Use of Social Media Tools by the Academic Libraries in Northern India: A Study

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ABSTRACT
The use of various social media tools in libraries is not a new topic and is in vogue for more than a decade now. Academic libraries around the globe are widely using social media tools to reach to their users and promote their products and services. The present study was carried out to determine the use of Social Media tools used for promoting the library resources and services in the academic libraries in Northern India. The library websites were analyzed for identifying social media tools being used. The study reveals that the majority of the academic libraries do not use any Social Media tool. However, their respective parent organizations use a few Social Media tools like Facebook, Twitter, Ask a Librarian and RSS feeds. The study further reveals that Email service is being used by many libraries followed by YouTube and Blog services.

KeyTerms: Social Media Tools, Web 2.0, Academic Libraries, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Blog

INTRODUCTION
The use of social media tools by individuals of all ages are on increase and the practice is most common in today’s younger generation. The libraries understand the role of social media in connecting, communicating and engaging with users and promoting library products and services. Today social media plays an essential and central role in communication and in building relationships. The online communities are increasingly showing their presence on such platforms which is significant and demands attention, and one will gain by connecting and engaging with people via such channels of communication Bell and in case of libraries, whether be to reach and engage with library users, to promote library products & services, to promote events etc. The influence of social media is continuously rising, so is the number of its users which in 2018 is 3.196 billion, up 13% year-on-year Kemp. As per the social media statistics, among the Internet users in 2017, 71% were social network users and it was found that the most popular among online activities was social networking wherein high user engagement rates were found Statista. The libraries are becoming more and more familiar with the social media and use it to fulfill a variety of objectives. According to Gensler “in a digital age, students see the library as an essential part of their college experience, and see this role continuing as they look to the future”*. The use of social media by an overwhelming majority of students is well documented Sponcil & Gitm and it becomes imperative for libraries to show their presence on such platforms†. The Library Journal’s Survey reveals that various social media tools were used by 86% of libraries in 2013 Dowd and majority of librarians (over 70%) felt the importance of using the social media Taylor & Francis Group, 2014‡.

The present study attempts to assess the adoption of various social media tools by the academic libraries in Northern India.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Academic libraries use social media tools to reach to their diverse user community and promote library products and services. There are many studies on the use of social media by libraries Kumar; Ntaka; Gichora & Kwanya; Dickson & Holley; Mahmood & Richardson Jr which have found the enormous potentials that the social media offers for the library community Secker. As per Chu & Du, social media is mainly used in academic libraries for communicating information to users; marketing and publicizing the library resources and...
services; providing services relating to library inquiries; communication by librarian and development of the library staff\textsuperscript{16}. Glazer also found the same use and purpose as Chu & Du in his study on the use of Facebook\textsuperscript{15, 14}. Mahmood & Richardson Jr. in their study found that some form of Web 2.0 was being used by each library under the study like wikis, social networking sites, blogs. RSS feeds, blogs and instant messaging\textsuperscript{17}. Lani Draper & Marthea Turnage’s in their survey of 265 academic librarians found the overwhelming use of blogs for marketing the library’s services\textsuperscript{18}.

In a survey of New York State Libraries conducted by Moss, 93% of libraries responded positively to engage in any social media and most of them are using Facebook\textsuperscript{19}. Buigues-Garcia & Gimenez-Chornet in their study identified that the social media tools like Facebook or Twitter are the most implemented tools in libraries and among the user information services are RSS, blogs, digital/virtual libraries or bulletin publications\textsuperscript{15}. Cho asserted that in order to offer innovative ways of communication to users, specific social media tools, that allow such communications, should be used\textsuperscript{17}. Gu & Wide’n-Wulf revealed through their study that there are numerous information practices adopted by researchers, and suggested that to further scholarly communication, librarians need to include social media tools in their communication channels\textsuperscript{20}. A study conducted by Khan & Bhatti found the positive attitude of respondents in the marketing a library using various social media tools\textsuperscript{21}. Their study further revealed that in order to attract online users and capture their attention, social media plays an important role which in addition helps in communicating and sharing knowledge and distance learning. The study further recommended the use of various social media tools to market different library services like YouTube, Facebook, Wikis, Blogs etc.

The main purpose of Social media is to connect and communicate with users, engage them and build relationships. Then day’s libraries operate as per the expectations of their users and have to provide the information to their users wherever and whenever they seek it Ramos\textsuperscript{22}. Now libraries have to be accessible from everywhere and work without any barrier. To fulfil this vision, libraries have to adopt various social media tools in a more systematic and comprehensive way so that new opportunities for user collaborations are identified and new library services are developed and introduced in the libraries Boon\textsuperscript{23}. In addition, there are various Social media tools which libraries use to create participatory library services wherein emphasis is laid on user engagement and additional entry points are created to offer library services to the users Smeaton & Davis\textsuperscript{24}. The use and benefits of social media in libraries are manifold and offer new ways to connect, engage and communicate with users. In order to achieve the primary goal of an Academic Institution i.e. supporting teaching and research, Academic libraries across the world are gradually integrating various social media tools into their services Igwe\textsuperscript{25}. It is evident by reviewing the recent literature that social networking offers an efficient and effective method to academic librarians for student outreach provided that possible issues that may arise are taken into account by the Librarians Dickson & Holley\textsuperscript{17}. The advantages of using various social media tools in teaching and learning in relation to students’ perceptions regarding their use have been studied by conducting various studies Hamid et al.\textsuperscript{26}. Numerous studies have also been conducted to assess the use of social media as a tool to improve academic performance Al-Rahmi et al.\textsuperscript{27}.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine, by examining the library websites, the use of Social media for promoting library resources and services in the academic libraries in Northern India.

**Research Questions**

- What type of social media tools are available on the websites of Academic Libraries?
- Which are the most frequently used Social media tools?
- How often is the contents updated on such tools and what is the content?
- Is there any facility for users to engage with the Librarian online?

**Methodology**

The researcher employed a survey method for data collection for the study. A sample of Academic Libraries from 27 UGC recognised universities was selected and examined for the present study wherein the universities belongs to the Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir states of Northern India:

The following UGC recognised universities from the above states were selected as listed on the UGC website http://www.ugc.ac.in as on 20.12.2017.

1. Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla
2. Central University of Himachal Pradesh
3. Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, J&K
4. University of Kashmir, Kashmir, J&K
5. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, J&K
6. Islamic University of Science & Technology University, University Avenue, Awantipora, J&K
7. Jammu University, J&K
8. Central University of Jammu
9. Central University of Kashmir
10. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab
11. Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab
12. Central University of Punjab, Bathinda
13. Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Khanpur Kalan Sonipat, Haryana
14. Chaudhary Bansi Lal University, Bhiwani, Haryana
15. Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirs, Haryana
16. Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind, Haryana
17. Deen Bandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science & Technology, Murthal, Haryana
18. Guru Jambeshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar
19. Indira Gandhi University, Meerpur, Rewari, Haryana
20. Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana
21. Central University of Haryana
22. Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
23. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
24. University of Delhi, New Delhi
25. Ambedkar University Delhi
26. Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi
27. Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha Vishwavidyalaya, Delhi
The websites/web pages of the selected university libraries were accessed and examined by the researcher from 20th December 2017 to 20th February 2018 to identify various social media sites being used by such libraries, the details of which are tabulated in Table 1. The websites were examined for evidence of social media tools, including (but not limited to): social media tools (like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube channel, Pinterest, Instagram, and so forth), blogs, Podcasts, wikis, Instant Messaging, Mash-up and RSS feeds. The availability of a library email id was also examined along with the Feedback option. All the websites were visited at least twice during the study. Changes within this period were incorporated in the study.

Table 1: List of Universities with URL and Social Media Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>URL of Library website/webpage</th>
<th>Social Media tools available on library website/webpage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla</td>
<td><a href="http://hpuniv.nic.in/lib.htm">http://hpuniv.nic.in/lib.htm</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in library Link to Library webpage visible No email id is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Central University of Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cuhimachal.ac.in/library.aspx">http://www.cuhimachal.ac.in/library.aspx</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in the library Email ID of the library available Link to Library webpage visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, J&amp;K</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bgbsbu.ac.in/central_library">http://www.bgbsbu.ac.in/central_library</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage not visible No email id is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>University of Kashmir, Kashmir, J&amp;K</td>
<td><a href="http://all.uok.edu.in">http://all.uok.edu.in</a></td>
<td>Following S M tools used in the library YouTube Email ID of the library available Link to Library webpage visible &quot;Ask a Librarian&quot; service available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Shri Mata VaishnoDevi University, J&amp;K</td>
<td><a href="http://www.smvdu.ac.in/index.php/research-and-publications/central-library">http://www.smvdu.ac.in/index.php/research-and-publications/central-library</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage not visible University has accounts in - Facebook - Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Islamic University of Science &amp; Technology University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lustlive.com/Index/CLibrary.aspx">http://www.lustlive.com/Index/CLibrary.aspx</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in the library Emails Ids of Lib. staff available Link to Library webpage visible University has accounts in - Facebook - Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Jammu University, J&amp;K</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jammuuniversity.in/campus_library.asp">http://www.jammuuniversity.in/campus_library.asp</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage not visible &quot;Post your complaint “ option on University website’s home page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Central University of Kashmir</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cukashmir.ac.in/displaydepartment.aspx?sid=74&amp;did=36&amp;page=494">http://www.cukashmir.ac.in/displaydepartment.aspx?sid=74&amp;did=36&amp;page=494</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in thelibrary Link to Library webpage visible Emails Ids of Lib. staff available University account in - Facebook - Twitter - Feedback &amp; Suggestions option available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab</td>
<td><a href="http://library.gndu.ac.in/">http://library.gndu.ac.in/</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage not visible University account in - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Central University of Punjab, Bathinda</td>
<td><a href="http://cup.edu.in/library.php">http://cup.edu.in/library.php</a></td>
<td>No S M tools used in thelibrary Link to Library webpage visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Khapur, Punjab, Sonipat, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bpswomenuniversity.ac.in/l">http://www.bpswomenuniversity.ac.in/l</a> Library.html</td>
<td>No S M tools used in thelibrary Link to Library webpage visible Emails Ids of Lib. staff available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Chaudhary Bansi Lal University, Bhiwani, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="http://opac.cblu.ac.in/">http://opac.cblu.ac.in/</a></td>
<td>Link to Library webpage visible but not working University accounts in - Facebook - Twitter - YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. No.</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>URL of Library website/webpage</td>
<td>Social Media tools available on library website/webpage</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirsa, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="https://www.cdlu.ac.in/library/">https://www.cdlu.ac.in/library/</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage not visible Icons of following S.M tools available on University website but not working Facebook Twitter YouTube LinkedIn Gmail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="http://crsu.ac.in/2015-01-23-06-39-20">http://crsu.ac.in/2015-01-23-06-39-20</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Library link visible but at bottom of the university website University accounts in Facebook Following icons available on the University website but not working Twitter YouTube LinkedIn Google+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Deen Bandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science &amp; Technology, Murthal, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="http://dcru.library.com/#/home">http://dcru.library.com/#/home</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage visible ‘Ask a librarian’ service available Email ID of the library available University has an account in Facebook Twitter RSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Guru Jambeshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gjust.ac.in/library/index.php">http://www.gjust.ac.in/library/index.php</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage visible Email ID of the library available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Indira Gandhi University, Meerut, Rewari, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="https://www.igu.ac.in/Digital-Library">https://www.igu.ac.in/Digital-Library</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in library Link to Library webpage visible University accounts in Facebook Twitter Following icons available on University website but not working YouTube LinkedIn Tumblr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kuk.ac.in/information.php?m=dg==&amp;L01_id=NjE=&amp;L01_direction=H">http://www.kuk.ac.in/information.php?m=dg==&amp;L01_id=NjE=&amp;L01_direction=H</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage visible Email ID of the library available University account in Facebook Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Central University of Haryana</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cuh.ac.in/pdf/library.pdf">http://www.cuh.ac.in/pdf/library.pdf</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage visible No separate webpage for library Email ID of the library available University account in Facebook YouTube University has a blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi</td>
<td><a href="http://jmi.ac.in/studyatjamia/library/introduction">http://jmi.ac.in/studyatjamia/library/introduction</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in the library Link to Library webpage visible Feedback option available Email ID of the library available University has an account in Facebook YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi</td>
<td><a href="http://lib.jnu.ac.in/">http://lib.jnu.ac.in/</a></td>
<td>Following S.M tool used in library Blog ‘Ask a Librarian’ service available Email ID of the library available No icons of S.M tools on University main website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>University of Delhi, New Delhi</td>
<td><a href="http://crl.du.ac.in/">http://crl.du.ac.in/</a></td>
<td>No S.M tools used in library Link to Library webpage visible ‘Ask a Librarian’ service available Email ID of the library available University has an account in Facebook YouTube</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATA ANALYSIS

Visibility of Library Webpage/Website

In order to access the library website/web page, the link to library must be separate and visible on the institutional website’s homepage to meet the user expectation and not classify the library with other services which in this study is treated as ‘not visible’.

The study shows that (66.7%) universities have visible links to their respective library webpages/websites whereas in case of (33.3%) universities, link to library webpage/website is not visible.

Table 2: Visibility of Library Webpage/Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visibility</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Link visible</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Link not visible</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Availability of Social Media Tools

Among the 27 libraries selected for the study, only (7.4%) libraries have social media icons on their webpages/websites and the tools are active while as (59.25%) universities have social media icons on their websites, out of which only (48.1%) universities have active social media tools.

Table 3: Availability of Social Media Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of S.M Icon on Library website/webpage</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of S.M Icon on University website/webpage</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active S.M tools of Library</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active S.M tools of University</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of Social Media Tool Used

The study reveals that Facebook is being used by (55.5%) universities while as not even a single library under study uses Twitter. Same is the case with Twitter which is being used by (40.7%) universities with not a single library using it. YouTube is being used by (18.5%) libraries using it. RSS service is being used by (11.1%) universities followed by LinkedIn (7.4%), Google+ (3.7%) & Instagram (3.7%). The Blog facility is being provided by 3.7% universities while as the same percentage of libraries also provide the facility.

Although ‘Ask a Librarian’ service is being provided by 18.5% libraries but all are email-based as accessed by the researcher during the study and do not fall in Instant Messaging category which allows communication between users and librarians in real time Maness.

DISCUSSION

Answers of Research Questions:

What types of social media tools are available on the websites of Academic Libraries?

The study reveals that the social media tools are not widely used by the academic libraries under the study although the tools are very popular among millions of users and dominate their everyday personal and professional lives Baro, Idiodi & Godfrey. Youtube service is being used by only one academic library and Blog service is being used by another academic library. Wang states that “we have tried hard to attract users to come to us, but (now) maybe it is now time for librarians to go bravely into the outside world and change others’ perceptions in all kinds of non-library setting”. Farkas reminds the libraries that libraries should not confine themselves to only those places where library users are; but the important thing is to be useful by providing access to resources, offer reference and information services which are interactive and create awareness by information literacy lessons.

Which are the most frequently used Social media tools?

There are many benefits of using S.M tools like to
communicate, to share, to collaborate, to disseminate information and to connect. The study shows that the Facebook is the most frequently used social media tools by the universities followed by Twitter and YouTube.

How often is the contents updated on such tools and what is the content?

The content on S M tools is being updated by most of the universities daily. Most of universities use facebook & twitter to post at least once a day. However the content on YouTube, blog & Instagram is not being updated often.

Most of the universities use facebook and twitter for informing students & scholars about the upcoming events & programmes, examinations, admissions, new services & facilities introduced and events organized by the universities. The library using YouTube has shared the videos of events and programmes on the channel conducted by it. The blog is being used to provide a platform for scholars and faculty members to interact with each other and discuss various issues relating to their subject fields. It also informs about the new arrivals. The Instagram is being used to share newspaper clippings and photographs of the events conducted by the university.

Is there any facility for users to engage with the Librarian online?

Yes, (51.8%) academic libraries have either email facility or Ask a Librarian facility to engage with the students.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the use of social media tools is not common among the libraries under present study, which may be because of lack of interest, lack of awareness, lack of skills or time among the librarians. Although a good number of universities are using facebook and twitter to show their presence on the social media but the trend is not encouraging and is far from reaching the optimum penetration. In order to stay relevant in the present technological era, academic libraries need to embrace the social media tools to reach to their users, connect and communicate with them and serve them effectively. The libraries need to promote their services and products online by showing a strong presence on various social media platforms. Examples are abundant which prove that librarians around the globe are implementing various Library 2.0 tools in their libraries in different kinds of library settings, and engaging with their users in innovative ways Baro, Idiodi & Godfrey. Majority of the libraries around the globe are making use of social media tools owing to the facts that the tools are free, need little skills to operate, best & effective service delivery platforms and online presence of their users. The librarians must be proactive to embrace and use such tools and serve their users the way they want and not stay calm and still in front of such technological advancements Ntaka. Libraries have always responded positively to the changes around them and it is perfect time for libraries to adopt and implement various social media tools.

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