Readiness of Librarians in Public Libraries towards Integration of Social Media Tools in Library Services Delivery in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract

The study is designed to x-ray the level of preparedness of librarians in Nigerian Public libraries towards integrating social media to the provision of library and information services (LIS). The survey research method was adopted using public libraries in south-east geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population of study comprises of core librarians working in the various public libraries in the south-east geo-political zone of Nigeria. It was revealed that the level of readiness among librarians in public libraries towards integrating social media to library service delivery is very low. Paucity of funds, indifferent attitude of public library managers, non-existence of social media policy, low level of ICT literacy among librarians in public libraries are the major constraints to effective integration of social media. This study has not only provided empirical evidences on the readiness of librarians in public libraries towards integrating social media tools to library and information services but also recommends ways for successful integration of social media into the public library system..

Keywords: **community libraries, public libraries, social media, information services, south-east,**

Introduction

Public library is the principal means where by the record of man's thought and ideas and the expression of his creative imagination are made freely available to all. It is a vital and sensitive

unit in the state and so demands proper planning and organization, if it is to achieve its desire goal. Public libraries are a vital part of the civilized society (Osuigwe, Jiagbogu & Udeze, 2012). It is can be described as a local centre of information making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to users. It also provides services for youths whose areas of interest often include adventures, sports, science fiction and other fantasies (Oduagwu, 2004; Oduagwu, 2006; Taiwo & Akangbe, 2012). As affirmed by Enyia (2002:79), "the thrust of public library activities is to reach out to wider population of the citizenry, improve their reading habits, their knowledge and contribution to various aspects of their daily living such as governance, source of good medicine, good schools for learning, food and water supply, electricity, recreation and improved occupational choices.

Public libraries are important and the society needs them so as to reap the benefits of a free, adequate and comprehensive flow of information absolutely essentials to break down the barriers of ignorance, prejudices and parochialism that have bedeviled the country since its independence (Oduagwu, 2006:154). However, despite the relevance of public libraries in the society, it is disheartening that most public libraries are considered no better than archives, lacking contemporary books, serials and audio-visual equipment of which, lack of properly trained young adult librarian is a factor (Oluwaseunfumi, 2015). Nevertheless, with the penetrating influence of information and communication technologies (ICT), public libraries like other libraries are now beginning to experience tangible and visible changes in its services offered to the clienteles. This was affirmed by Kalu, Okai and Unagha (2015:155), when referring to changes being witnessed in the library and information palace.

Change is a dynamic process that societies are exposed to, however, even when all human beings are aware that change is inevitable, only few people seemed to be prepared for the change (Olorunyomi & Adedeji, 2012). The fundamental issue remains that how ready are libraries to explore and maximize these changes? Are these changes threat or potentials?

The various tools and platforms being deployed for the delivery of library and information services as a result of ICTs facilities are responsible for the changes being experience. One of such platform is social media. Social media integration to library services

allow librarians to reach out to users in a familiar interface, provide users with instruction research help and the opportunity to have their voices heard (Landis, 2008). Social media is gradually becoming part of people's everyday lives. With social media as a normal part of the everyday lives of young adult, libraries have begun to use online tools to promote library services to this age group (Philips, 2015). According to Quadri and Idowu (2014:116) Social media as a web-based channel of information dissemination is rapidly permeating all aspects of library and information services to other remote users. Arguably, it is now becoming the most preferred means of establishing social/professional networks among librarians, while it is also being used to communicate with potential library users, as well as extending the information services to other remote users.

Social media refers to any website or application that allows people to share information in a virtual environment. It implies any web application, site, account or forum that allows for open communication on the internet. Social media is becoming popular because of users ability to quickly identify individuals, organization/institutions with similar interest and interest with them with ease. Social media refers to tools that provide opportunities for customers to engage with content produced by the library, including tool such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs (Smeaton & Davis, 2014). Social media are modern interactive communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest (Ezeah, Asogwa & Edogor, 2013). The social media like Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, YouTube, and Wiki are useful for the promotion of library resources and services and for the speedy collection of feedbacks from library patrons (Akporhonor & Olise, 2015). No wonder, Philips (2015:29) recognizing these changes asserted that as social media continues to evolve, research into the role of social media in libraries must reflect these changes. Social media allows the library to enter into the space of the user, rather than waiting for the user to come to them (Smeaton & Davis, 2014). Social media is a rapidly developing space and as more people grow up immersed in social media, it will become even more important for libraries to be present in these spaces. A great percentage of libraries in the present times are shifting from traditional library settings and provision of services to the electronic and digital mode of information delivery (Osuigwe, Jiagbogu & Udeze, 2012).

In contemporary society and given the importance being attached to use of social media in the delivery of library services, it is imperative that this study be carried out to provide empirical evidences on the readiness of librarians in public libraries towards integrating social media in library services.

Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to ascertain the readiness of librarians in public libraries towards integration of social media to library service delivery in south-east Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the readiness of librarians in public libraries towards integration of social media to delivery of library service;

2. ascertain the status of social media policy in relation to integrating of social media to library services; and

3. investigate the constraints to effective integration of social media to library service delivery

Literature review

Simisaye and Adeyeoye (2015) maintained that social media tools can be used in wide variety of ways and for many purposes. They however, contend that the choice of tools ultimately depends on a number of factors such as the required functionality, personal preferences as well time and digital literacy skill levels. According to Kalu, Okai and Unagha (2015), public libraries on their own should bring innovations to transform library spaces and redesign their services to meet the information, education and recreational needs of their users believing that when these are done, that it would help in attracting users back to the library. Henjyoji (2012) using a purposive selection, studied four public libraries in New Zealand and findings show that theses New Zealand public libraries have begun to use social media to interact with their users, but not consistently. It was noted that New Zealand public libraries are at the beginning of their use of social media. Cavanagh (2014) in her study of micro-blogging practices in Canadian public libraries revealed that social media platforms such as twitter are

making a difference by enabling libraries to create new relationships or strengthen existing connections to their client communities. She observed that public library users interactions through social media platforms such as Twitter, offer rich context for understanding the changing behaviours of society's information ecology. Chu, Rajagopal, Wan and Yeung (2012) in their study suggested the need for staff training and upgrading of skills. In which case, libraries and librarians need to be well-equipped in order to serve those in need.

The main drawback to libraries adopting social media tools according to Maisiri, Mupaikwa and Ngwenya (2013) includes the negative attitude of staff, both within the libraries and institutions that are served by the libraries and this to them, is because people are yet to appreciate the extent to which social media can be used for formal business. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) in their study revealed privacy concern as the major challenge librarians encounter in the use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services. Also, low levels of technology penetration, network problem, lack of awareness, lack of funds etc. were also identified as challenges. Also, Chitumbo and Chewe (2015), sees limited Internet access points, poor Internet connectivity and limited bandwidth, lack of awareness of the existing social media, no privacy, too many social media to explore and lack of clear policy on social media tools at the implementation stage as potential challenges. Taylor and Francis Group (2014) in their survey noted that the most significant challenge of using social media remains time/resource, followed by judging an appropriate tone for communications and making people aware of the library's social media activities.

According to the study carried out by Chu, Rajagopal, Wan and Yeung (2012), the primary library inclusion / outreach activities for which social media tools were applied include: library tours, exhibitions, virtual reference, online library user guide, book recommendation and library news posting. Their findings indicate that of the social media tools used for these activities, Facebook is the most frequently applied social media.

Maisiri, Mupaikwa & Ngwenya (2013) in their study using different type of libraries in the country of Zimbabwe shows that no library had a written social media strategic plan. However, their results indicate that Facebook, Wikis, YouTube, Blogs, Twitter, Skype, Flier, and

LinkedIn are the social media tools adopted and use in Zimbabwe libraries. Taylor and Francis Group (2014) revealed that libraries are divided on the benefits of introducing formalized social media policies and plans. They noted that about a third of libraries responding to the survey had a policy in place with over 40% having no plans to introduce one. Atulomah and Onuoha (2011) observed that Facebook was seen as the most effective for advancing the library profession, followed by LinkedIn while Twitter received the lowest rating. Eze (2013) noted that public libraries do not have enough professionals as required and there has been little or no training for the available workers towards acquiring the necessary skill. She further observed that adequate provisions are not made for the training of librarians in public libraries due to the lamented lack of fund.

Librarians in public libraries are expected to adequately exploit the opportunity offered by social media to promote library and information services. Social media tools enables libraries and information centres to communicate network and share information resources with other libraries and users as well. Social media therefore are transforming the way and manner with which public libraries provide library services.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used in this study. A researcher-design rating scale was used for data collection. The population of study comprised of librarians working in four states in the south-east of Nigeria, namely: Abia, Anambra, Enugu and Imo States. The names of the public libraries include Abia State Library Board, Umuahia; Anambra State Library, Ichidi Street, Awka, Enugu State Library Board, Amachara Mpu and Imo State Library Board, Owerri. The purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting six (6) librarians each from the administrative levels of the selected libraries resulting in a sample size of twenty-four (24) The rationale behind selecting librarians at the administrative cadre is to ensure that data generated are objective and a true reflection of the readiness based on their exposure in the job. A total of twenty-two (22) instruments were retrieved back and used for the study. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis while results were presented in tables. Responses

to item statements were weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Findings and discussion

Research question 1: How ready are librarians in public libraries towards integrating social media to delivery of library services?

Table 1: Readiness of librarians in public libraries towards integration of social media

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision	Rank
a.	Librarians in public libraries have the skill required to integrate social media to library services	5 (20)	11 (33)	5 (10)	1 (1)	22 (64)	2.91	Accepted	4th
b.	Librarians have access to technological tools but lacks the required skills	5 (20)	8 (24)	6 (120)	3 (3)	22 (59)	2.68	Rejected	6th
c.	Librarians in public libraries do not have full knowledge of social media to apply to library services	4 (16)	8 (24)	7 (14)	3 (3)	22 (57)	2.59	Rejected	7th
d.	Librarians in public libraries lacks access to relevant technological infrastructures	10 (40)	9 (27)	2 (4)	1 (1)	22 (72)	3.27	Accepted	1st
e.	Librarians lacks access to technological tools but possesses the required skills to integrate social media	7 (28)	9 (27)	2 (4)	1 (1)	22 (66)	3.00	Accepted	3rd
f.	Most librarians in public	10	7	2	3	22	3.09	Accepte	2nd

	libraries are still analogue minded	(40)	(21)	(4)	(3)	(68)		d	
g.	Public libraries are at the verge of introducing social media to their services	4 (16)	12 (36)	5 (10)	1 (1)	22 (63)	2.86	Accepted	5th
h.	Public libraries have been using social media over the years	3 (12)	6 (18)	8 (16)	5 (5)	22 (51)	2.31	Rejected	8th
Grand Mean							**2.84**		

Table 1 report on the readiness of public libraries towards integrating social media to library services. The result shows that the majority of the respondents agreed to most of the item statements. The result further disclose that the respondents agreed to the statement that librarians in public libraries lacks access to relevant technological infrastructures (3.27); most librarians are still analogue minded (3.09); the librarians do not have the requisite skills to integrate social media to library services (3.0); librarians in public libraries lacks access to technological tools but possessed the required skills to integrate social media (3.0); and public libraries are at the verge of introducing social media to their library services (2.86).

They however, disagreed to the statement that librarians in public libraries have access to technological tools but lacks the required skills (2.68); librarians in public libraries do not have full knowledge of social media to apply to library services (2.59); public libraries have been using social media over the years (2.31).

Research question 2: What is the status of social media policy in integrating social media to library services?

Table 2: Status of social media policy

S/N.	Status of Social Media Policy	AGREE		DISAGREE	
		FREQ.	PER. (%)	FREQ.	PER.(%)
	Public libraries do not have social media policy on use of social media;	15	68.2	7	31.8
	Public libraries are at the stage of developing a written social media policy to guide integration of social media to library services;	12	64.5	10	35.5
	Public libraries operate with unwritten social media policy;	14	63.6	8	36.4
	Public libraries are currently working on the social media policy;	4	18.2	18	81.8

Table 2 presents the respondents opinions on the status of social media policy on integrating social media to library services. As can be seen in the table, majority of the respondents agreed that public libraries do not have social media policy on use of social media (68.2%). Also, 64.5% of the respondents agreed that public libraries are at the stage of developing a written social media policy to guide integration of social media to library services. Furthermore, 63.6% agreed that public libraries operate with unwritten social media policy. Nevertheless, 81.8% of the respondents disagreed that public libraries are currently working on the social media policy that will guide full integration of social media library services.

Research question 3: Which of these constraints affects effective integration of social media to the delivery of library services in public libraries?

Table 3: Constraints to effective integration of social media to library service delivery.

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
a.	Difficulty in choosing the social media to apply to library services;	6 (24)	9 (27)	4 (8)	3 (3)	22 (62)	2.82	Rejected
b.	Indifferent attitude of public library managers to social media application to library services;	8 (32)	9 (27)	4 (8)	1 (1)	22 (68)	3.09	Accepted
c.	Lack of access to Internet connectivity;	8 (32)	9 (27)	1 (2)	4 (4)	22 (65)	2.95	Accepted
d.	Lack of manpower to effectively integrate social media to public libraries;	3 (12)	2 (6)	5 (10)	9 (9)	22 (37)	1.68	Rejected
e.	Librarians in public libraries do not have the requisite skills to effectively integrate social media to library services	9 (36)	6 (18)	5 (10)	2 (2)	22 (64)	3.00	Accepted
f.	Low level of ICT-Literacy among librarians in public libraries;	7 (28)	9 (27)	5 (10)	1 (1)	22 (66)	3.00	Accepted
	Low level of technological penetration in public libraries;	5 (20)	12 (36)	3 (6)	2 (2)	22 (64)	2.91	Accepted
g.	Non-existence of computer and other devices that supports social media application to library services in public libraries;	10 (40)	6 (18)	1 (2)	5 (5)	22 (65)	2.95	Accepted
h.	Non-existence of social media policy affects smooth integration of social media to the delivery of library services;	9 (36)	8 (24)	2 (4)	3 (3)	22 (67)	3.05	Accepted
i.	Paucity of funds to sponsor librarians to training;	11 (44)	8 (24)	3 (6)	-	22 (74)	3.36	Accepted
j.	Slow rate of Internet connectivity;	8 (32)	6 (18)	1 (2)	7 (7)	22 (59)	2.68	Rejected

k.	Unwillingness of librarians in public libraries to undergo self development programmes in ICT;	5 (20)	7 (21)	8 (16)	2 (2)	22 (66)	3.00	Rejected
l.	Users of public libraries are not ICT Compliant;	3 (12)	5 (15)	10 (20)	4 (4)	22 (51)	2.68	Accepted
	Grand Mean							**2.86**

Table 3 has a result showing the constraints to effective integration of social media to delivery of library services in public libraries. The results has shown that the rate the respondents agreed to most of the item statements are more as the result accounts for a grand mean of 2.79 which indicates agreement. The results has further shown that the respondents reported that paucity of funds to sponsor librarians to training (3.36); indifferent attitude of public library managers to the application social media to library services (3.09); non existence of social media policy affects smooth integration of social media to the delivery of library services (3.05); low level of ICT-literacy among librarians in public libraries (3.00); non-existence of computer and other devices that supports social media application to library services in public libraries (2.95); lack of access to internet connectivity; low level of technological penetration in public libraries (2.91); and difficulty in choosing the social media to apply to library services (2.82). Most of the respondents disagreed to the followings as constraints to effective integration of social media to the delivery of library services and they are: users of public libraries are not ICT-compliant (2.31); slow rate of internet connectivity (2.68); and lack of manpower to effectively integrate social media to library services (1.68).

It was found in this study that the level of readiness among librarians in public libraries towards integrating social media to library service delivery is not encouraging even though most of them possess the requisite skills. The results indicate that most librarians in public libraries are still analogue minded and lack access to technological tools but possessed the required skills to integrate social media to provision of library services. This is in line with the revelations of Taylor and Francis Group (2014) that librarians are divided on the benefits of introducing formalized social media policies and plans.

It was also revealed that public libraries do not have social media policy on use of social media; hence they operate with unwritten social media policy. Also, most public libraries are at the stage of developing a written social media policy to guide the integration of social media to library services. This corroborate with the findings of Maisiri, Mupaikwa and Ngwenya (2013), who in their study using different types of libraries in Zimbabawe discovered that no library had a written social media strategic plan. This is however contrary to the submissions of Taylor and Francis Group (2014), where over a third of the libraries surveyed had a policy in place concerning social media.

The outcome of the last research question indicated that there constraints to effective integration of social media to delivery of library services in public libraries. The results shows that paucity of funds, indifferent attitude of public library managers, non-existence of social media policy, low level of ICT literacy among librarians in public libraries are the major constraints to effective integration of social media. The result of this finding agrees with that of Akporhonor and Olise (2015) that low level of technology penetration and lack of funds are part of the major challenges librarian's encounter in the use of social media. It also corroborates the findings of Eze (2013), Chitumbo and Chewe (2015) that limited Internet access points, poor Internet connectivity and lack of clear policy on social media tools are potential challenges to effective integration of social media to library services.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that librarians in public libraries are not fully ready for the full integration of social media to library services delivery. As at the time of this study, there is no standing policy guiding integration of social media to the provision of library products and services in public libraries across the entire south-east Nigeria. Evidence shows that low level of technological penetration due to inadequate funding of public libraries remains a major challenge. The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

i.   Librarians in public libraries should formulate a viable Social Media Policy to guide the full integration of social media tools to the provision of library services in public libraries. The policy should be able to specify the nature and forms of services that should be provided through social media, who takes responsibility for the posting of information and resources to social media platforms. This is because, the library as an institution should not go out of the range of services that aligns with the objectives for which it was established to achieve.

ii. Librarians in public library sector should explore self-development opportunities to improve on their skills on how to apply social media to the provision of library services. Also, attending of conferences and workshops organized by Information Technology Section of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) will go a long way in ensuring that librarians in public libraries are equipped with the requisite skills

iii. Efforts should be made by heads of public libraries to ensure that high level ICTs facilities are massively provided and deployed for the provision of library services.

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