

Marketing of Library and Information Products and Services by using Social Media/Networks: Facebook and Twitter

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Abstract

This paper presents how libraries market their products and services by using social media/networks like Facebook and Twitter. The paper emphasizes on how librarians can incorporate online social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter into their library marketing strategies. The authors propose how we can get maximum utilization of social media for promoting library services and resources. It also presents barriers and quality of Facebook and Twitter. By using Facebook & Twitter, Librarians can more effectively reach out to remote students and build long term relationships that are beneficial to both students and librarians

Keywords: - Library Marketing, Social Media, Social networks, Facebook, Twitter

Introduction

Due to large explosion of new products and services of libraries and information centers, marketing become essential part to increase the use of these product and services. So present Social media/Networks like Facebook and Twitter is very powerful tool for marketing of library products and services, we need to understand the qualities and barrier of this social media/network tools. These tools are used for marketing as well as best for professional interaction and communication.

The use of Social Networking site, 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.

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.

Why Facebook and Twitter 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. 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 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. 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.

Entrepreneurs and developers from more than 190 countries build with Facebook Platform and

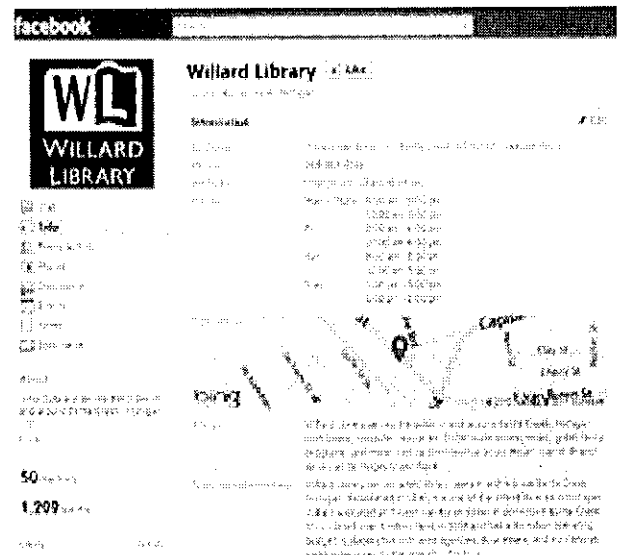
People on Facebook install 20 million applications every day. Every month, more than 250 million people engage with Facebook on external websites. Since social plugins launched in April 2010, an average of 10,000 new websites integrate with Facebook every day.

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.

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*. 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 pages feature, and also create

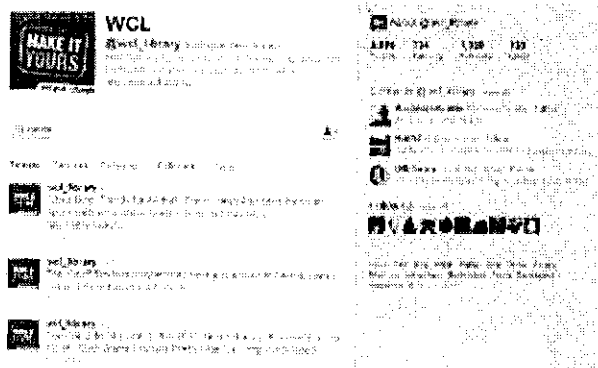
community of their users, employees etc. to interact and inform. Any Librarian could make use of Facebook Groups features to form close groups of different users to have professional communication.

Facebook Willard Library page Image



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. 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



Marketing by using Facebook and Twitter on Mobile

Mobile marketing is now very booming to do marketing of every product and service. By using Facebook and Twitter on mobile with its application, 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>)

How we can use Facebook and Twitter 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 are 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 time. By using these tools libraries do marketing and provide anticipatory service as well.

Both Facebook and Twitter is real-time tools for marketing, that's why it's affect 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 than give basic information of your library, than 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 which are not go 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 to User**

In marketing, frequently interaction is very necessary to make 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 add new books into its collection, libraries upload that list of website. Now we must upload that list on Facebook and Twitter, it gives larger impact and others users which are not library users also know about the new books.

- **Videos (Library orientation, Tutorial videos and Database Guide)**

Now library users are learning with web videos, 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 he gets feedback also on it.

- **Picture**

Library photos like stack area, Library building, staff photos can able to uploaded on Facebook and twitter, so user are become familiar with Library.

- **Community information**

Library also pass community information which is very important for the library users can uploaded on social media. It is natural that it should be a place where people go to get information about the community.

- **Library users feedback**

Social networking is built for conversations, so feel free to ask questions of your fans or followers. 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 product, 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 tool for linking services to users. But 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.

Social media tools can be built on powerful software platforms that allow you to disseminate information and announce events to a large pool of patrons quickly in a user-friendly format. While this can be an effective marketing strategy it is not social media in its purest form. Whether you are in a tech savvy library that is receptive to new technology tools or not, the philosophies behind social media can positively inform our approach to providing effective reference services to our patrons.

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