

## Building Communities

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# Building Communities

*Social networking for academic libraries*

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[www.chandospublishingonline.com](http://www.chandospublishingonline.com)

Chandos Publishing is an imprint of Woodhead Publishing Limited

Woodhead Publishing Limited  
80 High Street  
Sawston, Cambridge CB22 3HJ  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 1223 499140  
Fax: +44 (0) 1223 832819  
[www.woodheadpublishing.com](http://www.woodheadpublishing.com)

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First published in 2013

ISBN: 978-1-84334-735-4 (print)  
ISBN: 978-1-78063-401-2 (online)

Chandos Social Media Series ISSN: 2050-6813 (print) and ISSN: 2050-6821 (online)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013939098

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Typeset by Domex e-Data Pvt. Ltd, India  
Printed in the UK and USA.

A library outranks any other one thing a community  
can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing  
spring in the desert.

**Andrew Carnegie**

A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be  
prepared to take the helm.

**Henrik Ibsen (tr. F Sharp)**  
(*An Enemy of the People*, Act 1)

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## Acknowledgements

There are a lot of people who have helped me on the path of writing this book. I am truly grateful for their assistance:

Chaniqua 'Kay' Mauldin, for her extraordinary support and proofreading

Barbara Petruzzelli, for her words of encouragement

Theresa Davis, for her assistance in locating needed books and articles

The Mount Saint Mary College community

Dr Glyn Jones, George Knott, and Jonathan Davis, at Chandos Publishing

My son, Jonathan Garofalo, for his patient understanding and glossary suggestions

My wonderful husband, Jim Garofalo, for his support and proofreading and fantastic suggestions

Thank you to all.

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# The whats and whys of social networking for academic libraries

**Abstract:** A brief overview with an explanation of what social media are and why they are important, including the role of social media on campus as an adjunct to digital teaching strategies and also as a means for student engagement. Their twentieth-century origins. A presence in social media facilitates the academic library in participating in academic culture, as well as increasing its visibility. Considering the different types of community on campus keys in to the various ways in which participation in social media can benefit a library. This means innovation in difficult times, and can enhance relationships with and among students and improve students' learning skills. The role of the contemporary academic library. Outreach to distance-learning students.

**Key words:** social media networking, academic libraries, student engagement, information literacy, innovation, technology, life skills, branding, information commons, marketing.

## Background

The technological and social changes of the twenty-first century have expanded the roles of social media and social networking and highlighted the ubiquity of these technologies. The term 'social media' denotes 'websites and applications

which enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking' (*OED Online*, 2012). This is a democratizing technology, affording anybody the capacity to create content and disseminate information; a kind of global 'word of mouth' for the twenty-first century. The facility for anyone and everyone to create and distribute information to a broad audience, and then interact with that audience, allows the rapid development of extensive communities of people with common interests, where like-minded individuals can associate, engage, and build relationships through purposeful conversations and connections. Social networking sites are small virtual villages, and they also alter the traditional relationships between individuals and organizations or between individuals and institutions. Both facets of those relationships center on communicating – providing content and responding to messages, creating and building virtual personalities – resulting in dialog between the individuals and the institution or organization. The prevalence and popularity of social networking sites are changing the dynamics of social interactions as they change the traditional face-to-face in-person interactions and expand the numbers of different outlets through which individuals, institutions, and organizations can communicate. As Neal Rodriguez (2012, para. 2) commented, social networking sites '...are community building tools'.

'Social networking' – the use or establishment of social networks or connections or the use of websites which enable users to interact with one another (*OED Online*, 2012) – and 'social media' are among the buzzwords of current technology for all types of businesses and organizations. Getting connected and staying that way are important aspects of outreach, brand-building, and networking for people and groups alike. However, using technology to

connect with others is not new in the twenty-first century. The 1970s saw the birth of email and online BBS (bulletin board systems), newsgroups were first formed in the 1980s, and online communities such as Tripod and GeoCities sprang up in the 1990s, followed by blogs, chat, and online course management software. Wikipedia debuted in 2001, followed closely by iTunes, Friendster, MySpace and LinkedIn. Facebook and podcasting came into being in 2004, and Twitter in 2006 (McManus, 2011; Cherim, 2006).

During these years libraries kept pace and utilized these and other technical innovations, such as the incorporation of streaming media, downloadable audio, and ebooks into their collections. Social networking is just one more technological tool libraries are integrating into their service model. Through the use of social networking, libraries can connect with users and others, building a virtual community of people who have similar interests (the library) and interact through discussions and postings. Social networking is the twenty-first-century mode of communication. Libraries can use social networking to communicate with library users and extend services, for example, by providing news about library events, information about new materials, research tips, and much more.

Building a community on social media is much more than just waiting for comments from users. 'By definition, a community is a collection of people ... who interact together in the same environment' (Bacon, 2009, p. 4). A community goes beyond comments or 'shares' or an active fan base, although comments can be an indicator of community on a social media network. When user comments include reactions to another's comment, with direct engagement through the comments, the result is side conversations and possibly the emergence of new topics and revelations, indicating that a common purpose or mission exists among the participants – in

other words, a community exists, and social connectedness is established.

Social connectedness can be defined as the experience of belonging to a social relationship or network (Lee and Robbins, 1995) and a social networking community is such a network. Community-building via social networking results in a sense of belonging and connectedness. Community members connect with one another, building support for themselves from among these connections. When an academic library participates in social media for community-building efforts, the community members look out for each other and for the library. The community allows for opportunities for connection and growth, as community members participate and share in this active, engaging, and fluid experience.

To those that participate in such online communities, these spaces are real, and they augment, intensify, and connect to all aspects of their lives. Social networking sites deliver channels for members to connect, exchange information, invite others to events, and share media. In this way participants acquire a forum for presentation and extension of themselves and their ideas and concerns and a place to explore their identities, share their insights, and interact with others. Students may be confident in their ability to gather information via the Internet so that they can find resources, locate answers, and substantiate their answers, but also recognize that their confidence does not mean that they constitute an information-literate student body.

Consideration needs to be given to the different types of relationship existing on campus (student-based, faculty-based, service-based, staff-based and variations thereof), along with the acknowledgement that these different relationships are increasingly facilitated through social media technologies. There is a perception in academia that the use of and participation in social media networking sites

takes time away from more intellectual pursuits and dissipates the necessary boundaries between instructor and student; perceptions can be difficult to overcome (McBride, 2010). As Manlow et al. (2010, p. 50) state, 'While there are those who oppose web-based teaching, and who are suspicious of or slow to adopt new technologies, more and more faculty and administrators will recognize that advances in technology enable universities to transform the learning environment in a positive direction in line with progressive pedagogies'. Through successful community-building, members of the academic community may come to perceive that social media provide a means to engage with students and promote transparency within this growing twenty-first-century culture of informality, and can lead to campus-wide engagement through networking sites.

These sites are used not only for social networking and entertainment but also for access to information, for learning, and for carrying out professional duties. Perhaps the reluctance of academic libraries to begin to participate in social networking is due to the explicitly non-educational intention of a technology that includes 'social' in its name. But there are benefits to the library in building a community and establishing connections. Libraries may find that 'it might be possible to leverage it [social media technology] as an instructional tool' (Graham, 2007, p. 6). There is potential in social networking to allow the library to provide expertise in the research process, instruction in the use of resources, and information on the content available through the library. Social media technology furnishes the academic library with another tool for connecting to the community, whether the community members prefer contact in person, by phone, email, IM, chat, text messaging, or through the social networking community.

Social networking technology is a means to be where our community is, and to interact with the community and others with whom that community interacts. Younger people believe that email is dead, and use texting, IM, and Facebook to stay in touch. Libraries need to recognize that in order to remain relevant to a user base an adjustment in communication modes is essential. Facebook is a widely used social networking service that is very popular with people of all ages. Businesses and other organizations alike utilize Facebook in community-building efforts, using it as a means to extend and promote their services within their community. Academic libraries can use social media networking to notify their communities about news, events, resources, and library services.

A community built around the academic library can assist students and faculty seeking assistance in their research and information-gathering activities but who may be reluctant or unable to visit the physical library building in person. For instance, students using distance education may be unable to make the visit because of location constraints. There are also those, primarily students, who want information and need assistance with research, but do not wish to visit the library building. The library can reach those students through social media networking, demonstrating integration via the preferred means of interaction for these community members.

## **Role on campus**

Innovation is never easy. Academic libraries can become entrenched in their standard means of providing services, notifying the campus of available materials, or of reaching out to their core community of students, faculty, and staff. And as Steven Bell (Associate University Librarian for

Research and Instructional Services at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA) stated at the ACRL/NEC (Association of College and Research Libraries, New England Chapter) Annual Conference at the College of the Holy Cross (Worcester, MA, 18 May, 2012), ‘entrenched cultures do not support changes, innovation, and discovery.’ Integrating social media technologies into academic libraries is innovative, and without a doubt it will change the way academic libraries relate to their communities. More importantly, though, in order to continue to be relevant in today’s world of higher education, libraries need to connect to people on campus. Social networking provides a method to reach out to people, to make connections and build communities.

These are challenging times for higher education, and institutions will ‘have difficulty surviving in this new environment made harsher with [sic] the recent economic crisis’ (Manlow et al., 2010, p. 48). The global situation is a factor, but local conditions are the most likely determinants for any challenges faced, and it is essential to understand the academic environment in which the library functions, as well as the basic functions of the library, when considering an implementation of an innovative service. The basic functions of the academic library – providing the content of collections, a mechanism of access to the collection content, various services to support the community, and personnel to provide and maintain access, services and collections – are directly related to the academic environment (the college or university) in which the library exists. The changing face of higher education directly impacts the academic library and its services, such as:

- demographic changes and societal shifts, resulting in a culturally diverse student body as well as a shift to more undergraduates who are older than the traditional 18–22-year-olds

- changes to the curriculum
- technological changes, including those impacting the media used in the classroom and to support research
- financial support
- student recruitment and retention
- physical space limitations.

Changing social, political, and economic situations are impacting all facets of higher education, including the academic library. Societal shifts have already impacted the ability of young people to participate in the traditional offerings of higher education. As a result, owing to the need to work, working schedules, and the need for new skills, the make-up of the student body has shifted to include more undergraduates, along with an increase in evening and weekend classes and the further implementation of distance learning (Altbach et al., 2011).

What is the academic library of today? Briefly, it is an institution that offers a supplement and complement to the college's or university's curriculum; essentially the library offers content. To support the content, the library also provides a means for the academic community to access that content, whether via a print book, a digital object, or some other mode. It also provides services such as instruction and research support, a facility to house and interact with the content, and trained personnel to assist the community in activities related to this content. Much of the discussion on how best the library can serve the academic community revolves around scholarly communications and the collection content, and whether a library should even continue to develop a collection. Such debate is far outside the scope of this title. But it is important to remember that academic libraries essentially support the mission of their academic institution and go on from there.

No matter what your perspective, it is important to remember that libraries are a means to connect knowledge to the community. Libraries have always been about community, although the composition of the community involved varies from library type to library type. Academic libraries are concerned with their campus community members – the students, faculty, researchers, staff, alumni, and other groups associated with the college or university.

The partnership among those engaged in learning, research, and the library on academic campuses is an inherent one, and integral to the success of teaching and learning. ‘Raising awareness of what the library can do to support teaching and research staff, as well as students, and of its contribution to the wider institution, is a key component of demonstrating value’ (Creaser and Spezi, 2012, p. 10). Academic libraries contribute to the success of learning and research, and assist in the creation of students able to succeed in our dynamically advancing society, armed with the skills to navigate, find information and use it to answer questions and solve problems in the real world beyond academia’s walls. Academic librarians have the skills and talent to retrieve, organize and evaluate information and then guide others to locate it.

Digital teaching strategies encompass schemes that engage students so they can focus on the content and the collaborative process. The means to accomplish this are varied, and can depend on the delivery of the course content (synchronous v. asynchronous, online v. hybrid, blended v. face-to-face, etc.), but generally involve such activities as pre-course orientation, the ability to browse materials to gain familiarity with the various course materials (readings, texts, handouts, presentations, notes, etc.), recorded class sessions, and course management system orientation. Social media have the potential to facilitate distributed research, through the

engagement of students in developing practical research skills, such as those needed in using online information networks (Mejias, 2006). The academic library can serve as a means to assist and support digital teaching strategies, and the library's social networking community is a viable means of providing such support.

Distance-education students, in particular, may find the use of social media networking invaluable as a means to enhance their learning experience and connection to the academic campus. Instruction rubrics and pedagogical practices have shifted to place student interaction at the heart of the knowledge-transfer transactions. The connective nature of social media can assist distance-education students in feeling a part of the community through collaboration and interactivity (Beldarrain, 2006).

Since students use social networking daily (Madden and Zickuhr, 2011), the presence of a virtual library community can encourage a 'learning is fun' atmosphere while still providing informative and educational support. For instance, the library could use its social networking channels to spark a discussion about any anxiety issues the uninitiated may have around using course management software, allowing the community members the opportunity to acknowledge any apprehension and seek out information on how the software works, with the library providing information and access to an overview of the system. And seasoned users may find that such a community discussion serves for them as a review of functionality; they may even pick up a tip or tool of which they were previously unaware. These exchanges facilitate reciprocal communication and foster student-driven participation. Games and scavenger hunts are popular on social networking sites, so that another helpful activity for the cognitive inquiry approach to instruction could be a

scavenger hunt to introduce students to the system and aid in identifying skill levels among participating students.

Discussions of contemporary effective teaching embrace the idea that a connection between the student and the instructor is essential, and that successful learning and understanding go hand in hand with good teaching (Ramsden, p. 84). Student engagement is a factor relevant to course success, and there are many factors that affect course design and delivery and the effect that these have on student engagement and successful learning and teaching. Junco et al. (2011, p. 8) state that ‘academic and co-curricular engagement are powerful forces in both student psychosocial development and academic success.’ For the successful engagement of students in classes instructors need to provide the opportunity for students to share experiences that they find relevant and accessible. Academic libraries can play a role in fostering this engagement by building a social networking community that allows active participation by students in their learning experience.

## **Why social media for academic libraries?**

Academic libraries are besieged with greater demands from the academic community for access to and instruction in electronic information resources such as ebooks and database resources, while at the same time feeling pressure to advocate and promote awareness of library resources and services to current, former, and new users. Some librarians believe that social media are ‘outside the purview of librarianship’ (Boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 223), but the potential that exists for the library in participating in social media cannot be ignored; perhaps the changes that younger generations and advancing

technology are bringing about will result in a shift in perceptions among librarians. In any case, redefining the role of the library on the academic campus while simultaneously integrating new formats and technologies has been demonstrated to be difficult to achieve.

Staff and librarians find another challenge in the need to maintain a high tolerance for rapid change as formats and technologies morph and alter. The library can increase both its visibility to the academic community and the vital role it plays by active involvement in pursuits that are visible, support learning, and confirm the role of the library as both a learning space and a meeting place. A social media community that it has established can promote a positive and hospitable perception of the library.

Building communities via social networking can also assist libraries in demonstrating value to their academic institutions. Researchers, faculty, and students may be unaware that the online journal articles and other digital resources they use are library-provided. Overcoming perceptions can be quite an impediment to ensuring users of library services are library supporters. Fortunately, libraries are generally perceived in a positive light owing to a surplus of social capital. According to Bacon (2009, p. 6,) 'social capital is the collective family of positive interactions between two or more people. When you affect someone positively, it builds your social capital.' Providing research assistance, curriculum support and information literacy instruction, along with all the many other ways libraries operate on campus, equates to a substantial sum of social capital.

Social networking provides one way to build upon that social capital and develop additional relationships and connections, to communicate with and demonstrate value to the academic community. Participation and community-building via social

networking provide academic libraries with opportunities to engage with students, faculty, researchers, and staff. The library's efforts to demonstrate participation in faculty and student engagement provide 'evidence of value more effectively' (Barr, 2012, para. 8) to the campus. Building a community is a cooperative venture, which requires engagement with the various community constituent groups and encourages collaborative discussions.

The academic campus has been affected not only by technology and the resulting changes but also by globalization and a realization that competition for students, faculty, and research dollars is increasing. Libraries have to respond to these changes that are affecting the teaching and research efforts of our faculty and student bodies, and carve out new methods to meet these needs.

As Wavle (2009, p. 321) states, 'in order to increase the visibility of the library and to affirm the central role that the library plays in the academic enterprise, it is imperative for the library staff to actively engage in activities that support and foster learning, study, and discovery, as well as to be highly visible and active on campus.'

Today colleges and universities are regarding social media as important conduits through which to reach out, communicate, and engage with students, alumni, and potential students and to build relationships in the virtual locations where these groups interact. Integrating social networking on campus involves thinking about how to connect to students in their own environments and find efficient and effective ways to provide services that are flexible and meaningful to them.

Librarians must stay informed of new developments and continually acquire new knowledge and skills to remain relevant and support learning on the academic campus and

to keep pace with user expectations and needs. Given that academic libraries are a mechanism to offer access to knowledge for their communities, academic librarians need to overcome the tendency to overlook the fact that libraries are a means, not an end, and use innovative, new, and diverse methods to ensure that the library as an institution adjusts, survives, and thrives. Building a community based around the academic library through interaction via social networking is one such innovative method. Academic libraries can interact with the academic community through social networking. The library can, at a basic level, provide access to knowledge for the local social networking community or, at a more advanced level of interaction, offer the opportunity to build a community.

Whether faculty, students, and staff visit the library to use its resources and services or to meet and work collaboratively, the continuing growth in the information commons model for academic libraries reinforces the position of the library as the campus community's gathering place. Taking advantage of this situation and building up a community through social networking technologies provides academic libraries with a teaching tool that is in synch with the mindset and needs of at least one large component of the community, the students. Utilizing social networking demonstrates to students that the library is flexible, relevant, and contemporary. This technology also allows for collaboration and user-generated content, both facets of the informal learning experience (Cain and Policastri, 2011, p. 1). Libraries design and deliver personal, supportive, and responsive services to support research and the curriculum, but the heart of the job of academic libraries is still helping students to succeed.

Connectedness as it is seen in today's society is most often sought and achieved through social media and social

networking sites. The ability to connect and relate through conversations and interactive discussions provides an opportunity to discover and share new information, enabled online via social media, and social media are broadly used across colleges and universities. Obviously more than a passing trend, the social and digital media revolution is here to stay; the reality of online communities must be embraced, not just tolerated, in order to reach students where they choose to interact. The broad use of social media by college students creates exciting opportunities for academic institutions, such as the library, that are ready and willing to acquire the skills, knowledge, and training to successfully build communities and participate in social media technologies. As Olson et al. (2010, last para.) note, social media on academic campuses create ‘virtual environments where community members can connect with the institution and build affinity online.’

The community built through social media redefines how relationships are created and developed, both among individuals and with organizations. These communities also serve as digital meeting grounds, ‘public spaces’ as substitutes for locations where people have traditionally met face to face, such as parks, malls, neighborhoods, and other locations where people gather. In particular, college students are very engaged with social media, and this engagement has transformed the way these students communicate generally as well as within their college environment. College students use social media to connect, and to create and consume content; basically to experience college in both face-to-face and online communities. In fact, the more college students use social media to connect and communicate with other students, their instructors, and college staff regarding college concerns or coursework, the higher their levels of engagement (*Making Connections*, 2009, pp. 8–9).

The combination of our technologically advanced society and the information explosion means that information literacy and the skills involved in organizing, accessing, and evaluating information are integral not only to the learning process but to success in the workplace as well. Making students' learning meaningful as well as successful is crucial, and imparting effectively how best to navigate the confusing choices of information is difficult; the easy solution is to 'Google it.' But librarians know that those students who can locate, evaluate, analyze, and communicate information to others efficiently will almost certainly be successful in their chosen vocation.

Social networking can be another channel to communicate to the academic library's community those vital information literacy skills. Demonstrating and discussing the doubtful quality of information found through general Internet searches as compared to information located through scholarly research databases is one way of approaching this. Social media networking sites such as Facebook can be utilized as informal learning environments. Cain and Policastri (2011, p. 7) shared experiences in using Facebook as a teaching tool. An optional activity within a course provided an opportunity for students to share opinions and content online on a Facebook group page. The effort involved instructional design to ensure the topics and dialog encompassed the targeted subject matter of contemporary business topics, as well as a means for evaluation and assessment. The informal learning strategy meshed well with the activity, and offered 'a way to model professional communications via social media.'

### ***Student skills for success***

The academic library and librarians serve to encourage and support faculty in their efforts to teach students. By assisting

in the college or university's established learning priorities and curriculum, librarians can aid in the effort to ensure that students are equipped with the tools, skills, and competencies to be effective lifelong learners. The collaboration between librarian and faculty in this effort may be a challenge. Recognizing the opportunity social media software creates to aid in this effort and utilizing the technology to communicate and foster the community are ways to provide services and support those skills students need for success on the campus and beyond.

Take information literacy as an example. Information is readily accessible and very available because of the various technologies students use daily, from mobile technologies to computer labs and more. The pervasive nature of information in today's society would seem to mean that students are not only accustomed to using information but are also able to do so in a confident and accurate manner. The bare fact that students exhibit information-seeking behaviors on a daily basis, however, does not mean they have the skills to analyze the information they have retrieved and make judicious decisions on what information to use and what to cull (Rockman, 2004, p. xv).

A social networking community built around the academic library can provide a means to support appropriate, precise, and critical skills to deal with the ever-changing and expanding information environment, and its existence demonstrates a willingness to adopt a strategy that meets the students where they like to spend time – on social media. Posting questions or suggestions or tips on how to deal with the complex and plentiful information choices, and then waiting for comments and discussion from the community, can provide the opportunity to give practical feedback on comments that show poor judgment as well as those that demonstrate critical thinking and analysis in regard to

whether a chosen resource is authentic, valid, and reliable; such interactions can be a means to support and promote suitable information-seeking behaviors.

As Secker and Price (2007, p. 51) note, ‘social software such as podcasting and resource sharing can also be used in information literacy initiatives.’ Students use information from a variety of formats daily, and discussions may include these multiple media and how to determine the veracity of information found in media such as video or other visual art forms. Sustaining any discussion on these concepts that change data into meaning is another way librarians can support information literacy within the academic community and support students in developing the skills and competencies for lifelong success. Students who learn such skills are not only educated, they are information-literate. They can recognize when information is needed and know how to locate, analyze, and use the information they need. These are the people who will be best suited to contribute to economic productivity in the future.

The interactive nature of social networking can be adapted for user-centered learning. Postings can solicit observations and opinions from community members, which should provide an insight into their understanding of information literacy concepts and their level of awareness of resources and evaluative measures. Instructors need an awareness of students’ information literacy skills in order to develop enriched learning environments that engage the students (Maybee, 2006, p. 79), and the complexity of today’s information landscape demands that any information literacy effort support the information-savvy student as well as those who are not as proficient. The community setting can provide an opportunity for each segment to learn from the others. Questions, observations, and comments can enhance

collaboration within the community and foster continued discussion, creating a framework for connecting the community and enhancing the information-seeking behaviors of all participants (Jackson and Mackey, 2007; Maybee, 2006).

Of course, ensuring that efforts in the area of information literacy garner student attention is essential to success. Such efforts, if adequately integrated into the social media community, should merit attention from the students in the community. Collaborations between librarians and faculty in a social media community can demonstrate that the value of information literacy applies not just in the classroom but to anyone accessing information anywhere and for any reason, and the collaborators can work towards developing strategic alliances (Jacobson and Mackey, 2007).

A social media community can be a supportive environment where librarians and faculty cooperate to initiate conversations that highlight concepts. A solid academic foundation includes more than reading, writing, computer use, and proficiency in a subject or course. Success in higher education involves skills not related to any academic area or course. The levels of awareness students have of the fundamental skills necessary to research and use information in all aspects of life is difficult to gauge. Enriched discourse among community members can reveal how analyzing material to create new knowledge that results in a product, such as a paper or a performance, is an essential scholarly task. Acquiring a level of competent information-literacy expertise is a lifelong learning skill. Providing instruction through the interactive discourse of social media is another way an academic library can cope with the challenge of reaching students and instructing them about locating, analyzing, and using information (Katz, 1993; Raspa and Ward, 2000).

### ***Aligning with the institution's branding***

Staying connected to students is just one aspect of public relations at a college or university. Using social media helps with marketing and retention, and contributes to campus culture 'a space where students in the same institution can connect and share a common collegiate bond' (Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis, 2007, p. 31). In the competitive world of higher education, colleges and universities have developed branding. Branding is defined by BusinessDictionary.com as 'the entire process involved in creating a unique image for a product in the consumer's mind through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.'

Branding is more than consistent signage and stationery; it also provides an identity for campus content and culture. Branding is a marketing concept designed to define the essence of a college or university, to differentiate one higher-education institution from another (Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009).

Because colleges and universities 'bring the power of a social institution and the cultures that swirl around campus experiences to forge true partnerships with students, alumni, and supporters' (Anctil, 2008, p. 96), for consistency and a common public 'face,' any social media efforts by an academic library should align with the campus branding. The library can only benefit by ensuring its social media campaign remains consistent with its parent institution's image and branding. One way to guarantee such affiliation is to coordinate with the campus marketing or public relations staff.

Libraries should perform as part of the integrated marketing plan for the entire institution, where branding is

consistent across campus and individual segments such as admissions, athletics, library, alumni, academics, and so on, to conform to one campus brand and identity. Discuss the intended library's social media campaign with the college's or university's marketing or public relations people and ask them for suggestions on how the library can incorporate the institution's branding into its campaign. To avoid any misunderstandings or perceptions of competition, be prepared to explain why the library is launching a separate social media presence. Collaboration can alleviate misconceptions regarding intentions or purpose – the library just wants to use social media networking to engage with the campus and build community. Consider any suggestions, incorporate those that seem to be reasonable, and then move forward with a library social media plan aligned with the campus branding.

### ***Marketing the library's content and services***

The impact of technology and the Internet on higher education has led not only to a remarkable outgrowth of electronic resources but has changed the way faculty and students conduct research. Although the resources in the library can be searched and accessed with a smartphone, a tablet or other computer device, and the full texts of millions of journal articles are available both on and off campus, users turn to search engines rather than the library for research.

The library has evolved from a storehouse of books to an information commons, where people come to study, collaborate, meet, research, and more. Many use the virtual aspect of the library whenever and wherever they fancy doing so. Library users expect rapid, convenient delivery of

whatever resources they require. Libraries need to actively promote resources and services, and ensuring that the campus is aware of all the library offers is a task social media can accomplish (Burkhardt, 2010).

An unfortunate reality at the moment is that for most academic libraries, the majority of people on campus are not library users; and even library users are not aware of all the library offers. In addition, informing the campus of new services in a way that is noteworthy and memorable can be difficult. A social media networking presence and the community that it fosters provide an ideal forum to disseminate information about library resources and services.

Through social media, academic libraries can interact with faculty, staff, and students about new library resources, projects, services, or events. Participating in social media can 'provide opportunities for libraries in communicating better with their users' (Ayu and Abrizah, 2011, p. 257). The conversations naturally arising as an element of a social media presence can provide awareness and understanding of what resources, research needs, programs, or services are desired. Results should not be expected immediately, but patience and perseverance can give the library and its services more exposure and attention.

Since social media are about relationships, community, and conversations, consistent communication is crucial to social media success. And the communication must be two-way, just as in face-to-face conversations. These conversations can be about the new books that have arrived, or the new database content that is now available. Programs and late-night study hours can be mentioned. Any remark made about the library can be considered as posting content. As with any new tool, library staff using social media will take some time to acquire the best voice, personality, and posting

schedule, but with time a growing, active community centered on the library will begin to emerge.

## **Rewards of social media participation**

Using social media technologies to establish an academic library community is a venture that will take time and effort, but the rewards can make it worthwhile. Libraries can seize this opportunity to find connections with users and have real conversations with the people who use the library and its services. Establishing a social media presence will raise the visibility of the library, develop dialog, and increase awareness of all the library offers to the campus.

Presence in social media is the norm for colleges and universities. A study by the Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research at the University of Massachusetts noted that 100% of the colleges and universities studied used some form of social media (Barnes and Lescault, 2011, p. 2). A natural offshoot of such pervasive social media use in higher education is for campus units, such as libraries, to participate as well.

In essence, developing a social media network is really developing an online means for the library to stay in touch with people as well as to meet and build relationships with new students, faculty, staff, administrators, and researchers. The library shares information and participants comment and share content. To maintain the relationship and work towards building a community, the library responds to comments and posts.

It is essential to remember that social networking is not about technology but is rather about building relationships. Through social media networking the academic library can foster these relationships into a community. Subsequently

the library can reach out and present information to the community, which can respond in turn, giving the library the opportunity to listen. Provide thoughtful comments, promote links to news and events, and be personable. Ask questions of the community to foster engagement and nurture a sense of belonging. The library may discover that if it adopts new technologies such as online social networking, student involvement and participation increases because the library is accessible via a technology in which they are interested. Bottom line – library visibility is increased, as noted.

Utilizing social networks to create a library presence can help bring attention to library services. With regard to courses, social networking can provide a setting for feedback and discussion, where a librarian can post about citation style, locating relevant research articles, or accessing digital resources (Haycock and Howe, 2011). Since social media bring librarians and library users together, you would do well to consider collaborative collection development, where community members can suggest titles for purchase, or are asked to evaluate resources. Discussing new materials purchased or sharing reading suggestions are other ways to highlight and enhance library services and resources. Links to helpful resources, such as citation style guides, can be shared as well.

New resources can be introduced using social media, and existing resources can be featured in order to connect learners to new resources (Mejias, 2005). Every library has those ‘hidden’ collections that few users know exist; open a conversation with the library’s social media community about these unknown gems. Distribute helpful information such as emergency-response tests and preparedness materials or information about events in the college’s or university’s community. Promote the day’s activities at the library or answer questions. All of these allow the library to share with

its social media community and in doing so promote and highlight resources and services, while raising the library's visibility with the campus. Sachs et al. (2011) mention that students, faculty and libraries can benefit from being connected through social media, and Wan (2011, p. 318) points out that social networking 'has great potential for library outreach.' When executed successfully, social media can be a tool to reach out and promote library services, a means to build a community through connections, content, and conversations.

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## How to approach the implementation of social media technologies

**Abstract:** A discussion of the benefits of planning a social media presence prior to implementation. Social media participation is more a conversation than a lecture, so libraries need to be aware of this two-way nature of social media. Building a community means nurturing all the connections involved. It is important to listen to the people who make up the potential audience and involve them in planning; and then to constantly listen to them. Some of the deceptive aspects of the monitoring of social media are discussed. The results of a survey of academic librarians in nine libraries and their social media networking experiences are detailed, reviewed and explored.

**Key words:** social media networking, academic libraries, student engagement, planning, social media research study, community building, listening, interaction, library survey.

### Planning

Beginning by developing a plan, prior to starting a social media networking campaign, is a practical necessity. Without a defined goal, it is difficult to know how to proceed with any project. As Yogi Berra once said, 'If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else' (Hoffman

and Bauer, 2011). Social media efforts are no exception to this rule. A library embarking on the social media planning process should consider these basic questions.

- What are you trying to achieve? What are your goals and purpose?
- What specifically do you want to do? What social media channels will you use?
- Who is your target audience? Who do you want to reach and engage?
- Who will manage and maintain the library's social media presence? How will resources be allocated or reallocated to support social media efforts?
- How will you know if your plan is successful?

Taking some time to consider the possible beneficial outcomes and the potential difficulties that could be encountered is helpful in the planning process. The reasons why a library would consider social media technologies may seem obvious, but all involved parties need to come together, discuss the possibilities, and reach a consensus. A defined goal is essential in the development and direction of a project. So think about what you are trying to achieve, define the goal, and outline how you will apply the tools available to reach the goal.

Another way to view goal-setting in social media endeavors is to consider the purpose of developing a social media presence for the library. Understanding the purpose can assist in identifying which social media channels to choose and the content needed for those chosen channels. Purpose can provide clarity of vision when creating policies or guidelines.

Some sample goals for an academic library's social media networking campaign could include:

- to raise awareness of the library
- to provide useful and reliable content
- to connect with library users
- to reach new users through relationship- and community-building
- to interact with students using tools for communication that they have already embraced
- to highlight new resources or services
- to showcase existing library resources and services
- to elicit feedback
- to provide interactive or engaging content that has a purpose – either for immediate use or to trigger a conversation
- to develop a library campus community
- to support and promote academic goals
- to facilitate cooperative research
- to demonstrate potential academic uses of social media for the campus community.

This list is by no means exhaustive, and is provided as a launching point for developing your own goals.

Once the goals have been defined, the selection of social media networking channels should be easier. For instance, if a goal is to highlight new resources and services or to encourage feedback, then establishing a Twitter account, to tweet short announcements or solicit opinions, may help you to reach that goal. If a goal is to reach new users through relationship- and community-building, then a multi-channel

approach may be necessary in order to engage users in the varied social media technologies available. Goals convey purpose, which in turn leads to the means to move towards the goals.

## Community-building

Community-building on social media involves connections. People connect to the library because of their relationship – student, faculty, staff, administrator, etc. These connections can include conversations where ideas and thoughts are exchanged. Social media bring people together around a specific cause, person, or entity, and the subsequent conversations and engagement lead to a vibrant, interactive community.

Nurturing a community where members can engage more richly with one another also requires attention and contact. Communities thrive with active engagement and participation, where members' interest is sparked to engage deeply in dialogs and exchange ideas. Such engagement relies to a significant extent on the presence and involvement of the academic library in social media; this includes the continual production of engaging content from the library, content that provokes conversations.

A commitment to sustain social media networking conversations requires resources. These resources include, for example, staff time to develop the postings for the conversations and time to interact and cultivate the connections that can lead to a community presence. Social media conversations are different from face-to-face conversations – in a face-to-face conversation you can see who you are talking to but using social media, you may often start a conversation without knowing who is

‘listening’ or who will answer. In a social media conversation you post messages that you hope will engage many people in your online community; these are more one-to-many than one-on-one conversations. But with these conversations you have the benefit of being able to prepare ahead of time and the capability to include not just words but pictures, videos, or links to online resources.

Participating in social media conversations can be frustrating. Many times you speak (post) without getting any response. Maybe you shared a message with one or more community members but no one shared anything with you in response. Another possibility in social media conversations is that your post is shared with others – your post could be ‘liked’ or retweeted, or simply shared with friends. It is difficult to gauge the impact of your message without responses. You do not know if readers chose not to respond because there was no value to the community in your message or because they did not have anything to add to your message. Feedback becomes crucial to determining the difference.

Sometimes asking a question is a way to start a conversation. You can practice this in any social media context – blogs, Facebook, etc. When someone posts on social media, ask them for more details, or why they feel that way. You will have the opportunity to start to build a relationship as you learn more about the topic as well as about that person. This concept can then be brought into the library’s social media efforts. The library should be open to receiving comments and always responding to what is shared. Include a discussion point or two, or ask questions. Over time, as you fine-tune your message to the library’s community through experience, you will start to build relationships with people in your community, and the responses to your message will follow.

Social media networking is considered a participatory activity, where those involved connect through two-way conversations, conversations that are key to engaging the academic library community. Encouraging participation involves interaction. Simply posting events found in a calendar does not provide a means for engagement or interaction. The audience members – students, faculty, administrators, and staff – need a means of interacting with other audience members and the library, too, in order for a sense of community to be fostered.

Listen to the community's intended members while you are planning for a social media networking campaign. Reach out to the people who come into the library and seek their opinion on what they would like to see in a library social-media community. Post a quick survey on the library's web page. Send out an email to the academic campus. Staff can talk to people in the bookstore, at sporting events, and on campus. The bottom line is to strive for reaching a broad slice of the intended audience, note the suggestions, and then create a means to involve any people who are interested.

Listening to the audience is a repetitive feature of building a community. Not only is it important to listen in the planning stages, but it is also important to continue to listen. Social media are people-orientated and more casual in style than the typical academic campus interaction, and therefore it is necessary that the academic library develop a more personal tone when involved in social media community-building.

Community-building via social media can be an effective way to converse and collaborate with the college's or university's academic community, and listening to the members of that community can allow the library to discover opportunities in conversations those individuals are conducting in their user-generated content – comments on

posts, retweets, and mentions on blogs. Since the target audience members already have something in common – the college or university campus – identifying the audience is less of a challenge for the academic library than it may be for other entities.

Assess the needs of the audience. One way to learn what your audience wants, needs, and desires from the library, is to actively engage with it. Needs may change over time, so keeping abreast of the audience's perceptions and conversations will assist with this task. The audience will change, owing to graduation, transfers, job turnover, department changes, etc. Audience needs will change as well. By maintaining a dialog, asking the audience, and being responsive to its input, the library can collect insights on potential problems or issues, note opportunities, and consider improvements.

There are potential hazards to avoid, however – vanity metrics and the 'stickiness' of blogs. Discussions about blogs usually mention their inherent 'stickiness,' a term used to refer to the potential of a blog's content for staying with, or being retained by, those who read the blog. Semple (2012, p. 6) states that 'there is something inherently personal about the social tools....' Blogs, in particular, can be viewed as not only very personal but also egocentric – generally blogs are written by an individual, and the content is representative of that individual's opinions, experiences, and thoughts. The intrinsic 'stickiness' of a blog may be influenced by a wide variety of factors, including the intended audience, the topics covered, and the popularity of the topics and the blogger. If a blog is viewed as having low 'stickiness,' does that mean its content has no value? Does low attention or influence equate to lack of success?

Vanity metrics is another area of possible miscomprehension in the social media realm. Ries (2011) warns against relying

on vanity metrics. Activity in social media networking is activity that can be recorded and reported and analyzed. The number of people who ‘like’ an organization, the number of people who comment on a post, and the amount of time people spend in social media are statistics of the type that are gathered and reported on. It is easy to find out how many ‘hits’ a page gets, but does that figure truly measure the effectiveness of that web page? A more practically useful metric would be the amount of time a user stays on the site. The total number of users is a vanity metric, while the practically useful metric is the rate of growth in the user base. Vanity metrics are interesting, but in order to effectively assess community-building via social media, use real actionable metrics that can be related to the goals developed for community-building, and establish these goals and the methods of assessing them as a part of the planning process before entering into any social media conversations.

Remember to be consistent and persistent in social media conversations. The library has an audience and they have joined your community. Keep a consistent voice, a voice that is pleasant and helpful. Discussion topics should relate to the library, the campus, higher education, and the like. If the community chooses to discuss other topics, ensure they follow the institution’s social media policy on postings. Off-color or offensive comments may require removal.

Successful social media community-building may seem daunting at first, but by taking each step thoughtfully and slowly, a library should be able to establish a social media presence and work towards building a community. The technical skills required to establish a social media presence are basic computer literacy skills – the ability to use a web browser, knowledge of file management and organization for uploading photos and files. Familiarity with digital video and photo software, basic HTML coding, and descriptive

writing are also skills that are useful in using social media. The need for skill in precise writing, with a consistent, pleasant yet not too professional voice, and for having the time available to invest in social media technology may be among the more difficult aspects of implementing social media in a library.

## **Survey of academic librarians using social media**

At this point you may be wondering how real-life academic libraries have implemented and are using social networking. Although there are many general articles and blogs discussing best practice and procedures for getting a social networking campaign operational for businesses, information on how libraries have approached such an endeavor is not as abundant. One way to gather information from practicing libraries is through a survey. Developing a survey and determining how to distribute it to the target audience are the first steps. A broad survey would provide useful information to ascertain how academic libraries had tackled integrating social networking technologies into their practices and procedures. For this study, the target audience was determined to be those librarians and library staff who are interested in or involved with technology. There are several organizations and forums open to librarians and library staff involved with technology, forums through which they can network with colleagues with similar interests and discuss issues, concerns, ideas, etc. In order to connect with academic librarians with an interest in social networking technology, a message was sent out to several listservs (electronic mailing lists) which had as members either academic librarians or

technology-savvy librarians, or those interested in the new technology, requesting their participation in a survey regarding social networking. The listservs contacted were:

- COLLIB-L, the short form for the *College Librarians List*, is ‘the official professional discussion list of the College Libraries Section (CLS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA)’ (COLLIB-L Discussion List Information, 2010). The participants on this list are academic librarians.
- Web4Lib, the list for web systems in libraries, is ‘specifically aimed toward librarians and library staff involved in World-Wide Web management’ (Web4Lib Electronic Discussion, 2011). The members of this list include all the different types of librarians and library staff.
- LITA-L is the list for the Library and Information Technology Association, a division of the ALA. Participants in LITA-L are from every different type of library – ‘new professionals, systems librarians, library administrators, library schools, vendors and anyone else interested in leading edge technology and applications for librarians and information providers’ (About LITA, 2013).
- IFLA-L is the list for the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. IFLA-L is the ‘general discussion list for the international library and information community’ (IFLA: Mailing Lists, 2013). Members are from all types of libraries around the world.
- Innopac list, a mailing list for customers of the library automation vendor Innovative Interfaces, Inc. ‘The list includes over 3,000 subscribers from around the world’ (Innovative Users Group, Innopac List Etiquette, 2013), and discussion centers on issues with the products of

Innovative Interfaces, Inc. and includes topics such as hardware platforms, telecommunications, and system management.

- INFOCOMMONS-L (Information Commons Interest Group) is the list for those interested in issues related to ‘information commons facilities that integrate the resources and services of libraries with enhanced information technology’ (INFOCOMMONS-L list, 2004). Membership is comprised of librarians and library staff with interest in or experience with information commons facilities.
- The ERIL-L (Electronic Resources in Libraries) list is a forum for librarians and library staff to discuss issues regarding electronic resources in libraries. The membership of ERIL-L includes ‘staff from reference, instruction, technical services, systems, vendors, publishers, and other areas’ (ERIL-L, 2005).

A brief, 10-question survey was developed (Appendix 1 Survey questions). Some of these questions were open-ended so that survey responders might share more details of their experiences in implementing social media technologies. A message was sent to each of the above online forums in March 2012, soliciting participation in the survey. The survey was available for a limited period of just two weeks. No additional reminders were sent.

During the two weeks that the survey was available, there were 157 responses. Since it is very difficult to ascertain the number of people who received the invitation to participate, the author has no sense of what percent of the target audience this constitutes. The results were interesting and provided a general overview of how much social networking was happening in academic libraries, to what extent it was developed, and through which channels.

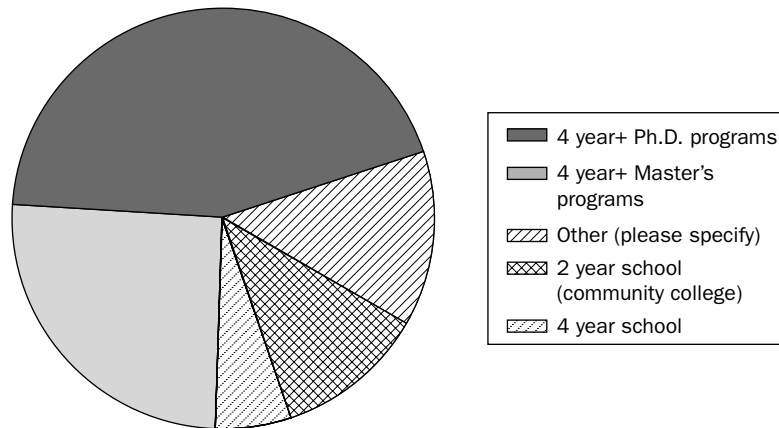
These are the survey questions.

1. What type of academic library do you work in?
2. What is your job title?
3. Which of the following areas are part of your responsibilities?
4. How long have you worked in libraries?
5. Do you use social media in your library?
6. Which of the following social media technologies does your library use on a regular basis?
7. How do you use social media in your library?
8. What technology skills do you apply to your use of social media in your library?
9. What one thing would you do differently in regards [sic] to social media in your library?
10. If you are interested in sharing more information on social media in your library, please provide your contact information.

### ***Survey results***

The largest group of the survey respondents (43.9%) consisted of those working in a four-year institution with a Ph.D. program. Another 25.5% were employed at a four-year institution with a Masters' program. An additional category was that of *other*, which, at 13.4% of responses, included institutions such as law school libraries, health science libraries, technical colleges, those that offer graduate Masters' programs only, and research libraries. Respondents from community colleges and other 2-year institutions accounted for 11.5%, and 5.7% responded saying that they worked in a four-year school.

What type of academic library do you work in?  
(please choose one)



**Figure 2.1** Academic library types

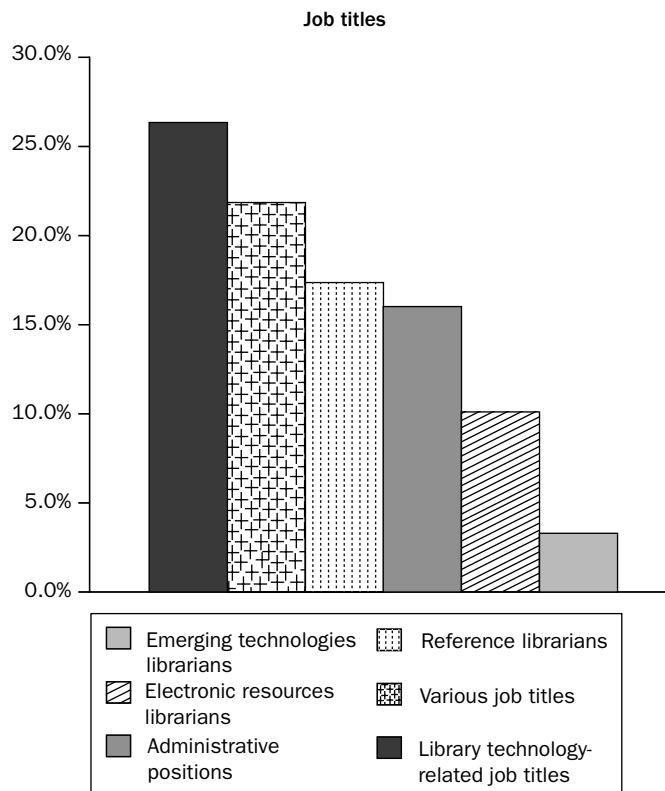
The job titles of the survey respondents varied greatly, from directors and chairs to department heads, to librarians. Some of the titles shared included:

- Emerging Technology Librarian
- Director, virtual services
- Web Services Librarian
- Information Technology Librarian
- Web Communications Librarian.

The highest response rate (26.3%) was from those who have titles related to library technology, systems, and technical or web services. The next largest grouping (21.8%) comprised a wide variety of titles – Librarian, Associate Librarian, interns, Academic Librarian, Collection Development Librarian, Circulation Librarian, non-librarian staff, and various subject specialty librarian positions. Respondents also included reference librarians (17.3%), various

administrative positions such as library directors and deans (16%) and electronic resources librarians (10%). Most of the job titles do not indicate any involvement in social networking tasks.

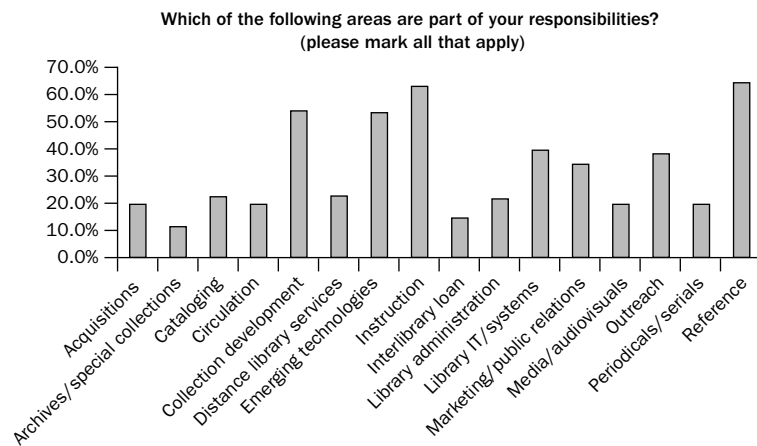
The job responsibilities of the respondents indicated the multi-tasking nature of academic librarianship. Respondents indicated that reference and instruction duties are a part of almost 65% of survey respondents' job duties, followed closely by collection development (54.1%) and emerging



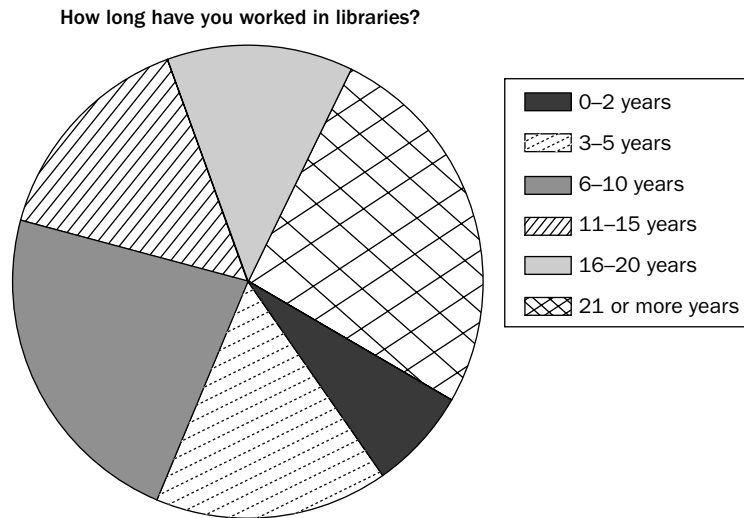
**Figure 2.2** Library job titles

technologies (53.5%). Library information technology and systems (39.5%), outreach (38.2%), and marketing/public relations (34.4%) responsibilities were the next most represented areas. Distance library services (22.9%), cataloging (22.3%), and library administration (21.7%) came next, with 19.7% of respondents reporting responsibilities in each of the areas of acquisitions, circulation, media/audiovisual, and periodicals/serials. Rounding out the duties were interlibrary loan (14.6%) and archives/special collections (11.5%).

The length of time respondents had worked in libraries provided an interesting glimpse into the make-up of the group. The largest percentage (26.1%) was constituted of those who had 21 or more years' experience in libraries. Those with 6–10 years' experience (22.9%) came next, followed by those with 3–5 years' experience (15.9%), 11–15 years' experience (15.3%), 16–20 years' experience (12.7%), and 0–2 years' experience (7%).



**Figure 2.3** Library responsibilities breakdown

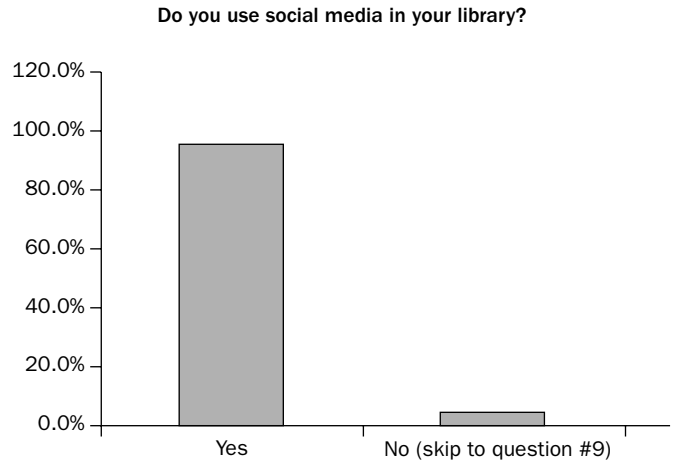


**Figure 2.4** Librarians' experience in years

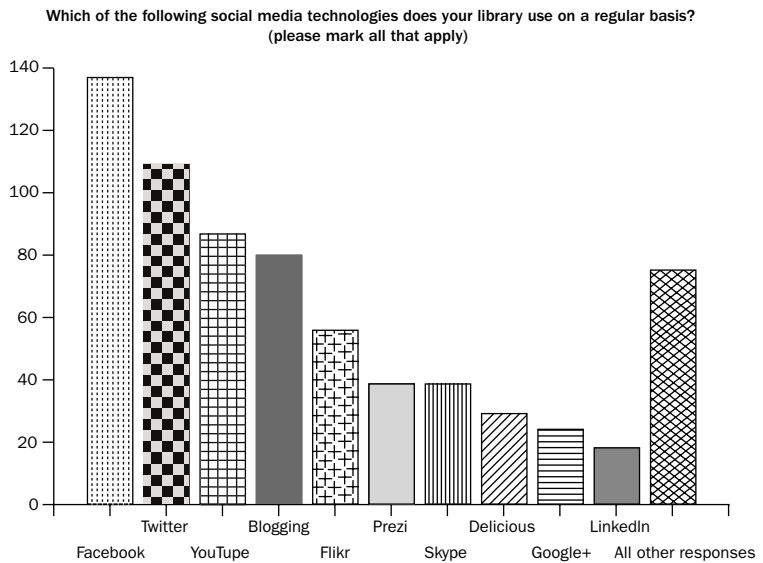
Of those who responded to the survey, an overwhelming 150 out of 157 (95.5%) use social media in their libraries. This should not be considered an unbiased sample, as respondents would be expected to be users, developers, or supporters of social media networking.

Academic libraries use a great many social media technologies. Survey respondents were given a choice of 28 different products or services to choose from, with the opportunity to enter additional technologies if not listed. Facebook led the way, with 87.3% of the respondents using the world's number one social media site. Twitter was second – 69.4% were involved with this service – and YouTube was third, with 55.4%.

The most popular use of social media in an academic library is to share anything library-related (90.4%). Other uses of social media in academic libraries include advertising services (80.3%) and marketing library events (79%). Only

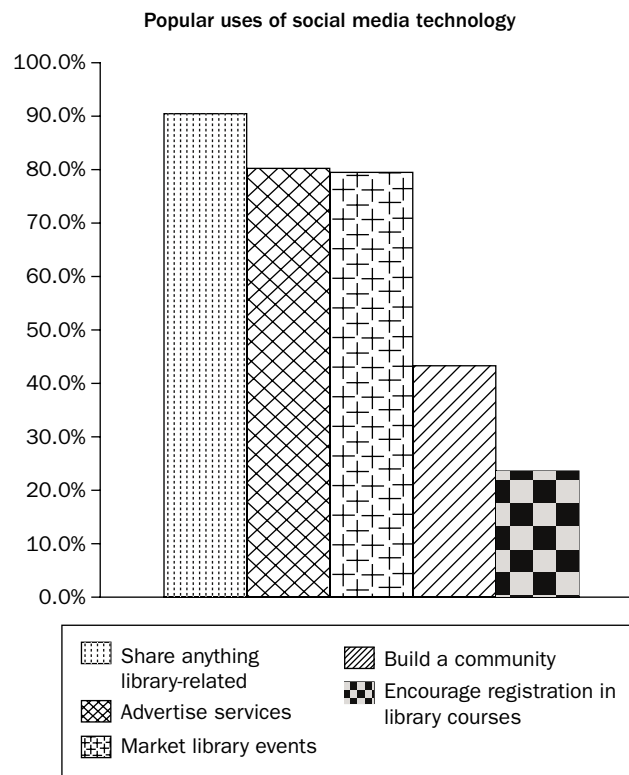


**Figure 2.5** Social media use in libraries



**Figure 2.6** Social media technologies in regular use in libraries

43% of respondents had used social media to build a community, while 23.6% used social media to encourage registration in library courses. Respondents were given the opportunity to share other ways in which they used social media technologies. Some use social media to stay up to date with their job areas, as a means of professional development. Others use any form of social media to keep the campus community aware of library events, services, and news by sharing new services, emerging-technology news, and anything deemed noteworthy. Social media were mentioned as a means to build bridges to non-administrative units on



**Figure 2.7** Popular social media uses in libraries

campus, to take part in researchers' discussions, to market library resources by connecting them to current events or trending topics, and to link staff together.

In response to the question asking what technology skills are in use by the libraries using social media, many categorized these skills as those that librarians employ to master everyday tasks – using general software, file management, keyboard input, posting responses on web pages. Some respondents indicated that familiarization with digital video (creation, editing, software use) and graphic design were helpful skills. Others stated that knowledge of RSS, basic web page maintenance (HTML, CSS), Javascript, and basic descriptive writing were all that were needed in order to use social media technologies. Overall, respondents suggested that using social media required just basic computer skills, flexibility in attitudes towards learning to use new tools and services, and time to actually use the social media. These were all that was needed to succeed.

There were many responses to the question, 'What one thing would you do differently in regards [sic] to social media in your library?' One respondent summed it up well: 'It's technically very easy to participate in social media, but the obstacle is that the planning, timing, writing, responding, follow-up, and just the coordination and content of the messaging is hard to get right. You have to have creative people, clear goals, and good internal communication in your organization to do it well.' Several libraries' responses were centered on the idea of consistency – the desire to have a consistent voice, consistent standards of use, a consistent schedule of posting, and just an overall consistent use of social media rather than an unscheduled and haphazard approach. Some stated that they wanted more promotion, outreach, or marketing of their library's social media efforts.

Others indicated that they would like to have more staff engaged in the library's social media technologies as well as more staff participating in posting, tweeting, blogging, and so forth for the library. A number of respondents mentioned a desire for better planning for social media technology implementation. Specifically, these libraries wanted

- the ability to set up strategies before actually embarking on a social media campaign
- to find out what would be useful as opposed to just doing something because it's the 'latest and greatest' buzz activity
- to have a policy or plan or guidelines in place to guide the social media venture
- to delineate what the library is, what students and faculty can expect from the library, and how they can use the library as their main information access portal.

But the biggest villain working against the easy adoption of social media technologies in libraries was time:

- 'just wish we had more time to do more'
- 'investigate more if more time was available'
- 'if we had the time we could try to do this.'

Librarians stated that they did not have enough time to prepare or plan in advance of implementation, and that if they could do it again, they would make the time to choose an effective social media channel and to make a better case to colleagues as to what social media technologies can do for the library and how this effort could benefit the greater academic community. Many respondents mentioned that social media can connect the library to its users and start building on that community, something that requires time,

a resource that is not in abundance at many academic institutions. As one survey respondent said, ‘Apply more staff time to an integrated communication strategy encompassing campus internal communications, print media, website, social media, etc. and oriented toward increased online engagement.’

The lack of resources, specifically staff resources, was mentioned by some libraries as another hurdle to be cleared in implementing social media technologies. One respondent noted,

‘If we had greater staff resources to devote, I wish we could develop a higher level of two-way conversation instead of so much one-way information sharing, but it has been really difficult; we are afraid to encourage patrons too heavily to communicate socially with us, because we don’t believe we have the staff resources to keep up if they really start doing so!’

Another respondent shared that in regard to social media technologies, they wished ‘we had someone dedicated to updating it.’ A third said, ‘I would like to post more, but we don’t have a lot of staff so that’s a challenge.’

Building a community on campus was a goal that some libraries cited for using social media technologies: ‘I would like to see our Facebook presence be used to promote and highlight our libraries’ services, workshops, and events differently. It is more about creating a community, which the spaces themselves do pretty effectively in the physical world.’ Another respondent said, ‘Would take more time to create an engaged community, rather than just amass “friends”.’ A third mentioned the importance of rethinking ‘our overall approach to engagement using those tools.’

## Discussion of survey results

Clearly, the selected set of responses indicates that libraries are using social media technologies. It is interesting to note that while 95.5% of the respondents report that their library uses social media technologies, there were no job titles that mentioned social media; the closest approximation would be job titles incorporating the phrase ‘emerging technologies’ (3.2%). In addition, for this question the largest number of participants (26.3%) answered that their job title pertained to systems or technology positions.

There is a wide range of social media technologies in use across academic libraries, but there are a few technologies that most of the respondents have in common. Facebook, which had over 937 million users (‘Facebook Users in the World – Facebook Usage and Facebook Growth Statistics by World Geographic Regions,’ 2012) and is estimated as having had 1.43 billion users by the end of 2012 (‘Facebook Helps Get One in Five People Worldwide Socializing on Online Networks,’ 2012), was used by 87.3% of the respondents. Twitter, with over 140 million active users worldwide (‘Twitter Turns Six,’ Twitter blog, 2012), was in use at 69.4% of the libraries in the survey. YouTube has over 800 million users (Grossman, 2012, para. 3) and was used by 55.4% of the respondents.

Academic libraries use social media technologies to share library-related information (90.4%). Advertising services (80.3%) and marketing library events (79%) are other routine ways libraries employ social media. Sharing about the library is the focus of most library social media campaigns. Unfortunately, although mentioned as something to aspire towards, community-building is not currently a significant element of libraries’ social media efforts (43%).

The technology skills used to access and sustain social media technologies at responding libraries are not high-level technical skills but rather basic computer literacy skills. The ability to use web browsers and familiarity with file management, combined with flexibility, are essential to utilizing social media successfully. Respondents cited time as a crucial factor in social media networking – time required to learn to use new software and tools as well as to actually participate in social media and develop the presence necessary to establish and build community.

Time (or the lack thereof) was cited by libraries as a major factor impacting the success of social media efforts. Libraries need time to plan and strategize how to employ social media effectively for their benefit. Time is needed to make an informed and strategic selection of which social media channels to use. And time is needed to disseminate the reasons for engaging in social media and the benefits of such engagement to colleagues in the library and to the campus community as a whole. Staff resources were another critical factor in developing a productive social media experience at any of these libraries.

Community-building in social media is dependent upon growing conversations, two-way communications. These communications take time and energy to establish and nourish. Without staff dedicated to social media networking responsibilities and a library commitment to expand the library's social media experience, community-building cannot thrive.

## Conclusion

It is apparent from the results of this survey that social media technologies are in use at academic libraries. There are many reasons libraries have turned to social media

networking, including the need for information sharing and marketing; however, community-building is not a primary motivation. The responding libraries demonstrate a strong conviction to reach out and engage with their communities through thoughtful social media networking, but a lack of time and staff resources limits these efforts. Given that 61% of young adults use social media daily (Madden and Zickuhr, 2011, p. 6), establishing and maintaining a presence in that Internet arena is a natural outreach undertaking for academic libraries. Libraries have built communities in the 'real' world; social media technologies will allow those communities to extend into the growing realm of social media. By taking advantage of the pervasiveness of social media networking, libraries can reach out to a large section of the academic community, fostering the shared purpose and sense of community in the virtual world of social media that already exists for the library in the bricks-and-mortar world.

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## Case studies of academic libraries and social media networking

**Abstract:** The experiences of nine academic libraries in Canada and the United States with social media networking are detailed, as well as the survey response of one library that chose to forgo any social media networking involvement. The rationale behind the implementation and maintenance of social media presence is covered. An analysis of and lists of recommendations arising from the survey responses are included.

**Key words:** social media networking, academic libraries, student engagement, case studies, survey, tips.

### Libraries

Nine libraries who responded to the March 2012 survey agreed to discuss their implementations of social media technologies in more depth. Specifics about these libraries' identities have been omitted at the request of the respondents, who requested that their remarks remain anonymous.

### Case Study #1

The first library studied, Library A, is a health sciences library at a large university in eastern Canada. This library began to

use social media in 2010. The official launch of its Facebook and Twitter presences occurred in February of 2011.

Library A decided to implement social media to support an effort to locate a better way to communicate with its users. The library had a blog on its website, but librarians and users found that posting content was difficult; the blog was pleasant to read, but the unfortunate truth was the blog was seldom used or read. Librarians turned to social media as a means to allow them to post content more easily and offer more direct communication with users. In addition, the library website and blog have been updated to improve usability and readability.

The implementation process at Library A was accomplished without much formal planning. A student worker took the initiative and asked the library director about getting the library involved with social media. Accounts were established for the library with Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; it also became involved with the iTunes U account the university's main library had already established. Shortly thereafter, a social media committee of health science library staff was established, to further formalize the work and efforts the student worker had started to put in. Guidelines on posting and a policy for how the library should use social media were developed by the committee.

The three biggest problems in implementing social media at Library A were technology, staff resistance, and user awareness. The technology issue was related to lack of experience with the social media technologies. Staff resistance came from a combination of lack of communication (about the potential of social media for engagement with students and to publicize events) as well as a lack of internal communication that the library even had a social media presence. Lack of user awareness is directly implicated in the slow growth of the library's social media networking efforts.

Library A has made efforts to overcome these three problems. Over time the staff have gained experience with the technology, eliminating that issue. A new process was put in place to alert staff to the library's social media presence and to filter news to the social media committee, which has resulted in a smoother process for getting information out on the library's social media outlets. User awareness is increasing, and at 150 Twitter followers Library A is starting to see some pleasant interactions on Twitter, but user engagement is difficult to encourage. The hope is that engagement can be built up with new students each semester.

Library A did not see a need for staff to acquire any particular technological skills in order to use social media technologies successfully. Rather, the lack of knowledge about specific social media platforms was a stumbling block, as were some other details, such as not knowing the differences between personal accounts and pages, or some of the specific functions and features of social media sites. Training has not been an issue – the staff involved with social media at Library A have technology skills, and the staff not yet engaged in the use of social media at the library are not involved with the social media committee.

Planning and implementing social media technologies at Library A were impacted by the aforementioned staff resistance. Fortunately the effort has been led by the staff members who *are* interested in using social media technology. The process would have been smoother if resistance by staff could have been overcome.

Library A assesses the success and effectiveness of its social media presence by the number of likes and followers. In Facebook, Library A considers a successful post one that has gained a lot of exposure and also increased the number of 'likes.' For Twitter, any kind of retweet or @mention is considered a sign of success, so the more retweets or @mentions

the better. On the other side, Library A acknowledges that any decrease in numbers of followers or likes is a sign that something has gone wrong, but that has not happened yet.

Based on its social media technology experience, Library A has come to the conclusion that social media should be considered within an overall communications/public relations plan for the library, rather than as an isolated form of outreach. One suggestion for the future is for the library's social media committee to transition into a communications/public relations team. This new group would consider outreach issues on a much broader level than just social media networking. Library A believes that if social media are viewed in the context of public relations, then efforts can be much more effective. Library staff already know that public relations is important, but most do not see the benefit of social media participation for the library. Social media can be seen as a frill, or a time-waster, whereas communications/public relations are generally perceived as vital functions in helping demonstrate the value of the library.

Library A also suggests that libraries considering social media technologies should establish clear guidelines about who can post content, what content is and is not acceptable, and what tone to use, in order to ensure a brand-consistent approach. In addition, consider enlisting student library employees to follow the library on social media. Doing so can be a helpful way of boosting interest among library users.

## **Case Study #2**

Library B is a library at a large university in western Canada, which has been engaging to some extent in social media since 2005. Library B has over twenty branches and until recently its social media presence had been managed at

branch level, leading to an 'ad hoc' lack of social media strategy. A more centralized approach to social media management is now in place, with the library's communication and marketing office overseeing and coordinating the library's social media efforts. Library B uses such social media technologies as Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Pinterest, Google+, Gowalla, and blogs.

The decision to implement social media in Library B grew out of an observation that the library had content worth getting out to the academic community, but the announcements and postings on the library's website were being missed. Library B wanted to reach students in a way they are already used to, and also reach out to others in the library community. Social media technologies were a logical solution with which to address both the distribution of content and community outreach.

Because the initial use of social media at Library B was 'ad hoc,' the process was quite varied. Each branch got involved in different social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc.) as needed. There was no planning committee or overall plan; each branch just did what seemed to work at that branch. The office now coordinating Library B's social media has guidelines for the use of social media, but no committee or group oversees the process. The university has guidelines for social media participation, and the branches had to follow those, but there was no library-wide coordination when Library B implemented social media.

Most of the problems encountered have been related to the lack of coordination among the branches at Library B when the use of social media was implemented. Social media accounts were established without synchronization with other accounts at that branch or other branches, and as staff changed or duties changed the accounts were not maintained and the frequency of postings suffered. Information about

the established accounts became transient, and passwords and login information were lost or forgotten. Another issue was the lack of collaboration in posting across channels and across branches, so that an event might be posted on one social media site but not on the account of the branch where the event was being held.

Experience has led Library B to develop a procedure where accounts are more central now, and there is a list of social-media accounts information that is maintained and verified twice a year. Blogs that are not updated regularly for more than a year are deleted. With a more centralized approach to social media use, Library B hopes to eliminate the situation where events are not posted across social media channels. One issue Library B is struggling with is to convince staff that outdated and unused social media accounts should be deleted. Efforts will be made to address this issue over time.

Library B did not find that there were certain technology-based skills required of people involved in implementing the use of social media, because the process of implementation was so ‘grass-roots’ – those who had interest or experience were the ones who established the accounts and got social media activity going in the library branches. A social media meet-up group has since been formed, and this group shares best practice and ideas. The group sessions address training gaps, and provide an opportunity to learn from real-life case studies of colleagues, but not all involved are engaged in the process. Attempts have been made to provide formal training, but there has been minimal response.

The major constraint on Library B in terms of dealing with social media has been staff resources. Given the genesis of social media implementation at Library B, there was little consideration given to account creation and how the branch accounts interact (or not) with the main library accounts.

The fact of the time and effort required to keep the accounts current and to move towards more coordinated social media management remains an issue.

Library B uses a combination of Hootsuite and Google Analytics reports to assess the effectiveness of social media use and impact. Facebook Insights, Klout, Social Mention, and other tweet analyzer tools are also used in combination with one another. Biweekly and monthly Twitter reports are also analyzed. Overall web metrics are combined with the social media statistics once a quarter, and then the usage is reviewed.

The strongest suggestion Library B made for those considering social media networking is to remember that libraries need to consider the maintenance of social media efforts and not just the set-up and implementation. It is important to establish an editorial schedule, and take into consideration how often each account needs to be used. For instance, a maintenance schedule for Facebook may be weekly but Twitter should be used daily.

Time is another consideration, as well as staff resources. Libraries should remember that it takes time to choose what should be shared on social media, and then more time to construct the language of the post or tweet. Attention should be given to who will be responsible for maintaining the social media outlets. Students may be a nice alternative, especially since they already use social media so that a need for training and resistance to using these outlets will not be issues. But the use of students may not allow a consistent 'voice' in the library's posts, and there are the privacy aspects, of which a library professional would be more fully aware, as well as college or university guidelines regarding the use of social media.

Thought should be given to who the audience is. Are students asking how to find the library on Facebook? Are

they talking about the library on Twitter? Taking the time to know the audience and the use the library expects for social media technologies can address whether or not the library should really be using social media tools, and if so, which services or sites would be most applicable or useful.

### **Case Study #3**

Library C is a special research library based at a southern United States research institution. Library C started blogging in 2004, did some podcasting from 2005 to 2007, and has used Twitter since 2008. The decision to implement the use of social media was based on the technology as a means to reach out to the community using easy-to-use and low-cost tools.

There were no planning committees, task forces, or discussion about implementing social media use at Library C. They just did it. Podcasting was started just with audio versions of the week's blog posts, produced with minimal editing to suit the spoken media. Implementing podcasting was relatively painless; since no additional content was created, the only time and resources involved were what was needed to record and post – a total of 20 minutes per week (after the use of the tools was learned). Library C monitored downloads of the podcasts and noticed there were steady increases in usage, so the podcasts continued. Over time they observed that there was no reaction from the listeners regarding the podcasts – no comments, no questions. So feedback was solicited, and none was received. The podcasts were cancelled because usage indicated that people were downloading them but then not listening to the programs.

Library C commented that they have learned that although the library strives to be an early adopter of new technologies [someone who uses a new technology before it becomes

widely known or used (Dictionary.com, 2012)], their users are generally late majority [the last sizable segment of a population to adopt an innovative technology...(and who)...adopt a new product only after seeing that the majority of the population already has (Investopedia Financial Dictionary in Answers.com, 2012)]. Efforts to integrate technologies such as QR codes have been more successful the second time around; they put QR codes on the print newsletter as soon as the codes appeared, and not one click-through occurred. QR codes were recently revisited and are now getting some usage. Of course, the increase in the number of smartphones and better apps may have also contributed to this later acceptance of QR codes.

Another issue Library C encountered was a dismissive perception by both upper management and the IT center. Upper management perceived social media as a 'waste of time'. Management was dismissive of the library's efforts to integrate social networking into the outreach plan, until the library's funding source mentioned that the library was doing a great job with social media. Upper management then became more accepting of the library's social media activities.

The IT center did not support projects that incorporated 'outside' technology, services that are not hosted in-house at the special research site. WordPress was not used, because the IT center could not control it. Instead, the IT center supplied a home-built system that lacked archiving, permalinks, and comments and was based on Bulletin Board code and not HTML.

Overcoming these issues has taken time and patience. Essentially Library C has learned to use what tools and services are made available, and to have patience. They wait and revisit technologies that were not embraced the first time they were introduced.

The skills required to successfully implement the technologies in use at Library C are simple. An important skill is the ability to learn to use new software, such as Audacity for podcasting. Ensuring there is time available to work with new software and become proficient in its use is important. There are books, tutorials, and other resources available to learn how to use new software or a new service; it can be difficult to carve out the time to take advantage of these resources.

Library C did not have any major constraints on planning and implementing social media technologies, other than the perception of their management and IT groups. Usage is the means by which Library C assesses the effectiveness of its social media impact. The Facebook and Twitter pages are active; there are actually ten times as many followers as there are cardholders in the library. The weblog is a feed of content created for Facebook and Twitter, so minimal effort is invested there. And the Flickr account is active, too.

The first tip Library C would pass along to others interested in implementing social media in their library is to 'share with the community, just like libraries have always done.' When posting in social media, remember to speak in a personal but professional voice; do not post like a press release, but do not use crass and antagonistic language, either. Library C suggests that the best way to use social media is to take advantage of the conventions of each tool. For instance, the nature of Twitter's 140-character posting limit means that posts will contain sentence fragments in order to stay under the limit. Nevertheless, do not use sentence fragments in another social media setting. Remember that growth in social media usage will happen slowly, but if the growth is steady, then continue with what you are doing.

If a library is considering adopting the use of social media, Library C advises to just start doing something in the social

media and then evaluate the results. Do not invest a lot of time in meetings and planning sessions; these can waste more time than is required to get the social media technology up and running. When assessing the effectiveness of social media, do not just count hits; there are other criteria by which to judge success. Review the comments made by users and the questions posed. Note whether someone mentions the social media outlet when you are interacting in person or over the phone or by email. If you use social media to highlight services or new materials, note if there are increases in the usage of, attendance at, or circulation of those mentioned. Most importantly, Library C cautions that a library should be willing to drop a specific social media technology if it is not working out, but to try again and move resources to another tool.

#### **Case Study #4**

Library D is located at a large research state university in the southern United States. Twitter was implemented here in 2009 and Facebook in 2010, and use of YouTube and Flickr was recently introduced. The decision to implement the use of social media was based on many requirements: to find new, potentially more effective, ways to communicate with students; to make basic library information (hours, contact) available in places where users already go; to enhance the library's online presence and image; to help build the sense that the university in general, and the library in particular, are progressive, open to new ideas, and not stuck in the past.

The process for implementing social media was pretty simple and personnel-focused at Library D. Two younger faculty librarians put forward the idea of using Twitter. They received approval from the library director to move ahead with the idea. The faculty librarians created a set of general

guidelines for how the new services would be used, and then they went ahead and started using social media technologies.

The implementation of social media at Library D did not involve many serious problems, but larger and ongoing concerns have arisen over time. The need for consistent posting is one of these concerns. The guidelines Library D developed for social media technology use included maximum and minimum posting frequencies, as well as a designated 'primary poster' and three back-up posters. Time constraints have impacted the capacity to achieve the minimum posting frequency. The reality of integrating consistent posting is an ongoing struggle for which no acceptable resolution has yet been found.

Time constraints affect another aspect of social media use – actively monitoring responses to the various accounts. Even something as simple as checking for Facebook comments takes time, and there is little time to spare at any library. Library D chose to limit its social media accounts in certain ways, despite many 'best practices' which oppose such limits. Fans of Library D can comment on Facebook posts, but they cannot post to the Wall; likewise, Twitter users can follow Library D, but they cannot really engage in conversations. The limits Library D implemented to deal with the acknowledged time issue have engendered a tension for the library staff involved with social media. The staff feel caught between the idea that they want to engage socially and use these tools as they were meant to be used and the simultaneous realization that Library D is short-staffed, with no time or resources to maintain the constant social interaction that a social media presence demands. This situation has posed a real conundrum. Given the fiscal restraints and economic reality of the times, the situation is not unique, either. Library D's limiting of the interactivity of its social media accounts was just the most efficient way to solve this problem.

After Library D's implementation of the use of social media, the university worked to standardize the social media presences of its many offices and departments. Library D had to make some decisions with regard to how far they were willing to standardize the 'look and feel' and to be held liable by the university for activity on the library's social media accounts. The latter point brings up a topic for a much broader discussion – how much can or should libraries be held liable for the things that their fans and followers say in social media? Library D saw this liability issue increasing concerns about allowing open postings and finding time to monitor comments, because the library is responsible for promptly finding and removing anything that might be deemed 'inappropriate' according to the university's myriad definitions. Library D is still struggling with how best to deal with this situation.

The technological skills required to implement social media technologies at Library D varied according to the exact type of social media and the staff member's exact role, but overall there was not a need for any unusually high-level technological skills in most of the social media used. A foundation comfort level with using websites and a solid knowledge of file management are required. Beyond that, just some dedicated time to learn to use the technologies and a basic understanding of the function and features of social media are all anyone needs.

For instance, with Twitter, staff needed to reach a minimal comfort level with digital image files in order to create a custom background. An understanding of account options in Twitter is also helpful. Posting messages to the account is simple, but requires an awareness of character limits and an understanding of how to use link shorteners such as [goo.gl](http://goo.gl) (*http://goo.gl*), which allows users to track clicks on the shortened links it provides.

When it comes to Facebook, staff found that creating the basic page and entering basic profile information required very little technological skill. However, using the FBML app (now deprecated, and no longer supported [Facebook features: 6. Removed features, Wikipedia, 2012]) and the static HTML app to create custom tabs or pages required more skill. Staff needed a foundational understanding of the HTML markup language. A knowledge of how to create digital images was valuable, as it always is, especially if a library chose to use the Facebook Timeline (now universally applied by Facebook).

Library D found that with YouTube, it is helpful for staff to know how to create a screen-recording, using a tool such as Screencast-O-Matic. Another useful skill is knowing how to upload the resulting video to YouTube. If the library wants to embed the video on another web page, then staff need to know how to use the 'embed code' function from YouTube. And for Flickr, the only technical knowledge needed is understanding how to upload a file.

Staff resources were the only real significant constraint Library D faced in implementation. The number of people interested and available was one factor. Another was the amount of time they could afford to invest in the upkeep of social media. Time and the impact on staff resources remain a critical factor in maintaining social media technologies at Library D.

The evaluation of the effectiveness or impact of social media technologies at Library D was performed through minimal assessment. Library D reviews subscription numbers, such as the number of Twitter followers, Facebook fans, etc. They use Facebook Insights to get a sense of how many people Library D is reaching and how many of them are commenting on or resharing the content. Similarly, Library D checks the number of views on YouTube videos. The

tracking feature in Google's goo.gl link shortener is used to track the number of clicks on the resources shared.

Library D recommends that any library considering social media technologies ensure that it knows what it wants social media outlets to achieve for the library. The simple fact that a library *can* implement social media technologies does not mean a library *should* do so – if you choose to do so, make sure you have a goal. Libraries should have a plan, too, for how they will use social media, what will be shared, when it will be shared, who will be responsible for the postings, etc. Library D cautions that the goal might not be met, and the goal and plan will likely change as social media technologies are used and integrated into library functioning, but that should be expected. Just make sure that the library starts out with a purpose and a plan for using social media technologies.

### **Case Study #5**

Library E is at a medium-sized regional 2-year community college in the eastern United States that began using social media in 2012. The library decided to implement social media because of the students; students here typically use technology to access social media, and they do that every day. Library E wants to meet users where they are rather than bring them to where the library is. Library staff want to use social media to advertise, to solicit feedback, and ideally as a venue where questions can be asked and answered. Another attractive aspect of social media is their lower barrier to publishing than traditional HTML-driven websites. Anyone who can send a text message can post a tweet, which can then be embedded on the library's website. Social media technologies provide an easy way to publicize events and show that interesting things are going on at the library.

The process at Library E for implementing social media involved a library staff member writing up a series of strategic plans for three social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) but these plans were discarded in favor of three ‘social networking authorization’ forms which were signed by administrators and the college’s public relations director. The next step was to acquire short screen names for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Once the initial steps were complete, volunteers were solicited to co-monitor the networks on the library’s internal wiki. Those involved with monitoring then discussed the purpose, plan, and technical details. Volunteers needed some time to become familiar with the technology. Then a staff workshop was held, on what social media are and why and how the library is using them. The workshop generated more interest and some possible volunteers.

Library E found that one of the biggest problems in implementing social media was the low level of staff technical skills. Many library staff do not truly understand computers, the web, or social networking as applied in an institutional context. Another limitation is the lack of understanding by library staff of copyright as it applies to hyperlinking to sites, as some staff stated that permission must be obtained before linking to another website. The final issue is marketing; a plan to market the library’s social media efforts has not been achieved.

Unfortunately, the issues that affected Library E’s implementation of social media technologies are still in effect. Ongoing staff workshops are slowly addressing the lack of technical skills in the use of social media and computers. A future intention to develop a protocol and guidelines on what is safe to post should quell the copyright fears. A marketing plan will emerge after fliers to promote the library’s social media efforts have been approved.

The technology-based skills required to implement social media at Library E were not extensive or complicated. Basic Internet literacy skills were all that were necessary – the ability to use a web browser, an understanding of how the Internet works, knowing what a URL is and its anatomy, skill in navigating a web application such as Twitter or Facebook and using YouTube’s editing functions. In order to address any deficiencies in staff expertise in these skills, Library E has embarked on a series of weekly training workshops. The skills the staff need are really a subset of fundamental computer literacy skills, so the workshops are focused more on basic computer literacy than social media literacy. Library E plans to cover social media needs once staff are more comfortable with computers and the Internet in general.

The major constraints in planning and implementing social media technologies at Library E centered on a lack of understanding by staff with regard to basic computer skills and copyright. Computer skill needs are being addressed by the ongoing workshops. The misinformation regarding copyright and posting was disconcerting. The lack of support from library colleagues and administration impacted Library E’s social media implementation. The staff invested in social media lack marketing expertise, so planning for promoting this effort has been a challenge.

The effectiveness of social media use and its impact have not yet been assessed by Library E. Staff will seek to use basic quantitative measures such as comments, likes, views, and retweets. Informal observations will also be considered, i.e. comments from those students who indicate that they heard about an event or a service on Facebook or on Twitter. Library E is more concerned with first building a presence on social media networks; assessment at this point would result in metrics indicating a failure.

Library E advises libraries considering social media to just start doing something and not get caught up in planning and requesting permission. Libraries are coming to social media late in the game, since most other organizations and businesses have already become involved. But that also means that there should be staff that are familiar with social media in their personal life, and they can be a valuable resource. Most importantly, though, consider whether or not the library and staff are committed to venturing into social media. If the commitment to provide time and energy to establishing and supporting a social media presence is not there, then choosing to skip social media is a better decision than attempting to establish a social media presence that is more a disappointment than a success.

### ***Case Study #6***

Library F is a science library branch located at a large university in southeastern Canada. Social media activity started here about six years ago, with blogs. The library chose to implement a 'new books' blog as a better means to market the collection. Since then Library F has moved to Facebook in order to connect to students and to Twitter to connect with students and faculty.

There was no planning involved with Library F's implementation. Each branch library pursues its own path at this university. Library F was able to quickly implement the decision to market the collection via a blog. A similar process was followed when the library moved to Facebook and Twitter. There are no restrictions or policies from a central administration at the library or the university, making the implementation simple and direct.

The main problem Library F has faced in implementing and maintaining social media has been the lack of time. The

time involved in getting accounts established and operational was not disproportionate, but the time needed to maintain the social media presence can be burdensome. Another issue has been marketing the service; how to establish the best way to publicize that the library has a social media presence to potential constituencies. Determining just who the different constituencies are and how best to contact them can be a challenge, too. A strategy to reach out to faculty will be different from one for students, and approaches may vary for undergraduate students and graduate students.

Persistence has helped Library F overcome the marketing and constituency concerns, along with a little trial and error. If one method gives less than acceptable results, then another attempt is made using another method; if Facebook posts are not bringing in students to events, then they concentrate on Twitter and see the results. Unfortunately the lack-of-time issue has not been resolved. Without the fiscal resources to provide additional staff resources, these efforts continue to be juggled among all the other tasks to be completed.

Library F did not find that there were certain technology-based skills required to implement social media. Using blogs and Twitter and Facebook is actually quite easy. Some staff members that did not have experience with these tools took the initiative to learn the skills and then mentor new people as the work expanded.

The major constraint in planning, implementing, and maintaining social media at Library F has been time, or the lack of it. Because each branch library is mostly autonomous, there has been no pressure to develop a central plan, policies, or guidelines regarding social media. Nor has the university dictated any mandates on this topic.

Library F assesses the effectiveness or impact of its social media use based on two main factors. The first is subjective – noting the interactions within each social media tool or

service (comments, retweets). The second is quantitative – tracking the number of likes and followers. The Klout score is also consulted.

The main recommendation from Library F is for other libraries to capitalize on librarians and other staff who are already passionate about social media. Encourage them to take leadership roles, both formally and informally. Libraries should try and become social media leaders on their campuses, to seize the opportunity to be recognized as leaders. The important thing is to just do it. Stay away from committees – death by committee is death.

### ***Case Study #7***

Library G is located at a medium-sized 2-year community college in the north central United States. Social media were considered for implementation in 2010, and that consideration grew out of the idea of one librarian, who researched and then attended a webinar on the topic. Further research led the librarian to the college's public relations representative, who strongly discouraged the library from getting involved with social media because the college already had a social media presence.

The college's public relations department turned this library away from the idea of social media. The library does not have a social media presence, and relies on the college's social media efforts. The librarian is not convinced that social media are needed at Library G. The administration's discouragement led Library G to reconsider social media at libraries. What do libraries think they can gain from implementing social media? The fact that a library's users are on Facebook and Twitter does not mean that the library should be there. Social media involve a lot of work and very little reward.

## **Case Study #8**

Library H is located at a large Catholic university in the eastern United States. Early social media efforts began in 2008 but plans were fully realized only in 2010. The library decided to implement social media because they wanted to be where the students were spending a lot of their time – Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare. In addition, the library acknowledged that companies are expected to have a social media presence, so why not libraries? Libraries provide customer service and information sharing to the people who come to the building. The library can extend these services through social media to more people.

There was a single staff member who led the implementation of social media at Library H. No committees or task force were involved. Guidelines on social media were developed by one staff member. The library's governing body approved the guidelines, and then the library started posting on Facebook and responding to individuals who mention the library on Twitter. A single staff member continues to create the content that comprises the library's social media presence, but other librarians assist with administrative aspects of Facebook and Twitter.

The three biggest problems in implementing social media at Library H were the lack of time, the lack of a smartphone (to assist in on-the-go management), and too much information to share while remaining true to the one-post-per-day guideline. Every library experiences the reality of too many tasks and too few staff resources. Developing innovative ways to resolve the lack of time meant that Library H now has an intern to assist a librarian with social media management tasks. The librarian invested in a smartphone personally and is now able to manage social media at all times. Updating the library website to reflect

more news and events happening in the library has meant that the flow of information has evened out.

Library H learned from practice and experience how to use Facebook and Twitter. No formal training sessions were attended, and actually training was not needed. Basic computer literacy skills are all that is required to implement the use of social media.

The only major constraint Library H encountered in planning and implementing social media technologies was, once more, the lack of time. The convenience of having an intern to assist with social media maintenance has lessened this constraint. The future availability of intern assistance is unknown.

Tracking the effectiveness of Library H's social media use or impact is very time-intensive. One librarian tracks and records every tweet that mentions the library. Doing this has helped Library H obtain positive and negative feedback about the library. Library staff can then act upon this information. For example, Library H received numerous complaints about the library's slow Wifi. When Library H checked with the university's IT department, they were told that the library's Wifi spots did not have enough capacity for the amount of people trying to get online. An upgrade of the wireless network solved this issue. Library H has also addressed complaints regarding building temperature, noise issues, and loudspeaker announcements. Social media played a role during the library's strategic planning process, when tweets were considered that contained opinions. Library H views Twitter as a comment box through which students can share their views and opinions with the library.

Library H recommends that libraries interested in implementing the use of social media remember to be engaging and have a personality. Libraries do not have to be serious all the time. People love photos, so upload a photo

or a picture of an event flyer with each Facebook update. Remember to engage patrons, and search for what they're saying about the library. And always respond in a timely manner.

### **Case Study #9**

Library I is located at a small two-year community technical college in the southeastern United States. Social media use was implemented over a number of years at Library I. Its blog was started in 2008. The library began to use Twitter in 2009 and Facebook in 2011. Chat reference and interactive online questions and answers were activated in 2011. Social media efforts were launched at Library I because everyone was involved with social media – they are very much in fashion.

Implementing the use of social media at Library I did not involve committees, planning, or task forces. Library I just jumped in and did it. The lack of planning did end up as a problem for the implementation, though. No plan meant that there was no goal for creating a social media network, other than starting up the accounts. Library I is still determining how best to use social media at the library. The lack of time is another factor to be taken into consideration in the implementation of Library I's social media efforts. The one staff member in charge of social media has to fit in these activities around all their other job responsibilities.

The major problem factor, though, has been a combination of the students' not using the library's social media network and the management's not understanding why the library should be involved in social media. The library manager is a proponent of cutting-edge technology, and supports the library's involvement in social media more as an achievement

than a process. But this library manager views social media solely as another type of outlet for posting announcements and basic library information. The lack of social networking and meaningful conversations with followers (students, faculty, patrons, etc.) means no one cares what the library is doing with social media. In order to create those conversations and build community, the library has to express some personality and creativity in its posts. Without the library manager's support in this effort, Library I's social media networking efforts are less than satisfactory.

Library I continues to work on overcoming the issues that have developed during the implementation of its social media efforts. Planning in advance what information is to be posted via each social media tool has alleviated the pressure experienced as a result of the lack of time and eliminates duplication of effort. Multiple versions of some posts are created – a longer one for the blog, a medium-length one for Facebook, and a 140-character one for Twitter. Library I attempts to 'cross-pollinate' whenever possible, that is, for example, to mention on Twitter that there is a new blog post, etc. When applicable, Library I uses HootSuite to post to Twitter and Facebook simultaneously, which somewhat eases the pressure of time. With better planning Library I hopes to make better use of the limited time available.

Attempting to change the library manager's perception of the use of social media is a large issue. Perhaps only time will tell if professional development opportunities that cover the meaningful benefits of social media networking for libraries can assist in an attitude change. Until then, Library I's social media efforts will be restricted to announcements.

The main technology-based skill required was an understanding of how social media work. The ability to post on a web service or move files is something basic and should be considered a regular requirement that does not require

specific training. Using the different social media tools will provide the user with the basic skills, but achieving an understanding of how to use them effectively will only come with experience.

The major constraint on implementing social media in Library I was and is staffing. Meaningful and engaged social media networking requires interactions to be conversations, two-way exchanges of thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Responding to students' questions requires that there are library staff available not only to follow the various social media networks in which the library has a presence but to pay attention to what is posted outside the library's own stream. In addition, providing helpful responses that will encourage students to seek out the library community in the future takes time, and time means staff, a resource in short supply at most libraries.

To assess the effectiveness of social media use and impact, Library I collects usage statistics. These statistics include the number of Twitter followers that the library has that are actually affiliated with the college, how many people have read the library's blog posts, and whatever statistics Facebook currently provides. Library I views this current assessment as a starting point and intends to develop other means to review social media effectiveness.

Library I recommends that any library interested in implementing social media should have a plan in place before beginning the effort. Coordinate efforts across social networks to avoid duplication of effort. Make sure you have plenty of staff time to devote to it. Be creative with your posts – have a personality. If you just post upcoming events and other library information, people will stop paying attention. In order to be creative and have a personality, you need to have the endorsement of the management of the library and possibly that of the university or college. They

must understand that the purpose of these networks is not just to provide another way to post announcements, but rather to create useful and illuminating conversations with library patrons.

## **Analysis of the experiences shared in case studies**

The libraries that were the subjects of the case studies shared varied experiences in regard to social media technologies. Geographic variations were minor, as all the libraries were located in either Canada or the United States. The types of libraries were mixed, with two-year, technical, or community colleges, universities, and specialized research libraries represented. Most had started with social media in the past four years, but three were pioneers and had started six or seven years before.

These libraries ventured into social media to build community. Whether to connect to students or to go where the students are, the wish to communicate with users via a means they choose to use was a common thread. Students use social media. As Martínez-Alemán and Wartman (2009, p. xii) note, 'Today the online world of social networking dominates the real college and university campus.' Creating a presence where students are is a logically obvious step for academic libraries.

There are some points that are common among the experiences of all the libraries responding. In particular, the need for more time is almost universal. Libraries state that time constraints impact how they use, maintain, and assess social media networking efforts. Surprisingly, the need for technology skills was not a major factor impacting these

libraries. The skills required for social media networking are described as basic computer literacy skills rather than high-level technical skills. At one library a series of ongoing workshops is held to address the needs of those staff members with a low level of technical skill. Understanding the nature and operation of social media was another necessary skill. The ability to learn to use new software and the flexibility to adjust to change were also found by these libraries to be necessary when working with social media.

Libraries also encountered stumbling blocks beyond those related to time constraints and staffing situations during the implementation of social media technologies. Developing procedures and schedules for posting and creating content can help make maintenance less burdensome. Employing persistence and patience can facilitate encounters with resistant staff and management. Communication among library colleagues is important on any project, and can assist not only with implementation but also with coordination and collaboration on a social media project.

Tips and recommendations were shared by these libraries on how others could implement social media. An unexpected point was the repeated call to advise libraries to just do something and not get stalled in the planning process, although two libraries did suggest having a plan in place before getting involved with social media. Other points were:

- to consider the audience
- to be engaging, have a personality
- to consider maintenance and establish guidelines
- to incorporate social media into the library's overall public relations and communication efforts
- to capitalize on staff who are passionate about social media

- to judge success by more than the number of ‘likes’
- to consider using student workers and/or interns to help with social media in the library
- to foster the support of management for social media in the library
- to use photos to engage people
- to respond quickly to comments, posts, questions, etc.
- to coordinate social media content and posting across various platforms.

One library suggested that libraries might use their social media networking as a means to seize an opportunity to be leaders on campus. As Ratliff states,

‘The social media phenomenon sweeping across the world creates a picturesque environment for the technologically savvy student, but often an intimidating outlook for administrators and faculty. While some higher education professionals embrace this opportunity to engage students through a new outlet, others struggle to adapt to new demands of the constantly connected, digital college student. Understanding social media and preferences of today’s college student are [sic] inherent to [sic] identifying the best practices to encourage student engagement and foster student development on college campuses’ (2011, abstract).

The library can take the opportunity to demonstrate an effective social media effort to seize the opportunity to be recognized as a leader on campus in using this communication and community-building platform.

But not all libraries participating as case studies had implemented social media. Out of the nine libraries that

provided details for the case studies, one library, Library F, chose to forgo the move to social media. This library had had an interest in social media, and one librarian researched the topic and attended a webinar. The plan was to start Facebook and Twitter pages for the library. The librarian then met with the college PR department, which managed the college's social media channels. The college PR department advised against the library's getting involved with social media. The college was already involved in social media and had devoted staff resources to establishing a presence and gathering followers, and the library would not have the resources to apply to social media that the college had.

Deciding not to independently pursue social media at this time was the decision of this library. The current college social media presence seemed adequate, given the PR department's position. The librarian stated that the research in social media on campuses and libraries was not persuasive enough in demonstrating that students desire libraries in their social media feeds. And there is a large percentage of students at this college that are not social media followers. Given these factors, choosing to forgo a social media project makes logical sense for this library.

Sometimes a library may not be in the best position to assume a leadership role for social media on campus. None of the libraries from these case studies was involved with a situation where the library was working along with another campus organization or department, or 'piggy-backing' on an established campus social media effort. Such an arrangement could make sense in some cases.

- Basic operating guidelines are already established.
- Account set-up time is reduced.
- Experienced workers can assist with start-up issues.

- In-house training opportunities can be provided.
- The established social media presence can be expanded through the library's participation and community-building.
- Resources such as staff and time can be shared.
- A bridge between the library and the other campus organization or department is created.
- Ultimately the goal of improving the campus social media presence needs to take precedence over ideas of 'turf.'

The decision to venture into social media should be made for reasons that are right for each individual library. Take the opportunity to explore what others are doing with social media at colleges and universities. Research is available regarding social media use in higher education. One comprehensive report was conducted by Reuben (2008) and examines the role of social media in higher education. Another report analyzes recent trends among 4-year accredited higher education institutions in the United States (Barnes and Lescault, 2011). An overview of how to listen and participate in social media can be found in Solis's ebook, *The Essential Guide to Social Media* (2008). Davis et al. (2012) review existing literature on the use of social media in higher education. For background on the networking and behavior aspect of reaching out to users, consult Easley and Kleinberg's book, *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning About a Highly Connected World* (2010). Practical advice on implementing social media can be found in Semple's *Organizations Don't Tweet, People Do: A Manager's Guide to the Social Web* (2012). Research, guides, and articles will continue to be written on this ever-expanding topic.

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## First steps

**Abstract:** Taking the time to develop policies and guidelines for implementing and maintaining a social media presence and to ensure staff members have the skills needed to participate successfully requires a strategy designed to ensure interested parties are involved, engaged, and supportive of the efforts made. The whole academic community should be consulted. Planning is complex, because of the complex nature of the identity of an academic library. The primary importance of purpose is discussed and emphasized, as is the fact that this is a two-way process. Typical concerns of library staff are addressed; the need for continuous learning and investment in skills is detailed. The chapter includes a skills checklist, and a range of samples of policies and guidelines.

**Key words:** social media networking, academic libraries, policy, guidelines, implementation strategy, samples, basic computer literacy skills, social media networking skills, checklist.

### Strategy for implementing social media

Social media technologies are all about conversations, conversations that transcend physical location and instead traverse areas of interest, personal and shared experiences, and more. If academic libraries are to strive for a successful place within the social media milieu, then it is imperative for a library to develop a social media strategy before embarking

on any initiative encompassing social media technologies; as Lenartz (2012, p. 344) states, ‘the first and most important step as an institution is to identify an overall strategy for the use of social media.’ Social media use for a business or organization is entirely different from the personal use of social media. Personal social media use is solely about one individual, while social media use for an organization can be multifaceted. Making up the image, reputation, vision, and idea of an entity such as an academic library are a multitude of layers. Consideration must be given to the position, culture, and mission of the library’s academic institution, and planning must include concepts such as research, instruction, and publications. The reputation and image of the library itself on campus must also be taken into consideration. Developing guidelines or policies for social media networking at an academic library should encourage the use of social media in building a community, and the guidelines should be ‘as simple, safe, and clear as possible’ (Lenartz, 2012, p. 351). It is imperative to take the time not only to plan how to implement social media technologies but to specifically address the purpose of implementing a social media strategy at all. A successful social media implementation requires a strong and clearly defined purpose.

Determining the starting point for the planning of a social media implementation can seem overwhelming, especially if very few library staff members actually have experience with social media. Avoiding ineffective and inefficient use of social media is closely related to purposeful planning. It is important to have a solid strategy, and the most useful strategy is to start at the beginning and move forward one step at a time, rather like embarking on a great physical journey. The first question to address in the planning process for an implementation of social media technologies for an academic library is ‘why does the library want to utilize

social media technologies?’ In other words, what is the purpose of this implementation?

Responding to this query is not as simple as it might seem. Just as the academic library is a multifaceted entity with a variety of services, determining the purpose of a social media project may be an effort loaded with ambiguity, and lacking clarity and any easily established goals. Following through with the journey motif, determining purpose will provide a destination, and then the planning will supply the route to reach it. Or, start by simply asking why (the purpose) and the how and what (the routes or ways to achieve it) can be better formalized. To attain success in social media and to mobilize a community around the effort requires an obvious and compelling purpose, a purpose that addresses a need or opportunity while at the same time being specific and significant.

Social media is not about ‘push,’ where messages are sent directly to the user in a one-to-one situation (Dholakia et al., 1999), but is instead about conversations, one-to-many two-way communications that involve listening as well as contributing. As a communicator, you provide, you shape, you set guidance and you enable. The audience decides what is useful and what is not. Conversations and community are the foundation for social media networking. As Levine (2000, chapter 4) states in *The Cluetrain Manifesto*, ‘When you think of the Internet, don’t think of Mack trucks full of widgets destined for distributorships, whizzing by countless billboards. Think of a table for two.’

A social media strategy involves developing objectives that are based on a clear understanding of the nature of communicating using social media. Social media are about developing relationships and building communities, so communication strategies need to be mindful of this difference and relate more to conversations and obtaining insights; it is important to remember to keep the communications as

dialogs and not to allow your posts to morph into a monolog. Social media networking involves a time commitment, and not just time for posting and commenting. Time will be needed to listen to your community – as you establish a social media presence, as you form relationships with your audience, and as you track, assess, and adapt your efforts.

Introducing new services or technologies often results in concerns from staff. With social media in an academic library, these concerns may include:

- loss of control over the library's identity
- dealing with negative comments about the library and its services and staff
- addressing individual personality versus organizational voice
- fear of failure
- the perception that social media efforts are a waste of time and (limited) resources
- contributing to existing information overload.

Change can be difficult. Communication and education are key to a successful social media effort and allaying the aforementioned concerns. Involve staff in discussions about social media networking and the library. Brainstorming sessions are useful, too, as they allow for input. Consider holding demonstrations as a part of staff meetings to build consensus on social media.

Communications about social media should include the likely benefits to the library as well as potential pitfalls. As with any planning process, mistakes will be made as the library plans and implements a new service, but it is important to remember that learning from missteps allows the library to discover what works and what does not. Remember to explain social media in a way that non-users can understand.

## Skill set defined

Given the rapid changes in libraries and technology, there is a recurrent need for library staff and librarians to engage in continuous learning. Riley-Huff and Rholes (2011, p. 130) discussed technology skill sets and librarianship, noting a need for improvement in skills involved with ‘integration of third-party Web 2.0 application programming interfaces (APIs) and social networking platforms.’ Mullins et al. (2007, p. 241) said, ‘The skill set for librarians will continue to evolve in response to the needs and expectations of the changing populations (students and faculty) that they serve.’ Involvement with social media networking technologies is no different, but those libraries engaged with social media networking cite the need for basic computer literacy skills as the most critical skills needed to implement social media technologies in academic libraries, rather than higher-level programming or application development skills. For the most part, basic computer literacy skills are skills used by library staff and librarians in everyday work situations to perform their job duties. These skills include but are not limited to:

- **typing and data entry:** keyboard and mouse use are the most basic of all computer competencies.
- **file system basics:** navigating the file system to locate, open, save and close files, as well as knowledge of installing and running programs is essential. Staff should also know how to locate any misplaced folders and files on the computer. Knowledge of how to use basic operating system components, such as the title bar, menu bar, tool bars, task bar and scroll bars, as well as how to minimize or maximize a window and open multiple windows is useful, too.
- **web browser usage:** navigation to websites, conducting searches via a search engine, and downloading files are

basic web browser tasks. Opening multiple browser tabs and windows can be helpful when navigating between various social media networking sites.

- **communications:** an understanding of the basic operation and etiquette of email translates well to social media networking communications using instant messaging, chat, and video chat. The ability to open and save attachments is also an essential basic skill.
- **troubleshooting:** knowing where to go for help is essential when using technology, whether or not that help can be found within the software, in a resource such as a book or website, or in a technology support center.

Library staff and librarians should have achieved a basic level of competency in computer literacy in order to participate successfully in social media networking. Basic competency equates to skillful use. Determination, persistence, and patience will assist most librarians and library staff who are involved with social media networking. Below is a checklist to assist in ensuring that basic computer literacy skills are achieved by all staff involved with the library's social media efforts.

### ***A checklist of basic computer literacy skills for social networking***

Library staff participating in social media networking for an academic library should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of how to

- perform basic mouse operations – point, click, right-click, double-click, drag – and use Alt and Ctrl keys in combination (e.g. Ctrl-Alt-Del, Ctrl-C, Ctrl-V, etc.)

- move a scroll bar up or down with the mouse
- use their knowledge of keyboard layout to assist in touch typing
- open, minimize, maximize, restore, scroll, and close a window
- move and resize a window on the desktop
- launch and exit an application program
- create, expand and collapse a folder
- select and copy one file and a group of files
- rename and delete a folder or file
- organize and manage different types of computer file, including having a basic knowledge of features such as the file name and path, and how to locate the properties of a file
- search for files or applications on the computer
- read and send email and handle email attachments
- find and retrieve information from the Internet
- download, view, and save files from the Internet
- change the font, font size, alignment or style (bold, italic, underline) of text
- insert images or other media objects (e.g. audio or video clips) in files
- resize and move media objects such as clip art, photos, etc.
- create a hyperlink
- check spelling and consistency, correct errors, and edit a file.

### ***Developing needed skills***

If you find that the library staff or librarians who will be involved with social media networking at the library are not proficient in these basic computer literacy skills for social networking, develop a plan to assist in getting these skills to those who need them. Consider workshops or one-on-one instruction sessions. Perhaps the campus information technology staff can assist in providing this instruction. Another avenue of skill provision is to locate online resources that can be utilized in computer skills training. A short listing of websites with information and checklists on basic computer literacy skills can be found in the bibliography. Encourage the staff to use the software already on their computer, software such as solitaire, word processing, and the web browser, to establish a comfort level with using the technology and prepare them for participating in the library's social media networking efforts. Just remember to provide staff interested in participating in the library's social media networking efforts with the opportunity and the time to become confident, competent, and capable technology users, and the library should have a skilled set of staff to assist in nurturing the library's social networking community.

### ***Guidelines or policies for social media use by academic libraries***

Establish guidelines for social media networking before implementation begins. If the library plans to use Twitter, establish a policy on Twitter usage first. The same course of action should be employed for Facebook, YouTube, or other social media. The process of policy development can deliver a meaningful understanding of the value of social media participation and how it can be used to the best advantage for the library.

‘Effective guidelines will establish a social media strategy, define terms of use, set expectations, and define consequences’ (Lenartz, 2012, p. 350). Guidelines should include basic determinations regarding who will post, developing a consistent voice, and building the schedule for posting. Other considerations include how to respond to negative comments, who will implement social media at the library, and adjusting existing workflows to integrate social media tasks. Ongoing maintenance of social media networking and who will be responsible for such are yet other details to include in the guidelines.

Rather than develop and start a full-blown multiservice social media campaign, kick off the library’s social media networking efforts with just one social media outlet. Pilot the guidelines and document the experience, noting successes and challenges. Open up a dialog with social media participants about what works and what does not work. Revise the guidelines and integrate revisions into policies and guidelines for other social media outlets the library implements. Stay flexible and review guidelines and make adjustments as situations dictate.

Remember that social media networking is about conversations and information meaningful to the community. Social media technologies by their very nature encourage community building, allowing connections within and beyond the library and encouraging collaboration. Keep the lines of communication open and engage community members. Each academic library is unique. What works well for one library may not be as successful for another. Experiment and be willing to change.

Libraries considering social media networking should clarify the purpose of such a venture. Be able to answer questions like these.

- Why participate in social media? What is the purpose?
- How will success be defined?
- Who is the target audience? Who comprises the community to be built?
- What content will stimulate the community to then share the library's content?

Defining purpose is crucial. Purpose provides clarity of vision. With a defined purpose, the identification of content to support that purpose is more easily achieved.

The heart of online social networking is the online communicative interaction. Academic libraries can support positive social networking use by developing rational and effective social media guidelines and policies to provide guidance in accepted and expected behaviors. By delineating expectations of behavior in the library's social networking community, the library can provide a means to intervene when behaviors stray outside expected guidelines and help community members whose technology use causes or may cause negative reactions, as well as aid those who are at the receiving end of negative social media behavior.

These guidelines and policies are best developed with input and contributions from the entire academic community, since the community built around the academic library's social media networking will potentially include faculty, students, alumni, administrators, and staff. Ideally, members from each of these groups should be involved in creating social media policy, for by involving the full range of stakeholders the committee then mirrors the anticipated community constituency. The policy or guidelines can be seen as online extensions of the basic library policies already in place, guidelines that protect library staff and community without hampering service and use. Nothing needs to be

extensive or restrictive, but rather more informative for those involved.

Once the committee is formed, any work of the committee should be both easily accessible and transparent. As guidelines and policies are developed, the committee should ensure that there are ample opportunities for input from stakeholders – the potential community members. Advance notice of meetings to be held should be given through normal campus communication channels and social media channels. Minutes from committee meetings should be regularly posted to a committee website, blog, Facebook group, and Twitter. If possible, delivery of live video and audio streaming or real-time remote access to committee meetings should be provided for those who cannot attend in person. The final product should be brief, readable, accessible, and free of technical terms.

Any academic library social media document should consider incorporating these concepts.

- **Be timely.**

Post updates at least twice a week. Add and update photos as events happen and circumstances dictate. The goal is to keep current yet not annoy those receiving the posts.

- **Be accurate.**

Check your facts before you post. Verify information with a source first to avoid the need to post a correction or retraction later. Whenever possible cite and link to sources not only for accuracy but to aid in community-building. If you discover an error in a posting, correct it quickly and note clearly that it is a correction; responsible handling of errors will earn respect in the online community.

- **Be mindful of your audience.**

The faculty, students, alumni, administrators, and staff of the college or university are the audience for the academic library's social media networking. Since social media blur the boundaries between professional and personal relationships, it is important to be thoughtful of postings and privacy. Choose photos carefully. Keep avatars professional. Language use should keep the audience in mind but not be considered rude or unprofessional.

- **Be respectful.**

Posts should be respectful and constructive. Contribute information and insights, not opinions.

The keys to success in social media are being honest about who you are, being thoughtful before you post, and respecting the purpose of the community where you are posting. Before diving into social media, you want to make sure your time is well spent. Create a social media plan by writing out answers to the following questions.

- **Responsible people**

Who will have the responsibility for populating, maintaining and monitoring your social media presence? Do they have the necessary skills and time? List the team members. Do not rely only on students.

- **Goals and strategies**

What do you hope to do? Launch a campaign, promote your department, communicate externally? With alumni, media or donors? Are these internal or external communications? Define your goal and list promotional tactics, e.g. 'We will list our Facebook url on all print materials.'

– **Define and measure your success.**

What do you hope to gain? How will you know when you have it? Do you want increased traffic to your website? More energetic give and take with students? Do you want to reach out to new colleagues on campus or around the world? Define success, how you will measure it, and the tools you need to measure it. ‘We strive for a community membership that equals X% of the total campus census by the end of 12 months.’

– **Identify your audience or community.**

Targeting specific groups, such as students, English faculty members, or the freshman class will help you tailor your content and conversation. List your primary audiences. Do you have secondary ones, too? How will you reach out to them initially? Remember simply setting up a Facebook page is not enough. You have to invite people there.

– **Engagement and conversations**

Nobody likes it when you constantly talk about yourself. It shows poor social skills. In social media, you need to be a good conversationalist. Be personable. Sometimes small talk is more valuable than messaging. How will you engage informally with your community? Ask questions, interact, and solicit feedback. Inquiries create interaction within the community. Ask the community for opinions on sources, resources, etc. Stay active, and respond to updates and comments to engage the community. Pepper your social media presence with questions. They are, after all, *social* media.

– **Listen.**

Listen before you converse. What are people saying in similar situations? What are people saying about the library?

Who is talking? List who is talking, about what, and where. Once you have the community conversations flowing, continue to listen but with the additional function of monitoring. Which posts, comments, or conversations elicit the most responses? Try to build on what works. If particular posts about events and resources are popular with the community, then post about other similar events or resources. Your community will tell you what they want to hear from your library by the way they interact with you.

### – Content

What content will you share? News or events? Images? Video? List the content you will be sharing via social media and the kinds of things you think are successful. How will you solicit input from the community? How will you foster the loyalty required to defend you when you need it most? Make your social media community comments special; consider sharing things with your community that help them feel as if they have the inside scoop on library information. Is an event scheduled? Tell the social media community first. Add and update photos constantly. Post photos of students and of campus events in the library. Invite the community to take photos and videos of themselves from study sessions and library events and send them to the library for posting.

### ■ Evaluation

Schedule an evaluation of your effort's success, based on the plan you outlined through answering these guideline questions. Be ready to recast your site's content and strategy if that is indicated. Regular evaluation should also be part of your effort. Set out your timeline, but remember that using social media is an ongoing effort.

Social media are powerful communications tools that have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. They blur the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, and are designed to be cultivated through social interaction, with content created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. As Lenartz (2012, pp. 350–1) states, ‘social media holds [sic] the potential for significant opportunities as well as serious consequences for students, staff, faculty, administrators, and the institution as a whole. The establishment of guidelines will help prevent these negative issues from occurring, and as a result will increase the use and effectiveness of social media overall.’

The following sample social media guidelines or policies are provided as examples of points and considerations academic libraries should consider when embarking on social media networking campaigns.

## **Sample social media policies**

### ***Sample A***

#### **Social media policy for the XYZ Library**

##### **Use of social media**

At the XYZ Library, we recognize that social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr have become important and influential communication channels for our academic community. To assist in posting content and managing these sites, the library has developed policies and guidelines for the official use of social media. These policies and guidelines apply to the library faculty, administrators, and staff, and can be used in connection with social media accounts associated with schools, colleges, departments, programs, and offices.

### **General guidelines**

- The purpose of using these communication channels on behalf of XYZ Library is to support the library's mission, goals, programs, and sanctioned efforts, including news, information, content, and directives.
- Prior to engaging in any form of social media involving XYZ Library, you must receive permission from your supervisor and the library's communications or marketing staff in charge of social media.
- When using an officially recognized social media channel you are representing XYZ Library.
- Confidential or proprietary library information originating from the library, or from third parties who have shared such information with you on behalf of XYZ Library, should not be shared publicly on these social media channels.
- Exercise discretion, thoughtfulness and respect for your colleagues, associates and the library's supporters/community (social media fans).
- Avoid discussing or speculating on internal policies or operations.
- A healthy dialog with constructive criticism can be useful; but refrain from engaging in dialog that might be seen to disparage colleagues, competitors, critics, or community members.
- Be mindful that all posted content is subject to review in accordance with XYZ Library's employee policies and editorial guidelines.
- Please refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing or giving any opinions on library topics or personalities that could be considered sensitive, confidential, or disparaging.

- Your personal social media account is not an appropriate place to distribute library news. If you have library information and news that you would like to announce to the community, the campus, the general public, or the media, please contact the library marketing or communications staff.
- XYZ Library does not monitor personal websites but will address issues that violate established human resources, editorial, graphic, Internet, acceptable use, social media, or other campus guidelines.
- XYZ Library encourages librarians, administrators, faculty, staff, and students to use social media but reminds users that at any time they can be perceived as a spokesperson of XYZ Library.

If you have any doubt about posting content on these social media sites, please consult the library staff member in charge of social media. Owing to the evolving nature of social media, these policies and guidelines are subject to revision. Feedback from the campus community is also welcomed.

## **Sample B**

### XYZ Library social media policy and guidelines

#### **Policy statement**

The use of social media websites is increasingly common, and these communications tools have the potential to have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. XYZ Library has developed a policy to properly portray, promote, and protect the institution. The policy also provides suggestions on how to protect personal and professional reputations while using social media. This policy requires that

- officially-recognized XYZ Library social media accounts and web pages be reviewed and approved through an application process
- each social media account will have responsible administrators assigned
- each officially approved account must include a disclaimer statement, in the prescribed form, regarding content and opinions contained on the site
- inappropriate, offensive, injurious, and illegal content may be removed by XYZ Library employees identified as account administrators, or at the direction of the staff responsible for social media policy
- best practices for social media accounts should be considered.

### **Application of policy**

This policy will apply to social media accounts created by XYZ Library employees for the official business purposes of the library, including the library faculty, groups, programs, departments, entities, etc. It will therefore impact students, faculty, administrators, and staff who utilize various social media for communication in conjunction with representing XYZ Library. Some examples of the various communication media included under this policy are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube.

All officially recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by the library in a directory on the XYZ Library social media website.

### **Exemptions**

This policy will apply only to social media accounts created for the express purpose of officially representing XYZ

Library groups, programs and entities, etc. and will not apply to private social media accounts. Library employees acting in an individual capacity should exercise caution to communicate clearly that they are not acting in a representative capacity, nor are they expressing the views of the library.

### **Definitions**

**Community member, poster, or user:** a person submitting content to any social media site that is officially recognized by XYZ Library.

**Social media:** websites and applications which enable users to create and share content are social media. Social media rely on social interaction and the Internet and web-based technologies to transform how people communicate with one another and receive news, information, and entertainment. Social media have transformed people from content consumers to content consumer/producers. Types of social media include networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, but also include blogs and podcasts.

**Social media accounts:** accounts or profiles created in social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn.

**Social media best practices:** guidelines, ethical considerations, and conventions for creating successful social media campaigns and accounts.

**Social media terms and conditions:** the terms and conditions imposed by the social media website in which the library is participating.

**Library's best interest:** (of behavior) ensuring users represent the library in an accurate, fair and legally compliant manner, while protecting the brand and reputation of the institution and campus.

## Procedures and Responsibilities

### A. Use of social media sites for library business

- The <staff member> will be responsible for administering this policy.
- Guidelines for content
  - XYZ Library employees are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct online as they would in the workplace. Laws and policies respecting contracting and conflict of interest, as well as applicable policies and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media, and all other library constituents apply online and in the social media context just as they do in personal, face-to-face interactions. Employees are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites.
  - Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about the library, its staff, or its students.
  - Post only content that is not threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.
  - Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the library is strictly prohibited. XYZ Library's name or logos may not be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.
  - By posting content to any social media site, the poster represents that the poster owns or otherwise has all of the rights necessary to lawfully use that content or that the use of the content is permitted by fair use. Posters also agree that they will not knowingly provide

misleading or false information, and that they will indemnify and hold the library harmless for any claims resulting from the content.

- While XYZ Library is committed to the protection of academic freedom, and it does not regularly review content posted to social media sites, it shall have the right to do so, and, with respect to any site maintained in the name of the library, may remove or cause the removal of any content for any lawful reason, including, but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.
- When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.
- Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, contact the campus Copyright Officer.
- If you also maintain your own personal social media accounts, you should avoid creating confusion over whether or not the account is associated with XYZ Library. If you identify yourself as an XYZ Library faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed on your site are not those of the library and you are not acting in your capacity as a XYZ Library employee. While not a requirement, XYZ Library employees may consider adding the following disclaimer to personal social media accounts. ‘While I am an employee at XYZ Library, comments

made on this account are my own and not those of the library.’

- Faculty members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the proposed guidelines suggested by the group, Faculty Ethics on Facebook <<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2229343363>>, and to engage in discussions concerning the ethical use of social media sites in an academic setting.

### **B. Clickwrap user agreements for new accounts**

Whenever a social media account is created, the social media outlet requires the account creator to agree to certain terms and conditions for use of the site by clicking ‘Yes’ or ‘I accept’ as part of the account creation process. These conditions are known as ‘clickwrap user agreements’ and are legal contracts. They often contain terms and conditions that create risks for the account creator and the XYZ Library (for officially-recognized library accounts). In view of this, XYZ Library has adopted this policy to manage these ‘clickwrap agreements’ and mitigate the risks they create. Account administrators are delegated authority to create official social media accounts through completion of the application process. Staff involved with social media will request legal and/or administrative approvals prior to approving applications when required.

### **C. Use of social media sites for the placement of advertising**

This Policy does not authorize XYZ Library departments to enter into advertising agreements with social media sites. Any XYZ Library staff wishing to purchase advertising services from social media sites, or from any type of

publication, must follow all applicable rules and policies governing both the public relations considerations and the procurement and contracting considerations related to such services.

- Because most, if not all, social media sites will require a ‘clickwrap agreement’ (an online contract that can be accepted by clicking ‘Yes’ or ‘I accept’), XYZ Library employees generally do not have the authority to place advertising without administrative approvals. Requests for approval should be directed to the appropriate staff member. Agreements may also require legal review and approval by the campus purchasing department.
- Staff that require frequent or recurring use of online advertising services should work with the campus purchasing department to arrange for the efficient use of time and resources so that multiple ‘clickwrap agreements’ can be quickly approved.
- Please note that the ease of clicking ‘I accept’ does not mean that the license agreement is without risk to the library. If you are in doubt about your authority to accept an online agreement on behalf of XYZ Library, or about the content of an agreement that is within your authority, contact the campus purchasing department for guidance.

#### **D. Existing XYZ Library conduct policies**

Social media users acting on behalf of the XYZ Library must adhere to all library policies and procedures, including but not limited to

- acceptable use policy
- copyright information

- IT security policy
- personal records privacy and security policy
- privacy statement
- website requirements and guidelines
- FERPA/Privacy policies
- Faculty and Staff Manual/Handbook.

#### **E. Student conduct code**

Each officially recognized library social media account will be required to include a disclaimer declaring it an official XYZ Library social media account and include a link to the library's social media policy.

### ***Sample C***

#### **Social media policy for the XYZ Library**

##### **Section 1: Policies for all social media sites**

*Protect confidential and proprietary information.* Do not post confidential or proprietary information about XYZ Library, students, employees, or alumni. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPA. Adhere to all applicable library privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.

*Respect copyright and fair use.* When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the college/university. Any questions about fair use or copyrighted material are to be directed to the campus copyright and intellectual property manager/officer.

*Do not use XYZ Library's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.*

*Respect library time and property.* Ensure use of library computers is in accordance with campus guidelines.

*Terms of Service* Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

## **Section 2: Guidelines and best practices**

This section applies to those posting on behalf of XYZ Library, though the guidelines may be helpful for anyone posting on social media in any capacity.

*Think twice before posting.* Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the university. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you would not say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online.

*Strive for accuracy.* Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.

*Be respectful.* Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion with the articulation of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the library and its institutional voice.

*Remember your audience.* Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or can easily be made available to the public at large. This audience could include prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Before publishing, consider the audience to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

*On personal sites, identify your views as your own.* If you identify yourself as a XYZ Library faculty or staff member

online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution.

*Photography procedures.* Photographs posted on social media sites can easily be appropriated by visitors. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at 72 dpi and approximately 800 × 600 resolution to protect your intellectual property. Images at that size are sufficient for viewing on the web, but not suitable for printing.

### **Section 3: Social media procedures**

If you post on behalf of XYZ Library, the following procedures must be adhered to in addition to all policies and best practices listed above.

*Notify the campus.* Contact campus communications managers to ensure all institutional social media sites coordinate with other campus sites and their content. All institutional pages must have an appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for content.

*Acknowledge who you are.* If you are representing XYZ Library when posting on a social media platform, acknowledge this affiliation.

*Have a plan.* Consider the message, audience, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up to date.

*Link back to the campus.* When appropriate, link back to the main college/university website.

*Protect the institutional voice.* Posts on social media sites should protect the library's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. The library's social media site does not represent the college/university as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post – names, profile images, and posts.

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## Make the connection: posting on social media

**Abstract:** Building a community: hints and tips are provided to assist academic libraries in implementing social media networking. Suggestions on posting and basic but detailed information on the use of social media channels Facebook and Twitter are included.

**Key words:** social media networking, implementation, Facebook, Twitter.

### Just DO it

Now that your library has a set of guidelines or policies in place for social media networking, it is time to move forward and begin building a community. Be willing to experiment, and be flexible. There will be missteps, but do not be discouraged when they happen; instead adjust and continue onward. Persistence is the key in building a social media community. Focus on being consistent, and incorporate changes in small and ongoing efforts. Keep in mind that ‘A sense of belonging is what keeps people in communities. This belonging is the goal of community building. The hallmark of a strong community is when [sic] its members feel that they belong.’ (Bacon, 2009, p. 7). Listen to the community and fine-tune the goals and objectives for the

library's social media networking based on how the library's community is actually using it.

Remember to link together different forms of social media networking. The library's home page should have a link to its social media channels. Each of the library's social media accounts should make mention of the other library accounts. Consider placing social media links in e-mail signatures.

Remember to get the word out. Mention the library's social media networking in library emails, at events, and during meetings on campus. Place flyers at the library's computers. Take an opportunity to mention the library's social media presence during classroom information literacy instruction sessions. Make the students aware that the library is building a community and trying to make it as easy as possible to connect with the library. Facebook provides targeted ads, which are fairly inexpensive. The library could purchase ads targeted to the library's community as another way to reach out and make an impact. Inform library student workers about the library's social media networking. On Twitter, find people in your campus community and start following them. Most will probably follow the library in return. Following others indicates that the library is interested in that community and what it has to say.

Setting up the library's account on social media outlets will require some decision-making. These decisions bear on the library's profile on social media sites. One such decision is in the area of personalization. How will the library personalize its account and therefore its social media experience? Some essential information should always be provided, such as physical location and contact information. Another standard should be a link back to the library's website. Social media are not the place to restate the library's mission statement. Compile a brief, informal, welcoming, and friendly description of the library. Make an effort to be personable.

Different social media networking channels have different customization options. For instance, you may be able to change colors or backgrounds, upload the library's logo or photo, or add custom tables. Work with these options until you find something that fits your library. Take some time to make your library profile unique.

Facebook has some specific areas that libraries should find useful. The Wall section contains information that is posted by the owner (in this case it would be the library) and comments made by the community. The Wall is an ideal location to post information about upcoming activities and events, or any news about the library. Community members can comment on these postings here, too. Since this Facebook page is about the library, photos should be about the library. The Events section holds information about future and past events. Community members will be alerted about these events and encouraged to attend. Videos can also be made available via Facebook. Content in this section could, for instance, be short videos of a library event or tutorials about using library resources. The link section ('Website' in 'Contact Info') should, at the bare minimum, include a link to the library's web page. Links to the library's catalog or discovery search tool, the college or university's main web page, and other locations should be considered if they could be useful to the library's social networking community. Libraries should encourage input from the community. Facebook provides a place to encourage discussion, and that allows the library to mention new resources, services, and activities as well as providing community members with a means to ask questions. Detailed information on creating library accounts on Twitter and Facebook can be found in the Basic Twitter How-to Section and the Basic Facebook How-to Section of this book. Additional information can be found in the book's Tools and Resources Section.

Begin to post on social media using the goals and policy or guidelines previously established for the library's social media efforts as guides on what to post. Social media networks are the perfect place to post about library news and events. Keep your social media outlet fresh and interesting. Consider mentioning new resources, whether those resources are books, a new database, or a citation maintenance tool. Social media provide a great way to update the library community about new arrivals and what is going on at the library. Links to relevant or helpful web content, for example campus information, can also be posted. Enhance your posts and include links to photos or videos. Since building and maintaining a community involve conversations, make sure to communicate with the community – solicit feedback, ask questions, and comment on the responses. Remember to acknowledge compliments to the library gracefully and reply to negative feedback in a positive fashion. Address whatever problem has been communicated and try to help. The worst possible strategy is to ignore complaints.

## **Basic Facebook how-to section**

(Information based on Facebook's Help sections at <http://www.facebook.com/help/>)

### ***Background – who sees what on a Facebook page***

1. People visiting a page can see
  - posts by the page that have not been hidden
  - a list of their friends who like the page

- what their friends are saying about the page
  - recent posts to the page made by others.
2. Page admins can see
- all posts by the page
  - things people have posted to the page
  - the administration (admin) panel
  - page insights.

Posts about a page respect the privacy settings of the people who create them. Page administrators (admins) will not see posts *about* their page that people have not shared publicly, even though people visiting the page might see these posts if they are part of the audience the post was shared with. Pages themselves are public spaces, and posts added to a page's timeline will be visible publicly and are eligible to appear in the Recent Posts by Others box.

There are limitations on what visitors can see. When people visit a Facebook page, they see what their friends and people whose pages they subscribe to are saying about it. For example, if someone tags a page in one of their posts or checks in at a location, the people they originally shared with will see these stories highlighted for them on the page's timeline. Friend activity allows users visiting a page on Facebook to see how their friends are interacting with that particular page on Facebook. Although access to each 'friend's activity' regarding a page is located on the page, this information will differ from page to page, because it is dependent on shared 'likes' among friends. This feature allows users to see what their friends think of a page (e.g. business, interests, etc.) without having to have it come through their newsfeed, or to ask their friends about it, or to view their friend's profile. Any friends that have 'liked' the

same page(s) as the user and have interacted on that page via ‘likes,’ comments, etc. are now viewable by visiting that page’s (or those pages’) ‘friend’s activity,’ located on the left-hand side of the page.

Why is this feature useful? Because it can help pages by means of peer recommendation and allow users to see peer recommendation. In other words, users can see what their friends think about a page. However, owners and admins must be watchful of these interactions, especially with regard to possible negative reactions.

Other facts about viewing pages are as follows.

- The spam filter view on your page is only visible to page admins in the activity log. User posts that are manually marked as spam by page admins will also show up in the spam filter view.
- People will be able to view a tagged photo on a page only if they are already able to see it based on its privacy setting. Tagging a page in a photo does not change the privacy setting for that photo; it only adds the tags.
- Tagged photos will appear on your page’s ‘photos’ view. Stories about tagged photos will not appear on your page’s timeline. You can prevent tagged photos of your page from appearing on your page. To do so,
  - from the top of your page, click the Edit Page button
  - select Manage Permissions from the listed options
  - uncheck the box next to Everyone can add photos and videos to [Your Page’s name]’s timeline.

## ***Step 1 – personal accounts v. Facebook pages or groups or timelines***

*Personal accounts* are optimized to work for individual people instead of businesses, brands, and organizations. Unlike personal accounts, *Facebook pages* allow artists, businesses, and brands to showcase their work and interact with fans. In contrast to the restrictions on numbers of friends for personal accounts, there is no limit to the number of people who can ‘like’ a Facebook page. These Facebook pages come pre-installed with custom functionality designed for each category. Developers also build an array of apps for page admins to add to their pages.

### **Facebook groups**

Facebook groups provide a closed space for small groups of people to communicate about shared interests. For instance, the social media networking committee for your library could be a Facebook group that interacts face to face, via email, and through the Facebook group. Facebook groups can be created by anyone, and more privacy settings are available for groups than for pages. In secret and closed groups, posts are only visible to group members.

Members of Facebook groups must be approved or added by other members. When a group reaches a certain size, some features are limited. The most useful groups tend to be created by small groups of people who know one another. In groups, members receive notifications by default every time other members post in the group. Group members can participate in chats, upload photos to shared albums, collaborate on group docs and invite members who are friends to group events.

## Facebook pages

Facebook pages allow real organizations, businesses, celebrities and brands to communicate broadly with people who like them. Pages may only be created and managed by official representatives. Page information and posts are public and are generally available to everyone on Facebook. Anyone can 'like' a page to become connected with it and get newsfeed updates. There is no limit to how many people can 'like' a page. Page admins can share posts under the page's name. Page posts appear in the newsfeeds of people who 'like' the page. Page admins can also create customized apps for their pages and check Page Insights to track their pages' growth and activity.

## Facebook pages v. timelines

Facebook pages help businesses, organizations, and brands share their stories and connect with people. People 'like' pages they are interested in so that they will get updates about the activity of those pages. Every page will appear in search results on Facebook. When someone 'likes' a page, that page will appear in the Pages section on the Info tab of their timeline. Libraries can 'like' other libraries' Facebook pages. Additionally, all pages can be found in the Page Directory.

Timelines are for personal, non-commercial use only. They represent individuals and a timeline must be held under an individual name. Pages are for professional or official use, and allow an organization, business, celebrity or band to maintain a presence on Facebook. You may only create Facebook pages to represent real organizations of which you are an authorized representative.

In addition, pages are managed by admins who have personal Facebook timelines. Pages are not separate Facebook accounts and do not have separate login information from your timeline. They are merely different facets of your site, very much as groups and events are. Once you have set up a page within your timeline, you may add other admins to help you manage this page. People who choose to connect to your page will not be able to see that you are the page admin or to have any access to your personal account.

## **Step 2 – sign up**

1. If you are the official representative of a library, you can create a Page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php> to represent the library on Facebook. After you complete the sign-up form, Facebook will send an email to the address you have provided. Just click the confirmation link to complete the sign-up process.
2. If you're an admin of a Facebook page, you can choose a username for it at <http://www.facebook.com/username> in the same way that an individual selects a username for their timeline. You can choose a username for each eligible page you manage.
3. If a page already exists for your library, you may have to claim this page. This happens for a variety of reasons. For example, when someone checks into a place that does not already have a page, a new page is created to represent the location. If you are an official representative of an existing page, you can request to claim it in several ways.
  - From the page, click the menu.
  - Select 'Is this your business?'

- Follow the steps that appear on your screen. Add and verify information about your business, such as its address and website, and click Continue.
- Next, Facebook will ask you to claim your page to prevent anybody else from becoming an admin without your permission. Choose to verify your connection to the business by email or by uploading documentation, as follows:
  - email: choose this option if you have an email address associated with your Facebook account that was officially issued to you by your business. Email addresses from generic providers such as Yahoo! or Gmail will not be accepted. The email address should correspond to your library's name, for example, *jane.doe@collegelibrary.edu*
  - documentation: upload a scan or photo of an official document that shows your business's name and address, such as a utility bill, etc.
  - click Submit.
- You are now an admin and can begin managing the page. Please allow up to one week for the Facebook Pages team to review your claim request and respond. If your request is accepted, nobody else will be able to become an admin of your page without your permission.
- Once you have claimed your page, you can merge it with duplicate pages that you may already have set up for your library. People who 'like' the pages will become associated with the one page that has the most likes. The pages must be about the same thing and have similar names to be eligible for merging. Additionally, if the pages have physical locations, make sure the addresses are the same. Learn more

about merging pages at [http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=249601088403018&in\\_context](http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=249601088403018&in_context).

- You may use qualifiers in your page name, but you may not have more than two words after a hyphen. In addition, you may not use the words 'fan' or 'official' in your page's name, even if you are an official representative. The name must not be spelt only with capital letters, unless the name is an acronym. Also, most pages represent proper nouns, so make sure the first letter of your page's name is capitalized.
- Facebook recommends not adding extra information to your page's name. Instead, add information about your page in the About section.
- Allowed:
  - College Library – State College Owned
  - College Library – Open Late
  - Springfield Library
  - Woodbridge Library PTO
  - Library Users Against AIDS
- Not allowed:
  - College Library – the best on the block
  - College Library – Now Open Late!
  - Official Page of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Official \_\_\_\_\_ Page
  - The official \_\_\_\_\_ Page
  - The official Page of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fan Page of \_\_\_\_\_
  - The fan Page of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Community Page of \_\_\_\_\_

- SPRINGFIELD LIBRARY
- College Library voted BEST IN WORLD
- SpRiNgEr CoLLeGe LiBrArY

### ***Step 3 – enter basic information***

1. Page profile pictures are square and display at 160 × 160 pixels. The photo you upload must be at least 180 × 180 pixels. A square image of your library’s logo is recommended. Rectangular images will be cropped to fit a square. Page profile pictures are displayed next to your page’s name around the site, so your page profile picture should stand on its own to represent your page. You can also be creative in the way you put your profile picture and cover photo together. On your page’s cover, the profile picture displays 23 pixels from the left side and 210 pixels from the top of your cover photo. Here are the instructions for adding a profile picture for your Facebook page.
  - From the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  - Select Update Info.
  - Select Profile Picture in the left sidebar.
  - Click Choose File and select a photo to upload from your computer.
2. You can edit the information that appears in your page’s summary box below its profile picture, but you cannot choose which fields display there.
3. Contact information – to add contact information, follow these directions.
  - At the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  - Select Update Info.

- Add an address, phone number, email address and website in the fields provided.
  - Click Save Changes.
  - You can also add contact info in the free-form About box that displays below your page’s profile picture. To edit the About section:
    - click the summary box under your page’s profile picture
    - hover over the About section and click Edit
    - add text to the About field of your page’s Basic Information tab
    - click Save Changes.
4. To update the address of your page:
- at the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Update Info
  - update your address in the Address field or drag the pin on the map to adjust its exact location
  - please note that it may take up to a few hours for edits to be visible on your page.

#### ***Step 4 – customize***

- The new Facebook Pages design gives you the ability to:
  - add a unique cover photo to the top of your page
  - star stories to make them bigger
  - pin posts to the top of your page
  - add milestones to mark key events
  - arrange views and apps below your cover.
- Your cover photo is the large picture at the top of your timeline, right above your profile picture. Like your

profile picture, cover images are public, which means anyone visiting your page will be able to see them. People have a better experience viewing your page when they see a cover that is as unique as your library.

- Consider using one of the following types of photos for your library's page cover image:
  - external building shots
  - interior shots without people prominent
  - interior shots with people front and center
  - book shots
  - photo collage
  - an event shot.
- Use a unique image that represents your page. Be creative and experiment with images your audience responds well to. Cover images must be at least 399 pixels wide and may not contain
  - price or purchase information, such as '40% off' or 'Download it at our website'
  - contact information, such as a web address, email address, mailing address or other information intended for your page's About section
  - references to user interface elements, such as Like or Share, or any other Facebook site features
  - calls to action, such as 'Get it now' or 'Tell your friends.'
- Cover photos are 851 pixels wide and 315 pixels tall. If you upload an image that's smaller than this, it will be stretched to this size. The image you upload must be at least 399 pixels wide. To get the fastest load times for your page, upload an sRGB JPG file that is 851 pixels

wide, 315 pixels tall and smaller than 100 kilobytes. For images with your logo or text content, you may get a higher quality result by using a PNG file.

- All cover images are public, which means anyone visiting your page will be able to see the image you choose. Covers must not be false, deceptive or misleading, and must not infringe on third parties' intellectual property. You may not encourage or incentivize people to upload your cover image to their personal timelines.
- To add a cover:
  1. go to your page
  2. click Add a Cover
  3. choose whether you want to upload a new photo or pick a photo from one of your existing photo albums
  4. once you choose a photo, you can reposition it by clicking on the image and dragging it up or down
  5. Click Save.
- To edit your page's cover:
  1. go to your page
  2. hover over your cover
  3. click Change Cover at the bottom right of your cover
  4. pick one of the options from the pop-up menu (for example, upload a new photo, reposition your current cover photo, or delete your cover)
  5. save your changes.
  6. Note: your cover image has to be at least 399 pixels wide.

## ***Step 5 – administering Facebook***

NOTE: A page can have multiple admins, but each page admin will need an individual personal Facebook account.

- You can access your page by typing its name into the search bar at the top of any Facebook page and selecting it from the dropdown that appears. To manage your page's settings,
  1. from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  2. select Update Info.
  3. You can also access and manage your page by using Facebook as the page you admin or from a list of all the pages you manage.
  4. View a list of all the pages you manage all in one place by hovering your mouse over Pages in the bookmark menu on the left side of your newsfeed and clicking More.
- To use Facebook as the page you manage,
  1. from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  2. select Use Facebook as [page name].
  3. All actions that you take while using Facebook as your page will appear on Facebook as coming from your page. For example, if Jane comments on a photo while using Facebook as her page 'Jane's Library,' then the comment will appear from Jane's Library, and not from Jane herself. Other parts of Facebook will also behave differently.
  4. Your newsfeed will show updates from other pages you or other admins have 'liked' while using Facebook as your page.

5. Your notifications will be about activity on your page, not your personal timeline.
  6. To go back to using Facebook as yourself, repeat the instructions above and select Use Facebook as [your name].
- While using Facebook as the page you manage you can
    - receive red on-site notifications about new people who ‘like’ your page
    - receive red on-site notifications and email notifications about people who comment and post on your page
    - view a newsfeed for your page. This newsfeed will be populated with stories about your page and stories about other pages you ‘like’
    - ‘like’ other pages and comment on posts by these pages.
  - You can feature specific page admins in the Page Owners section of your page. To feature admins,
    1. from the top of your page, click Edit Page
    2. select Update Info
    3. select Featured in the left column
    4. click Add Featured Page Owners, and select admins to feature.
    5. People will see your featured admins when they click the About link below your page’s profile picture.
  - See your page’s recent notifications on the admin panel. When you’re using Facebook as your page, notifications will also appear as red bubbles in the upper-left corner of the site.
  - You can edit the page posting preferences and email notifications, as follows.

1. At the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  2. Select Manage Notifications.
  3. From here, decide if you would like always to post as your page and whether or not you will receive notifications about your page at your email address.
- The admin panel is a place where you can respond to people using your page and quickly see how your page is performing. From your admin panel, you can
    - view notifications
    - respond to messages
    - view your page insights
    - access your activity log to curate content on your page
    - access the Edit menu to make changes to your page's settings.
  - Open the admin panel by clicking Show in the upper-right corner of your page. To close your admin panel, click the Hide button in the top-right corner.
    - Non-admins who visit your page will not see the admin panel. It is only available to your page's admins.
    - To view your admin panel, click Admin Panel above the date selector in the upper-right corner of your page.
    - To close your admin panel, click the Hide button in the panel's top-right corner.
  - This is how to re-add the Photos tab or another application previously removed from your page.
    1. At the top of your page, click Edit Page.
    2. Select Update Info.

3. Select Apps from the left sidebar.
  4. Find the app you want to re-add and click Edit Settings under its description.
  5. Click 'add' to re-add the app to your page.
- People can tag pages in their own photos. They can also tag pages in photos posted by their friends and friends of friends. Pages can tag other pages they have 'liked' in their photos. At this time, only pages that are categorized as People or Brands and Products can be tagged. You can enable the option to allow photo tagging for photos uploaded to your page by following these instructions.
    1. At the top of your page, click Edit Page.
    2. Select Manage Permissions.
    3. Check the box labeled People can tag photos posted by [your Page name].
  - To find your page's privacy controls, follow these instructions.
    1. From the top of your page, click Edit Page.
    2. Select Manage Permissions.
    3. Here, you can set country and age restrictions to control who is able to search for and 'like' your page. You can also control posting preferences and manage your moderation blocklist from this tab.
  - Admins of pages with fewer than 5,000 likes can import their email lists and invite them to 'like' their page. You can now upload a file containing your email contacts and Facebook will securely import them. You will then be able to suggest your page to your contacts. You can also suggest your page to your web email contacts. Simply provide your web email address and password, and your contacts will be imported. You can then suggest your page to them.

Note that Facebook may use the email addresses you upload to help you connect with friends, including using this information to generate suggestions for you and your friends on Facebook. If you do not want Facebook to store this information, please go to [http://www.facebook.com/invite\\_history.php](http://www.facebook.com/invite_history.php). To import your email lists,

1. open your admin panel
  2. click Build Audience
  3. select Import Email Contacts.
- The ‘Find Us on Facebook’ badge provides your library with a way to promote your page from Facebook’s website, and help direct your customers to your presence on Facebook. This badge can be applied in-store or on location, on the web, and in print collateral. You can learn how to create a badge in the ‘Promote your page’ section when you are editing your page, or at <http://www.facebook.com/badges/page.php>.
  - ‘Organic promotion’ refers to the newsfeed stories automatically generated from the actions taken by people on your Facebook page, or page posts. For example, when someone ‘likes’ something you post to your page, their friends may see a story about in their newsfeeds.
  - Facebook pages and the natural distribution of their content through newsfeed are free to page admins.
  - Page admins will have an opportunity to increase distribution incrementally as well, with paid advertising. Page admins can create Facebook Ads to drive traffic to a Facebook page.
  - Your page’s activity log is a tool that lets you review the history of your page and change the settings of individual posts. Only page admins can see the activity log. From your page’s activity log you can

1. see all your page's stories, organized by date
  2. star posts to make them bigger
  3. hide and delete posts
  4. change the date of posts by your page
  5. report and remove spam posted on your page.
- Powerful reporting and insight tools are provided free to page admins. On a cumulative and week-by-week basis, these granular reports measure reach (examples: impressions, clicks), viral impact (example: follower adds), responder insights (example: gender and age) and engagement (examples: video plays and Wall posts) of visitors to the page. To view insights,
    1. go to your page
    2. click the menu
    3. select View Insights.
    4. Insights provide measurements of your page's performance. By keeping an eye on how many people 'like' your page, engage with your posts or create their own posts, you can better understand which of your posts people respond well to. Insights are available only on pages with at least 30 likes. It can sometimes take several hours for insights to become available after your page gets 30 likes. App pages and pages without admins do not have page insights. The Page Insights user interface displays about 500 posts.
  - To see metrics on your Facebook page or platform application, go to the Insights Dashboard. Only page administrators, developers, and domain administrators can view Insights data for these entities. To view comprehensive Insights on your specific page or website, click on the corresponding item on the left navigation bar.

Four metrics at the top of your Insights tab allow you to quickly assess the size and engagement of your audience.

- Total Likes: the number of unique people who ‘like’ your Page as of the last day of your selected date range.
- Friends of Fans: the number of unique people who are friends with your fans as of the last day of your selected date range, including your current fans.
- Talking About This: the number of unique people who have created a story about your page during your selected date range. A story is created when someone
  1. ‘likes’ your page
  2. ‘likes,’ comments on or shares your page post
  3. answers a question you have asked
  4. responds to your event
  5. mentions your page
  6. tags your page in a photo
  7. checks into or recommends your Place.
- Total Reach: the number of unique people who have seen any content associated with your page (including any Ads or Sponsored Stories pointing to your page) during your selected date range.
- A Mention occurs when users tag a page in a post or photo. Users can do this by using the @ sign and typing the name of the page.
- Engaged Users are the people who have clicked anywhere on your post.
- The Likes tab provides the following information about the people who ‘like’ your page:

- gender and age: the percentage of people who liked your page for each age and gender bracket as of the last day of your selected date range. This is based on the data people enter in their timelines.
- countries: the number of people who liked your page as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by country. This is based on the user’s IP address.
- cities: the number of people who ‘liked’ your page as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by city. This is based on the user’s IP address.
- language: the number of people who ‘liked’ your page as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by language. This is based on the user’s default language setting.
- The ‘Where your Likes came from’ graph on the Fans tab shows New Likes and Unlikes during a date range you specify.
- New Likes are the unique people who have ‘liked’ your page each day during your selected date range.
- Unlikes are the unique people who have ‘unliked’ your page each day during your selected date range.
- The Like Sources table on the Fans tab shows the number of times your page was ‘liked,’ broken down by where the ‘like’ was registered (on your page, from the newsfeed, on your website, etc.), during the date range you specified.
- People Talking About This is the number of people who have created a story from your post. Stories include:
  - sharing, ‘liking,’ or commenting on your post
  - answering a question
  - responding to an event.

- The Talking About This shows:
  - gender and age: the percentage of people who talked about your page for each age and gender bracket, as of the last day of your selected date range. This is based on the data people enter in their profile.
  - countries: the number of people who talked about your page, as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by country. This is based on the user's IP address.
  - cities: the number of people who talked about your page, as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by city. This is based on the user's IP address.
  - language: the number of people who talked about your page as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by language. This is based on the user's default language setting.
- Impressions is a measure of the number of times a post from your page is displayed, whether the post is clicked on or not. People may see multiple impressions of the same post. For example, a fan might see a page update in their newsfeed once, and then a second time if their friend shares it.
- Reach is a measure of the number of people who received impressions of a page post. The reach number might be less than the impressions number, since one person can see multiple impressions, while reach covers only the people who have seen your post. Figures are for the first 28 days after a post's publication and include people viewing your post on both desktop and mobile. Your post counts as having reached someone when it is loaded and shown in newsfeed. Note that data from before 2 July 2012 include only people viewing your post on the desktop.

- To sort your page's posts by how many people have seen them click Reach in the Page Posts section of your insights overview.
- The Reach tab helps you understand who the people you are reaching are and how you managed to reach them. For users your page has reached, data are available on
  - gender and age: gives the percentage of people who saw any content about your page for each age and gender bracket, as of the last day of your selected date range. This is based on the data people enter in their profile.
  - countries: the number of people who saw any content about your page, as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by country. This is based on the user's IP address.
  - cities: the number of people who saw any content about your page, as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by city. This is based on the user's IP address.
  - language: the number of people who saw any content about your page, as of the last day of your selected date range, broken down by language. This is based on the user's default language setting.
- The reach chart shows how many people have seen any content about your page, and where applicable, whether these people were reached through an organic, paid or viral channel. People might see your content through more than one of these channels. As a result, the sum of your organic, paid, and viral reach might be larger than your total page reach.
  - Organic reach is the number of unique people, fans or non-fans, who saw any content about your page in their newsfeeds, ticker, or on your page.

- Paid reach is the number of unique people who saw an ad or Sponsored Story that pointed to your page.
- Viral reach is the number of unique people who saw this post from a story published by a friend.
- The Frequency graph on the Reach tab shows the number of people who have seen content about your page in the last 7 days, broken down by the number of times they saw it during that time.
- The Page Views graph on the Reach tab shows the number of Page Views and Unique Page Views on each day during your selected date range.
- The External Referrers table on the Reach tab shows the number of times people arrived on your page from a URL that is not part of facebook.com during your selected date range.
- Virality is the number of people who have created a story from your post as a percentage of the number of people who have seen it.

Page post metrics will be available 12 to 15 hours after the end of the day the post was made. Metrics are logged in Pacific Standard Time. Page post data remain available for 28 days after the date of the post.

## ***Step 6 – using Facebook***

1. Publish your page.
  - Once you have filled out your Facebook page and are ready to show it to the public, you need to publish your page to have it display on the site.
  - While your page is unpublished, a dialog at the top of it indicates that your page is not currently visible to

non-admins. There is a link there to Publish Your Page. This will instantly set your Facebook page to 'published' and so make it visible to the public. You can also publish your page from the Edit Page section.

- You can unpublish your page at any time. Setting your Facebook page to 'unpublished' will hide it from non-admins, including people who 'like' your page. Your page will not be visible until you set it back to 'published.' To unpublish your page,
    - from the top of your page, click Edit Page
    - select Manage Permissions
    - check the box next to Unpublish Page
    - click Save Changes.
2. To invite friends to your page,
    - open your page's admin panel
    - click Build Audience
    - select Invite Friends.
    - Use the dropdown menu to choose a list or select Search All Friends. Next, scroll through your friends and check the boxes next to the names of the people you want to invite. You can also search for friends in the menu's search box. When you have finished selecting friends, be sure to click Submit to send your friends invitations to your page.
  3. Suggest your page to friends by clicking Invite Friends from the Build Audience menu in the admin panel. Selected friends may begin to see suggestions for your page in the right column as they navigate around Facebook.

4. You have complete control over your page and can manage it in whatever way feels most natural to you. You can remove people's posts, so feel free to remove profanity, spam, or other posts as you wish. However, when you engage your fans in a genuine dialog, transparency is very important. Remember this is a conversation, so listen, respond, and address negative feedback honestly and openly. This is a great way to show your customer service and demonstrate your ability to handle constructive criticism or feedback graciously.
5. Pages appear in newsfeed distribution for various actions taken on the page. They may also appear in ads. People will see these stories and ads and can click Like in the story or ad to 'like' the page. Alternatively, if someone sees a page they like on a friend's timeline, they can visit the page by clicking on the page's profile picture or name. They can also search for the page by name, either within Facebook or from a global search engine.
6. Non-admins can share a page with friends by selecting Share from the menu under the page's cover photo.
7. You can edit the information that appears in your page's summary box below its profile picture, but you cannot choose which fields are displayed there. The types of information that appear in the summary box are specific to your page's category.
8. Clicking Like is a way to give positive feedback and connect with things you care about.
9. You can share a link from the web on Facebook.
10. Your newsfeed is the ongoing list of updates on your home page that shows you the new events and posts from the friends and pages you follow.

11. Notes is a feature that lets you publish whatever is on your mind in a full rich format.
12. Notifications are email, onsite, or mobile updates about activity on Facebook.
13. Milestones are key moments you decide to highlight on your page. Milestones are automatically expanded to widescreen and are visible to everyone visiting your page. To add a milestone,
  - click Milestone in the sharing tool at the top of your page’s timeline
  - add a headline, location, date, and details for your milestone
  - choose to add a photo
  - click Save
  - from anywhere on your page’s timeline, scroll to a spot and click to post a milestone or any other type of story to a particular date.
  - Milestone photos display at 843 pixels wide and 403 pixels tall. At this time, 1 January, 1000 is the earliest date a milestone can have.
14. You can only change the name of a page with fewer than 200 likes. If your page qualifies, follow these steps to change its name.
  - From the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  - Select Update Info.
  - Change the text in the Name field and save your edits.
  - You cannot currently change the name of a page with 200 or more likes.

15. To delete your page,
  - from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Manage Permissions
  - click Delete [Your page Name].
  - You will have the option to unpublish or delete your page. If you choose to delete your page, please note that its removal is permanent.
16. Consider ‘liking’ other Facebook pages for campus entities. Your page can ‘like’ other pages, and you can feature those in a box on your page’s timeline. To feature a page,
  - use Facebook as your page
  - visit the page you want to feature and click Like
  - return to the original page and click Edit Page at the top
  - select Update Info
  - select Featured from the left sidebar menu
  - click Edit Featured Likes
  - choose pages you would like to feature
  - click Save.
17. You can create new events from the events app below your page’s cover photo. If you do not see an events app, go to it from your page’s settings.
  - From the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  - Select Update Info.
  - From the left column menu, select Apps.
  - Under Events, click Go to App.
  - From the events app, click Create Event in the top right corner.

18. You can edit an event. Visit your page's event and click the menu in the upper-right corner.
  - Select Edit Event.
  - Make changes to the event's details and click Save Event.
19. People will always see the timeline view of your page when they visit it. Views and apps are now easy to find right below your page's cover. You can't change the default landing view to another view or app, but you can link people directly to a particular view or app on your page. Find the URL for a view or app on your page in the web address bar of your browser when you visit that view or app. Use the sharing tool at the top of your page's timeline to create a post that links people to your app, and draw attention to the post by pinning it to the top of your page. We also recommend adding an icon to your custom app so that people will notice it under your page's cover.
20. Pinned posts are page posts that admins have chosen to display prominently at the top of their page. A pinned post always appears in the top left of a page's timeline and has a flag in its top right corner. A post a page admin pins to the top of the page will remain there for seven days. After that, the post reverts to the date when it was published on your page's timeline. Your page can have only one pinned post at a time. If you choose a new story to pin to the top of your page, it will replace the existing pinned post, moving it back to the date when it was published on your page's timeline. Posts from people who 'like' a page are not eligible to be pinned posts. Page admins can only pin posts created by the page. To pin a post to the top of your page,

- click the pencil icon in the upper-right corner of your page's post
  - select Pin to Top
  - your pinned post will move to below the sharing tool in the top left of your page's timeline, and an orange flag will appear in the upper-right corner.
21. You can choose to not show posts by others on your page's timeline until you review them, to not allow others to post on your page at all, and to turn off the Recent Posts by Others box on your page's timeline. However, people will still see posts about how their friends have interacted with your page. To prevent posts by everyone from appearing on your page's timeline until you review them,
- from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Manage Permissions
  - choose Hidden from Page in the menu to the right of Default visibility of posts by others on [Your page's name]'s timeline
  - click Save Changes
  - visit the Activity Log each day to choose which posts should be allowed on your page's timeline for everyone to see.
22. To turn off the facility for people to post on your page's timeline,
- from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Manage Permissions
  - uncheck the boxes next to Everyone can post to [your page's name]'s timeline and Everyone can add photos and videos to [your page's name]'s timeline in the Posting Ability section
  - click Save Changes.

23. To remove the Recent Posts by Others box from your page's timeline,
  - from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Manage Permissions
  - uncheck the box next to Show the box for 'Recent Posts by Others' on the top of [Your page's name] in the Post Visibility section
  - click Save Changes.
24. You can feature any post on your page by starring it.
  - Hover over a story on your page's timeline.
  - Click.
  - This allows you to feature the posts you think are important. When you star a post, it expands to widescreen.
25. Hiding a post from your page will remove it from your page's timeline so people cannot see it there. You can choose to unhide it later from your activity log. Please note that photos you have hidden from your Page's timeline will still be visible when people visit your page's Photos view. To hide a post on your page,
  - hover over the post on your page's timeline
  - click the pencil icon in the upper right corner
  - select Hide from Page.
26. When you delete something, you remove it from your page permanently. To delete a post on your page,
  - hover over the post on your page's timeline
  - click the pencil icon in the upper right corner
  - select Delete Post
  - confirm that you want to delete this post from your page by clicking Delete Post.

27. To unhide a post,
  - go to your page
  - click Admin Panel above the date selector in the upper-right corner
  - from the Manage menu, select Use Activity Log
  - locate the post you want to unhide by using the date selector in the right-hand column or filtering by type of post
  - click the icon next to the hidden post
  - select Allowed on Page.
28. To post to your page from the mobile web (m.facebook.com),
  - tap
  - type your page's name into the search bar
  - tap your page's name to visit it
  - tap Write Post or Share Photo to post to your page
  - to remove a post from your page, swipe your finger over it and tap Remove.
29. To post to your page from the Facebook iPhone app,
  - tap
  - type your page's name into the search bar
  - tap your page's name to visit it
  - tap Wall
  - tap Write Post or Share Photo to post to your page
  - to remove a post from your page, swipe your finger over it and tap Remove.
30. Views and apps appear under your page's cover. The views and apps boxes are 111 pixels wide and 74 pixels tall. To change the order they appear in,

- expand the views and apps menu by clicking on the downward arrow to the right of your page’s views and apps
  - hover over the position where you would like to put a view or app and click the pencil icon that appears
  - choose the view or app you would like to swap into that spot from the menu
  - to remove a view or app, select Remove from Favorites in step 3. You cannot move the Photos view, which will always appear first.
31. To change the icon for an app on your page,
- at the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Update Info
  - select Apps from the left sidebar
  - click Edit Settings under the name of the app whose icon you want to change
  - click Change next to Custom Tab Image
  - on the next screen, click Change next to the existing image
  - follow the instructions that appear for uploading a new image or deleting the existing image. For some apps, the developer has chosen not to make the icon customizable, and you will not be able to change it.
32. To activate updating via text message,
- from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Update Info
  - select Mobile from the left sidebar
  - click Sign Up for SMS and follow the steps given
  - please note that if your carrier is not listed in the dropdown menu, they are not currently supported for

Facebook Mobile Texts. Please contact your mobile operator for more information.

33. You can associate multiple phone numbers with a single page. However, you can only associate one page or timeline to each mobile number. If you associate a mobile number with your page, that number cannot be associated with your timeline or another page.
34. The Likes view shows people visiting your page trends of people interacting with it over time. People will know if your library is becoming the talk of the town or if your library has a long history and loyal customer base. Your Likes view includes
  - total number of likes
  - count of people talking about this
  - the week when the most people were talking about your page
  - the city where the most people talking about your page are from
  - the most common age group among people talking about your page
  - a trend graph showing new likes and people talking about this.

The Likes view for local business pages also shows:

- the number of photos the page is tagged in
  - the week when the largest number of people checked into the page's physical location
  - the largest number of people who checked in together.
35. Messages for Pages allows you to have one-to-one conversations with people who have contacted your page. Engage your audience personally by responding to

- messages, answering questions and soliciting feedback. Keep in mind that people have the option to move messages to their Other folder, so remember to keep your responses relevant and only write back when a response is expected. To respond to a message your page has received,
- visit your page’s inbox to select the message you want to respond to
  - type your response in the box below the message
  - click Reply.
36. When someone sends a private message to your page, you will receive a notification in your page’s admin panel. Additionally, if you switch to use Facebook as your page, you will see a messages notification icon in the upper left corner of the site. A red bubble will display the number of new messages you have received. Click on the notification to see and respond to messages sent to your page.
37. You can send messages only to people who have contacted you on your page. Respond to a message your page has received by going to your page’s inbox. You cannot message someone who ‘likes’ your page unless they have messaged the page. To turn off private messaging,
- from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Manage Permissions
  - uncheck the box next to People can send messages to [your page name] in the Messages section.
38. As a page admin, you can update the people who ‘like’ your page and their friends by using the sharing tool located at the top of your page’s timeline. You can update your status, ask a question, post photos, share a link, and

record or upload a video. These posts appear on your page's timeline, as well as in the newsfeeds of people who have already 'liked' your page, and of their friends.

39. When you post to your page, people who 'like' your page may see it in their news feeds. If you sponsor a page post, it can go to people who 'like' your page or their friends. You can choose who will see your sponsored page posts in the ad create flow.
40. There are two ways to control who sees your page's posts. You can limit your post's audience so that only certain people will be able to see it, and you can add newsfeed targeting to optimize your post's reach. To limit or target your posts, make sure your page has post privacy gating turned on, like this.
  - From the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  - Select Manage Permissions.
  - Check the box next to Post privacy gating.
  - Click Save Changes.
41. To limit your post's audience and make sure only certain people will be able to see your post,
  - click the dropdown Public menu when you are writing your post
  - select Location/Language. Type in the countries or languages of the people you want to see your post
  - your page post will only show up in newsfeed or on your page for people in the countries you choose or for people who speak the languages you specify. Even if people share your page's post with their friends, only friends in the audience you choose for the post will be able to see it.
42. Add targeting to your page posts so only the most relevant people will see them in their newsfeeds. Unlike

limiting your page's audience, adding newsfeed targeting does not affect who can see the post on your page. Hide posts that you do not want anyone to see when they visit your page. To add targeting,

- before you publish your post, click the target in the sharing tool
- click Add Targeting and choose one or more filters:
  - Gender
  - Relationship Status
  - Education
  - Interested In
  - Age
  - Location
  - Language
- click the options on the right side to choose who you want to target your post to. For example, when targeting by gender, Male is automatically selected. Click Male and select Female to target your post to women's news feeds instead
- when you have finished adding filters, click Post
- as you add filters, the number of people your post is targeted to will be updated next to *Targeted to:*. The more filters you add, the fewer people you will target. The minimum number of people you can target your post to is 20.

43. You can post to your page by sending an email to a special admin-facing email address assigned to your page. Put your message in the subject line of the email and leave the body blank. To upload a photo or video, attach it to an email and send it to this address with the caption in the subject line. To find your page's email address,

- at the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Update Info
  - click Mobile in the left sidebar
  - find your page’s email address under With Mobile Email
  - save this email address in your phone’s address book. Anyone emailing this address will be able to post as your page, so please share this address only with other page admins. You may generate a new email address by clicking Learn More from the Mobile tab of your page’s settings and clicking Refresh your upload email.
44. You can prepare a post and schedule it to appear later by adding a date and time in the future before you post it. You can schedule a post up to six months in advance in 15-minute intervals. From your page’s sharing tool,
- choose the type of post you want to add to your page
  - click the icon in the lower left of the sharing tool
  - choose the future year, month, day, hour and minute when you want your post to appear
  - click Schedule
  - if you choose a date in the past, the post will appear immediately at the appropriate place on your page’s timeline. All times are for the time zone you are in.
45. After you have scheduled a post to appear on your page, you can view it in your activity log.
- Open your admin panel by clicking Admin Panel in the upper-right corner of your page.
  - Click Manage at the top.
  - Select Use Activity Log.

- Scheduled posts will appear at the top of your activity log. From here, you can edit the post by hovering over it and clicking the menu.
  - Change the time your post is scheduled for.
  - Publish the post now.
  - Cancel the post.
- 46. You can change the date of a post by your page on its timeline or from the activity log. 1 January, 1905 is the earliest date a post can have. For stories that happened before that, try posting a milestone.
- 47. From your page's timeline,
  - hover over the post on your page's timeline
  - click the pencil icon in the upper right corner
  - select Change Date
  - choose the year, month, and day where you want the post to appear on your page's timeline
  - click Save.
- 48. To change the date of a post by your page from your activity log,
  - click the icon on the right side of your post
  - click Change Date
  - select a year, month and day
  - click Save.
- 49. For more advanced ways to enhance your page and reach new people using the Facebook Platform, visit the Facebook Developers Site at <https://developers.facebook.com/>. Examples of ways you can more deeply integrate with the Facebook Platform include building custom Page Tabs or Apps, and learning how to implement Social Plugins (i.e. the Like, Share, and Recommend buttons) in an external website.

50. Here are a few ideas for successful posts.

- ‘Fill in the blank’ posts inspire engagement and encourage people to be creative and interactive. For example, you can post a fill-in-the-blank question such as ‘My favorite fiction book is —.’ People who like your page can then share their own books as a comment on the post.
- Post a picture and ask people to come up with the best caption.
  - Post exclusive content or news to get people talking about your page and sharing content with friends. Consider announcing new resources such as new databases or new services such as On Demand Acquisitions, etc.
  - Posting special offers (such as event information) just for the people who like your page can increase loyalty and drive in-library traffic.
  - Create an event through your page to let people know about library events or new services. When someone sends an RSVP to your event, it will create a story in their friends’ newsfeeds, generating organic promotion.
  - Ask people to vote or give feedback on a question you have by creating a poll.
  - Once you have gained a number of likes, you can create a sponsored story for your page posts to increase your audience’s engagement. The newsfeed is always changing, and depending when your fans log on, it is possible that an update you post on your page will not be shown to everyone who ‘likes’ your page. Running a sponsored story for your page posts increases the likelihood that your

fans will see your post and will give them more opportunity to engage.

- Partner with other campus organizations to create co-promotions. You can also cross-promote by posting on each other's pages as your page.
- Ask in-library users to leave recommendations or reviews on your page. It is always better to let other people say good things about your library rather than saying good things yourself. When other people recommend your library, an event, or service, this will create more word-of-mouth marketing and inspire the friends of your users to get involved as well.
- You can find more examples on the Facebook Marketing Solutions Page at <http://www.facebook.com/marketing>.

### ***Step 7 – moderating posts on your Facebook page***

There are two tools available to page admins for proactively moderating page content.

- **Moderation Blocklist**  
You can add comma-separated keywords to the Moderation Blocklist in order to prevent them from appearing on your page. When people include blacklisted keywords in a post or comment on your page, the content will be automatically marked as spam. To add keywords to the blocklist,
  - from the top of your page, click Edit Page
  - select Manage Permissions

- type the terms you want to block in the Moderation Blocklist field, separated by commas
- to unmark a post as spam, locate it in your page’s activity log, click the icon and select Unmark as Spam. To unmark a comment as spam, locate the comment on your page, move your cursor over the comment in question and click on the X that appears. You can then click the Unmark as Spam link.
- Profanity Blocklist

You can also proactively moderate posts on your page by turning on the Profanity Blocklist, which will block the most commonly reported words and phrases marked as offensive by the broader community.

  - From the top of your page, click Edit Page.
  - Select Manage Permissions.
  - Select an option from the menu next to Profanity Blocklist, that is from none (off), medium and strong.
- Facebook is now helping page admins ensure that the most valuable content posted by users on their page timeline is more visible to anyone viewing the page. Facebook now offers automatic content filtering on page Walls (timeline) that will ensure that posts soliciting spam are removed from public view as well as that posts containing good content remain more visible.
- To help display only the most valuable content on your page, automatic spam filters mark comments that have been detected as spam. These comments will appear in grey to admins, but will not appear to the public. Please keep in mind that comments that include keywords you have added to the Moderation Blocklist will also appear in grey. You can learn more about the Moderation Blocklist here. <http://www.facebook.com/help/131671940241729/>

- To unmark a comment as spam, locate the comment on your page, move your cursor over the comment and click on the ‘X’ that appears. You can then select the ‘Unmark as Spam’ link.
- Page admins can mark a post as spam. The post is removed from the page and is not visible to anyone except the person who posted it and their friends. Admins of the page can also view the post by clicking on the Spam filter in the page’s activity log.
- Page admins have the same options for reporting posts and comments made by other pages as for posts and comments made by people. As an admin you can also ban other pages from your page. You can learn more about these options at <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=911>.
- Removing v. banning
  - When you remove someone from your page, they will no longer ‘like’ it. This is a good option for people you do not want following your page’s posts in their newsfeeds. However, pages are public spaces, and people you have removed can choose to ‘like’ your page again.
  - When you ban someone from your page, they will still ‘like’ it but will no longer be able to post to your page, comment on posts, or share content from your page to other places on Facebook. We recommend banning people who continually post spam on your page.
- To remove someone connected to your page, visit your page’s Insights by clicking the ‘like this’ link or Insights tab in the left-hand column of your page. For pages with the timeline design:

- open the menu in the upper-right corner of your page
- select View Insights
- click Likes at the top
- from the Likes section of your pages insights:
  1. click See Likes in the top-right corner
  2. select the X next to the name of the person you wish to remove. You also have the option to permanently ban the person
  3. click Okay.
- To permanently ban someone from your page,
  - open your admin panel and click See All in the New Likes section
  - select the X next to the name of the person you wish to ban
  - check the Ban Permanently box
  - click Okay.
- To ban someone from a post on your page’s timeline,
  - click just beside a post by the person you wish to ban
  - click Delete Post
  - select Delete and Ban User.
- To ban someone from a comment,
  - click the X next to a comment by the person you wish to ban
  - select Delete Comment
  - choose Delete and Ban User.
- You can always view a list of the people banned from your page via the See Likes link on the Likes tab of your Page Insights or the See All link next to New Likes in your admin panel. Select the Banned filter from the top-left dropdown menu after clicking the link.

- To ‘unban’ someone,
  - go to your page and open the admin panel
  - click See All in the New Likes section
  - select Banned from the top left dropdown menu
  - click Unban next to the person’s name.
  - You can always view a list of the people banned from your page via the See Likes link on the Likes tab of your Page Insights. Select the Banned filter from the top left dropdown menu after clicking the link.

## Basic Twitter How-to Section

(Information based on Twitter’s Help sections at <https://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics>):

### **Background – what is Twitter?**

Twitter is a social networking information network made up of 140-character messages called tweets. Messages from users you choose to follow will show up on your home page for you to read. There are three key shortcuts:

- @ The @ sign is used to call out usernames in tweets, like this: Hello @Twitter! When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile.
- # The hashtag (#) is used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet, for example, #resources.
- tweet (verb) The act of posting a message, often called a ‘tweet,’ on Twitter  
(noun) A message posted on Twitter (containing 140 characters or fewer).

## **Step 1: set up an account**

- Here are instructions for creating an account.
  1. Go to <http://twitter.com> and find the sign-up box, or go directly to <https://twitter.com/signup>.
  2. Enter your full name, email address, and a password.
  3. Click Sign up for Twitter.
  4. On the next page, select a username (usernames are unique identifiers on Twitter); make up your own or choose one suggested by Twitter. Twitter will tell you if the username you enter is available. If not, you will have to try again.
  5. Double-check your name, email address, password, and username.
  6. Click Create my account. You may be asked to complete a Captcha to verify that you are a real individual.
  7. Twitter will send a confirmation email to the address you entered on sign-up. When you receive it, click the link in the email to confirm your email address and account.
- Tips for picking a username
  - Your username is the name your followers use when sending @replies, mentions, and direct messages.
  - It will also form the URL of your Twitter profile page. Twitter will provide a few available suggestions when you sign up, but feel free to choose your own.
  - Please note: you can change your username in your account settings at any time, as long as the new username is not already in use.
  - Usernames must have fewer than 15 characters and may not contain ‘admin’ or ‘Twitter,’ in order to avoid brand confusion.

## **Step 2: familiarize and customize**

After signing up, follow a handful of accounts to create a customized stream of information on your homepage. Following means you will get that user's tweets on your Twitter homepage. You can unfollow anyone at any time. Find out how to follow news sources, friends, and more in the article *How to Find People on Twitter*, at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/14022-how-to-find-people-on-twitter>.

- Read 'Twitter 101' at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585-twitter-101-how-should-i-get-started-using-twitter>.
- Take the Twitter Tour at <https://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics/topics/182-announcements-and-new-stuff/articles/20169519-twitter-tour-let-us-show-you-around>.
- Upload a profile picture, which might be, for example, the library's logo.
  1. Go to the Profile tab in your settings.
  2. Follow the instructions.
- To edit profile information,
  1. visit the Profile tab in your settings, or click the Edit profile button on your profile page
  2. make the desired changes to your name, bio, website, or location
  3. click Save Changes.
- To change your background image or header, see *How to Customize Your Twitter Design* at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/15357>.
- If your photo does not upload,

1. check your file type. Twitter supports JPEG, GIF, and PNG file formats. It does not support animated GIFs. All existing animated GIF images will be left as they are, but no new ones can be uploaded. Profile photos with nudity will be removed.
2. make sure your file is the correct size. Your photo must be no larger than 700k.
3. make sure your browser is up to date. Try upgrading your browser or using another browser. Your upload problem may be related to the browser or computer you are using.
4. make sure you click Save Changes at the bottom of your Profile settings page. Your image will not save until you do so.
5. Is the upload chopping off parts of your image? Profile photos on Twitter are all displayed as small squares. If you upload a photo that is rectangular, Twitter will cut off some of the image to make it square. To avoid this, upload a square photo, or customize image dimensions by using an online image editor.

### ***Step 3: post***

Build a voice. In the Twitter universe that means

- retweeting (using existing information – other tweets, from the college or university, for instance). Retweets can be found on your tweets timeline, your profile, and other profile pages on Twitter.
  - To retweet without adding your own commentary,
    1. hover over a tweet
    2. click the Retweet link, highlighted below

3. a pop-up will show you the tweet you are about to retweet and will ask you to confirm.
  4. click the blue Retweet button.
  5. The tweet will then be shared with all of your followers!
- To retweet and add your own commentary,
1. copy the content of the tweet you wish to share. (Note: this only works if the tweet has well under 140 characters. Twitter recommends using the official Retweet button.)
  2. open a new Tweet box and paste the content into the message
  3. add the letters RT and the Tweet author's @username to show that it is a retweet and is not your own content
  4. add your comment at the beginning of the message, as shown below
  5. click Tweet to post the message to your followers.
- replying (using @reply with a reaction to an existing tweet). Users will see @replies in their Home timeline if they are following both the sender and recipient of the update. Otherwise, they will not see the @reply unless they visit the sender's Profile page. To @reply,
1. find the tweet you want to @reply to
  2. hover over the tweet and click on Reply
  3. a Tweet box will pop up with the @username of the account you are replying to already added at the beginning of the tweet. Complete your @reply and click Tweet to post it.

Mention other Twitter users by name to include them in your content (use their Twitter username preceded by the @ sign) and start new conversations. To mention someone

- type your tweet as you normally would, but replace any names you include with that person’s @username. For example, ‘I love @librarycongress!’
- click Tweet to post it.
- Twitter will recognize and link to the @username in the tweet.

Become familiar with Twitter’s advanced features:

- lists
- direct messages
- favorites.

Here are some other ways to develop an identifiable and engaging character in the ‘Twittersphere.’

- Include images of videos in your tweets.
- Connect your Twitter account to your blog, Facebook, or website.
- Share photos and behind-the-scenes information about your library. Even better, give a glimpse of developing projects and events.
- Regularly monitor comments about your library.
- Ask questions of your followers, to glean valuable insights and show that you are listening.
- Respond to compliments and feedback promptly, as if you were talking in person.
- Demonstrate what the library has by showing wider leadership and know-how. Take initiatives.
- Reference articles and links.
- Champion your community stakeholders – retweet and reply publicly to great tweets posted by your followers and community.

Establish the right voice. Twitter users tend to prefer a direct, genuine, and of course, a likable tone from your business, but think about your voice as you tweet. How do you want your library to appear to the Twitter community?

To enable you to achieve all this, remember, Twitter is portable. Connect your account to your mobile phone, or download a Twitter application, to begin posting from wherever you happen to be.

#### **Step 4: administering Twitter**

- Promote your Twitter account and make it easy for people to follow you directly from your website by posting a ‘follow’ button from <https://twitter.com/about/resources/buttons>.
- Add a Tweet button to your library website. See more at <https://twitter.com/about/resources/tweetbutton>.
- Put your tweets anywhere or create a live stream for an event by using a widget (a small, standalone application or block of content with a specific purpose). These can be compatible with Facebook, MySpace, Blogger, etc. Use this technique to
  - put your Twitter profile on your blog or website
  - push your tweets to your Facebook page.
- Consult the Embedded Tweets documentation, <https://dev.twitter.com/docs/embedded-tweets>, to generate copy-and-pasteable HTML markup to render a tweet on any website or render embedded tweets dynamically through an oEmbed endpoint.
- Check out the Twitter blog at <http://blog.twitter.com/>.

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## Evaluating the impact of social media in academic libraries

**Abstract:** Defining the impact and measuring the success of social media networking in academic libraries is difficult. Establishing assessment methods is important in order to know if the goals outlined for social media have been met. What should you evaluate and how? A list (with descriptions) of some tools available to define, analyze, and measure social media impact is included.

**Key words:** social media impact, social media assessment, social media metrics, evaluation, assessment tools.

### How to evaluate

Although much information can be found about how businesses measure their social media success, there is very little information available on how to define, analyze, and measure the success of libraries in social media. Businesses examine social media in light of standard business goals – to raise revenue, reduce costs, and increase customer satisfaction. In order to measure whether a social media campaign has been successful, businesses examine typical social media metrics. These metrics pertain to concepts central to the customer and are designed to demonstrate whether social media have increased awareness, changed attitude, moved

others to action, generated value, or monitored the competition of the business. Goals related to these concepts should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-based (Doran, 1981). For instance, a goal may be to show a 10% greater increase in number of followers than that of a competing business by the end of the month.

Determining ways to assess and measure success in social media for a library should relate back to the library's purpose in participating in social media. Depending upon this purpose and the library's goals for social media participation, success may be measured by such points as the

- visibility of the library in social media searches on custom search engines
- size and growth rate of the library's social media community
- number of comments by community members.

Social media are relatively new and social media metrics are even newer. There is a lack of quantitative data to support the effectiveness of social media networking by academic libraries, as most discussions on the topic are anecdotal (Boxen, 2008). Therefore, finding the means to assess may be challenging.

Part of the difficulty of measuring a library's social media networking success is that many of the points libraries want to delineate are intangible. The number of community members or comments can be measured, but qualitative methods for determining levels of engagement of the users or the tone of conversations are not available. Indeed, some discussions on the subject of social media success conclude that social media statistics are too difficult to measure. Stephen Downes of the Canadian National Research Council

commented on this topic with the remark, ‘It’s like measuring “friendship” [or] measuring “reflective moments”’ (2007, para. 3).

Libraries can work towards making social media assessment more attainable by defining desired outcomes and metrics in the planning stage. In that way, metrics are integrated into the assessment framework at the start. Remember the difference between vanity metrics and actionable metrics when determining assessment methods. If the goal is to use social media to encourage community growth, then assess by the size and growth rate of the community. If promotion of library services, events, or resources is the goal, then measure attendance at events promoted via social media and compare that to attendance at events that were not promoted through social media, or gather usage statistics of a promoted service after its promotion. And if participation in the community is a goal, count the number of comments on posts in the social media community. Other assessment metrics could be whether or not there is an increase in traffic at the library’s web page after social media conversations where a link to the web page is provided, or review if usage of a particular resource (such as a database) increases after mention of it in the library’s social media channels.

Assessment metrics are dependent upon the goals established for embarking on a social media campaign. For instance, if library social media efforts are concerned with student behavior and critical thinking skills, metrics should relate to whether these improved after community instruction and discussion. In the same manner, the impact of social media networking on collaborative learning, engagement, and interaction can be measured by whether or not there are increases in instances of these as a result of social media interactions on relevant topics.

## What to evaluate and what tools to use

Libraries can employ tools to aid in evaluating social media networking efforts.

- One such tool is a survey. You can develop a survey and ask the community to complete it.
- Another tool involves focus groups. Solicit focus group participants to discuss the library's social media efforts and request their suggestions for improvement.
- Usage statistics are another tool libraries can employ to evaluate social media, and these could include measuring and analyzing the following:
  - community engagement  
An examination of community engagement should include not only gathering raw numbers but also monitoring the community. Through monitoring active users and their comments, the library can learn to adjust the content as needed.
  - click-through on links  
'Click-through' has been defined as 'the action or facility of following a hypertext link to a particular website' (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2012), and it can be used to measure rates of usage of a site. Compile the number of community members who click on links mentioned in library social media and analyze which links are used and which are not.
  - real-time interaction  
Social media conversations provide opportunities for interactions with community members at the point in time when they have an interest or a question, rather than whenever they happen to call, visit, or email the library.

- incoming links  
Once the community is talking about the library, community members may share links among themselves. These links may lead back to the library and the community, so they would be incoming, or inbound, links. Incoming links can be a gauge of engagement and activity within a community.
- total community size  
This number includes not only active and participating community members but also passive members.

Choosing the right data points that will help measure goal achievement is crucial, as is including insights about the library's efforts. Trends in usage and changes in these over time can provide an awareness and understanding about whether the library is on the right track. Once all the various data are gathered and analyzed, some revision or revamping of the library's social media networking may be needed. The community can provide helpful insights into both how the library is succeeding with its social media and how it can improve. As with assessment of any service, measurable results and attainable goals can be achieved in a realistic and timely fashion. Take the time to plan, discuss, vet, and revise as needed. Flexibility in goals, means, and results can make the difference to success in social media (Happe, 2008; Kanter, 2009; Stuart, 2009).

Methods to measure impact do exist for non-profit companies, and some of the data points may be relevant to academic libraries. Lasica (2010, KPI section, para. 1) discusses KPI, or key performance indicators, 'a metric that you track to assess whether you are accomplishing your business goals.' In the Sage Nonprofits Insights Study, Q1 2012, Social Media Study, "Quantity" or "Headcounts" was [sic] the top method of measurement selected (61%).

While *counting* is a good way to get started, ultimately it is how you engage and transition loose social connections into supporters or donors that counts. A number of participants responded they [sic] are tracking the conversion of social connections to supporters (28%)' (p. 6).

No matter what metric is used, any assessment should connect back to the library's social media strategy, and should include an interval point so as to provide context about any changes in the statistics, based on whether the measurement was daily, weekly or monthly, etc. Monitoring and gathering statistics to quantify the impact of social media networking require a goal against which to compare and measure.

If the library's social media networking strategy includes criteria such as increasing communication with the campus, supporting critical thinking skills, or improving engagement with students, then the library will need a way to assess any impact on these elements. Simple measures such as usage may apply when determining if communication was increased, but gauging an impact with regard to supporting goals connected to critical thinking or engagement may be more difficult. Depending on social media networking activities for the library community, elements such as increased numbers of research questions, community growth, discussions on research skills, the number of comments from the community, increased usage of citation tools, the measurement of reference queries, or click-through rates to the library's web page may all be data elements that can be measured and analyzed as a means to determine the effectiveness of the library's social media networking in meeting stated goals.

A simple but direct way to assess the library's social media networking efforts is to ask the community. Post a query asking for the community's input about what the library is doing with social media. If more in-depth information is

desired, develop a survey and make it available to the library's social media community as well as to people who visit the library's web page or physical building. The use of focus groups may be helpful in developing a detailed analysis of the library's efforts in meeting stated goals.

Anyone making efforts at assessment needs to consider some aspects of social media networking that are more subjective and concern the tenor of the community rather than the numbers of members or posts. These aspects should be viewed to see if there is any correlation between them and any usage or statistics measures. Review the

- frequency of postings by the library, and whether there is a correlation between the frequency and usage statistic measures
- timing of postings
- variety of content types in posts – exclusively text, or containing images, photos, or videos
- content posted in terms of subject matter
- 'voice' of the posts – is the tone informal and friendly or rather official and authoritative?
- use of questions, to engage or discover – how often is a specific question included in a post?

Assessment should be a meaningful tool to help make the library's social media networking more effective. Do not be discouraged; just remember 'Social media measurement is not very effective' (Cifuentes, 2012, para. 1).

There are a great many tools available to assist with social media assessment. Some statistics and usage tools include Crowdbooster, Facebook Insights, Google Analytics, Klout, Netvibes, PageLever, Social Mention, StatMyWeb, Technorati, TweetReach, TwentyFeet, Twitalyzer, TwitterCounter, and

ViralTracker. These services track a variety of usage statistics and may be service-specific (e.g. Twitalyzer and TwitterCounter measure usage only on Twitter).

- **Crowdbooster:** a formerly free tool to analyze statistics for Twitter and Facebook accounts, this tool provides an interactive graph and table that display performance over time increments such as the past week or month. This is useful to compare performance for trends, but may not be cost-effective; collecting these statistics over time from other tools and then entering them in a spreadsheet for analysis is probably an effective alternative.
- **Facebook Insights:** provides analytics to track user interactions and traffic but is only available to Facebook pages that are 'liked' by at least 30 people. Helps determine the best time of day/day of week to post as well as what type of content is most popular. Since the Facebook Insights tool is constantly updated, this tool is more useful when consulted often in order to catch the impact of changes made and notice any patterns that may form.
- **Google Analytics:** the basic version is free, and provides detailed statistics about the users who visit a website, along with basic analytical tools. Data are collected through code inserted in the pages the user wants to collect data about, and this code is reliant on cookies (so data cannot be collected about those users who disable cookies).
- **Klout:** delivers social media analytics purported to measure influence across a social network by measuring the size of the network, the content created, and how other people interact with that content.
- **Netvibes:** provides a personalized dashboard or all-in-one start page where users can display the latest updates from

favorite websites or have widgets for updating social media sites. This tool can be a time-saver when posting social media updates.

- **PageLever:** this tool uses the Facebooks Insights API to provide details about nearly anything posted on a Facebook page, including data such as what posts prompted people to remove their 'likes' of a page. Useful when a more in-depth analysis of Facebook activity is desired.
- **Social Mention:** a search engine for social media that searches user-generated content (blogs, comments, bookmarks, events, news, videos, etc.), allowing you to track mentions of your social media sites across the social media landscape.
- **StatMyWeb:** provides detailed statistics of websites, and this information can be useful for evaluation of websites. Included is publicly available information, such as when a website was created, where the website is hosted, web rank, and estimated numbers of visits to the website.
- **Technorati:** a search engine for blogs and social media (similar to Social Mention) that also measures the authority of a blog (authority is based on how many people are talking about and linking to the blog).
- **TweetReach:** an analytics product for Twitter, this tool provides detailed metrics on reach, content, engagement, and contributors to help measure the reach of brands, campaigns, and events on Twitter.
- **TwentyFeet:** tracks social media activity across sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, allowing the collection of all the basic stats from these sites in one place, and may alleviate some of the time constraints involved in social media maintenance.

- **Twitalyzer:** provides another way to analyze Twitter activity, as it combines basic Twitter activity measurements with demographic data, metrics such as Klout, and statistics such as the number of times a Twitter name is mentioned by other users (including retweets).
- **TwitterCounter:** is a basic tool that provides statistics about Twitter usage and follower growth.
- **ViralTracker:** is concerned with video and provides metrics on viral videos, widgets, Internet commercials, and movie and game trailers and their impact in social media outlets such as weblogs, forums, and sites.

A listing of these tools and their websites, as well as other tools, is included in the bibliography. Here is the bottom line on assessment. It is the measure all of the social media metrics that can sensibly and effectively be employed, such as community growth, engagement as defined by the library (number of posts and comments or number of new community members), or usage statistics on the library's web page measured from click-through from the social media channels. Attempt to connect trends in the social media metrics with the activity of the library's social media networking. Remember to ask the community about its perception of the library's social media efforts, and include this feedback in the assessment process. Surveys typically do not produce high returns. The size of the group should be considered when assessing the data gathered.

## Mid-course adjustments

Once you have gathered the data and analyzed the results, informed decisions may need to be made regarding the

library's social media networking efforts in order to ensure that the community the library is building will be effective, useful, and worthwhile. Data gathering and analysis will assist with answering these three key questions.

- What is happening in terms of the library's engagement in social media?
- Why is this happening?
- What is the library going to do in response?

If the community is not growing or is growing slowly, consider changing the ways in which the library is reaching out to potential community members – perhaps those interested are just not aware. If the level of engagement is less than expected, it may be time for a new tactic in posting, whether that is a change in the staff responsible for this, a change in the content, or a change in the frequency of posting.

Think about the goals for the library's social media networking efforts. Some revisiting and revision of them may be necessary so that the goals align more with experience and reality. Strive to develop clear ways to track and measure success in meeting established goals. After analyzing the data it may be apparent that some goals are not being achieved. Take the time needed to review the goals, because such a review may reveal that there are stated goals that are not connected to any specific measurements, or that these measurements are not being collected. Essentially the library should be able to see some measureable results and have reached at least parts of attainable goals; in other words, there should be stated objectives and activities that can be accomplished in a realistic and timely fashion. For instance, if the library has not seen its community grow by more than one percent (1%) after six months of consistently posting

twice a week on social media networking sites, then the library needs to revisit its social media efforts, goals, and the reasons why the library set up this course. News of any changes that are decided upon should be widely disseminated among staff and communicated to the entire campus community to ensure that everyone is informed.

Determining a success level for the library's social media networking efforts may not be easy. The entire social media networking arena has no standard way to measure effectiveness: 'social media success measurement is still an infant and suffers from a lack of common metric standards' (*Social media campaign measurement*, 2012, Conclusion). Any social media networking efforts require creativity, time, and staff engagement, as well as clear goals, with consistent voice and regular assessment, review, and evaluation. Perhaps the most effective way to view social media metrics and assessment is as performance indicators that can provide insight into whether or not the library is successfully reaching out to the campus and building a sustainable and valuable community. After all, social media are essentially about people and relationships, which are very challenging to measure in any circumstances.

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## Closing thoughts

**Abstract:** Making an effort to engage with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to build a community for the academic library is not straightforward, and has to be taken on thoughtfully. It requires patience. Nevertheless, it can be a rewarding experience that can substantially raise the visibility and the popularity of the library on campus.

**Key words:** social media networking, academic libraries, student engagement, collaboration, campus life.

Social media networking may be a fairly new phenomenon, but it is the ‘impact of social media on education that has been rapid, significant, and apparent’ (Lenartz, 2012, p. 336). Building a community via social media around the academic library may not be a simple task to complete, even with supportive staff and willing participants. Integrating social media networking into the library’s tapestry of technology tools can be a multifaceted but rewarding endeavor. Efforts should acknowledge the potential problems, and everyone involved should remember that ‘new technologies alarm us for very real reasons but can and must be addressed in ways that do not crush innovation and fun’ (Mitrano, 2006, p. 22). The community the library fosters should provide the members with a place to discover collections, explore what the library has to offer, learn, and just connect to the library and with other community members.

Embarking on a social media networking campaign to build a community should be about more than tallying how many members have signed up for tweets from the library or have become the library's 'friends.' The heart of community-building should revolve around the reason for which the community exists. How do the campus and the library benefit from participation in the library's social media networking community? Is this a useful and valuable service? What do community members say about the library? Are community members satisfied with the library's social media efforts? Do community members refer others to the library's community? Do they visit library-created content such as tutorials, or other research- and help-related materials? Does the library invite comments from the community, whether through surveys, comments, or direct questioning? Does the library listen to its community and revise services and resources based on community members' input? The experience of developing and nurturing the library's community can provide valuable assistance in designing and implementing social media networking that is satisfying and positive for all.

The establishment of clear goals and objectives and then the definition of ways to measure whether these are met are important tasks to complete before creating a library's social media accounts. Defining desired outcomes can be as complex or as simple as the library wishes. Social media networking provides a means for libraries to connect with the campus and with users that may never meet the library staff in person. The community the library builds on social media is a constituency to whose members the library can be useful by encouraging, promoting, innovating, revising, and improving.

Developing and building a community through social media, along with maintaining social media networking and measuring its impact on and benefits to libraries, are skills

that appear to fall outside the range of traditional librarianship. Generally speaking, determining how these new responsibilities will be integrated into the library's workflows and how staff will be handling the duties and activities is as yet unclear. Some libraries have created Emerging Technology positions, where social media responsibilities might be placed. Perhaps the social media activities will be initiated by the most motivated staff member, and as time goes by the responsibilities might be distributed later on to those staff most interested in and/or experienced with social media. Given that social media networking provides opportunities for engagement and connections, perhaps the staff involved with outreach or marketing will embark on initiating the library's social media networking. With this venture into social media being a relatively new arena, libraries will no doubt blaze various paths toward developing a strategy for social media networking, persevering and persisting and taking time to alter and revise decisions and tactics as needed, always keeping in mind and at the forefront of the effort the goal of building a community.

Building a community is an endeavor that takes time and patience. You cannot force people to participate, and nurturing and growing a community is different from directing or controlling that community. To facilitate knowledge exchange, the library should take a more proactive role in providing learning and research support service to the campus. Academic libraries support learning on campus, and the community should be centered on learners and the project of helping them to become better learners. 'Social media can foster collaboration between students, academic staff, librarians, and learning technologists' (Ford et al., 2011, p. 123). Taking the opportunity to demonstrate to the learning community

via social media how to find, sort, evaluate, and cite the information needed for their learning and research helps develop a collaborative community of shared learning and practice, a community centered around the academic library.

Mitrano (2006, p. 28) discusses how social media can help social and informal learning, as they invite participation and interaction. A library's social media community can help members contribute to, question, and learn from each other. 'Social media provides [sic] the tools and resources to stimulate new ways of thinking and to move effectively across new frontiers which open the door to communication, collaboration, community, creativity, and convergence...' (Manlow et al., 2010, pp. 61–2). These interactions or conversations could even form the basis for instructional materials, or for short, directed, current information bites on topics unearthed from the community's range of interests. If it was warranted and if the community showed interest, guest experts on particular topics could participate in discussions and provide advice and guidance, demonstrating new and diverse approaches or tools to show that there may be different ways to achieve a particular goal or to meet a need.

The community built around the academic library will need to encourage engagement with members in order to thrive. Research on the use of social media in higher education has 'found a positive impact in increasing engagement' (Lenartz, 2012, p. 337). Engagement might be revealed through such attributes as the level of participation or through more qualitative metrics such as the quality of interactions among members, usage statistics and the size of the community. The value of community participation is an elusive attribute to measure, but its assessment might include the skills acquired or honed during community conversations, the new tools or resources discovered, or the new learning approaches revealed. As Wavle (2009, p. 324) states, 'Social

networking technologies can help us bring people-recognition to the community of learners and scholars that we connect with.’ The organizational reputation of the library should be increased on campus as a result of a successful social media networking campaign, and new expectations about the library may ensue, where people become a part of the community because they choose to participate rather than being forced or coerced to do so.

The opportunity to connect with the academic community through social media networking and enhance campus life in this way allows library staff to integrate their work well with overall collegiate life. Social media participation can provide ‘a great opportunity for participants within HE [higher education] to share ideas, celebrate creativity, and participate in an environment that offers immediate feedback from others who belong’ (Bateman and Willems, 2012, p. 57). An academic library community can support engagement and student success and provide a channel for interaction across the campus spectrum – students, faculty, staff, administrators, library staff, librarians, researchers. Social media networking can be employed in a thoughtful and considered way as a means to enhance collaboration, foster group cohesion, and build community – to connect, energize, act, interact, educate, and engage.

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## Appendix 1

### Survey questions

1. What type of academic library do you work in?
2. What is your job title?
3. Which of the following areas are part [sic] of your responsibilities?
4. How long have you worked in libraries?
5. Do you use social media in your library?
6. Which of the following social media technologies does your library use on a regular basis?

Academia.edu

Badoo

Bebo

Blogging

CiteULike

Creately

Delicious

Facebook

Flickr

Foursquare

Google+

Gowalla  
Hi5  
LinkedIn  
MySpace  
Ning  
Prezi  
Qzone  
ResearchGate  
Skype  
StatsIt  
StumbleUpon  
tagged  
tribe.net  
Tumblr  
Twitter  
Vimeo  
Yelp  
YouTube  
Other (please specify)

7. How do you use social media in your library?
8. What technology skills do you apply to your use of social media in your library?
9. What one thing would you do differently in regards [sic] to social media in your library?
10. If you are interested in sharing more information on social media in your library, please provide your contact information.

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## Appendix 2

### Case study questions

- 1) Please provide some background about your institution and your contact information.
- 2) Tell me about your process for implementing social media in your library.
- 3) Why did you decide to implement social media in your library?
- 4) What were your three biggest problems in implementing social media in your library?
- 5) How did you solve these problems?
- 6) What type and level of technological skills are needed for social media implementation?
- 7) What methods or resources were used to acquire these skills?
- 8) What were the major constraints in planning and implementing social media technologies in your library?
- 9) How do you assess the effectiveness of your library's social media use/impact?
- 10) What recommendations do you have for others interested in implementing social media in their library? Do you have any "social media best practices" tips to share with other libraries?

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## Appendix 3: Tools and resources

A myriad of social media networking services, tools, and resources is available. Owing to the nature of social networking, expect constant change and transition in these services, tools, and resources. Libraries may want to consider the following when planning and developing their social media networking campaigns.

### ***Social networks***

Academia.edu	<i><a href="http://academia.edu">http://academia.edu</a></i> Platform for academics to share research papers
Bebo	<i><a href="http://www.bebo.com">http://www.bebo.com</a></i> Social networking site
Elgg	<i><a href="http://elgg.org">http://elgg.org</a></i> Open source social networking engine
Facebook	<i><a href="http://www.facebook.com">http://www.facebook.com</a></i> Social utility
Google+	<i><a href="http://plus.google.com/">http://plus.google.com/</a></i> Social networking site

Hi5	<a href="http://www.hi5.com/">http://www.hi5.com/</a> Social networking site
LinkedIn	<a href="http://www.linkedin.com">http://www.linkedin.com</a> Social networking site for professionals
MySpace	<a href="http://www.myspace.com/">http://www.myspace.com/</a> Social networking and music-sharing site, adapted for mobile devices
Ning	<a href="http://www.ning.com">http://www.ning.com</a> Platform for creating social networks
Pinterest	<a href="http://pinterest.com">http://pinterest.com</a> Content-sharing service
SocialGo	<a href="http://www.socialgo.com">http://www.socialgo.com</a> Custom social community-building platform
Tribe.net	<a href="http://www.tribe.net/">http://www.tribe.net/</a> Community-based networking site
Twitter	<a href="http://www.twitter.com">http://www.twitter.com</a> Social networking in 140-character bursts
Wall.fm	<a href="http://wall.fm">http://wall.fm</a> Social networking site builder
Yammer	<a href="http://www.yammer.com">http://www.yammer.com</a> Enterprise social networking

### **Social bookmarking**

citeulike	<a href="http://www.citeulike.org/">http://www.citeulike.org/</a>
Delicious	<a href="http://delicious.com/">http://delicious.com/</a>
Digg	<a href="http://digg.com/">http://digg.com/</a>
Evernote	<a href="http://www.evernote.com">http://www.evernote.com</a>

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Reddit	<a href="http://nl.reddit.com/">http://nl.reddit.com/</a>
Scoop.it	<a href="http://www.scoop.it/">http://www.scoop.it/</a>
Sharethis	<a href="http://sharethis.com/">http://sharethis.com/</a>
StumbleUpon	<a href="http://www.stumbleupon.com/">http://www.stumbleupon.com/</a>
Tumblr	<a href="https://www.tumblr.com/">https://www.tumblr.com/</a>

### **Social media dashboards**

Buffer	<a href="http://bufferapp.com/">http://bufferapp.com/</a> Site and app to post to multiple social media accounts
ExactTarget Social	<a href="http://www.exacttarget.com/products/social-media-marketing.aspx">http://www.exacttarget.com/products/social-media-marketing.aspx</a> Helps manage one or more Twitter accounts
HootSuite	<a href="http://hootsuite.com">http://hootsuite.com</a> Manage multiple social network accounts and profiles
MediaFunnel	<a href="http://mediafunnel.com">http://mediafunnel.com</a> Social media management platform for corporate enterprises
Netvibes	<a href="http://www.netvibes.com">http://www.netvibes.com</a> Real-time social media monitoring, analytics, and management
Nimble	<a href="http://www.nimble.com/">http://www.nimble.com/</a> Manage social relationship contacts, etc. in one place
Onlywire	<a href="https://www.onlywire.com/">https://www.onlywire.com/</a> Send messages to multiple social media accounts

Pingraphy	<a href="http://pingraphy.com/">http://pingraphy.com/</a> Schedule pins on Pinterest and analyze usage
PinPuff	<a href="http://pinpuff.com/">http://pinpuff.com/</a> Calculate measure of popularity on Pinterest
Scroon	<a href="http://www.scroon.com">http://www.scroon.com</a> Manage social media
Seesmic	<a href="http://seesmic.com">http://seesmic.com</a> Manage multiple social media accounts, especially Twitter; now part of HootSuite's offering
SproutSocial	<a href="http://sproutsocial.com/">http://sproutsocial.com/</a> Multiple social media account management for companies
Tracky	<a href="https://tracky.com/">https://tracky.com/</a> Social collaboration platform and app
TweetDeck	<a href="http://www.tweetdeck.com">http://www.tweetdeck.com</a> Manage Twitter and Facebook accounts (a Twitter application)

### **Other social media tools**

Aviary	<a href="http://www.aviary.com/">http://www.aviary.com/</a> Photo editing app especially for the web
Bit.ly	<a href="https://bitly.com/">https://bitly.com/</a> URL shortener, bookmarking and analytics tool
Bloglines	<a href="http://www.bloglines.com/">http://www.bloglines.com/</a> Subscribe to, create, manage, and share news feeds and blogs

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Crowdboost	<a href="http://crowdboost.com/">http://crowdboost.com/</a> Social media analytics
Engagio	<a href="http://www.engagio.com/">http://www.engagio.com/</a> Manage conversations in social networks
Facebook Insights	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/insights/">http://www.facebook.com/insights/</a> Analytics data for Facebook pages
Flickr	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/">http://www.flickr.com/</a> Online photo management and sharing
Google Analytics	<a href="http://www.google.com/analytics/">http://www.google.com/analytics/</a> Usage statistics for web pages and social media sites
Google Blog Search	<a href="http://www.google.com/blogsearch">http://www.google.com/blogsearch</a> Search for blogs or blog posts
Hashtag.org	<a href="http://www.hashtag.org">http://www.hashtag.org</a> Hashtag search engine
Hashtracking	<a href="http://www.hashtracking.com/">http://www.hashtracking.com/</a> Hashtag tracking
Icerocket	<a href="http://www.icerocket.com/">http://www.icerocket.com/</a> Search engine for blogs, news, Twitter, MySpace, and the web
IFTTT	<a href="https://ifttt.com/">https://ifttt.com/</a> Create social media-related tasks via 'if this then that' logical steps
Klout	<a href="http://klout.com">http://klout.com</a> Measures social media influence
Oovoo	<a href="http://www.oovoo.com">http://www.oovoo.com</a> Video chat

PageLever	<i><a href="http://pagelever.com">http://pagelever.com</a></i> Analytics and tools for Facebook pages
Paper.li	<i><a href="http://paper.li">http://paper.li</a></i> Publish selected web content into an online newspaper
Reddit	<i><a href="http://www.reddit.com">http://www.reddit.com</a></i> User-generated news links
Scrambls	<i><a href="https://scrambls.com/">https://scrambls.com/</a></i> Scramble social media posts and determine who can read them
Screenr	<i><a href="http://www.screenr.com/">http://www.screenr.com/</a></i> Create and share instant screencasts
Scribd	<i><a href="http://www.scribd.com/">http://www.scribd.com/</a></i> Upload or download documents; has Facebook app
Shelfari	<i><a href="http://www.shelfari.com">http://www.shelfari.com</a></i> Create virtual bookshelves, share what you are reading
Social Mention	<i><a href="http://www.socialmention.com/">http://www.socialmention.com/</a></i> Real-time social media search and analyzer
StatMyWeb	<i><a href="http://www.statmyweb.com/">http://www.statmyweb.com/</a></i> Website usage and other web statistics
Storify	<i><a href="http://storify.com">http://storify.com</a></i> Create stories using social media
Technorati	<i><a href="http://technorati.com/">http://technorati.com/</a></i> Blog monitoring service
Topsy	<i><a href="http://topsy.com">http://topsy.com</a></i> Real-time social media search engine

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Tweetbeep	<a href="http://tweetbeep.com/">http://tweetbeep.com/</a> Alerts for Twitter conversations
TweetReach	<a href="http://tweetreach.com">http://tweetreach.com</a> Measures impact of Twitter campaigns
Tweetstats	<a href="http://www.tweetstats.com/">http://www.tweetstats.com/</a> Graph your Twitter stats
TwentyFeet	<a href="https://www.twentyfeet.com/">https://www.twentyfeet.com/</a> Measures social media statistics and tracks social media results
Twilerts	<a href="http://www.twilert.com/">http://www.twilert.com/</a> Twitter alerts via email
Twitalyzer	<a href="http://twitalyzer.com/">http://twitalyzer.com/</a> Metrics for Twitter accounts
TwitterCounter	<a href="http://twittercounter.com/">http://twittercounter.com/</a> Statistics and usage for Twitter accounts
Unfollowr	<a href="http://unfollower.name/">http://unfollower.name/</a> See who has unfollowed your Twitter account
Vimeo	<a href="http://vimeo.com/">http://vimeo.com/</a> Video sharing site
Viraltracker	<a href="http://www.viraltracker.com/">http://www.viraltracker.com/</a> Online video metrics
Wordle	<a href="http://www.wordle.net/">http://www.wordle.net/</a> Generate word clouds from text
YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com">http://www.youtube.com</a> Video sharing site

## **Informational Sites**

Basic computer literacy skills (information and checklists)

[http://www.stevenshenager.edu/computer-literacy/complit2\\_print.html](http://www.stevenshenager.edu/computer-literacy/complit2_print.html)

<http://www.viu.ca/calendar/GeneralInformation/computer-literacy.asp>

[http://www.settlement.org/downloads/linc/LCG1to5/p8\\_comp\\_checklist.PDF](http://www.settlement.org/downloads/linc/LCG1to5/p8_comp_checklist.PDF)

<http://www.exploreadultlearning.co.uk/basic-computing-skills-work.html>

[http://www.fscj.edu/tutorials/media/online\\_skill\\_assess.pdf](http://www.fscj.edu/tutorials/media/online_skill_assess.pdf)

[http://www.carecommunications.com/library/2000/HOH\\_2000\\_09\\_ComputerSkills1.pdf](http://www.carecommunications.com/library/2000/HOH_2000_09_ComputerSkills1.pdf)

[http://www.carecommunications.com/library/2000/HOH\\_2000\\_10\\_ComputerSkills2.pdf](http://www.carecommunications.com/library/2000/HOH_2000_10_ComputerSkills2.pdf)

[http://www.kcc.edu/students/helpful/learning/online-learning-support/Documents/Computer\\_Self\\_Assessment.pdf](http://www.kcc.edu/students/helpful/learning/online-learning-support/Documents/Computer_Self_Assessment.pdf)

<http://www.ctdlc.org/remediation/>

CommonCraft videos

Social media in plain English

<http://www.commoncraft.com/video/social-media>

Social networking in plain English

<http://www.commoncraft.com/video/social-networking>

Facebook in plain English

<http://www.commoncraft.com/video/social-networking-facebook-0>

Twitter in plain English

<http://www.commoncraft.com/video/twitter>

Educational social media site

EdSoMe: <http://edsome.com/>

Friends: social networking sites for engaged library services

<http://onlinesocialnetworks.blogspot.com/>

Revolutionizing libraries with social media

<http://libraryschool.campusguides.com/socialmedia>

Social networking librarian

<http://socialnetworkinglibrarian.com/>

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## Glossary

**actionable metrics** a measurement or assessment that provides specific, repeatable actions for application to observed results; e.g., number of users retained.

**aggregator** a web-based tool or application that collects syndicated content such as news.

**API (application programming interface)** a program or code used by software components or applications to communicate with each other, exchange data and work together.

**app** an application that performs a specific function, such as a game, web browser, mapping, music player, etc.

**authenticity** description of someone behind blog posts or other social media profiles.

**avatar** an image that represents a person online in forums, games and social networks.

**back channel** private communications such as emails or messaging sent between people in a social networking interaction.

**backlinks** the incoming links to a website from another website.

**beta** a stage of product development; appended to the name of a particular piece of software or a resource to let users know that it is still in development.

**blog (web log)** a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.

**blogosphere** a term used to refer to all the blogs on the Internet.

**blogroll** a list of recommended blogs on a blog site.

**bookmarking** marking something that is important to share with others.

**bulletin board** an online message system where users post messages and view responses; also known as a discussion group, discussion forum, message board, or online forum.

**campaign** a set of coordinated marketing messages with a defined goal.

**CAPTCHA** a challenge response test created to assure that a person, as opposed to a software program, is writing the response, usually consisting of a series of words, letters, and/or numbers, displayed in a slightly distorted form, that must be entered before an account is created, a post is submitted, etc.

**chat** one-to-one communication through a text-based application.

**click-through** to navigate a website by clicking on the hyperlinks; an instance of such navigation.

**cloud computing** accessing data remotely through an Internet connection, rather than from a desktop.

**cluster** a grouping of content items with similar tags.

**CMS (content management system)** a system used to manage or edit the content of a website.

**comment** a response provided as an answer or reaction to a blog post or message on a social network.

**content** any piece of online information or media, including images, graphics, text, videos, animations, sound clips, etc.

**content curation** the act of locating, organizing, and sharing the most relevant content on a specific topic. Bookmarking is a type of content curation.

**cookie** information retained by a web browser, a record of what websites have been visited, and often passwords.

**crowdsourcing** harnessing the knowledge and skills of a group of people to solve a problem or contribute content.

**dashboard** the administrative area of some services, where content is posted, comments are managed, etc.

**domain name** the identifying name of an Internet site.

**dynamic content** content that is constantly changing.

**ecosystem** a community and its environment functioning as a whole.

**embedding** (as in ‘embedded video’) adding code to a web page so that content from another site (such as a video, an audio or an RSS feed) can be viewed directly from the web page and the user does not have to go to another site.

**engage** to communicate with others on social networks.

**engaged** in the habit of interacting on social networks by posting comments and sharing content.

**entry** an individual post or article.

**feed** a format that provides users with frequently updated content.

**findability** the quality of being locatable; a presence on the web and in social networking that is findable and navigable.

**folksonomy** collective indexing through the use of tags, labels or keywords by the consumers or users of particular content.

**follow** monitor someone's online activity in a specified social media application.

**forum** an online discussion site, also known as a message board.

**friend** on Facebook, the action of confirming a friend request and connecting with another Facebook user in order to post and share information.

**friends** on Facebook, individuals that can see a user's Facebook profile and can engage with that user.

**geolocation** the function of tracking the physical location of people or objects, using electronic means.

**geotagging** a process to add location-based information (metadata) to media such as photos, videos, or online maps.

**GPS (global positioning system)** a global navigation satellite system that allows devices enabled with this technology to pinpoint locations of people, buildings, and objects.

**handle** a 'moniker' or name.

**hashtag (#)** hash symbol used to annotate a message; a convention for adding additional context and metadata to social media postings on Twitter; provides the ability to discover, aggregate and organize relevant posts.

**hit** any request for a file/content from a web server, often used to measure site usage/traffic.

**hosting** housing for content to be available online such as a blog, podcast, or streaming video.

**HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)** the coding language used to create and link together documents and files on the World Wide Web; it defines how the elements of a web page are displayed (color of background, type of text, etc.)

**hyperlink** any link on a website that takes the user to another web page or document on the Internet.

**IM (instant messaging)** a live, real-time direct online communication synchronous channel which facilitates interaction between two or more parties.

**information literacy** the ability to know when information is required, and to locate and use it efficiently and appropriately.

**key words** descriptive words about specific content.

**landing page** any web page that is linked to from another page; where the user 'lands' after clicking on a link.

**like** on Facebook, a means to show approval of and share a message etc. with others.

**lurker** a person online who reads discussions on a message board, newsgroup, social network, or other interactive system, but rarely, if ever, participates in the discussion.

**mashup (see remix)** multiple types of media drawn from pre-existing sources to create a new work.

**media sharing** description of a means to share photos and videos.

**Meme** a thought, idea, joke, or concept to be shared online; generally in the form of an image with text above and below it.

**metadata** data about data; this data can include a title, descriptions, tags, and captions aggregated to describe something such as a video, photo, or blog post.

**metrics** a standard of measurement; with regard to social media, those measures of quantitative assessment used for comparison or to track performance or usage.

**microblogging** a means to quickly share information in concise updates, e.g. Twitter.

**moblog (mobile blog)** a blog published directly to the web from a mobile device.

**navigation** a menu of links, tabs, or buttons allowing users to move from one web page to another within a site.

**network** either a social network such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, or the people connected within a social network.

**OS (operating system)** software that performs basic tasks and manages a system's or device's resources.

**PDF (portable document format)** a stable file format for publishing and distributing digital documents with the same layout, formatting, and font attributes as the original. Documents in pdf format require a pdf reader or browser plugin to view.

**permalink** permanent URL or web address of an item of content that remains stable even if the hosting web page changes.

**pixel** any of the small discrete elements (dots) on a display screen that together constitute an image.

**platform** a specific framework or software system within which tools work.

**plugin** a software component that adds functionality to a website or blog.

**PNG (portable network graphics)** a computer file format for images.

**podcast** a digital file, usually audio but occasionally video, made available for download to a portable device or personal computer so that it can be viewed or played back later.

**poke** a very low-impact ‘touch’ on a social network, often used when two people are not connected on that network, but one of them wants to be.

**post** an entry or message.

**privacy setting** a social network setting that enables the user to control what posted content is visible to whom.

**QR code (Quick Response code)** trademark for a two-dimensional barcode used to take a piece of information from a transitory medium and put it into your cell phone using a QR code reader; usually links to web content via a URL.

**remix (see mashup)** any work that takes elements from two or more media files and puts them together to create a new piece of media.

**retweet** repost someone else’s tweet.

**RSS (real simple syndication)** a lightweight XML format used for publishing frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines, and podcasts in a standardized format.

**screencast** video capture of the contents of a computer screen, usually used, accompanied by narration, as part of an explanatory video tutorial to explain how a website or a software product works.

**seeding** posting an initial message or series of messages in an online discussion space or social network; posting information for others to download as they wish.

**share** to post or repost content from elsewhere on a social media site.

**social bookmarking** or **social tagging** (usually known as ‘tagging’ or ‘labeling’) a method for Internet users to store, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of web pages on the Internet, with the help of user-driven metadata (uncontrolled vocabularies).

**social graph** a diagram of people’s interconnectedness.

**social media curation** the act of selecting, reviewing, and repositioning quality content for a specific audience, such as a community, or for a specific topic, such as a library.

**social networking sites (SNS)** web-based services that allow individuals to construct public or semi-public profiles within a bounded system, display in some format lists of other users with whom they are connected, and view and navigate these lists of connections and those made by others within the system.

**squeeze page** a web page that asks a user for information such as email address and name so that they are able to see future content from that site, receive a download, etc.

**status update** a short account of what a user is currently doing.

**stream** watch or listen to a video or audio file online.

**streaming media** video or audio files that can be watched or listened to online but not stored permanently on the viewer's computer.

**tag cloud** a visual representation of the popularity of the tags people are using on a blog or website, where often popular tags are displayed in a large type and less popular tags in smaller type.

**tagging** on Facebook, identifying someone in a photo. After someone is tagged in a photo, the photo will appear in their profile, along with photos they have posted.

**tags** labels or key words added to a blog post, photo, or video to help users find related topics or media. Tags can make an entry more relevant to a search engine.

**Terms of service (TOS)** the written rules of or legal basis upon which a user agrees to use a website, a service, a hosting site, or other online location for creating or sharing content.

**thread** a series of posts on a single topic or theme; a related strand of conversation.

**Timeline** on Facebook, a digital scrapbook of a user's life, displaying their profile in an actual timeline format with events shown at the time when they occurred.

**trending** (of a word, phrase, or topic) popular on Twitter at a given moment.

**troll** (*slang*) someone who intentionally posts controversial, inflammatory, irrelevant, or off-topic messages in an online community's discussion forum or chat room with the primary intent of provoking community members into a negative emotional response or of disrupting regular, relevant discussion.

**Tweet** a post on Twitter.

**unfriend** to remove someone from your network or list of friends; on Facebook, they can no longer post on your Wall or share information with you.

**UGC (user-generated content)** all forms of user-created materials, such as blog posts, reviews, podcasts, videos, comments, etc.

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator)** the address of a document, a web page, or other content on the Internet.

**URL shorteners (link shorteners)** services that reduce long URLs to shorter ones.

**user-generated content** material created by 'the public,' such as comments on a blog post, uploaded videos, or any form of interaction on a social network.

**vanity metrics** measurements of activities or users on a website, blog, etc., that provide a positive picture but provide little insight into actual performance; e.g. number of followers.

**viral** shared rapidly and organically, without prodding or encouragement, on social networks.

**vodcast** a video podcast.

**VOIP (Voice Over IP)** the use of a computer or other web-enabled device to place phone calls over the Internet.

**webcasting** using the web to deliver live or delayed versions of audio or video broadcasts.

**widget (window gadget)** a small, standalone application or block of content with a specific purpose; used to easily add dynamic content to a website or blog without any code having to be written.

**wiki** a collaborative website which can be directly edited by anyone with access to it.

**XML (Extensible Markup Language)** a markup language which is used to define data elements on a web page and also what those elements must contain, rather than simply defining how the elements are displayed (as HTML does).

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