Social Networking: Challenges for LIS Professionals

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Abstract

Changing environment of the Information Technology, there has been an explosion in the number of people using social networking websites, such as MySpace, Facebook, Ning, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Twitter, Foursquare, Blogging, etc. Users are more comfort with internet. It is a big challenge for every LIS professional to understand their demands and fulfill in a short time. To understand users need and give them proper information, librarian faces many challenges because modern libraries change their traditional look they become an information center. LIS professional who understands the millennial library customer, is able to adapt existing services and create new ones to meet their community's needs, and change the public perception of library. The present paper detail about social networking, need of social networking in libraries and challenges for LIS professional to understand modern user needs and provide them good fast services.

Key words:-Social Networking, Need of Social Networking in Libraries, Challenges for LIS Professional.

Introduction

Social technology has not created a new human dynamic it simply has enhanced our ability to communicate with others-anywhere, anytime, in multiple ways, and usually for free. Social Networking describes any web site or service that facilitates people communicating one-to-one or one-to many, in a conversation. This includes MySpace, Facebook, Ning, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Twitter, Foursquare, Blogging, etc. Social networking includes everything from eCommunities to broadcasting communications through text, audio, or video in a live format. Social Networking is about connection through conversation among people independently or through organizations speaking with an organizational voice. Social networking is used by

individuals to keep contact with friends and relatives, and for entertainments. It is also used by businesses and various other organizations to promote products, brands, people, events, as well as to disseminate information and update groups of followers with shared interests. Over recent years, there has been an explosion in the number of people using social networking websites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Literature review

Sondarva, Bharat H (2013) Observed that social media become an integral part of life. He introduce all social networking site web 2.0, Facebook, YouTube, Blog, Slide share, LinkedIn, Teachertube, Twitter etc and use of them in library. He also conclude that for successful implementation of all these social networking sites Librarian must need to be a organized plan, proper training and experience.

Salim Said Alkindi & Mohammed Nasser Al-Suqri (2013) found that the time has changed, so it is important to make sure that marketing efforts are more on understanding the changing needs on today's library users. Marketing of library services by social networks is much required, if we want people to come to library. Facebook applications can be used to promote library services and support library marketing.

According to Efua Mansa Ayiah and Cynthia Henewaa Kumah (2011) now libraries are virtual, digital so it is actual need of LIS Professional to connect with user with the help of social network. Digital users are more comfort with non printed material. The librarian should have adequate knowledge about social network and must acquire the necessary skills in information technology to meet the challenging demands of social networking sites.

Noushina Praveen (2011) Conclude that the Library and Information Science Professionals are connected easily to each other by using face book. They share personal and professional interest and experiences. Face book allows users to share own views and give feedback for library services and other organization events. He also accept that Facebook play a big role to aware library users.

Mishra, C.S. (2008) Focus especially web 2.0 in library. He found that implementation of Web 2.0. in library. Some social networking tools such as RSS, Wiki, Blogger, flicker, Library Think, Elf and so on are more effective to connect users and a group. LIS Professionals need to be some technical skills for aware to users these networking tools.

Need of Social Networking in Libraries

Social Networking is used to publicize library events such as alert users, to additions to collections, to provide links to articles, videos, or Web content that might prove

relevant or helpful to patrons, and to provide a conduit for community information. Social media also play an important role in fostering relationships with the community by allowing patrons to ask questions or provide feedback about library services. A social networking site can be a good way to make connections with people with similar interests and goals.

- **Communicate with patrons-**Social Networking sites are the perfect spot to meet new people online. With the help of advanced search tools you can find users who have the same interests. Social media is another way that you can get into contact with your patrons. Facebook, for example, allows people to share events, images, and thoughts in real time, during the course of any day.

- **To promote library services, workshops, and events-**Every organization need to promote workshop, event and library services it is possible by creating a profile on some of these networks. You can load images, your logo, etc. into your profile and it will be visible for your virtual friends and all the users who visit your profile.

- **Marketing/Advertising –** Your library likely already markets its services or events using traditional media: fliers, bookmarks, announcements in calendars of events, newspaper ads, press releases, etc. Social media is simply another form of media that you can use to get your message out there. Millions of people use social networks and likely a large percentage of the population you serve does too. You're missing out on a lot of eyes if you eschew social media.

- **Gather and Track valuable Feedback-**People are talking about your library on the web and in different social media channels. They're saying both good things and bad things. One of the most important tenets of customer service is to be responsive to your users' concerns or praise. Recognize them and show that you're interested in and care about their opinions.

- **Understanding Users Better –** Often people assume they know their user population. I know I do. Social media allows conversations with your users, and these conversations often reveal important insights. Simply talking with people allows you to get to know them better, and more importantly, serve them better.

- **Staying Informed About the World-**People on social networking sites share what interests them, such as news on current events. People who share their interests and whom just want to stay informed can read these stories and share them as well. Eventually, these stories make them to users who may have never read them. Since stories are shared through "word of mouth, " smaller news outlets such as blogs can get exposure, and social network users are overall connected to a larger pool of new information and opinion.

- **Build Community-**Contacting with other people through the internet becomes easier for shy people. Shy people can overcome these using social networking platforms to establish contacts. Later the interaction this is easier because they have already talked and interacted online.

Challenges for LIS professional
Social Network gives many benefits for Libraries to present them, but 21st Century

librarianship is faced with many challenges that can only be overcome through new ways of being a librarian, using new skill sets, and imbued with a new understanding of what being a librarian means today and in the future. There are many skills and abilities that librarians need in order to succeed. These can range from being trained to create or update library websites to working successfully with coworkers and interacting with users. Nowhere is change more evident than in the librarian profession. Now there are seeing commercial competition for information access and delivery services arise routinely, making ineffective attempts to serve young library customers whose needs we don't understand, being inundated with technology beyond our capacity to keep pace, while knowing our younger customers are more technologically savvy than we.

Social networkings sites can be used to commit scams, spread computer viruses, or defraud people by stealing their identity. Spam and unwanted advertising can be a constant problem, especially on sites such as Twitter. Librarians are also being called on to create websites, wikis, and pathfinders in order to better promote the library and increase the access to information.

Below are main skills useful for librarians, accompanied by brief overviews. The main skills are Technological Knowledge and Training, Organizational and Evaluation Skills, Business Management, and Interpersonal Skills.

- **Technical Knowledge and Training-**Technical knowledge and training the first skill which is required for today's Web 2.0 world, the librarian is more and more the key to information in a digital format. To be proficient in technology and computers is essential to being a successful librarian. With computers, librarians must be able to navigate on the machine and access information from the Internet as well as other digital sources. Every LIS and information personal knows that what is the network? – What do you need to put a computer on a network? – Wireless networks – how to connect to wireless on PCs with various operating systems. – How to determine if internet connectivity problems are network problems, computer problems or web site failures – what is an IP address? Being able to assist users electronically is a big part of a public and academic librarian's day-to-day activity. Librarian must know about Microsoft Office products and other alternatives, anti-virus software, personal firewall software – ftp – telnet – HTML editors – basic ability to understand your operating system– knowledge of what (os) you have on your computer – ability to test & learn new software (librarians are often asked to troubleshoot any program installed on library computers), in depth knowledge of email software. A knowledge and understanding of the computer is high on the list of skills needed when training to be in a library. Along with being able to access information off the Internet, comes the ability to promote the library and connect with users as well. Many libraries today are using such Web 2.0 sites as Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace to connect with their patrons and update them on special events, announcements, and library programs.
- **Organizational and Evaluation Skills-**The ability to multitask and juggle many different jobs is a major part of the reference librarian's repertoire. Often, librarians are asked to perform many tasks, from assisting in the search for

information for a patron, to ordering or discarding library materials, to preparing presentations about the library for the community or a board of directors.

Along with the ability to multitask and organize within the workings of the library as a whole, comes the organizational and evaluation skills that come with working one on one with a user seeking to answer a specific question. Librarians must be able to separate good and bad information from a database or online search in order to give library users the best answer possible. This can often be difficult today in a world where sites that pop-up on search engines like Google and Yahoo! may not provide the necessary or correct information that the patron needs.

- **Business Management-**Though libraries are not businesses in the popular sense of the word, they face the same difficulties and concerns when it comes to managing a business. Often, librarians are under scrutiny from boards or employers to make sure that the library, while helping to assist patrons, also stays fiscally solvent. In order for a library to be successful, a librarian has to be able to market accordingly. Providing business leadership allows for the library to stay fiscally secure and enables user ship to remain at a high level. Another aspect of business management is marketing your library. This can include calling the local newspaper and inviting them to events a library is having, sending out newsletters to patrons, and having special giveaways and raffles. It could also hearken back to technology training with starting a Facebook or Twitter account. Training and awareness of management and marketing skills will allow increase of information directed towards users and community members about a library, its goals and its services.

Conclusion

Social Networking provides new options for Libraries to "talk" to their services. These communication channels can be real time, full of links to additional resources, valuable for the constituents and free. The Social media tools used to deliver the organizational voice are systems like e-mail, Twitter, blogs, Facebook, RSS feeds, and the social media sites like YouTube, Scribd, Slideshare, and Flickr. It is truth that goes through social networking for libraries services LIS Professional must expert in networking and other computer skill especially. Social networking makes it easy to make users online who share your particular interests, even if an interest is obscure, or the other people who share the interest live in different parts of the world to you. Libraries are using twitter to provide a running conversation with users, Facebook to provide information and recourses, and YouTube to deliver viral videos. One advantage of social networking that should not be overlooked is that in most cases it is completely free of charge to set up an account and use it. You can also use social networking sites to promote your own website, blog, or group. All types of libraries use sites like Twitter to promote their new arrival, achievements, and services. We can say that Social Technologies are giving libraries wonderful opportunity to present their identity.

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