SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AS MARKETING TOOLS FOR LIBRARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper is focused on social networking sites as marketing tools for library products and services in university libraries in Delta State. The study adopted the descriptive survey design, and has a population of 41 librarians working in six university libraries in Delta State. The questionnaire was used for data collection while data were analysed using frequencies. The study revealed that librarians in university libraries in Delta State were aware of social networking sites used globally for marketing of library products and services. There was no university library in Delta State that used social networking sites for marketing of library products and services, and no university library in Delta State has social networking sites usage policy included in her library polity. Consequently, the study recommended that librarians and stakeholders should encourage the use of social networking sites in their various libraries, and have social networking usage policy included in their library plan enhance usage of library products and services.

Keywords: Internet, Networking, Sites, Networks, Marketing, Information, Products

Introduction

The current information environment for academic libraries is that of low patronage among users, declining budget, competition and inadequate awareness of their products and services. Also rapid developments of information and communication technology have affected the usage and value of academic libraries. On low traffic to the libraries SCONUL (as cited in Cronin and O'Brien, 2008) noted that "despite significant increases in the

usage of online library and related services, physical visits to academic libraries are down over 22% in the last 10 years". On awareness of library products and services, Mathews (2011) while reading students post observed that "I could see from these numerous post (online post in social media) and comments, that very few of them (students) were aware of all the services and resources that their libraries make available, students simply didn't know about their library."

Another evidence on tow usage and awareness of library information resources can be found in the work of LaGuardia and Kennedy (as cited in Ogborno, 2016), where they observed that "awareness and use of online databases have been disappointing." In affect there is a disconnect between the library and its users. No wonder Cronin and O'Brien (2009) where of the view "that there often seems to be a disconnect or lack of awareness between what services libraries actually offer and what customers actually think they offer." Advancement in information and communication technology has led to competition between the libraries and other information providers, to the extent that libraries can no longer lay claim to being the sole information provider. Against this background academic Libraries should have to find better ways to attract and retain patrons to increase usage, and change perception as the information services provider in the educational environment (Cronin & O'Brien, 2009). The necessity for academic libraries to market their products and services using social networking sites can never be over emphasized. Understandably, the social networking sites (SNS) have become a major parameter for marketing not only in commerce and industry, but also in educational institutions, libraries and information rendering agencies. One of the reasons for this innovation in the library, according to Taylor & Francis Group (2014), is to reach library users in their homes or virtual space as today modern online library is no longer solely relying on its physical space as an access point.

Marketing of library and information products and services
Marketing of library and information products and services is a novel discussion in the field of library and information science. This has become obvious particularly in the 21st century as a result of the emergence of new information products and modern information service delivery mechanism. Consequently, marketing of information products has been a popular topic in library and information profession in recent years, although, marketing as a concept is alien to many library and service provision agencies (Kendadamath, 2016). Consequently, the evolution of new products and

services in library has made it imperative for librarians to look for modern and improved methods of advancing and disseminating library and information services and products. One of such ways is marketing. Marketing, according to Chaudhary (2011.1) "is a process which carries goods from producers to ultimate consumers". Furthermore, Kotler (1982) defined marketing as the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchange of value with target markets, for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization's offering in terms of the targets, markets needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate services and markets. Also Kennedy and LaGuardia (2013) define marketing to be "a combination of getting the word out about what our libraries offer in the way of e-resources, describing what the resources can do for various clientele, getting feedback from our clientele about their knowledge and use of the library e-resources, and being responsive to their needs after having gotten their feedback". Marketing in libraries is imperative because the libraries are not the only information providers in town and according to Kennedy and LaGuardia (2013), "we are in an economic climate in which every penny needs to be justified, there is a heightened expectation among those funding libraries that they will see a palpable return on their investment and competition with information-fulfil led systems outside libraries that is increasing". Therefore the library should convey their information products and services to the consumer wherever they are.

Library, according to Thorn sett-Scott (nd), can market services, events happening in the library, collections and staff expertise, these are core library routines which are also known as library products and services and are marketable through social networking sites. Marketing is all about reaching out to people and customers, in a formal library setting, library users are the audience for library marketing, granted that technology has encouraged competition, technology can also help libraries overcome this competition through new means of marketing. In this regard, Alkindi and Al-Suqri (2013) noted that "library marketing is the distribution and provision of awareness or the library and its resources, products and services using various tools and technologies to attract users to be aware of library products and services".

Social networking sites for marketing of library products and services
The Internet in the 21st century is a source of interconnectivity among institutions, business associates and friends, since its evolution. However, it is only in the last decade that social networking services have dominated in

education, businesses and social environment particularly in developing countries. Accordingly, their use has become a wide-spread practice in educational institutions, agencies and among young people (Horizon, 2009 as cited in Collins, Rahilly, Richardson and Third, 2011). Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. It also help to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection (Boyed & Ellison, 2007 as cited in Collin, Rahilly, Richardson & Third, 2011). Accordingly, libraries can market or make their products and services and make them known to the public and library user's through social networking sites (SNS). Evaluating the positive impact of social networking sites {SNS) on marketing of library products and services Breading (2010), as cited in Kennedy (2013), noted that the advantages of using social networking sites (SNS) in marketing library services and products are obvious and that such use of social networking sites has become standard *br almost every organization as a means to promote its message, products or services. Accordingly, social networking today is part of library initiatives as it offers library the opportunities for exposure and increases both within physical facilities and through the web presence.

While many libraries particularly in developing countries still use traditional marketing techniques in marketing of library services and products new trends are emerging, this involves the use of web 2.0 technologies (Robinson, 2007 as cited in Boenne, Onuoha & Madukoma, 2013). Although, these web 2.0 is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations, it is a social networking tool or website which are classified by services, purpose and their roles in modern library practice (Ikenne, Onuoha and Madukoma, 2013). Furthermore, Choi (2013) as cited in Ikonne, Onuoha and Madukoma (2013) listed the social networking site to include the following: Internet forums, message boards, weblogs (blogs), publishing (wikis, wordpress, and blogger.com), podcasts, vodcast and pictures. While social media site include (facebook, myspace, linkedlin) photo and video sharing site are (YouTube, Vimeo, Halu, Flickr, Photobucket) white (Twitter, Digg, Stumble upon, Delias, Scribad, social News Dig, Propeller) Audio (I-Tunes, Pandora Rhapsody are social networking sites).

Research on the use of social networking sites has continuously reported the role social networking sites in marketing of library and information services and products.

Accordingly, Ikonne, Onuoha, and Madukoma (2013), Achugbue and Ogbomo (2015), Islam and Habiba (2015), Okite-Amughoro (nd), and Achugbue, (2015) reported the following social networking sites as catalyst in the marketing of library and information services and products. Facebook, Book clubs, Social catalogue, My exhibits, Open library, Social PA system, YouTube, Web 2.0, Wiki, RSS, Twitter, My space, LinkedIn, Mashup (Achugbue, 2015 and Ikonne, Onuoha & Madukoma, 2013). Facebook and my space enable users to share informative resources with one another, it also ease the dissemination of information to library patrons. Consequently, libraries can also advertise their different upcoming events, new arrivals of informative resources as well as promoting the image of the library. Book club is social services where libraries share their resources. Libraries can use My Space to advertise these services. Currently, my space has over 195 groups with the library book club. Presently, the librarians in the United States view the potential opportunities for using social networking sites for marketing of information services and products (Achugbue, 2015). Social catalogue is one of the online social networking services that enable library and library users to post biog entries and sign up for RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds including feeds for hold and check out (Achugbue, 2015).

Wiki can be used as a knowledge management tool for the library in the areas of organizing and managing digital information and editing existing article for the users. However, RSS feeds on the other hand are used by libraries for users to subscribe to information library resources and updates on new items, library new arrivals, new services, subscription to databases, library content for republishing on library sites and selective dissemination of information (SDI) (Ikonne, Onuoha and Madukoma, 2013). Others include Twitter which can be used by the libraries to market library reference/research services, while libraries can also use YouTube to market their different programs, conferences and workshops by uploading their videos on the YouTube and delivering of video content through podcasting (Ikonne, Onuoha and Madukoma, 2013). Linkedin, for example, can be used by the libraries to create professional connections and market library services within and among other professionals in different libraries across the globe. Libraries can also share professional experiences and advertise the profession through linkedin. Other social networking sites where library can market their services and products include Flickr, social bookmarking, weblog, web 2.0, meebe, second life and mashup (Ikonne, Onuaha and Madukoma, 2013 and Achugbue, 2015. From the foregoing, Achugbue (2015) noted that, in the present circumstances, social networking is very important for libraries and information

related agencies and organizations globally for marketing of products and services.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. To find out whether librarians are aware of the use of social networking sites as a marketing tools for library products and services.
2. To know the extent of usage of social networking sites by librarian as tools for marketing library product and services.
3. Find the perceived purposes for which librarians use social networking in university libraries

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Are Librarians aware of the use of social networking sites for marketing tools for library, product and services?
2. Do Librarians use social networking sites for marketing of products and services in the university library?
3. What are the perceived purposes for Librarians use social networking sites?

Methodology

The research adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 41 librarians working in the university libraries. Six university libraries used for the study are Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun, Delta State University Abraka, Western Delta University Oghara, Novena University Ogume, Edwin Kiagbodo University Kiagbodo and Michael and Cecilia Ibru University Agbarha Otor. Data were collected using questionnaire, while frequency was used for the data analysis.

Analysis of data and presentation of results

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate.

Copies of Questionnaire Administered	No. Returned	Percentage Returned
41	39	95.1%

Table 1 shows the questionnaire response rate. A total of 41 copies of the questionnaire was administered and 39 (95.1%) of them were retrieved and so the response rate was 95.1%. The response rate is adequate since the standard and acceptable response rate *tor* most research studies is 60%. The response rate of 95.1 is considered adequate for the study because the standard and acceptable response rate for most research studies in the social sciences and education is 60% (Dulle, Minish-Majanja & Cloete, 2010).

Research Question 1
Are you aware of the usage of social networking sites as tools for marketing library product and services?
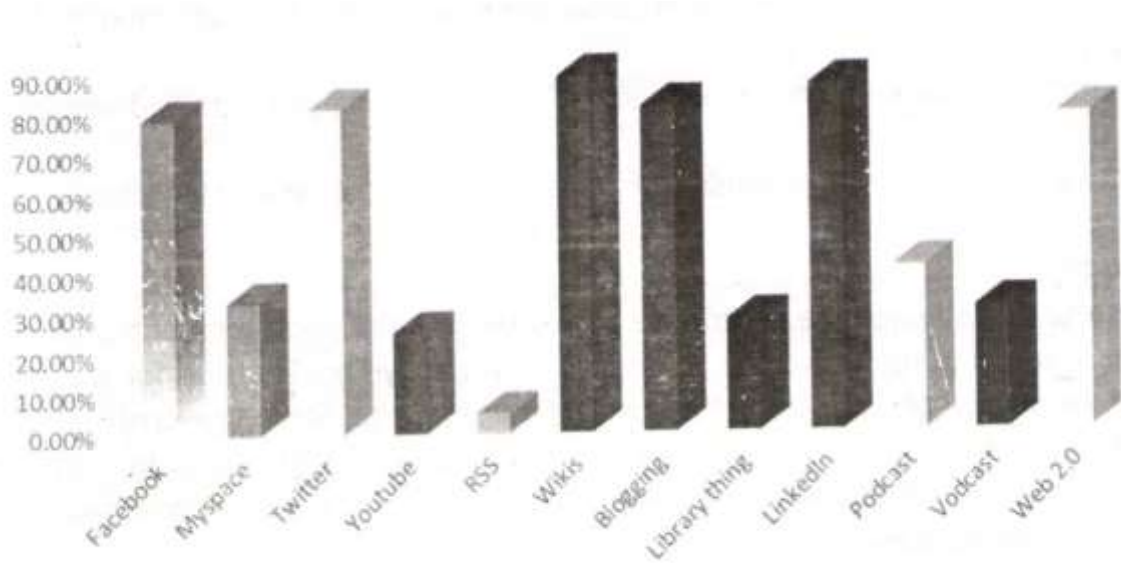The librarians' responses to the question are shown in Fig 1.

Fig. I: Librarians awareness of usage of social networking sites fat marketing library products services.
The findings showed that Librarians have high level of awareness for facebook, (79.5%), Twitter (82%), Wiki (89.7%), Blogging (82%), LinkedIn (82%), and Web (71.5%). However librarians have low level of awareness for MySpace, YouTube, RSS, Library Thing, Podcast and Vodcast. This result is in agreement with the finding of Gul and Islam [2013] that there is more awareness on the use of facebook among librarians for the marketing of library products and services.

Research Question 2
Do Librarians use social networking sites for marketing library products and services in the university library? Table II shows the librarians responses to their extent of usage of social networking sites.

Table II: Use of social Networking sites among librarians.

Social networking sites	Yes	No
Facebook		39(100%)
Myspace		39(100%)
Twitter		39(100%)
Youtube		39(100%)
RSS		39(100%)
Wikis		39(100%)
Slogging		39(100%)
Library thing		39('100%)
Linked In		39(100%)
Podcast		39(100%)
Vodcast		39(100%)
Web 2.0		39(100%)

The results in Table II revealed that librarians do not use social networking sites to market library products and services in the University libraries. The result agreed with the finding of Achugbue and Ogbomo (2015) that none of the academic libraries in Niger Delta, Nigeria has their presence on the social networking sites.

Table III: Reasons of not using social networking sites as tools for marketing library products and services.

Reasons for not using social networking sites	Agree	Disagree
Librarians are not trained on how to use social networking for marketing of library products and services	8(20.5%)	31(79.5%)
Social networking sites are not part of library facilities at the moment	36(92.3%)	3(7.7%)
Lack of will and motivation on the part of the universities	22(56.4%)	17(43.6%)
Librarians lack interest in the usage of social networking site for official library work	8(20.5%)	31(79.5%)
Lack of training opportunities for librarians	29(74.4%)	10(25.6%)
Unstable power supply	34(87.2%)	5(12.8%)
Cost and unreliable internet connectivity	32(82%)	7(18%)
Librarians lack ICT skill	12(30.8%)	27(69.2%)
Lack of fund to maintain websites	5(12.8%)	34(87.2%)

Because the librarians said no to the use of social networking sites for marketing library products and services, the researchers decided to determine the reasons for the librarians none use of social networking sites for marketing in university libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. Table III shows that the reasons include social networking sites are not part of library facilities, unstable power supply, cost and unreliable internet connectivity, inadequate training opportunity for librarians and inadequate will and motivation on the part of University management/administration. The above result also agreed with Mabweazara (2014), who reported in a study in South Africa the reason for non use' of social networking in marketing of library products and services are lack of financial support, absence of social media policies and poor internet access.

Research Question 3.
What are the perceived purposes for Librarians use of social networking sites? Librarian's response to research question 3 is shown in fig II.
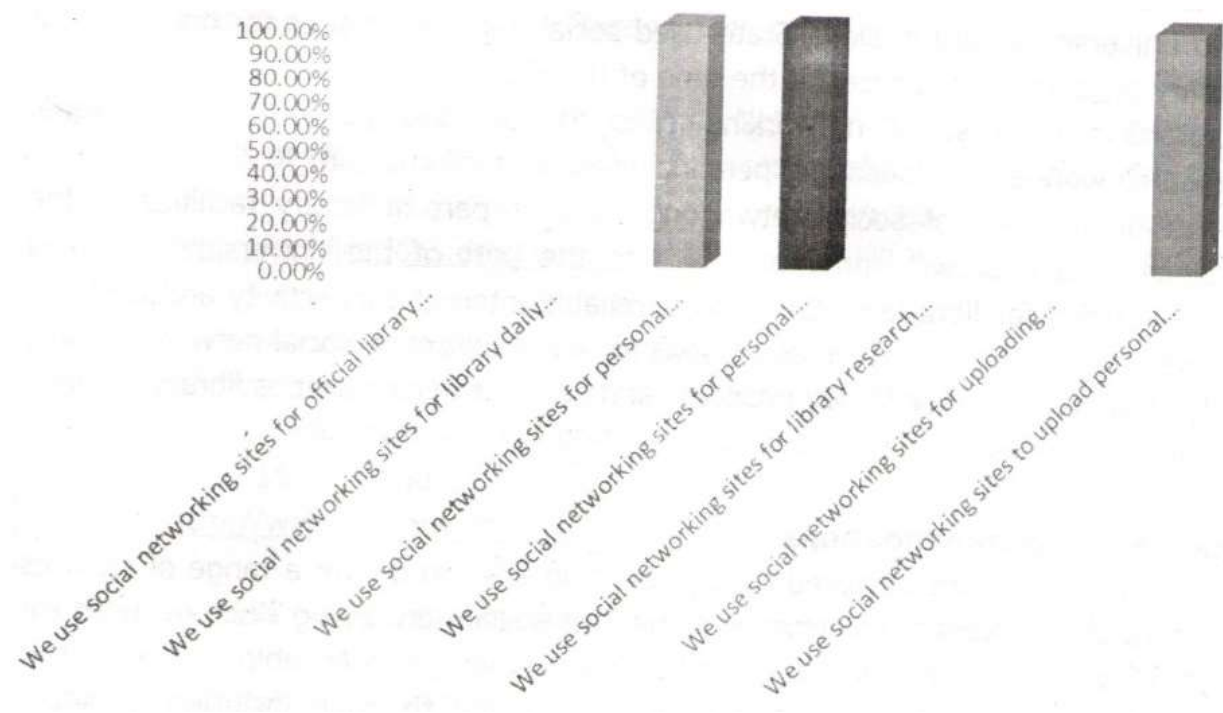

Fig. II: Librarians perceived purposes for the use of social networking sites
Librarians perceived purposes for the use of social networking sites in university libraries in Delta State are personal collaboration, personal research and to upload personal video and personal information. The above results agreed with Mabweazara (2014), found that librarians in National University of science and Technology and University of the Western Cape use social media tools to archive their personal materials, useful in storing their document, leisure and communication, following current event and influential people

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Summary of the Study

The study was carried out to explore Social networking sites as marketing tools for library products and services in University Libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide the study, while simple percentage was employed to analyze the data collected through structured questionnaire. Based on the analysis of data, the following findings were made.

1. Librarians in university libraries in Delta State were aware of social networking sites used globally for marketing of library and information products and services.
2. No university library in Delta State used social networking sites for marketing of library products and services at the time of this study.
3. Librarians used social networking sites for personal collaboration, personal research work and uploading of personal video and information.
4. Lack of inclusion of social networking sites as part of library facilities at the moment, Lack of will and motivation on the part of the universities, training opportunities for librarians, Cost and unreliable internet connectivity and unstable power supply were indicated as reasons for none utilization social networking sites as marketing tools for library products and services in Universities library in Delta State.

Conclusion and recommendations

Social networking sites are deployed by academic libraries to deliver a range of services to their users in a university community. Variety of social networking sites are used for this purpose, but university libraries in Delta State, have not been able to deploy this technology to market their products and services due to none inclusion of social networking sites to their plan to reach library users in their homes and virtual spaces. It is therefore recommended that:

1. Librarians should encourage university stakeholders to include social networking policy in their various Universities library policy/ plan.
2. Librarians should show interest in the usage of social networking sites for official library work.
3. Librarian should be trained of the usage of social networking sites to enable them take advantage of it in the marketing of library products and services.

4. Universities authority should ensure stable power supply and affordable internet connectivity in university libraries.

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