

# Use of Social Media Platforms to Promote Library Services and Profitable Librarianship

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## **Abstract**

*The study was conducted to determine the use of social media platforms to promote library services and profitable Librarianship. For this study, descriptive survey research method was used. The sample for this study consisted of 200 students at the National Open University of Nigeria, from 3 selected NOUN centers in Kogi State, Nigeria. Data were collected using questionnaire. Frequency and Means method were used to analyze the collected data. The study showed that blogs and whatsApp are the widely used social media platforms for promoting library services in libraries. The results also showed that the use of social media platforms facilitates two-way communication, ease communication with library users, provides a forum for feedback, increases library users and financially profit librarians through traffic generated as users visits their blog pages. Some challenges librarians faced were discovered, and recommendations were made. These include the provision of adequate computers and Internet services, especially free Internet WiFi within the centers, and a viable ICT policy among other recommendations.*

**Keywords:** Academic Libraries, Library Promotion, Library Services, Modern Technologies, Profitable Librarianship, Social Media Platforms.

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## **Introduction**

The digital era has expanded the responsibilities of Librarians to provide a wide range of resources to users and services that extend beyond the physical walls of the Library. The roles of librarians in the global information environment is unique, Igun (2010), and are critical to information availability and distribution both in the physical and virtual fields. Modern Technology and discoveries such as smart phones, mobile Internet facilities and social media platforms have created new challenges for librarians to meet these digital era users information needs and expectation. Iwhiwhu, Ruteyan and Eghwubare (2010) stress that the challenge of librarians is how to attract users to the library and keep them. Therefore, Librarians must re-address the means of servicing their users to conform to the modern technological approach.

Using social media platforms to administer, distribute and disseminate information can greatly attract users and promote library usage in this information jet moving age. Library services can now be available to users on the go, anytime and anywhere, which have totally redefined Library services from the walls of the Library to the boundless spaces of the World Wide Web.

Librarians can deliver various library services such as providing resources to support learning, cultural development and making available list of materials using social media platforms like blog, whatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn. These platforms through their unique features like blogging, commenting and affiliate marketing, more participation, private messaging, discussion forums, media and multimedia uploading, interactive and collaborative learning increases active Library users, promotes Library activities and in turn generate unsolicited revenue for Librarians who actively manage these platforms.

## **Statement of Problem**

As information sources and delivery channels of information seekers changes due to the advancement in technology, Librarians whose primary responsibility is to provide library and information service must move with this trend. This rapid and ever changing modern technology have posed some challenges to librarians. Library users are greatly migrating to other sources of information like the internet and making librarians losing some relevance.

Librarian must constantly engage in proper promotion of their services in order to maintain relevance in this information driven century. Studies have shown that most Nigerian's

that visits the internet basically uses the social media platforms, over 5 million active social media platform users are in Nigeria, Terragon (2013). Popular bloggers who promotes both local and international news in Nigeria have greatly benefited financially from the readers traffic generated on their blog pages, GoogleAdsent (2017). Therefore, this study examines the use of social media platform to promote library services and profitable librarianship.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed at the use of social media platforms to promote library services and profitable librarianship.

1. To identify the kind of social media platforms can be use to promote library services
2. To find out ways librarians uses of social media platforms to promote library services
3. To identify the challenges librarians may encounter while using of social media platforms to promote library services

### **Research Questions**

The research questions raised are:

1. What kind of social media platforms can be use to promote library services?
2. How can librarians profit from the use of social media platforms to promote library services?
3. What are the challenges librarians may encounter while using of social media platforms to promote library services?

### **Social Media Platforms and Library Services**

The social media platforms form the independent variables while the Library services Librarian provides to their users are the dependent variable.

The dependent variables are divided into library materials and librarian functions which are Books, Journals, Newspapers, Maps, Internet based, resources, CD/VCD and Lending services, Referral services, Reference services, Indexing, Abstracting, User education respectively. The independent variables are blog, Facebook, Twitter and whatsApp.

### **Social Media Platforms Librarians can use to Promote Library Services**

#### **1. Blog**

A blog also known as Weblog is an online journal style or informational website which displays information in the reverse sequential order, with latest posts or subject appearing

first or at the topmost. Blog pages are social media web platforms where a writer or group of writers and readers or viewers shares their views on a subject or topic even news as it may apply, Ogi Djuraskovic and FirstSiteGuide (2018).

Blogging can be used to promote library services like library outreaching, dissemination of information, building library image, communicate both to internal and external users, and highlight new material arrival and promoting available materials in the library collection. Also Librarians can promote library services like opening hours, special library events, online discussion and community services like festivities in their local communities, ceremonies, sports, (Ekoja, 2011). Trending news about issues of general interest can be posted and allows users to comment instantly and add their contribution and opinions (Ezeani and Igwesi, 2012).

## 2. **Facebook**

Facebook is a social media platform that facilitates social interactions between users. Facebook allows users to create group with unique identity where members can interact and share messages, pictures and even materials when they signed in.

Librarians can use Facebook to promote Library service like hosting library homepage (Fakas, 2007), advertise opening and closing hours, locations, website information, newly acquired materials and classmate interaction and discussion on special subjects.

Research has revealed that millions of users visit the Facebook platform every hour and about 2.2 billion active users were recorded in January 2018 ([www.facebook.com/Info](http://www.facebook.com/Info), 2018) and most of them are young people. Facebook page can serve as a connect centre to Library users and librarians can also remind user through posting of up-to-date messages and pictures of the resources available in the library.

## 3. **WhatsApp**

WhatsApp is a social media platform with instant free messaging and voice over telephoning services. Instant text messaging, voice calls, video calls, documents and media sending serves are all available on this platform (Tech Crunch, 2015)

Librarians can send instant messages to users and get instant responses. Urgent information that requires Library users attentions can be communicated to users, even documents and materials can be send to users at anytime and even outside the Library working hours.

#### 4 **Twitter**

Twitter is a online real time news and social networking platform where users post and interact with messages. The ease of posting, interacting and sharing of information on this platform have made it a very vital platform for librarians to reach and interact with library users (Waddell and Barnes, 2012). Information on the go with users responses can be tweeted at everybody convenience.

#### **Benefits of using Social Media Platforms to Promote Library Services**

Library services can be promoted through social media platforms because the platforms are dependable for information dissemination, prompt feedback mechanism, researches and course promotion. The benefits of using social media platforms to promote library services are:

##### **1. Facilitate effective Two-Way Communication**

The social media platforms create a good forum for feedbacks from Library users and Librarians can positively influence their users when they get responses from them as to what is affecting them and library usage. Social media platforms help Librarians to monitor library users comments and give clarification on any issues of concern (Pierson, 2011). Relating social media platforms to Library services, Villoldo (2012) stated that communication with the library user by Librarians is the service that Library has most benefited from social media platform implementation.

##### **2. Increases Library Users and Usage**

In January 2018, over 2.2 billion users visited Facebook and the current internet user is about 3 trillion users worldwide (BloggingBasics101 2018). When a Library is hosted on Facebook, the activities of any user on the library pages can be viewed and even be visited by friends connected to that user. Whenever a Library user comment or post on the library pages, other people linked to that particular user will see and know the activities and services offered by the Library and this can motivate others to join the Library users.

Blogging and Tweeting comments and post can also be broadcasted online and both Library users and any other internet user who desire the services offered by the Library can view.

### **3. Saves Costs**

The cost of enrolling and facilitating social media platforms is relatively low (Villoldo, 2012). Therefore, with little cost, Librarians can promote Library services using social media platforms and can also reach their users and millions of intended and potential users within the immediate community and within the globe.

### **Profitable Librarianship using Social Media Platforms**

When Librarians generates reasonable traffic through effective Library services on their blog pages, which can also be linked from the Facebook pages, Twitter tweets or whatsApp platforms, Google Adsense, Yahoo! Publisher Network (YPN) and some others servers host pay every blog site owner according to the traffic generated on their website. The highest paid blogger, the Huffington post monthly earns is about \$2,330,000.00 smashing magazine monthly earnings is about \$190,000.00 (Jessica Knapp, bloggingbasic101 2018) while within Nigeria, the popular bloggers like Linda Ikeji earns about \$10,000.00 monthly, some also earns a low as \$100 monthly.

Librarians who can effectively communicate and meet the needs of Library users will earn according to the traffic of users that visit their blogs. The professional job of a Librarian is an information provider and also someone who guide, preserve and provide information to users. But doing this on the social media platforms, users need are met and the Librarian will make money through his or her hard and smart work.

### **Methodology**

The researcher used descriptive survey method for this study and population samples of 100 National Open University of Nigeria students were selected from 3 study centres within Kogi State Study Centres of National Open University of Nigeria. A two part structure questionnaire instrument was administered to the respondents. The questionnaire Part A contains background information while Part B contains social media platforms librarians can use to promote library services.

The data were organized into tables and analyzed in simple percentages which were based on a frequency distribution and data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

### Data presentation and Analysis of Findings

Data presented below were gathered during field work and were used to answer research questions:

**Table 1. Bio data of Respondents**

Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	93	43.3%
Female	122	56.7%
Total	215	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, April, 2018.

Table 1 shows that 93 (43.3%) of the respondents are male while 122 (56.7%) respondents are female.

**Table 2: Age range of respondents**

Age range	Frequency	Percent
23-27years	49	22.8%
28-32years	91	42.3%
33-37years	43	20.0%
38-42years	20	9.3%
43years and above	12	5.6%
Total	215	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, April, 2018.

Table 2 shows that 49 (22.8%) of the respondents are between age 23 – 27 years, 91 (42.3%) are between age 28 – 32 years, 43 (20.0%) are between age 33 – 37 years, 20 (9.3%) are between age 38 -42 years while 12 (5.6%) are between age 43 years and above.



**Table 3: Types of social media platforms used by respondents**

Social media platforms	Frequency	Total	Percent
Facebook	196	215	91.2%
Twitter	180	215	83.7%
Blog	211	215	98.1%
WhatsApp	201	215	93.5%

Source: Field Survey, April, 2018.

Table 3 shows that 196 (91.2%) of the respondents uses Facebook, 180 (83.7%) uses Twitter, 211 (98.1%) Blog while 201 (93.5%) uses WhatsApp.

**Table 4: Respondents usage of social media platforms**

Platform Usages	Hourly logon		Daily logon		Weekly logon		Total usage	Total Daily login within hour and Daily logon	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Social media platforms	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	140	78.9%	46	24.6%	3	1.5%	189	186	98.4%
Twitter	88	52.4%	75	44.6%	5	3.0%	168	163	97.0%
Blog	191	91.0%	18	8.6%	1	0.4%	210	209	99.5%
WhatsApp	188	95.0%	8	4.0%	2	1.0%	198	196	99.0%

Source: Field Survey, April, 2018.

Table 4 shows that on Hourly logon to social media platforms 140 (78.9%) of the respondents visits Facebook, 88 (52.4%) visits Twitter, 191 (91.0%) uses Blog while 188 (95.0%) uses WhatsApp. Daily logon to social media platforms 46 (24.6%) of the respondents visits Facebook, 75 (44.6%) visits Twitter, 18 (8.6%) uses Blog while 8 (4.0%) uses WhatsApp. Then weekly logon to social media platforms 3 (1.5%) of the respondents visits Facebook, 5 (3.0%) visits Twitter, 1 (0.4%) uses Blog while 2 (1.0%) uses WhatsApp.

On total social media usage, Blog and WhatsApp have users frequencies of 99.5% and 99.0% respectively while on weekly logon have 0.4% and 1.0% respectively. The result shows that most social media platforms users uses blog and WhatsApp most often and they stay glued to them as it shows from the lower percentage of the users that visits the platform just weekly.

### **Conclusion**

It is obvious from this study that Librarians can use social media platforms to promote Library services because most students and library users are always using social media at every point in time. The modern technology age is fast moving people from the 4 walls of Library room to social media platforms and Librarians can use these platforms to reach users and even profit from their usage.

### **Recommendations**

The following are recommended by the researcher in order to promote efficient and effective use of social media platforms to promote library services by librarians;

1. Adequate technology and internet facilities should be made readily available in all libraries building. The library management can liaise with philanthropic bodies or the university management and even the TETFund for the purchase of modern computers and internet subscriptions in their libraries.
2. Information and communication technologies policies should not only be formulated in the libraries but should also provide a section for the use of social media platforms among librarians and even non-professional staff in the library.
3. Librarians using social media platforms to promote library services should be very careful and be mindful of what they post on social media platforms because once contents are shared online, it might be very difficult to take them back.

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