SOCIAL NETWORKING: A GOOD PLATFORM FOR LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

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Abstract:

'Social Networking' refers to a range of web-enabled, it enabled software programs that allow users to interact and work collaboratively with other users. It includes ability to browse, search, invite friends to connect and interact, share film reviews, comments, blog entries, favorites, discussions, events, videos, ratings, music, classified ads, tag and classified information and more. A social network allows individual to join and create a personal profile, then formality connect with other users of the system as social friend. This paper is mainly discusses about the social network, social networking, definition of social networking, its various important features, benefits and how social networking helps in libraries and librarians for doing various activities like information exchange, resource sharing, etc. These days everybody is using these various social networking. It can help to provide everyone up-to-date information at one platform related to their fields. As we know that libraries and librarians are the biggest information exchanging platforms then social networking is too much beneficial for the users and librarians.

Keywords: Web 2.0, Social networks, Social media, LIS Professionals & Social Networks.

Social Network:

Social network is a broad term used to denote the blogs, user created videos and wikis. A social networking is an online service, platform or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social network or social relations among people who share interests and activities. Social networking often involves grouping specific individuals or organizations together. Social network provides a quick, low tech method to generate, maintain web based subject guides and act as communication tools to enable social interaction among LIS Professionals. Most Social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet. They interact, share and exchange resources by social networks. It promotes free flow of information and sharing of resources beyond boundaries.

Introduction:

Social Networking allows an individual to create a profile for themselves on the service and share that profile with other users with similar interests to create a social network. Users can choose to have public profiles which can be viewed by anyone or private profiles which can only be viewed by people that the users allow. Users can usually post photographs, music and videos on their site.

A Social Network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. Social networks are built upon a hypothesis that there exists a determinable networking structure of how people know each other. Social networking could enable librarians and patrons not only to interact, but to share and change resources dynamically in an

electronic medium. Users can create accounts with the library network, see what other users have in common to their information needs, recommend resources to one another, and the network recommends resources to users, based on similar profiles, demographics, previously-accessed sources, and a host of data that users provide. A social network thus can be formalized into a net structure comprising nodes and edges. Nodes represent individuals or organizations. Edges connecting nodes are called ties, which represent the relationships between the individuals and organizations. Myspace and Facebook are two popular social networking sites launched during 2003 and 2004 respectively. Myspace allow organizations to create their own profiles, pages and can be used by libraries. But Facebook allows individual librarians to create profiles.

Social Networking Sites:

People use social networking sites for communication personally as well as professionally to contact with others. Social networking site functions like an online community of internet users. Social networking sites like Face book provides new venues for young Library Information System (LIS) Professionals to express themselves and to interact with one another. It provides an unprecedented platform for them to dynamically farm, collaborative groups and creates, publish, exchange, share and cooperate any type of information. It makes use of web sites and LIS Professionals are using Social Networking Sites closely followed by creating awareness, socializing, making friends and new arrival display is predominantly dominated by Social Networking Sites closely followed by topic discussion and metadata linking.

Definition of Social Networking:

According to Computing Dictionary, The development of social and professional contacts; the sharing of information and services among people with a common interest. The use of Web sites or other online technologies to communicate with people and share information, resources, etc. *(http://dictionary.reference.com/)*

Social Networking includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information, opinions and experiences. It facilitates conversations and interactions between individuals, groups of people and virtual communities. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia *(Ayiah, 2011).*

Social Networking as a Community in which individuals are somehow connected through friendship, values, working relationships, idea and so on (*Powell, 2009).*

Features of Social Networking Services:

Social networks are very good platform for all the libraries and information centres. The primary function of any library is to acquire, store and disseminate the information, in the same way Social Networking services also explores the information variously. Social Networking in the field of information landscape can be great contributor in to the field of information poor society. It has several unique features that can serve the user community where availability of resource is a great challenge to library field. Library should experiment and come forward to accept this new budding technology. It has some major features like:

➢ Social collaboration,
➢ Easy surfing,
➢ More participation,
➢ Private messaging can be easily possible by communicating thousands networks,
➢ Discussion forums,
➢ Events management,
➢ Blogging and commenting,

➢ Media uploading,
➢ Multimedia enabled,

Interactive and collaborative learning are some of the important features that you can see in social networking.

Benefits of Social Network Sites (SNS):

We use people to find content, but we also use content to find people. If they are understood better relationships and knowledge flows can be measured, monitored, and evaluated, perhaps (for instance) to enhance organizational performance. The results of a social network analysis might be used to:

❖ Identify the individuals, teams, and units who play central roles.
❖ Discern information breakdowns7, bottlenecks8, structural holes, as well as isolated individuals, teams, and units.
❖ Make out opportunities to accelerate knowledge flows across functional and organizational boundaries.
❖ Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of existing, formal communication channels.
❖ Raise awareness of and reflection on the importance of informal networks and ways to enhance their organizational performance.
❖ Leverage peer support.
❖ Improve innovation and learning.
❖ Refine Strategies.

Since a social network perspective is, inherently, a multi-actor perspective, social network analysis can also offset the limitations of logic models (results frameworks). Information Technologies provide useful platforms to enhance collaboration and networking between educators and practioners. Current trends in the profession, for example, standardization, technological progress, research and development among other issues. Development work, for one, is more often than not about social relationships. Hence, the social network representation of a development assistance project or program would enable attention to be quickly focused (to whatever level of complexity is required) on who is influencing whom (both directly and indirectly). (Outcome mapping is another method that attempts to shifts the focus from changes in state, viz., reduced poverty, to changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities.)

Social Networking in Libraries:

Social networking websites can be used as to promote library services its activities, Recent Changes, etc. The social networking tools that can be practiced by the library for the aforementioned purposes are:

MySpace: MySpace (http://www.myspace.com) and Facebook (http://www.facebook.com) are extremely popular social networking sites which primarily have a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources.

Facebook: Another social media site frequented by students, Facebook is librarian friendly. Group communication among patrons can be possible in web 2.0.

Ning: Librarian can use this tool to get connected with students, library associations, and more. You can also use it to share information with many people at a time.

Blog: By creating a blog, you'll be able to disseminate information to lots of people at one time. Whether you're updating students on new collections, or just conversing with library staff, blogs are a powerful tool, especially when combined with RSS.

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Meebo: Network and assist students on Meebo, no matter what IM client they use. Online chatting or virtual reference service in library can impacted by professionals to clients.

LinkedIn: This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. Whether that's you, faculty, authors, historians, or other sources, they can find them in your LinkedIn network.

Twitter: Use Twitter, a micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival, current content services of library.

Application of Social Networking Services in Libraries:

Social Networking Services for collaboration in libraries applies through various aspects which deals with collaborative partnerships, the partners in library collaboration and the types of work. By examining where and how librarians already collaborate, this analysis will provide a foundation for evaluating tools used in academic library collaboration. Ramsey (2008) detailed out the collective aspects of social networking services as below.

1. **Information Exchange-**
    Information exchange fall into small-scale collaborative activities, including exchange of informal ideas about concepts and technologies, and also formal categories of collaborative tasks engaged in by academic librarians.

2. **Resource Sharing-**
    The resource-sharing category of collaborations includes interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing arrangements, cooperative collection development efforts, and cooperative resource management programs.

3. **Sharing Services-**
    The sharing services category focuses primarily on public services functions such as reference and instruction. It includes efforts between librarians within individual institutions and externally, between librarians and vendors and with government entities.

4. **Work-Related Project Collaboration-**
    Work-related tasks include consortia partnerships. In this long-term groups seeking to establish priorities and standardize practices across member institutions in a particular consortium, as well as short-term groups focused on particular shared projects or concerns for particular functional areas. Aside from consortia, work-related project   collaboration also appears as participation on committees from local to international levels and as work with donors and friends of the library groups.

5. **Resource Description and Standards of Practice-**
    The final category of collaborative tasks, establishing rules for description and standards of practice, encompasses creating and refining classification rules and instituting broad standards of practice.

Social Networking Opportunities for Libraries:

Social networking is used in everywhere. These days' social networking websites are so much popular and useful tool for a social person. These social networks are a big platform to share their own thoughts, their own experience of work, and their problems. As like any person Library professionals are also using these websites for make them up-to dated in their field and gain knowledge from anywhere. These social networks have some good features such as the ability to create groups that share common interests or affiliations, upload or stream live videos and hold discussions in forums.

Another social network allows professionals to exchange information, opportunities and ideas. Below presents the example of the aims or purposes.

1. Provide news or information for users
2. Provide links to recommended Internet Resources
3. Book reviews, information about new books
4. Provide entertainment or amusement for users
5. Provide news or information for librarians
6. Book discussions
7. Provide news or information for trustees
8. Provide research tips
9. Communication among librarians (in a library system)

Conclusion:

Information has seen transitions in communication since its origin. It moved from verbal communication to print media, followed by electronic media and finally to digital era embedding digital conversations using internet generated services. Participation and technology to handle social, cultural and educational activities has become the mainstream for communication and information sharing. Particularly social networking sites with Web 2.0 based participatory technological services have formed a class of interactive learning. Social networking can be referred to as a web platform where people from different cultural settings can connect and interact with each other. Social networking could enable librarians and patrons not only to interact, but to share and change resources dynamically in an electronic medium. Users can create accounts with the library network, see what other users have in common to their information needs, recommend resources to one another, and the network recommends resources to users, based on similar profiles, demographics, previously-accessed sources, and a host of data that users provide. A social network thus can be formalized into a net structure comprising nodes and edges.

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