

SELECTIVE SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS IN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

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Abstract: The paper describes the importance and power of social media. Various types of social media have been given. Different areas of libraries and information centres have highlighted in which prominent online social platforms could be implemented. Each type of social media has been described with its implications in libraries. Advantages of social media have been also presented.

Keyword: Twitter Social Media; Library 2.0; Facebook; YouTube; SlideShare.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in computer applications during the last few decades have brought radical changes in the way information is gathered, stored, organized, accessed, retrieved, preserved and consumed. The application of computers in information processing has brought several products and services to the scene. Now-a-days Internet is a genie for information seekers which instantly provides the desired information searched from the World Wide Web. The Internet and the Web are constantly influencing the development of new modes of communication without any geographical barrier encountered by the producer as well as the consumer of information. In the age of Internet, time lag between production and delivery of scholarly information has been drastically reduced [1]. There is a great interest in how the Internet and computers can be combined so as to provide higher quality of social communication. The evolution of social media and social networking sites is undeniably one of the most impressive aspects of the Internet in recent years. Social media enable human relationships through technology. In other words, social media are the media for social interaction [2]. Moreover, social media can be used in all walks of life whether it is education or business and various other fields. The last decade has seen an increase in the rise of social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and more recently TikTok which enable folks to share information about themselves, photos and video and to connect to other members of the website/application [3]. It is safe to assume that social media is here to stay and is now a priority for many organizations. The challenge for all organizations, but particularly acute for people working in the information industry, is how to control and make use of these social platforms to best effect. The debatable term Library 2.0 is open to interpretation but what is clear is that in a networked society library service is likely to be increasingly virtual, participatory and collaborative with the focus on user centered change and participation. In this sense, the library becomes user generated [4].

2. DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

“A social networking service (also social networking site, or SNS or social media) is an online platform which people use to build social networks or social relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections.” [5].

Taylor-Smith & Lindner^[6] stated that wikis, blogs, chat rooms, instant messengers, 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.

In nutshell it may be said that the networked society is today a reality with billions of people connected to the internet and able to communicate through social media such as Twitter Facebook and YouTube. However, although the terms social media, social networks and Web 2.0 have become ubiquitous it is worth dissecting these terms to provide some clarity in this complex world. Drawing a line between the related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content we could define social media as ‘a group of Internet-integrated applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 (the platform) and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (the ways in which people make use of social media)’ [2].

3. WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE LIBRARY?

Social media can be powerful tools for libraries in many ways:

- They disseminate information at very pace;
- They offer a way for libraries to promote their activities, resources and services while allowing a two way dialogue with stakeholders;
- Internet users trust library staff more than most other providers of online support and information;
- Social media can be used in a variety of communication methods broadly summarized as broadcast messages, response to enquiries and then conversation between institution and users;
- They give a competitive edge in a time of major technological change and with access to information widely available libraries need to demonstrate the value of their proposition.
- Social media give librarians a way to reach out to their users who may not have considered the library as a resource for their information needs.

4. PURPOSE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES USE IN LIBRARIES

- To reach a new audience of potential library users;
- To provide quick updates to library users;
- To build discussion groups and collaborative work;
- To promote specific adult programs and services;
- To extend specific children's and youth services programs;
- To push library news and press release;
- To modernize the library image and e-reputation;
- Marketing of library product and services;
- To aware the library users about latest arrivals;
- To send reminders to the users;
- To spread news and service alerts;
- To rise funds.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS IN LIBRARIES

Social media applications have emerged as a very interesting and powerful tool for libraries. The scope of social media applications includes:

- communication with users community;
- interaction with library users and clients;
- marketing of library services;
- users education;
- creating awareness of library resources (new arrivals and others);
- connecting with other librarians and library staff; and
- getting feedback of library and its services.

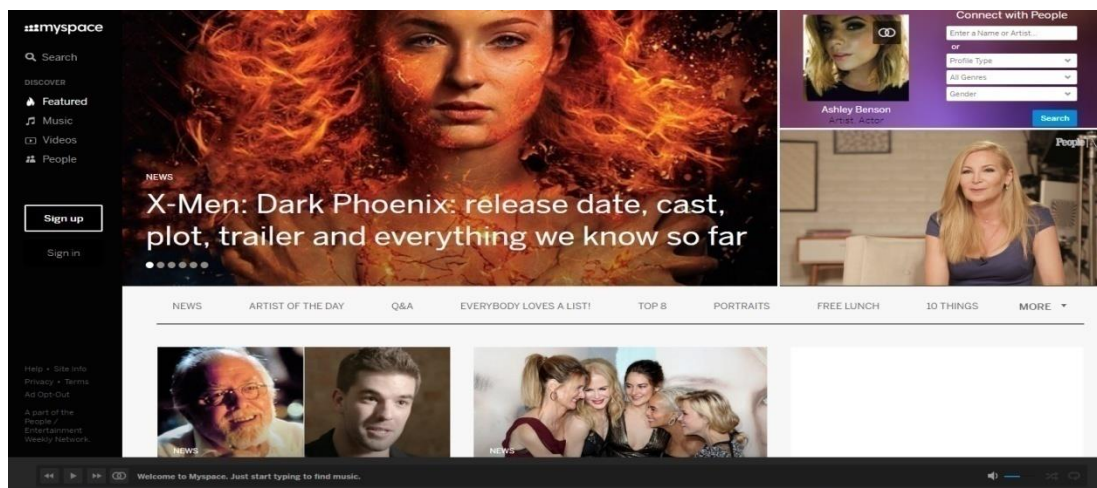
6. SELECTIVE SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS

Social networking tools in libraries have considerable benefits that students can take advantage of. Some of them are the improvement of innovation and learning, the opportunity to accelerate knowledge flow across functional and organizational boundaries, remote access as well as information flexibility for the users, and also the increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of existing, formal communication channels[3].

Social networking tools helps academic librarian to share information with research scholars and students in the easiest way for academic library environment. Academic Librarian can use in three broad categories for serving the user in library and information services. The major three are Information communication, Knowledge distribution and knowledge organization[7].

A. Information Communication:

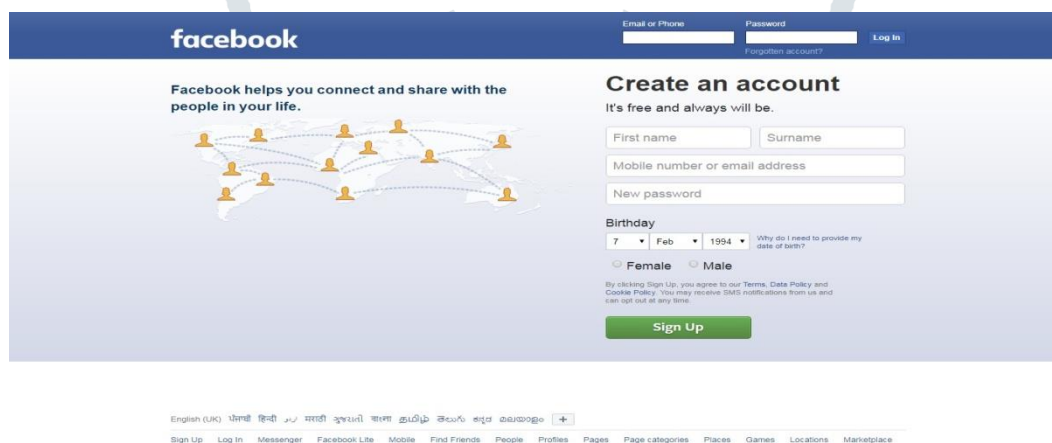
MySpace:(<http://www.myspace.com>)

**Figure 1: MySpace**

<http://www.myspace.com>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [8]

It can be used in the libraries in the light of its benefits which are: sharing ideas and collaboration; sense of community; reading and writing skills; self-expression and empowerment; create positive adult role models; networking; meeting user communities; introduce users to library resources.

Facebook(<https://www.facebook.com>)

**Figure 2: Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [9]

Facebook, as one of the most popular SNS nowadays, can effectively be used by libraries so to support students in their studies and, in addition, inform them of new academic resources and programs that they can take part in. Some of the considerable advantages of Facebook for libraries are:

1. Facebook can work as a tool for interaction among the students and teachers;
2. Facebook works as a tool to mobilize the library services among the younger generation of library professionals;
3. To make the users aware of new arrivals of the library notices have to be made, in the same way, Facebook also shows new information in the form of notification;
4. Facebook helps students or research scholars to develop practical research skills that they need in a world where knowledge construction and dissemination make increasing use of online information networks.

It may be said that Facebook, as an SNS that is mostly used for social communication and interaction, can be a great tool for libraries as through it students who have 'liked' or 'follow' library Facebook pages can get information directly about the new arrival of academic resources at the library or about various activities in which they can participate. This process is very simple as they can see the library notifications on their wall whenever their library uploads a new post or someone 'likes' a library's post [3].

Ning(<https://www.ning.com>)



Figure 3: Ning
<https://www.ning.com>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [10]

Ning is an online platform for people and organizations to create custom social networks [11]. 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 [7].

Library Blog



Figure 4: Austin Public Library Blog
<http://austinpupliclibraryblog.blogspot.com/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [12]

Blogs are helpful in:

- Providing up-to-date information on local events;
- Announcing of new library acquisitions, promoting the services that they work so hard to provide;
- Directing users to useful, new or interesting resources;
- Commenting on local and national events and activities in the IT, book and library worlds;
- Providing news from the library/information service; and
- Requesting feedback or comments and generally help the library to engage with its users, especially those who rarely visit a physical library.

As far as the advantages of blogs in libraries are concerned, they can be used in following ways:

- In current awareness service, blog can be used to highlight news or resources of interest; and to post book reviews from students, faculty and the staff members;
- To list new acquisitions and to announce library news and events;
- Using of systems such as RSS technology is another blog application in libraries for selective dissemination of information;
- It is better place of information exchange [13].

LinkedIn(<https://in.linkedin.com>)

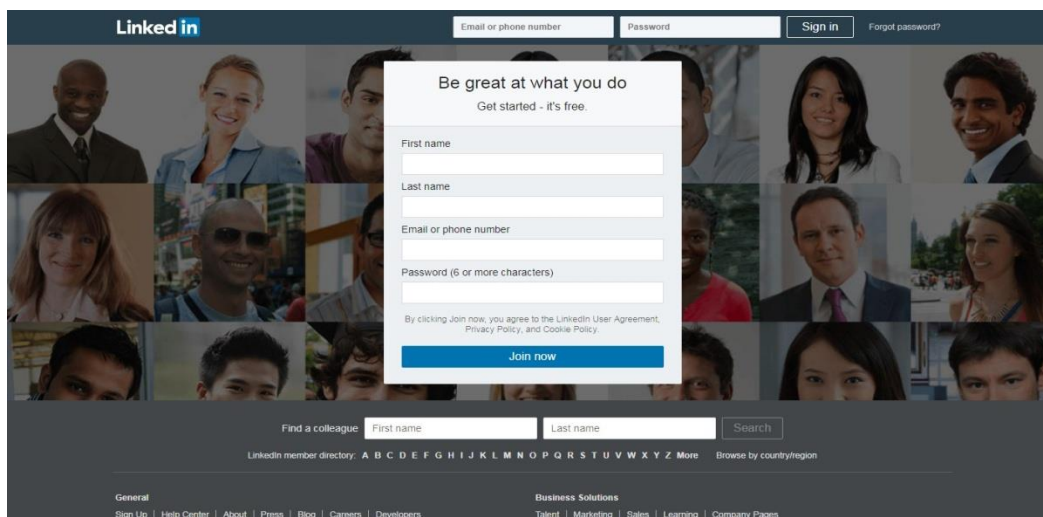


Figure 5: LinkedIn
<https://in.linkedin.com>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [14]

LinkedIn can be a powerful resource for librarians, both as a tool for career development and as a resource to assist library users[15]. 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 [7].

Twitter(<https://twitter.com>)

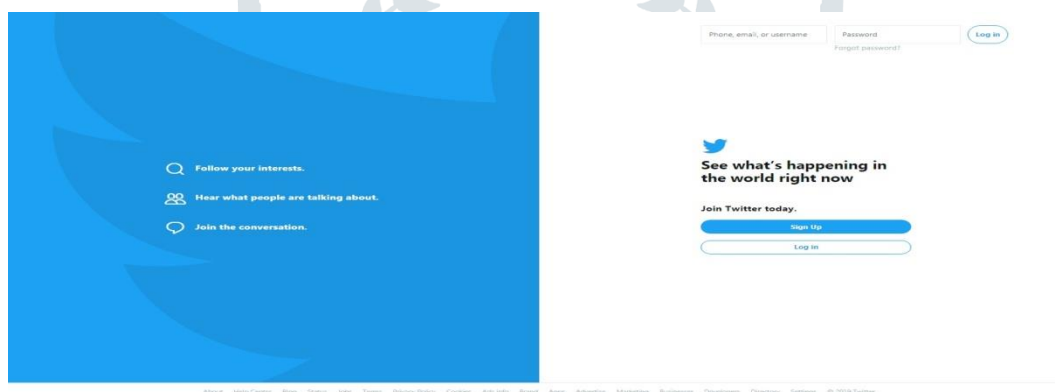


Figure 6: Twitter
<https://twitter.com>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [16]

Advantages of Twitter in libraries:

- A library could share all kinds of news that users want through twitter;
- Twitter is also accessible via mobile device, making easy to transfer and share comments or information;
- Short messages about events such as readings, lectures, book sales, new arrivals and programmes;
- Twitter post can link to interesting news stories about libraries;
- Twitter accounts don't get hacked so it is beneficial for library;
- Colleagues, students and friends may be connected with other librarians, friends and students because of twitter;
- During seminars and conferences twitter feeds will allow user to keep up with registration deadlines, speakers and other details all the time without having to visit the site;
- Library vendors are started with twitting so that the librarians also have the new arrivals and also details of the venders;
- Many major news sites like CNN and BBC have twitter feeds. This makes it easy to just quickly check latest news and information to use in the library reference service;
- Through twitpic, photos of staff and library can be shared;
- Help others by sharing knowledge;
- Get advice from library users [17].

B. Information Distribution

Flickr(<https://www.flickr.com/>)

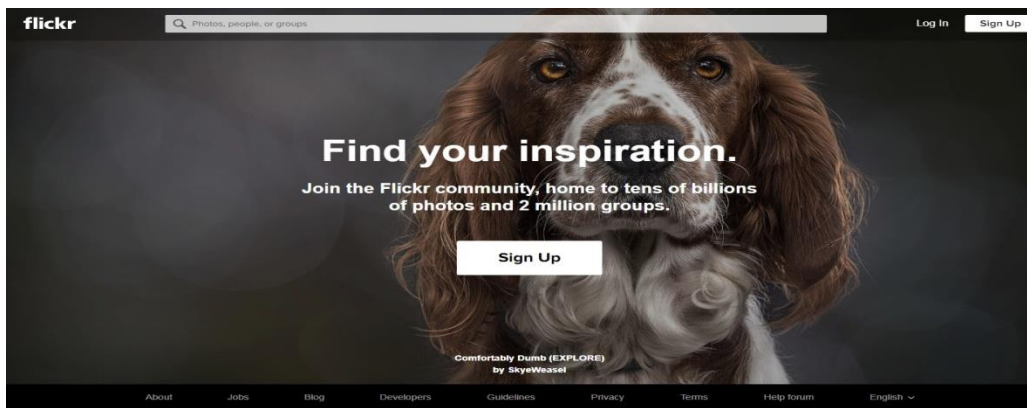


Figure 7: Flickr
<https://www.flickr.com/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [18]

Flickr (pronounced "flicker") is an image and video hosting service. It was created by Ludicorp in 2004. It has changed its ownership several times and has been owned by SmugMug since April 2018[19]. Benefits of using Flickr in libraries are:

- It may be use for recording the library events;
- It may work as a best tool to promote library service and its collection;
- It may provide access to images from the library collection;
- It shares as well as builds knowledge.

Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/>)

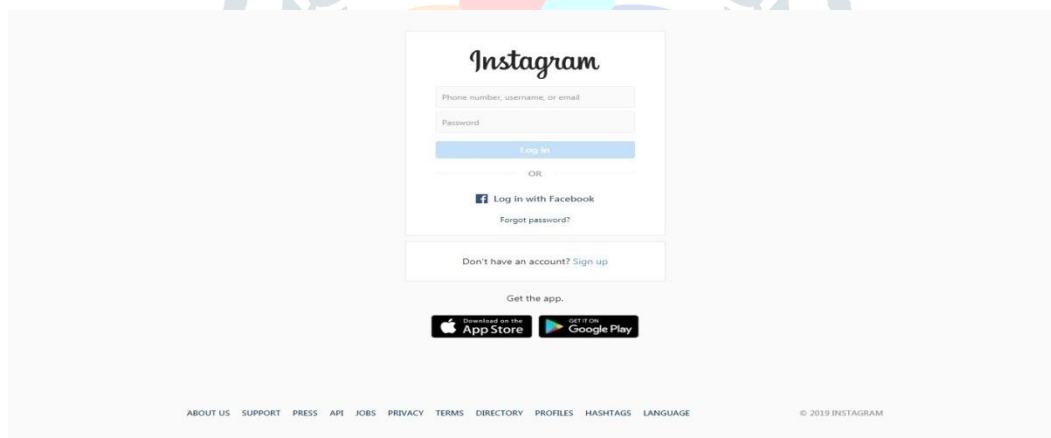


Figure 8: Instagram
<https://www.instagram.com/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [20]

Instagram is another image and video hosting service owned by Facebook, Inc. It is helping libraries in many ways. Libraries can use it to get feedback from the library users on pictures and videos relating to its collections, activities, etc. It can also work as a publicity tool to promote library events. Libraries use it to show the things behind the scenes.

YouTube(<https://www.youtube.com/>)

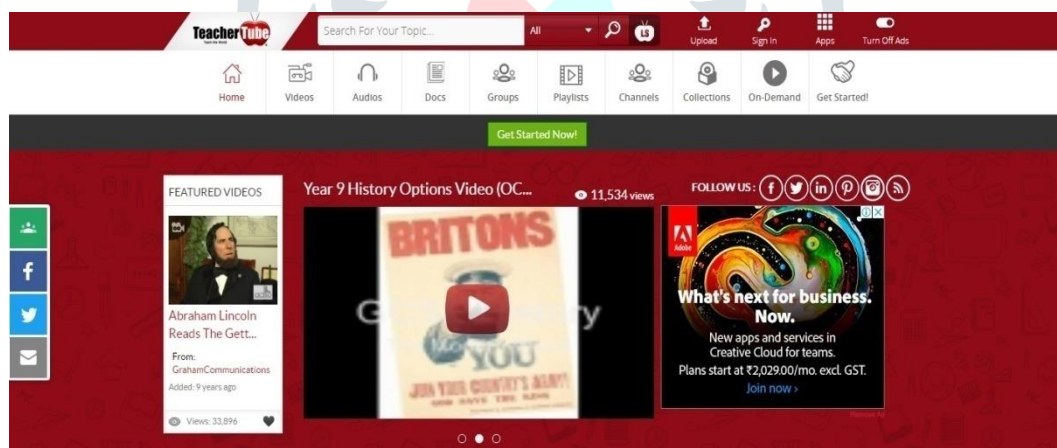
**Figure 9: YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [21]

It is powerful tool to reach a mass amount of patrons with the least amount of effort. Library can make use of it for videos sharing related with the events, library orientation, and other important activities of the library. Librarians also take help of it to do their day to day work or any new challenge relating to library activity. Use of library may be promoted via YouTube. In short, this channel of information communication is being widely used by the library professionals as well as its patrons.

TeacherTube(<https://www.teachertube.com/>)

As its name explains itself, it a video sharing website primarily designed for teachers (Everyone who teaches or want to teach something). It is similar to, and based on YouTube. Library instructions can be provided through this.

**Figure 10: TeacherTube**

<https://www.teachertube.com/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [22]

Wikipedia(<https://www.wikipedia.org/>)

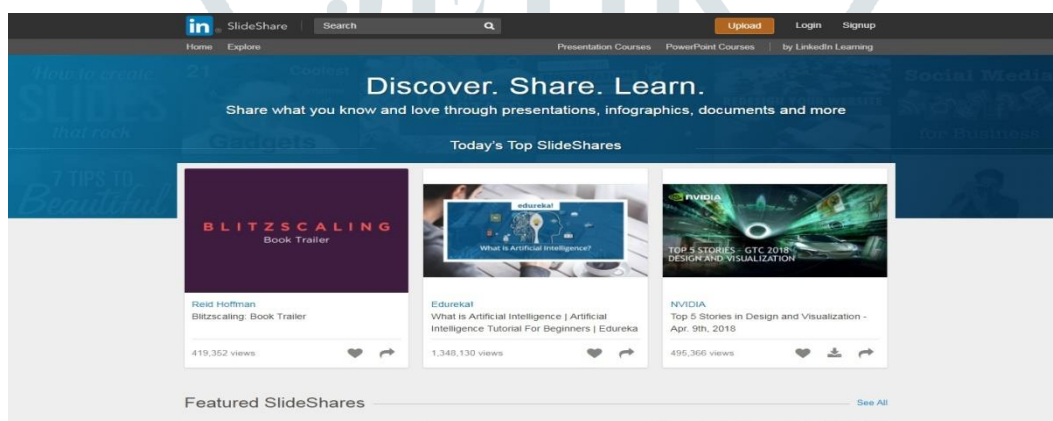
It is a multilingual online encyclopedia updated by its users. Librarians can use this platform to share knowledge. Information contained in this encyclopedia can also be edited or updated. Library professionals can also host their library websites on wiki software.

**Figure 11: Wikipedia**

<https://www.wikipedia.org/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [23]

SlideShare(<https://www.slideshare.net/>)

It encourages 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[7].

**Figure 12: SlideShare**

<https://www.slideshare.net/>, retrieved on 24-12-2018 [24]

7. WEB 2.0 AND 3.0

It is user centered web, where blogs, wikis, social networks, multimedia applications, dynamic programming scripts are being used for collection, contribution and collaboration on the web. The underlying principle is 'share the resources collectively'. Application of Web 2.0 in libraries has taken the libraries into a new generation. It is important for the librarians to experience Web 2.0 tools from a user's perspective and use these tools in modernizing library services. Web 3.0, also known as semantic web, is smarter and can understand what you want [7].

8. CONCLUSION

It has been seen that Social Media are being used constantly in all walks of the life and library is no exception. Libraries are using these online platform in many ways. They are promoting their collections and services via social media. They are getting feedback from the user communities to make day to day work more better. Some online platforms, like YouTube are to be proved very useful to learn new things and to improve the existing ones. In nutshell, it may be said that via these media, libraries can reach their patrons more easily than others.

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