

Web 2.0 and Marketing of Library Services in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Technological advancement has introduced extraordinary changes in every occupation as well as librarianship. A library must create new thoughts and should react to development within community in order to feed academic development. Purpose of this study is to explore the current state of affairs of library professionals regarding use of Web 2.0 tools in promotion and marketing of library services in Pakistan. Survey method was used to conduct this study and data was collected from librarians of 41 public and private sector universities using structured questionnaire. Findings reveal that major trends of library marketing are in transitional phase from traditional to digital.

Keywords: library marketing, marketing 2.0, web 2.0 marketing, social media marketing

INTRODUCTION

A famous author of the book *THE Library Marketing Toolkit*¹, Ned Potter stated in an interview that, “*there are only really a handful of libraries you can point to and say ‘yep, their marketing is good enough’*” (E. Massis, 2014). Services that are not marketed properly they do not get recognition. A product is anything that can be marketed to fulfill the needs of users and in libraries there is a wide combination of services, objects and projects that constitute the product of library (Madhusudhan, 2008).

Libraries are the hub of information providers since the ancient age to the current age. Libraries are playing their constructive role in the development of society. Now, libraries have entered into a new modern era and speed up his services through different channels and mediums. Libraries are transmitting, disseminating, and promoting their services through different modes like, internet, web 2.0 tools (Wikis, SNSs RSS, blogs etc).

Academic libraries address the unique needs of library users who are considered part of an academic institution, including needs of students, researchers, teachers and other staff members. Despite this, academic libraries are facing challenges of increasing costs and decreasing budgets due to technological advancements and high demands of users. To make image alive in the minds of users, many academic libraries use marketing strategies to publicize their programs, events and services. According to Gupta & Webber (2006),

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marketing is important for the better impression of library, achievement of rationality, make user centered instead of system centered libraries, increase the use of resources and publicize the positive image of library among its clients.

“Marketing is planning and managing the organization’s exchange relations with its clientele. It consists of studying the target market’s needs, designing appropriate products and services, and using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and serve the market” (Jestin & Parameswari, 2005).

According to Aldhaheeri & Bach (2013), ICT Data and Statistics Division of the International Telecommunications Union identified that there are 2.8 Billion users almost 40% of the whole world population is using internet now a days. New developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have introduced changes in every field of life as well as in librarianship. With the emergence and widely use of the web 2.0 in current scenario, the traditional function of academic library as physical research center is under danger. In order to survive in current scenario it has become essential for librarians to recognize their customer needs and make a good use of web 2.0 technologies in their marketing practices. The combination of web 2.0 technologies and marketing practice would result as marketing 2.0. Marketing 2.0 defined as the usage of web based technologies that provide opening interactive and collaborative communication channels between customers and organizations.

Pew Research Center published a report entitled “How Americans Value, Public Libraries in their Communities”, indicated that “95% of respondents agree that the material and resources available at public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed”. The results of report screamed and indicated a tremendous support for libraries in terms of marketing 2.0 practices (Zickuhr, Rainie, Purcell, & Duggan, 2013). Proper utilization of web based technologies in marketing practices such an example would benefit to reach a maximum audience and lift the library’s image immensely. Marketing of services through web 2.0 tools, libraries can publicize their products, brands and image according to users’ needs and requirements. Moving between traditional and marketing 2.0 is occurring through the numerous digital tools i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, Tumbler, podcasts, vodcasts and many more.

We have attempted to examine the current status of this ongoing trend in Pakistani libraries keeping in view the circumstances of technological, social, and professional barriers for library professionals in Pakistan to keep pace with the outer world. Current state of literature on library marketing in Web 2.0 context is also very limited in the country; hence, we were tempted to present the current state of affairs in order to make a way forward for library professionals in developing countries to emulate with the technological race of the world.

RELATED LITERATURE

While searching for peer-reviewed literature on Library Marketing in the context of Web 2.0, we have observed a considerable increase of research studies conducted from 2007 onward around the globe. A lot of research has focused on utilization of social networking sites and web 2.0 tools in marketing and promotion of library services in different perspectives such as best practices, tools, techniques, methods, perceptions and attitudes of library professionals, etc. Similarly, transition between traditional and digital strategies have been worked out by Massis (2014).

There are lots of library and information resources and products that can be marketed to library's clients. Adewale, Omolola, & Ladipo Sunday, (2012) dialated upon that libraries must market their services like SDI, CAS, document delivery services, abstracting and indexing services, photocopying services, record management and rental services. Other more valuable services such as refereal services, video *coverage*, emailing, compilation of subject based bibiographies, translation services, audio/visual services etc., are also important to satisfying the users/clients (Amuda, 2014). Kane (2011) also sugested reference services, marketing, guidelines, online book forums, acquisition implication and online catalog services can be provided to library patrons using SNS. Baro, Joyce Ebiagbe, & Zaccheaus Godfrey (2013) suggested that blogs, social networking sites, instant messaging are helpful in the promotion of products. RSS, social networking sites are advocated by Walia and Gupta (2012); video sharing, online discussion, blogging are supported by Khan & Bhatti (2012); flicker, blogs, podcast, twitter and online videos are also being used but Facebook is mostly used tool in American libraries. However, it is well established among many researchers (Jacobson, 2011; Rogers, 2009; Xia, 2009) that social media sites have distinct features for library marketing and that Facebook is mostly used in promotion and marketing of library services. Similarly, Flickr is also an important tool for the marketing (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012). Instant messaging is such a tool through users can interact with librarians to get information (Morris & Allen, 2008). Blogs can be used in academic libraries for catalog searching, books, internal communication and subject guides as well (King & Porter, 2007).

However, the important point here is that how library professionals percieve to develop their expertise in using these tools efficiently and get benefited effectively. Rehman and Shafique (2011) investigated that the use of web 2.0 tools in information professionals is increasing day by day but library professionals are not well aware of it. Arif and Mahmood (2012) previously revealed in their study that instant messaging was mostly used tool then comes blogs, wikis and RSS in Pakistan. Chua & Goh(2010) explored that RSS, messaging services, and blogs were most common web 2.0 tools used in the libraries of Europe, Asia and North America. Tripathi & Kumar (2010) examined the status of websites of 277 major university libraries in Australia, Canada, UK and USA. The results revealed that IM, blogs and RSS, are most popular in academic libraries in these countries. Mahmood and Richardson (2011) surveyed the adoption of web 2.0 tools in academic libraries. The researchers concluded that Wikis, blogs, RSS, social networking sites and instant messaging were the most commonly used web 2.0 tools.

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Many studies (Abidin, Kiran, & Abrizah, 2013; Anunobi & Ogbonna, 2012; Arif & Mahmood, 2012; Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012; Komolafe-Opadeji & Haliso, 2012; Maisiri, Mupaikwa, & Ngwenya, 2014) have highlighted the problems and hurdles confronted to library professionals in implementation or adoption of web 2.0 tools in developing countries such as lack of knowledge how to use these tools in Malaysian libraries unavailability of computers, lack of computer and internet facility in libraries of Pakistan lack of awareness of social media use, lack of trained staff, lack of government interest and involvement, copy right issues and bandwidth problems in Nigerian libraries lack of motivation, computer expertise, facilities and personality characteristics were found in the librarians regarding the use of web 2.0 tools.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research method was discovered to be the most helpful and suitable to collect data from the targeted population, therefore, we preferred survey research design for this study. Another factor justifying the survey research technique is that it is found to be the best source for self-reporting type data collection. The data for this study was gathered (by the third author during her MPhil research study on the theme of Social Media and Library Marketing) through a structured questionnaire—devised after an exhaustive literature review of almost 64 peer-reviewed research articles. However, the instrument was refined by considering the status of Pakistani libraries.

Population of this study consisted of library professionals of 41 public and private universities in Pakistan. The gathered data were revised and assessed quantitatively and tabulated for interpretation intelligibility, authenticity and accuracy of the data. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 20 was utilized for analysis.

FINDINGS

We have attempted to make in-depth analysis of the current status of using Web 2.0 tools for promotion and marketing of library services in Pakistan. Since this study deployed survey method on self-contained structured questionnaire, therefore, prior to initiate discussion on findings, the demographics of the studied population is given hereunder:

Demographic information of the respondents

Out of 100 respondents, 63 were male and 37 were female. Most of the respondents (i.e. 47 out of 100) were in between the age of 30 to 39, whereas, 30% of the respondents were in between 40-49 years of age and 16% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20-29. Remaining 7 respondents were above 50 years of age.

Regarding qualification, 53 respondents hold MLISc Degree, followed by 37 respondents, who had MPhil degree; 7 participants had Phd and only 3 had bachelor degree in library and information science. Similarly, table 1 (below) shows designation of the respondents along with professional experience in years.

Table 1: Designation and Professional Experience of the respondents

Gender	Count	Age	Count	Qualification	Count
Male	63	20-29	16	Bachelor Degree	3
Female	37	30-39	47	Master Degree	53
		40-49	30	MPhil Degree	37
		50+	7	Doctorate Degree	7
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

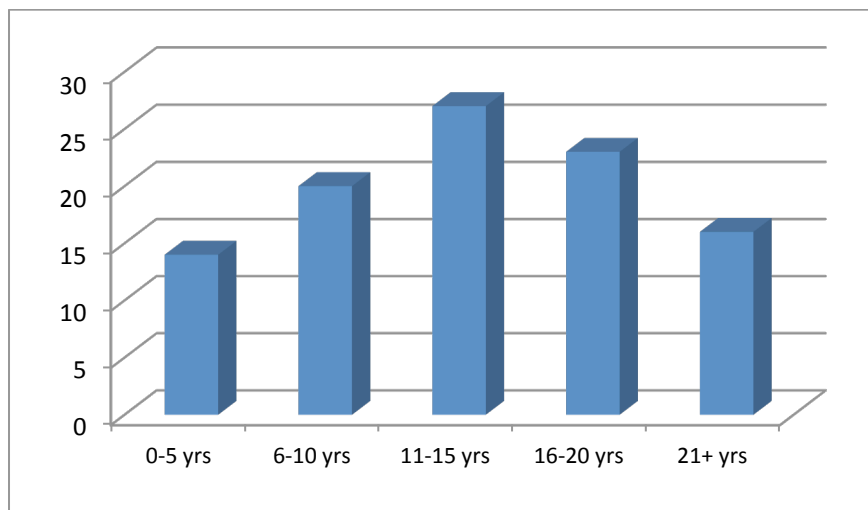


Figure 1: Working Experience of respondents in Years

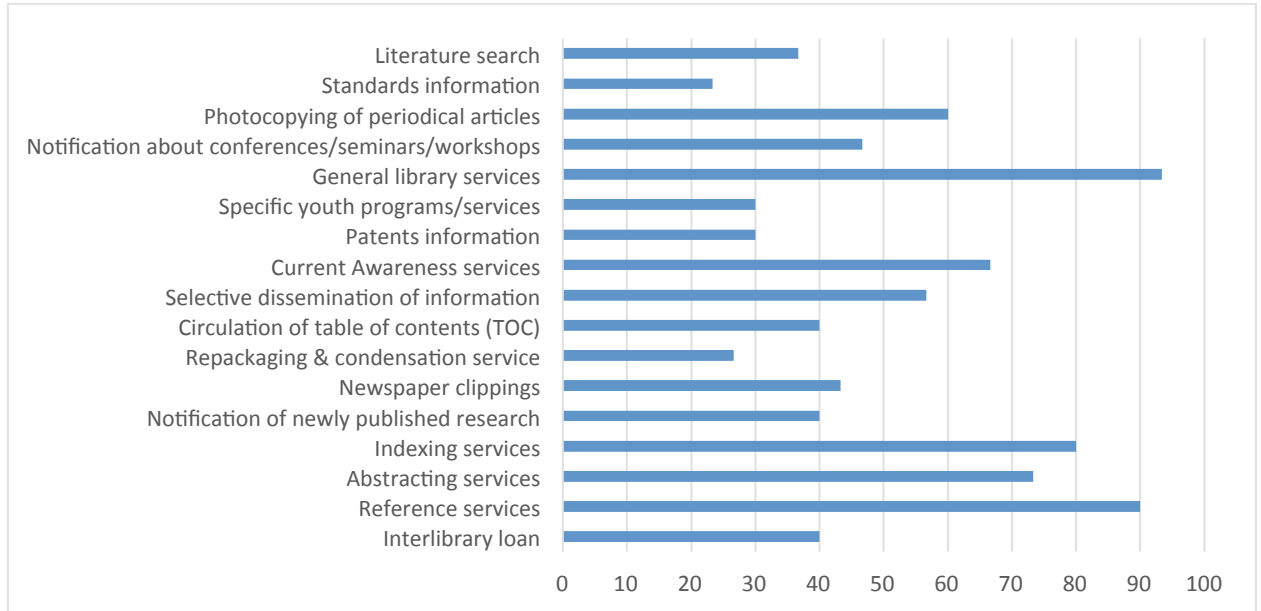
Marketing of Library Services

Majority of the respondents (i.e. 83 library professionals) declared that they are responsible for marketing programs for their respective libraries. Whereas, 16 responses were ‘no’ to this question. It is also found that 70% of the studies population are using web 2.0 tools for library marketing and promotion of library services in Pakistan. Further breakdown of which library services are provided to patron using social media applications are given in Figure 1 (below).

Data analysis show that library professionals are not familiar (with few exceptions) with providing different library services using social media applications. For example, only few services such as reference services, indexing services, current awareness service, and document delivery services are provided by library professionals using social media

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applications. Similarly, majority of the library professionals are not familiar with methods and techniques of providing other library services through social media applications.



The respondents were asked about the importance of marketing of library and information services in the context of web 2.0 tools. As shown in Figure 2 (below) majority of the respondents (i.e. 83%) considers Web 2.0 as an important tool for promotion and marketing of library services.

Using Web 2.0 Tools

To identify the usage frequency of Web 2.0 tools for marketing and promotion of library services, we have asked several questions from the respondents. However, summarizing the data, we came up with the picture presented in figure 3.

As shown in Figure 3, RSS Feeds, Podcasting, and Mashups are among Web 2.0 tools which are never used by library professionals for marketing library services in Pakistan. However, most frequently used Web 2.0 tools are Instant Messaging, Micro blogging, Social Cataloging, and Social Networking Sites.

Figure 2: Librarians who provide Library Services using Social Media Applications

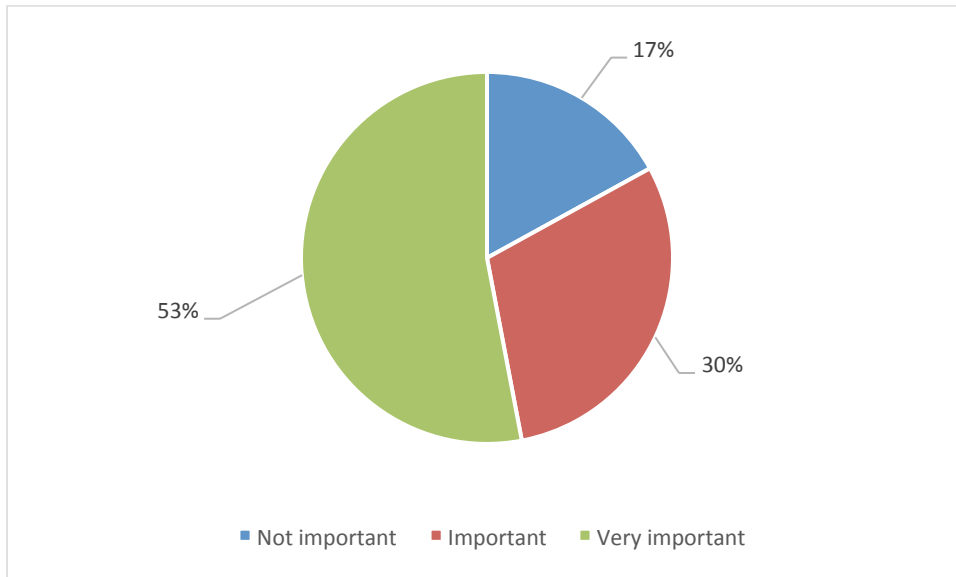


Figure 3: Attitude of considering Web 2.0 in Library Marketing

Comparing Traditional Marketing with Marketing 2.0

The world is moving from traditional to digital environment which is evident from many developments and research studies. Patrick (2013) compared Coca-Cola commercial on television channels and Youtube.com. He found that the same commercial on Youtube.com was more interactive and attractive than it was on television channel as reviewed by the customers. Moreover, research establishes that social media reaches nearly One in Four around the globe where majority of people trust online reviews (eMarketer, 2013).

Our data found that librarians are using traditional modes of library marketing such as on-site advertisement, newsletters and brochures, exhibitions and library guides in Pakistan. Therefore, we intended to find contemporary trend and aptitude towards using social media and traditional marketing methods for promoting library services. It is concluded that slightly more than half (i.e. 57%) of the library professionals are using Web 2.0 for promotion and marketing of library services in Pakistan. Whereas, slightly less than half (i.e. 43%) still prefer traditional methods of marketing for library services. This means that the trends of library marketing are in transitional phase from traditional to digital.

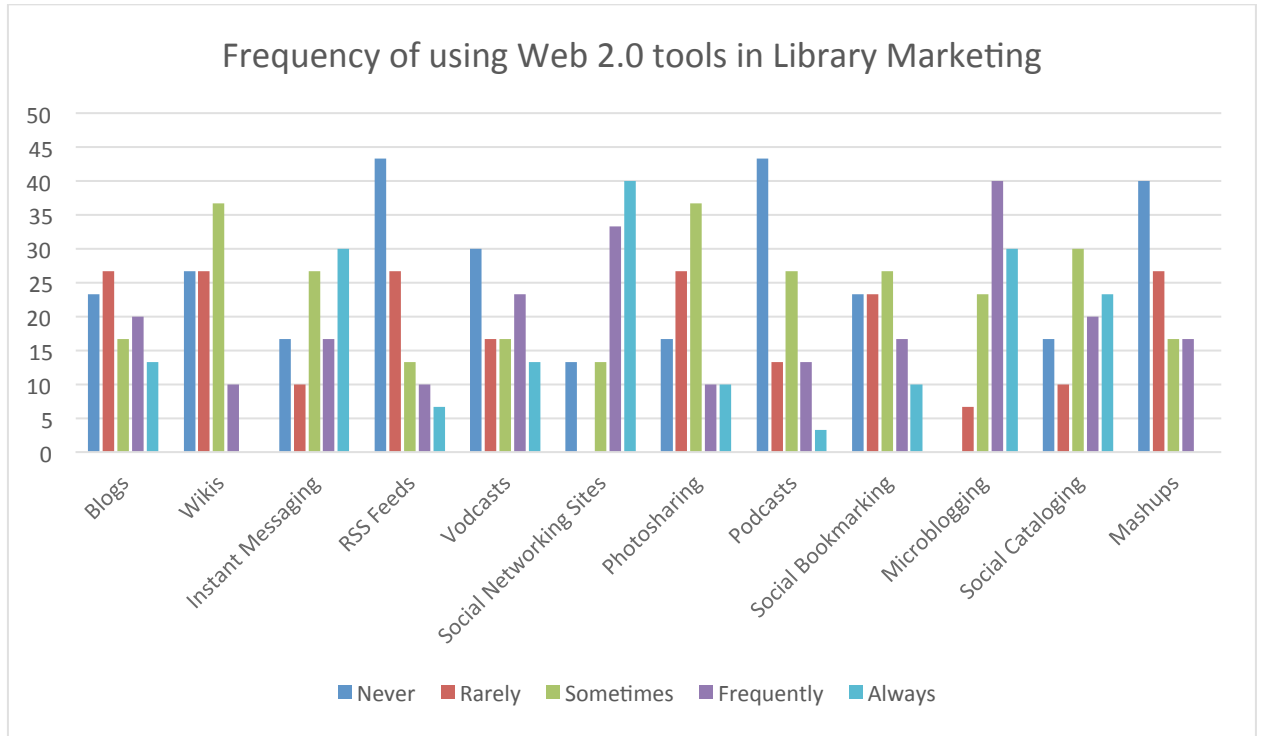


Figure 4: Frequency of using Web 2.0 tools for Library Marketing

CONCLUSION

Library and information science field in Pakistan is rapidly growing since last decade. This growth is resulted in strengthening research and development, establishing postgraduate courses, library automation and digitization trends, adoption of Web 2.0 by the library professionals, and increase in continuing professional development activities in the country. Library schools, associations, and professionals are firming up to enlightening the LIS profession in Pakistan. We have presented the current status of usage of Web 2.0 tools for promotion and marketing of library services in Pakistan. In do so, we have concluded that currently the trend is in developing phase and mostly library professionals are unaware of the power of Web 2.0, however, their attitude towards adoption of such advanced technology is positive and will contribute to a positive change in effective library service delivery in future.

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