

Library Advocacy on the Social Media- What Works

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Abstract

The study investigates library advocacy on the social media- what works. Survey research method was adopted for the study; Librarians of University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University were selected for this study. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages. The results reveal that LinkedIn (100.0%), Youtube (100.0%) and Google+ (93.7%) were the major types of social media used by librarians for advocacy. The findings also revealed that the advantages of using social media for advocacy of library and information resources and services by the Librarians were that social media is a platform to share professional networking (100.0%), is used for marketing and broadcasting library resources (100.0%) and social media are user-centered (100.0%). The findings further reveal that lack of social media skills (100.0%), network fluctuation (100.0%) and epileptic power supply (100.0%) were the major challenges the librarians encounter in the use of social media for advocacy of library and information resources. The study recommended that library management should develop a programme for library advocacy campaign and outreach for awareness which serves as a medium of marketing the library to prospective users.

Key words: Library, library advocacy, social media, universities.

1. Introduction

The concept of social media has cut across every human endeavours. Private and Public organizations, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), industries (Banks, Oil and Gas producers' etcetera) use social media devices as a means of communication to achieve aims and for development. Moreso, in this 21st century social media plays an important role in transferring information for the public interest. It is a means that employs mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modify user generated content (Kietzmann, Silverstre, McCarthy and Leyland, 2012). Driving factors for its adoption include the progressively ubiquitous access, convenience, functionality, and flexibility of social technologies (Brown, 2010; Schroeder, Minocha and Schneider, 2010).

Use of social media resources by the University Library seems to be supported by policy of the library. This is because the use of social media in the Library came to being as a result of technology and to promoting the library to the world, to promote and support social development in achieving the objective of education. Library is guided by policy in carrying out library services to users so as to achieve the goals of the library in terms of research, teaching and learning. For purposes of this Policy according to Georgia State University Library, the use of social media resources helps to ensure high quality customer service. Social media are defined as any Web-based application, site, software, or account created and maintained by the Library which facilitates an environment for library staff and library users to share information about library related subjects/issues. Social media include but are not limited to Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, and WordPress (Georgia State University, 2012).

Library advocacy is a means of promoting the library and selling the library products to potential users in the urban and rural areas. It is also to provide current, relevant, interesting information to members and the general public. Library advocacy is also necessary as one of the obligations of the librarians in the university where research, teaching and learning occur knowingfully well that not all students in the university campus visit the library due to the act of truancy and lack of interest in using the library. The necessity of library advocacy is channel towards ensuring that the vision and the mission of the library are achieved. Universities are established to achieve her goals and objective which is accomplished through the services library offers to the students by providing prints and electronic information resources for use. Also, for advocacy to be effective there is need for the use of social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Blog, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Podcast, instant Messaging, MySpace, Wikis, etcetera.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Social media which came to being as a result of development through the advent of Information and Communication Technology is a global phenomenon that cut across all facets of human endeavour. Social media itself is a technology devices used majorly for communication and transferring information from one entity to another geared towards achieving a goal. Librarians in the universities used social media as a means of communication by creating a webpage of the library and using other platforms of the social media to create awareness of library services and arrival of vital information resources in the library. Prior to this research, the researchers have discovered that despite the diver's functions and usefulness of the social media, many university libraries underutilised social medial devises as a result of this users do not patronise the library despite the update and relevant collections of information resources the libraries are holding. For this reason, there is a strong need for library advocacy by making efficient use of the social media.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What types of social media do librarians in University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University use for advocacy for their library and information resources and services?
2. What are the advantages of using social media for advocacy of library and information resources and services by librarians in University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University?
3. What are the challenges the librarians in University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University encounter in the use of social media for advocating their library and information resources?

2. Literature review

2.1 Concept of library advocacy

Advocacy can simply be referred to advertisement, promotion or the act of marketing a product as a result of its importance or value with a planned and organised action. It is the process of creating awareness and passing information through communication to stimulate a positive response toward a working phenomenon. The term Advocacy comes from the Latin word 'ad voce' meaning 'towards a voice.' Advocacy is a relatively new concept in the field of library science in this 21th century. Hence, the key interpretation of advocacy is empowering a person to have a voice. McNamara (2009), in her study on concept of advocacy for people with

Learning Disabilities in Ireland reported that advocacy tends to be widely misunderstood by many professionals among the multidisciplinary team in the disability sector in Ireland. This tends to be due to a lack of information and awareness regarding the process of advocacy. Singh (n.d), define advocacy as the pursuit of influencing outcome-including policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social system and institutions- that directly affect people's lives.

According to McNamara (2009), advocacy is made up of two components: self-advocacy and representative advocacy. Self-advocacy occurs when a group or an individual are capable of speaking up for themselves whereas representative advocacy involves an advocate speaking up on behalf of a group or individual. Blanck (2005) reiterated that advocacy is actively supporting a cause or issue; speaking up in favour of; recommending; supporting or defending; arguing on behalf of oneself or on behalf of another. Goodley (2000) defined advocacy is a means of supporting or speaking up for someone, their needs and rights. It can involve pleading their case on behalf of the person or supporting them to speak up for themselves. Grant, Goward, Richardson and Ramcharan (2005) were of the opinion that advocacy is about making sure that everyone has an equal voice. Advocacy is also about speaking up and getting someone to listen to you.

Advocacy is conceptualised in many different ways by theorists such as Michael Edwards, Alan Fowler and Kumi Naidoo among others, and practiced in many different ways by activists and their organizations around the world, as well as by advocates in the corporate and government sectors. Depending on the issue, context and catalyst, advocacy can be either a top-down or a bottom-up process (Gladkikh, 2010).

2.2 Concept of social media, why advocate on the social media

The primary aim of using social media for advocacy by the librarians was to support teaching, learning and research. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media applications are powerful technological tools for communication loosely summed up as technologies used for interacting, creating and sharing information all built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. Persson and Svenningsson (2016), reported that Keeping up to date of information resources by researchers poses a constant challenge. Social media serves as a link for communication in the research world (e.g. conferences, personal contact, e-mail etc.). According to Persson and Svenningsson (2016) social media tools are LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs etc. While, scholarly social media platforms including ResearchGate and Academia.edu, to network, voice opinions and share journal articles. With the addition of these new communication channels comes the importance of building a brand and establishing a social media presence to stay visible, in order to attract potential collaborators and funders (Bik and Goldstein, 2013; Tregoning, 2016).

International studies show that some researchers are active users of social media tools and that the numbers are increasing, but the majority still remains hesitant (Lupton, 2014; Mas-Bleda, Thelwall, Kousha and Aguillo, 2014). A researcher should consider social media as a communication tool since it is becoming more common that universities and funding agencies, especially in the US and the UK, are convinced that outreach activities are important both for promoting and explaining research to the public (Scott, 2013; Wilkinson and Weitkamp, 2013). According to Schaffer (2013), Social media covers a wide range of resources and choosing which to use is not self-evident. He suggested that it is better to use fewer social media tools than too many because there are no rules about which ones to use.

2.3 Types of social media platforms used by librarians for library advocacy

Social media is a product of web-based or internet technologies and they depend on these online and mobile technologies to operate. The different types of social media are Facebook, blogs, microblogging, YouTube, twitter, Wikis, Mash Up, Digg, Delicious Second Life, Flickr, Picasa, amongst others (Akorhonor and Olise, 2015). Quadri and Idowu (2016) carried out a study on Social Media Use by Librarians for Information Dissemination in Three Federal University Libraries in Southwest Nigeria. The sample consisted of all 82 librarians in the selected universities and the study established that there was a high level of awareness of social media tools like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, and the other social tools found in the study, but Facebook, Google+, and Twitter were the mostly used for disseminating information. Aras (2015), reported that the primary social media instruments used in university libraries are Facebook, Twitter, RSS, Blog, YouTube, and Flickr. Facebook's main mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People surf on Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

2.4 Advantages of social media for library advocacy

In libraries, the use of social media is one form of relationship marketing that has the potential to pay great dividends in the form of user loyalty; it creates an atmosphere in which library users are connected with the librarians. Libraries are not just about tangible sources; they are also about verbal sources, meaning their workers. Therefore, cultivating user loyalty is just as important as building literary collections (Aras, 2015). According to Fernandez (2009), social media offers a two-way communication that will go a long way toward creating dynamic libraries that are constantly evolving in congruence with their users' changing needs and expectations. Social media has the potential for information seekers and providers to achieve a win-win relationship.

Academic libraries need to become digital. Academic libraries need to take advantage of the tools digital and social media which can provide the library to open up new channels for both business issues and problems they are trying to solve. Social media can offer the academic library a user connection. With the use of social media Libraries are going to build a culture where communicating, engaging and embracing both positive and negative feedback, makes the library better organization (Safko, 2010). The use of social media in academic libraries is widespread in terms of marketing and broadcasting. Libraries commonly use Facebook fan pages, Twitter accounts, YouTube channels or blogs to distribute news about events, services, or resources. Libraries have also actively used these mechanisms to reach out to potential new users (Stoeckel and Sinkinson, 2015).

Social media applications' incorporation in academic libraries has been advocated because of the following characteristics that they command according to Maness (2006) cited in Mabwezara (2014).

- i. They are user-centred since users participate in the creation of the content and services. Stephens (2007) maintains that users are involved in planning library services, evaluating those services and suggesting improvements in an open conversation.
- ii. They provide a multi-media experience. Both the collections and services of social media tools contain video and audio components. For instance, by using YouTube users are able to view and listen to video presentations.

- iii. They are socially rich. The library's Web-presence includes users' presence. There are both synchronous (e.g. Instant Messaging allowing on the spot communication through Google talk) and asynchronous (e.g. Wikis allowing collaborative production of content) ways for users to communicate with one another and with librarians. Via online communities users can opt in to share their library use, current check-outs, favourites, interests (Stephens, 2007).
- iv. They are communally innovative. They rest on the foundation of libraries as a community service, but understand that as communities change, libraries must not only change with them, and they must allow users to change the library. They seek to continually change services, to find new ways to allow communities to seek, find, and utilise information. Stephens (2007) revealed that experience and a sense of discovery afford the library staff a chance to learn, make mistakes and celebrate successes and new initiatives.

2.5 Challenges encountered in the use social medial for library advocacy

University libraries, today, have discovered that the best and easiest way to promote library information resources and services are through advocacy. Social media have given the professional librarians the new options in promoting their resources and services. Libraries now advertise the resources and services on their facebook pages, twitter, blog, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Podcast, etc. Social media provide more opportunities for the librarians to reach the library users and give them a chance to interact. Social media allow patrons to promote program and events of the library by rating, reviewing and sharing with their friends and neighbours (Akporhonor and Olise, 2015).

Bakporhonor and Olise (2015), conducted a study on challenges Librarians encounter in the use of social medial for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria and found out that epileptic power supply, lack of awareness, privacy concern, low level of technology penetration, network problems, lack of technical knowledge and expertise, high cost of ICTs, corruption and negligence, little government intervention, resistance to change were the challenges Librarians encounter in the use of social medial for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries. Supporting this, Adomi (2007) state that power outages is a problem militating against information/internet provision and use in African countries. Similarly Ossai-Ugbah (2013) claims that this power outages increases the general overhead and running cost thus having a negative impact on the use of social media for marketing library and information services in Nigerian university libraries. The question here is how then university libraries can be able to effectively use social media for promotion in a cost-effective manner. Bakporhonor and Olise (2015), reported that most librarians in the developing nations are not aware of social media services even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive users of these sites for library services. Users are also not aware of the protocols involved in social communication. Many students are possibly unaware, even some of the academic staff may be unaware that there is a subject specialist in their discipline.

3. Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for this study and samples of 63 librarians were selected in two university libraries in South-West Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique was used to select University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University which have the highest number of librarians in South-West Nigeria.

On the other hand, the total enumeration sampling was adopted for the 63 librarians who constitute the entire librarians in the two university libraries in South-West Nigeria. The instrument is titled “Library advocacy on the social media- what works” Scale (LASM) contained questions developed into four sections. Section A; Background information. Section B; Types of social media platforms Librarians use for advocacy, Section C; Advantages of using social media for advocacy and Section D; Challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media for advocacy. The reliability coefficient for the instruments was tested to be 0.88 using Cronbach-Alpha method. The questionnaire was pre tested on librarians of the University of Ilorin that was not included in the study. The data collected for this study were analyzed and presented in tabular form.

4. Results Analysis and Discussion

Table1: Distribution of Respondents by name of university

Name of university	Frequency	Percentage (%)
University of Ibadan, Ibadan	36	57.1
ObafemiAwolowo University, Ife	27	42.9
Total	63	100.0

The distribution of the respondents by name of university shows that majority 36(57.1%) were Librarians in University of Ibadan, while 27(42.9%) were Librarians in ObafemiAwolowoUniversity. From the above table, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents were Librarians in University of Ibadan.

Table2: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	30	47.6
Female	33	52.4
Total	63	100.0

Table 2 shows that 33(52.4%) of the respondents were female while their male counterparts were 30(47.6%). The indication of this is that the selected universities have more female Librarians than the male counterpart.

Table 3: Qualification of respondents

Qualification of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
OND/NCE	-	-
HND	4	6.3
BLIS	14	22.2
MLIS	37	58.7
Ph.D	8	12.7
Total	63	100.0

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents 37(58.7%) have MLIS certificate, followed by 14(22.2%) respondents that have BLIS certificate, 8(12.7%) were Ph.D holder, while only 4(6.4%) of the respondents were HND holder. None of the Librarians were OND/NCE holder. From the above table, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents have MLIS certificate which means most of the Librarians in the two selected universities were professional Librarians.

Table 4: Age Distribution of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-24 years	4	6.3
25-29 years	7	11.1
30-34 years	34	54.0
35-39 years	10	15.9
40 years and above	8	12.7
Total	63	100.0

The distribution of the respondents by age shows that majority 34(54.0%) were within 30-34 years of age, followed by 10(15.9%) respondents, who were within 35-39 years, 8(12.7%) of the respondents were within 40 years and above, followed by 7(11.1%) respondents that were within 25-29 years, only 4(6.3%) respondents were within the age of 20-24 years. From the above table, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents were within 30-34 years who are matured adult.

Table 5: Types of social media used by librarians for advocacy

S/N	Social media used	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Ranking
a.	Twitter	32(50.8%)	15(23.8%)	8(12.7%)	8(12.7%)	2.37	.867	5 th
b.	Facebook	19(30.2%)	29(46.0%)	7(11.1%)	8(12.7%)	2.94	.965	4 th
c.	LinkedIn	19(30.2%)	44(69.8%)	-	-	3.30	.463	1 st
d.	YouTube	4(6.3%)	59(93.7%)	-	-	3.06	.246	1 st
e.	Blog	7(11.1%)	40(63.5%)	16(25.4%)	-	2.48	.692	5 th
f.	MySpace	-	15(23.8%)	40(63.5%)	8(12.7%)	2.11	.599	8 th
g.	Flicker	-	27(42.9%)	36(57.1%)	-	2.43	.499	7 th
H	Wikis	-	23(36.5%)	40(63.5%)	-	2.37	.485	8 th
i.	Podcast	-	19(30.2%)	44(69.8%)	-	2.30	.463	9 th
j.	Academia.edu	-	56(88.9%)	7(11.1%)	-	2.89	.317	3 rd
K	Google+,	-	59(93.7%)	4(6.3%)	-	2.94	.246	2 nd
l.	RSS Feeds	-	32(50.8%)	19(30.2%)	12(19.0%)	2.32	.779	6 th

Table 5 reveals that majority 63(100.0%) agreed that LinkedIn and Youtube with (Mean=3.30 and 3.06) respectively, followed by Google+ with mean of 2.94, Academia.edu with mean of 2.89, Facebook with mean of 2.94, Twitter and Blog with (Mean=2.37 and 2.48) respectively, were the major types of social media used by librarians for advocacy. This finding commensurate with the submission of Quadri and Idowu (2016) in study carried out on social media use by Librarians for information dissemination in three Federal University Libraries in Southwest Nigeria. The sample consisted of all 82 librarians in the selected universities and the study established that there was a high level of awareness of social media tools like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, and the other social tools found in the study. In this study LinkedIn, Youtube, Google+, Academia.edu, Facebook, Twitter and Blog were the mostly used for library advocacy because is easy to use and the Librarians agreed these works more than the others in sharing information.

Table 6: Advantages of using social media for advocacy of library and information resources and services

S/N	Advantages	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Ranking
a.	It encourages a wide range of communication	23(36.5%)	32(50.8%)	8(12.7%)	-	3.24	.665	4 th
b.	It helps in sharing information	23(36.5%)	32(50.8%)	8(12.7%)	-	3.24	.665	4 th
c.	It is a platform to share professional networking	19(30.2%)	44(69.8%)	-	-	3.30	.463	1 st
d.	It is used for marketing and broadcasting library resources	21(33.3%)	42(66.7%)	-	-	3.30	.463	1 st
e.	Social media are user-centered	12(19.0%)	51(81.0%)	-	-	3.19	.396	1 st
f.	Social media is used to create professional profiles with scholarly social medial platform	4(6.3%)	31(49.2%)	28(44.4%)	-	2.62	.607	6 th
g.	It is used for outreach activities	-	26(41.3%)	37(58.7%)	-	2.41	.496	7 th
h.	Social media are socially rich	8(12.7%)	18(28.6%)	37(58.7%)	-	2.54	.714	7 th
i.	Increases library users/usage	11(17.5%)	45(71.4%)	7(11.1%)	-	3.06	.535	3 rd
j.	Social media are communally innovative	12(19.0%)	29(46.0%)	22(34.9%)	-	2.84	.723	5 th
k.	Saves cost	7(11.1%)	52(82.5%)	4(6.3%)	-	3.05	.418	2 nd

Table 6 reveals that majority 63(100.0%) agreed that social media is a platform to share professional networking, is used for marketing and broadcasting library resources, social media are user-centered with (Mean=3.30, 3.30 and 3.19) respectively, followed by saves cost with mean of 3.05, increases library users/usage with mean of 3.06, it encourages a wide range of communication and helps in sharing information with (Mean=3.24 and 3.24) respectively, were the major advantages of using social media for advocacy of library and information resources and services by the Librarians. This finding corroborates with the study of Stoeckel and Sinkinson (2015), they reported that libraries commonly use Facebook fan pages, Twitter accounts, YouTube channels or blogs to distribute news about events, services, or resources. They further reported that Libraries have also actively used these mechanisms to reach out to potential new users. Maness (2006) cited in Mabweazara (2014) emphasized that social media are user-centred since users participate in the creation of the content and services.

Table 7: Challenges the librarians encounter in the use of social media for advocacy of library and information resources

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Ranking
A	Low level of technology	-	15(23.8%)	26(41.3%)	22(34.9%)	1.89	.764	5 th
B	Privacy concerns	-	33(52.4%)	30(47.6%)	-	2.52	.503	4 th
C	Lack of funds	-	59(93.7%)	4(6.3%)	-	2.94	.246	2 nd
D	Lack of awareness	-	58(92.1%)	5(7.9%)	-	2.94	.246	3 rd
E	Lack of social media skills	19(30.2%)	44(69.8%)	-	-	3.30	.463	1 st
F	Network fluctuation	27(42.9%)	36(57.1%)	-	-	3.43	.499	1 st
G	Epileptic power supply	25(39.7%)	38(60.3%)	-	-	3.43	.499	1 st

Table 7 reveals that lack of social media skills, network fluctuation and epileptic power supply with (Mean=3.30, 3.43 and 3.43) respectively, followed by lack of funds with mean of 2.94 and lack of awareness

with mean of 2.94 were the major challenges the librarians encounter in the use of social media for advocacy of library and information resources. This finding is in line with the submission of Bakporhonor and Olise (2015), they conducted a study on challenges Librarians encounter in the use of social medial for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria and found out that epileptic power supply, lack of awareness, privacy concern, low level of technology penetration, network problems, lack of technical knowledge and expertise, high cost of ICTs, corruption and negligence, little government intervention, resistance to change were the challenges Librarians encounter in the use of social medial for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries. Supporting this, Adomi (2007) state that power outages is a problem militating against information/internet provision and use in African countries.

5. Summary of major findings

Librarians in University of Ibadan (57.1%) constituted the largest respondents in this study. There were more female (52.4%) respondents in the study and majority (69.8%) of the respondents were married. There was more professional Librarians 37(58.7%) with MLIS certificate and majority 34(54.0%) were within 30-34 years of age. The study revealed that LinkedIn, Youtube, Google+,Academia.edu, Facebook, Twitter and Blog were the major types of social media used by librarians for advocacy because is easy to use and the Librarians agreed that these works better more than the others like Myspace, Flickr, Wikis, Podcast and RSS Feeds in sharing information. The study also revealed that the major advantages of using social media for advocacy of library and information resources and services by the Librarians were that social media is a platform to share professional networking, is used for marketing and broadcasting library resources, social media are user-centered, it saves cost, increases library users/usage and it encourages a wide range of communication and helps in sharing information. The study further revealed that lack of social media skills, network fluctuation, epileptic power supply and lack of funds were the major challenges the librarians encounter in the use of social media for advocacy of library and information resources.

5.1 Conclusion

Library advocacy augment the development of the library as a growing organism. The role of social media use for advocacy of library information resources and services is identified by its advantages such that social media is a platform to share professional networking, is used for marketing and broadcasting library resources, social media are user-centered, it saves cost, increases library users/usage and it encourages a wide range of communication and helps in sharing information. Librarians in the two selected universities used social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Youtube, Google+,Academia.edu, Facebook, Twitter and Blog for advocacy because they agreed that these works better more than the others like Myspace, Flickr, Wikis, Podcast and RSS Feeds in sharing information. Nevertheless, lack of social media skills, network fluctuation, epileptic power supply and lack of funds were the major challenges the librarians encounter in the use of social media for advocacy of library and information resources.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Library management should develop a programme for library advocacy campaign and outreach for awareness which serves as a medium of marketing the library to prospective users.
- Library management should implement a working policy that will make library advocacy campaign/services to be more effective.
- Library management should endeavour to acquire modern ICT tools that are complaints with the use of the various social media platforms.
- Government should provide fund for universities for educational purpose to be able to acquire ICT tools in the library.
- Library management should organize workshop for training the professional Librarians on how to use the various social media platforms effectively for library advocacy
- Government should see library advocacy as her responsibility by encouraging the librarians in the universities by giving them incentives in terms of prompt salary and other benefits.
- There should be stable power supply in the library
- Library management should provide current materials for research and development

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