

# **Librarians' Use of Social Media for Marketing Library Services and Resources in University Libraries in Delta and Edo States**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

*This study explored how librarians in Delta and Edo University libraries used social media to promote their services and resources. The study's population consisted of 127 librarians from federal, state, and private university libraries in the Delta and Edo states. The entire enumeration sample approach was used in the investigation. The data were examined with simple percentages, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics (the mean was set at 2.50). The study discovered that university librarians in Delta and Edo States use various marketing approaches to promote their services and resources, including social media, library webpages, one-on-one interactions with users, phone calls, exhibitions and displays, bulletin boards, orientation programs, and notice boards. Also, the study found that librarians in university libraries located in Delta and Edo States utilize various social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and TikTok, to promote their services and resources. Furthermore, while librarians use social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and TikTok to sell their services and resources, the utilization of social media for marketing was found to be poor. Recommendations based on the study's findings include: librarians should be encouraged by library management to engage more in the marketing of the library's services and resources by making available all resources required to successfully market the library's resources and services via the use of social media tools, among others.*

**Keywords:** Librarians, social media, Marketing, Library Resources, Library Services, University Libraries.

## **Introduction**

The 21st-century university library is considered the nerve centre of academic activity in any university. They (libraries) are the driving force behind the accomplishments of the university's teaching, learning, and research activities. To accomplish this, university libraries acquire books, periodicals, and electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-zines, database subscriptions, and academic software. With the acquisition of these resources, university libraries are making concerted efforts to ensure that their information resources and services are always accessible to users. However, acquiring materials without making adequate efforts to showcase (market) them to users will result in books taking up shelf space and not being used. Scholars have repeatedly warned that information resources and services available do not imply automatic access and use (Nwachukwu et al., 2014).

It is obvious from the foregoing that librarians must be willing to advertise their products and services to users to grow patronage in this digital age. Users in the twenty-first century are predominantly digital natives who want to source their information rather than relying only on the library, especially in this age of Google and free internet access to electronic resources. To encourage consumers to use their services and resources, university libraries should be prepared to engage in marketing operations to promote patronage. Twin (2021) defines marketing as "the activities that a corporation engages in to stimulate the purchase or sale of a product or service." Library marketing, as defined by Lamb (2020), comprises learning about the preferences of present and potential patrons, delivering relevant materials and services, and gathering feedback to enhance the library's services and materials.

Librarians must engage in aggressive promotion to promote their materials and services and enhance library utilization. In the twenty-first century, the greatest way to accomplish this is

through social media usage. Social media emergence has expanded the reach and changed the nature of library marketing. Social media are now been deployed for selling library services in a more novel way. It allows users to create, interact with, chat with, and exchange information, hence boosting customer access to libraries (Khan & Bhatti, 2012). Merriam-Webster defines social media as an electronic platform that people use to make virtual communities for the function of exchanging information, private messages, ideas, and other types of content. Examples of such platforms include microblogging and websites for social networking. The main social media used by groups are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. The Office of Communications and Marketing is in charge of these tools. Social media is a sort of online content sharing that lets people share personal information, documents, videos, and photos swiftly and seamlessly (Dollarhide, 2021). The present study is aimed at examining librarians' use of social media for marketing their services and resources in the university libraries in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Due to people's choice of specialized online information sources, library visitor rates have decreased in the twenty-first century. A worrying problem is the underuse of library resources and services at university libraries. The aforementioned advancement has elicited significant apprehension among scholars in the field of librarianship. Is it feasible that the underwhelming promotion of library resources and services is a factor in the poor use of libraries? Is it feasible that librarians are failing to use the right resources and channels, including social media, to promote their offerings? Additionally, a preliminary study by the researcher has shown that librarians use social media rarely to advertise their resources and services. A possible

effect of this is that patrons may become less familiar with the library's resources and services, thus resulting in a reduction in their use of such resources and services.

### **Research Questions**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the marketing strategies employed by librarians for showcasing their offerings and resources?
2. What are the social media tools employed by librarians in universities for promoting their offerings and information resources?
3. To what degree do librarians in universities employ social media tools for offerings and information resource promotion?

### **Literature review**

The literature review was done in line with the objectives of the Study.

### **The marketing strategies employed by librarians to showcase their offerings and resources**

In their study, Olorunfemi and Ipadeola (2018) examined the marketing strategies employed by university libraries in Nigeria's South West region. The authors discovered that libraries utilized various promotional techniques, including electronic information access, staff-user interactions, exhibitions and displays, development of library web pages, user education initiatives, and personalized consultations with library patrons. Research was done by Edewor et al. (2016) on the development of library and information services provided by African university libraries. The survey found that the key methods used by African libraries to advertise their collections and information services include flyers, orientation activities, websites, and library periodicals including memos, bulletins, and newsletters. Urhefe-Okotie (2023) explored the

marketing strategies and skills required by librarians for the promotion of their services and resources in academic libraries in Nigeria. The findings indicate that planning library week, offering electronic access to information, planning user education, using flyers and posters, displaying new arrivals, emailing users, and setting up exhibitions and library websites, among others are the marketing strategies adopted by the libraries under study. Osinulu et al (2018) explored the marketing strategies used by librarians in a state university library. The findings revealed that carrying out user studies, interlibrary loan services, improving borrowing privileges, suggestion boxes, compilation of bibliographies, and the use of Web 2.0 technologies and services, among others. According to Bamigbola (2013), e-mails, phone calls, library websites, faculty/departmental meetings, and the deliberate packaging of pertinent material for users were among the marketing methods used by many Nigerian university libraries.

### **The social media tools employed by librarians in universities to promote their offerings and information resources**

According to Tofi, et al. (2018), the most popular social media platforms for disseminating library and information resources and services in the modern digital era include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, blogs, and RSS feeds. In research on librarians' use of social media, Blessing and Florence (2015) found that Facebook and blogs are commonly used by libraries to advertise their resources and services. In a research, Oloo and Luyombya (2023) explored the social media platforms for marketing library services and resources at Kyambogo University Library, Uganda. The findings indicated that the university library uses mainly WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to promote its services and resources. Kirita and Mwaantimwa (2021) assessed the deployment of social media marketing for library resources and services. The findings indicated that Facebook is the most used social media platform, which

is followed closely by WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and blogs. Kizito et al (2023) explored the use of social media platforms for boosting the marketing of library services in the Hamu Mukasa Library, Uganda Christian University, Mukono. The findings show that Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Telegram, WhatsApp and Instagram. Chauhan (2013) examined the use of social media in libraries. The researcher stressed that Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, Flickr, and Library Thing are majorly deployed for promoting services are resources in libraries.

### **The Extent to which librarians in universities employ social media tools for offerings and information resource promotion**

Okuonghae, et al. (2018) study focused on the informal scientific communication strategies used by librarians in South-South Nigerian university libraries on social media platforms. The level to which social media is used to advertise library resources and offerings was analyzed by the writers. The study's conclusions suggest that the use of social media for informal scientific communication by librarians at university libraries in South-South, Nigeria, is constrained because of several obstacles that prevent their efficient use of social media for this objective. Blessing and Florence (2015) examined how university libraries in South-South Nigeria used social media to advertise their collections and information services. The research found that promoting library and information resources and services in libraries is mostly done via Facebook and blogs which is used to a large extent. Additionally, research revealed that librarians' use of social media facilitates two-way communication, facilitates contact with library users, offers a platform for user input, and boosts library utilisation. Innocent et al (2021) examined the extent of the use of social media for effective information service delivery in university libraries in Abia State, Nigeria. The findings indicated that the extent of the use of social media for promoting services in the university libraries in Abia State, Nigeria was low as

the majority of the university libraries studied do not have official social media pages. Nduka et al (2021) explored the use of social media tools by library and information professionals in South-West, Nigeria. The findings indicated that the extent of the use of social media platforms by library professionals was high. Lastly, Ternenge (2019) examined the awareness and deployment of social media platforms for the dissemination of information by information professionals in Benue State Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, Makurdi. The findings showed that the extent of the use of Facebook was high but there was low use of WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Blogs.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey design was selected for the study. The population of the study is 127 librarians and this is comprised of the total number of librarians from federal, state, and private universities in the Nigerian states of Delta and Edo. As of the time of this study, there are three federal, six states, and eight private universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. 127 librarians from all the universities in the Nigerian states of Delta and Edo made up the sample. Total enumeration sampling was used since the population was small enough to be controlled. The respondents' information was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire's data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (the mean will be set at 2.50).

### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** Strategies deployed by librarians for marketing services and resources in university libraries.

**Table 1: Marketing Strategies Deployed by Librarians for Marketing Services and Resources**

S/N	Strategies Deployed for Marketing Services and Resources	Agree		Disagree		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a.	Application of social media	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
b.	Library Webpage	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
c.	One- One Interaction with Library Users	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
d.	Selective Dissemination of Information Service	120	90.2	13	9.8	133	100.0
e.	Phone Calls	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
f.	Exhibition and Display	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
g.	Bulletin boards	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
h.	Orientation Programmes	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
i.	Staff friendliness to users	80	60.2	53	39.8	133	100.0
j.	Notice Boards	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
k.	Posters	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
l.	Fliers and leaflets	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
m.	Memos and Circulars	70	52.6	63	47.4	133	100.0
n.	Digital Signage.	37	27.8	96	72.2	133	100.0
o.	Brochures	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0
p.	Newsletters	133	100.0	0	0.00	133	100.0

As per the data shown in Table 1, it can be inferred that the entire sample of 133 librarians (100%) utilized various communication methods like social media, the library's website, face-to-face interactions with patrons, phone calls, exhibitions and displays, bulletin boards, orientation programs, notice boards, posters, fliers and leaflets, brochures, and newsletters. Furthermore, a significant number of the employees, specifically 120 individuals or 90.2%, utilized a service that selectively disseminates information. Additionally, 80 employees or 60.2% indicated they made efforts to enhance the user-friendliness of their staff, while 70 employees or 52.6% relied on memos and circulars as a means of communication. In conclusion, the promotional strategies employed by librarians in university libraries located in Delta and Edo

states include various forms of media such as social media, library websites, as well as personal interactions with library users through telephone calls, exhibitions, displays, bulletin boards, orientation programs, notice boards, posters, flyers, leaflets, brochures, newsletters, and selective information dissemination. Additionally, the approach of staff members towards users and the use of memos are also utilized as promotional techniques.

**Research Question 2** What social media platforms do librarians utilize to promote offerings and materials at university libraries?

**Table 3: Social Media Sites for Marketing of Offerings and Materials**

S/N	Social Media Tools Used for the Marketing of Services and Resources	Agree		Disagree		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a.	Facebook.	100	75.2	33	24.8	133	100
b.	WhatsApp.	100	75.2	33	24.8	133	100
c.	Twitter.	17	12.8	116	87.2	133	100
d.	Instagram.	20	15.0	113	85.0	133	100
e.	LinkedIn.	0	0	133	100.0	133	100
f.	Google +.	7	5.3	126	94.7	133	100
g.	Snap Chat.	0	0	133	100.0	133	100
h.	Skype.	0	0	133	100.0	133	100
i.	Podcast.	0	0	133	100.0	133	100
j.	Pinterest.	0	0	133	100.0	133	100
k.	Blogs.	0	0	133	100.0	133	100
l.	TikTok.	7	5.3	126	94.7	133	100

A majority of the participants, particularly 100 people or 75.2%, use Facebook and WhatsApp to promote library resources and offerings, according to the information in Table 3. A smaller proportion of librarians, 20 individuals or 15%, use Instagram for this purpose. Additionally, 17 librarians or 12.8% use Twitter, while 7 individuals or 5.5% each use Google+ and TikTok for marketing library services and resources. Additional social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Snapchat, Skype, Podcasts, Pinterest, and Blogs, were not utilized. Thus, it can be inferred that librarians in university libraries located in Delta and Edo States utilize

various social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and TikTok, to promote their services and resources.

**Research Question 3:** Extent of the use of social media by librarians for the marketing of services and resources in university libraries

**Table 4: Extent of Use of Social Media Platforms for Marketing of Services and Resources**

S/N	The Extent of the Use of Social Media for Marketing	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean
a.	Facebook.	50	30	30	23	2.80
b.	WhatsApp.	80	30	23	0	3.43
c.	Twitter.	0	0	90	43	1.68
d.	Instagram.	5	10	90	28	1.94
e.	LinkedIn.	0	0	102	31	1.77
f.	Google +.	0	0	36	97	1.27
g.	Snap Chat.	0	0	27	106	1.20
h.	Skype.	0	0	0	133	1.00
i.	Podcast.	0	0	0	133	1.00
j.	Pinterest.	0	0	0	133	1.00
k.	Blogs.	0	0	0	133	1.00
l.	TikTok.	0	30	7	96	1.50

**Aggregate Mean**

**1.63**

**Criterion Mean**

**2.50**

According to Table 4, the overall mean, which is 1.63, is lower than the criteria mean, which is 2.50. As a result, university libraries' librarians don't advertise their services and resources on social media very frequently. Apart from Facebook and WhatsApp.

### **Summary and Discussion of Findings**

The current study demonstrates that university libraries in the states of Delta and Edo use a range of marketing techniques to advertise their products and services. One-on-one interactions with library patrons, phone calls, exhibitions and displays, bulletin boards, orientation sessions, notice boards, posters, fliers and leaflets, brochures, newsletters, selective information service distribution, staff friendliness toward patrons, memos, and staff exhibitions are a few of these techniques. The current research supports that of Olorunfemi and Ipadeola (2018), who reported that a variety of techniques, including electronic information access, user-friendly staff, exhibitions and displays of new materials, the creation of a library website, user education, and individualized interactions with users, are used to market library and information offerings in university libraries located in the South West region of Nigeria.

This study also found that librarians in university libraries located in Delta and Edo States utilize various social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and TikTok, to promote their services and resources. This finding agrees with the one by Tofi, et al (2018) who, that the most popular social media platforms for disseminating library and information resources and services in the modern digital era include Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, blogs, and RSS feeds.

According to the findings of this research, the use of social media by librarians to promote services and resources in university libraries is limited, with Facebook and WhatsApp being the primary platforms used. This aligns with the study conducted by Okuonghae, et al. (2018) who found that the use of social media for informal scientific communication by librarians at university libraries in South-South, Nigeria, is at an all-time low and that librarians are constrained by several obstacles that prevent their efficient use of social media for promoting their services and resources

## **Conclusion**

The study was conducted to examine how librarians in universities located in the Delta and Edo States of Nigeria use social media platforms to promote their services and resources. With the rapid advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) and social media tools, it has become essential for librarians to take advantage of these platforms to enhance user engagement and promote the library's offerings. The study findings indicate that librarians in these regions have implemented various marketing strategies to publicize their services and resources. These strategies encompass the use of social media platforms, library websites, personal interactions with users, telephone communication, exhibitions, bulletin boards, orientation programs, posters, flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other methods.

However, the study also reveals that librarians' involvement in advocating for their services and resources is minimal. While librarians in these regions utilize social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and TikTok to promote their offerings, their overall utilization of social media as a marketing tool for academic library services and resources is limited.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results of this investigation, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. Librarians should use social media as part of their marketing strategies to effectively promote library services and resources. This will help spread information to users, increasing awareness of the value and benefits of utilizing library resources.

2. Library management should prioritize creating a technology-friendly environment within the library, ensuring reliable electricity and network connectivity. This will enable librarians to utilize social media platforms more effectively for marketing purposes.
3. Library management should develop policies that prioritize the promotion of library resources and services through modern technological channels, including social media.

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