

# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY SERVICES

**Kaushal Chauhan**

*Librarian, M.D.S.D. College, Ambala City, Haryana, India. Email: chauhan\_khushi@rediffmail.com*

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**Abstract** *Social media has significantly transformed every aspect of life, from accessing daily news to staying connected with family and communities. It has emerged as one of the most effective tools for engaging with library patrons, allowing for the seamless exchange and dissemination of information. The primary objectives of social media include enhancing usability, promoting and marketing services and resources, and fostering interaction with users. It serves as a vital bridge between valuable content and its intended audience. Libraries strategically use relevant and value-added posts to connect with their patrons and promote their services effectively. Social media platforms offer libraries a convenient and accessible avenue for marketing their services. These platforms are freely available and user-friendly, making them ideal tools for outreach. The key lies in active participation in promoting library services and resources. Different social media channels can be utilised for various purposes, such as knowledge sharing, information dissemination, and communication. While the specific services offered by libraries may vary, most institutions leverage social media to engage users, share knowledge, and build interactive communities. Social media is a powerful medium through which content—including information, documents, videos, and images—can be created, distributed, and shared with a broad audience in a short timeframe.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Social Media and Libraries, Social Media and Library Services, Social Media Services etc.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Today social media plays a key role in information dissemination as it has a significant influence on libraries. It serves as a means for people to express their voices with regard to political, religious, and other matters. Young people are especially one of the most dominant users of social media. Social media serves as a vast repository of diverse content, ranging from the sharing of news updates to travel videos and personal photographs. It is not limited to web-based communication alone; its scope extends to interactive activities such as playing online games and sending personalised greetings for special occasions. For professionals in Library and Information Science (LIS), social media is increasingly recognised as a flexible and effective platform for reaching out to potential library users. It holds the potential to greatly enhance communication and engagement between libraries, information centres, and their patrons. Libraries can utilise a variety of social media platforms to serve different objectives. Popular tools and channels include Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, WebEx, Zoom, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Telegram, and Email. These platforms enable libraries to promote their services, disseminate information, and foster meaningful user engagement with ease and efficiency.

Users engagement, quick prompt information delivery, marketing of products and services, reference services, user orientation and visual content, current awareness services, multimedia and visual environment are the main advantages of social media. Social media is a powerful platform that enables the creation, distribution, and sharing of content with a wide audience in minimal time. This content may include a variety of formats such as text-based information, documents, videos, and images. Social media encourages active user participation and offers libraries an easy and efficient method for marketing their services. Libraries adopt various social media channels to connect with their users, taking advantage of platforms that are freely accessible and user-friendly. The only requirement is active participation to promote library services and resources. These platforms are accessible across multiple devices desktops, laptops, and mobile phones making it possible for users to connect with their library from virtually anywhere. Social media allows libraries to reach users directly, providing round-the-clock access to library content. It enables the formation of online communities where libraries can engage users by sharing relevant, informative, and engaging content. This not only increases user awareness and visibility of library services and resources but also enhances the overall reputation and influence of the library.

## OBJECTIVES

- To investigate role of social media in libraries.
- To know social media services in libraries.
- To identify social media as a tool of communication creation, distribution.
- To find how social media is used in libraries.
- To make recommendations for enhancements and improved social media usage in library services.

## SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

To effectively use social media as a medium for communication and interaction with users, it is essential to develop a well-defined social media strategy. This strategy should reflect the organisation's decisions regarding the following key components:

- *Goals and Objectives:* What are the specific goals and objectives for utilising social media as a communication channel?
- *Target Audience:* Who is the intended audience? What type of content do they prefer to consume?
- *Engagement Platforms:* On which platforms is the audience most active and engaged?
- *Channel Selection:* Which social media channels are most suitable for achieving the desired goals?
- *User Engagement and Content:* What topics and types of content are likely to capture the audience's interest? How can users be encouraged to participate actively and provide feedback?

A clear and focused strategy helps ensure that social media efforts are aligned with organisational objectives and user expectations, thereby enhancing communication and engagement.

## Types of Social Media Channels Used by Libraries

Libraries can utilise a variety of social media platforms, each serving different purposes for communication, information sharing, and user engagement. Some of the commonly used platforms include Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, WebEx Meet, Zoom, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Telegram, email, and Yahoo.

- *Facebook:* Facebook is one of the most widely used and rapidly growing social networking platforms. Users need to create an account to access its features, which include profile creation, discussion boards, community groups, and pages. Through wall posts,

users can share text messages, videos, and images. The platform also supports instant messaging, and users can like, share, and comment on posts.

- Libraries can maintain active Facebook pages to post updates, share videos, and promote library-related events and services. It serves as a powerful tool for marketing, enhancing communication, increasing visibility, and fostering interaction with users. Libraries can use Facebook to promote events, library services, educational resources, and academic courses.
- *YouTube:* YouTube is a free video hosting and streaming platform that allows users to watch, upload, and share video content. Many libraries create educational and promotional videos, playlists, and tutorials to raise awareness about library resources and services. Typical content may include:
  - *Database Tutorials:* How to use platforms like Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Emerald.
  - *Library Orientation Videos:* How books are organised, how to locate materials, and how to navigate different sections of the library.
  - *Research Support:* Guidance on using research tools like Google Scholar, reference management software, plagiarism checkers, citation methods, and article search techniques.
  - *Pinterest:* Pinterest is a visual discovery and image-sharing platform that allows users to find and organise ideas using images, animated GIFs, and videos. It operates through "pinboards" and enables users to save, organise, and share content related to various themes such as education, lifestyle, motivation, and creativity.

Key features of Pinterest include:

- *Pins and Boards:* For organising content.
- *Guided Search:* To help users find relevant topics.
- *Follow Functionality:* To keep track of updates from specific users or boards.

Libraries can use Pinterest to curate and share visually engaging educational content, reading suggestions, inspirational quotes, infographics, and event highlights. A collection of pin is called "board" in Pinterest. Through Pinterest may share rare book covers; Different pages of book; Visitors of special collection, Book of the month, Visitors of special collection, about different events of libraries etc.

## Advantages of Social Media for Libraries

Social media offers a multitude of benefits for libraries, enhancing user engagement, communication, and promotion

of services. The following are key advantages of integrating social media into library operations:

### User Engagement

User engagement on social media is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of the library's social media presence. Metrics such as the number of followers, likes, shares, comments, and retweets help assess whether the library is successfully connecting with its audience. High engagement reflects strong interest and relevance of the content shared.

### Quick and Prompt Information Delivery

Platforms such as Facebook enable libraries to deliver real-time updates through wall posts. This allows libraries to instantly inform users about news, events, or resources and receive immediate feedback. Users can like, comment on, and share posts, fostering interactive communication and enabling libraries to understand users' interests and preferences.

### Marketing of Products and Services

Social media serves as an effective marketing tool for libraries to promote their services, activities, resources, and events. It helps build stronger relationships with patrons and tailor content to the target audience. Effective marketing through social media not only increases user awareness and participation but also enhances the library's reputation and digital presence.

### Reference Services

By leveraging social media, librarians can reach users directly and provide information services traditionally offered at reference desks. Social platforms can also be used to proactively respond to queries and offer support. Tools such as "Ask a Librarian" enable students and users to receive real-time assistance, thereby positioning the library as a responsive and reliable resource.

### User Orientation and Visual Content

YouTube is particularly useful for creating orientation videos and tutorials that guide users in how to use subscribed databases and library services. These videos can be cross-posted on platforms like Twitter and Facebook to maximise reach and accessibility. Visual content improves understanding and enhances the learning experience.

## Current Awareness Services

Social media platforms are ideal for sharing updates about new arrivals, tables of contents from subscribed journals, and institutional research publications. Regular posts keep users informed and engaged with the latest academic resources and library developments.

## Multimedia and Visual Environment

Pinterest offers a visually rich platform for sharing infographics, floor maps, and other graphical content. Similarly, Facebook facilitates the sharing of images and videos, helping libraries present information in engaging and creative formats.

## Disadvantages of Social Media for Students and Libraries

While social media provides numerous advantages, its excessive or inappropriate use can lead to several negative consequences, particularly for students. The following are some significant drawbacks:

- *Deterioration of Communication Skills:* Excessive reliance on social media can hinder the development of essential interpersonal communication skills. Many students prefer virtual interactions over face-to-face communication, which may lead to decreased confidence in real-world conversations. As a result, self-esteem and public speaking abilities may decline, making students feel socially anxious or withdrawn in personal interactions.
- *Decline in Creativity and Motivation:* Overuse of social media can suppress creativity and reduce motivation for physical and intellectual activities. Students often become absorbed in passive consumption of online content, leading to decreased interest in outdoor activities, academic pursuits, and personal development. This behavioural shift contributes to lethargy and reduced enthusiasm for goal-oriented tasks.
- *Psychological and Behavioural Issues:* Social media has been associated with increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, depression, envy, and even narcissistic behaviour. Continuous exposure to curated and idealised representations of others' lives can lead to unhealthy comparisons and diminished self-worth. Additionally, exposure to violent or inappropriate content can negatively influence the behaviour and mental health of children and adolescents.

- *Disruption of Productivity:* The addictive nature of social media often distracts students from their academic responsibilities. Many students spend excessive time on messaging apps, scrolling through feeds, or taking selfies, which detracts from study time and focus. This constant distraction significantly reduces productivity and can negatively affect academic performance and goal attainment.
- *Affects Health:* Many teenagers spend too much time on social media, and they might learn about bad things or want to do bad things because of it. Social media mostly damaging the mental health of students and also, social media causes physical health problems for students.
- Dropping of grades and performance of students and enables cheating in exams, Users are vulnerable to cyber-crimes like hacking, identity theft etc.
- Sharing personal information on social media can expose individuals to serious threats such as kidnapping, robbery, and even murder. Criminals may exploit publicly available details to track movements, identify vulnerabilities, and plan harmful activities. Furthermore, social media platforms have become a common medium for scams and fraud. Scammers continuously develop new, sophisticated tactics to deceive users, resulting in a growing number of victims. It also leads to cyber bullying which attacks any personality significantly.

## Suggestions

- Social media offers an effective means to better understand and connect with a library's target audience. It enables the creation of a vibrant and interactive community of library patrons. Through these platforms, users can share their reading experiences or activities at the library, fostering a sense of personal connection and engagement.
- Libraries can utilise social media to create dedicated event pages that promote upcoming programs, activities, or exhibitions. By encouraging patrons to follow their official profiles on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and others, libraries can provide timely updates, enhance visibility, and significantly increase participation in events. This continuous engagement helps maintain user interest and strengthens the overall impact of library services. Orientation/User Education can be taught through social media. Book-reading and author-talk events can be organised by librarians.
- Librarians should not hesitate to experiment with new social media channels. Librarians are encouraged to utilise multiple social media platforms such as

Facebook and Instagram—to maximise outreach and engagement. Developing a well-structured monthly content calendar is essential to ensure consistent and strategic communication.

- High-resolution images and engaging video content should be prioritised, particularly short-form formats like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, which are highly effective for audience growth and rapid content dissemination. Consistency in posting and periodic live interactions with patrons can further enhance user engagement and foster a sense of community.
- By maintaining an active presence on social media, libraries can offer patrons a centralised space to access a wide range of resources in multiple languages. This digital presence effectively brings the library to users, enabling them to discover diverse information topics without the need to physically browse library shelves.
- Furthermore, marketing remains one of the most impactful uses of social media for libraries. It plays a crucial role in promotional activities, raising awareness about services, resources, events, and institutional achievements.
- Library professionals must monitor how users engage with social media, as this is a crucial responsibility. They should also provide guidance and training to help users avoid harmful or inappropriate content.
- Excessive use of social media is often a significant contributing factor to depression among students. Dropping of grades and performance of students and enables cheating during examinations. Therefore, there is a need for constant guidance, programs, workshop to prevent students from such kind of things and to promote them towards education.

## CONCLUSION

Social media serves as a vital link connecting valuable content with the audience. Libraries utilise posts that are relevant and add meaningful value to their patrons. While library services may differ from one institution to another, social media universally functions as an effective platform for communication and marketing within the library context. Many research have shown that social media has become a study tool for people of all ages. Social media offers numerous advantages; however, it also presents certain drawbacks that can negatively impact individuals. Social networking platforms have significantly influenced the lives of many people, particularly students. Students get many distractions while using social media. Sometimes they distract from the pool of reliable information sources. Many libraries operate with limited budgets for advertising and marketing strategies. Therefore, social media serves as a powerful and cost-free tool that they can effectively utilise. While the use

of social media offers significant benefits, it is important to use it in moderation to avoid the risk of addiction. It can be said that social media must not be used to impress people but it should be used to create a meaningful impact.

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