



## Analysis of Social Media Use among Academic Libraries

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#### ABSTRACT

Social Media (SM) has found uses and application in academic library for various services and functions. This assertion was to be determined among Nigerian university libraries in terms of what platforms, average number of posts, engagement in terms of like, share, comment of users, number of likes on the SM account, type of information disseminated on SM. The result shows a low use of SM among the sampled university libraries in terms of number of SM accounts operated, number of posts, level of engagement in terms of like, share and comment to post from the university libraries' SM accounts. Also low number of likes for the SM, type of information disseminated is also very low. Most university libraries do not even have any SM accounts. Recommendations were made as to how to improve on the use of SM platform, services that can be rendered on it, how to make it more engaging, and the type of information that should be sent with the frequency of posting messages.

**Keywords:** Social media, Social media account, Social media platforms, Posts, Messages, Engagement, University libraries.

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### I. Introduction

The issue of Social Media (SM) coming into the library is no longer a debate, SM has come to stay in library including academic library. Nigerian academic libraries have also embraced SM as a tool for library services to users (Ezeani & Iqwesi, 2012). Several conferences and workshop have been organised by Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) along this line to ensure improved library service through SM.

The issue of availability and usage are two different things, as also the issue of what type of use is put into. This research work intends to analyse data from selected academic libraries in Nigeria on how acceptable SM has been to them, the prevalence of the SM platform, how acceptable are they to their users in terms of like, comment, share etc. The type and category of information displayed or sent out from their accounts or pages among others.

Just as the generation Y and Z have been identified as technology savvy so also the need for academic libraries to upgrade their services to suit these classes of people. Researchers have shown that generation Y and Z are always on the internet and connect greatly with their SM. The latest ideology of libraries all over the world is to

take library services to users and not necessarily users coming to the physical library necessitate the need for academic libraries to connect with SM. Also repacking of information and serving the users in their most preferred way has equally affected university libraries to join the SM network.

SM has been identified as having advantage of real-time conversation, coupled with opportunity for exchange of information in various formats. It is also the most versatile tool now for collaboration, communication and creativity. It is therefore pertinent to determine how academic libraries are leveraging on these qualities of SM to provide library and information services.

The following are the stated objectives of this research.

- To determine the prevalence of SM among academic libraries,
- To assess the acceptability and relevance of the academic library SM use in terms of number of likes/comment/share etc. among its users,
- To examine the various type of information being shared on the academic library SM,
- To determine the frequency of dissemination of information from the SM sites.

## **II. What is Social Media?**

SM has as many definitions as possible but the following has been considered for this research. Tezgular (2013) stated that it is a digital platform where the sharing of information captured simultaneously by the user-friendliness brought by new generation web technologies and communication. Miller (2015) described it as web 2.0 applications work for user and are able to locate and assemble contents that meets our needs as users rather than forcing us to conform to the paths laid out for us by content owners or their intermediaries.

Web 2.0 has been described as the environment that invites participation- submitting new posts, rating and commenting on content; content is dynamic, collaborative and changed often; the user community is potentially well connected with one another, therefore not only able to share information but also contribute web content at wider extent (Aqil, Ahamad, & Siddique, 2011). Barsky and Purdon (2006) stated that social networking sites offer a free and easy way to create personal web pages and fill them with content such as blogs, digital photographs, favourite music, short video clips and much more. Junco et al. (2011) defines SM as a collection internet websites services and practices that support collaboration, community building participation and sharing.

## **III. Social Media and Library**

Common SM tools like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, LinkedIn, Foursquare, Tumblr, Vimeo, Pinterest, Wikipedia, Instagram, Sound cloud etc have been used by libraries for the promotion of their library services by universities libraries with the potential benefits and challenges (Kemrajh, 2013). Chu and Du (2013) stated that social networking tools allow you to teach library staff new technologies related to their profession, to follow the activities, and to keep resources up to date. As a result, students, researchers rely more on university libraries keeping pace with technology.

Aras (2014) listed some objectives of university libraries in actively using SM as follows:

- To promote library services, workshops and the events in order to increase library use.
- To provide better access to information.
- To be where the users are.
- To get feedback from users.
- To highlight specific features of the library.
- To create collaboration with other libraries and the users.
- To announce the library news.

Aras (2014) further stated that libraries are using SM to establish good communication with users, to understand the issues and find solutions. By using SM, libraries want to give a message to their users about how they are innovative and solution-oriented. In addition, social networks aid in finding new user and colleagues to collaborate to librarians and disclose promotion of libraries and the importance of library services to communities (Buono & Kordeliski, 2013).

Aqil, Ahamad and Siddique (2011) ex-ray some important aspect of web 2.0 vis-à-vis library and

information centres as blogs/weblogs, Wikis/Wikipedia, Live Streaming Media, Tagging Social Networking Sites, RSS feeds, Instant Messaging, Web Podcasting and Mash-up. They further stated that librarians can do many other things with social networks depending upon the specific requirements and changing needs of the library patrons and staff. Burgert and Nann (2014) research showed that academic libraries use SM tools to promote their libraries and interact with users. Because, today we are in the digital era and libraries worldwide have been adjusting to the shift from the printed era to the digital era (Nonthacumjane, 2011).

## **IV. How Libraries Use Social Media?**

Barggett and Williams (2012) in a survey of Shenandoah University reported that students wanted an expanding use of Facebook by library by posting on it daily. The students use the library website to find information about library hours, information about events and new materials. Combining this fact leads to the supposition that posting about library events, hours and new materials on SM will help drive users to Facebook. Nancy and Dowd (2013) explained that you can see that SM space has a way to entice people to click on a link to learn more. The important part is getting the users the information in whatever SM platforms they are using.

Burget and Nann (2014) reported that University of Central Florida Library has links to library relevant applications like WorldCat, JSTOR, and Cite Me and photos of recent events in the library. Bosque, Leif and Skarl (2012) in a survey of 296 academic libraries found that one-third were using Twitter, with majority not using features such as hash tags or direct messages. Other problems include academic libraries not tweeting frequently, leaving their account entirely dormant and unprofessional communication directed at students. University of Southern California Libraries @usclibraries provide frequent tweets on historical images of California, highlights of their collection and more.

Wilkinson (2013) identified certain ideas for libraries to explore SM like Pinterest, as libraries showcase Library guides, Youtube videos, or other resources that encourage user to identify ways library can assist them. He further encouraged libraries to interact with each other by sharing ideas, resources, and events being used to stay current with their student population. Collins and Quan-Hasse (2014) studied Ontario Academic libraries and found that two-thirds of academic libraries maintained a SM presence on at least one platform. Similarly, Chu and Du (2013) recorded 71% of academic libraries from respondents in Asia, North America, and Europe as using SM.

Kumar (2013) concluded in his work that SM has a great impact on information promotional activities by bringing tremendous changes in the field of marketing. He also listed various social networking sites useful for marketing library services and products as LinkedIn, Ning, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, Slide Share and delicious. He further described each of them and how they can be used for fruitful library marketing. Similarly, Breeding (2010) stated that through SM channels a large amount of positive exposure is gained by libraries. At

universities and other institutions, library outreach and public relations initiatives rightly include social networking as key promotional tools (Kemrajh, 2013).

## **V. Engagement through Social Media**

This is looking at no of followers/like/share/comment or participatory library service through SM. Most libraries agree that SM tools help them to achieve their mission of engaging with community and allow them to participate in conversation with their community (Rutherford, 2008). Breeding (2010) put it succinctly that use of SM tools can help libraries to remain relevant and social networking can no longer be seen as a passing fad.

The number of participation is an indication or a measure of how the library services are popular or interactive with or by the users. Smeaton and Davis (2014) stated that although most of the libraries have been engaged in SM technologies quickly by creating blogs, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts, there has been little exploration of how successful these technologies have been in meeting libraries' goals and whether SM is being used to drive participatory service.

SM provides a ready-made communication channel which can be used by the library to create user engagement and move towards a participatory service (Cahil, 2009; Fernandez, 2009). Porter and King (2007) stated that libraries have always been open to user participation and SM is a new way for users to interact with their library. SM allows users to be involved with the libraries in a completely different way, giving them more power in content creation and decision-making. Joint (2010) stated that using facilities like tagging or commenting on a resource by users creates an immense knowledge benefit to librarians as users' knowledge is superior to librarians' knowledge. Cahil (2009) identified some facilities of social networking technologies which can help librarians in the area of creating subject heading, cataloguing, introduction of library resources and services.

Statistics of some libraries are presented below, as July 6, 2014, University of Florida library has 3,772 likes and 30,796 visits, while the British library has 167,350 likes and 56585 visits. Each of these libraries has substantial likes and visits to their pages, they post appealing content frequently and they are engaging in conversation with their users (Burgert & Nann, 2014).

## **VI. Methodology**

For the purpose of this research, a stratified sampling technique was used for sampling university libraries for a proper reflection of all the categories of ownership of all the institutions. The stratification is a single step, whereby the institutions were stratified based on whether they are federal, state or privately owned university. The National University commission site was searched for all the accredited universities in Nigeria as at 15th of September, 2015.

A total of 128 accredited universities in Nigeria were used for this work. The distribution for the universities are as follows: federal owned universities are 40, state

owned universities are 40 while private owned universities are 51 (with the exception of nine newly accredited universities in 2015). 20% of the total population was sampled using stratified and probability random sampling. After the institutions have been stratified based on ownership, probability random sampling was used to get the 20% population. Each of the strata provides 8 federal owned universities, 8 state owned universities and 10 privately owned universities; making a total of 26 universities.

The web sites of the university library of each of these institutions were searched for on the internet by their name and/or from their university web site to assess the library site or page for solutions to the objectives of the research. Each academic library web site sampled was thoroughly searched on the first page to determine the answers to the objectives of the research and in some cases where necessary a further step was taken to search a page or two into the website. The results are listed in Table I.

TABLE I  
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Institution Library (Year)	SM Tools	No. of Posts (Within Six Months {April-Sept.})	Information literary	Advocacy/Marketing	Public Info/News	Academic Information	Library Infor/Notices	Insti.Info/Announcement	Link(s) To Lib Page	Linked To Institution Page	Aver. No. Of Post/Week	Average No. of Response to Post			Total No. of Likes/Followers
												Likes	Share	Comments	
Univeristy of Ibadan UI.	Facebook	28	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	1.1	1	1	1	1,862
	Twitter	8370	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	321.9	3	2	1	75
University of Jos UNIJOS.	Facebook	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	0.3	-	-	-	363
	Twitter	16	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	0.6	-	-	-	70
University of Lagos UNILAG.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
University of Nigeria Nsukka UNN.	Facebook	20	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	0.8	1	-	-	830
	Twitter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	24
NnamdiAzikiwe University NAU	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Univeristy of Abuja UA.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal University of Petroleum Resources, FUPR.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natiaonal Open University of Nigeria NOUN.	Facebook	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	107
Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti ESU.	Facebook	2	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	0.1	1	0	0	1,140
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology LAUTECH.	Facebook	1	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	0.0	1	0	0	142
Benue State University BSU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kogi State University KSU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gombe State University GSU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kano State University of Science. & Tech. KSUST.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adekunle Ajasin University AAUA.	Facebook	52	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	2.0	1	0	0	369
Delta State University DSU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
American University of Nigeria AUN.	Twitter	2	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	0.1	-	-	-	28
	Youtube	2	-	-	-	-	Yes	No	No	No	0.1	-	-	-	148
Babcock University BU.	Facebook	9	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	0.3	-	-	-	130
Bowen University Iwo, BUI.	Facebook	12	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	0.5	1	1	-	474
Crawford University Igbesa CUI.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pan-Atlantic University, PAU	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salem University, SU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Renaissance University, RU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oduduwa University, OU.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Igbinedion University Okada IUO.	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Covenant University, CU.	Facebook	33	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	1.3	1	1	1	400
	Twitter	33	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	1.3	1	1	1	117

## VII. Analysis of Results

From the analysis and data generated the following are the result of the various objectives for the purpose of the work.

**Availability of SM Platforms/Account:** out of eight (8) federal universities libraries sampled, four (4) which is 50% of them had SM account. Among the eight (8) state University libraries, three (3) which is 37.5% of them had SM account. For the ten (10) private university library, four (4) which is 40% of them had SM account. Overall, it shows that out of 28 sampled Nigerian university libraries, 11 which is 39.3% of them had SM account.

**Common SM Platforms/Accounts:** Facebook maintains the highest patronage with 10 university libraries (38.5%) having an account on it. Twitter was the next popular SM with 5 university libraries (19.2%) having account on it. Youtube is the next available SM with just one university library (3.8%) having account on it. Other SM platforms like Skype, Instagram, Pinterest, Deli-cio-us, Vimeo, blog, etc were absent from university libraries in Nigeria.

**Number of Posts:** A period of six months was selected for the purpose of the work and that is between April and September, 2015. UI twitter account maintains the highest post within the period with 8,370 posts, followed by AAUA Facebook with 52 posts and CU Facebook and Twitter each having 33 posts. From the lowest end, NOUN Lagos Facebook and UNN Twitter had no posts, while LAUTECH Facebook has 1 post and ESU had 2 posts.

**Average Number of Posts per Week:** average no of posts per week was calculated for the various university libraries, UI Twitter maintains the lead for weekly post with 321.9 post, followed by AAUA with 2 posts, CU Facebook and Twitter with 1.3 and UI Facebook with 1.1 post. Other institutions have average weekly posts less than 1 which ranges from 0 to 0.8.

**Type/Class of Information:** the content of the information were analysed and grouped as follows:

- **Information Literacy:** This is information that has to do with when information literacy programme will hold in the library, issues relating to training on library services and resources. Facebook account of UI, UNIJOS, UNN, ESU, AAUA, CU and CU twitter account has information on information literacy.
- **Advocacy/Marketing:** This is information that has to do with soliciting assistance support and/or promoting library on the account. Facebook and Twitter account of UI, UNIJOS and CU; while Facebook of UNN and AAUA have information on advocacy/marketing.
- **Public information/News:** This is majorly posting from newspapers or other public news that is international, national or state in nature. Facebook account of UI, UNIJOS, UNN, AAUA and CU; Twitter account of UI and CU have information on public information/news.

- **Academic Information:** this include postings on academic events like seminar, conferences, inaugural speeches, commencement lectures, etc. to keep the users abreast of probable academic programmes to attend. Facebook and Twitter of UNIJOS and CU, then Facebook of UNN and AAUA have information on this.
- **Institutional information/notices:** this include resumption dates, school calendar, sales of forms, scholarships, endowments, announcement from management or senate, emergencies or institutional breaking news, etc. Facebook and Twitter account of UNIJOS, AUN and CU; Facebook of UI, UNN, LAUTECH, AAUA, and Babcock have information on institutional information/notices.
- **Library information/notices:** this is information pertaining to library and library activities like orientation, new arrivals, development/changes within the library, holidays or changes in closing or opening time etc. Facebook and Twitter of UNIJOS and CU, then Facebook of UI, UNN, ESU, AAUA and Babcock have information on this.

**Links:** this has to do with whether users can from the SM account link up to the university, the university library home page or other resource based sites. There was no single library SM account that linked up with the university web site or other resource based sites. For the university library web site or page, UNIJOS Facebook and Twitter, Facebook of AAUA and CU are linked to the library web site.

**Level of Engagement:** this was determined by looking at the average number of likes, share and comment that follows the posts.

**Likes:** the range for the number of likes is between 0 and 3 with average of 0.5. Out of the 26 institutions, 9 of them have users clicking on the likes of their posts maximum of 3 times.

**Share:** the range for the number of shares is between 0 and 2 with a mean of 0.2. Out of the 26 institutions, 4 of them have users sharing their posts maximum of 2 times.

**Comment:** the range for the number of comments is between 0 and 1 with a mean of 0.2. Out of 26 institutions, 2 of them have users sharing their post once.

**The Total Number of Likes:** As at end of September, Facebook account of UI has 1,862 followed by ESU 1,140; UNN 830. On the lowest side, Twitter account of UNN has 24 (the account is new), AUN is 28, and UNIJOS is 70.

## VIII. Discussion

From the analysis of the result, it shows that Nigerian universities libraries sampled have not adequately embraced SM for library services. This is in contrast with the work of Ezeani and Iqwesi (2012) that libraries and librarians have embraced SM in Nigeria but support an earlier finding of Olajide and Oyeniran (2014) that libraries and librarians have not embraced SM in Nigeria. The availability of only three (3) SM platforms across all the sampled institutions shows that there is a low level of adoption of various platforms in library services among Nigerian university libraries. Available platforms are

more of chatting, gisting and sharing short textual information. Platforms that are graphic and multimedia in nature are missing. These are platforms that could be used for display of new arrivals, showcasing the photo gallery or archive of the library, real-time face to face communication, artefact and other 3-dimensional objects are missing. University libraries need to do more in this adopting these platforms. This finding support earlier finding of Olajide and Alao (2015) that higher educational institutions in Nigeria are not very present on the SM and the adopted SM are few in number.

The number of post recorded within the period and the average post per week is very small. University libraries in developed nations make sure that their SM account is active and alive with good number of posts per day so as to engage their users (Breeding, 2010). Nigerian university libraries need to do more by making their SM platform to be interactive, active and engaging. New information, issues and development must be posted as much as possible per day.

The more the no of likes, followers, sharing, comment, the higher the level of engagement with the users. The no for likes and followers are very low; indicating that university libraries SM account(s) is/are not popular among the users. No single institution has no of likes that is up to 10% of its total population. The issue of sharing and comment is a further worse reflection of the use of university libraries' SM accounts by users.

On the issue of engagement is that the users are not really relating with their university library SM platform(s). There is a need for users to interact with their library through the SM platform(s) so that university libraries can know what really interest or useful to the users. Also through their proper engagement, the university library will know what their feelings are and also how they will like to be served.

Small no of post is also indicative of low usage which means that university libraries are not doing enough in providing detailed and timely information to their users. The small no is also a reflection of not covering all the various aspect of information that library is supposed to provide. There was a low no of posts for virtually all the various types of information that is expected of the university libraries. Users can not see library as a one-spot shop where they can get adequate information on every matter. Even library related information is not well posted.

The linkages of the university libraries' SM accounts to university and library website or other resource based sites are near zero. It means that users cannot from the university libraries' SM accounts link up with the main university website or the library. This is not good enough as users may have reasons to find, explore or act on information gotten from the university libraries' SM accounts. University libraries' SM accounts should serve as an avenue to invite, connect, and attract users to both the university and the library.

The level of interaction with the university libraries' posts is also low. This could mean that university libraries are not carrying their users along in form, content, type platform or time of sending their information. University libraries should research into what are the information that can be of interest and usefulness to users per time.

The manner of framing the content may have to be considered looking at the large no of SM users with the no of engagement in the university libraries' accounts. The content creation and language may need to be looked at, issues of quality and area of interest and value of information to users must be considered in sending out information to users.

## IX. Recommendation

- Nigerian University libraries need to embrace SM more in providing services to their users, most of their users are on the SM; as this can serve as feedback to the library on services provided.
- Different types of platforms must be explored as there are so many platforms out there that the users are operating on. For various forms or type of information some SM platforms are better suited and these must be used.
- University libraries must look for way of boosting the engagement with the users through choosing library SM ambassadors, getting data from necessary quarter so as to be able to send friend requests to its users, following departmental/faculty based SM platform so as to be visible to the users.
- University libraries' users must also show more commitment and engagement with their university library SM account through activities such as likes, comment, share, etc.
- University libraries' SM accounts should provide links to sites such as university, university library, other resource based, etc.
- University libraries should see to orientating users on the available SM and the opportunities they stand to gain in interacting with the library through the SM platforms.
- There must be constant and regular posting on the account so as not to make it stale, dormant or disinteresting to users. Quality, timely, interesting and relevant information must be posted as much as possible. This will keep the users coming and increase engagement with the library.
- Information on diverse and different background or section that affects the users and the larger community must be posted regularly. This will help the library in achieving its information dissemination purpose in this age of SM.
- Content posted must be inviting, interesting, useful and relevant to the users. Generally available information may not really appeal to the users, so library must be ahead in information sourcing and disseminate such before it becomes stale or general information.

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