

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICES

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ABSTRACT:

Social media reigns as the fastest communication tool in today's world, offering a powerful platform for sharing knowledge and skills between users and library professionals. Recognizing this potential, libraries are embracing social networking sites as a valuable outreach tool. This paper delves deeper into the current landscape of social media and its significance for libraries, exploring its diverse applications in academic library services. It details the use of social media platforms like social networking sites, content sharing sites, collaborative sites, academic-specific platforms, and various social media tools. Ultimately, this paper aims to provide an overview of how social media is transforming academic library activities and services.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Library, Library Services etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized the field of Library and Information Science. The traditional concept of an academic library has been fundamentally transformed by its impact. Today's libraries are not just repositories of physical books but also house comprehensive digital collections, including e-journals, e-books, online databases, software, CDs, DVDs, and even computers. To cater to diverse user needs, many libraries are actively leveraging the power of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Google+. These platforms, originally designed for personal connections, are now being effectively utilized by academic libraries to engage with students, faculty, professionals, organizations, and the broader academic community. This shift reflects the evolving role of libraries from passive repositories to active information hubs, fostering a dynamic and connected academic environment.

SOCIAL MEDIA: CONCEPT:

“Social Media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation, sharing and aggregation of content, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks” (Wikipedia 2023).

Social media tools are digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and consume content, connect with others, and engage in various forms of social interaction. These tools have revolutionized the way people communicate, access information, and participate in online communities.

SOCIAL MEDIA: AN OVERVIEW:

Background of Social Media Development: -The PLATO system, developed by the University of Illinois in 1960 and subsequently marketed by Control Data Corporation, stands as a pioneer in computer-based learning, additionally incorporating some of the earliest functionalities now recognized as social media. In 1991, Tim Berners-Lee created the World Wide Web, enabling online communities and offline group support through weblogs, etc. Web 2.0 transformed online services from communication channels to interactive platforms for social interaction. Social media kicked off in the mid-90s with platforms like Six Degrees, featuring profiles, friend's lists, and real names. This "first social network" was inspired by the idea that everyone is just six connections apart. Social media exploded in the early 2000s, with platforms like Friendster and Myspace paving the way for Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. (Wikipedia 2023).

SOCIAL MEDIA: CURRENT SCENARIO:

The internet has become a fundamental pillar of the modern information society, connecting billions of people worldwide. As of October 2023, according to Statista, a staggering 5.3 billion people, or 65.7% of the global population, were using the internet. This widespread adoption highlights the internet's crucial role in communication, education, commerce, and countless other aspects of life. Social media, a cornerstone of the online world, boasts an even greater reach. With 4.95 billion active users, representing 61.4% of the global population, these platforms have become powerful avenues for social interaction, information sharing, and library services. China, India, and the United States boast the world's largest populations of internet users, followed by Asia as a whole with over 2.93 billion and Europe with around 750 million (Figure1).

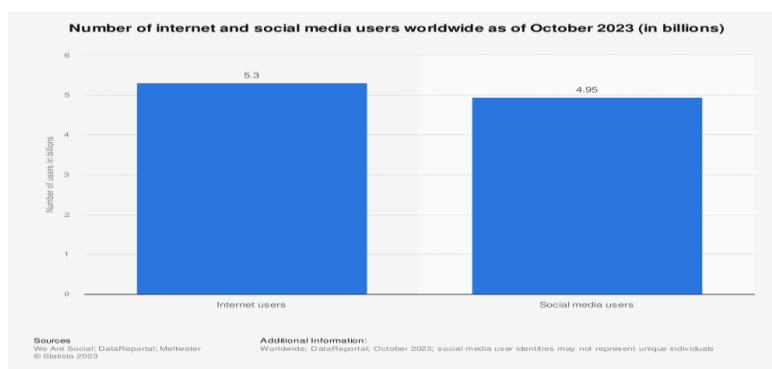


Fig. 1: Snapshot of Number of internet and social media users worldwide as of October 2023 (in billions)

According to Statista, breaking down barriers and connecting the world, leading social networks transcend languages, borders, and boundaries. In 2022, these platforms reached an estimated 3.96 billion users, and their influence is only expected to grow as mobile technology unlocks new avenues for connection in previously underserved corners of the globe. With over 3 billion monthly active users, Facebook remains the world's most popular social network, a title it earned after being the first to surpass one billion registered accounts. Meta Platforms further strengthens its grip on the social media scene with three other billion-user platforms under its umbrella: WhatsApp, Messenger, and Instagram (Figure 2).

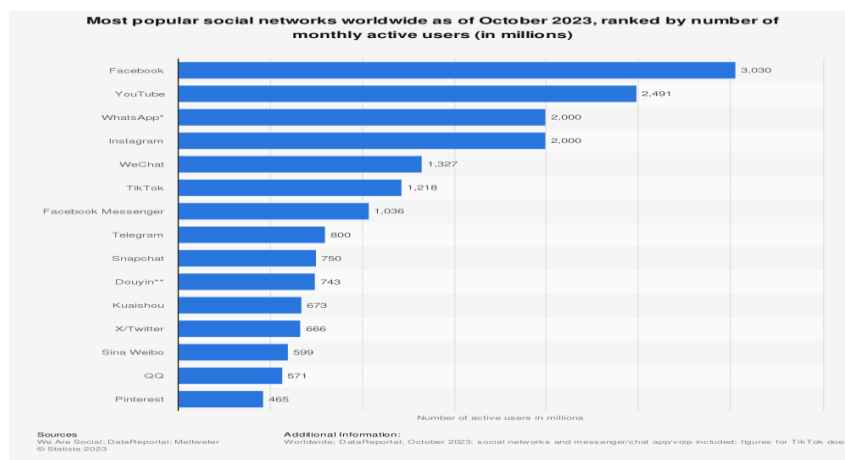


Fig.2: Snapshot of Most popular social networks worldwide as of October 2023, ranked by number of monthly active users(*in millions*)

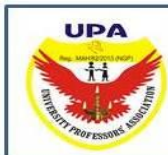
IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:

In today's information-saturated world, the true challenge for library professionals isn't simply maintaining vast collections, but transforming them into active, engaging services that connect with users. This service evolution goes beyond basic assistance to delivering tangible value, empowering users through self-service options while still extending support. Additionally, libraries are no longer confined within their walls; they're actively reaching out, transforming from reactive information hubs to proactive community centers.

Social media platforms offer a game-changing opportunity for libraries to deepen engagement with their patrons, transcending geographical barriers and catering to diverse learning styles and preferences. Libraries have always been hubs for knowledge creation, gathering, and sharing, but in today's digital age, social media empowers them to be even more responsive and accessible. This is particularly relevant for academic libraries, where social media can bridge the gap between researchers, students, and the information they need. By strategically leveraging these platforms, libraries can become dynamic knowledge conduits, delivering valuable resources directly to the doorsteps of their users. Through the use of social media, library professionals can significantly enhance their ability to provide services. Social media platforms act as bridges, connecting library patrons with the diverse services offered. This, in turn, helps libraries fulfill their goals and objectives more effectively. Consequently, the majority of libraries now leverage social media for various purposes, including promoting their offerings, sharing news and upcoming events, hosting video conferences, and even conducting research.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY SERVICES:

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for academic libraries to actively engage with users, both on-site and remote, by extending access to resources and services beyond the physical walls of the library. Several key factors contribute to the effectiveness of social media in this context, like- Attracting new library users, facilitating information sharing and exchange, marketing library resources and services, enhancing interaction with library users,



achieving library goals and objective, creating a more engaging library environment, building a positive library image. Social media platforms relevant to libraries can be categorized based on their characteristics: social networking

sites, forums, wikis, blogs, podcasts, microblogging, bookmarking sites, and media sharing. Here are some of the most useful types of social media for academic libraries:

Social Networking Sites:

Facebook: Facebook is a great platform for sharing news and events, promoting library resources and services, and building a community around the library. Academic libraries can create a page for library and use it to share updates, post photos and videos, and host live events about library, provide instant messages and reference services to users.

LinkedIn: LinkedIn is a professional networking site that can be used to connect with faculty, researchers, and other library professionals and share their ideas with others. Library professionals can create a profile for library and use it to share information about resources and services. **Twitter:** Twitter is a great platform for sharing short updates and news. Libraries can use Twitter to share links to new library resources, promote upcoming events, and answer questions from users, marketing of library services like alert and reference services.

Content Sharing Sites:

Instagram: It is a great platform for sharing photos and videos of library. Academic libraries can use Instagram to show off physical space, highlight new books and exhibits, and share behind-the-scenes glimpses of the library.

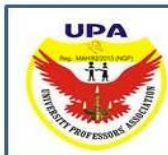
YouTube: YouTube is a widely using platform for sharing videos about library, its resources, and its services. Libraries can create videos about how to use the library, highlight new resources, and interview faculty and staff. **Blogs:** Blogs are a great way to share longer-form content about library. Libraries can use blog to share news and updates, write about library resources and services, and feature guest posts from faculty and staff. Some of the examples are Lislinks, Infoliberalian ets.

Collaborative Sites:

Wikipedia: It is a good platform for sharing information about library and its collections. Librarians can create a Wikipedia page for library and use it to share information about its history, holdings, and services. **Goodreads:** It is useful for connecting with readers and book lovers. Academic libraries can create a Goodreads page for library and use it to share book recommendations, host book clubs, and promote library events.

Discord and Slack: Creating online communities for students and researchers to work together on projects. Hosting live chats and Q&A sessions about library. Providing support and feedback.

Academic-specific platforms:



SlideShare and Academia.edu: Useful for sharing presentations, research papers, and other academic content. Connecting with other scholars and researchers. ResearchGate: It is another social network for academics. It's a great way to find and connect with other researchers in field, as well as to share research and find funding opportunities.

Mendeley: Mendeley is a reference management tool that also has a social networking component. Librarians can use it to connect with other researchers in field, share research papers, and find new research.

CONCLUSION:

While utilizing social media presents libraries with inherent challenges, these obstacles shouldn't be seen as impassable roadblocks. Rather, they offer valuable opportunities for growth and professional development. Social media presents a valuable tool for academic libraries, it requires more than just awareness. Successfully harnessing its power demands an investment in professional development, reliable infrastructure, strategic platform selection, and dedicated social media management. By addressing these challenges and implementing thoughtful strategies, academic libraries can truly leverage the transformative potential of social media to connect with their communities, enhance user experience, and ultimately further their mission of supporting research and learning.

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