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## Making Social Media More Social: A Literature Review of Academic Libraries' Engagement and Connections Through Social Media Platforms

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# Social Media for Communication and Instruction in Academic Libraries

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# Chapter 1

## Making Social Media More Social: A Literature Review of Academic Libraries' Engagement and Connections Through Social Media Platforms

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter explores how academic libraries have used social media for broadcasting information, responsive communication, and engagement. Many libraries focus on the marketing aspect of social media, since it is a successful method of promoting events, services, and resources. However, exclusively using social media as a marketing tool ignores the best part of social media: the connections it fosters between people. The online community is just an extension of the in-person community that the academic library serves. This chapter examines the state of the literature on libraries' use of social media through the lens of increasing engagement and connections with the community as the key to successful social media.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social media is ubiquitous and pervasive on the digital landscape today, including in higher education and academic libraries. One only has to turn on the television to see any commercial promoting the company's Facebook presence or website for details. Despite the differences among the multitude of social media platforms, the main commonality they share is that they are used to connect people with other people. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are among the many tools people use to reach out to old friends, make new friends over a shared interest, and learn more about hot topics and current events.

The massive scale of the Internet has made it necessary for academic libraries to have an online social media presence to meet users where they are. The biggest social media platform in use at the time of this writing is Facebook, with 2.196 billion active users monthly. Other major platforms include You-

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Tube with 1.9 billion users, Instagram with 1 billion users, and Twitter with 336 million users (We Are Social, n.d.). This chapter will focus on Facebook and Twitter as the primary networks that libraries are using or can use to reach their communities, but the rising popularity of Instagram and YouTube will also be discussed. There are many different networks currently in use by public, academic, and special libraries. Gonzalez, Marks, and Westgate (2018) launched a Social Media Directory of Academic Libraries that lists accounts associated with various academic libraries across the globe, along with contact information for the librarian or representative responsible for the accounts. At the time of this writing, the directory includes 173 libraries on Facebook, 157 libraries on Twitter, 128 libraries on Instagram, and 101 libraries on YouTube.

The boundaries between online and offline have blurred significantly since the Internet has become a pervasive influence in society. A library's community exists in both online and offline spaces simultaneously, and it is necessary to bridge the gap between these spaces to create a holistic experience for the community. Young and Rossmann (2015) emphasize the need to integrate the offline presence of the library into the online world. Social media is "a tool that enables users to join together and share in the commonalities of research, learning, and the university community" (p. 22). Social media can bring together individuals in a community, and libraries must learn to use these tools more effectively to bridge the gaps.

This crossover between the digital and physical worlds has become even more enmeshed with the rise of mobile technology. The Pew Research Center (2018, February 5) reports that 95% of Americans own a cellphone, and 77% own smartphones. This instant connection to social media, news, businesses, and information has changed behaviors. New Media Consortium's (2017) Horizon Report indicates that mobile learning is a major trend for higher education. Convenience and communication drive this trend, and ease of access can improve learning outcomes for students all over the world (Adams Becker, et al, 2017).

This chapter's objectives are to determine how academic libraries have used social media in less than effective ways, how they are using social media for communication or engagement with their communities, and how to incorporate best practices for readers to improve user engagement on social media. This narrative literature review examines the state of academic libraries' social media presence and their use for engagement with students. A search of the Library Information Science and Technology Abstracts database (LISTA) with the keywords "social media" and "libraries" brings back over 2,800 results. A search adding the keyword "engagement" to the previous search string returns only 141 results. A further limitation using the search string "social media AND academic libraries AND engagement," reflecting the focus of this review, returned only 31 articles. Focusing on these articles and examining their references for relevant materials became the basis for this chapter. The search was limited to articles published between 2011 and 2018, but relevant references cited by more than one paper were also examined and included for context. College and Research Libraries News offers additional resources of interest, since many of these are not "scholarly" peer review articles but focus on trends in the field that are important for working professionals. A similar search of "social media" on the College and Research Libraries News archive returned 262 items, comprising many "how-to" articles, strategy tips, and descriptions of successful campaigns or promotions.

In order to share a common vocabulary, the following are some definitions of popular terms used at length in this chapter:

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- **Content:** Material created for and shared through social media networks including but not limited to images, text, and videos;
- **Platform:** The website or technology upon which a social network is built;
- **Social Media:** Social networking websites that allow users to follow, “friend,” or interact with chosen people. This chapter primarily discusses Facebook and Twitter;
- **Users:** People in the community of a specific library, often the target audience of a marketing strategy, including students, faculty, staff, and community members;
- **User Engagement:** “The emotional, cognitive, and behavioural connection that exists, at any point in time and possibly over time, between a user and a resource” (Attfield, Kazai, Lalmas, & Piwowarski, 2011).

## **BACKGROUND**

Since its inception, the Internet has continuously grown and developed. The concept of Web 2.0 has influenced how libraries utilize the Internet and social media for many years. O’Reilly (2005) coined the term Web 2.0 as a new, interconnected version of Internet technologies focusing on community-driven participation that, while not quite idealized in its utopian form, influenced the way social media networks were built and utilized. O’Reilly emphasizes interactivity between companies and users, including “trusting users as co-developers [and] harnessing collective intelligence” (p. 5) as core competencies for these websites. Academic libraries led the adoption and use of Web 2.0 applications like blogs, RSS feeds, instant messaging, social networking services, wikis, and social tagging (Chua & Goh, 2010).

Early goals of using these networks were to forge connections and share information between users and librarians (Chua & Goh, 2010). These goals have remained relatively static through the years, even as the tools have changed. An examination of social media policies at academic libraries found that most libraries’ goal for using social media is to “engage the community in conversations and to share information” (p. 403).

While the goals have not changed, opinions about the usage of social media have. In the mid-2000s, many librarians did not see the value of having libraries participate with social media. An Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) study by De Rosa, Cantrell, Havens, Hawk and Jenkins (2007) explored librarians’ viewpoints on aspects of the networked world including sharing information, privacy concerns, and future involvement. The study revealed that librarians did not see a place for the library on social media. Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were still in their infancy, the possibilities still unseen. Librarians reported using social bookmarking sites like Delicious, sharing videos on YouTube, and maintaining individual blogs for themselves or their libraries. The librarians were not necessarily wrong. Koerwer (2007), a 19-year-old college sophomore, wrote a column about his experiences and described how seeing librarians on Facebook “seemed like another instance of adults arriving too late to a fad, like a soccer mom wearing a Pikachu T-shirt” (p. 40). He goes on to say there may be opportunities for librarians to ingratiate themselves gracefully, but with strict limitations.

Attitudes have changed since 2007, and many articles have explored librarians’ social media preferences, usage, and presence. More recently, Chu and Du (2013) surveyed librarians on their perceptions of various social networking tools. The majority of their 38 respondents currently use or plan to use social networking. Librarians value the promotion and marketing features, the convenient dissemination

of news, and the possibility of engagement with users. These benefits outweigh the costs, which they describe as little to none; however, they face challenges of inadequate time and training, and a relatively unengaged user base. Social media platforms had saturated the market by this point in 2013, and many more librarians have become more familiar with how these networks work.

## **LIBRARIES' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Broadcasting**

As opinions about social media in academic libraries changed, its goals and uses remained static. Librarians feel most comfortable using social media platforms for promotion and advertising, or broadcasting. Broadcasting most accurately describes the practice of posting on social media to share information and raise awareness, but without engaging in conversation or deeper online responses. This one-way communication can be effective for just-in-time messages, but without user interactions it can feel like shouting into the void. Broadcasting is the current status quo for libraries who use social media, and it can be an ineffective method for communicating, engaging, and bridging the gap between the online and offline worlds. The literature explores in great detail the history of how librarians use social media for broadcasting, and the benefits and challenges of the practice.

One of the earliest studies of libraries' social media posting habits examined Twitter use in libraries. Aharony (2010) collected tweets from 30 public and academic libraries in the United States between August and October 2009. These tweets revealed similarities in the content that each created. Aharony labeled tweets in five major categories: "library, information about, miscellaneous, technology, and general information" (p. 345). Seven years later, Harrison, Burrell, Velasquez, and Schreiner (2017) analyzed the social media habits of six Midwestern academic libraries and found very similar themes in the types of postings, falling into the categories "Make community connections, create an inviting environment, and provide content." Considering the time that elapsed between the two previous studies, the content that libraries are publishing has not changed much. Providing basic information about the library itself and promoting resources and events are basic elements of social media.

The most popular use for social media is to promote services or resources at the library. Surveys of librarians in the U.S. and internationally show that librarians recognize the utility of social media as a marketing tool, the most important aspect of their usage (Ayu & Abrizah, 2011; Hendrix, Chiarella, Hasman, Murphy, & Zafron, 2009; Omeluzor, Oyovwe-Tinuoye, & Abayomi, 2016). The Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections developed a program to feed into Instagram's Application Program Interface to create a dynamic embedded feed of images from their collection (Wilkinson, 2018). Their content promoted rare, interesting, and light-hearted materials, selected to create "user delight."

In addition to the surveys of librarians, studies of the social media postings themselves confirm that librarians use social media for promotion purposes. Since social media platforms have a wide reach and little monetary cost except for time, it is a cost-effective method of marketing. Many librarians explore the uses and effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool in libraries, as well as in other businesses (Sachs, Eckel, & Langan, 2011; Sriram, 2016; Thomsett-Scott, 2014).

Understandably, there is little literature from librarians describing why this is an ineffective method of social media use. Young and Rossman (2015) at Montana State University Library struggled with

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their social media presence prior to their engagement strategy. An analysis of their tweets determined that the majority of their postings about workshops, library spaces, and event promotion yielded very low interaction rates. This prompted a new approach, which is discussed later in this chapter.

### **Responsive Communication**

Some librarians have determined that broadcasting their messages does not help them reach their users. They have begun to ask their users exactly what they want and to build strategies around their particular preferences. This strategy can be considered “responsive communication,” the practice of determining what kinds of messages, platforms, and methods users prefer, and strategizing to take account of those preferences.

Users have a variety of information-retrieval methods, and it is necessary to understand the preference of the library’s audience before making general assumptions about the best way to reach them. The librarians who have written about their experiences with responsive communication emphasize the importance of each individual library looking at its specific population, since results vary so much.

A survey undertaken by Booker and Bandyopadhyay (2017) asked library users about their social media habits and preferences. The majority of respondents use social media platforms and think it is important for the library to have a social media presence. However, they do not prefer to get their information about the library from social media, but rather the email and flyers in the library. Users under age 35 prefer to get information from the library webpage or the newsletter before social networking sites. They still feel that the library should be present on social media platforms, but not mainly for promotion. Similarly, Gustafson, Sharrow, and Short (2017) created and disseminated a survey to gauge how the campus community preferred to receive information. This informed a marketing strategy used by the authors to promote events and services. Social media was found to be less useful than email or posters, but useful for “instant gratification and just-in-time communication” (p. 429).

Stvilia and Gibradze (2017) created a survey to determine the perceived value of different types of library tweets. They asked 120 undergraduate students to rate which library services they valued most and how important different categories of social media postings were to them. Students stated overwhelmingly that they value the library as a place to study (90%), and the next highest ranked service was access to information and resources (58%). The social media postings they most valued were operations updates, study support, and event information.

Some libraries include reference assistance as a goal of for their social media presence, assuming that a reference interview requires conversation and engagement between a librarian and a user. Sachs, Eckel, and Langan (2011) at Western Michigan University created a social media policy with this as one of their goals. However, a survey of their users revealed that users were not seeking to interact with the library on social media and would likely not use that service. Their social media management team took this preference into consideration and dropped the goal from their social media policy.

The major takeaway from the literature is that each library’s users have different preferences, and every author emphasizes the importance of learning about your own users before creating a social media presence. Responding to users’ preference is important, but is it engagement? As Attfield et al. (2011) describe, user engagement is the connection between a user and a resource. Crafting a social media approach to cater to the library’s population can lead to user engagement, but it requires strategic tactics that move beyond responsive communication.



## **Moving Beyond Responsiveness: Engagement or Active Communication**

Libraries that use social media platforms to engage with their users participate in active communication, in which libraries initiate conversations that can move from the online world into the offline world by affecting policy, bringing people into the library space, or providing assistance. Historically, libraries have not been very successful in this endeavor. A study of academic-library Twitter accounts found that few accounts were using social media for conversation or engagement: “Most of the libraries were not being mentioned by their followers; in fact, only four library Twitter accounts had more than ten mentions” (Del Bosque, Leif, & Skarl, 2012, p. 209). However, some librarians have successfully developed their social media presence to build connections with their users.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Young and Rossmann (2015) created a social media group that analyzed the Twitter activity and usage at Montana State University Library and developed methods to focus on building community rather than one-way broadcasting and promotion. Their target audience was students at their university, and their goal was to increase interaction rates as measured by favorites, retweets, and mentions. Their most popular topics before beginning their new strategy included workshops, library spaces, and events, common themes found frequently on many library social media accounts. The community-focused approach included more personality in the tone of tweets, focusing on topics their community wanted to hear about such as student life or local community, and quick responses:

*We prioritized responsiveness, availability and scholarship with the goal of connecting with students and building a sense of community. . . . By creating personality-rich content that invites two-way interaction, our strategic social media program has helped form a holistic community of users around our Twitter activity. (Young & Rossmann, 2015, p. 30)*

Their plan worked, and their Twitter account saw a 366% increase in student followers.

Stewart, Atilano, and Arnold (2017) developed a “Social Listening” strategy. The Thomas G. Carpenter Library at the University of North Florida used a customer relationship management concept to connect with students, gauge their interest, and make their social media presence more engaging. Social listening, a process more prominent in private businesses than in libraries, focuses on listening and responding to users’ input rather than broadcasting and marketing. The social media team prioritized social listening on their social media platforms rather than creating original content. They observed any “mention” of the library, “check in” at their location, and popular hashtags related to the university, and responded to every comment. Regardless of the sentiment of the comment, whether it was complaining about noise or gratitude for study rooms, librarians responded. Librarians note that this method has worked. User engagement has increased, their Twitter impressions rose to 15,000 per month, and they receive feedback from their users. By building reciprocity and trust between their students and the library, they in turn receive more feedback from their students and provide more help.

Another practice to improve engagement is to work with students directly to create resources and marketing strategies. Luo, Wang, and Han (2013) created a video series called “Falling in Love with the Library” that they developed, created, and executed in partnership with students. They looked at specific social media sites that their students were using, to determine where they could best reach their target audience and make the most impact. Youku, the Chinese version of YouTube, seemed a likely candidate. Librarians worked together with students to create and promote the video series, which was a smash

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hit. The authors identify four factors contributing to their success: content, style, venue, and partnership with students. The authors note that this last factor, partnership with students, is the most important, as it ensured that the previous three would be relevant and engaging for other students on campus.

In an attempt to create engagement with their campuses, some libraries interact heavily with other departments or units at the same school. This can be useful, as many student life or official university accounts have more activity, followers, and interactions than library accounts. By interacting with other institutional accounts, library postings and presence can find a wider audience of users still connected to the university or college. Stewart and Walker (2018) examined 16 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) library social media accounts to see if patrons are engaging with them, by focusing on hashtags, retweets, and sentiment analysis. Retweets showed only 11% of followers engaged with library content. A majority of interaction came from other institutional accounts or non-followers engaging with posts related to institutional boosterism, the practice of creating content that focuses on the school's culture or events in a positive manner. These tweets focused on sports, campus activities, and popular culture, and usually contain slogans, mascots, or other university events. The authors found an over-representation of campus culture on library twitter feeds rather than original content, promotion of library events or services, or focus on the library as a place. They found that "library-centric content, at its best, appears rather generic in tone and did not evoke transcendent and enthusiastic engagement with followers" (p. 123). The Twitter accounts they studied did not encourage two-way communication; rather those accounts used the platform as a broadcasting service focusing on the campus culture. The HBCUs they examined made attempts at engagement but fell short.

One major challenge to improving engagement with social media is that many people use social media passively. Passive social media use is when a person observes, rather than interacting with others using the platform (Zhu & Bao, 2018). Students reported privacy concerns, the desire to control and manage their impression on other users, and social network fatigue as contributing factors to passively using social media networks. These factors are not addressed in library literature, but can explain why engagement, which requires active participation, can be a challenge. Prior to the rise of social media, passive use of message boards and other online communities was a recognized issue. Jakob Nielsen (2006) examined internet communities and coined the 90-9-1 rule: 90% of users are "lurkers" who read or observe without contributing to the discussion, 9% of users contribute occasionally, and 1% of users participate greatly and account for the majority of the content. Reference services on social media may be depressed for this reason. Sachs, Eckel, and Langan (2011) found this to be the case when trying to add reference assistance to their social media.

Despite this challenge, other fields within higher education successfully use social media to create connections and further engagement. Academic libraries can look to models created by colleagues in classroom instruction and student life for inspiration in their social media usage. Chugh and Ruhi (2018) examine how Facebook has functioned as a powerful tool, used to engage in after-class discussion groups, seek assistance outside the formal classroom setting, and foster learning communities among students and instructors. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) used Twitter in their freshman seminar for in-class discussions and coursework and found that student and faculty engagement increased. Discussions that could not have achieved depth in a one-hour seminar found rich answers and connections between students, study groups formed for other classes, and students who discovered mutual interests that formed the basis of new relationships. Harris (2016) describes ways in which other campus departments and entities can use social media to support Student Life initiatives. Athletics, student affairs, community relations, and

campus safety all have unique relationships with students, and social media can enhance interactions. The examples given by each of these authors can provide guidelines or ideas for academic librarians, and even if we may not have the exact same goals, there are correlations that can be implemented.

## **SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Best Practices for Engagement**

Developing a strategy is key for a cohesive and effective social media experience. There are many articles and books about how to develop marketing strategies or marketing plans for libraries. Even if advertising is not high on the priority list for the library's social media presence, these strategies can be used to reach the target audience, plan content, and develop better relationships. Creating a strategic marketing plan can focus and streamline social media efforts. Deploying an unfocused series of social media posts or platforms can feel unorganized and chaotic to the user, so having a strategy is important (Chua & Goh, 2010).

Libraries can take a cue from business and marketing professionals when considering their strategy. Potter's (2012) *The Library Marketing Toolkit* lays out the marketing cycle and provides methods to design a plan based on these stages. Libraries can use this step-by-step plan for their social media approach to improve their engagement. The marketing cycle is as follows:

1. Decide on your goals;
2. Market research;
3. Segmentation;
4. Set objectives;
5. Promotional activities;
6. Measurement;
7. Evaluation; and
8. Modification.

### **Set Goals**

The first step in creating a social media presence is to determine a purpose and set goals. One might frame one's goals by answering the question, "Why are we doing this, and what do we hope to gain from it?" (Burkhardt, 2010). The answers to these questions will help to inform the kind of platforms to use, the messages to put out, the content to produce, and the target audience.

Social media policies can help to set goals and create a strategic presence. Policies can be instrumental in making sure all stakeholders understand the priorities, mission, and limits of using social media. Johnson and Burclaff (2013) examined academic library policies regarding social media, and found that very few academic libraries have such policies. Many share the general social media policy created by the larger university without adapting it to fit the library's specific needs. The authors recommend considering the library's mission and goals and crafting a policy that aligns with those priorities. "The library mission should drive the library's activities and should therefore be present in these guiding policies" (p. 404).

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Creating goals for a library's social media account can vary. Popular goals include raising awareness about the library, reaching a certain number of people in a time frame, or creating original content. Strategies that support engagement often move beyond these goals. Young and Rossman (2015) developed goals to "connect with students and build community" with the activity focus of "information sharing [and] social interaction," with specifics for "tone and tenor, posting frequency, posting categories, and posting personnel" (p. 26). Each component contributed to the overall goal, and created a cohesive strategy for their team to follow.

## **Market Research and Segmentation**

Market research is the process of analyzing the market and where one sits in it (Potter, 2012). This can involve looking at similar institutions and studying the demographics of a community. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to all users that will work for every library. Focusing on meeting the library's users where they are will eliminate costly diversions to platforms that do not work for them. Look at the age group of the community's user base. If the library's social media target audience is freshmen, part of the Gen Z cohort, they may be using different platforms than most librarians have ever used. The 18-to-24-year-olds embrace a wide variety of platforms, including Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube, and they are leaving Facebook at a rapid pace (Pew Research Center, 2018, March 1). Other populations have different preferences as well, so consider adult learners, international students, transfer students, and other user groups that may be overlooked. Consider different strategies for reaching those populations and develop specific goals for them.

The first step is to identify the target audience for a social media platform, and find out if they are responsive to social media connections with the library. Many of the surveys looking at student preferences examine how students want to receive marketing or advertising from the library (Gustafson, Sharrow, & Short, 2017; Booker & Bandyopadhyay, 2017). Look back at the goals for one's social media presence and determine if one's audience will be receptive.

## **Set Objectives**

Based on the goals determined at the beginning of this process, objectives are measurable and attainable benchmarks that can determine if one is progressing toward meeting those goals.

Objectives can be a simple measure of analytics, such as "obtaining 60 followers within the first four months of using the service and using multiple likes per image" (Ramsey & Vecchione, 2014). Other objectives can include posting a certain number of unique items within a time frame, creating an amount of original content, or sharing a certain number of links back to library resources. For engagement, different goals are needed. Stewart, Atilano, and Arnold (2018) established goals focusing on content creation and awareness of the library in their first iterations of their social media policy, but as they developed their Social Listening strategy, their goal shifted to "seeking out opportunities to reply to, connect with, and encourage library customers to reach out to the library" (p. 54). Their objectives focused on responding to every mention and check-in at the library, which led them to achieve their overall goal.

Libraries should create a team to manage their social media presence. This will alleviate the pressure on a librarian or staff member and has multiple benefits. A team can create a calendar and update more regularly, make sure that each department or subject is represented fairly, and set bigger goals that align

with other marketing objectives (Jansen, 2017). Librarians who use a variety of social media platforms can get bogged down or overwhelmed by producing content for each channel. Having a team, a strategy, and a plan can help to avoid this.

Time is a major concern for librarians using social media, especially for those interested in building relationships with their users. Posting several times per day can be daunting and takes a great deal of time. Librarians must set aside time to learn the platforms; update their knowledge of constant changes on the platforms in the face of user requests and technical fixes; respond to users' queries or comments quickly; and create content that is interesting and engaging. One major concern for librarians using these platforms is the cost of their time (Chu & Du, 2013; Dickson & Holley, 2010).

## Promotional Activities

Creating unique content that fits user preferences is an integral and sometimes difficult part of maintaining a social media presence. Graphics, pictures, and visual media are the most popular posts on many of these platforms. A survey of the target population will help guide decisions about the kind of content of most interest or use to them, and those preferences should guide the goals, strategy, and content. From their survey results, Stvilia and Gibradze (2017) learned that students prefer operations updates, study support, and event information. Content that caters to these themes may better engage them than faculty and staff profiles or collections updates.

In addition to creating content for each platform, it is also important to respond to users who interact with an account. Stewart, Atilano, and Arnold (2017) used "social listening" to improve engagement. Students felt heard by the library and that built trust between them. This responsiveness, in addition to content that appeals to them, can generate goodwill and develop relationships.

Looking at other libraries' postings and modifying them to fit the library's vision can be easy and inspirational; however, this can lead to homogeneity in its overall social media presence. Harrison, Burrell, Velasquez, and Schreiner (2017) found overwhelmingly similar postings in their analysis of six Midwestern universities, despite differences in sizes, populations, and strategies. Adherence to mimicking other successful posts might overshadow analyzing the effectiveness of posting.

## Measurement, Evaluation, and Modification

Assessment of social media can be a challenge for librarians. Clearly defined and measurable goals can improve the experience for managers. In the early days of social media, quantitative data about the effectiveness and success of these platforms was not readily available (Dickson & Holley, 2010). However, in recent years a plethora of tools and methods has become available to librarians.

One easy way to measure engagement is to look at followers, retweets, and replies. Counting mentions, retweets, shares, likes, or comments on various platforms can be a quick tool for measurement. Kim, Abels, and Yang (2012) examined 10 academic libraries' tweets to find out who was sharing their content, and found that university organizations and students are the two largest groups who retweet library accounts. Stvilia and Gibradze (2014) analyzed tweets from six major university libraries to measure the most popular topics and effectiveness of those themes. The most popular categories of tweets include event, resource, and community building. Retweets and favorites determined which content was most effective, and study support was the most popular category by far, followed by community building and resources. Some of the most frequently used words in the "community building" category included

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“learning, hope, great, student, luck, best, follow, awesome” (p. 139). Based on their description of the category and these kinds of words, this would relate to engagement and building connections with users.

Native tools on each platform can be powerful. Facebook has a sophisticated suite of tools called Page Insights that can provide information about who is engaging with posts, the volume of people, and common traits that may help provide better understanding of the audience. The key terms for these metrics include “impressions,” the number of times a post is shown; “reach,” the number of unique users who have seen a post; and “frequency,” the average number of times a user sees an ad (Nonprofits on Facebook, n.d.). Using these tools can help align the target audience with the people actually interacting with posts, determine what days and times are most successful for increasing engagement, and develop new methods and strategies (Ramsey & Vecchione, 2014; Vucovich, Gordon, Mitchell, & Ennis, 2013). Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube also have their own programs that measure algorithms and audiences to provide similar sophisticated information (Twitter for Business, n.d.; Instagram, n.d.; Youtube Creator Academy, n.d.). Many of the tools provided by these companies focus on advertising revenue, which may not be relevant for libraries who do not purchase ad space from them. Third-party tools also provide assessment capabilities if the native tools or individual measurements do not provide enough information. Klout, SumAll, and StatCounter are three alternatives with similar functions.

The marketing cycle requires continuous adaptation and updating. Once the assessment data has been analyzed, determine if the goals made at the outset have been met or if they need to be tweaked in order to reach a desirable outcome. This can lead to improving strategies and developing new goals based on the information one has obtained, which begins the cycle anew.

## **CONCLUSION**

One major issue in the literature about academic libraries’ social media use is the privacy of users. Privacy has been discussed in terms of what information universities and colleges collect about students, what corporations collect, and what private information is freely available, but this topic has not been studied in terms of what academic libraries collect from social media. When a library follows or friends a user, any manager on the account can usually see a great deal of information about that user unless they have strict privacy settings. This can give the library much more information than the amount with which the user may feel comfortable. Assessment tools such as Page Insights and Twitter Analytics can provide even more information in the aggregate about the user base. Librarians must consider the implications of collecting that much data about students or the community. Dickson and Holley (2010) considered privacy in their research, but few others have recently looked at social media use through this lens.

Even with all of the analytics tools available to librarians today, these may not be sufficient for measuring engagement. Assessment and evaluation are an important aspect of the marketing cycle, and libraries currently can’t determine outcomes that may be more complicated than reach or impressions. Engagement is about connection with individuals, and a gap exists for measuring engagement in social media.

Another issue that carries with it an opportunity is the concept of using social media to incorporate participatory culture for collective knowledge creation. One promise of Web 2.0 was that users could communally build knowledge together. A participatory culture is one that breaks down the hegemonic imposition of cultural and structural barriers on knowledge. Deodato (2014) discusses how libraries are considered the organizers of knowledge, but through collection development, classification, and restriction of access, they are actually creators of knowledge that support, or choose to subvert, the cultural

hegemony. The proliferation of Web 2.0 was thought to subvert the top-down hierarchical creation of knowledge by letting users become involved in that creation. For example, websites like Yahoo Answers allow for the creation of collective knowledge where users can post questions, answer others' questions, and rate answers. This could be possible in social media, allowing for more participation from users in the communal creation of knowledge, growing beyond engagement into something more inclusive.

The rapid growth of social media over the past decade has created new opportunities for academic libraries to bridge the gap between the online and offline realms. At the moment, libraries that incorporate engagement into their social media strategies are one-off success stories rather than trends that are taking off. This is an opportunity for libraries to move beyond broadcasting our promotional messages into the social media void, while considering the questions surrounding privacy, assessment, and participatory culture. Building connections and having conversations with students, faculty, and the community to develop relationships, improve real-world services and resources, affect policy, and meet target goals can improve the social media experience for librarians, patrons, and the community.

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