Benefits and Challenges of Using Social Media for Teaching and learning By Njobvu, B. and Hamooya C.

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Abstract

Social media referred to as the networked tools that allow people to meet, interact and share ideas, artefacts and interests has proved to be a good tool for education. This paper aim at looking at the opportunities and challenges of using social media for teaching and learning. The desk top research method was used to gather research findings on the topic. Some of the opportunities discussed include flexibility, repeatability and convenience and accessibility. Challenges include lack of privacy, lack of genuine friendship, wastage of time and miscommunication. This research concludes that social media are a must for every lecturer, teacher or student. However, ways and means should be found to mitigate the challenges.

Key words: Social media, Networks,

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper will look at definitions of terms in the social media environment, as well as there benefits and challenges in providing or acquiring education. This is in the view that the education sector can no longer ignore the social media which is being utilised by the majority of the people.

**DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

According to Anderson (2009), the term social networking refers to the networked tools that allow people to meet, interact and share ideas, artefacts and interests with each other. Boyd and Ellison (2007) in defining social networking sites say that these are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Shirky (2008) captures the essence of social networking more succinctly by indicating that social networks facilitate the creation of groups and the exploration of new ways of gathering together and getting things done.

Some of the social media network services as listed by the European School Net include the following.

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| **Name** | **URL** | **Function** |
| Facebook | www.facebook.com | Registered users, can create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages and photos. Includes automatic notifications when users update theirprofile. |
| Google Plus | https://plus.google.com | Real-life sharing though the web including messages, video conferencing and photographs. |
| YouTube | www.youtube.com | A video-sharing website. |
| Twitter | www.twitter.com | A micro-blogging platform where users send 140 character messages to each other. |
| Linkedin | www.linkedin.com | A social network for business-related and professional networking. |
| Flickr | www.flickr.com | Primarily a photo sharing website. |
| Wordpress | www.wordpress.org | An open-source blogging platform. |
| Slideshare | www.slideshare.net | A presentation sharing website. |
| Wikipaedia | www.wikipedia.org | An online encyclopaedia that anyone can edit. |
| Del.icio.us | http://delicious.com | A social bookmarking website where you can share URLs with your contacts. |

Source: European School Net: SMILES project.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

According to the European School Net (2013), Social Media has six major characteristics. Social Media challenges traditional models such as the normal methods of teaching in a classroom by applying new methods. Social Media gives people audience which may be much more than the audience that one may have without the use of the social media. Further, the European School Net says that Social Media promote openness and transparency and removes hierarchy in dealing with issues. Social Media enable collaboration among lecturers and students not seen before.

**BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Flexibility**

Social Media presents an opportunity of flexibility in the process of teaching and learning. Social media supports a variety of styles of learning including e-learning. Social Blended approaches that combine face-to-face and online learning are preferable to an online pedagogy or face to face independently.

Face-to face classes are likely to enable high levels of emotional understanding, while the convenience and flexibility of online components can motivate students to complete educational tasks. Cheong (2002) posits that Social Networks contributes to the different perspectives of the students forums such as chat rooms that exist to provide opportunities to exchange views on topics which may be difficult to understand.

Many education theories confirm that human interaction is a vital element in the learning process. It should be noted that social networking provide participation through such virtual classrooms, chat rooms and meetings by video.

**Repeatability**

It should be realised that each person has their own speed of assimilating content. Social media therefore gives the user of information an opportunity to repeat listening or viewing the materials in question. The social networking has offered this way through their sites and gives the opportunity for lecturers and learners to retrieve the information at their own time and as many times as possible.

**Convenience and accessibility**

Cheong (2002) says that social networking is easy and quick in terms of facilitating accessibility, reviewing, updating, and editing learning material and such could be done anytime and anywhere. Further, Social media it allows for an option to select learning materials from large quantity available online which the lecturers and learners need. Social media also makes it easier to distribute course materials.

The social networks help to reduce stress and increase satisfaction among lectures as well as students. It allows each lecturer or student (slow or quick) to study at their own pace and speed (self-pacing). Furthermore, it is easy to join bulletin board discussion any time, or visit classmates and instructors remotely in chat room.

It can provide stronger understanding and increase retention on the subject, due to using many elements which exist under e-learning, e.g. multimedia, quizzes, interaction ... etc and the ability to retry training in order to understand.

The social networking allows access to courses available in their sites, allowing the learner to follow-up online at any time it deems appropriate, and overcome the limitations of space and time in the educational process. As a result, it helps resolve timetable conflicts.

For universities which over with crowded lecture. rooms, Social Media provide learning to take place beyond the walls to a classroom or lecture theatre.

**CHALLENGES OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKING IN EDUCATION**

There are many challenges facing the use of social networking in education such as privacy, time wastage and miscommunication technology literacy as well as availability of infrastructure.

**Privacy**

Dwyer, Hiltz & Passerin (2007) say that social-networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter are open for anyone who wants to participate. However, researchers have studied the relationship between privacy concerns and online behaviour. Studies have shown that users would express very strong concerns about privacy issues of their personal information, however they are less vigilant about safeguarding it. Although a lot of the information individuals give on social-networking sites is elective, users are progressively more comfortable with displaying a great deal of personal information online. Due to the availability of such personal information, one of the main concerns for users who register in these sites is privacy. Questions being asked on privacy include; Who has access to such information and what is it used for? Whose role is it- parent, student, educator and website developer to ensure an individual understands his right to privacy and exercises it accordingly? So, the privacy is one of the obstacles that has faced the use of social networking in education.

**Lack of genuine friendship**

Through social networking, people have a lot of friends but the quality and integrity of these friendships is not always true. On the other hand, data on these social-networking sites for a person is not always 100% honest and reliable, and they do not verify personal details (age, location, etc.) of their members. While sites provide an opportunity for individuals to present a positive and accurate self-image, there is an equal potential to abuse this openness. The quality of friendship affect the quality of information they would provide on the social networks. So, having many friends through social networking sites is likely to be more harmful than good. This will affect the use of social networking in education.

**Wastage of time**

 Zaidieh (2012) says that the study which was conducted by the site www.azureim.com showed the amount of time spent by individuals with each other online. The amount of time spent on accessing social networks has effect on health of individuals because spending a lot of time browsing these social networks can affect the way the genes operate within the human body, and weakens the immune and hormone levels, and function of arteries. He continues to say that it has an impact on mental health. Moreover, the use of social networking in the education can cause lack of motivation towards learning and can be boring sitting in front of computer for a long time, especially if the scientific material presented is free of audio and visual effects that will attract learner towards learning.

**Miscommunication**

Hameed, Badii & Cullen (2008) confirms that e-Learning does not afford the student with the same opportunities of explanation and clarification that occur as compared to face-to-face interaction. Students experience difficulties through social networking in expressing their point of views and ideas in writing, as many of them prefer to express their views verbally which is method they have used many years through their education, While e-education users need to acquire good writing skills to express their views and opinions freely. Face to face allows individuals to perceive physical clues like tone, inflection, body language, in an online environment, these are lacking.

Lack of technology Literacy

Although the young generation is well informed about the operations of social networking tools, the older generation often struggle to learn how to use such tools. This applies to both students and lecturers. Lack of technology literacy is a serious barrier to accessing educational and other information through the social networking tools.

Lack of availability of Infrastructure

Infrastructure is one of the necessities of accessing information on the social networks. One has to have a smart phone with Internet connectivity to function. This presents a big challenge in communities where the daily concern is about where to find the next meal. Lack of such infrastructure widens the digital divide between those who have and those who do not have.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that accessing educational information through social media has come to stay as it presents more merits than demerits. Lecturers, teachers and learners therefore should embrace it and find ways and means of overcoming the challenges. Governments in developing countries like Zambia should come up with strategies which will ensure that the digital divide is narrowed. Initiatives practiced in other countries such as a laptop for every student would go a long way in ensuring that the much needed educational information is accessed through the social media.

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**APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES TO ENHANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES**.

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**ABSTRACT**

Social media technologies have emerged as powerful tools through which numerous people are now using as effective platforms or venues of communication in everyday life. It may be argued that Facebook has more than 300 million active users, which is approximately one-third of Africa’s population. Twitter and Skype has a similar numbers of active users and sees more than 100 million users actively login on a daily basis.

With such exponential rates in the use of these technologies for sharing and disseminating information globally, social media platforms are increasingly being adopted and used by many academic libraries in interacting with faculties and university community (staff and students) as innovative ways of positively contributing to effective teaching and learning environments. Yet there are still a number of grey area questions that demand answers as this is still fairly new territory. It must be pointed out that academic libraries are increasingly using social media through the Internet to share information and resources such as providing information literacy programs, remote access to library informational resources and marketing its services to potential library users. Consequently, using social media, academic libraries are positively imparting lifelong skills on information seekers and enhancing their teaching and learning environment.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to discuss the application and corresponding implication of social media by academic libraries in developing world context to enhance teaching and learning in universities. In order to do this, the paper will review and analyse existing and emerging literatures on the application of social media in academic libraries from developing and developed countries. Doing this will help in identifying gaps in the use of social media in different geographical localities and understand how these technologies may enhance numerous library services. Additionally, the paper will identify the prominent challenges that may undermine the application of social media in academic libraries, especially in developing countries context such as Zambia. Additionally, the paper will recommend on how academic libraries may use social media to create holistic library services. Lastly, the paper will conclude by highlighting the general overview on the successful use of social media in library service delivery. The paper will be of benefit to librarians, educationists, researchers and decision makers locally, regionally and globally.

**KEY WORDS**

Social networking, Social media; Academic libraries and Internet-based services

**INTRODUCTION**

In a white paper entitled “Use of social media by the library”, Taylor and Francis (2014) argue that just a decade ago, social media was perceived by many as having little relevance for use in the professional life of librarians. It can be argued however, that in recent years there has been a sea change in attitudes towards social media. Social media is now widely being used by librarians to fulfil a variety of objectives such as communicating directly with users, marketing library services and ultimately enhancing teaching and learning. With its increased use in society, social media has been defined from different perspectives in emerging literature. For instance, Junco et al. (2011) defines social media as a collection of Internet websites, services and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation and sharing of information.

Social media technologies have become an increasingly familiar tool employed in academic libraries to market library services and in enhancing teaching and learning in university environments. Recent studies argue that social media technologies are widely being used by academic libraries to provide innovative services to its library users. A study in the more populous region of south western Ontario reviewed that of the 26 academic libraries examined in 2010 and 2011 respectively, a total of 26 libraries had at least one official social media tool and twitter was the most popular format, followed then by facebook. YouTube was the least widely used social media tool by academic libraries (Kim and Abbas, 2010). Additionally, Belden (2008) argues that there is increasing literature demonstrating how students are interacting and using social media technologies in their personal, civic informal and formal learning contexts.

Furthermore, Okoroma (2011) stresses that for a modern university to become competitive in the provision of education, manpower development, and research and improve the socio-economic development of any nation, it must equip itself with a robust and innovative library. Such a library becomes responsible in the provision of quality literature in support of the university core business activities of enhancing teaching, learning and research. It is the firm view of this paper that herein lies the potential of social media in enhancing library services.

Existing literature suggests that while there has been exponential growth in the use of social media among people to communicate and socialize, academic libraries especially in developing countries such as Zambia have lagged behind in adopting and using these tools to enhance their services. From the foregoing, it can be argued that the application of social media in service delivery is a mammoth task for librarians and other information professionals.

Therefore, this paper seeks to reveal current applications and demonstrate the wider adoption and up-take of social media in enhancing library services. It also aims at discussing the application of social media by academic libraries to enhance teaching and learning. The paper argues that while there is a drive for librarians to use social media technologies within the library setting, such platforms are still an evolving process or phenomenon with many librarians who are experimenting with what works and how it can benefit the library (Taylor and Francis, 2014).

In order to achieve the aforementioned, the paper begins by defining the concepts in the research paper. The key concept includes social media, social networking, internet-based services and academic libraries. It is the view of the author that defining and discussing aspects of social media will lead into a more meaningful discussion of the application of social media in academic libraries in enhancing teaching and learning. Then that will be followed by a discussion on the application of social media in academic libraries. There after the paper will discuss the challenges and recommend steps that may be taken to remedy the situation .

**DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS**

Social media is a growing phenomenon in expanding networked and connected information landscapes. There are, however, deluges of definitions available on social media in the literature. For instance, Junco et al. (2011) argue that social media denotes a collection of Internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation and sharing. They further point out that considered as part of Web 2.0 applications, social media tools range from networking platforms such as Facebook to video sharing sites such as YouTube. Each tool differs drastically in utility, interface, and application, but supports collaboration and sharing where “everybody and anybody can share anything anywhere anytime” (Joosten 2012:6)

Further, Kaplan and Haenlein (2009: 61) stress that social media represent a group of Internet-based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. They argue that social media allow for the creation and exchange of user generated content and capture the key terminology involved. Hence, for the purpose of this discussion, social media is defined as the digital social interaction between members of a community (library, in this case) for the purpose of the fulfilment of their needs, whether social, intellectual, entertainment, economic, spiritual or any other need as identified by the members within that community. Social media connections have become very important and promise tremendous potential for the library profession around the world including Zambia. It is essential to define some basic concepts, in an effort to enrich this discourse.

Suraweera et al (2011) posits that social networking denotes a process of relationship building among a group with a common interest of finding relevant information. It could be argued that social media is the platform upon which social networking takes place. In the Social Network Space people with common interests share information with each other via an array of social networking platforms created by users as they share, communicate, and generate content that constantly build the social web (Ezeani and Igwesi, 2012). Social media is evidently proving to be a viable tool for cooperation and sharing of knowledge in an open access platform. It is such characteristics that are making social networking rapidly developing into a new way of providing internet based library service through new emerging technologies, with emphasis on user-centric approach or two-way interaction and communication of information as everyone is seen as a teacher contributor and potential learner.

A number of scholars stress that with such emerging networking tools, social media platforms promises to facilitate an enabling atmosphere where information can now flow multi-dimensionally through library to users, library to library and user to user rather than the traditional one way stereotype form of informational flow moving from the library to users. Additionally, social media technologies are being seen as a constantly force expanding the world of participatory and collaborative scholarly communication and learning. There is also increasing evidence demonstrating that students are instantaneously interacting with social media technologies in their personal, civic, and informal learning contexts. The above argument is supported by Lawson (2007) who observes that in Eastern and Northern Ontario a number of academic libraries are increasingly using social media tools such as twitter and facebook to promote services and highlight resources to patrons thereby promoting teaching and learning among various users. Further, the Pew Research Centre’s Internet and American Life Project (PRCIALP) recently found that 67 percent of Internet users aged 18 to 29 use social media technologies such as Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Pinterest, or Instagram (Dugan and Brenner, 2012). This demographic age group also known as the digital natives are more likely than any other to use social media tools. With the recognition that this age group encompasses the majority of the college and/or university community of students, educators have been investigating the affordances of social media for teaching and learning.

Therefore, it is evident from the foregoing that libraries have always connected people with information. As social media technologies continue to play an important role in disseminating and marketing information, these technologies are increasingly being perceived by libraries as an added advantage in improving servive delivery to users and in branding the library as a community hub (Fernandez, 2009).

An academic library is a unit or department within a Higher Education institution (HEI) mandated to provide scholarly informational materials to support teaching and learning of its parent institution. Tise (2009) posits that academic libraries facilitate access to information thereby providing the means through which new knowledge is developed and made available to all. This is consistent with Okoroma (2011) who acknowledged that academic libraries are a unit of the university responsible for the provision, management and dissemination of information to the university community. Further, Curzon et al. (2009) explain that an academic library is a library that is attached to an HEI to serves two complementary purposes namely: supporting the school's curriculum and the research of the university faculty and students.

**APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

It is argued that besides the overall increase in the amount of literature in libraries on social media technologies in the information age, there is little evidence to suggest that such technologies are being fully applied in enhancing service delivery by libraries. Further (Sadeh, 2007) argues that the lack of evidence on how libraries and other information professionals especially in developing countries such as Zambia are utilising social media to improve service delivery. It is in this regard that the discussion of the application of social media in academic libraries is critical to highlight on the extent to which such libraries are utilising these technologies to enhance teaching and learning of host universities. Similarly, the discussion intends to point out the prominent contextual challenges that academic libraries face in utilising them in teaching and learning.

The phenomenon of employing social media technologies in academic libraries to improve service delivery and enhance teaching and learning environments is increasingly becoming evident in the modern era. Until recently, most studies on social media technologies have not fully engaged to establish in depth realities surrounding their use in libraries (Kim and Abbas, 2010). However, it must be pointed out that previous studies have clearly argued that academic libraries in divergent geographic localities have adopted and used social media based on their unique contextual characteristics (Linh, 2008; Chua and Goh, 2010).

Further, it can be argued that various social media technology packages are emerging as powerful information dissemination tools and offer immerse options for academic libraries to improve service delivery while promoting participatory atmosphere among library users. Additionally, as the core of the profession of librarianship is embedded in sharing information, librarians are in a unique position to implement and exploit the potential of social media technologies to their advantage. This is evident from the vast opportunities which social media technologies promise to provide and facilitate when used as tools by libraries for communicating and dissemination of information.

Social media offers an easier way for academic libraries to effectively engage with their existing and potential patrons. This is particularly evident by the massive use of social media technologies by most people in everyday activities in their civic, social and educational setup. It may be true to stress that young people are driving social technologies as they are heavily involved in using online platforms to exchange information and in performing their everyday activities. Tise (2009) argues that as libraries embrace and increase its use of social media technologies, it is likely to effectively provide information to most of its patrons who usually utilise these technologies and consequently enhance their teaching and learning experiences. Further, Tise stresses that by using social media technologies to disseminate information to its patrons, academic libraries ensure that they make available the needed library resources such as books and periodicals, films and videos, software and electronic databases, projectors, graphics equipment and cameras to the wider library user community and eventually positively impacting on the learning experience of the growing technology consuming modern students. Also (Belden, 2008) acknowledges that using social media in a library set-up would promote and ensure that libraries create responsive services in that it improves the maintenance of reserve materials, answering reference questions, providing bibliographic instruction, developing media packages, recommending books or films, and teaching users how to use materials.

In many respects, libraries serve as centres of interdisciplinary common place as library users or learners from all disciplines come in one common place in search of one common goal. Digital libraries extend such interdisciplinary by making diverse information resources available beyond the physical space shared by groups of learners. Hence, digital libraries great benefit lies in bringing together people with formal, informal, and professional learning missions (Mathews, 2006). From the foregoing, it is clear that the application of social media in enhancing library services such as teaching and learning cannot be over-emphasised.

Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) posit that modern libraries are using latest technological trends to make their services known, popular and user friendly. The concept of a library as a physical place where patrons come to seek information is rapidly disappearing into the new concept of I-cloud technology that promotes social cyberspace where users are constantly virtually interacting. With the i-cloud technology, it is possible for libraries of the 21st century to build massive virtue databases in the clouds comprising collective knowledge metadata. This is a movement away from the old stereotype of conventional one directional way format of providing library services. Instead modern libraries are promoting more dynamic, two-way network environments characterized by open access, content creation, collaborative and participatory social space where users are free to access and contribute content. Such open access protocols are promoting self-taught environments and multiple opportunities for free access, interaction and collaboration with a variety of information and in different formats (Ibid, p.3).

It is obvious that the application of social media technologies is giving librarians the impetus to become innovative in marketing and identifying potential library patrons on social cyberspace. Social media technologies and tools are not only being used as vehicles for promoting library services and programs but are also being used for improving the library reference services (Steiner, 2009, p. 4). Similarly, students are using social media tools such as Ask a Librarian, Meebo and Twitter to ask questions in “real time”(Steiner, 2009, Ibid, p. 5). Additionally, social media tools such as Instant Messaging (IM), Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) are being used to achieve a successful and sustainable reference services in an online social space by engaging in an online face-to-face interaction. This is particularly useful for distance learners who may call in from any part of the country with reference queries. It must be noted that using social media tools for library reference services is promoting a participatory environment where client can be served by multiple sources and a variety of authoritative, scholarly perspectives resulting in an enriching wealth of information and experience (Lankes, 2008; Miller, 2006). Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) also observe that for librarians to effectively deploy these social media for reference purposes they must be versatile and knowledgeable in different subject fields to be able to match patrons with desired information.

The above observations and contributions to the literature on the application social media in academic libraries have highlighted the indispensability of social media tools in enhancing services such as referencing and marketing library services. Another significant dimension in which social media can be applied to enhance teaching and learning in academic libraries is through information literacy. Generally speaking, information literacy refers to teaching and imparting life-long skills to information seekers. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) refers to the ability to find, retrieve, analyse, and use information as information literacy (Kuh and Gonyea, 2003). Kuh and Gonyea (Ibid) argue that one cannot become information literate without first acquiring the foundational skills and competencies traditionally associated with general education, critical thinking and reasoning abilities, written and oral communication skills, and so forth.

According to Shapiro and Hughes (cited in Kuh and Gonyea, 2003), information literacy should in fact be conceived more broadly as a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact as essential to the mental framework of the educated information-age citizen as the trivium of basic liberal arts (grammar, logic and rhetoric) was to the educated person in medieval society. This contention suggests that information literacy is not merely about the ability to find and retrieve information but also about analysing and using the information for teaching and learning as espoused in the ACRL definition above. In addition, information literacy is also about critical thinking and reasoning as well as effective communication skills.

The notion of information literacy, originally conceptualised in the 1970s ([Bundy, 2004](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/00242530510593407)), is now commonly used to describe the skill set required to interact effectively in the electronic environment. There is some debate as to whether or not this term appropriately describes the skills required by the citizen of the information society. There appears, however, to be a consensus that a variety of literacies are required in order to use networked communication technologies, digital media, and online and traditional information resources. Information literacy can be understood as the overarching term to describe the skills needed to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) effectively, and to access appropriate digital information resources.

In view of the above, it is inconceivable to imagine professionals who are better placed to provide information literacy than librarians and other information professionals. The direct access to the complex information environment described above necessitates a change in the role of librarians and information professionals, from gatekeepers to guides (Wallis, 2005). Given the demands of the knowledge society the librarian must support learning at all levels. The need for all citizens to develop a skill set of technological and media literacies means that librarians will have to be incorporated into learning programmes to teach these abilities. Librarians can teach generic skills in how to access information through a variety of media whilst emphasising an understanding of issues around its validity, authenticity and currency. Information literacy programmes can inculcate good principles in the fundamental skills of information use in the knowledge society. Wallis’ conception of information literacy and the role of the librarian in enhancing its provision suggest that librarians and other information professionals have to be adept in the application of social media.

As noted by Wilder (2005) certainly on the higher education front with the increased use of e-learning, typically through virtual learning environments (VLEs), the e-literacy requirements of students have increased. With many library management systems still not plugged into VLEs there is often the need for the library to aggressively assert its presence. Additionally, the proliferation of the web, along with search engines, has led to less structured approaches to the retrieval and evaluation of quality information. This argument resonates with the foregoing discussion which has highlighted how social media can be applied in enhancing the provision of services such as information literacy in academic libraries.

So there is no doubt that information literacy is well established in the domain of the librarian and indeed, for some, it represents a new calling that merges traditional library skills with the challenge of real teaching (Wilder, Ibid). In order to demonstrate how libraries are applying social media in providing services such as information literacy, a few practical examples would suffice. In this regard, the Copperbelt University (CBU) Main Library has automated most of its internal functions, including the main Library Catalogue. A number of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) terminals are located in several places of the library for use by the readers. However, perhaps what is more significant is that the library has not introduced social media platforms on which users are provided with information on how to access certain resources. This is a weakness that appears to be still besetting a number of libraries in developing countries similar to Zambia.

An exploratory study by Ogbonnaya and Mji (cited in Chitumbo and Chewe, 2015) of how university students from two South African universities have adopted Facebook in their social life and academic pursuits found that majority of university students see Facebook as a tool for socializing and making friends and connecting with old friends while only a small percentage see it as a tool for their studies. Another study by Kumar investigated the perception and use of social media tools among Sikkim University students. The study showed that a good number of university students use social networking sites for academic purposes in addition to entertainment (Chitumbo and Chewe, 2015).

**CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

Having discussed on how academic libraries are integrating social media technologies in enhancing teaching and learning environments of university communities, it is necessary to highlight some key challenges faced in this undertaking. Taylor and Francis (2014) argue that there are a number of challenges associated with using social media in academic libraries. These may include among others increased demand on time, technical expertise requirements among librarians, limited funding from management, and lower Internet bandwidth affecting connectivity. It can be argued that for social media to be effectively used, academic libraries need to build capabilities among its staff (Mathews, 2008). This may be done by improving the library staff technological expertise in customizing technological applications to improve users accessibility to online catalogs especially for libraries in developing countries such as Zambia. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) also acknowledge that most library staff in developing countries lack requisite ICTs skills required to adopt and integrate social media tools in providing effective library services.

Secondly, it can be a challenge for librarians to use an informal but presentable tone, or deliver social media content in a bilingual or multilingual region. For instance, the Copperbelt University has begun attracting a number of foreign students from neighbouring countries and this may pose challenges for librarians to effectively deliver social media content due to limited access to wireless services, technological infrastructure and other technologies.

Further, the capabilities and requisite ICT skills needed to effectively utilise social media in libraries vary enormously across library staff. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) observe that many librarians and users are not keen to use social media tools to improve their everyday activities. In resisting embracing change they continue using traditional and unconventional methods to provide library services in their comfort zone and are not eager to embrace change. This is a bottle-neck for the application of social media in enhancing library services.

Taylor and Francis (2014) also note that libraries in developing countries face inadequate funding making it difficult for them to train their staff to effectively use social media tools. Similarly, Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) argue that there is a low culture in maintenance of property in most institutions in developing countries. This is evident from the poor state of the few available technologies in existence. Given such a scenario it becomes difficult for most libraries to facilitate remote access to information.

The above challenges are compounded by external factors such as Internet connectivity, poorly developed technological infrastructure and government restrictions on the use of social restricting accessibility to information (Taylor and Francis, Ibid). Specifically, limited Internet connectivity is a huge challenge for most developing countries such as Zambia. According to the figures from the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA), in the first quarter of 2014, Zambia had 2,559,500 mobile internet and 18,741 fixed internet subscribers. In a population of about 14 million, this translates to only 18 percent Internet subscribers. Therefore it can be deduced that social media platforms such as twitter, facebook and many others are not adequately used for academic purposes. Internet access is one of the main factors determining use of new media. Therefore, the application of social media in enhancing library services such as teaching and learning is greatly undermined due to limited internet connectivity.

Therefore, it must be pointed out that if academic libraries face difficulties in discharging their core mandate, there is likely that other difficulties that may undermine the application of social media in enhancing teaching and learning are possible.

In the context of the above scenario, there has been a continuous concern about the role and status of the academic library. Many authors have pointed out that academic libraries will have to change and the roles and responsibilities of librarians need reconceptualisation. For example, Osburn (1979) highlights the need for change in research libraries because of the changing patterns of scholarship in America, the emerging dominance of the sciences in the university's hierarchy of disciplines and the demands of government funding agencies for relevant research. He emphasized that research libraries needed to be more responsive to the new academic agenda and more service-oriented model of collection development was needed (Ibid). Perhaps we may add the impact of technological advancements, particularly in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as another reason why there is need for change in the way academic libraries offer services. This is especially so in their endeavour to provide teaching and learning.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is worthy to note that there is need for more widespread publicity in existing literature and studies conducted to show how libraries especially academic libraries may positively leverage the potential of social media to enhance teaching and learning among the university community. The identified challenges may be addressed through the following strategies:

* Organizing a public awareness forum such as library orientation, conferences, symposia, workshops to create awareness and educate librarians and users on the social networking services and applications. This will help to stimulate new ideas, sensitize and create awareness of the new tools.
* Embracing current change in order to remain relevant and adapt to the new ICT driven environment.
* Adopting a maintenance culture so as to manage the few available ICT facilities effectively.
* Provision of stable power supply will encourage and facilitate the effective use of these tools.
* Pro-active training of librarians to acquire 21st century skills to adapt to the changing ICT environment.
* Government should take an active role in providing ICT facilities to institutions.
* Educating the public on the issue of copyright law and violation.

**CONCLUSION**

Libraries play an important role in providing information for teaching and learning, research and community outreach. In order to stay relevant in meeting the growing needs of its users, libraries therefore must evolve and innovate to become pro-actively engaged in leveraging the potential of new technologies and face the challenges that come along to achieve better services delivery.

Furthermore, the paper has demonstrated how developments in ICTs are revolutionising delivery services in libraries in general and academic libraries in particular. The paper has highlighted on how social media has changed the manner in which libraries provide services. For instance, the concept of a library as a physical place where users come to get information is rapidly changing to a social cyberspace where users access, communicate and contribute to existing knowledge. This is because libraries of the 21st century are characterized with collective knowledge creation and enabling technologies; and also a movement away from the old stereotype, conventional and one directional library services to users to a more dynamic, two-way communicational network environment characterized by open access, content creation, collaborative and participatory social space where users are free to access and contribute content.

On the other hand, the paper also identified the challenges associated with the application of social media in enhancing library services, including demand on time, technical expertise requirements, limited funds, and limited internet connectivity. In conclusions, the paper has concluded by suggesting strategies which can be used to address the observed challenges.

National governments and other stakeholders also need to facilitate the establishment of Internet-based facilities and services as well as support libraries in the training of staff needed to effectively utilise social media in enhancing service provision.

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**USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS IN THE PROVISION OT HEALTH INFORMATION AT DZIWANI KNOWLEDGE CENTRE: BENEFITS, IMPACTS AND PROSPECTS**

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**ABSTRACT**In an information age as the current one, the importance and use of social networks cannot be ignored. With various social networking tools being developed, the health sector cannot afford to be conservative in the approaches used for health interventions. Optimum utility of these tools is useful in presenting information that borders on health and wellness that would otherwise be under-utilized owing to its orthodox packaging. The purpose of this paper is to share with colleagues what Afya Mzuri and its Dziwani Knowledge Centre for Health is accomplishing by linking its e-bulletin to social networking tools such as Facebook, the centre's web portal, and blog thus providing an interactive information service that ensures that health information is delivered right to the door-step of the busy professional, the social network youth addict and the health researcher. Dziwani Knowledge Centre for Health is a knowledge management service of Afya Mzuri, a health NGO. It offers information on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, Nutrition, Mother and Child Health, Sexual Reproductive Health, Family Planning and life style diseases. The paper also discusses benefits and impacts that the information service is having on communities as is evidenced by success stories documented in the e-bulletin feedback service. Lastly, but not the least, the paper highlights future prospects of Dziwani services in view of the recently launched web portal and an IT system that triggers alerts to subscribers of the e-bulletin accessible on the phone and computer and a campaign that has been launched using various avenues to increase awareness of such services to the average Zambian.

**KEYWORDS**

Information, Knowledge Management, Facebook, Blog, Social media, Web 2.0, Behavioral change, Health

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Social media has recently emerged as not only a promising technology for knowledge management (KM) (Levy, 2009) but also an enabler of information creation, consumption, dissemination, collaboration and coordination in entirely new ways (Lapointe, Ramaprasad andVedel, 2013). It has been used to connect different people in different geographical locations and different interests thereby creating an opportunity to disseminate any kind of information including health. Health information dissemination is thus, an activity that ensures behavior change among most risk population relating to riskpractices that promote ill health. Additionally,Lapointe, Ramaprasad and Vedel (2013) argue that “in healthcare… information dissemination is a key mechanism of creating awareness, a crucial factor in the early detection and prevention of diseases”. This activity can be undertaken in both formal andnon-formal settings such as social media platforms. Social media is defined as “a group of internet-based application that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61).

Emphasizing on the role of social media in healthcare, Lapointe, Ramaprasad and Vedel (2013) observed that social media are now providing a space to discuss medical conditions outside of the healthcare providers’ office. Patients and their families use social media technologies to share their experiences and their findings and educate others with similar conditions. They repackage the information they find for others, creating forums for knowledge discovery and discussion. The authors have further argued that social media provides a forum for reporting personal experiences, asking questions, and receiving direct feedback for people living with a disease. Through social media, support groups have found a new platform for organizing as patients and family caregivers share their experiences, seek consolation online, and connect with others.

Blogging and Facebook have been regarded as the most commonly used social media technologies (AlAamri, 2009). Although they could probably facilitate knowledge management by capturing the narrative experiences and disseminating information and knowledge (Stiler and Philleo, 2003), relatively little research effort has been dedicated to investigate the knowledge management potentials of blogging and Facebook.Knowledge Management (KM) has taken the world by storm. Even developing countries like Zambia are not lagging behind. Rastogi (2000: 40) defines knowledge management as “a systematic and integrative process of coordinating organization-wide activities of acquiring, creating, storing, sharing, diffusing, developing, and deploying knowledge by individuals and groups in pursuit of major organizational goals”.

Further, Kakuwa (2013) notes that knowledge management involves both explicit and tacit types of knowledge. One way in which knowledge can be shared is online - in a blog. ‘Blogging has joined e-mail and social-networking sites as a mass use of the internet.Burnett (2014) defines Blogs as “frequently updated, reverse-chronological entries on a single webpage. Blogs can be very useful for organizations. They can be used to store information and to transform that collection of information into useful knowledge.” Personally, librarians and other professionals can use blogs to keep abreast of developments in their field, follow or participate in debatesand discussions that go on online.

Apart from its advanced group features, Facebook is also associated with greater online social connection, which can promote knowledge dissemination and sharing.There is a slight difference between blogs and Facebook in term of their knowledge acquisition and application activities. In particular, their difference mainly lies on the knowledge construction.As suggested by Chatti et al. (2007), “*social media supports a bottom-up building of communities and networks*”. By using appropriate social media technologies, it can enhance the social motivation of the users in pursuing knowledge management.The current dominance of public blogosphere may mean that the satisfaction gained from sharing information in blogging has been less studied in comparison to motivations related to communication and interpersonal relationships, which is why this paper is so important.

**DZIWANI KNOWLEDGE CENTER FOR HEALTH**

Dziwani is the knowledge management department of Afya Mzuri. Afya Mzuri, which means "Good health" in Swahili, is a Zambian non-governmental organization (NGO), which began life as the Zambia HIV/AIDS Business Sector (ZHABS) Project (2000 to 2004) and registered as Afya Mzuri in 2003. For the past nine years, Afya Mzuri has been a key implementer of a range of workplace-related HIV and AIDS activities supported by a number of donors. In addition to this, Afya Mzuri is mandated to research, document and disseminate information about HIV and AIDS. In early 2009, Afya Mzuri sought to redefine its core-business focus of the organization. The redefined vision for the organization is: To build upon its known expertise in the collection, management and dissemination of HIV and AIDS materials in Zambia via an expanded central Resource Centre and enhanced provision of decentralized information services. This expansion will include one of remit, strategically linking HIV and AIDS to the related issues of TB, STIs, sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and malaria, while providing extensive repository, archive and materials distribution facilities, together with comprehensive database and web services. The vision of the organization is therefore,“to be recognized as Zambia’s leading experts in behavior change, community empowerment and knowledge management for health”. While its mission is “to contribute to the national health response through empowering people and communities to adopt healthy behaviors through innovative and participatory approaches.”

As a Knowledge Management department, Dziwani Knowledge Centre for Health has taken advantage of social networks to advance better health by providing health information to members and subscribers. Its expansion in 2012 enabled its massive visibility on the web. Nyirenda (2013) explains that currently, the Centre has a number of facilities and these include a reference library with more than 7,000 publications; a video library with computer facilities; a cyber café intended for health research, Web portal (online learning, issuance of materials, Monitoring and Evaluation); *Insaka* space for on-site learning/training sessions, focus group discussions, e- learning, group discussions via skype, workplace programs and workshops; e-Bulletin sent via email and blog; warehouse for Information Education and Communication (IEC)materials such as posters, brochures and health games, an archive for IEC materials produced in Zambia (hard and soft copies); and a database of health organizations in Zambia, their contact details and their mandate.

**BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF E-BULLETIN FEEDBACK SERVICE**

Our main focus is to share with you what Afya Mzuri and its Dziwani Knowledge Centre for Health is accomplishing by linking its e-bulletin to social networking tools such as Facebook, the Centre’s web portal, and blog thus providing an interactive information service that ensures that health information is delivered right to the door-step of the busy professional, the social network youth addict and the health researcher.E-bulletin is a daily email from Dziwani which contains the latest stories relating to HIV and AIDS, Malaria, New born, Maternal and Child health, Nutrition, Family Planning, Sexual Reproductive Health, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis in Zambia and Sub- Saharan Africa from the daily newspapers, as well as details of items added to the resource Centre, and a selection of Internet sites and news stories from other email bulletins.

At present, the e-bulletin is read by more than 3,000 readers in and outside the country. The bulletin typically comprises of health news from the daily tabloids, news from selected health internet sites and summaries of not more than three featured resources from either the reference or the video libraries. The facility also includes health promotions undertaken by the institution. This way, readers can access health headlines without buying a tabloid. However, due to copyright issues, the bulletin just provides a summary and a pointer to a well acknowledged source, and since most tabloids have an online presence, a reader can simply search the particular article on the web.Appendix A provides examples of health news that is posted on the e-bulletin from different sources.

Email subscription to the service can be made by simply entering one’s email address. Further, notice of de-subscription can be communicated by an email reply to the sender. In such cases, administrators simply deletes the email address from the mailing list. The blog version of the bulletin can be accessed at its blog address where there is also an archived collection of back issues of the bulletin. Here, there is also an allowance of comments, by which readers interact with the administrators who are able to answer health concerns raised by the public. The articles appearing on these two platforms are then uploaded on the Facebook page, thereby providing maximum utility of the social platforms and making it highly interactive.

The web portal is used to support on line research and information needs of the community. Some services accessible through the web portal include registration for membership for both individuals and organisations; e- Learning; online discussion forums; online ordering of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials; databases for trainers, facilitators and behaviour change specialists and downloadable health information materials.

All in all, these social networking tools make it easier for members of staff to advance another mandate of their institution – behavior change communications. The benefits of health knowledge to members of the public are enormous and may not be quantified. Eventually, Afya Mzuri helps in enabling good health practices among people. One of the beneficiaries of the e-bulletin, Perl, notes the life-changing benefits of accurate and timely health knowledge.

Bernettet al (2007) notes that Facebook, the world’s largest social networking website, has 1.1 billion users each month. Therefore, health messages can be delivered via existing contacts, which may be more influential than behavior change interventions delivered via traditional methods. Further, unlike traditional Web-based interventions, online social networks typically achieve high levels of user engagement and retention; and social media requires users to actively engage and generate content, which may well be more influential than traditional websites and advertising that are typically more passive in nature (ibid).

**FUTURE PROSPECTS OF DZIWANI SERVICES**

In view of the recently launched web portal and an IT system that triggers alerts to subscribers of the e-Bulletin accessible on the phone and computer and a campaign that has been launched using various avenues to increase awareness of such services to the average Zambian, Dziwani is likely to touch upon millions of lives with health information. It is hoped that these strategies receive adequate funding so the general public can continue to reap the benefits. Lack of or insufficient funding is the major challenge facing this service as most of the institution’s services are project-based. While it may not come as a surprise to wake up one day and find this service gone, the authors note the importance of keeping such a programme running in an era of increased numbers of diseases. Once adequately supported, the e-Bulletin can go a long way in fostering health behavior change. One of the shortcomings of the service is the limited number of people with email and online accounts. However, this is being countered by the rapid growth of the ICT sector that is seeing more Zambians being more interactive on social forums than formal settings. With the development of more social networking tools, there is no doubt the e-Bulletin will be accessed through text-based tools such as WhatsApp, offline platforms such as SMS and audio-based support systems such as toll-free lines for automated audio updates.

**CONCLUSION**

While blogs and social networking tools can be useful, it is important to note that they are just tools and not the objective itself.   While more research needs to be done as to how blogs can more effectively be used, it is important to note that technology will continue to influence learning.  The next step may be the integration of knowledge management and e-learning systems to augment current practices.  Blogs also introduce individual or communities s to online learning communities so they can access and evaluate information, and construct new learning paradigms for themselves.  Finally, effectively modeling ways to use blogs as a learning tool is a useful skill for individuals to have as they embark on their journey of life-long learning.

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**Theme “The Social Library: How Libraries, Registries, Archives, and Museums use social media for enhancement of their services in Zambia”**

**Topic: The Future of Social media in Libraries, Archives and Museums in Zambia**

**By Charles Nonde**

This paper has been written from personal experience in the work environment and through interaction with other information professionals with whom the author has interacted with and shared common challenges in the work environment. Information on the paper has been derived from physical investigations into the various institutional platforms their digital footprints and observations based on the current and past evolution of librarianship in relation to use of technology.

It is also a personal reflection on how the education system is responding in relation to the new work environment and the demands that come with it especially in the use of online resources.

Whether information managers have also risen to the occasion and display the power of librarianship in harnessing new technologies in delivering information to the masses whether they are a Private/Academic/Public library, Archive, Museum or Records Centre. In this paper were “libraries and librarians” is mentioned embraces Archives, Museums, Records Centres etc. in the context of applying social media in their operations.

The introduction of computers has significantly changed the landscape in which organizations having been operating and the library has been no exception, from card catalogues and other manual tools, information has been migrated to online databases and many other electronic media including social media applications.

In this regard, it has seen the development of many useful applications being used the world over. Social media has also been making in-roads in the way information has been managed and circulated to create awareness to the intended audiences. Organizations are making use of social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Baidoo etc. to create visibility, awareness and drive social change, therefore, making it imperative for institutions such as libraries to keep abreast of such developments.

The resulting changes with the introduction of computers has also seen an exponential growth of social media sites as those mentioned above and the new generation of users referred to as the millennials has arisen, who spend much of their time on these platforms to socialize and extract information from various sources. Making it a very lucrative area for information managers to exploit in order to attract them to essential information that would enhance their learning process.

It is for this reason, that these branches of information managers learn how to effectively use social media as a medium to encourage people to read, discover and learn new things especially in a day-and-age of the millennials whose mode of interaction is via social media. The library can only be more relevant to them through such means especially that information nowadays is available cheaply as long as you have the right tools to use.

Social media are [computer-mediated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-mediated_communication) tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in [virtual communities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_community) and [networks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_network). *Social media* is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of [Web 2.0](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0) and that allow the creation and exchange of [user-generated content](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User-generated_content)."(Kaplan, Haenlein 2010)

Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between businesses,organizations, communities, and individuals.(Kietzmann,Hermkens 2011)These changes are the focus of the emerging field of [technoself](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technoself) studies.

Social media differ from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality reach(Agichtein et al, 2008), frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence. Social media operates in a dialogic transmission system, (many sources to many receivers). (Pavlik 2015) This is in contrast to traditional media that operates under a monologic transmission model (one source too many receivers).

*"Social media has been broadly defined to refer to 'the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships'".* (Dhiraj, 2013)

There are many effects that stem from internet usage. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of site. At the same time, the total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 99 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 66 billion minutes in July 2011.(State of the Media, 2012) For content contributors, the benefits of participating in social media have gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation and bringing in career opportunities and monetary income, as discussed in Tang, Gu, and Whinston (2012).



*Diagram above depicting the many different types of social media Source: http://www.theconversationprism.com/*

Another definition of social media is obtained from techgadget.com as follows; Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and [wiki](http://searchsoa.techtarget.com/definition/wiki)s are among the different types of social media.

**Here are some prominent examples of social media commonly used today as defined by TechGadget.com:**

1. Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nielsen Group, Internet users within the United States spend more time on Facebook than any other website.
2. Twitter is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
3. Google+ (pronounced *Google plus*) is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project’s slogan is “Real-life sharing rethought for the web.”
4. Wikipedia is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January of 2001.
5. LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
6. Pinterest is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them. An image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.

**Social Media Dynamic**

Social media is becoming an integral part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate. Most traditional online media include social components, such as comment fields for users. In business, social media is used to market products, promote brands, and connect to current customers and foster new business.

Social media analytics is the practice of gathering data from blogs and social media websites and analyzing that data to make business decisions. The most common use of social media analytics is to mine customer sentiment to support marketing and customer service activities.

Social media marketing (SMM) takes advantage of social networking to help a company increase its exposure and broaden customer reach. The goal is usually to create content compelling enough that the user will share it with their social networks.

One of the key components of SMM is social media optimization (SMO). Like search engine optimization (SEO), SMO is a strategy for drawing new and unique visitors to a website. SMO can be done two ways: by adding social media links to content such as [RSS](http://searchwindevelopment.techtarget.com/definition/RSS) feeds and sharing buttons, or by promoting activity through social media via status updates,  tweets, or [blog](http://searchwindevelopment.techtarget.com/definition/blog) posts.

Social CRM (customer relationship marketing) can be a very powerful business tool. For example, establishing a Facebook page allows people who like your brand and the way you conduct business to [like](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Facebook-Like-button) your page, which creates a venue for communication, marketing and networking. Through social media sites, you can follow conversations about your brand for real-time market data and feedback.

From the customer’s perspective, social media makes it easy to tell a company and everyone else about their experiences with that company -- whether those experiences are good or bad. The business can also respond very quickly to both positive and negative feedback, attend to customer problems and maintain, regain or rebuild customer confidence.

Enterprise social networking allows a company to connect individuals who share similar business interests or activities. Internally, social tools can help employees’ access information and resources they need to work together effectively and solve business problems. Externally, public social media platforms help an organization stay close to their customers and make it easier to conduct research that they can use to improve business processes and operations.

Social media is also often used for crowdsourcing. Customers can use social networking sites to offer ideas for future products or tweaks to current ones. In IT projects, crowdsourcing usually involves engaging and blending business and IT services from a mix of internal and external providers, sometimes with input from customers and/or the general public.

On the other hand, the integration of social media in the business world can also pose challenges. Social media policies are designed to set expectations for appropriate behavior and ensure that an employee's posts will not expose the company to legal problems or public embarrassment. Such policies include directives for when an employee should identify himself as a representative of the company on a social networking website, as well as rules for what types of information can be shared.

It is for this reason, that these branches of information managers learn how to effectively use social media as a medium to encourage people to read, discover and learn new things especially in a day-and-age of the millennials whose mode of interaction is via social media. The library can only be more relevant to them through such means especially that information nowadays is available cheaply as long as you have the right tools to use.

The shift of paradigm from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 is offering new challenges for libraries that how to capture the attention of remote users who are engaged in social media activities. Different applications of Web 2.0 in form of social media are being used by millions of people in the world. Social media is an instrument on communication. It is a broad term and covers a large range of websites, which enable people to interact with other visitors. These media are Social news (Dig, Propeller), Social Bookmarking (Del.lcio.us, Simpy, Blinklist), Social Networking (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), Social Photo and Video Sharing (YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr) and Wikis ([Wikipedia](http://www.webology.org/2012/v9n1/a93.html#18), 2011).

According to the statistics of July 2011, it has been reported that there are 750 million users of Facebook around the world. Twitter is being used by 250 million users worldwide., 115 million people use LinkedIn, MySpace is being used by 50 million users and the users of Google Plus are 25 million ([Googlefan](http://www.webology.org/2012/v9n1/a93.html#7), 2011/Social Media Stats 2015).

Social media provides more opportunity to reach your community, target specific audiences, and give them a chance to interact with your library. Statistics of Social media usage shows that there are nearly 700 million active Facebook users, over 100 million LinkedIn members, 5 billion+ images on Flickr, 24 million pages on Wikipedia, 300 million Twitter users posting over 7,000 tweets per second, over 2.9 billion hours of YouTube watching per month ([Tortorella](http://www.webology.org/2012/v9n1/a93.html#10), 2012).

The whole business of libraries is about connecting people with information and this is what social media is really all about. Social media helps in reaching out to our communities and providing them information that they need in a very accessible way. There are number of libraries that used Wikis, Flickr, or Blogs for publishing historical photos and ask people to identify people, places, or events pictured.

Different libraries use Wikis for content creation and to create a collaborative relation between the library and community. Hence, IM (Instant Messaging), SMS, Twitter and email are being for answering questions ([Convertive](http://www.webology.org/2012/v9n1/a93.html#6), 2011).

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. Social media includes networking web sites like Facebook, MySpace, micro blogging web sites like Twitter and other media like blogs, podcasts, photos and videos. By posting library material via social media on library page, it can be used by the variety of locations on the Web ([Tuten](http://www.webology.org/2012/v9n1/a93.html#17), 2001).

In Zambia, an interesting trend was on platforms such as Facebook in that students have opened accounts relating to their fields of study. Some of the universities/colleges indicate that they have twitter and Facebook accounts, however, it is not clear whether librarians or the public relations office or both manage these accounts.

In some cases, information managers have risen to the occasion to set up social media platforms to enhance already existing information delivery services, also professional associations such as the Library and Information Association of Zambia(LIAZ) have incorporated these tools as a means for sharing information with its members and members interacting as well as.

Notable improvements have been observed in the three public universities especially in the harnessing of their Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) infrastructure as it has enabled students to register for courses online, view results and other administrative processes which has seen the reduction in long queues, shorter registration processes among other benefits. Remarkably, the universities have been responsive to the fact that many of its students fall in the millennial sub-category in contrast to thosereferred to as the born-before-computers or BBCs with regard to their preference to use hardcopy references instead of online resources.

The millennials want information on the go and they have invested in an assortment of smart phones, PDAs and portable PCs that have internet access. They do not necessarily have to go into a library to seek what they want, especially if that library is perceived to have outdated information. Beyond that reality lecturers in some cases have opted also preferred to send notes, assignments and other course work via Twitter, Facebook, email and other convenient ways which compile the students to access them via online platforms.

Just a decade ago, social media was seen by many as having little relevance for use in a professional context by business entities including librarians. In recent years, there has been a change in attitudes. Social media can be a tool thatLibrarians, Documentalists, Archivists and other information professionals can use to fulfill a variety of information dissemination objectives.

Peoples preferred destinations for information not so long ago included libraries, archives, records centres, museums and any other information retention facility that could satisfy the information needs of individuals and organizations, this trend has been changing over time with much of this information being readily available at the touch of a button.

**Social media objectives**

Libraries use social media to fulfill a range of objectives, with most focused on promotion i.e. visibility for and usage of the library service and resources. However, broadcast/ informational communications are increasingly being supplemented with two-way communications designed to solicit feedback e.g. for collection development, offer real-time customer service and build engagement with users.

Social media is also increasingly being seen as a collection management tool, offering flexible ways to present resources e.g. YouTube for video delivery and categorize them e.g. folksonomies. Outreach is also seen as important for example, helping librarians increase their visibility and connections within the broader library community; also, for assisting in the promotion of the work of their faculty.

Use of social media for enhancing teaching and learning is currently a lower priority, but this will likely become an important activity in the near future, and librarians with their growing experience of using social media tools are well placed to help develop institutional capabilities.

**Reasons for using social media**

Librarians have several objectives that they are using social media to help them achieve their goals, which can be summarized as follows:

1. To seek opinion on the library and its services for self-evaluation purposes, to encourage debate and to instigate an opportunity to respond to library user feedback;
2. To reach library users in their homes or ‘virtual spaces’ as today’s modern online library is no longer solely relying on its physical space as an access point;
3. To publicize events, services, news and presence;
4. To encourage collaboration, for example through collection development and building repositories of collaborative content specific to certain user groups;
5. To increase usage of library collections by promoting new and existing content;
6. To connect with other librarians and keep abreast of industry news;
7. To build a sense of community with both users and with other institutions and industry contacts.

**Advantages and benefits for librarians and libraries when using social media are seen to be:**

1. Financially the costs of using social media are perceived to be low;
2. It requires little training;
3. It promotes library services and disseminates news quickly, delivering this information more directly to library users;
4. It increases engagement and interactions with library users;
5. It helps gather feedback to enhance user services;
6. The promotion of library holdings via social media can help increase usage of content;
7. It enhances communication both within the library and with other departments;
8. It can be used for outreach activities through onward sharing, well beyond the institution itself, helping build connections and reputation more broadly.

**Challenges associated with using social media in libraries include the following:**

1. Social media can require considerable time commitment from library staff;
2. Social media can require technological expertise, for example customizing applications to provide access to online catalogs;
3. It can be a challenge for librarians to use an informal but presentable tone, or deliver social media content in a bilingual or multilingual region;
4. Levels of interest in and skills with using social media vary enormously across library staff;
5. There are limited funds to support more advanced social media usage/ features and the training that would be required to enable this;
6. A library needs to work hard to maintain engagement with library users and attract popularity (followers, likes and so on);
7. It can be difficult to maintain library branding for content/resources made accessible via social media;
8. There are potential copyright issues when using social media such as YouTube to build collections;
9. External factors such as Internet connectivity, technological infrastructure and government restrictions on the use of social media may restrict access.

**Why study social media in the library?**

Social media has the potential to facilitate much closer relationships between libraries and their patrons wherever users are based at local, regional and international geographical spread, and however they choose to learn about and access library services and resources. Current usage of social media by the library community generally remains ad hoc and somewhat experimental, but the uptake of these tools is accelerating, and they will likely play an increasingly important role in library service provision and outreach in the future.

The truth of the matter is that the Zambian information professional is working in a very challenging environment, that includes but not limited to reduced funding, lacking of proper legislation to justify the existence of libraries with the exception of Archives and Museums, limited tools for use, costly internet services and a mixture of other plethora as highlighted above. However many of the institutions along the line of rail despite the challenges above do have a relatively decent technological structure in place as evidenced from the number of websites and internet connectivity held by public and private educational institutions.

**The Zambian social media landscape: Libraries, Archives, Museums and Records Centre**

A random check on Facebook reveals that there are Facebook pages referring to libraries in many of the local education institutions; however, when you visit the page it is quite clear that these references have nothing to do with the established libraries in these institutions and/or what type of services they are offering to their clients. Examples below:

1. The Copperbelt University Library has an unofficial page that does not have anything relating to the actual library and its services. https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Copperbelt-University-Library/381035601981390
2. The University of Zambia Library has an unofficial page that does not have anything relating to the actual library and its services. https://www.facebook.com/pages/University-Of-Zambia-Library/276835595682243

 and https://www.facebook.com/pages/Unza-Main-library/121826961317909

1. The Mulungushi University has an unofficial page that has nothing to do with the library. https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mulungushi-University-Library/190540071156172?fref=ts
2. There are librarian pages such as LibrariansCorner https://www.facebook.com/groups/1416568001952262/ with about 314 at the time of viewing it. According to the description of the page, it was created for the purpose of “bringing information closer to the librarians, new job adverts and all the cute happenings around the country” which is a good thing. However much is not going on regarding professional exchange of ideas and anything regarding harnessing these social media tools such as Facebook in sharing information with the masses or indeed among the professionals. There are many other similar pages specific to Zambia, some of which have not seen any activity in over 6 months or more.
3. The Library and Information Association page is slightly different, as it tries to connect its members, sends information on various issues that members can use for their own professional development amongst others.

The trend is similar with the established Museums, Archives and Records Centres in the country, there are face book pages but none are official; that is to say trained professionals in these areas are not managing these pages. All you find are random postings from people in many cases nothing to do with the institution itself, what it does etc. beyond the fact that they had visited the place.

It is a fact that information professionals have an understanding of ICTs, are knowledgeable in their use and the advantages that come with using them for information dissemination and connecting with people and most importantly they have the infrastructure already established and the cost is already covered within the organizations operations. Therefore, the question to the information professionals is why they have not taken advantage of embracing such social tools that will link them to their clients beyond the four walls that they operate in.Why are they not expanding their reach into the virtual world where their clients have migrated? Is it a technophobia related situation or administrative processes are not being proactive?

Does the parent entity have a policy for such an undertaking? Furthermore, the official pages that do exist are they being managed by the Public Relations Office only? Case in point, a recent posting on the LIAZ Facebook page revealed that for many educational institutions social media is managed by public relations offices.

Museums which fall under the parent entity the National Heritage Conservation Commission in the Ministry of Tourism are a vast body of a diversity of knowledge that include written and other resources that are well preserved as exhibits showcasing the past, present and possibly the future of a culture and its various elements. People travel far and wide to see these exhibits to learn and study them alike. Zambia has several museums located in Lusaka, Western province, Southern province and Northern provinces interestingly none of them has a social media page with even just basic information. An institution such as the National Archives have gone a step further by digitizing much of their resources but don’t have a social media account which could be used to connect or bring people closer to what they do and they could make available their resources to a larger audience within and beyond the borders of Zambia.

This is a sad state of affairs but it can be improved upon, probably information managers will have to present their case to management in order to receive support needed. However, the onus is with the librarians because the whole idea of having social media tools is to make the whole process of finding information for clients easier; another is that social media is a very effective tool for advertising any information resource thus the collections needs to move to online platforms. There is a generational change in the users of information many of them have acquired smart phones and similar gadgets that are giving them information right at the fingertips, for as long as the established entities are not responsive to this change, they will be becoming irrelevant to the millennials and possibly the business structure.

In some organizations, that have libraries or similar units are making appraisals to see the need to continue have such facilities or shutting them down all together, practical examples include the library that used to be part of the World Bank has been discontinued, others within the UN systems are migrating their collections to the Information Centre to create space for other expansions. This scenario may not really apply to educational institutions, but to what degree can they guarantee their existence in the near future?

While it is a management decision, information managers have a responsibility to show the relevance of their units in the business model of any organization for as long as “we keep quiet”, we shall see the death our noble profession in the organization structure. The future of the libraries, museumsetc. lies in our ability to respond to the changing environment on how information is now being preserved, delivered and used in the era of digital access.

In other parts of the world especially in the developed countries, social media is a concept that caught on in a fairly early stage in its developmentand organizations bought into the new technologies to further expand their reach.

Virtually all libraries, museums and many other bodies of knowledge has harnessed these tools and have created for themselves virtual spaces, that even educational institutes have integrated online tools as part of the services they are offering to their clients, those on long distance programs especially from third world countries who cannot travel for their studies are using this tools as alternatives to access information.

Some examples of libraries, archives and museums that are using social media effectively beyond the physical boundaries of their localities.

According to Kemraijh (2013) In The developed countries, librarians have evolved and responded to the changing interface of delivering information below are some general examples how they have harnessed social media tools:

**Twitteris being used to:**

1. Distribute library news and information.
2. Provide customer service.
3. Build connections with researchers.
4. Build connections with other librarians and institutions.

**Facebook is being used to:**

1. Distribute library news and information.
2. More social and less formal than Twitter – share photographs and run competitions.
3. Arrange events including tracking RSVPs and sending event updates.
4. Engagement with students.

**Pinterest is being used to:**

1. Promote general library collections, digital and archive special collections and information literacy.
2. Set up of online repositories for students to pin researched references as part of collaborative group work.
3. Display book titles to save time browsing and promote new titles.
4. Provide an arena for students and course leaders to pin reviewed and recommended reading for a particular topic.
5. Develop communities with other online libraries.

**YouTube being used to:**

1. Streaming film collections.
2. Instructional ‘how to’ videos teaching information literacy skills and how to use library services and resources.

The American Library Association (ALA) released a report earlier this year entitled The 2012 State of America’s Libraries. The report states "Facebook and Twitter in particular have proven themselves useful tools not only in publicizing the availability of online collections, but also in building trusted relationships with users."

According to a survey conducted by the South Carolina State Library, 88% of respondents (all library workers) claimed to use Facebook in their work. Twitter was second most popular, at 46.8%.



***Diagram showing staff’s use of social media.***

So what are libraries using Facebook for and what does "building trusted relationships with users" mean? The ALA report elaborated:

"Social networking is used to publicize library events such as gaming nights; to alert users to additions to collections; to provide links to articles, videos, or Web content that might prove relevant or helpful to patrons; and to provide a conduit for community information. Social media also play an important role in fostering relationships with the community by allowing patrons to ask questions or provide feedback about library services."

**Enhanced Catalogs & Mobile Apps**

However,there is more that libraries can do to create a social experience for their patrons, other than being active on Facebook. LibraryThing for Libraries is a set of services offered by the company LibraryThing. It features catalog enhancements (such as user-generated book reviews and recommendations) and a customizable mobile app called Library Anywhere.



***The Diagram above showing the landing page of “Library Things”***

In June, LibraryThing for Libraries had 800,000 "professionally vetted reviews." While library users could just go and get reviews and recommendations from Amazon or Goodreads, it does seem useful to have them integrated into a library's catalog.

In a discussion in Branch, Portland librarian Justin Hoenke called LibraryThing "the ultimate social reading tool for libraries." Although Sarah Houghton, Director of the San Rafael Public Library in California, cast some doubt on whether library patrons use the reviews regularly.

**Reimagining The Library Book**

Some libraries are experimenting not just with socializing the library catalog, but the reading process itself. New York Public Library has released an interactive website called Candide 2.0, a community annotated version of Voltaire's 1759 book called Candide. The NYPL version is described as an "experiment in public reading and communal annotation."



***Diagram above showing Candide 2.0.***

It will be fascinating to track how libraries continue to bring the Social Web to their organizations. I have not even touched on the increasing prevalence of e-books inside libraries - another trend that potentially creates a more social experience for library patrons for example, with social book highlights.

**Ways Museums Are Reaching Digital Audiences**

If the last time you were in a museum you were being shuffled in a single-file line by an aging docent, you may be surprised by the dynamic lives these institutions lead in the digital world.

New platforms are allowing museums to break free of the confines of the academic ivory tower and engage with their communities like never before.

Ian Padgham, former social media guru of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art says museums started flocking to social media in 2009. Museums initially used social media just to advertise events and exhibits, but quickly jumped into a world of interactive education and user-generated content. From interactive SCVNGR challenges to crowdsourcing information about works of art, more museums are becoming digital savvy destinations. Here is a look at some innovative campaigns.

**Opening the Dialogue**

The traditional experience of perusing exhibits can now become a dialogue, thanks to real-time information networks. Museum Nerd, a blogger and social evangelist who shares musings on museum visits, arts advocacy and education, believes engagement is the most important reason for museums to use social media.

During one visit, for example, Museum Nerd asked @MuseumModernArt why there was so much dust in an exhibit. The museum's communications team investigated and sent a Twitter reply.

“Social media has pushed museums toward being more responsive to the public,” writes Museum Nerd in an online chat interview. "It's allowed a visitor to let the museum know what they like and what they don't like about their experience in real time."

When Padgham spearheaded the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's social media accounts (he now works for Twitter), he invited social media followers the mainstream audience never before prioritized by the museum to press previews. "It's not just what The Chronicle says. We want [the local audience] to have a voice and spread the voice."

Many museum marketers take the potential of their new voices seriously. Francesca Merlino, the [Guggenheim Museum's](http://www.guggenheim.org/) marketing manager, says her team responds to every inquiry received through the museum's social accounts.

These social accounts offer a peek behind the scenes of the galleries to show visitors a side of museums never before accessible.

**Breaking Down the Walls of Inaccessibility**

Through social media, museums can tear down the illusion of inaccessibility. During the 2011 Super Bowl, for example, @NOMA1910 (the New Orleans Museum of Art) and [@IMAmuseum](http://twitter.com/#!/imamuseum)(the Indianapolis Museum of Art) placed bets via Twitter, showing the public an unexpected collegiality between museum staffers.

On a similarly sporting note, Padgham changed his museum's Twitter avatar to the San Francisco Giants logo when they were in the Major League Baseball playoffs. Padgham tweeted that he "... knew the graphic design team would kill him, but Go Giants!" Both the Giants and MLB retweeted the San Francisco Museum of Art. "The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is no longer a place you go to," says Padgham."Art can be a part of your hometown spirit. There's a freedom to no longer be this very proper institution."

The Guggenheim Museum's social following reflects its largely international audience. Approximately 70% of its annual visitors are not from the U.S. "Social media is really an opportunity to connect with our global following," Merlino says. The museum has been running user-generated campaigns such as a partnership with YouTube Play to create great online short videos. The competition culminated in a screening and live streaming of the top 25 entries.

To honor the museum's 50th birthday, the Guggenheim's followers uploaded images re-imagining its iconic rotunda. The museum also teamed up with Google SketchUp designers to create and place 3D shelters on Google Earth.

These user-generated content campaigns created the greatest periods of growth and active engagement with the museum, Merlino says.

Crowdsourcing is a great way to maximize a diverse following while also creating popular content. Each Thursday, the Museum of the City of New York posts a piece of artwork along with a mystery building on Facebook. Respondents are challenged to identify the unknown location and validate their responses with proof.

Twitter followers of the Tate Modern might even create art for the museum. The Tate is calling for volunteer artists to paint vignettes to be included in an upcoming exhibit.

**Emerging Cultural Aggregators**

For your average fan of the arts, the proliferation of online cultural hubs has created an overabundance of information. "I don't have time to read 50,000 posts from different institutions," says Padgham. "I want to find people curating a perfect synthesis. Those will be the next celebrities."

Museum Nerd is one of those Internet celebrities. @MuseumNerd began tweeting in September 2008. Today, more than 67,000 people follow the flagship Twitter account. Museum Nerd's social presence now includes a blog, Facebook page, Flickr stream, Foursquare account and Tumblr, as well as some external writing.

**Mobilizing Visits**

Most museumgoersare not going to turn off their phones during a visit. Rather than fight the tide, many museums are integrating mobile into their exhibits. Museums are adopting apps like Sparkatour to guide visitors instead of relying on chunky audio guide devices.

The app allows small to mid-sized museums to add audio to all of their video and visual content.Museums are creating fun competitions out of their exhibits using SCVNGR, a social, location-based gaming platform. For example, the Smithsonian hosted a SCVNGR hunt through nine of its museum’s most popular exhibits between June 24 and July 26 2013.

Foursquare rewards and badges are also a great way for museums to acknowledge their social followers. During the summer, the Penn Museum will give away free drinks to the first 10 visitors who check in after 5:00 p.m.

**The Digital Museum**

For patrons who are physically separated from the museums they would like to visit, digital museums are popping up across the Internet. Here are five museums you can visit without leaving your computer.

**Conclusion: The General and future potential outlook for information depositories in Zambia**

Organizations achieve their objectives by bringing together the talent and energy of many people. As such, the raft of emerging communications platforms today has the potential to literally transform how organizations work. From the 1990s, email fundamentally changed how most jobs were done and now its social media making inroads. Now wealth of new communication tools is being used to create sometimes dramatically different ways of working.

Social media has huge potential in Zambia; there are many trained professionals who can stand up to the challenge to harness these tools to ensure that information can still be accessible regardless of where the clients is located be.Clearly, there is nothing official existing on the social media platforms in the Zambia context relating to Libraries, Museums, Records Centres and Archives meaning that people have limited access to these rich resources due the limiting factors of distance.

Information professionals will need to present their individual cases to management and justify why it is necessary for their respective departmental libraries to be online. This is a unique opportunity to embrace newer methods of providing accessibility of information including those who live in the wider geographical locality. Currently information is liquid cash and has a volatile expiry date there is need for it to be delivered within the shortest possible time.

The failure to harness such technologies to already existing librarianship practices may result in lower usage of established faculties and threatening their very existence. As seen above, despite there being many trained professionals, none, if any, have embraced the use of technologiessuch as social media in their everyday library services. A lot can be learnt from information professionals in the developed world and how they have adapted social media into effective tools being used as part of the services offered by the library.

As indicated, the set up cost is already covered by the organization all that is needed is to find the time and migrate information to the newer platforms.**Conversational channels will flourish**; a smaller proportion of companies will find that micro-blogging and status updates provide a very effective way of communicating on some tasks, given that many of their staff is familiar with tools such as Twitter and Facebook. The uptake of conversational channels will be mainly in smaller groups driven by function, location or team membership, rather than uniformly across organizations.

In general, terms, there is agreement that it is difficult to predict how social media and its use will evolve, so the priority for most of the librarians we spoke with is to remain experimental and flexible. There is little doubt that use of social media is well on its way to becoming an integral part of how people communicate with each other in the 21st century.

A more integrated future is imagined, with library services and collections becoming more deeply embedded with external sites. Some librarians see their role becoming one of helping users find paths through complex content, and directing them towards making useful connections as efficiently as possible – potentially by merging smart applications and human crowdsourcing, with the smart component drawing on the human element by using social sources to retrieve information that is personalized and relevant to a specific user.

The shift of provision of library resources online has also brought about a huge shift in the role of the librarian, with this role becoming more integrated into the user communities within the institution. The overarching objective is for the information managers know to the right social media tools to use in order to make visible resources that users to have access to and how, create awareness and encourage reading and social-economic change in Zambia.

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