work, and offers a central gathering point for information. PBwiki offers controlled access, so you can give some editing privileges, while others can only read.
- **Footnote:** On Footnote, you'll get access to original historical documents, and can update them with your own content and insights. You can even find personal anecdotes and experiences you won't find in reference books.
- **Community Walk:** Community Walk offers a geographical way to interpret text and events. You can use it for instruction, such as showing someone where to find a book, or walk them through a historical and geographical timeline.
- **SlideShare:** Encourage faculty, staff, and students to share their slideshow presentations for the greater community to access on SlideShare. It's a great way to disseminate information among research community to the field of research and development (R&D) activities.
- **Digg:** Digg is a great way to find useful content that you wouldn't come across in traditional ways. Find stories here, then share them with others using Digg's blog function.
- **StumbleUpon:** Another way to find great content is with StumbleUpon. You can channel surf the Internet to find useful content, research tools, and more.
- **Daft Doggy:** If you've found a particularly good resource, you can use Daft Doggy to create a website tour with instructions, pointing out useful references and items of note.

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

- aNobii: Social networking site like aNobii helps book lovers to share reviews and recommendations. It also prepare due date alerts, lending, and discussions.
- Del.icio.us: With this social bookmarking tool, you can create a custom directory for library patrons. Teach them to search by your tags, and it will be easy to find useful Internet research links.
- Netvibes: In Netvibes' new Ginger beta, you can create a public page that can be viewed by anyone. You can use it to help guide patrons to helpful internet sources, news feeds, and more. It can be integrated with many of the tools mentioned here, like Flickr and library blogs.
- Connotea: Connotea is a great reference tool, allowing you to save and organize reference links and share them with others. They can be accessed from any computer and offer integration with lots of other tools.
- LibraryThing: This social cataloging network is great for librarians, and you can catalog along with Amazon, the Library of Congress, and more than 200 other libraries around the world. You'll get recommendations and easy tagging as well.
- lib.rario.us: Another social cataloging site, you can put media such as books, CDs, and journals on display for easy access and tracking.

7. CONCLUSION

Access to Internet connectivity and computers are increasing day by day. In this century no one is interested in printed work; for librarians to make libraries interesting innovations such as 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; announce library programmes on the wall and so on.

In the present era, SNSs have become one of the largest online platforms in the world for sharing real time information. To implement the fourth law of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan "Save the Time of the Users" SNSs is becoming the interest area of libraries, documentation centers, information centers, for implementing new services in libraries and informing their clientele in short time period. User required to be aware about SNS and sufficient training should be imparted to staffs to accomplish the task of planning social software in library. Last but not the least the librarian

must take the responsibility of planning, organizing and implementing social networks in library and information centre.

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Biography

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