

# Application of Social Media in Promoting Library Services: A Survey of Academic Libraries in Kaduna Metropolis

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## I. INTRODUCTION:

Technological innovations that are being adopted virtually in every field of endeavor pose challenges in one way or the other and gradually changing the skills and competencies needed for efficient and speedy service delivery in all walks of life. One of such technological innovations is Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the social media that subsequently follows. All over the world, social media is being used in business, marketing, banking, libraries, etc. to facilitate interpersonal and organizational communication. With this development, it means that the 21<sup>st</sup> century librarians in Nigeria need to be more proactive and innovative towards applying and ensuring that the current technological tools are applied in every aspect of library services in order to meet up with the global best practices. Ekoja (2007) postulated that even though few Nigerian university libraries have achieved satisfactory levels of ICT acquisition and usage, the fact, however, remains that they are all generally aspiring to embrace it at the limit of the resources available to them.

Social media can be seen to be a powerful tool that provides a veritable platform for quick information communication, knowledge sharing and collaboration among friends, colleagues, affiliations, professionals etc, which if it is well applied and utilized in providing library services will in no doubt adequately promote services and activities of libraries being the “hub” of information. A university library that is well equipped with all the library and information resources and services but its resources and services are not duly promoted through the use of ICT cannot maintain its relevance in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Pussadee (2011) remarked that “libraries worldwide have been adjusting to the shift from the printed era to digital era, the speed of change has created new library landscape in terms of services and activities”. Based on this, adopting fully, the use of these technologies in the ICT section of our libraries in Nigeria for the purpose of promoting library services cannot be over-emphasized. Erlendsdottir (1998) observed that “We are no longer just the guardian of books. We are information providers in an environment that is constantly changing and where the information needs to be gathered quickly and effectively”.

It is not a gainsaying, that there is an astronomical increase in the use of social media platforms in our day-to-day activities, work, business, etc. to communicate, promote and advertise in order to reach our numerous target group/audience that we may not get to reach face-to-face. However, the higher percentages of such audience are the young people, i.e. students that are using any of these social media platforms. The opportunity provided by ICT offers solutions to new challenges in the libraries by providing services to its users so as to remain ever relevant in the field of librarianship. From the above statements the questions that are begging for answers are: How far have Nigerian academic libraries adjusted to the shift from print to electronic form of library service? What is the level of application of social media platforms in Nigerian academic libraries? This paper intends to investigate and find answers to these pertinent questions on the use of social media platforms in promoting library services in higher institutions in Kaduna metropolis.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To ascertain the types of social media platforms used in promoting library services in academic libraries
2. To determine the effectiveness of the use of social media in promoting library services and resources.
3. To find out the challenges/problems in the use of social media for promoting library services.

## III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 3.1 Relationship between Social Media and Libraries

It is evident that the world is growing in an astronomical progression in the area of ICTs invirtually every field of endeavor. This paradigmshift has become a must for any organization or firm that quests or desires to remain in the competitive market environment in this digital era otherwise it suffers a serious setback in products/services it provides. However, the use of social media platforms being an aspect of ICT offers numerous opportunities in providing an apt library services. According toEberhart (2010), “A library is a collection of resources in a variety of formats that is organized by information professionals or other experts who provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic or intellectual access and offer targeted services and programs with mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences and the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole”. The social media platforms will enable librarians to increase their visibility and connections with their immediate community in terms of providing essential library services. Hendrix etal (2009) stated that libraries are using Facebook mainly to market the library, push out announcement to library users, post photos, provide chat reference and have a presence in the social network.

### 3.2 Social Media Platforms that can be used in Libraries

**3.2.1 Blogs:** According to (Scott, 2010) blogs are personal websites written by somebody who is passionate about a topic; provide a means to share that passion with the world and to foster an active community of readers who provide comments on the author’s posts.

A blog can be seen as a user generated website where entries are much in journals style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe blog as the social media equivalent of personal webpages and

can come in a multitude of different area. Blog is a vital tool in promoting library services and maintaining a solid public relation between libraries and their communities. It allows pushing an idea out which may be to enlighten, educate, seek opinion, or improve on the current services etc as one may think, generating instant feedback. Blog is written using software that puts the most recent update, or post at the top the site (reverse chronological order). Posts are tagged in selected information categories on the blog and often include identifiers about the content of the post to make it easy for people to find what they want on the blog via search engines. Blogs can be used in library for the marketing and promoting library and information science services to its users. They can be used for outreach, dissemination of information, building library’s image, internal and external communication, highlight of new and value added information resources. Ekoja (2011) opines that blogs are very helpful in promoting library services like new acquisitions, opening and closing hours, library events and programmes, online discussions etc.

Librarians can periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject or issue both in the government and institutions and allow users to comment or contribute to the content, articles on thought, provoking issues can be posted and expect instant reaction (Ezeani and Egwesi, 2012).

### 3.2.2 Facebook

It is a social media networking websites where users can post, comments, share photographs and post link to news or other interesting contents on the web, chat live, and watch short for video. The shared content can be made publicly accessible, or it can be shared on among a selected group of friends or family or with a single person. It can also be seen as a platform that features interactions between users. Facebook users can create a friend list right after membership process and can specify those who can or cannot take part in the interaction when they sign in. The sharing can be conveyed among friends and enriched with comments. Facebook used by academic libraries is to promote the library with a library homepage. Libraries advertise hours, location(s), website information, newly acquired materials etc on Facebook. Fakas (2007) adds that by linking to the library website, the Facebook page acts as a portal to the library. As students always use outside search engines for their research, the Facebook page can serve as a reminder to users, the resources available in an academic library. Wan (2011) adds that university libraries can use Facebook to

provide update on library services, such as new reference services, document delivery, research supports etc. Some libraries also put up post related to library collections and other research resources. Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities (Chu &Meulemans, 2008). Libraries are sharing about themselves- what's happening at the library, what will happen, and what recently happened. For instance, Topeka and Shawnee County Public library purchased and unveiled a new bookmobile. The library shared about the new bookmobile through its Facebook page. Librarians can interact with users to know their information need. Libraries try to link some of these specialized Library applications to Facebook.

### 3.2.3 Twitter

It relies on messaging service, whether it uses a cell-phone, instant messaging, such as Yahoo Messenger or MSN messenger, or through specific websites. It allows the user to send messages to friends and family quickly and easily. Twitter only asks one question "what are you doing?" As long as an answer is 140 characters or less, it is possible for thousands of people to see the answer immediately (Marion &Omotayo, 2010). Waddell and Barnes (2012) note that ease of posting and sharing information on Twitter makes it an essential for libraries to reach their users. Librarians in Nigeria can use this platform to give users firsthand information on the on-going national elections or events. Users can send instant messages (IM) on complaints or ask questions on a particular issue and get a feedback on the spot using Twitter (Ezeani&Igvesi, 2012). University libraries use Twitter account to notify users of new relevant items from collection and events.

### 3.2.4 Youtube

Youtube offers anyone with an internet connection the ability to upload video clips and share them with friend, family and the world, all for free. A reasonable number of people in the society use this site to share video that they have recorded or otherwise captured. One of the possible uses of YouTube is a storehouse for instructional videos with a link that could take the viewer to the library's website for more information.

A reasonable number of people in the society or community use this to share video that they have recorded or otherwise captured. Many

thousands of hours of recent news and entertainment programmes, movie clips, personal productions, and even educational materials are available to be searched and commented upon. Members of library staff can utilize this tool as both an information resource for their patrons and as a platform to add videos marketing the library or teaching the use of databases. This tool can support teaching and learning, for example a complete video of a lecture and practical about "Human Anatomy" can be recorded and uploaded in the YouTube, whereby students, researchers can watch. This will aid better understanding of the student or whoever that may be interested in the knowledge. It can be useful for reference and entertainment purposes. You want to learn something fast? There's probably a YouTube video about it, for example listen to a new song. It is a very good platform to post library- related instructional videos.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was adopted in the course of the study. Abdul-Maliq (2006) defines survey research as a type of research in which one focuses on a definite person or persons or a group or organization or issue to draw a generalization. It is important for the study of wide subjects or issues involving small or large organizations or geographical areas. The population for the study was drawn from twoacademic librarieswithin Kaduna metropolis: Kaduna State University library and Isa KaitaLibrary, Kaduna Polytechnic. Since only two institutions were involved in the study, all the library staff constitutes the population and sample size. The data collection was done using structured and unstructured questionnaire administered to the staff in the two institutions. Seventy (70)copies of questionnairewere administered; sixty seven (67) were completed and returned. The data were descriptively analyzed and results were presented using tables, frequency and percentages.

## V. FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The table below explains the number of questionnaire distributed and received for the purpose of data analysis.

**Table 5.1 Demographic Data**

S/N	Institution	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Retrieved	Questionnaire not retrieved	Percentage (%)
1.	Isa Kaita library, Kaduna Polytechnic	40	38 (56.1)	2 (2.8)	40 (57.1)
2.	Kaduna State University Library	30	29 (43.2)	1 (1.4)	30 (42.8)
3.	Total	70	67 (95.7)	3 (4.2)	70 (100)

Table 5.1 indicates the response rate of the study. Seventy (70) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the institutions that formed the population of the research. Out of the total number of questionnaire, 67 (95.7%) completed and returned the questionnaire. The high response rate

is attributed to the help of two research Assistants at Kaduna State University (KASU) and the fact that both of the authors work in Isa Kaita Library, Kaduna Polytechnic which enabled them to effectively administer and receive the questionnaire.

**Table 5.2 Social Media Platforms used in Libraries**

S/N	Type	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Facebook	23	34.32
2.	Twitter	9	13.43
3.	YouTube	13	19.40
4.	Blogs	8	11.94
5.	Wikis	5	7.46
6.	MySpace	2	2.98
7.	whatsApp	7	10.44

From table 5.2, the analysis shows that 23 (34.32%) of the respondents are more familiar with the use of Facebook in providing library services, while 13 (19.40) of the respondents chose YouTube and 2 (2.98%) preferred MySpace for the purpose of providing various kind of library services. The reason for high preference to Facebook is because it is more popular and particularly used in the academic environment mainly to facilitate interactions amongst students in

the higher institution and also has more than one feature that can be done using one platform. YouTube, which is the second, may be as a result of its audio/visual nature, just like watching a T.V set at home. The complete lecture of a topic, e.g. “Human Anatomy” most especially in the advanced countries institutions can be downloaded for medical students to watch will in turn aid their understanding in both theoretical and the practical aspects of the topic.

**Table 5.3 Integration of Social Media as part and parcel of library services**

S/N	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
1.	Absolutely Inappropriate	5	7.5
2.	Inappropriate	7	10.4
3.	Neutral	16	23.8
4.	Slightly Appropriate	11	16
5.	Absolute Appropriate	28	41.8

Respondents were asked as shown in the above table on the appropriateness of integrating Social media as an integral part of library services. Twenty eight (28) which is 41.8 % of the total responded that it is appropriate. However, 16

(23.8%) remained neutral. On the other hand, 5 (7.5%) believe that it is absolutely inappropriate. This result shows that majority of library staff wants Social media to be fully integrated into their services. The result could be due to the easy and

fast method of receiving and distributing information.

**Table 5.4 Importance of social media in building staff and users' relationship**

S/N	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
1.	Strongly disagree	-	0.00
2.	Disagree	6	8.96
3.	Neither agree nor disagree	12	17.91
4.	Agree	24	35.82
5.	Strongly agree	25	

From table 5.4 above, it indicates that 25 (37.31%) of the respondents strongly agree, followed by 24 (35.82%) in building a good and cordial relationship between staff and users. While 6 (8.96%) of the respondents disagree with the above statement. Based on the above response, it is glaring that the essentials of social media platforms will further build a better working relationship between library staff and users in satisfying users

need at any point in time with just a touch in any of the ICT gadgets devices which are now smaller in sizes and bigger in capacities. The consequence of this could be the fact, the aspects of information science; which are information gathering, processing, disseminating, storing etc can now be done at any time at our own pace with the aid ICT tools. T

**Table 5.5 Frequency of use Social media platforms for library services**

S/N	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
1.	Never	2	2.98
2.	Most never	8	11.94
3.	Occasionally	22	32.83
4.	Almost every time	17	25.37
5.	Every time	18	26.87

The frequency of use social media platforms for library services is presented in table 5.5. The analysis shows that 22 (32.83%) of the respondents said that they use social media platforms occasionally. This is followed by those who use it every time as indicated by 18 (26.81%) of the respondents. Only 2 (2.98%) said that they never use it. Certain factors could be responsible

for these responses. It is possible that some librarians are not adequately trained in the use of ICT and social media and as a result, it will not be easy for them to use it regularly. It could also be due a seeming dislike for social media as a whole as some people think it is a negative way due to bad or pornographic pictures often seen in the social media.

**Table 5.6 Acceptability of the use of social media**

S/N	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
1.	Strongly oppose	1	3.45
2.	Somewhat oppose	2	22.98
3.	Neutral	10	14.92
4.	Somewhat favor	17	25.37
5.	Strongly favor	37	55.22

Table 7 shows acceptability of the use of social media in academic libraries. Thirty Seven (55.22%) reveal that they strongly favor and accept it, 17 (25.37 %) somewhat favor the use of social media in libraries. On the extreme, 1 (3.45%) of the respondents strongly oppose the use of social media. From these responses, it is evident that social media is well favored and accepted in academic libraries. The reason for this is not unconnected to its general importance to library

operations. This response is in agreement with Ekoja (2007) who stressed the importance of social media platforms in library operation and services. Secondly, it could also be due to prevalent use of ICT in libraries. The third reason could be as a result of the prevalence of young people in high institutions who have adopted the social media as their main source for accessing and sharing information, since they are easily attracted to the computer and the internet.

**Table 5.7 Library services accessed through social media platforms**

S/N		Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Informing	6	8.96
2.	Advertising	4	5.97
3.	Educating	28	41.76
4.	Announcement	1	1.49
5.	Reference services	7	10.44
6.	Current awareness services	21	31.34

Table 7 above examines the various library services that are accessed through social media in academic libraries. Twenty eight (28) which translate to 41% of the total respondents indicate that they access educational resources through the social media. 21 (31%) indicate that they use social media for current awareness services. Only 1 (1.49%) use it for announcements. From these respondents, it is clear that majority of the library users patronize social media platforms to advance the course of their education. The reason for this response could be attributed to the fact that most of users of academic libraries are adults, students, lectures and researchers who are seen to be serious minded people.

#### 5.8 Challenges Associated with the Use of Social Media Platforms in Libraries.

The question asked in terms of challenges faced in the use of social media platforms in library services was left open. However, the respondents observed the following as some of the problems; lack of interest among some staff to learn new technologies, inadequate training and re-training of staff to familiarize them with new technologies, poor internet services, erratic power supply, insufficient fund for data subscription, etc.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The advent of Information and Communication Technology has brought about great changes and innovations in the way in which businesses and other human activities are carried out. Libraries for many years remained the store house of knowledge but that central role has been challenged by ICT and the social media which makes information communication and sharing easier and simpler. Based on the above study, it can be concluded that the integration of social media platforms to library operations is critical to its survival and relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, results have shown that in the two institutional libraries studied, social media platforms are occasionally used as part of library services. As a result, academic libraries need to put in place adequate facilities and needed awareness

to enlighten both staff and students on the importance of social media platforms in library services delivery.

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Academic libraries should train and re-train their staff on computer proficiency through regular conferences, seminars, workshops and professional training programmes.
2. Management of academic institutes should ensure the provision of computers and their accessories to their libraries.
3. Adequate funds should be provided to libraries to ensure regular subscription for bandwidth. Fund could be solicited using public-private partnership such as MTN or AIRTEL for internet provision in libraries.
4. Library management should ensure regular and uninterrupted power supply using standby generator, solar, inverter etc that are dedicated to libraries within the institutions.

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