MARKETING OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN WEB BASED ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT :

Applications of Web based technologies in libraries will result in a meaningful and substantive change in libraries, its collection, services and methods of delivery of services. The library's services will change, focusing more on the facilitation of information transfer and information literacy rather than providing controlled access to it. In today's digital environment number of student are declining in the library, with the help of web libraries can attract the readers back to the library. By using blogs or micro blogs, librarians can go straight to the user with news and up to date information related to new services, materials or service developments. Social media is becoming more and more a must for libraries and many libraries are finding that when used properly it can be a great tool to save money and promote library services and collections. Libraries have to integrate several technologies in their services in order to attract the users. The paper discusses the application of web based tools in libraries. Web 2.0 technologies play very important role in marketing of library services. Social media provides more opportunity to reach your community, target specific audiences, and give them a chance to interact with your library. Social media marketing of libraries is the way of advertising library, its brand product and services via web 2.0 technologies. By using social media libraries can engage with their clienteles and enable them to participate in the production of library products. Libraries should develop their marketing plan for utilizing web based environment for news and service alerts and quick updates to library users. The basic aim of marketing is to know and understand our users in order that the library is able to satisfy those needs in an effective way.

Keywords: Web Based Service – Library; Web 2.0 tools; Social Media Marketing, Marketing –Library Services, Promotion – Library Products

INTRODUCTION :

Libraries are major information providers and facilitators. Moving from clay tablets to card catalogs and then to digital catalogs, libraries have always played a very important role in purveying information as a social

commodity. Libraries have always connected people with information; social media is beginning to play an important role in marketing information to library users and in branding the library as a community hub.

Marketing is frequently viewed as a set of strategies and techniques that belong to administrators outside of librarianship. Many librarians have their view that marketing products and services is not possible in the profession of librarianship. Philip Kotler is of the view that marketing is not limited to large corporations seeking profits only. It is equally applicable to non-profit organizations as well as colleges, universities, charitable institutions, libraries, information centers and service organizations of all kinds. The basic aim of marketing is to know and understand our users in order that the library is able to satisfy those needs in an effective way.

Technological advancement offers great opportunities for libraries to reach out to customers far beyond the traditional boundaries of the physical building. Of more recent development is the coming of the Library 2.0 phenomenon, in which libraries are deploying Web 2.0 tools in enhancing the delivery of their services.

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, the father of library and information science, formulated the five famous laws of library and information science. The fifth law- "*Library is a growing organism*" is now being challenged by the tremendous progress of technology and its speedy application in all fields, especially in the field of library and information science.

In a Web 2.0 environment it is possible to put a document up onto the web and, using a web based word processor, all your colleagues can make changes to it (which can be seen and rolled back if necessary) there and then. So, not only is the actual document itself shared, but the application (the word processor) is shared on the web as well. It has evolved into a dynamic, interactive and collaborative platform that

facilitates exchange of knowledge and information amongst its users. Sharing of ideas, communities, groups and pages are set up to invite like-minded people to join in. Ideas and opinions are shared with a global perspective, which otherwise would not have been possible.

In today's digital environment number of student are declining in the library, with the help of web 2.0 tools libraries can attract the readers back to the library. A strong web presence, including representation on social media sites, improves awareness of library services and contributes to a progressive and modern image, which may in turn lead to increased physical visits.

According to futurist Alvin Toffler, "*The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.*"

Why use web 2.0? - Libraries and Librarians all over the world are using web based environment to promote library services, share information, and engage with users and network with colleagues, on a global scale. There are number of different types of web 2.0 applications including wikis, blogs, social networking, folksonomies, podcasting & content hosting services. Many of the most popular websites are Web 2.0 sites such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Face book, MySpace, Flickr.

A presence on social media websites can provide cost effective marketing opportunities and invaluable public relation for your library service.

Essentially promotion is the means of informing your users what you do and what you can do. The benefits for those who promote their library services include: increased usage, increased value in the organization, education of users and changed perceptions.

Limitations of study – Study is limited to marketing of library services only through web based environment or via library website/homepage.

Why of Marketing: For the libraries and information centre, marketing of product and services are needed for the following reasons:

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a) Maximum Use of Library Resources: Marketing provides an opportunity to use of library resources in a maximum way.

b) Justifiable Extended Services: Due to the limited budget in all libraries irrespective of size and region, libraries are unable to provide effective library services to the community. Marketing is the only way to extend the library services to satisfy users' need, without any cost.

c) For Self Survival: Libraries are facing increasing threat from the emerging information technology, necessitate the use of the marketing techniques in libraries to survive itself in this competitive world.

What is Marketing? : Possible product and services for a library for marketing are:

a) Print Media: Books, Journals, Bibliographies, and Directories etc.

b) Electronic Information Product and Services: CD/DVDs etc.

c) Online Information Product and Services: Online journal, networking products etc.

d) Other Services: Reprographic services.

e) Products: In the development of the product, its periodicity, content aspect, coverage/ scope, pricing, and promoting, manpower requirement, technology utilization should be consider. The product should be on demand criteria.

f) CAS/ SDI Services: The library services can also be marketed through CAS/SDI services via email alerts, SMS etc.

SWOT Analysis of Library: A continuous built in evaluation procedure should be followed to assess the capabilities and weakness of the product/service, distribution channel etc. The evaluation should be based on customer satisfaction of the services/ products etc.

The SWOT Analysis is often used in organization to highlight and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is particularly helpful in identifying areas for development. Strengths are characteristics of the library that give it an advantage on others; Weaknesses are

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characteristics that place the library at a disadvantage relative to others; Opportunities are external chances to improve performance in the environment; and Threats are external elements in the environment that could cause problems for the library.

Application of SMS in libraries-SMS text messages can be sent to the customers (users) in order to remind them of the overdue books and when they are due.

The SMS facility can be used as a medium for the communication of reference queries in libraries. It is a form of virtual reference service. The text messaging technology can be used for referral services, to guide the users to the source of information

Marketing of Library Services using web 2.0 tools-

Web 2.0 has created new ways of working, including opening up new opportunities in learning and teaching that have not been possible on a large scale before. With Web 2.0 data sharing the web also becomes a platform for social software that enables groups of users to socialize, collaborate, and work with each other.

Library Website provides **virtual library tour** to the physical facilities including services, infrastructure and collection available in the library. The library maps, floor plans, library departments, photographic views are also used for the tour.

Ask-a-Librarian services have a web based question submission form or an e mail address or both. Users are invited to submit their queries by using web forms or through e mail. Once a query is read by a service it is assigned to an individual expert for answering. An expert responds to the query with factual information.

The **web based user education** provides a high degree of interactivity and flexibility to the users. The library websites can use web based user education for imparting training to users in teaching the basic library skills.\

It is imperative that E-resources must be utilized very effectively in university/college teaching for enhancing the traditional forms of teaching and administration. Students are now required to find web access to the lecture notes and selected digital resources in support of their study, they have personalized web environments in which they can join discussion forums with their class or group, and this new kind of access gives them much greater flexibility of study A great way to market the library is to let everyone know about all of the events in the library. Create descriptive hash tags (#libraryevent!) that can be used on sites such as Twitter and Face book and encourage people to attend and live blog or tweet. Encourage people to take photos and post them to your Face book page, share them on Google+, etc. Follow the complete event lifecycle by blogging it yourself on your library blog, tweet about it before, during, and after it takes place, put photos on Face book, etc.

FAQs Frequently Asked Questions are listed questions and answers, all supposed to be commonly asked in some context, and pertaining to a particular topic say library rules & regulations, timings, fine charges etc. http://mdcollegelibrary.in/LibraryFAQ.aspx

Web-OPAC - An internet enabled OPAC is called Web OPAC, Many Academic Libraries are having Web OPAC to check the library catalogue online

Online Feedback- An online feedback is a web-based version of a traditional feedback and suggestions. It is a cost-effective and, generally, unbiased way to collect opinions, interests, views, preferences, and factual information about a large number and wide variety of young students. Online feedbacks provide a dynamic, affordable, and easy way to find out what libraries should be doing to better serve this age group. They are a great way to reach a large number of readers at once. They are also an excellent tool for attracting users to the library website. http://mdcollegelibrary.in/LibraryBulletin/OnlineFeedback.aspx

A blog can be created by Library professionals to give up to date information to users. http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/# & www.mdcollegelibrary.blogspot.com

Library can put up video on **You tube** to show how to access E resources in the library. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWjwe4EBnlM . User orientation programme especially on e-resources is needed for maximum and optimum utilization of electronic information resources.

You tube can be used as publishing tool for marketing of library and library products. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6SSJsQloGg (University of Wisconsin Library at UW-Stout)

Twitter - Libraries can create Twitter account and keep users informed about all the events, activities organized in the organization. https://twitter.com/iitbombay (IIT, Bombay)

Role of Librarians – Librarians do more than connect people to raw information: they use their expertise to help users make sense of information. Libraries are great users of internet mailing lists, e.g. ILOSC (Indian Librarians Online Study Circle), LIS Leadership Forum, younglibrarianassociation, etc. Information push and pull technologies have given librarian an opportunity to automate the required information gathering and dissemination to the users. Librarian sends e mail alerts, to faculty for new arrivals in the library.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

(*Kulkarni, Ghosekar and Katkar* 2010)   In their article highlights various blogs available today's scenario for wide spread of information to cope up with the ever changing information need of stakeholders in the digital era. This paper posits how web 2.0 is impacting on library to transform libraries to library 2.0 with the use of blogs. Blog can be used as library information publicity and feedback tool.

(*Maness*, 2006) The paper applies the theory and definition to the practice of librarianship, specifically addressing how Web 2.0

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technologies such as synchronous messaging and streaming media, blogs, wikis, social networks, tagging, RSS feeds, and mashups might intimate changes in how libraries provide access to their collections and user support for that access.

Library of Congress is also utilizing social media for marketing its services and to interact with its online users. Library uses Blogging, Flickr, YouTube, Social Networking, iTunes and Twitter for its different services (*Braziel*, 2009).

The content of Library Blog has to be highly relevant, if it has to hold the attention of the users. Promoting content relevant to the immediate needs of target group, timings for publication of alert services is highly desirable. (*Bandi, Malladad, & Kanamadi*, 2011)

Blogs can be considered a very useful and good source of information to find information about the trends and debates in specific field. Specialization is a best way to optimize the potential use of blogs if they are provided through non-conventional library services and information delivery. (*Natarajan*, 2007)

The literature reveals that the use of web based technologies in the libraries is increasing in recent years. These tools may be used by the libraries for personalizing outreach services. The application of these tools may help libraries to offer their resources and services to the users in a proactive manner.

Recommendations-

- Allocate fund for Library website development. Library should have dynamic website, which reflects the mirror of the library.

- Technology knowledge is must for the librarian for adding innovative services in the library.

- Continuous professional development is also required.

- Develop some standard for using web 2.0 technologies incorporating in library home page.

- Even though Library professionals have shown a positive attitude towards the fair use of web technology they need extensive and appropriate training to make use of these tools through library page.

- It is recommended that libraries should provide their patrons with tools for accessing social media by developing social media page on library web site.

- Face book is much popular among teens; it is recommended that libraries should develop their Face book page on their web sites. It would keep the library fresh in teen's minds.

- SWOT analysis of library should be conducted on regular basis that helps to improve the library visibility in web environment.

CONCLUSION :

Libraries can become key players in the process of economic restructuring & development of the nation. In the technology driven knowledge economy, academic librarians and his team has a very important role to play as they have to satisfy the critical multidimensional information needs of their users. The use of Web 2.0 tools and applications will constitute a meaningful and substantive change in the history of libraries. The library collection will become more interactive and fully accessible. We need to become web 2.0 savvy ourselves, using new tools where appropriate, to promote library services. The Library should start short term course on use of web based technology for the students and the faculty members. To survive and sustain in the present environment, one has to have combination of generic, traditional and web related skills like, digital archiving, content development, developing metadata, electronic database searches, network consortia access etc. Open access for global information from a remote place is present day's necessity. The current technology not only empowers users with wider choices for seeking information but also necessitates them to possess technical skills to access information in electronic media. The two-way communication afforded by social media

will go a long way toward creating dynamic libraries that are constantly evolving in tandem with their users' changing needs and expectations. Social media have the potential for information users and information providers to achieve a win-win relationship. Librarians can play a significant role in ensuring that their users get the latest information as quickly as possible. In order to grow latest trend in libraries, librarians should be trained and educated regarding use of latest technology for marketing library resources and services and all the problems that hinder in online environment in libraries should be resolved. Promotion and marketing of the library is important and there is a need for libraries to enhance their organization with users' need.

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