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Librarians And Social Media As Catalyst For National Development In Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate Librarians and Social Media as Catalyst for National Development in Nigeria. Survey and online observation method were used. Findings showed that many academic libraries have no websites with social media tools. Librarians in Nigeria have major roles to play in busting national development by meeting daily information needs of users through library service delivery. The paper discussed information services provided with the use of social media technology by librarians and roles of librarians in using different social media to reach users with needed information irrespective of distance and time globally. Based on the findings recommendations were made to libraries, Librarians and library and information science professional bodies in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Librarians, Social media, National Development, and libraries.*

Introduction

National Development simply implies the advancement or growth of a country especially socio-economically, politically, literarily (educationally) culturally and technologically (Zakari, 2001).The transformation of the socio-economic structure of a country facilitates easy development and progress for the overall advancement of the society. Thus, every nation needs to be dynamic and develop in all spheres of human endeavour so that the well being of the society is generally enhanced. Like other nations, Nigeria came up with its national goals aimed at developing the nation all round.

The five main national goals of Nigeria which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the national policy on education are the building of : (a) a free and democratic society. (b) a just and egalitarian society, (c) a united, strong and self-reliant nation, (d) a great and dynamic economy, and (e) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. And this has seen the National Policy on Education undergoing a number of reviews after the first edition in 1977, we have had the second, third and the latest been the fourth edition in 1981, 1998 and 2004 respectively all aimed at improving the quantity and quality of education in the nation(Suleiman, 2012) citing (National policy on Education, 2004). One of the major avenues through which successive governments used to mobilize the Nigerian public to contribute their quota to the development of the nation is education. Education is also about setting young people up for life, by giving them opportunities to find decent work, earn a living, contribute to their communities and societies, and fulfil their potential (UNESCO, 2012). Perhaps this explains why in most cases, the financial allocations for education come second to defence in the federal government's annual budgets (Thanuskodi, 2011). However, investment in education in Nigeria is quite low and therefore falls below the recommendations of the United Nations. The entire budgetary allocation to education has been far below the recommended budgetary

allocation of 26%. In 2000,2005, 2007 and 2012, the federal allocation was 9.6%, 6.3%, 8.7% and 8.43% respectively (Onocha, 2013).

In the 21st century education has shifted to a technology based which is one of the most rapid facilities you can think of. Empirical evidence has shown that librarian role is changing from a static mode, providing library services from physical and traditional library to a dynamic mode, providing access to information irrespective of formats. Hence, social media (networking) technology is an integrating tool of education that can serve as catalyst for national development in Nigeria. Apart from information acting as catalyst for national development and social change, it is geared towards the preparation of the ideal man. The ultimate hope is that literate people in Nigeria who are products of modern library services including social media will be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills for survival. Social media have affected communication between people in educational community positively since the pass two decades. Now, life is made easy by this media for academic, social, and political development of any that is connected to it.

As we all know, communication is a basic human need and for that reason, man has always found a means of meeting this need. The media, which is an umbrella term for various means of communication, has become an integral part of human life around the world. The earliest forms of personal media, speech and gestures, had the benefit of being easy to use and did not necessarily need complex technology (Zakari, 2001). The weaknesses of not being able to communicate to large audiences led to the development of mass media, such as writing. With these developments, the role of the media in the society became more and more significant. John Dewey emphasized the role of media for education as James Agee and Walter Lippmann also highlighted the functions of the media for entertainment and information. New Media, New technologies can lead to new types of media and the ability to use a given form

of media is related to the ability to use its related technology (Social Networking, 2011).

Today, technology has made more universal, the ability to produce media. Printing, radio and television are some examples of mass media in that they are intended to reach vast audiences (Nwakaohu, 2008). These forms of media previously could not be produced readily by the average person. The advent of relatively inexpensive, personal media technologies like blogging, podcasting and Internet video allowed the average literate person to do what was therefore restricted to media companies (Suraeera, 2010). This leads to development of social media, in the internet all over the world today where information is now possible to anybody, anywhere and at anytime. Therefore, librarians are the soul and body of social media networks. The rapid infusion of social media in information dissemination requires a generation of librarians who will be able to use the new tools to enhance their own productivity, decision-making processes, and who understand the importance of integrating social media in the information delivery processes. Library and information services profession is the soul winning of information to users in all over world. Hence the study intends to investigate into the roles of librarians in social media for national development in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

In this study of librarians and social media as catalyst for national development in Nigeria, the following specific objectives guided the study:

1. to determine the value of social media websites in contribution to national development.
2. to know the role of librarians in various social media websites use for library activities.

Review of Related Literature

Social Media (Networking) Services

This is one of the fastest and current services that librarian can offer to learners of all kinds in this 21st century. A social networking service is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, who, for example, share interests and/or activities (Nwakaohu, 2008). Online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centred service whereas online community services are group-centred. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks (Suraeera, 2010). It allows professional Librarians to exchange information, opportunities and ideas; professionals are able to stay informed with new knowledge about their field. Social networks are also being used by teachers, lecturers and students as a communication tool because many students are already using a wide-range of social networking sites. Social media tools are not magical, but using the right application software can have a remarkable positive influence on the student or user attitudes towards learning as well as their abilities to comprehend and affect the world around them.

The use of online social networks by libraries and information organizations is also increasingly prevalent and a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users, as well as extending the services provided to individual libraries. The various social networking sites librarians can use to provide services are both at international and national levels, which includes: Facebook, Myspace, 2go, Snaptu, UC Browser, Opera mini, Twitter and others. One of the good things about these sites is that the applications are acceptable in many of our camera phones owned by users of the

library such as Blackberry, Nokia phones, Tecno, IP computer, IP phones, LG products, Samsung galaxy , Apple, Andriod, and Java phone and among other.

Librarians Roles in Social Media Tools

In this 21st century librarian can keep constant touch and effective interaction with college, staff, patron, and faculty member through online collaborative environment. The social networking tools that can be used by libraries and librarians for the aforementioned purposes are as follows:

- MySpace: MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com>) is extremely popular social networking sites Which primarily have a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources.
- Facebook: This is another social media site frequented by library users and is librarian friendly, it also encourage group communication among patrons.
- Ning: Librarian can use this tool to get connected with library patrons, library associations, and more. You can also use it to share information with many people at a time.
- Blog: By creating a blog, you'll be able to disseminate information to lots of people at one time. Whether you're updating patrons on new collections, or just conversing with library staff, blogs are a powerful tool, especially when combined with RSS.
- Meebo: librarians can use this tool by creating a network of library users and thereby assisting them, no matter what IM client they use. Online chatting or virtual reference service in library can be impacted by professionals to clients.

- LinkedIn: This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. Some professionals publish their work through LinkIn.
- Twitter: Use twitter, a micro-blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival, and current content services of library.

Information Distribution through Social Media Tools

According to Sarah (2013), information sharing is the major part and crucial area where professionals should look seriously while considering and designing library activities in digital age. Patron's satisfaction should be given first and foremost priority by providing right information at the right time in a right way from anywhere. Library professionals should rethink for implementing social media technologies in library services from early period. Sarah went further to explain the following social media tools on how librarians could use them to distribute information:

- ❖ Flickr: This image distribution tool is a great way to share new image collections. Library can share photo collection of workshops; conferences and different programme that are organised within the library environment or may wish to share photos of their physical building and areas where materials are stored and may include staff offices. You can create image sets with metadata, as well as take advantage of the many plugins available for Flickr users. Flickr users can also help gather missing information about images.
- ❖ YouTube: Library video and e-learning tutorials, events and other videos of library services can be effectively promote and webcast through YouTube.

- ❖ TeacherTube: teachertube, which is a YouTube for teachers, presents an excellent opportunity for instructor-librarian collaboration. Librarians can guide students to helpful library resources through YouTube.

- ❖ Second Life: On Second Life, you can create a virtual library with streamed media, discussions, classes, and more.

- ❖ Wikipedia: Wikipedia is an online encyclopaedia updated by users. You can use this tool to share your knowledge by editing, or simply point library patrons in the right direction. You can also host your library websites on wiki software like PBWiki.

- ❖ PBwiki: PBwiki is the world's largest provider of hosted business and educational wikis. It encourages collaboration from students, a way to showcase work, and offers a central gathering point for information. PBwiki offers controlled access, so you can give some editing privileges, while others can only read.

- ❖ Footnote: On Footnote, you'll get access to original historical documents, and can update them with your own content and insights. You can even find personal anecdotes and experiences you won't find in reference books.

- ❖ Community Walk: Community Walk offers a geographical way to interpret text and events. You can use it for instruction, such as showing someone where to find a book, or walk them through a historical and geographical timeline.

- ❖ SlideShare: This can encourage faculty members and students to share their slideshow presentations for the greater community to access on SlideShare.

It's a great way to disseminate information among research community to the field of research and development (R&D) activities.

- ❖ Digg: Digg is a great way to find useful content that you wouldn't come across in traditional ways. Find stories here, then share them with others using Digg's blog function.

- ❖ StumbleUpon: Another way to find great content is with StumbleUpon. You can channel surf the Internet to find useful content, research tools, and more.

- ❖ Daft Doggy: This another social media tools librarian can use to found a particularly good resource. They can also use it to create a website tour with instructions, pointing out useful references and items of note.

Research Method

The researchers adopted survey method, and online observation. Both methods were used to check whether libraries in Nigeria have their own websites with social media tools to reach users online. Unfortunately, many academic libraries and others had no websites in Nigeria. This could lead to an ineffective use of these modern facilities; the agenda for a 21st century librarianship would include a heavy emphasis on the development of social media and internet infrastructure.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the important buzzword of today's` world. It has changed the society into information society and our way of life. It has been integrated in every walk of life; ICT includes computers and communication technology for processing, storage and its retrieval of information. Therefore, social media as one of ICT

tools have been brought into education for online learning, teaching and information services to patrons as well as research collaboration. Okojie (2012) opined that global research trends affirm a correlation between the quality of an institution and the availability of computer resources, internet literacy, policy promotion, democracy and freedom of speech, competition for international visibility and support for open access initiative. These of course have major role to play in national development. Hence, Nigeria needs a new generation of library and information science practitioners or retraining of the existing ones that can serve as engines of both community development and social renewal. In this study, current issues of social media services and the role of librarians were fully discussed. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made for the development of libraries, librarians and Nigeria library and information science profession in general:

1. Information professionals at all levels should try to learn about social media tools that will enable them meet information seekers needs on time.
2. Librarians in academic libraries should create their own blog and post some information about the library services.
3. Librarians should try as well to create blog in academca edu websites, through this library patrons will be reach with information electronically all over the world.
4. Librarians should embrace training and retraining of 21st century skills of information and communication technologies(ICTs)
5. Librarian's registration council of Nigeria should try to reduce their payment for workshop for young librarians. Since most of the workshops are 21st century skills for librarians.

6. Academic libraries and others in Nigeria should create their own websites with inbuilt social media tools through these real online services could be provided to users.

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