

## **The Use of Facebook to Market Information Resources and Services in Academic Libraries in Nigeria: An Overview**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper focused on the use of Facebook to market, information resources and services in academic libraries in Nigeria. Several related literature was reviewed on Facebook, its applications, used in library information resources and services, it discussed the marketing strategies and it benefits towards the used of facebook in rendering effective and efficient library tasks, while so many challenges associated with the use of facebook applications in libraries more especially when it comes to marketing services were identified some of them are Lack of awareness on facebook application to library services, Dogmatism on the part of some libraries and library personnel (inability to conform/adapt to changes), Infrastructural and technological challenges amongst others. Poor training of library personnel to enhance efficiency on emerging digital technologies services for effective information service delivery Lack of funds and privacy concerns, erratic power supply as challenges militating against successful integration of facebook in academic libraries. The paper conclude that, facebook now a days has become an inevitable tool for libraries in rendering sufficient information service delivery. The research recommended that higher institutions in Nigeria should provide necessary digital facilities that can support libraries in handling the current changes of information needs of its clients, as facebook would facilitate fast interaction and communication to the users on the activities of library, adequate funding should be provided to improve service delivery.*

**Keywords:** Facebook, Marketing, Library, Information resources, Services, Academic Libraries.

### **Introduction**

The advent of Facebook platform has positions libraries to be responsible for a wide variety of resources and services that expand far beyond the wall of conventional libraries. Igun (2010) Opines that libraries role in the global information environment is unique in control of information resources in both physical and virtual domain. Notably, the advent of Facebook has led to a new phenomenon for librarians to meet the rapidly changing information needs and expectations of the 21st century users. It is a means in which librarians and libraries can optimize their work and services as well as maintain their relevance. In this 21st century, paradigm shift in sharing and delivery of information is evident with the use of Facebook platform. It is on this notes that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) observed that Facebook have been used as a medium to interact with clients to market information resources and services. However, literature review indicates that most people in under developing countries used Facebook to chat and interact as well as socialize rather than engage in academic and research activities (Kamba 2020). It is evident that knowledge on the use of Facebook platform enhance effective information delivery among the users.



Moreover, in a large proposition of the literature relating to Facebook use in academic libraries, this is far from prominent with a contradiction apparent between the advice relating to marketing and the advice relating to the use of Facebook. Okoroma (2017) stated that it is important to explore the perception of the academic libraries in using Facebook platform. Studies depicted that librarians attitude were positive in using Facebook for library promotion and they strongly behaved that Facebook is an important tool for marketing of library information resources and services among online information users. This facilitates library promotion by reducing the cost and minimizing time and energy compared to traditional library promotion. The review of the related literatures shows that there have been a number of studies that have analyzed and discussed the extent to which the Facebook have been utilized in academic libraries. The study which was conducted by Ezeani and Igwesi (2018) revealed that librarians use Facebook to promote library services where Facebook reported to be the most used social media for library promotion and provision of services. The effective use of Facebook provides opportunities for libraries and information centers to market their services and resources. Librarians are expected to adapt changes in technological advancement in performing and utilization of Facebook.

### **Concept of Facebook**

Facebook was first created in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg a Harvard student as a social networking website for college student to stay in touch, it gained huge success immediately. Within the first month of creation, more than half of the Harvard undergraduate students registered on the services for membership. It was soon expanded to all Ivy league schools, and then to all colleges, becoming a popular way to get to know other people on campus and to exchange information and ideas about the environment policies events as well as many other things. During the next couple of years, Facebook became open to the public as membership climbed to tens millions of active users. (McFadden 2019 and Phillips 2007)

Facebook is a Social media platform that facilitates social interaction between users, it allows users to create group with unique identity where members can interact and share messages, pictures, and even materials when they signed in. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) Described that the primary uses of Facebook by academic libraries is to promote the library activities via its home page libraries advertise opening hours, locations, website information, newly acquired materials, etc on Facebook. .David and Malekani (2019) further argued that academic libraries can use Facebook to provide resource and services updates on library services such as new reference services, document delivery, research supports etc. There are several global Facebook groups across networks to communicate on a common topic.

### **Facebook Applications**

Facebook application in recent times has become a medium of interaction, communication, collaboration and sharing of ideas among the people. It is one of the most used social media platform globally among the people irrespective of race, color and background. Users registered their presence on facebook by downloading facebook application on web page. Users registered their names, occupation, and place of origin as a means of identification in web page. It is the decision of the academic libraries to use facebook in marketing of information resources and services (Kirschaner and Karpinski, 2010).

### **Library Resources and Services**

Akporhonor and Olise (2015) asserted that librarians using Facebook may likely promote library services like lending services, referral services, reference services, technical services, indexing, abstracting, user education, etc. Library resources are books, CDs, VCDs, journals,



newspapers, yearbooks, maps, dictionaries, encyclopedias, internet-based resources etc. this is because librarians in the libraries using Facebook for professional purposes in the provision of library services effectively. Amuda and Adeyinka (2017) state that Facebook is used as tool for promoting of library utilization of resources and services alike some services rendered through are;

- Hosting library homepage
- Advertise opening and closing hours
- Websites information
- Location of the library
- Newly acquired materials/new addition
- Classmate interaction and discussion on special subjects
- Announcing upcoming event

A short video about the services offered by the library guide to new databases subscribed by library can also be shared through Facebook and it can be used to analyze the library services and resources through users feedback as it has the option of like and dislike or to put a comment to provide updates on new reference services, document delivery and research support.

### **Marketing Information Resources and Services Through the Use of Facebook in Library**

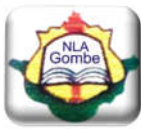
Ahmed, et al (2020) cited in Chitumbo and Rogers, identified some of the key marketing strategies of the information resources and services some are:-

1. **Current Awareness Services:** this is one of the services that promote library resources and services through the use of Facebook. This happens, when library professionals, place information on new arrivals, orientation programme, electronic resources, online resources available on the library websites, this will go a long way of increase the library visibility, utilization and render effective services.
2. **Reservation Services:** Facebook can be applied for reservation and renewal items on loan. Instead of visiting the physical library for such transaction, the library user can send messages to the circulation librarian through the use of Facebook.
3. **Reference Services:** This has been made easy through the use of Facebook. A library user can have direct access to the reference librarian and ask questions and he/she is sure to get answers almost immediately. The Facebook can give the user and librarian the opportunity to see each other and interact in a more friendly way even without coming to the physical library.
4. **Selective Dissemination of Information:** This specialized library service can be marketed and prompted through Facebook. Facebook captures the area of specialization of the user and this allows the librarian to source for resources that will benefit library users.
5. **User Education:** this is a service that can be done virtually and hosted on the library's website or it can be placed on Facebook for users to access and study at user's time and pace. The use of Facebook to reach out to users saves the management the library time and resources to organize such programmes and for the students, it saves them the stress and time of having to learn in a classroom situation.

### **Benefit of Using Facebook in Marketing Library Information Resources and Services in Academic Libraries**

Jegbefumea, et al (2020) cited Powell and Loss as they identified some of the benefits associated with the use of Facebook in marketing library information resources and services which includes:

1. To promote events; such as library services and its operation;
2. To update on library refurbishments, promote library orientation and exhibition guides;



3. To connect with distance learner and promote customer services tool such as complaints, suggestions, enquiries, feedback etc.
4. To promote acquisitions of new information resources of the library;
5. To connect with new students joining the institution and to engage with the academic community;
6. As a teaching tool to promote information literacy, technology and writing tips ( not only library based)
7. It helps to creates groups that share common interest or affiliation there by given rise to collaboration and exchange of information such as LRCN, NLA etc.
8. It can also be used to upload lives videos, conferences and discussion forum.
9. It serves as an effective tool in information management that is capable of creating prospective opportunities for library users.
10. It allows professionals to exchange ideas, information and opportunities. Other resources sharing category of collaborations includes; interlibrary loan, cooperative collection development and cooperative resource management programs.

### **Challenges Associated with the Use of Facebook in Marketing Library Information Resources and Services**

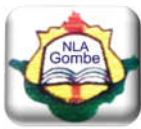
Many libraries around the world used facebook in marketing their services and resources. A study conducted by Okoroma (2017) identified various challenges inhibiting the use of Facebook by academic libraries in Nigeria, such impediments includes: Lack of awareness on Facebook application to library services, Dogmatism on the part of some libraries and library personnel (inability to conform/adapt to changes), Infrastructural and technological challenges amongst others. Poor training of library personnel to enhance efficiency on emerging digital technologies services for effective information service delivery. Another study by Akporhonor and Olise (2015) reveals some of the major challenges associated with the use of facebook in marketing library information resources and services which among are Found that network problems, lack of awareness, Lack of funds and privacy concerns, erratic power supply and low level of technology penetration as challenges militating against successful integration of facebook in academic libraries. Furthermore a study conducted by Bakere, Yacob, and Umar (2018) on Facebook usage by library staff in academic libraries revealed that, Lack of management support, Lack of skills and Personal knowledge, Poor access to internet and Lack of cooperation among staff, Lack of awareness, Irregular power supply, Lack of finance, were the bane of low integration of Facebook for service delivery.

### **Conclusion**

Since the advent of Facebook in information resources and service delivery cannot be over emphasized, it has therefore, become imperative for a social media policy be formulated and implemented in Nigerian academic libraries. Doing so would ensure appropriate utilization and integration of the Facebook in marketing library information resources and services in academic libraries in Nigeria. It identified that Facebook is the best social media applicable for which information and services in library ensured adequate information resources and service delivery. This would allow both the library staff and users to use Facebook within the framework of certain rules and this will go a long way to protect the organization from potential Facebook risk.

### **Recommendations**

1. The higher institutions in Nigeria should provide necessary digital resources such as Facebook that would facilitate fast interaction and communication to the users on the activities of library.

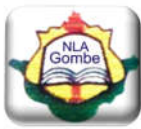


2. The library should embark on alternative sources of funding to provide sufficient and adequate digital technology resources for functional library service.
3. Libraries should prioritize staff training and retraining particularly on the use of Facebook. This would provide opportunity to require knowledge about the relevance, applicability, and other technicalities of Facebook use in information resources and service delivery.
4. Libraries should create their Facebook marketing strategies, planning and services for interaction on its services, operations and programmes.
5. Adequate technology and internet facilities should be made readily available in all the offices in university libraries. The library management can liaise with philanthropic bodies or the university management and even the TETFund for the purchase of modern computers and internet subscriptions in their libraries.

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