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Use of Social Media in Marketing Library and Information Services in University Libraries in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract
The study was conducted to find out the use of social media in marketing library and information services in university libraries in south-east, Nigeria. The research design was a descriptive survey with researcher-made rating scales used for data collection. Census sampling was applied in selecting librarians. The population of the study consists of all the librarians working in the ICT unit of the selected libraries. A sample size of 65 librarians was purposively selected and out of the copies of research instrument administered to librarians, 50 copies were returned. Results from the finding showed that social media such as YouTube, Blog, Facebook and Twitter were used in marketing library and information products with Blog, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube indicated as highly relevant in marketing library services. University libraries are now using these social media (SM) to a great extent. Furthermore, slow bandwidth/slow internet connectivity, time constraint, lack of fund, low level of ICT literacy skills, non-existence of social media policy (SMP) were identified as challenges to effective use of social media in marketing library products and services. The recommendations made on the basis of these findings include: developing interest in using social media by heads of library, clear definition of audience needs and services to market, re-training of librarians in the application of social media to marketing of library products and services and formulating of a viable social media policy.

Keywords: Information services, Library services, Marketing, Social media, South-east, University libraries, Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction

Libraries are challenged as never before to remain relevant to the community to which they are offering their services, especially, when the user has many options with regard to accessing timely information. Librarians and information professionals must learn to effectively market and advertise their services for competition for customers, competition for resources, maintain relevance, promote an updated image, visibility, valuable community resources, rising expectations, survival in a web 2.0 world (Jose & Bhat, 2007; Mishra & 2010).

The social community must know where the libraries are, what they have to offer and how they intend to offer. We are in a globalised society, so it will be an aberration for library and information professionals to be in the hiding when the various platforms are there for them to utilize (Ekere, Akanwa and Benson, 2015). Social media when utilized in the marketing of library services could result in a meaningful and substantive change in libraries and it is becoming popular because of its emphasis on sharing content and linking one another which many people need for their research (Ikonne, Onuoha &Madukoma, 2013; Ekwelem, Okafor &Ukwuoma, 2013).

Social media is described as online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives (Simisaye&Adeyeoye, 2015). Social media have the potential for information users and information providers to achieve a win-win relationship. It is being used worldwide for diverse purposes in libraries and information centres e.g. marketing, branding, building customer relationship, reference services, quick dissemination of news (Fernandez, 2009; Jain, 2013).

Social media is about communication, conversation and participation, as is the participatory library (Smeaton & Davis, 2014). It is inherently interactive, encouraging conversation and collaboration. Alkindi& Al-Suqri (2013) define social networking sites (SNSs) as an online communication and marketing tool in which individuals as well as organizations can build online profiles in order to share information, exchange messages with others, maintain relationships in social networks and to communicate with the majority of SNS members. Social media enable libraries to get closer to the clients Ekere, Anyalebechi & Benson (2016) sees it as a platform through which library can fully come to grips with the reality of the information needs of the users in contemporary society. It presents libraries and librarians with the means of reaching users and builds up user loyalty.

Alkindi & Al-Suqri (2013) defines *"Library Marketing"* as the distribution and provision of awareness of the existence of the library, and its resources and services, using different tools and technologies in order to get users to use those resources and services. It is all about navigating through the public domain to reach out to the users and get them acquainted with products and services offered by libraries. Marketing and promotion of information services is among the approaches academic libraries must use in order to create and increase awareness to the clients (Makori, 2012). Marketing is human activity that is directed at satisfying the needs of library users through an exchange process (Benson, Udo-Anyanwu & Onuoha, 2016).

Marketing is beyond developing and promoting new services and products of libraries. It is about bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness. Marketing is an integral part of library service, because it has to do with basic principles of librarianship, which is developing good collection and user-oriented services (Madhusudhan, 2008). Marketing in terms of libraries as noted by Eze, Ezukwuoke and Okeke (2015), means a sufficient change in the traditional attitude of librarians towards acquisition, organization, processing and retrieving information. Jose and Bhat (2007) contends that today libraries are facing a whole lot of problems, their funds are shrinking, costs of resources like journals are increasing rapidly and reading habits among people declining due to reasons such as onslaught of television and internet.

Librarians and libraries should begin to view the website as marketing and public relation tool as increasing number of users are turning into solely networked users and rarely visit the library in person (Siddike, Munshi

&Mahamud, 2013).Effective marketing provides the means by which users are made aware of the services of the library and their value. This is because heavy patronage determines the worth of the library and heavy patronage depends on several other factors of which marketing is one (Martey, 2000). No doubt, knowledge is now getting closer to the people at the press of the button and libraries and information centres seems to be losing their clients on daily basis. The need for effective utilization of social media tools in marketing of library and information services in order to bring back the users is a necessity and a challenge that information on providers must come to reality with (Ekere, Akanwa & Benson, 2015; Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha, 2016).

Librarians in Nigerian universities as well as all tertiary institutions libraries are now realizing the potentials of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, and Google+ and are making efforts to integrate it in the library services (Quadri & Idowu, 2014). It is in the light of this that this study seeks to examine the use of social media marketing library and information services in selected university libraries in south east using the following specific objectives:

1.2 Objectives of the Study
This study is conducted in order to:
    i.   establish if university libraries used social media in marketing their products and services;
    ii.   ascertain the relevance of social media in marketing library products and services in university libraries;
    iii. establish the extent to which social media are used in marketing library products and information services; and
    iv. investigate the challenges encountered by university libraries in using social media to market their

products and services

v.   **2.1 Review of Related Literature**
As librarians continue to embrace new technology, use of social media would increase in the library and information science domain. As rightly noted by Ottong, Eyo & Ottong (2014:17), the scenario of contemporary library shows that:

the 21ˢᵗ century has brought a lot of dynamism within the library and information science profession. This has come as a result of the sophisticated nature of the present day library user. Library patrons are constantly prompting librarians to be more pro-active in their service delivery.

Ekere, Anyalebechi & Benson (2016) argues that, to effectively use social media to market library services, the library need to: identify the users and their information needs, analyse the user's environment and their approach to information seeking. Also worthy of identification is viable strategies can be implemented to ensure that the marketing of reference and information service yield result. Benson, Udo-Anyanwu and Onuoha (2016), citing, Abdulsalani and Salami (2013) argues that librarians must begin to change their orientation about traditional approach to library services in order to experience the benefits inherent in marketing of library and information services. As rightly noted by Jose & Bhat (2007), remaining close to the customer is a pre-requisite to the marketing success. They maintained that the culture of customer oriented-ness needs to be emphasized in all strategic plan documents.

Eze, Ezunwuoke and Okeke (2015), believed that effective utilization of resources and services can be achieved through marketing approach. They also affirmed that the impact of the information technology and the adoption of the marketing approach will

help improve services for users and enhance the reputation of the library and information professionals.Benson, Okorafor&Ariole (2017) found out in their study that library and information science practitioners in Imo State make use of social media in dissemination of information to library users to a low extent. They further revealed that problem of bandwidth; slow internet connectivity, electricity breakdown and others are problems militating against effective utilization of social media in the provision of library services. Benson, Okorafor&Ekeruche (2017) also, identified marketing of library products and services as one among services that social media are utilized for in libraries in Imo state.

Siddike, Munshi and Mahamud (2013) in their study revealed the practices of web-based academic library marketing and services in Bangladesh. The results indicates that 15 libraries have direct links from the institutions home page to the library with only one private university having no direct link to their respective libraries. However, Benson, Udo-Anyanwu & Onuoha (2016), observed that the basic strategies adopted in the marketing of information products and services include use of library notice board, face-to-face interaction, seminar/workshops, use of institutions websites and library online, networking among professional colleagues.

Mishra (2010) identified the possible social network tools that can be look forward for marketing library and information services, they are Facebook, MySpace, ELF, LinkedIn, slide share etc. He explained Wiki as a knowledge management tool for the library to organizing and managing digital information for the users. While RSS feeds are used by libraries for users to subscribe to, including updates on new items in a collection, new services, and new content in subscription databases and also library content for republishing on library sites.

Fernandez (2009) affirmed that one of the greatest advantages of marketing with social media is that users can be anywhere to receive information related news from librarians. They don't need to be physically present in the library to access library news, products and services. They further stressed that the use of social media in libraries is one forum of relationship marketing that has the potential to pay great dividends in the form of user loyalty. Thus creating an atmosphere in which library users are connected with librarians. Jain (2013) maintained that social media is well recognized and well accepted forum for marketing library and information services. Collins & Quan-Haase (2012) maintained that social media has become an increasingly familiar tool employed in academic libraries to market services and resources to current and prospective patrons. As rightly pointed out by Alkindi and Al-Suqri (2013), libraries can exploit the features of SNSs to market their services. The adoption and use of SNSs as an online information marketing strategy is a new way to enhance library services and to increase the library's reputation on the internet where the people meet and discuss different issues and or social issues.

Okon and Omoh (2014), highlights on the barrier to effective marketing in Nigerian university libraries. They include attitude of library staff, lack of funds, low level of knowledge, diverse nature of services and clientele, and non-realization of information value. Ekwelem, Okafor and Ukwoma (2013), contends that the knowledge of librarianship is expanding at an unprecedented rate. They suggests that librarians should as a matter of necessity, consider creating profiles for marketing and publicity purposes, since many students seem receptive to the idea of library presence on social media. Similarly, Zohoorian-Fooladi & Abrizah (2012), pointed out that librarians in general do not take the advantage of using

social media marketing tool. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) using a self designed model for librarians' use of social media to promote library and information resources and services, explained that librarians using social media may likely promote either library services like lending services, referral services, references services, technical services, indexing, abstracting, user education etc or library resources such as books, CD, VCD, journals newspapers, year book, maps, dictionaries, internet based resources.

From the literature reviewed, no study has been previously carried out on the use of social media in marketing library products and services with reference to selected university libraries in south east Nigeria.

3.1   Research Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The population of study consist 65 librarians working in the ICT units of selected federal university libraries in south- east, Nigeria. The respondents were purposively selected from the ICT Units of the selected libraries; librarians that have worked in the ICT Unit and have been reposted to other Units of the selected libraries were purposively selected. The selected libraries include University of Nigeria (UNN), Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), Imo State University (IMSU), Abia State University (ABSU), and Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU). The librarians in ICT units were used because they were in better position to give an objective rating of the situation being studied. The instrument used for data collection was a Likert rating scale. The questionnaire was made up four sections. Section A seeks data on social media used in marketing library products and services; section B was used to collect data on relevance of social media in marketing library products and services; section C dwelt on the extent to which social media are used in marketing library and information services. Section D was on challenges of effective use of social media in marketing of library products and services. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.1 Results and Analysis of Data

Research Objective 1: to establish if university libraries used social media in marketing their products and services

Table 1: Use of Social media in marketing library products and services

Social media used in marketing library products and services	Utilized		Not Utilized	
	Freq .	%	Freq	%
Facebook	39	78.0	11	22.0
Twitter	38	76.0	12	24.0
Blog	42	84.0	8	16.0
MySpace	39	78.0	11	22.0
Wikis	32	64.0	18	36.0
RSS feeds	47	94.0	3	6.0
Flicker	29	58.0	21	42.0
WhatsApp	34	68.0	16	32.0
YouTube	45	90.0	5	10.0
Podcast	28	56.0	14	26.0

Table 1 shows the type of social media used in marketing library products and services. 39 (78%) of the respondents affirmed that Facebook is used in marketing library products and services. 38 (76%) indicates that twitter is used. 42 (84%) says that blog is used in marketing library products and services. 39 (78%) indicates MySpace, 32 (64%) agreed that Wikis is utilized. RSS feeds and Flicker were confirmed as being utilized by 47 (94%) and 29 (58%) respectively. Similarly, 34 (68%) say is WhatsApp is used, with 45 (90%) and 28 (56%) respondents indicating YouTube and Podcast respectively

Research Objective 2: to ascertain the relevance of social media in marketing library products and services in university libraries

Table 2: Relevance of Social Media in Marketing Library Products and Services

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook	50	3.88	.328
Twitter	50	3.72	.497
Blog	50	3.94	.240
MySpace	50	2.94	.935
Wikis	50	3.52	.544
RSS feeds	50	3.26	.664
Flicker	50	2.96	.856
WhatsApp	50	3.82	.388
YouTube	50	3.72	.454
Podcast	50	3.04	.669
	50	3.48	0.484

Table 2 present the analysis of relev ance of social media in marketing library products and services. At a grand mean of 3.48 and standard deviation 0.484, majority of the respondents indicates that social media is relevant in marketing library product and services. As indicated in the table, facebook ($\bar{x}$= 3.8; SD=0.328) was the item with the highest mean, followed by whatsapp ($\bar{x}$=3.82; SD=0.388), Blog ($\bar{x}$=3.94; SD=0.240). Next of the ranking is YouTube ($\bar{x}$ =3.72; SD=0.454) and Twitter $\bar{x}$=3.72; SD=0.497).

Research Objective 3: to establish the extent to which social media are used in marketing library products and information services

Table 3: Extent to which social media are used in marketing library and information services

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook	50	3.40	.808
Twitter	50	3.50	.647
Blog	50	3.76	.431
MySpace	50	3.18	.720
Wikis	50	3.34	.717
RSS feeds	50	3.02	.820
Flicker	50	3.18	.720
WhatsApp	50	3.80	.404
YouTube	50	3.52	.646
Podcast	50	2.86	.783
	50	3.356	0.610

Table 3 shows the extent to which social media are used in marketing library and information services. At a grand mean of 3.36 and standard deviation of 0.610, the respondents agreed that social media are used in marketing library and information services to high extent. The respondents agreed to all the 10 items (social media) as being used to a very high extent in marketing library and information products and services. The highest mean on the lists is Whatsapp ($\bar{x}$=3.80; SD=0.404), followed by Blog ($\bar{x}$=3.76;SD=0.431). YouTube ($\bar{x}$=3.52; SD=0.646), Twitter ($\bar{x}$=3.50; SD= 0.647), facebook ($\bar{x}$=3.40; SD=0.808), wikis (x=3.34; SD=0.717), MySpace ($\bar{x}$=3.18; SD=0.720), Flicker ($\bar{x}$=3.18; SD=0.720) RSS feed ($\bar{x}$=3.02; SD=0.820) and Podcast $\bar{x}$=2.86; SD=0.783)

Research Objective 4: investigate the challenges encountered by university libraries in using social media to market their products and services

Table 4: Challenges to use of Social Media imarketing of library products and services

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Low bandwidth / slow internet connectivity	50	3.82	.388
Time constraint affect use of social media tool	50	3.48	.544
Low level of ICT literacy skill	50	3.38	.635
Unwillingness of heads of libraries to adopt use of social media tools in marketing information service	50	2.98	.869
Lack of knowledge about social media platforms to use in marketing	50	3.18	.596
Conservative culture /natural lag in adopting new technology	50	3.14	.833
Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media	50	2.64	.749
Lack of fund to undergo training on ICT literacy	50	3.46	.542
The presence of too many social media to learn and adopt	50	3.24	.625
Non existence of social media policy	50	3.30	.614
Lack of marketing skills among librarians	50	3.12	.558
	50	3.25	0.565

Table 4 shows the respondents responses challenges to effective use of social media in marketing of library products and services at a grand mean of 3.25 and standard deviation of 0.565, majority of the respondents agree to all item statements. This include low bandwidth/slow internet connectivity ($\bar{x}$=3.82; SD=0.388), time constraint affect use of social media tool ($\bar{x}$ =3.48; SD=0.544), lack of fund to undergo training on ICT literacy ($\bar{x}$= 3.46; SD=0.542), low level of ICT literacy skills ($\bar{x}$=3.38; SD=0.635), the presence of too many social media to learn and adopt ($\bar{x}$= 3.24; SD=0.614); non existence of social media policy ($\bar{x}$=3.30; SD=0.614), lack of knowledge about social media platforms to use in marketing ($\bar{x}$=3.18; SD=0.596); conservative culture/national lag in adopting new technology ($\bar{x}$=3.14; SD=0.833), lack of marketing skills among librarians ($\bar{x}$=3.1; SD=0.588); unwillingness of heads of libraries to adopt media tools in marketing information services ($\bar{x}$=2.98; SD=0.869) and low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media ($\bar{x}$=2.64,SD=0.749).

5.1   Discussion of Findings

It was found in the study that social media is used in marketing library and information products and services. The study indicates that social media such a YouTube, RSS feeds, blog, facebook, MySpace, and twitter etc are used in marketing library products and services. This affirms the submission of Mishra (2010), who identified the possible social networks tools that can be look forward for marketing library and information services and they are Facebook, MySpace etc. It also aligns with the submissions of Benson, Okorafor and Ariole (2017) that social media being utilized include facebook, twitter and whatsapp. It also corroborates the submission of Benson (2017) that marketing of library products is among the key library services that social media are applied. The implication of this study is that the use of social media in marketing library products and information services is gaining popularity in university libraries in south east Nigeria. The findings of this study is contrary to the submission of Benson et al (2017) that social media tools such as YouTube, RSS feeds, flicker, wikis, podcast and MySpace are not utilized in the provision of library services.

It was revealed that social media such as Blog, Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, Twitter, others are highly relevant in marketing of library services. This corroborate with the findings of Jain (2013), who maintained that social media is well recognized and well accepted forum for marketing library and information services.

The findings revealed that social media is being used in marketing library products and services to a very great extent. This finding however, contradicts the submissions of Benson et al (2017) that library and information science practitioners in Imo state make use of social media to a low extent.

Evidence from the research questions on challenges to effective use of social media in marketing of library products and services indicates that low bandwidth / slow internet connectivity, time constraint, lack of fund to undergo training on ICT literacy, low level of ICT literacy skills among librarians, non-existence of social media policy and the presence of too many social media among others are challenges to effective use of social media in marketing library products and services. The findings also corroborates earlier findings of Benson et al (2017) study carried out in Owerri Imo State low bandwidth, time constraint, low level of ICT

literacy skills etc, limits effective utilization of social media in marketing of library products and services.

6.1   Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, it is concluded that social media is used in marketing library and information products and services and that blog, Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, twitter etc, are highly relevant in marketing of library services. It is quite interesting that social media is now being used to a great extent in marketing library products and services in Nigerian universities. Moreover, low bandwidth/slow internet connectivity, time constraints, non-existence of social media platforms poses challenges to the full integration and effective use of social media in marketing library products and services.

The following recommendations were made in line with the findings of the study.

Heads of university libraries should show interest in using social media to market library products and services. It is important that heads of university libraries develop interest in using social media in marketing library products and services. This would go a long way in motivating the subjects under them to align with the same vision of accepting and utilizing of social media in the provision of library and information services. This is very important considering that innovations and creativity remains the engine that drive library services in contemporary society. It is also recommended that university libraries should have a clear definition of what their audience needs, the services to market and the social media platform that is most cost effective and as well reach a wide audience. This would help them address the issue of the prevalence of too many social media platforms to use in marketing.

Furthermore, re-training of librarians in the application of social media to marketing of library products and services is a necessity

as this would help to equip them with the requisite skills needed to effectively market library products and services. This would also empower them with relevant marketing skills. Regards to this, in-house training and other professional conferences can be explored as means of training librarians on how to apply social media to marketing of library products and services.

Moreover, formulation of social media policy is now a necessity in the library parlance. With the rate at which social media platform are springing up daily, it is pertinent that heads of libraries should design a framework for formulating social media policy (SMP) for their libraries. The SMP would help in defining the type of services to market trough social media, the nature and type of social media to adopt and categories of staff to work synchronously in order to achieve the objective of marketing in university libraries. The social media policy should also define the training needs of librarians required to work in the social media section of the ICT units of Nigerian Libraries.

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