# The Role of a Librarian in Using Social Media Tools to Promote the Research Output of HIS/ HER Clienteles

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**Abstract**
Social media has the potential to facilitate much closer relationship between libraries and their patrons wherever users are based and however they choose to learn about and access library services and resources. This paper therefore revealed the role of a librarian in using social media tools to promote the research output of its clientele. The study also revealed that current usage of social media by the library community generally remains and ad hoc, and somewhat experimental, but the uptake of these tools is accelerating and the likely play an interesting important role in library service provision and outreach in the future.The study revealed some of the role of a librarian in using social media for advocacy is to offer practical advice about how researchers can make their research output visible to rest of the scholar and to provide both print and non-print (electronic) materials that are relevant to the area of specialization of its clientele the right information, in a right format and at the right time. The study also revealed that librarian can also search for conferences online that match area of its clientele discipline or area of specialization on its client behalf and forward it to its clientele for further action.
**Keywords:** Libraries, Librarian, Social Media Tools, Advocacy, Clientele.

## 1. Who is a Librarian?
A Librarian is a trained Information Specialist who holds a University undergraduate degree and a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defined a Librarian "as a person who work professionally in a library and may hold a degree in Librarianship (known either as Library science or Library and Information science). A librarian is also a specialist in library work, that is, a person who is responsible for a collection of specialized or technical information or materials, such as musical scores or computer documentation. Those (librarians) who are working in academic environment are called "Academic Librarians".

Academic librarians are responsible for acquiring, organizing, managing and distributing library resources, and ensuring that library provision meets the needs of all its users. Academic librarians are responsible for providing support to academic community and also help its institutions to achieve its mission and vision, that is, the organization objectives.

## 1.1 What is Social Media?
Social media can be defined as "various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications (Penzhom, 2015). Social media also includes web-based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into interactive dialogue (Wikipedia.com).

According to Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, "Social Media" are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Social Media platforms, for example Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and Google+, have become a very important part of our day-to-day communication. Massive amounts of information are potentially contained in these networks and search engines are being created to search for relevant information contained in these networks. It is also "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". (A definition by Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein found on Wikipedia)
Study found that social media is used by libraries to deliver a blend of:
- Customer service
- News and updates
- Content/ collection promotion
- Dissemination of the institutions' research output
- Provision of educational tools and resources
- And for building relationships both within and outside of the institution
- Also found shift from using social media as the voice of the institution to being the voice of a librarian within the institution

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wherever users are based, and however they choose to learn about and access library services and resources. Current usage of social media by the library community generally remains and ad hoc and somewhat experimental, but the uptake of these tools is accelerating, and they likely play an increasingly important role in library service provision and outreach in the future. Some examples of use of social media in university libraries are: Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Flickr, e.t.c.

### 1.1.1 What are the Reasons for Using Social Media in the Libraries?
Librarians have several reasons for using social media in the library and it can be summarized as follows:
- To seek opinion on the library and its services for self evolution and purposes;
- To encourage debate and to instigate an opportunity to respond to library user feedback;
- To reach library users in their homes or 'virtual spaces' as today's modern online library is no longer solely relying on its physical space as an access point;
- To encourage collaboration, for example through collection development and building repositories of collaborative content specific to certain user groups;
- To connect with other librarians and keep abreast of industry news;
- To build a sense of community with both users and also with other institutions and industry contacts, etc.

### 1.1.2 What are the Advantages of Using Social Media in the Libraries?
There are a lot of advantages and benefits for librarians and libraries on the use of social media in the library and these can be summarized as follows:
- It promotes library services and disseminate news quickly, delivering this information more directly to library users;
- It helps gather feedback to enhance user services;
- The promotion of library holdings via social media can help increase usage of content;
- It requires little training;
- It increases engagement and interactions with the library users;
- It enhances communication both within the library and with other departments, etc.

### 1.1.3 What are the Challenges in Using Social Media in the Libraries?
The challenges associated with the use of social media on libraries include the following:
- Social media can require considerable time commitment from library staff;
- It can be a challenge for librarians to use an informal but presentable tone, or deliver social media content in a bilingual or multilingual region;
- Social media can require technological expertise, for example customizing application to provide access to only catalogs;
- Levels of interest in and skills with using social media vary enormously across library staff;
- A library needs to work hard to maintain engagement with library users and attract popularity;
- There are limited funds to support more advanced social media usage/ features and the training that would be required to enable this, etc.

### 1.2.1 What is the Role of a Subject Librarian In Using Social Media for Advocacy?
The role of a subject librarian in using social media for advocacy is that he/she can offer practical advice about how researchers can make their research output visible to rest of the (scholar) world (Penzhom, 2015).

Another role of a subject librarian is to provide both print and non-print (electronic) materials that are relevant to the area of specialization of his/her clientele the right information, in a right format and at the right time. Information professional/ librarian can make a significant contribution to increasing digital inclusion of materials in the library.
- Librarian should be versatile in all fields of knowledge, in order words, subject librarian should have more knowledge of his/her clients' discipline/ area of specialization;
- Librarian should also know which social media is relevant to his/her client discipline/ area of specialization;
- Librarian should be aware of current and changing local research interest of his client;
- Librarian should have the ability to to advice his/her client on current trends on his/ her field, best practice and available options in research publication;
- Librarian should be knowledgeable and understand the primary sources he/she would recommend to his/her client.
- Librarian should have the ability to advice his/her client on the value and use of mobile technologies, Web.2.0 and other communication tools to his/her researcher.

### 1.2.2 What Social/digital advocacy is and the advantages of using social media for advocacy?

Digital advocacy has to do with the approach in which the librarian engaged his/her clientele online and this is by creating a profile for his/her clientele on a social media platform like LinkedIn, Google Scholar, Facebook, Academia, Twitter, e.t.c. to mention a few.

According to Penzhon, "Advocay can include many activities that person or organization undertakes including media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publishing research. It is also a way of producing relevant resources that reflect the 'real story of one's community Advocacy can be regarded as an action that speaks in favour of, recommends some materials for a client.

The librarian can also search for conferences online that match area of his/her client discipline or area of specialization on his/her client behalf and forward it to his/her client may be he/she will like to go for the conference and present paper so that when the researcher comes back, the subject librarian can now assist the up-coming researcher to upload his/her conference presentation online so that other researchers that fall to the same field with the researcher can see it and by doing these, the librarian is projecting the up-coming researcher to the world.

### 1.2.3 Advantages of Using Social Media for Advocacy:

- One of the advantages of using social media for advocacy is that, it helps the researcher to stay connected and develops important skills;
- It also serve as interactive dialogue, that is , you have 'conversations' rather than just broadcast information and ideas.
- It's essential to find work and improve researcher's lives
- It saves money
- It enables a skilled workforce, strong community and a successful society.

### 1.3.1 Who is Our Client is, and what his/her field of research entails?

Librarians should know his/her client area of specialization. Librarian should also know the area of his/her client interest, their research field and what it entails in order to provide for their needs at the appropriate time. if their client has some challenges, like visually impaired, e.t.c, librarians should be ready to provide for their needs as well as know their area of challenges and provide adequate provision for them all. This will help the librarian to provide the right information at the right time for his /her client.

### 1.3.2 How will a librarian go about setting the scene for promoting the work of his/her researcher?

People need the right information, in the right format and at the right time. As a result, librarian should be able to provide his/her client the right skills to retrieve information online, access, motivation and trust to get online and get the benefits of being digitally included.

As a Subject librarian, one of the thing that a librarian needs to do for his/ her client is to first of all create a profile on the internet for his/her client on **LinkedIn** which it's a professional social network and, also upload the area of his/her client specialization on the internet in order for the researcher to gain more professionals and older researchers to know which particular area the up-coming researcher is working on. As a result of this, all the older researchers will be contributing and sending both journal articles and electronic books that has to do with his/her area of specialization to his/her LinkedIn page in order to help the younger researcher to grow fast in his/her choosing career. LinkedIn is widely known as destinations for professional social network. It also sophisticated and has reputation.

**Google Scholar**: (http://scholar.google.com) gives access to academic literature that has been peer reviewed and is generally trustworthy. This contrasts with content from general search engines where databases are created by harvesting any site that has a link from another site. Any information you find using a general search engine should always be viewed with caution (Cosijn,2015).

Google scholar is another social media tool the librarian can use for his/her client. The reason for choosing Google scholar for the up-coming researcher is that, Google Scholar is a web resource that allows users to search for journal articles, citations, theses, preprints and book availability on the web. Google Scholar is a useful social media platform. Materials located using Google Scholar come from a wide variety of sources including; selected academic publishers, selected professionals. Universities, Scholarly articles available across the open web, e.t.c, (Friend, 2006). Google Scholar is potentially good for researchers of Academic Information and the value of Google Scholar as an information resource has received much scrutiny in scientific and academic circles (Friend, 2006).

The goal of Google Scholar is to make peer-reviewed papers, articles, abstracts, books and theses available and to help the researchers to identify the most relevant scholarly research. If the researcher has to find academic material on the Web, the Information professionals/ Librarian will strongly recommend the researcher to use Google Scholar rather than Google.

The librarian can create google scholar account for his/her up-coming researcher and upload his/her client articles on the platform for other researchers to see and to be able to use the paper for their own work. Google

scholar will tell you those who cited your article and how many times they have cited the paper. This is the one of the advantages of google scholar for the up-coming researcher.

**Academia.edu.ng:**

Academic.edu.ng is another social media that we would recommend to our up-coming researcher, this is because, is a social media that is good for academic platform to search for international paper around the world. Academic.edu.ng usually organized their articles based on discipline, that is, subject by subject, so as a result of this, it will be very easy for up-coming researcher to see any articles on his/her field. Subject librarian can recommend academic.edu.ng for his/her researcher to create his/her own profile on the social media and to upload his/her research paper on this platform for other researchers to see it and to be able to cite it whenever the demand arises.

**LinkedIn:**

LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for business community. It is also a professional network where professionals that have common interest from different background can share ideas. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.

**Elsevier Scopus**

Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. Delivering a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences and humanities. Scopus features smart tools to track, analyze and visualize research. As research becomes increasingly global, interdisciplinary and collaborative, the researchers can make sure that critical research from around the world is not missed when choosing Elsevier scopus.

**1.3.3 Examples of Two (Social Media) Tools That Would Not Be Suitable For Our Researcher**

Below are the examples of two (social media) tools that would not be suitable for our up-coming researcher in his/her field:

**Facebook**

Facebook is one of the most popular social media that people are using through-out the world to communicate with each other such as; political associate, friends and families, organizations, at times professional colleagues. But people communicate more on social aspect of their lives than academic topics on facebook because facebook encourage people to share fun, sports activities, what they experience in their daily lives activities but talk less on academic topics and activities, and so on and so forth and that is the more reason that we would not suggest facebook for our up-coming researcher as one of the social media platform to use for the growing of his/her academic research.

**Twitter**

Twitter is another social media that we will not recommend for our up-coming researcher. Though is good for up-coming researcher because twitter helps to build up an instant personalized feed that covers one's personal and academic interests.

But the only disadvantage twitter has is that, researcher will not be able to upload his/her abstract on twitter because researcher can only type one hundred and forty character on the twitter page whereas, the researcher abstract surely will be more than one hundred and forty characters. As a result of this, we don't think it's a good social media for up-coming researcher.

**1.4.1 How the Impact of His/ Her Research Output Will Be Ascertained:**

- Using social media to communicate knowledge opens up vast new possibilities
- Universities want their researchers to demonstrate impact around the communication, as a result, need to build a community around their work, perhaps even before it published
- The researchers also need a public engagement strategy that allows them to reach more people and eventually have a bigger impact with their findings
- More and more academics are therefore creating content and posting it online

In conclusion, social media is used by the libraries to deliver a blend of customer service news and updates, content/collection, promotion, dissemination of the institutions' research output, provision of educational tools and resources and for building relationships both within and outside of the institution.

There is a drive for librarians to use social media within the library setting. It has been acknowledge that this is still an evolving process with many librarians experimenting with what works or not, and how it can benefit the library. As a librarian, using social media effectively can seem a real challenge. But with almost 1.8 billion social media users world-wide approximately a quarter of our global population, social feeds offer a unique and valuable channel for university libraries to not only reach their users but also expand their audience.

Most librarians feel strong positive about the potential for social media to help increase engagement between users and library staff and services. Social media is also seen as an effective outreach tool, helping librarians promote the work of their faculty members and connect more deeply with the broader library

community.

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