Chapter 21
Social Media in Library and Information Centres

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses social networking as a new tool in information management, using Facebook as case study. It explicates how social networking can enhance library outreach and librarians' collaboration. It presents social networking as new tool in information management that is capable of creating future prospects, opportunities, and hope for library users, and information and library professionals. For the purpose of this work, three groups were created on Facebook. One for library users and two for Librarians: Academic Library Users, African Librarian, and Nigerian Librarians. Social networking sites could be effectively used to disseminate information and promote pleasant professional relationship among librarians and library users. It encourages academic collaboration. With Facebook group, pictures of memorable events could be shared, news could be posted, and meetings, conferences, and workshops could be announced.

INTRODUCTION

The social and communication pattern of our society are being shifted by the influx of Social media products and services such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Bloggers WordPress, Delicious etc. Undeniably, this development has direct impact on various aspects of library and information services; starting from how we find information online, to the ways libraries a reach out and relate with their clientele. This chapter considers social media as an enhancement of library services, library outreach and librarians' collaboration. It presents social media as an effective tool in information management that is capable of creating futures -prospects, opportuni-

ties, hope for library users and information and library professionals.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

It is difficult to give an explicit definition of the term, Social media Many are confused with the use of term with others like social networking, social news, web 2.0., wikis, etc. We often use them interchangeably.

To get better understanding of what Social Media connote let's simplify the term by taking the words and separating them into their different meanings. According to the Dictionary.com website, here are the definition listings for each:

Social: 1. pertaining to, devoted to, or characterized by friendly companionship or relations: a social club. **Media:** 1. a pl. of medium. *(ok that doesn't help, let's go to the second definition-L.S.C.)* 2. (usually used with a plural verb) the means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, and magazines, that reach or influence people widely: The media are covering the President Jonathan speech tonight.

From the above we can now see that Media is an instrument on communication, like a newspaper or a radio, so social media would be a social instrument of communication. It can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting/communication

Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social media dialogues. They support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers (Wikipdia 2010)

Social Media Websites

Now that we have got the simplified meaning of Social Media the next is know what social me-

dia websites are. Any website that invites you to interact with the site and with other visitors falls into the definition of social media.

Social Media is expansive term therefore it covers a large range of websites. But the one common link between these websites is that you are able to interact with the website and interact with other visitors.

The number of social media is increasing everyday. Here are some examples of some social media websites:

Arts, Bookmarking, Cars and Auto, Connecting with Friends, Consumer Reviews, Cooking/Food, Cultures/Foreign Language, Dating, Education/Books, Event Planning, Family, Fashion/Clothing, Finance, Games, General Networking, Health/Medical, Internet Marketing, Link/Website Sharing, Microblogging/IM/Mobile, Movies, Music, News, Pets, Photo Sharing, Politics, Pop Culture, Professional, Real Estate, Religious, Shopping, Social Action, Sports, Technology, Teen, Travel, Video Sharing, Women, Miscellaneous

- **Social Bookmarking**. (Del.icio.us, Blinklist, Simpy) Interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people.
- **Social News**. (Digg, Propeller, Reddit) Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.
- **Social Networking** (General). (Facebook, 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) Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.
- **Microblogging/IM/Mobile:** blogspot, twitter

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