Strategies for
Managing Libraries in the Future

EDITED BY

Dr. H. Anil Kumar
Librarian
Indian Institute of Management
Ahmedabad

Dr. T. S. Kumbar
Librarian
Indian Institute of Technology
Gandhinagar

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Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad

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Effective use of social media/network tools for marketing library and information products and services: a study of Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia

Viral Navik

Jignesh Amin

Abstract

Now, Social media is a part of our life cycle and has become a very effective tool for communication and marketing. The authors in this paper have tried to explore how librarians and information professionals use this social media/networks for marketing library services and information products. Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia are very popular social media among all and they can reach out to remote students and build long term relationship that are beneficial to both students and librarians. This paper also explains benefits and barriers of using social media for library marketing.

Keywords

Library marketing, Social media, Social networks, Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia

Introduction

The marketing of library and information services has always been a major task due to explosion of new products and services of libraries and information centers. Now, marketing has become an essential tool to increase the use of these product and services. So, the present Social Media/Networks like Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia is very powerful tool for marketing of library products and services. "We need to understand the qualities and barriers of this social media/network tools. These tools are used for marketing as well as best for professional interaction and communication" Burkhardt (2011).

The use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Ning and Meebo, has provided libraries unique opportunity to share and widen access to information resources and services. Steiner (2009) believes that social networks are used by libraries as vehicles for outreach and promoting services, programmes and new resources as well as for providing general information. Libraries have become increasingly focused on being 'where' their users are. Brain Mathews (2009) wrote that marketing today's academic library: a bold new approach to communication with students.

Phillips, Loreen S. (2009) many libraries are already experimenting with different social media services like Twitter or Facebook to interact and connect with their patrons, yet there are still a number of questions that come up as this is still fairly new territory. "How do I get started?" "What sorts of things should I post?" "How can I grow our social media presence and gain more fans or followers?"

In addition to marketing, the simple act of having conversations and creating relationships with patrons is immensely useful. Through conversations on social media, libraries can gain insights into what their users want and need and ultimately understand their users better.

Marketing and modern marketing for library services

Marketing aims to identify the client base and to determine and fill its needs, and demands by designing and delivering appropriate products and services. The main focus of the concept is the client and the goal is client satisfaction. Rowlew (2001) calls marketing, the management process which identifies, anticipates, and supplies customer requirement efficiently and profitably. Kotler (1999) says, that marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods, services and ideas to create exchange with target groups that satisfy customers and organizational objectives.

Modern marketing is that function of the organization or library that can keep constant touch with the organization's or library's users, read their needs, develop products and services that meet these needs and build a program of communications to express the objective of library or organization.

Difference between

Traditional 4 P's of Marketing (Neil Borden 1953)		Modern C's of Marketing (Robert F. Lauterborn 1993)
Product	→	Consumer
Price	→	Collaboration
Place	→	Convenience
Promotion	→	Communication

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing_mix

Under the umbrella term marketing, we study concepts like building customer relationships, branding, marketing communication, price and pricing, policy, collection marketing data and marketing strategy and planning. For the purpose of this paper, we shall restrict the scope of the subject to effective use of social media for marketing of library services.

Why Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia for marketing?

Social media is a powerful tool for marketing and communication. The number of users on popular social media sites is growing at exponential rates. Facebook has more than 500 million active users, one which rivals the population of the United States (Facebook, 2011). Twitter has more than 6 billion active users up to 2011. Pingdom predicts that if tweets grow at the rate of 16% each month, then by January 2011 (Twitter, 2011) we should be seeing over 6 billion tweets. While this number appears high, it will likely be a reality with the popularity of Twitter continuing to

grow. From February 2010 to February 2011, Twitter experienced 1,382% growth rate (Twitter, 2011). Two millions of people are using these tools as part of their everyday lives for both work and play. People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook (Facebook, 2011).

Entrepreneurs and developers from more than 190 countries build with Facebook Platform and people on Facebook install 20 million applications every day. Every month, more than 250 million people engage with Facebook on external websites. Since, social plugins launched in April 2010, an average of 10,000 new websites integrate with Facebook every day. More than 2.5 million websites have integrated with Facebook, including over 80 of comScore's U.S. top 100 websites and over half of comScore's Global Top 100 websites (http://www.slideshare.net/Jackieken/kent-19-bad-67051-marketing-management?&lang=en_us&output=json).

Facebook

Facebook was found in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook can be used to build, maintain relationships with known or unknown acquaintance. The users and librarians can post their daily activities; share their events in the space provided, which is referred to as *wall* (Wikipedia, 2011). Librarian and Users can also share their photos, video with others. Facebook has numbers of applications related to various themes like business, education, entertainment, games, lifestyle, sports utilities etc. A Library can create its presence on Facebook, with the Facebook page feature, and also create community of their users, employees etc. to interact and inform. Any Librarian could make use of Facebook Groups features to form close groups of different users to have professional communication.

Facebook Vikram Sarabhai Library page Image

Source: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Vikram-Sarabhai-Library/
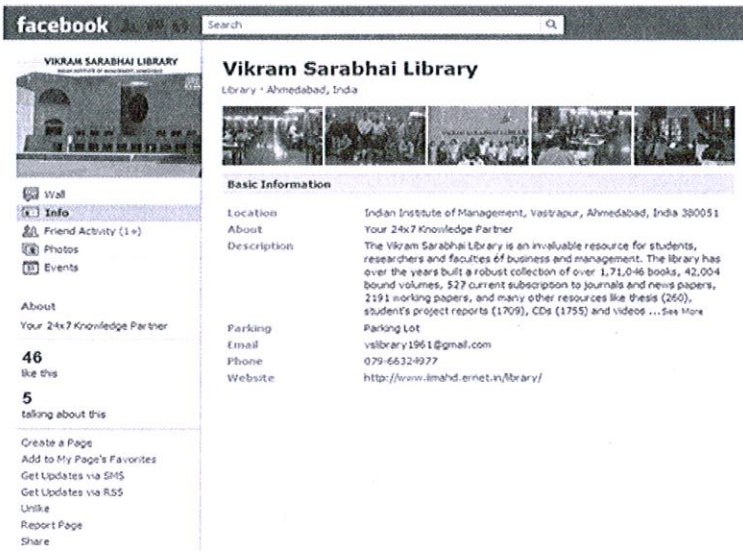
Twitter

Twitter is a real time information sharing network founded in 2006. Librarian and user can build their Twitter profile by providing key information in the *Bio* section (Wikipedia, 2011). Also, librarian and users can make use of their blog or networking website *weblink* in the web section, to share detailed information about them. In Twitter, librarian and user can share their tweets (short messages of 140 characters) with their followers. Twitter is considered to be pretty *viral* in nature and information travels very fast through this channel. A library/firm can also create its Twitter account and engage with the customers. A key feature of Twitter is *trendlist*, which displays the topics on which large number of Twitter users and tweeting at a particular given time. Twitter users while tweeting can make user of hash-tag (#) with certain keywords in their tweets, so that these tweets get aggregated with those by other people who tweeted on same keyword. Users can also search for certain keywords using hash-tag and join discussions that happen around the topic to which the hash tag is related.

Twitter WCL Library page image

Source: http://twitter.com/#!/wcl_library

Wikipedia

Wikipedia (Jimy Walls & Larry Sanger, 2001) has more than 20 million articles and has about 100,000 regularly active contributors as on July 2011. Wikipedia is become the largest and most popular general reference work on the internet and 265 million readers worldwide and estimated that 2.7 billion monthly page views from the United States alone (Wikipedia, 2011).

Wikipedia Vikram Sarabhai Library page Image

Article | Discussion   Read | Edit | View history   Search

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Vikram Sarabhai Library
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Main page
Contents
Featured content
Current events
Random article
Donate to Wikipedia

▼ Interaction
Help
About Wikipedia
Community portal
Recent changes
Contact Wikipedia

▼ Toolbox
What links here
Related changes
Upload file
Special pages
Permanent link
Cite this page
Rate this page

The **Vikram Sarabhai Library** is a central library located at Indian Institute of Management - Ahmedabad (IIMA). VSL is an invaluable resource for students, researchers and faculty of business and management as well as corporate executives. The library has over the years built a robust collection of over 2,00,000 items including books and bound volumes of periodicals, more than 10,000 full-text electronic journals, 300+ current subscription to print Journals, magazines & Newspapers, 2,191 working papers, and many other resources like thesis (260), project reports (1624), CDs (1931) and videos (132).

The library, spread over 20120 sq. ft., also provides access to the best of the business and management related digital resources through its subscription of around 60 databases consisting of scholarly and industry relevant content. The library also provides access to i3 of CMIE and Reuters databases. The library website - http://www.iimahd.ernet.in/library/ is linked to various databases that are accessible from any networked computer within the campus. The library provides specialized tools like federated search (360 Search), remote login (restricted to internal users) and Institutional Repository searching.

The library is committed to fulfil its mission by facilitating access to current, global and relevant information by identifying, acquiring, organizing and retrieving information in various formats (print & non print) to serve the information needs of the academic fraternity for teaching, research, consulting, training and learning requirements. In addition to the internal members the VSL also serves the academic information requirements of doctoral students from various parts of the country. The external visitors of the VSL also include alumni, faculty of other b-schools, researchers and corporate executives.[1]

Add caption here

Contents [hide]
1 Mission of VSL

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vikram_Sarabhai_library

Marketing by using Facebook and Twitter on mobile

Mobile marketing is now a very popular marketing tool application. By using Facebook and Twitter on mobile, libraries can reach to their users without spending on commercial library software. There are more than 250 million active users currently accessing Facebook through their mobile devices. Nearly two-thirds of active Twitter users access social networking sites using a mobile phone. People that use Facebook on their mobile devices is twice as active on Facebook than non-mobile users. There are more than 200 mobile operators in 60 countries working to deploy and promote Facebook mobile products. (http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics)

Benefit of using social media/network

Some of the benefits of using these tools include,

▸ Free of cost

▸ Easy to use

▸ Social Media/Network can reach to larger audience

▸ Easy to get feedback of users

▸ More informal and friendly for communicating with user better than going traditional way

How we can use Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia for marketing of library product and services

Normally every library has a portal for marketing of information and products like journal database, new arrival books, recommendation of books and news about library. What actually happens practically that users do not go to library page regularly but they do visit their Facebook and Twitter regularly because of the popularity

and explosion of these tools in recent times. By using these tools, libraries do marketing and provide anticipatory service as well. Both Facebook and Twitter are real-time tools for marketing, that's why it's affect is more rather than email and website for reaching towards the library users.

First step is to make library group or create your library page on Facebook & Twitter then give basic information of your library, then start posting information services and product marketing. What library should post (message on Facebook & Twitter) for better and smarter marketing is very necessary.

Distribute and put link of social networks/media to your library website

Best way of marketing information product is to give link of your Facebook and Twitter to your library website, so that users who are not going to library webpage are using this tools easily and effectively. Email this links to all library users with signature and use this links very generously.

What library should post (information/message) on Facebook & Twitter for marketing its services and product.

▸ *Interact with user*

In marketing, frequent interaction is very necessary to make a big impact. Facebook and Twitter is meant for interaction and libraries are the social hub to connecting link. That's why social media like Facebook and Twitter become intermediate source for Libraries and users.

▸ *Library news and events*

When library is organizing events like book fair, library orientation or database demonstration, put this information on Facebook and Twitter. If your web site is going to be down for repairs, let people know *via* your social media accounts. Social media is great for updating people on what is going on.

▸ *New arrival book list*

When library adds new books into its collection, they upload that list on their website. The list may be uploaded on Facebook and Twitter. This will give larger impact and other users who are not regular library users also know about the new books.

▸ *Videos (Library Orientation, Tutorial Videos and Database Guide)*

Now library uses frequently web videos for their learning and Youtube is the best example of it. Through Facebook & Twitter posting, Libraries share its orientation programs and other library related video, it saves lots of time of librarian and it is easy to get feedback.

▸ *Posting pictures*

Library photos like stack area, Library building, staff photos can be uploaded on Facebook and Twitter, so user becomes familiar with Library.

▸ *Community information*

Library also disseminates community information, which is very important for the library users if it can be uploaded on social media. It is natural that, these social media sites are places where people go to get information about the community.

▸ *Library users feedback*

Social networking is built for conversations, so librarians can feel free to ask questions to the users, fans or followers of libraries. Questions also often get the most response. Ask interesting things that you actually want to know, such as, "Why do you use the library?" When people answer, continue the conversation with your patrons.

Conclusion

For marketing of library services and its products, librarian must build a strong relationship with patron and increase the level of trust that they have in you. Facebook and Twitter are the best social media tools for linking services to users. By being part of the conversation and asking questions, it is possible to place your library and information services in the center of your social network. Whether you are a tech savvy librarian or receptive to new technology tools or not, the philosophy behind social media is to use it in its simplest form to send out a positive signal to your user community and thereby provide an effective reference service without investing much.

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