

Impact of Social Networking Tools on Academic Libraries.

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the application of social networking to academic library services and awareness programmes for easy facilitation of the library professionals, teaching faculty and research scholars. It underscores the importance of utilizing social networking in academic library services in digital environment. It also discusses the social networking tools useful for academic libraries and users.

Keywords Social Networking, Social Media, Social Networks, Web 2.0, Library 2.0, Social Tagging, Online Users.

INTRODUCTION

The changing technology, explosion of information and the transition of academic libraries from print to electronic mode have influenced the library users' behaviour. Most of the libraries, especially academic libraries have metamorphosed into hybrid (print and electronic) libraries. Compared to other libraries, academic college libraries need special attention in developing collection, systems and services. Here an attempt is being made to chart out the social networking tools for assessing the exiting situation, and perceptions and expectations of users in academic college libraries.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The advent of information technology has resulted in significantly reducing the size of libraries. These small modern academic libraries have rich potential for serving information needs. It has become possible to the digitize information contained in book formats. The digital and electronic information is based on digitized data, which has gradually replaced paper-based records.

Digital information system in comparison to text-based information system is getting more and more popular in these days. Internet has become an unavoidable requirement for every educational institutions and libraries.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking sites are very popular for accessing and sharing information. LIS professionals have started adapting themselves to the popularity of social networking sites and their expanding role in the creation, exploitation, and sharing of information by engaging them as a central medium for interacting with library users and providing services to meet their information needs.

Information Technology literate librarian is capable of teaching these skills to library users. This includes guiding and training of users through social networking sites that are used as resources and tools for teaching, learning and research purposes.

Academic LIS Professionals possessing these skills are capable of efficient and effective navigation of online social networking sites and applying their expertise to services with and within the social networking platforms.

Social Networks Meaning:

Social networking is an online service or site that focuses on building of social network or social relations among people who share same interests and activities. Social network provides a quick way to generate, maintain web-based guides and act as communication tool to enable social interaction among LIS Professionals. It facilitates free and unobstructed flow of information and sharing of resources beyond boundaries.

Social networking has become one of the most important parts of our daily life which enable us to communicate with one another. Social media is a great way to protect and build our digital reputations.

Social Networking Tools in Academic Libraries:

Academic librarians can employ social networking tools to share information with teachers, research scholars and students in the easiest way possible in the academic library environment.

The following three broad categories of social networking tools for serving the user in library and information services are:

A. Communication type of Networking Tools:

Through this kind of tools academic librarians can be in constant touch with teaching faculty, students and research scholars in online environment for effective transactions.

B. Distribution type of Networking Tools:

Providing right information at the right time in a right way is the first priority of librarians for users satisfaction. Information dissemination and sharing is the heart of library services. LIS professionals need to be abreast of all available channels for effective and efficient information distribution of online environment.

C. Knowledge Organization type of Networking Tools:

Knowledge organization environment for getting helpful information which can be accessible with the social networking technologies. The below mentioned tools effectively in library and information centre for users as:







Benefits of Social Media Networks in Academic Libraries:

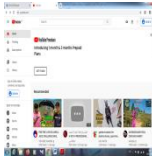

- Social networking / Media technology gives us access to easy, instant communication tools.
- Social networking gives you a chance to connect with people around the world.
- Social networking helps people who are shy or socially isolated to connect with others
- Social networking gives users an immediate access to their teaching updates.
- Social networking refines strategies.
- Social networking improves innovation and learning.
- Social networking develops communicative skills along with social rapport
- Social networking media allow users to quickly share their academic tasks.









Some of the Disadvantages of Social Media Networks:







- Inadequate library staff.
- Slow speed of Internet.
- Lack of knowledge how to use it.
- Inadequate training opportunities for library staff.
- Too many social media tools to learn Lack of privacy and identity theft.
- Confidentiality of information.
- Electricity failure.

- Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media
- Inadequate funding for libraries. Lack of time to use social media

Communication type of Networking Tools		
Sr.No.	Tools and its Image	Description
1	Facebook 	Facebook is a very handy and easy social media platform that is being used by all academic librarians and users. Facebook allows us to form groups of like-minded persons having common needs. All users can freely communicate with everyone on the group so formed for library services.
2	Twitter 	Twitter is a micro blogging application. It will keep up staff and users updated on daily activities, like regularly updated collections, new arrival, current content services of library.
3	MySpace 	This has become a very popular social networking site. It is used for making friends, talking and sharing resources online.
4	LinkedIn 	This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library users connected with the people that can help them find information.
5	Blog 	Many aspiring as well as established authors, journalist and celebrities are using blogs to write their views and ideas. Through blogging librarians can inform users about the availability of new collections and being in contact with the users and their needs.
6	Ning 	Ning is slowly becoming popular among library users. Through it information can be shared with several users at a time.

Distribution type of Networking Tools		
Sr.No.	Tools and its Image	Description
1	YouTube 	This is the most popular social media site for teaching learning videos, e-learning tutorials, and related events.
2	Wikipedia 	This is an online encyclopedia updated by users. You can use this tool to share your knowledge by editing, or simply point library users in the right direction.

3	<p>SlideShare</p> 	Encourage faculty, staff, and students to share their slideshow presentations for the greater community to access on SlideShare. It is a great way to disseminate information among research community to the field of research and development activities.
4	<p>Flickr</p> 	This is one of the best tool for sharing a new image collections. Institutions can share photo collection of workshops, conference and different programme that are organised with in the institutions.
5	<p>TeacherTube</p> 	This is the video sharing website. It is designed for librarians and teachers to share educational resources such as video, audio, documents, photos, groups and blogs. The site contains a mixture of classroom teaching resources and others designed for teacher training.
6	<p>Second Life</p> 	Second Life is a virtual world where users can create, connect, and chat with others from around the world.
7	<p>PBwiki</p> 	PBwiki can be capture knowledge, share files and manage projects within a secure online environment.
8	<p>Community Walk</p> 	Community Walk offers a geographical way to interpret text and events. Librarians can be used it for instruction, such as showing someone where to find a book, or walk them through a historical and geographical timeline.
9	<p>Digg</p> 	Digg is a great way to find useful content that you wouldn't come across in traditional ways.
10	<p>StumbleUpon</p> 	Another way to find great content is with StumbleUpon. You can channel surf the internet to find useful content, research tools, and more.

Knowledge Organization type of Networking Tools		
Sr.No.	Tools and its Image	Description
1	LibraryThing 	This social cataloging network site for librarians and you can catalogue along with Amazon, the Library of Congress, and more than 300 other libraries around the world. You will get recommendations and easy tagging as well.
2	aNobii 	aNobii social networking site helps book lovers to share reviews and recommendations. It also prepare due date alerts, lending, and discussions.
3	Del.icio.us 	With this tool, librarians can create a custom directory for library users. It will be easy to find useful internet research links.
4	Netvibes 	In this Netvibes site we can create a public page that can be viewed by anyone. Librarians can use it to help guide users to helpful internet sources, news feeds, and more. It can be integrated with many of the tools mentioned here, like Flickr and libraryblogs.
5	Connotea 	Connotea is a great reference tool, allowing you to save and organize reference links and share them with others. They can be accessed from any computer and offer integration with lots of other tools.
6	lib.rario.us 	This is another social cataloging site, you can put media such as books, CDs, and journals on display for easy access and tracking.

CONCLUSION

Social media is being used more and more in educational libraries today. Implementing social networking tools in the library requires proper planning and evaluation. Maximizing the use of social networking from different perspectives can potentially result in successful social networking tools in the library. For this, staff of the library should have the knowledge and training to use social networking.

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