



USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: A SURVEY OF RHEMA UNIVERSITY, ABA AND AKANU IBAM FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, UWANA, AFIKPO, EBONYI STATE

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Abstract

This paper was conducted to investigate the role of social media in information service delivery in academic libraries, using surveys of Rhema University Library, Aba, and Akanu Ibiam Polytechnic, Uwana, Afikpo. The study used a descriptive survey. The population of the study was 45, consisting of 35 library staff from Akanu Ibiam Polytechnic, Afikpo, Ebonyi State, and 10 library staff from Rhema University, Aba, Abia State. Data was obtained through questionnaires, and out of 45 questionnaires distributed, only 40 were returned by the respondents. There was no sample as the population was found to be manageable. Five objectives and five research questions guided the study. The findings revealed that the two institutions use social media in information service delivery. The most used media tools are Facebook, Blogs, WhatsApp, and E-. The findings further noted that challenges abound for the use of social media in information service delivery. These challenges include: a lack of cooperation from library management, irregular power supply, inadequate awareness, insufficient training and retraining of library staff, insufficient manpower, insensitive staff attitudes, network issues, and a lack of funds. However, the study recommended among others that there should be support from library management, provision of regular power supply, sensitization among staff, training and retraining of staff on ICT skills, adequate network services and provision of adequate funds for subscriptions of data, ICT facilities and other things that might be needed to attract users through this service delivery platforms.

Keywords: Social Media, Library Staff, Information Service Delivery, Academic Libraries

Introduction

Academic libraries are the libraries established in institutions of higher learning for purpose of supporting the academic community in teaching, learning and research activities. (or in order???) to meet the academic

requirements and needs of the users in the community, they provide information resources in different formats and different disciplines offered by the various faculties, organized with effective access tools that will guarantee easy and effective use of the



resources provided. Before the advent of Information Communication Technology, library services were done manually with information primarily in print format, which as a result hampered the effective information service delivery by academic libraries and as such limited the information service role in meeting the information needs of the academic community. The introduction of information technology has revolutionized information service delivery systems in libraries thereby making it possible for academic libraries to compete with other information agencies in the provision of timely, accurate and relevant information in different formats. Incorporating new technologies such as social media tools in information service delivery is important as it will make the institutions relevant and be able to follow the trend in information service delivery. Information are scattered in different media which has necessitated the information users sitting in their comfort zones to access information. Based on this, academic libraries should therefore devise strategies to meet the information needs of their users by applying social media tools that will effectively meet the demand of their users in information provision and services. Social media as stated by Umeozor (2022) has revolutionized library service delivery by providing new avenues for engagement, outreach and information dissemination. Social media is an important instrument for attracting and keeping information users who are engrossed with new inventions in information technology. Social media is an avenue for engaging information users in different access channels needed for information exploitation and exploration for decision-making. Social media is also an avenue used by libraries most importantly academic libraries share their services, and collections as well advertise their services to those who may not know what the library has for them. Social media is an essential instrument for information dissemination as its use is apt as information continues to explode

in recent times. Social media according to Ilesanmi and Mabawonku (2020) are means by which individuals or groups of people communicate, share and experience online and real-time interactions. They are used to send messages, share ideas, meetings and other information needed by group of people or individuals. These social media are Facebook, WhatsApp, E-mail, Instagram, Twitter, Blog, Skype, Wikis, Youtube among others and are used by libraries in information dissemination and service delivery. Librarians should be inclined to the use of social media in information service delivery as this will make them relevant and as well improve their library services to clientele. Social media are rapidly becoming the instrument of choice for communication between the librarians and the users. Awurdi (2019) observed that social media have increasingly permeated the world of librarianship by providing interactive spaces for libraries to engage in two-way communication with their users. Librarians in the academic communities should utilize the avenues provided by social media spaces to providing effective information services by engaging their users in discussions, exchange of ideas and experiences, knowledge sharing and information provision. Social media is an important meeting point for information socialization among groups for maximum use of information for decision making. Libraries of Rhema University and Uwana Polytechnic are not exempted as this will help in boosting their information service delivery. It is based on this that the researchers embarked on this study to investigate the use of social media for effective information service delivery in these two institutions.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of social media has created new opportunities and challenges for teachers and lecturers alike. Social media has become the driving force in the expansion of distance learning. The use of social media caused a



great infusion of data into the lives of adults and has in turn caused them to assume creative roles in their social lives in addition to their personal lives. Therefore, librarians engage in the development of use of new technologies in information service delivery to meet the demands of users in this information age. The use of social media in library service delivery is likely to wave in the foreseeable future on the contrary considering the new development and trends suggesting an approaching explosion in social media with great implications for librarianship and other fields of knowledge. It is therefore based on this that the researchers considered it necessary to investigate the use of social media in effective information service delivery in academic libraries in Nigeria with a survey of Rhema University, Aba and Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Uwana Afikpo.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the study are to investigate the use of social media in effective information delivery in academic libraries in Nigeria, focusing on Rhema University, Aba and Akanu Ibiam Polytechnic, Afikpo. The specific objectives sought to:

1. Identify the social media tools used for information service delivery in the libraries under study
2. Ascertain the challenges associated with the use of social media in information service delivery
3. Suggest ways of improving the use of social media for effective information service delivery in the libraries under study

Research Questions

1. What are the social media tools used for information service delivery in the libraries under study?
2. What are the challenges associated with the use of social media in

information service delivery in the institutions under study?

3. What are the ways to improve the use of social media for effective information service delivery in the libraries under study?

Literature Review

Social media use is essential in academic libraries as it will help library staff keep themselves abreast of innovations in their career and further help to provide services that will meet the varying needs of their patrons (Adewojo & Adebara, 2016). Social media has been increasing globally because of the growing number of internet users engaging in two-way interaction (Abbas et al, 2021). Social media consists of Web 2.0 technologies which include internet-based applications that allow content creators to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content such as videos (Kaplan & Haenlin, 2010). Social media includes a range of online applications that enable group or individual interactions for social connections, collaborations and the exchange of ideas in a web-based community (D'Souza et al, 2017). Umeozor (2022) listed some commonly used social platforms by libraries as;

- i. Face-book. This is a network platform used in online connections and sharing with family and friends. Facebook is used by university libraries to share updates, advertise resources in the library holdings, send messages about upcoming events, and share ideas with users and colleagues. Anyaoku, Orakpor and Ezejiolor (2017) said that Facebook and Twitter are capable and important tools for information dissemination while Blogs and YouTube are used to also share information.
- ii. WhatsApp: This platform is used by many university libraries in information communication. It is in



- most cases used in sending messages or direct communication with users. This is done by creating a group with users through their phone numbers submitted during registration. With this, users can be informed of any development in the library.
- iii. LinkedIn: It is a social platform that provides employment-oriented online services. It is used to connect with the academic and professional community in sharing information about research reports, job opportunities and collaboration with other institutions or organizations.
 - iv. YouTube: This is an online platform used by university libraries to share video information on activities or events done in the library. This medium is used to inform the users on the proper use of the library through video display.
 - v. Blog: It is an avenue used by librarians in the university to market services in the library. The librarians also use this to market the profession as well as individual innovations in the profession.
 - vi. Instagram: It is a productive platform used by university libraries to upload video or picture events of services, resources or any other activity covered by the libraries. This creates awareness of what the library has for the users. With the introduction of information technology, Instagram has become a useful tool for attracting users to the library.

It is important to note that, with the potentials embodied in social media for effective information service delivery. Different types of social media exist, notably among them are, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, MySpace, YouTube and LinkedIn are available to librarians for information service delivery (Ezeani & Eke, 2017). Furthermore, Ezeani and Igwesi (2018)

identified six types of social media available to Nigerian information professionals; Facebook, Blogs, Wikis, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. These are used for outreach, marketing of library services and collection, transfer and dissemination of information to users.

The use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Wikis, and YouTube among others in the delivery of information have become necessary for the survival of academic libraries.

White (2014) in his study categorized social media to include but not limited to the following:

- ❖ **Social connections:** this means keeping in touch with friends and family members through the use of Facebook, Twitter, Google and Myspace. These social networking tools are used widely for building social connections online.
- ❖ **Multimedia Sharing:** in this platform, video and managing digital photography content online are covered in this type of social platform. Some of the most popular sites for multimedia sharing are YouTube, Flickr and Picasa.
- ❖ **Professionals:** It is a platform designed to provide opportunities for career-related growth. It is used to connect professionals with specific interest in their areas or fields of knowledge. It is used as an avenue for discussion or it can be linked to a classroom for teaching and learning of new development in the field.
- ❖ **Informational:** Informational communities are made up of people seeking answers to every problem. It is used to pass information or teach people how to establish life or learn new things. For example, setting up a



Blog can help in passing information to people on how to set up a project.

- ❖ **Educational:** These networks are widely used by students or professionals for collaboration. This is beneficial to researchers in conducting research or interacting with experts in their field for further knowledge. Examples are the student room, the school blog, and the math forum.
- ❖ **Hobbies:** People use this based on their hobbies to discover a whole community of people from around the world who share the same passion for those interests.

Kaplan and Haen (2010) defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It is an internet-based technology that allows users to share and receive material through social networking, blogging and media-based apps. Developments in ICTs which brought the existence of social media have become an indispensable tool for librarians in the area of information service delivery (Asabe, 2019). The use of social media has affected the operations and information service delivery of libraries, as it provides librarians with innovative and effective ways of interacting and collaborating with their users (Ayodele, 2017). In the field of library and information science, social media can help in promoting service delivery as well as developing the technological proficiency of professionals and other users (Sadeh, 2017). Awurdi (2019) observed that social media have increasingly permeated the world of librarianship by providing interactive spaces for libraries to engage in two-way communication with their users. Social media platforms provide space for users to form connections, exchange ideas and collaborate with fellow community members, creating a sense of belonging and promoting lifelong

learning (Nv- please check the reference, 2020). Social media is important as it is the key to providing services to meet the technological demand information services. According to Ogunbodede and Ivwighreghweta (2020), social media plays crucial roles in libraries, transforming the way they engage with their communities, deliver services and provide information and resources. Social media is an effective platform for university libraries to engage with their users due to its relevance to the era of information explosion as it gives fast and valuable information service delivery. User approach towards library is changing and many information users can comfortably stay in their comfort zone and access information. Therefore, the use of social media platforms for service delivery has become important to make librarians relevant in their profession.

Social media makes information access easier and faster. Librarians are therefore encouraged to explore the tools necessary for improving library services by articulating the nature of social media, creating webpage and content through the establishment of friendly user interface over networks, creating online database management, evaluating and applying information and assisting users with skill acquisition, searching and navigating the web, creating social network space, teaching and providing quality online library services, performing reference desk through the use of Wikipedia (Malanty, 2015).

The librarians in the process of rendering library services face various challenges due to the state of university libraries in Nigeria. Due to the economic situation in the nation, many universities are faced with low funding and this has greatly affected the university libraries which already were not getting enough budgetary allocation to improve library services. Opeke and Onuoha (2013) in their study revealed that restriction in the social media space during official hours topped the challenges, followed by erratic power supply



and privacy issues for service delivery. Also, Hamid, Chang, Waycott and Kumia (2011) in the study “The use of online social networking revealed that the barriers such as Infrastructure, control and supervision, time, skills, cultural differences and language were identified for low utilization of social media by users. Similarly, Madhusudhan and Nagabhushanam (2012) results showed that majority of the respondents indicated that slow internet connectivity was a major barrier to accessing webbased library services. In addition, Ajayi, Shorunke and Akinola (2013) findings revealed that inadequate power supply and obsolescence of ICT facilities among others were issues peculiar to the use of ICT in the tertiary institutions studied.

According to Olufunke (2017), librarians are faced with many challenges but most the common ones are: inadequate ICT facilities in the library, poor internet access, lack of finance, epileptic power supply, lack of management supply, lack of cooperation among staff, lack of skills, lack of awareness of social media tools, and poor maintenance culture. Following this, Chitumbom (2015) provided the following strategies to include;

- i. Creation of social media links: These allow librarians to create platforms where they can interact with colleagues and users for collaboration and effective service delivery. These link when created help in marketing library resources and services. These links can be Facebook pages, fan-pages, library blogs and library websites among others.
- ii. Creating accounts for users: Librarians can use this avenue to create accounts for mostly students to ensure easy and equal participation among users on the available networks. It will also allow users/students to comfortably use their mobile gadgets to access library services via social links.

- iii. Librarians should be responsible for all activities on social media
- iv. Social media policy should be established to guide the use of social media on institutional networks.

In a study carried out by Umeozor (2022), he found out that social media was used for rendering defined reference services. However, Adayi et al, (2021) on a study on “the extent of utilization of social media for effective library service delivery in selected university libraries in Abia State, discovered that networking sites are not used to provide library and information services because none of the university libraries studied had any official social media website. On the other hand, Uwandu and Osuji (2022) in their study on the use of social media for service delivery by library staff in academic libraries in Imo State: a case study of Federal University of Technology, Owerri revealed that the types of social media used by library staff for service.

In a similar study carried out by Chu and Du (2012), librarians from 140 university libraries in Asia, North America and Europe were involved. Findings from the study revealed that Facebook and Twitter (63%) each were found to be highly used by librarians among the eleven social media spaces listed, while instant messaging and Blogs and others were rated less. Their result also showed that they used social media space for real-time enquiries with the library users and information sharing among librarians.

Anyaoku, Orakpor and Ezejiofor (2017) surveyed the knowledge and use of web 2.0 by librarians in Anambra State, in South East, Nigeria. The study revealed that librarians should lobby and spearhead efforts to develop and improve internet connectivity facilities in their workplace by exploring and using web-based innovations for information service delivery and management in their constituencies. Also, Emmanuel and Osuohale (2019) carried out an investigation “on



utilization of social media platforms by librarians for promoting library resources and services in Nigerian tertiary institutions in Cross River State Nigeria”. The study revealed that Facebook and Blogs were frequently used social media platforms for promoting library resources and services in the libraries. Hence, it was recommended that the management of the institutions should encourage more participation on social media platforms through seminars and symposiums. This implies that social media is a valuable tool for information service delivery as through it the image of the library will be rated high considering the high demand for information in this digital age. The present study emphasizes the use of social media in private and public academic libraries in Abia and Ebonyi States, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey with questionnaires as instruments for data collection. The population consisted of 45 librarians from Rhema University, Aba, 10 library staff and 35 library staff from Federal Polytechnic, Uwana, Afikpo, Ebonyi State. The study considered all the respondents as useful and therefore no sampling was used as the number was considered manageable. The instrument were distributed by the researchers on the first visit and out of which 35 questionnaires were properly filled. this show (78%) response rate. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution

No. of Questionnaires Distributed	No. of Respondents	No of Questionnaires Filled	No. of questionnaires not returned	Percentage (%) Returned	Percentage not Returned
Rhema University, Aba	10	5	5	11%	11%
Federal Polytechnic, Uwana	35	30	5	67%	11%
Total	45	35	10	78%	22



Research Question 1: What are the Social Media tools available for information service delivery?

S/N	Items	Federal Poly, Uwana		Rhema University, Aba	
		A	NA	A	NA
1	Facebook	√		√	
2	Blogs	√		√	
3	YouTube		×		×
4	Twitter		×		×
5	WhatsApp	√		√	
6	Instagram		×		×
7	E-mail	√		√	
8	Podcast		×	√	
9	Skype		×		×
10	LinkedIn		×	√	
11	Myspace		×		×
12	Google		×		×
13	Wikipedia		×	√	

The table above shows that Federal Polytechnic has only 4 social media platforms for information service delivery in their institution. These platforms include Facebook, Blogs, WhatsApp, and E-mail, whereas Rhema, a private University, has Facebook, Blogs, WhatsApp, E-mail, podcasts, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia for information service delivery. Other social media tools like YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, Myspace, and Google were found to be lacking by the institutions. This shows that the institutions still need to explore more social media platforms to improve information service delivery in these institutions.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges encountered in the use of social media in information service delivery?

S/N	ITEM	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Lack of cooperation from library management	4	8.8%	15	33.3%	-	-	-	-
2	Erratic power supply	32	71.1%	11	24.4%	-	-	-	-
3	Lack of awareness	6	13.3	14	31.1%	-	-	-	-
4	Lack of training and retraining of staff in ICT	22	48.8%	28	62.2%	-	-	-	-
5	Lack of trained manpower	-	-	-	-	24	53.3%	9	20%
6	Insensitive attitude of staff	-	-	7	15.5%	15	33.3%	17	37.7%
7	Network problem	23	51.1%	18	40%	-	-	-	-
8	Lack of fund	27	60%	22	48.8%	-	-	--	--



The table above indicated that 4 (8.8%) and 15 (33.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of cooperation from the management pose a challenge to the use of social media in information service delivery; 32(71.1%) and 11(24.4%) of respondents also strongly agreed and agreed on erratic power supply being another challenge. Also, lack of awareness, lack of training and retraining of staff in ICT, network problems, and lack of funds were strongly agreed and agreed by respondents

without opposition. Only 7(15.5%) and 15 (33.3%); and 17 (37.7%) respondents agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed on the insensitive attitude of staff as a challenge to the use of social media for information service delivery. However, 24 (53.3%) and 9(20%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on the lack of trained manpower as one of the challenges to the use of social media for information service delivery in academic libraries under study.

Research Question 5: What are the ways of improving the use of social media for information service delivery?

S/N	ITEM	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Good management support	6	13.3%	4	8.8%	-	-	-	-
2	Steady power supply	13	28.8%	21	46.6%	-	-	-	-
3	Proper Awareness	2	4.4%	18	40%	4	8.8%	-	-
4	Adequate ICT facilities in the library	11	24.4%	22	48.8%	3	6.6%	-	-
5	Training and retraining of library staff.	15	33.3%	18	40%	8	17.7%	2	4.4%
6	Good network services	22	48.8%	19	42.2%	-	-	-	-
7	Adequate funding for the library	16	35.5%	23	51.1%	5	11.1%	2	4.4%
8	Adequate Trained manpower	7	15.5%	11	24.4%	8	17.7%	6	13.3%

Table 6 above shows good management support (13.3%) and (8.8%) steady power supply (28.8%) and (46.6%), good network services (48.8%) and (42.2%) were strongly agreed and disagreed without opposition, while proper awareness (4.4%) and (40%), adequate ICT facilities (24.4%) and (48.8%) training and retraining of library staff (33.3%) and (40%), adequate funding (35.5%) and (51.1%) and adequate trained manpower (33.3%) and (24.4%) were strongly agreed and agreed but with some disagreed and strongly disagreed by some respondents. However, the

result, shows that ways should be sought to improve the use of social media for information service delivery.

Discussion of findings.

(For RQ 1 for example) The findings from the study revealed that there are available social media tools for effective information service delivery in the institutions under study This means that with the adoption of social media tools in information service delivery, users will get timely information and help librarians to



provide better services to users. The availability of social media tools in information service delivery help in creating relevance to the libraries and as such improves the marketing strategies of libraries. Social media tools such as; WhatsApp, Facebook, Blogs and E- mail are very important platforms used in recent time for information dissemination. Social media tools are used to engage students in discussions as it concerns teaching, research and learning. Supporting this findings, Daniel et. al (2024) in their study on utilization of social media and library service delivery found social media as a valuable tool for enhancing library service delivery in university libraries due to its ability to effectively engage users, provide information, and create a dynamic and interactive online presence. State the effect of the findings, either positive or negative, on your subject

1. As much as possible, infuse your thoughts on the interaction and back the thoughts by quoting relevant authors on the specific findings
2. Be brief as much as possible
3. Repeat this for RQ 2-5
4. May I suggest that you limit your article to 3 questions? The remaining 2 can go for another article with a relevant question added.

With the introduction of ICT, many information seekers prefer staying in their comfort zones to search for information and this has great implications for libraries because the goal of every library is to provide information resources and services to users at a minimum time and at the same time provide services that will attract users to full utilization of information resources provided. This can be achieved through the adoption and use of social media in information service delivery. This study is in consonance with the challenges encountered in the use of social media; it was discovered that respondents agreed to the fact

that all the options were the challenges encountered in the use of social media for information service delivery. With the current economic hardship in the country, libraries find it hard to sustain their services due to poor budget allocation, data subscription, low bandwidth, network problems, high cost of internet connectivity and irregular power supply. We are in the era of information technology and users access information from different media and thereby making libraries to have low patronage. Libraries especially the academic libraries should develop strategies to make them relevant and attractive. tion service delivery becomes a challenge. In consonance with the above, Emmanuel and Osulale (2019) identified the high cost of internet connectivity, lack of interest in utilizing internet services, low patronage of internet service, and paucity of well-trained staff on the utilization of social media platforms as constraints to the effective use of social media in tertiary institutions.

The study, however, proffered solutions to the challenges encountered in the use of social media. The result showed that all that were suggested were agreed upon by the respondents. The study agreed with the study of Okeke and Iye (2023) whose findings indicated that workshops and seminars, a conducive working environment, regular training for library staff, a good network system, adequate staff and adequate skilled manpower are the solutions to challenges faced in the use of social media in the promotion of library resources and services. In support of the above result, Mashindano (2022) also listed that library staff should be trained continuously in ICT skills and that the library management should streamline promoting activities in day-to-day library operations. The study also suggests that there should be internet facilities to provide speedy connection to the internet and proper ICT policy for university Libraries as government authority documents.



Conclusion

Social media has been discovered to be a very important tool for effective information services mainly at this information age. Libraries in order to meet the information demand of the time should importantly collaborate and look out for social media tools that would be of help in assisting in information service delivery. Information is highly sought by individuals in different ways and places, libraries should therefore strive to compete favourably with other information industries through the use of social media handles to remain relevant and boost the image of the library. Based on the study, it was found that Facebook, WhatsApp, Instant Messaging, and E-mail were used to a high extent while Instagram, Blogs, Twitter, and podcasts were used on a very low scale.

Social media use should be encouraged as this is the only way libraries will survive in this information age and actualize their goals.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made by the researchers:

- ❖ The management of these institutions should ensure the libraries are connected to the internet with regular subscription of data.
- ❖ There should be a constant power supply in the libraries. Moreover, an alternative power supply should be provided in case of power failure from the Electric Distribution Company.

- ❖ Regular training of staff in ICT should be adopted by these libraries to enable library staff possess adequate skills required for the use of social media tools.
- ❖ Library management should be sensitive to the information demand needs of users and as such always plan on strategies to adopt in meeting these needs and demand of their users.
- ❖ There should be a conducive environment for information service delivery to users. This can be obtained by the provision of speedy and quick information to users.
- ❖ Users should be sensitized on the services provided by these libraries through social media platforms created by librarians.
- ❖ There should be good and viable network connectivity in these libraries for effective information service delivery.



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