

# Social Media Usage by Library Staff in Academic Libraries: The Case of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The significance of social media in an academic library cannot be overemphasized. The advancement and application of information technology to academic libraries has brought about change in users attitudes and needs, changes in library services and changes in library staff job functions. The objective of the study was to ascertain the awareness and use of social media by library staff of Yaba College of technology, Lagos, Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was employed for the study. The sample for this study comprised of 60 library staff. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected. Findings of the study revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most commonly used social media tools by library staff in promoting library and information resources and services. However, major constraints to social media usage include poor internet access, irregular power supply and lack of social media tools, hence, recommendations were made; these include the provision of internet facilities in all offices in the library and uninterrupted power supply for library staff amongst others.

**Keywords:** Social media, Library staff, Academic libraries, Yaba College of technology, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

The academic library can be regarded as the centre of the learning community, providing a space for students, faculty members and the community to do their research and advance their knowledge. The library staff provides numerous services to these users, addressing their information diverse needs, characteristics, and interests. This point was sustained by Agyen-Gyasi, Lamptey, and Frempong (2010:1) when they asserted that “academic libraries are essential contributors to knowledge generation and serve a wide spectrum of knowledge seekers”. In recent times, the degrees to which academic libraries can provide services to meet the needs of their patrons are factors of availability of skilled personnel and application of modern technologies.

The emergence of ICT in which social media is a part has also brought about change in users attitude, behaviour, needs, and change in the way library staff carry out their job functions. These changes have compelled library staff to prepare themselves in this era of ICT (Rahman, Khatun and Mezbah, 2011). Social media tools such as Facebook, Blogs, Twitter and YouTube among others has changed many facets of human communication which has also changed the library users’ attitude, the pattern of communication and services. This implies that library staff needs to be aware and make use of the social media tools that are available in order to enhance services rendered to users.

The fifth law of Ranganathan emphasizes the fact that “the library is a growing organism”. This fact was sustained by Barber (2011) who opined that library in higher institutions of learning is to be active and constantly changing which is a prerequisite of changing roles for library staff. This means that library staff are to be innovative and creative for them to remain relevant in this ever-changing web environment. Every library staff must have the basic knowledge of operating systems in terms of downloading and installing, attachment of auxiliary devices like scanners; basic knowledge about troubleshooting; knowledge about MS-office; knowledge of electronic resources work and use of the web (social media) (Pawer and Kaur, 2014).

Social media is a communication forum that allows users to electronically share information and knowledge with each other. According to Australian Electoral Commission (2011) defined social media as “online tools and Web sites that facilitate many-to-many communications between users. Specific examples include Facebook and Twitter, but may also include more regional or niche services, and more longstanding collaborative environments such as web-based forums and wikis”. In this light, Constantinides and Fountain (2008) also asserted that the social media is a system that aids the creation of informal users’ network that facilitates the flow of information and knowledge by allowing effective generation, dissemination, sharing, editing of informational content. This means that social media is mainly used to share or convey or communicate information with a wide range of individuals through the help of internet connectivity.

The advancement of information technology has brought about a transformation in academic library operations especially in the use of social media tools which have brought about serious constraints to library staff. Iwhiwhu, Ruteyan and Eghwubare (2010) noted that the challenge of most library staff is the amount of efforts required to attract users to the library and to retain them. Hence, as libraries thrive on modern technologies, library staff are saddled with the responsibility of acquiring new skills and knowledge on the application and use of these tools (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog) to enable them to advocate round the clock library

services to their diverse patrons. It was on this background that the study seeks to examine the usage of social media by library staff in academic libraries with special reference to Yaba College of Technology.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine library staff awareness of social media in Yaba College of technology;
2. Assess the extent of library staff usage of social media tools- Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog;
3. Ascertained motivating factor of the usage of social media tools by library staff; and
4. Investigate the constraints that hinder the usage of social media applications by library staff in Yaba College of technology.

#### 1.1.1 Research Questions

1. What is the library staff awareness of social media in Yaba college of technology?
2. What is the extent of library staff usage of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog?
3. What motivate the usage of social media tools by library staff of Yaba College of technology?
4. What are the constraints to the usage of social media by library staff of Yaba College?

#### 1.1.2 Literature Review

Bradley (2012) defined the term Social Media as the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. In this regard, Sweetser and Lariscy (2008: 179) defined social media as a “read-write Web, where the online audience moves beyond passive viewing of Web content to actually contributing to the content”. Social media does not only provide information, it also provides a forum for individuals to interact with each other (Wasike, 2013). Dickson and Holley (2010) opined that the common social network tools used in academic libraries are the mainstream websites like blogs, wikis, social media websites and social bookmarking websites. This implies that social media encompasses the provision of information and also enable users to interact with each other.

Social media provides an opportunity to enjoy user-to-user interaction distinguishes social media from the traditional media which is characterized by top-down news dissemination arrangement (Clark and Aufderheide, 2009). In the same light, Oge (2014) saw social media as an online media that takes communication beyond the restraint of the traditional media.

On the other hand, Okoro and Nwafor (2013) opined that social media are interactive web-based platforms that offer citizens (library staff) opportunity and place to connect, share opinions, experiences, views, contacts, knowledge and expertise. In addition, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also explained Social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, social media consists of various user- driven marketing channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, WhatsApp and it has a number of benefits to library staff and users.

- **Facebook** is another tool that library staff can use in disseminating information and giving the library a facelift globally. According to (Potter, 2011), Facebook can be used for marketing libraries and information centres in several ways. Through the Facebook page/account, library staff can draw users’ attention to useful hidden treasures of the library that library users have forgotten or are not aware of, such as grey literature, current awareness resources and reserve resources. If time is limited, Facebook can be populated via other platforms such as Twitter feedback, the library calendar, and library Blog. Also, OPAC search can be embedded on the Facebook page for ease of library users. Gallardo (2013) also suggests best practices for library staff Facebook page: stay to the point, pin important posts to the top of your page, be casual and conversational, use images, post consistently, post the same types of content on the same day of the week, give fans access to exclusive information or content, find your optimal time to post, and take advantage of Insights
- **Twitter** is another platform for frequently updating collections, new arrival, current content services of the library and advertising library services. Waddell and Barnes (2012) noted that the ease of posting and sharing information on Twitter makes it an essential tool for libraries to reach their users. Library staff can use this platform to give users firsthand information on the on-going events. This infers that users send in queries and get feedback from library staff. Twitter can be used to keep library staff and patrons updated on library’s daily activities; for example, frequently updated library collections. Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status updates. It was also emphasized that twitter can create library service alerts (Ezeani and Igwesi, 2012).
- **The blog** is an important social media tool that enables library staff to market and promote their library activities and service. Ekoja (2011) expressed that blogs are very helpful in promoting library services like new acquisitions, opening hours, library events and programmes, online discussions, etc. Dickson and Holley (2010) added that library staff can post news about the library as well as events occurring in

the library. This implies that there is a need for consistent updating of the blogs in order to keep the library staff as well as users abreast of available library services and resources. Blogs enable library staff to periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject matter and let users comment or contribute to the subject matter that is being discussed and expect instant feedback (Ezeani and Igwesi, 2012)

- **WhatsApp** is yet another social media platform that allows interaction between library staff and their colleagues and also promotes library services to the users. WhatsApp Messenger is a 'cross-platform messaging application which allows users to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS' (WhatsApp.com, 2012). The application is compatible with iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Nokia, and other Windows smartphones. WhatsApp features include one-on-one chat, group chat, push notifications, sending and receiving both video and audio files (Shambare, 2014). By September 2015, it was estimated that WhatsApp had more than 900 million monthly active users up from over 700 million in January 2015. The service is one of the most popular mobile apps worldwide. (Statista, 2015).

There are many studies on use of social media in academic libraries, among others are;

Kwanya, Stillwell and Underwood (2012) reported that Kenyan library staff mentioned that social media tools enhance interactivity between users and library staff in the process facilitating seamless communication and feedback. Xu, Ouyang and Chu (2009) also found out that social media tools can enable collaboration, they offer improved section management through allowing instant communication, and also improve accessibility and integration of cataloguing resources for cataloguing departments. Draper and Turnagae (2008) who studied Blogmania: Blog use in academic libraries found out that Blogs are mostly used by library staff in promoting library services. On the other hand, Priolkar and Kumbhar (2015) studied the use of social media sites by library professional found out that library professionals majorly use Facebook in disseminating information to users of the library.

In Hong Kong, Chu and Du (2013) studied the use of social networking tools in academic libraries. The study adopted a survey questionnaire for data collection which was sent to 140 libraries. According to the study, it was obvious that through the use of social media, library staff have been able to establish a level of engagement with their colleagues. This has ensured that they are updated with the latest news and new trends within their profession. Mitchell and Watstein (2007) asserted that today's reference and information literacy library staff have a unique opportunity to step up to the multifaceted challenge of visibility' in online environs (such as Facebook) based on the fact that these online environments are the places where students and scholars exist.

Irrespective of the benefits of social media as stated above, there are some challenges to the use of social media by library staff in academic libraries in Nigeria. Ezeani and Igwesi, (2012) acknowledged that Social Media provide important opportunities to libraries. They added that library staff can use these platforms for marketing library and information services. The study identified the challenges faced by Nigerian libraries in the use of Social Media as lack of awareness of Social Media, lack of trained staff, lack of Government intervention, bandwidth problem, technophobia, and unreliable power supply. To support this finding, Ossai-Ugbah (2012) opined that consistent power failure increases the cost of running the library making it difficult for library staff to use social media for marketing library and information services in Nigerian university libraries. In the same light, Shehu, Urhefe, and Aworo (2015) in their study of accessibility and utilization of internet service in Nigeria libraries highlighted several challenges faced by the staff while accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries. The majority of the respondents indicated that power outage and unavailability/inaccessibility of internet were some of the challenges facing staff while accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised of 60 library staff of Yaba College of technology, Lagos state. Total enumeration technique was used to cover all 60 library staff for the study. A structured questionnaire titled social media usage by library staff (SMULS) was used to collect data. A total of 60 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 40 copies were returned which amounted to a 67% response rate. This percentage of questionnaire response rate is acceptable as it is over 60%. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

## 2.1 Demographic Data

**Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
male	15	37.5	37.5
female	25	62.5	62.5
Total	40	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2015)

From Table 3, it could be seen that majority of the respondents are females 25(62%) while males are 15 (37.5%). This means that there is more female library staff in Yaba College of technology Lagos, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Educational Qualification**

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
Bachelor	18	45.0	45.0	65.0
MSC library science	11	27.5	27.5	92.5
Msc non-library science	2	5.0	5.0	97.5
Others	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 2, shows that majority of the respondents have bachelor degree 18 (45%), followed by Masters in library science with 11(27.7%) followed by diploma degree with 8(20%) and Masters in non-library science 3(7.5%). This implies that majority of the library staff are professionals as they have their degrees in librarianship.

## 2.2 Data Analysis

The research questions raised for this study were answered using the data obtained from the field.

**Research Question 1:** What is the library staff' awareness of social media in Yaba college of technology?

The analyzed data in Table 1 provides an answer to this research question.

**Table 3: Awareness of social media tools**

Awareness of social media tools	
Facebook	36 (90%)
Blog	21 (52.5%)
Twitter	25 (62.5%)
WhatsApp	33 (82.5%)
Linkedin	10 (25%)
YouTube	24 (60%)
Others	2 (5%)

Out of all the above mentioned social media tools in table 3, 36(90%) of Yaba college of Technology (YABATECH) library staff were aware of majorly Facebook, WhatsApp 33(82.5%) and Twitter 25(62.5%). There was minimal awareness of Blog 21(52.5%) among the library staff. This finding was not in collaboration with the finding of Draper and Turnage (2008) who found out that Blogs were mostly used by library staff in promoting library services.

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent of library staff usage of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blog?

**Table 4: Extent of social media usage**

How often do you use social media tools?					
	Never	Everyday	Twice a week	Once a month	Total (%)
Facebook	4 (10%)	23 (57.5%)	10 (25%)	3 (7.5%)	100
Blogs	18(45%)	9(22.5%)	8(20%)	5(12.5%)	100
WhatsApp	7(17.5%)	25(62.5%)	6(15%)	2(5%)	100
Twitter	18(45%)	10(25%)	4(10%)	8(20%)	100
YouTube	13(32.5%)	13(32.5%)	10(25%)	4(10%)	100
Linkedin	27(67.5%)	6(15%)	4(10%)	3(7.5%)	100

Table 4 shows that library staff often make use of WhatsApp and Facebook everyday which had the highest score 25(62.5%) and 23(57.5%) respectively. This finding collaborated with that of Priolkar and Kumbhar (2015) who reported that library professionals mostly use Facebook in disseminating information. In this regard, Mitchell and Watstein (2007) who asserted that today's reference and information literacy library

staff have a unique opportunity to step up to the multifaceted challenge of visibility' in online environs(such as Facebook) based on the fact that these online environments are the places where students and scholars exist.

**Research Question 3:** What motivate the usage of social media tools by library staff?

**Table 5: Motive for Usage of Social Media Tools by Library Staff**

I use social media for the following reasons	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total (%)
Reference service	4(10%)	2(5%)	27(67.5%)	7(17.5%)	100
Selective Dissemination of Information	4(10%)	2(5%)	25(62.5%)	9(22.5%)	100
Discussion with users	8(20%)	3(7.5%)	22(55%)	7(17.5%)	100
Interaction with colleagues	4(10%)	7(17.5%)	16(40%)	13(32.5%)	100
Announcement of library events /services/news	10(25%)	11(27.5%)	11(27.5%)	8(20%)	100
Advertise my library	8(20%)	9(22.5%)	15(37.5%)	8(20%)	100
Information literacy programmes	6(15%)	5(25%)	20(50%)	9(22.5%)	100
Keeping track with current trends in library	4(10%)	4(10%)	22(55%)	10(25%)	100

Table 5 shows that library staff in Yaba College of Technology use social media tools for promoting library services which include reference service, selective dissemination of information which had the highest frequency 34(85%). Library staff also use social media tool in keeping track with current trends in the library with 32(80%). This finding is in collaboration with that of Chu and Du (2013) who reported that through the use of social media, library staff have been able to establish a degree of engagement with their colleagues. This has ensured that they are updated with the new trends within their profession.

**Research Question 4:** What are the constraints to the usage of social media?

The analyzed data in Table 4 provides an answer to this research question.

**Table 6: Constraints to Usage of Social Media**

Constraint to usage of social media	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total (%)
Lack of management support	8(20%)	13(32.5%)	12(30%)	7(17.5%)	100
Lack of skills and personal knowledge	11(27.5%)	12(30%)	12(30%)	5(12.5%)	100
Lack of social media tools	7(17.5%)	13(32.5%)	17(42.5%)	3(7.5%)	100
Poor access to internet	5(12.5%)	11(27.5%)	15(37.5%)	9(22.5%)	100
Lack of cooperation among staff	9(22.5%)	21(52.5%)	8(20%)	2(5%)	100
Lack of awareness	5(12.5%)	18(45%)	14(35%)	3(7.5%)	100
Irregular power supply	8(20%)	10(25%)	17(42.5%)	5(12.5%)	100
Lack of finance	5(12.5%)	18(45%)	15(37.5%)	2(5%)	100

Table 6 confirms that some of the major constraints to social media usage includes poor internet access with 24(60%), irregular power supply with 22(55%) and lack of social media tools 17(42.5%). This finding is in line with Ezeani and Igwesi, (2012) whose study identified the challenges faced by Nigerian libraries in the use of Social Media as lack of awareness of Social Media, lack of trained staff, lack of Government intervention, bandwidth problem, technophobia, and unreliable power supply. The finding also collaborated with that of Shehu, Urhefe, and Aworo (2015) who in their study of accessibility and utilization of internet service in Nigeria libraries highlighted several challenges faced by the staff while accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries. The majority indicated power outage and unavailability/inaccessibility of internet were some of the challenges facing staff while accessing the internet in Nigeria libraries.

### 2.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings from the research revealed that among the social media tools mentioned, library staff were aware of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. This finding disagrees with that of Draper and Turnage (2008) who found out that Blogs were mostly used by library staff in promoting library services.

In assessing the extent of social media usage by library staff in Yabatech, it was revealed that they mostly use WhatsApp and Facebook daily in rendering services to users and this finding collaborated with that of Priolkar and Kumbhar (2015) who reported that library professionals mostly use Facebook in disseminating information. In this regard, Mitchell and Watstein (2007) asserted that today's reference and information literacy library staff have a unique opportunity to step up to the multifaceted challenge of visibility' in online environs(such as Facebook) based on the fact that these online environments are the places where students and

scholars exist. In addition, library staff use social media tools for reference services, Selective Dissemination of Information and keeping track with current trends in the library. This finding is in collaboration with that of Chu and Du (2013) who reported that through the use of social media, library staff have been able to establish a degree of engagement with their colleagues.

Conclusively, findings from the study also revealed that some major constraints to social media usage include poor internet access, irregular power supply and lack of social media tools.

### 3. Conclusion

Social media usage is essential in academic libraries as it will help library staff keep themselves abreast of new innovations in their career and further helps to provide services that will meet the varying needs of their patrons. Based on the findings of the study it could be seen that library staff in Yaba College of technology make use of majorly facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter in communicating and providing library and information services to users. This means that library staff have not fully utilized other social media tools and as such there is a need for proactive awareness and training to educate library staff.

However, challenges such as poor internet access, irregular power supply, lack of social media tools and lack of management support were issues that must be looked at critically in order to derive maximum benefit from the use of social media.

### 4. Recommendations

For proper awareness and use of social media, the following are the recommendations were made by the researchers in order to enhance the effective use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in the library. To start with, the academic library management should ensure they acquire and made available internet facilities for all library staff. They can also solicit for fund from federal or state government for internet subscription in their libraries. There should also be regular and uninterrupted power supply for staff in the library to enable consistent use of social media tools in disseminating information to users of the library. Lastly, academic library management should support their staff by persuading them to attend workshops, conferences and seminars in order for them to update their skills on all the various social media tools and keep abreast with current technological trends.

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