Facebook and Twitter for Academic Libraries in the Twenty First Century

Anand Y. Kenchakkanavar
Research Scholar
Department of Studies in Library and Information Science,
Karnatak University,
Dharwad, Karnataka, India
anand.3661@gmail.com

Abstract

At present day in this twenty-first century we are living in virtual world and Library and informational science professional’s need to use social networking sites for academic users. The main purpose of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of using online advertising on the social networking sites Facebook and Twitter in academic libraries and recognize essential trends that subsist. While it is understandably exciting to embrace new technology to reach students and staff members, it is very important to have an understanding of how to utilize the technology to properly connect to library users. Several articles found in library publications are written from a librarian’s perspective, explaining the essence of Facebook and Twitter are describing different ways to promoting library advertising and services.

Keywords: Academic Library, Social Networks, Facebook and Twitter

1. Introduction:

New technology has produced new opportunities and challenges for libraries in creation, promotion, dissemination and storage of information and many institution libraries undergoing change in the face of technological proceed. Social networking sites have made a new platform for individuals to communicate, sharing information and interact with a worldwide audience for organizations, social networking sites presents new avenues for communication and collaboration with their users. Several libraries are using social networks to engage their users in the online environment. Social networks propose real-time channels for information sharing and communication. Social networking sites are encouraging social interaction through profile-based user accounts. Social networks are generally defined as Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2005), meaning they mimic desktop applications. Popular social networking sites include Facebook and Twitter. Every Social network website includes ‘About’ and ‘Help’ sections. These sections focus that every company should write about their social features. This is a secure guard against overlooking a major feature of the website. While this was a suitable preventative measure, the design of each social website clearly emphasized its social features. Over the past half-decade, the online social networking
sites have continuously grown up exponentially. A social Networking application provides a digital look of people’s individual relationships or links and presents regular address book updates and viewable profiles. Social network all purposes should also aid in the identification and exchange of probable ties into weak or strong ties by providing ‘introduction services’ and permitting users to display their knowledge, information, experience and proficiency in a searchable layout (Boyd, 2006).

The experience of quick updates has been dubbed as microblogging. During the 2008 US Presidential Election, microblogging was recognized by Rhett Smith in politics by using Twitter and Facebook status updates on election night (Smith, 2008). A number of people are using social networking sites and it is an essential part of their everyday life (Anon, 2011). Information Service providers have naturally sought to an increasing their products. A widely-used definition is presented by Boyd and Ellison (2007), who characterise SNSs as web-based services that allow individuals to:

a. Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system;
b. Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and

c. View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The present study captures a broad outlook of Facebook and Twitter in academic library. It is focusing on Facebook and Twitter through library services and the need for attractive the quality of social networks based on library services in digital environment programs. These are helpful in producing a positive environment for successful use of social networks in library services. The Facebook and Twitter are used for learning in higher education. There are several researches conducted on comprehensive digital environment. This point of view on the whole social network spectrum that reaches from the traditional printed textbook to Twitter requires a broad experimental approach to get an overall understanding about how students travel the digital environment during their learning activities. This particular outlook paired with detailed knowledge regarding current developments in SNSs technology can lead to predictions. To the future changes in the digital environment and consequences for libraries. Reddy (2004) presents that very important for university libraries and librarians to design, develop, increase, implement, and deliver world
class web-based library services, resources, and instructions at the fingertips of library users and devoting resources to strengthen support in the core areas of teaching and research.

2. Statement of the Problem

As the social networking phenomenon develops into more extensive in our information world, its presence in the library landscape becomes challenging and stimulating. Even though various studies have focused on Facebook and Twitter’s impact on different sectors in our society; only a few have so far focused on Facebook and Twitter’s use in libraries. The present study efforts to add to the literature on library Facebook and Twitter’s use, addressing library Facebook pages and library Twitter pages and their content.

3. Literature review:

Social networking sites developed exponentially within the last few years in libraries. Social networking sites are also offering different focuses, designs and features for their users. These social networking sites need student and staff members to join their community and experience their vision of the social web. Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter provide various features to make possible socialization on the internet. Users share private messages, photos, songs, videos and most other standard forms of expression. These SNSs are the most visited sites on the internet (Alexa, 2008). Library services are more extensively known as information services. Facebook Librarian appears to increase reuse of the library service (Mack et al., 2007). Xiaobin and Jing (2009) argue that social networking sites are supporting library and information service has emerged to create organizational knowledge. Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) surveyed the Facebook for library services after conducting survey of 126 librarians from organizations of higher education. In that study the many librarians (90 percent) point out that they are aware of the existence of Facebook, only half of the librarians knew that their institutions are registered in Facebook’s directory.

Aharony (2010) presented the use of Twitter to recognize microblogging patterns. The study indicated that both types of libraries recognized the power of Twitter as a useful channel of communication and effort to produce a tweet at least once per day. He also noted that public libraries use more informal language in their tweets and assess to academic libraries, possibly to reach and attract different potential users. Krishnamurthy et al. (2008)
defined those different classes of Twitter users, their geographical growth patterns and network size. There has been significant research on the collaborative characteristics of microblog communication that enhances social presence and maintains connectedness in both formal and informal communication.

4. The main purposes of Facebook and Twitter for academic libraries

There are several purposes of Facebook and Twitter in library services aimed at the research and scientific community. Their main features include:

a) Facebook and Twitter are freely accessible to the users and having most useful ways to promoting library services and activities.

b) Facebook and Twitter focuses on the users to use of resources and access to library materials from everywhere in the world.

c) Facebook and Twitter offers live chatting and discussion queries in group pages, these sites Increase education/ Knowledge opportunity.

d) Facebook and Twitter are substitute to printed information in libraries and users can get new information easily.

e) Facebook and Twitter have many ways to encourage user group to present feedback and to engage with others in online area.

f) Facebook and Twitter are not only helpful for existing library users, but attracts new users to visit library and to use services.

5. Social Networking sites are changing Library Environment

Academic library and information centres are applying the new technologies and trends to build their library services popular and user friendly. The present idea of a library as substantial place where users can visit to get information is quickly changing to a social cyberspace where users contact, communicate and contribute to existing information. The potentials of the new technology offers the open access protocols which present the opening for free access, free interaction, free communication and contribution to knowledge. Library services through modern technology are making new instinctive tools, continuous change, flexibility and evaluation while encouraging user posting, sharing, cooperation, communication, and personalization. Sekyere (2009) defines that social networking sites hard works are a successful and new technique of student outreach; others argue that social networking by academic librarians is an effective use of librarian time and effort.
Social networks provide enhanced right to use information. It puts the library where the users are. It enables users to share their knowledge and in turn, helps bring others into the library. It helps simply to post future events or book exhibition. These types of postings rapidly increase when users share the information with their friends through their social networking sites channels. This opportunity helps to promoting library services and activities. A social network has several ways to invite user group to present feedback and to engage with others in online area. This research paper focuses on the changes in the library environment through Facebook and Twitter.

6. **Facebook in Academic Libraries:**

Social networking community engaged for college and university students from 2004, Facebook has surpassed all other social networking opportunities in attractiveness while reaching out to a seemingly never ending user-base. And students, Teachers, and parents are using Facebook. Libraries have certainly taken notice and deemed Facebook resource worthy of attention. Library Facebook pages are used to exposes library events, news updates and encouraging library services, information and resources.

In the present environment, any study of the possible impact of social networks on academic libraries must essentially focus on Facebook to be appropriate. Academic librarians have been aware of Facebook for some time, although it seems that the early reaction to it was indifferent. Facebook publicized that it now has 845 million monthly active users. As well, it reported that over half of these users (425 million) using the social networks every day (Facebook, 2012). Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) define that approach of academic librarians towards Facebook, and created that most described as being indifferent and friendly to the use of social networks within libraries and promote library services. Hendrix et al. (2009) defined that the use of Facebook in academic health science libraries, concluding that a small number of libraries use Facebook. Those libraries that do use Facebook do so mainly for marketing the library: they deliver announcements to library users, post photos and provide chat reference. These librarians have positive perceptions about their libraries’ presence on Facebook.

Academic libraries are trying with implanting library services contained by the Facebook page itself for a true outreach program. Using Facebook applications, a few
academic libraries implanting the library catalogue to permit students to access the inside of
the library catalogue without visiting the library’s web site (Farkas, 2007). Facebook
courages helpfulness by signifying existing social connections in a virtual space. Facebook
is an extension of cooperation in the public section – individual profile information is
accessible by users has added as friends. Facebook encourages sociability by creating a
comfortable, private and familiar social environment.

Facebook’s establishment for a social network is the friend system. To view a user’s
profile, that user must grant you access. This access makes you a friend of the user. Current
alteration to the Facebook border is predominantly the big switch to pages and group pages
sharing the same appearance as individual profiles provide even greater functionality for
creating a presence as an institution. The library creates a ‘Facebook page’; it is a permanent,
customizable profile. Users can decide to become ‘fans’ of the library by representing users
can ‘like’; its page. After liking the page, fans and user will begin to receive updates posted by
the library to their News Feed, a core Facebook feature. This is essential to understand, as it
has been asserted that Facebook users rarely go out and seek information on Facebook, rather
they browse those items that come into their News Feed.

6.1 Advantages of Facebook in Academic Library:

Nowadays information can be shared on worldwide basis. Facebook includes many
advantages, we can stay in contact with our library relations or friend’s circle that lives for
away, users can easily find out new arrivals on library Facebook home page. Users are
capable to post everything from everywhere. If librarians post any library news or events on
library Facebook homepage message will distributed to all library users and anybody can see
that message. Ellison et al. (2007) recognized the advantages of Facebook for college
students. They use Facebook as a research background in order to decide whether offline
social capital can be created by online tools. The consequences of their study explained that
Facebook use among college-age respondents was significantly associated with events of
social capital.

The major advantage of Facebook is that millions of people are registered from all
over the world and Facebook provided feedback through ‘comment’ ‘like’ and ‘dislike’ key.
The Facebook has many advantages to students and staff and also it is really very useful in library. Here are some most important advantages of Facebook as follows;

a) Facebook presented free service to users and now a day’s several libraries are adopted facebook through library services and Facebook given paid services but it does not compulsory on users they give freedom to users to choice services.

b) The Facebook site permitted us to sharing information with others, ask library users feedback or opinion, ask question etc. Librarians can share library news, events, photos and videos etc... Librarians can use Facebook as news and information source.

c) Facebook offer the ‘chatting’ options with friend’s circle, and it presents an easy chatting application with friends who are online. Many people particularly students use Facebook chat for group discussions.

d) Present-day almost all internet users are using Facebook and using Facebook you can discover your old friends and colleagues whom you have lost contact and connect with them online again.

e) Facebook has good privacy setting it gives the option to customize according to your wish. Facebook provided Fan page, group’s page, event page etc these all are getting very popular day by day. If librarian uses these Fan pages & groups it focusing library promotion activities.

f) Librarian can use Facebook as social bookmarking site so librarians can share their blogs, most important articles to students and faculty members in fractions of second.

g) Facebook has given very well security to users account and provide extremely secure service with very high level privacy policies. Facebook for all time try to keep privacy setting as simple as possible so users can secure their account easily.

Facebook is a ‘one-stop shop’ because it provides specifically entertainment, communication, and sharing of information with friends and users. It is a right place for solving problems with friends or others through chat options, and sharing new ideas with public, ask questions, comment on people’s status, add your status etc. So Facebook is ‘one-stop shop’ of this kind on the internet.
7. **Twitter in Academic Libraries:**

Twitter offers quick and efficient tools for information sharing; information professionals should also think about implementation of Twitter in library. Twitter is social networking site which provides users to make an individual account and leave short public messages. Nowadays several libraries have already adopted and started experimenting with Twitter profile as an outreach tool to share library information, library events, and resources links with their users. Users can also commonly use Twitter as an exact platform to ask a query about a library service, request, or technical problem, and practically expect a sequence of answers in reply. Twitter entered the social networking world in 2006 and Twitter is the one of the fastest developing social network in the world (Snyder, 2008). Information dissemination is the primary goal of Twitter program run by the library. According to Twitter’s home page – ‘Twitter is a service for friends, family and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?’ This highly efficient social web site focuses entirely on quick updates. Twitter is a most popular and rapidly growing ‘microblogging’ service where users can post quick and frequent short messages (up to 140 characters) called ‘tweets’, which may contain links to other online material such as photos and websites, to their ‘followers’ who have subscribed to their Twitter account (Dickson & Holley, 2010). Users subscribe to other user’s ‘tweet’ feeds to receive their updates. Other users or friends are added either by email or by invite.

Twitter can check your web email accounts to see if any of your current contacts are Twitter users. Before becoming friends with another Twitter user and subscribing to their feed, you must receive their permission. From a privacy perspective, Twitter has variable privacy options. In a current study of the use of Twitter among librarians a strong conclusion was that librarians are more likely to take benefit of the tool for personal professional use and their own training and development functions, than for direct library services delivery to end-users (Loudon and Hall, 2010). These activities all contribute to librarians’ professional development which, it would be expected, feeds into their daily work practice. However, less prevalent are examples of instances where librarians and users work collaboratively with these tools to develop service innovations together. Milstein (2009) presents the excellent point that Twitter is developed for “exchanging information” and supports libraries to ‘treat Twitter as a conversation rather than a broadcast medium.’ Of all the options discussed so far,
the outlook of using Twitter for reference is actually by far the simplest. The primary difficulty may be the potential learning curve of becoming familiar with the language of Twitter, which is used in symbols (most prominently, ‘@’ it indicates that you are directing a tweet at another user and prompts it to show up in their ‘replies’ tab) and unique verbiage, such as RT which indicates a “re-tweet” of a statement from another user.

Present day, Twitter is commonly using in all types of libraries for different purposes. According to Del Bosque, Leif, and Skarl (2012) presents that Twitter use by 296 academic libraries and in this study authors recognized seven content types in the libraries’ Twitter streams: campus events, community events, hours, library events, responses to reference questions, links to outside sites, and resources. This beautiful research study presents the implementation of a Twitter-based information service in a health sciences library. Stuart (2010) defines in his study that Twitter is used in libraries for a many purposes. In his study 433 libraries are having Twitter accounts to identify how Twitter is being used in academic, public, state, and national libraries. The author identified that 44 percent were using Twitter account to ‘broadcast library news/ information’.

7.1 Advantages of Twitter in Academic Library:

Social Networks has made accomplishment for library fans and building library outputs brands a far easier and straighter process. Twitter is a powerful tool that benefits of many library users. If librarians use the Twitter it increases library functions and focuses to attract the students and staff members. Twitter has free an account, making it easy to get started tweeting to promote library work or sharing library news, events photos, ideas and thoughts and other information. Tweeter intended to spread easily and tweets can be made a user’s favourite. Tweeter provides such as photos and videos automatically embedded in the tweet, so users can see the content exclusive of leaving the site.

a) Twitter given posting a 140 character tweets, library would be transferring more information than it can do everywhere else and this is cost less.

b) Library related news, photos and videos Post frequency requires careful alteration. If librarian post occasionally, library users are less likely to see library related posts compared to other feeds. So librarian should update everyday new information to the users.
c) Twitter subsists for Smartphone’s and tablets as well, it provides users to an opening to library users across multiple platforms.

d) Twitter presents handy way to quickly address clients concerns. Librarian can answer tweets from followers who ask about library related news and functions or a particular issue. Twitter presents a useful way to alert clients to changes in policies, upcoming events and other important notices.

e) Twitter is social assembly for the producing library functions and events advertising in the virtual world. This is the main advantages and every library and librarians should try to make use Twitter because if libraries are not using twitter advertising, then librarians are missing a large support.

f) The library uses Twitter to express short messages regarding library resources and other information for example new book alerts, books due date information, library holidays and other services. Several students connected to the Twitter network become followers. The library also follows helpful tweets from others.

g) There are many people on the virtual world and this is in fact one of the major advantage of using Twitter for library.

Conclusion:

Present day we are living in virtual world. In the 21st century Library and information science professional’s necessity to use of social networking sites and this new technology offering outreach technical options for academic librarians. This study is a new platform for reaching students and staff members. Social networking sites allowing users to access the library’s resources without leaving. The main advantages of using social networking sites are effectively utilize library services and promotions of libraries. If the library provides a Facebook and Twitter through library services, it always helpful to the staff and students to discussing problems, query, asking questions, library holidays, new book posters, new book lists, reserving book facility due date extensions, instruction sessions or classes etc., in several ways these social networks are very useful to the users.

The literature review explains that several authors have conducted many studies on influence of social networking sites on library and information centre and their students / staff members. Different types of academic libraries are discussed. Some articles studies school libraries and university libraries in the centre of their interest and those all libraries are
influences Facebook and Twitter through library services. According to the above mentioned advantages of Facebook and Twitter, librarians should think Facebook and Twitter are most important social networking sites tools for new platform to communication with their users. Library staff members should encourage interaction by posting library news, library new book photos, announcing library functions or writing notes. The number of library fans, as well as numbers of likes or followers to library pages; it shows that users following their library activities on Facebook and Twitter. Finally, Academic librarians should consider using Facebook and Twitter applications to focus and attract more users to the libraries.

Reference:


13. However, The use of Twitter and Facebook appear to be the most commonly experimental social network applications for libraries. [http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v08n02/mack_d01.html](http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v08n02/mack_d01.html) (accessed 05-05-2015).


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