

**LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ENHANCED INFORMATION SERVICE
DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITY LAW LIBRARIES: TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN
THE DIGITAL AGE**

By

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Abstract

The study explores the leveraging of social media for enhanced information service delivery in university law libraries: trends and opportunities in the digital age. Eighty-five (85) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and eighty-one (81) were returned and found useful for the study. All data were categorized and analyzed using tables. Frequency and simple percentages were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that social media are used to render various library services, legal research support, user training, and education, current awareness services, information dissemination, promotion of library events and programs, virtual program and reference services, networking and collaboration as well as information literacy. However, the major challenges faced by the law libraries of university staff when using social media for information services delivery include unreliable power supply, inadequate bandwidth, security issues, high cost of internet services, and lack of technical skills. It was also recommended that the university and the library management adequately address infrastructure challenges by investing and addressing inadequate power supply and bandwidth issues to ensure seamless social media usage within the library for information services delivery.

Keywords: Leveraging, Social Media, Information, Services Delivery, University, Law Libraries.

Introduction

Social media platforms have revolutionized communication and information-sharing processes in various domains, including library services. In academic institutions, particularly university law libraries, social media is a vital tool for providing information services to faculty, students, and legal researchers. Libraries, including academic law libraries, are increasingly leveraging these platforms to enhance service delivery, engage users, and promote resources. Social media offers unique opportunities for fostering connections between librarians and users

while enabling the sharing of valuable resources and knowledge. The dynamic and interactive nature of these platforms presents numerous advantages for libraries, including real-time interaction, accessibility, and the ability to reach a broader audience at minimal cost (Oladeji & Bakare, 2022) Adewole-Odeshi and Bassey (2023), social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp are extensively utilized by librarians for professional development and service delivery. Similarly, Ogunbodede (2022) highlights that social media networks establish and build relationships, promote social interaction, and provide more opportunities to reach library users, allowing them to interact effectively. Despite the growing integration of these platforms, their full potential remains underexplored.

Law libraries play a critical role in supporting legal research, education, and practice. In Nigeria, the integration of social media into library services has emerged as a strategy to address some of the challenges associated with traditional methods of service delivery. However, despite the growing adoption of social media, its effective utilization in university law libraries remains underexplored, particularly in the context of Nigeria. As Akanbi and Ali (2022) noted, the adoption of digital tools in libraries has been uneven, and often hindered by infrastructural, technical, and human resource challenges. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate how social media is leveraged for enhanced information service delivery in university law libraries in Nigeria, exploring the trends, opportunities, and challenges associated with its use.

This study investigates how law librarians in Nigerian universities use social media to enhance information service delivery. It focuses on the level of awareness, the specific services provided, and the challenges librarians face in utilizing these platforms. Understanding these factors is essential for maximizing the potential of social media in modern library operations.

This research seeks to address critical gaps in existing studies by examining the types of social media platforms used, the frequency of usage, and their application in promoting library services and fostering collaboration.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing reliance on digital platforms for information services necessitates a critical examination of how social media is being leveraged in university law libraries. While previous studies have explored general library services, there is limited empirical research on how social media enhances service delivery specifically in law libraries. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, technical know-how, and security concerns further hinder its effective use. This study aims to bridge this gap by evaluating trends, opportunities, and challenges in leveraging social media for improved information services.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness and use of social media by law librarians in Nigerian universities?
2. What library services are provided through social media in Nigerian university law libraries?
3. What challenges do law librarians face when using social media for information service delivery?

Review of Related Literature

Concept and Significance of Social Media

Social Media and Library Services

The evolution of social media has significantly transformed the landscape of library services. Libraries worldwide are leveraging social media platforms to provide innovative

services, engage users, and disseminate information effectively (Oladeji & Bakare, 2022). These platforms offer real-time communication, increased accessibility, and a broader reach, enabling libraries to connect with diverse user groups. Law libraries, in particular, benefit from social media as it aids in the promotion of legal research resources, collaboration, and dissemination of legal information to faculty, students, and researchers (Makeri, Isa, Gumsu, & Buba, 2024).

Social media facilitates libraries in bridging the gap between physical and virtual spaces. As the demand for virtual resources increases, platforms like Facebook and YouTube have become invaluable for hosting webinars, live-streaming lectures, and offering tutorials on accessing digital resources. Instagram, on the other hand, is particularly effective for visually engaging content, such as showcasing new arrivals or celebrating library events. Additionally, platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn are increasingly being used by law libraries to engage with professionals in the legal field, fostering connections beyond academic settings (Akanbi & Ali, 2022).

Libraries also use social media to gather user feedback, which helps in tailoring services to meet specific needs. For example, Makeri et al. (2024) note that interactive features like polls and surveys on social media platforms allow libraries to gather input on service improvements, enhancing user satisfaction. This interactive aspect not only improves service quality but also fosters a sense of community among library users.

Awareness and Use of Social Media Among Librarians

Awareness and adoption of social media by librarians vary across regions and institutions. In Nigeria, the level of awareness of social media tools among librarians is relatively high, with platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook being widely utilized for service delivery.

According to Oladeji and Bakare (2022), these platforms are essential for enhancing communication between librarians and users, promoting library services, and fostering user engagement.

Recent studies suggest that awareness is not the only factor influencing social media use among librarians; technical expertise and institutional support also play critical roles. Librarians in institutions that prioritize digital literacy training are more likely to use social media effectively. For instance, Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) found that librarians with adequate training are better equipped to use social media for tasks such as catalog promotion, resource sharing, and user interaction. Similarly, Akanbi and Ali (2022) highlight that librarians in well-funded institutions are more proactive in adopting newer platforms like TikTok for creative content sharing.

Despite this high level of awareness, certain demographic factors, such as age and educational background, influence the extent to which librarians use social media. Younger librarians tend to be more familiar with emerging technologies and are more likely to experiment with newer platforms. On the other hand, older librarians often require additional training to bridge the digital divide. This disparity underscores the need for continuous professional development to ensure all librarians can effectively utilize social media (Makeri et al., 2024).

Challenges Associated with Using Social Media in Libraries

While social media presents numerous opportunities for libraries, it also poses challenges that must be addressed for optimal utilization. Studies have identified unreliable power supply, inadequate bandwidth, high internet costs, and security concerns as significant obstacles to social media adoption in Nigerian law libraries (Makeri et al., 2024; Oladeji &

Bakare, 2022). These challenges limit the ability of librarians to fully explore the potential of social media in enhancing service delivery.

Another critical challenge is the lack of institutional support. Many libraries in Nigeria operate on limited budgets, which restricts their ability to invest in social media tools and related training programs. As Eyo (2024) points out, even when librarians are willing to adopt social media, insufficient infrastructural facilities and irregular power supply hinder their efforts. This lack of investment not only affects service quality but also discourages librarians from exploring innovative ways to engage users.

Privacy and data security concerns further complicate the adoption of social media. The increasing reliance on social media platforms raises questions about the confidentiality of user data and the ethical implications of using third-party services. According to Oladeji and Bakare (2022), libraries must navigate these issues carefully, ensuring compliance with data protection laws while safeguarding user privacy. This is particularly important in the Nigerian context, where regulatory frameworks for data protection are still evolving.

Finally, resistance to change among some librarians and library users poses a barrier to social media adoption. Makeri et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of addressing this resistance through awareness campaigns and training programs that highlight the benefits of social media in enhancing library services. By demonstrating the value of social media, libraries can overcome resistance and encourage broader adoption among stakeholders.

Results and Discussion

Level of Awareness and Use of Social Media

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on the sources primarily used to access social media.

| Sources | Frequency | Percentages |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| University library | 9 | 11.1% |
| Cyber café | 6 | 7.4% |
| Personal computer | 66 | 81.5% |
| Total | 81 | 100% |

Table 1 highlights the primary sources used to access social media. The majority (81.5%) of respondents use personal computers, while fewer rely on university libraries (11.1%) and cyber cafés (7.4%). This demonstrates a preference for personal devices in accessing social media platforms.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on level of awareness of the use of social media platforms for Information Services Delivery.

| Social Media | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| X (Twitter) | 42 | 51% |
| Facebook | 80 | 98.7% |
| YouTube | 70 | 86.4% |
| Instagram | 50 | 61.7% |
| WhatsApp | 80 | 98.7% |
| Telegram | 25 | 30.8% |
| Podcast | 9 | 11.1% |
| LinkedIn | 21 | 25.9% |
| Blogs | 65 | 80% |

Table 2 presents respondents' awareness of various social media platforms. WhatsApp and Facebook emerged as the most popular platforms, with a 98.7% usage rate. Other frequently used platforms include YouTube (86.4%), blogs (80%), and Instagram (61.7%). However, LinkedIn (25.9%), Telegram (30.8%), and podcasts (11.1%) showed lower usage rates, indicating the need for diversification.

Frequency of Social Media Usage

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on Frequency of Using the Social Media

| Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Every day | 72 | 88.8% |
| Once a week | 7 | 8.6% |
| Occasionally | 2 | 2.4% |
| Total | 81 | 100% |

Table 3 reveals that 88.8% of respondents use social media daily for information service delivery, underscoring its integral role in library operations.

Information Services Provided Using Social Media

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents Based on Library Services Provided Using Social Media

| Services | Frequency | Total |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Legal research support and guidance | 56 | 70.3% |
| User training and education on legal information resources | 49 | 60.4% |
| Information dissemination | 65 | 80.2% |
| Current awareness services | 63 | 77.7% |
| Promotion of library events | 54 | 66.6% |
| Virtual programs and reference services | 49 | 60% |
| Networking and collaboration | 65 | 80.2% |
| Information Literacy | 56 | 70% |

Table 4 outlines the services provided via social media. Information dissemination and networking (80.2%) are the most common, followed by current awareness services (77.7%), legal research support (70.3%), and promotion of library events (66.6%).

Challenges Encountered

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents Based on the challenges encountered in the use of social media in law libraries.

| Challenges | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Unreliable power supply | 71 | 87.6% |
| Inadequate bandwidth | 52 | 64.1% |
| High cost of internet services | 43 | 53.1% |
| Technical Know how | 49 | 60.4% |
| Security Issues | 63 | 77.7% |

As shown in Table 5, unreliable power supply (87.6%) and security issues (77.7%) are the most significant challenges. Other challenges include inadequate bandwidth (64.1%), high internet costs (53.1%), and limited technical know-how (60.4%).

Recommendations

1. Infrastructure Improvements: University management should invest in reliable power supply and adequate bandwidth to support social media usage.

2. Cost-Effective Internet Services: Libraries should explore affordable Internet options to reduce costs for users.
3. Training Programs: Continuous professional development should be provided to enhance librarians' technical skills.
4. Diversification of Platforms: Libraries should consider expanding their use of social media platforms to include LinkedIn, Telegram, and podcasts to reach broader audiences.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social media plays a critical role in enhancing information service delivery in university law libraries. Despite its widespread use, challenges such as infrastructure and security concerns persist. By addressing these issues, libraries can fully harness the potential of social media to improve service delivery, foster collaboration, and engage with their user communities effectively.

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