



## AWARENESS AND ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS BY LIBRARIANS FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW.

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper presented an overview on the awareness and trends of the adoption social media tools for knowledge sharing by librarians in university libraries in South-South Nigeria. The paper explains the use of social media platforms for knowledge sharing in academic libraries and how it has gained significant attention in recent years. The paper explores the concept of social media, its significance in facilitating knowledge sharing by librarians in South-South University libraries, different types of social media platforms used in academic libraries, the challenges associated with their implementation and the way forward.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, adoption, social media tools, university library and knowledge sharing

### Introduction

Social media is a concept that has revolutionized the way people connect, communicate, and share information in the digital age. It refers to online platforms and technologies that enable individuals and groups to create, share, and exchange content in various forms, such as text, images, videos, and audio. These platforms provide users with tools and features to interact with one another, build networks, and engage in virtual communities.

The fundamental idea behind social media is to facilitate social interaction and foster relationships through the Internet. It allows people from different parts of the world to connect and communicate instantly, breaking

down barriers of distance and time. Social media platforms enable users to share their thoughts, experiences, opinions, and interests with others, making it a powerful tool for self-expression and personal branding.

Social media, in the context of academic libraries, refers to online platforms and technologies that enable the sharing of scholarly information, research outputs, and library resources among library staff, researchers, students, and the wider academic community. It provides a dynamic and interactive environment for disseminating information, fostering collaboration, and engaging users in meaningful discussions. Adewojo and Mayowa-Adebara (2016) opined that social media tools and its networking sites have motivated librarians to



engage with each other and to express and share their creativity, overcome the kind of isolation, create a sense of belonging, develop leadership skills, cultivate and develop deep learning capabilities and a capacity for practical reasoning. Social media tools make it possible for librarians to exchange ideas among members of a community, librarians inclusive and this in turn creates an appropriate context for knowledge sharing online. Social media tools also provide the platform for mutual interaction among librarians; and their interaction with other members of the community. It represents an innovative trend that should be of interest to any future ready information provider institution such as libraries. Social media tools provide a conducive atmosphere for librarians' interaction and management of users' information needs.

### **Awareness on the use of social media by librarians in the university libraries in South-South Nigeria.**

In the digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for knowledge sharing in academic libraries. It plays a crucial role in creating awareness about library services, resources, and events among library users, researchers, and students. University librarians' awareness on social media usage and platforms provide opportunities for them to communicate with their target audience, promote library collections, and share information about workshops, conferences, and other academic activities. This acquaintances with social media, makes the academic libraries and librarians, reach a

wider audience and engage with users in real-time conversations, leading to increased visibility and participation.

Librarians in academic libraries vary in their awareness and utilization of social media for knowledge sharing. However, in recent years, many librarians have recognized the potential benefits of social media platforms for engaging with users, promoting library services, and sharing knowledge and resources. Librarians who are actively involved in social media often use platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to connect with their user communities, share information about library events, resources, and services, and provide timely updates. They may also participate in relevant discussions, join professional networks and communities, and collaborate with other librarians and researchers through social media channels. Additionally, awareness of social media usage make some librarians to curate and share content related to their library's subject areas, highlight new acquisitions, recommend readings, and provide research tips and tricks. This awareness of social media usage by librarians can also be a valuable platform for them to showcase the expertise and knowledge they bring to their roles, thereby establishing themselves as valuable resources within their academic communities.

While not all librarians may be equally familiar or comfortable with using social media tools, there is an increasing recognition of its potential as a tool for knowledge sharing. Librarians who actively



engage with social media platforms can enhance their outreach efforts, foster connections with their users, and promote the valuable resources and services offered by their academic libraries.

### **Adoption of social media tools by university librarians for knowledge sharing in South-South, Nigeria.**

The adoption of social media by librarians for knowledge sharing in university libraries have been growing steadily. Librarians recognize that social media platforms provide unique opportunities to connect with their users, promote library services, and share valuable information and resources. The following are some key areas of this adoption:

1. **Outreach and Engagement:** Social media allows librarians to reach a wider audience and engage with users in a more interactive and immediate way. They can share updates, news, and events related to the library, academic resources, and research tips. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide avenues for librarians to answer user queries, participate in discussions, and provide personalized assistance.
2. **Information Dissemination:** Librarians can leverage social media to disseminate information about new acquisitions, databases, research guides, and other resources available in the library. They can share links to relevant articles, research papers, and multimedia materials, creating awareness and accessibility for users. This approach

promotes the use of library resources and encourages scholarly engagement.

3. **Information Resource Advancement:** Librarians can use social media to showcase specific resources, such as rare books, special collections, or digital archives. By highlighting unique materials and sharing intriguing facts or stories, librarians can generate interest and curiosity among users, encouraging them to explore these resources further.
4. **Collaboration and Networking:** Social media platforms provide opportunities for librarians to connect and collaborate with colleagues, both within their own institutions and across different libraries. Platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter enable librarians to join professional groups, participate in discussions, share best practices, and learn from each other's experiences. This collaboration strengthens the overall knowledge sharing within the library community.
5. **Feedback and Evaluation:** Social media allows librarians to gather feedback from users and evaluate the impact of their services and resources. Librarians can conduct surveys, collect comments, and monitor user engagement to understand user needs and preferences better. This feedback can inform future decision-making processes and enhance the quality of services provided.

It's worth noting that while many librarians have embraced social media for knowledge sharing, the extent of adoption may vary among individuals and institutions. Factors such as available resources,



institutional support, and librarian expertise can influence the level of engagement. However, overall, social media has become an increasingly valuable tool for librarians in university libraries to share knowledge, connect with users, and promote their services effectively.

### **Significance of social media for knowledge sharing in the university libraries in South-South Nigeria.**

The significance of social media in academic libraries lies in its ability to extend the reach of library services beyond physical boundaries, enhance access to scholarly resources, and create virtual communities of practice. Social media platforms offer opportunities for librarians to showcase library collections, promote events and workshops, provide quick updates, and engage with users in real-time conversations. They also facilitate the sharing of academic research, innovative ideas, and educational resources among researchers and students, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange. The significance of social media in university libraries involves utilizing various social media platforms to engage with the academic community, promote library resources and services, and foster a sense of community among students, faculty, and staff. Here are some key aspects and benefits of integrating social media into university libraries in South South Nigeria:

1. **Communication and Outreach:** Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn provide avenues for libraries to share important announcements, news, and updates with

their audience. It allows libraries to reach a wider demographic, including both on-campus and off-campus users, and facilitates quick and efficient communication. (Ansari and Tripathi, 2017), stated that increasing and the engagement of social media for knowledge sharing by librarian help in gathering feedback to enhance user services, increasing utilization of library content, maximizing utilization of the documents, and facilitating collaboration and promoting effective communication between library staff and their patrons. Akporhonor and Olise (2020), further corroborated this view when they stated that blogs and facebook are the most commonly used social media to promote library and information resources and services in the libraries. Findings also showed librarians' use of social media promotes two-way communication, makes communication with library users easier, and provides forum for feedback and increases library users /usage.

2. **Promotion of Resources and Services:** University libraries offer a wealth of resources, including books, journals, databases, and specialized collections. Social media platforms offer an effective way to highlight and promote these resources, making students and faculty aware of their availability and encouraging their utilization. Libraries can share links to online resources, provide research tips, and showcase new acquisitions through engaging posts. Chitumbo (2023), established that social media tools are already engaged in



promoting resource services in the academic libraries and that most respondents use social media tools mostly for socializing and not for academic purposes. The study established that over 80% of respondents (both librarians and students) are already engaged in SMTs except that they use SMTs for socializing and not for academic purposes.

3. **Events and Workshops:** Libraries often organize events, workshops, and seminars to enhance information literacy and research skills among students. Social media platforms provide a means to advertise these events, generate interest, and encourage participation. Libraries can create event pages, share event schedules, and gather feedback and suggestions from attendees.
4. **Virtual Communities:** Social media allows libraries to build virtual communities centered on shared interests, academic disciplines, or specific programs. Libraries can create Facebook groups, LinkedIn communities, or Twitter chats where students, faculty, and researchers can connect, share ideas, collaborate on projects, and seek assistance from library staff or fellow community members.
5. **Feedback and User Engagement:** Social media platforms facilitate two-way communication between library staff and users. Students and faculty can provide feedback, ask questions, and share suggestions or concerns through comments or direct messages. Libraries can respond to queries, provide

assistance, and gather valuable input to improve services and resources.

6. **Information Literacy and Research Support:** Social media platforms offer an opportunity for libraries to share information literacy tips, research techniques, citation guidelines, and other academic resources. Libraries can create instructional videos, infographics, or blog posts to assist users in their academic pursuits and encourage the development of critical thinking and research skills.
7. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Social media enables university libraries to collaborate with other libraries, academic departments, student organizations, or external partners. Libraries can share joint initiatives, co-host virtual events, or promote cross-disciplinary research projects. Such collaborations enhance the visibility and impact of the library and foster a sense of interdisciplinary engagement.

It is important for university libraries to have a social media strategy in place, considering factors such as the target audience, goals, content planning, and engagement monitoring. Additionally, libraries should prioritize user privacy and data protection while utilizing social media platforms.

### **Types of social media tools that can enhance knowledge sharing in academic libraries in South-South Nigeria.**

It should be noted that the social media landscape is constantly evolving, and new tools and platforms may emerge over time. However, it should be clarified that there are several types of social media tools that can be





utilized for knowledge sharing in academic libraries in Nigeria. These tools provide platforms for collaboration, information dissemination, and interaction among library users. The following are some examples:

1. **Blogs:** A blog, short for "weblog," is an online platform or website where individuals or organizations regularly publish and share written content in a chronological format. It serves as a personal or professional online journal or informational outlet where authors, known as bloggers, express their thoughts, opinions, or share information on various topics. Academic libraries can create and maintain blogs to share information, resources, and updates with their users. According to Ogundipe & Aina, 2017, blogs allow librarians to post articles, book reviews, research guides, and other relevant content, fostering knowledge sharing and engagement.

2. **Wikis:** The term "wiki" originated from the Hawaiian word for "quick." Wikis are designed to be user-friendly and promote easy collaboration among multiple individuals. Wikis are collaborative online platforms that allow users to create, edit, and organize content collectively. They enable collaborative content creation and editing, making them valuable tools for knowledge sharing, documentation, and information management. They enable collaborative content creation and editing. Libraries can use wikis to build knowledge bases, create subject guides, and develop community-driven resources. Users can contribute to and edit the content, enhancing collective knowledge sharing (Ilo & Okello-Obura, 2013).

3. **Social networking sites:** Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn can be leveraged by academic libraries to connect with users, share announcements, promote events, and facilitate discussions. These networks facilitate information dissemination and engagement with library resources (Ilo & Okello-Obura, 2013).

4. **Online forums:** An online forum, also known as a discussion forum or message board, is a web-based platform that enables users to engage in discussions, ask questions, share information, and interact with one another on various topics of interest. Online forums provide a space for users to participate in conversations, exchange ideas, seek help, and build a community around shared interests or objectives. It provides spaces for users to ask questions, seek help, and exchange ideas. Libraries can host forums or participate in existing ones to facilitate knowledge sharing, address user queries, and foster a sense of community among library users (Ogundipe & Aina, 2017).

5. **Video-sharing platforms:** Platforms like YouTube and Vimeo can be utilized to share instructional videos, tutorials, and library orientation sessions. Libraries can create their own channels to disseminate information in an engaging and visual manner (Ilo & Okello-Obura, 2013).

6. **Social Bookmarking:** It is a method of organizing, saving, and sharing web bookmarks or links to online resources through social bookmarking websites. Instead of saving bookmarks locally in a web browser, social bookmarking allows users to store their bookmarks online and access them



from any device connected to the internet. These tools enable users to save and organize web links or bookmarks and share them with others. Delicious and Pinterest are common social bookmarking platforms. Professional librarians in the university libraries can quickly store and programmes information in the library portal and also be retrieved whenever it is required.

7. **Podcasting Platforms:** This refers to a digital platform or service that facilitates the creation, hosting, distribution, and consumption of podcasts. Podcasts are episodic audio or video content that can be streamed or downloaded from the internet, typically in a series format. It provide the necessary infrastructure and tools for podcast creators to produce and publish their episodes, while also offering a user-friendly interface for listeners to discover and access podcasts. Podcasting tools facilitate the creation, hosting, and distribution of audio content. Examples include Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Academic librarians can use this platform to create, host and distribute information in the academic library website.

8. **Live Streaming Platforms:** Live streaming tools allow users to broadcast real-time video content to audiences. Twitch and YouTube Live are popular platforms for live streaming. This platform when properly utilize by academic librarians, real time information can quickly be disseminated to library users within a short space of time.

## **Challenges in using social media tools by librarians in university libraries in South-South Nigeria.**

The use of social media in academic libraries comes with its share of challenges. These challenges include the need for training and skill development for librarians to effectively utilize social media platforms, concerns about privacy and data security, information overload due to the vast amount of content available, and the need for strategies to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of social media initiatives. These challenges may include:

1. **Information Overload:** The abundance of information on social media platforms can lead to information overload for librarians. They must navigate through a vast amount of content to find relevant and reliable information (Nwagwu, 2018).
2. **Privacy and Security Concerns:** Social media platforms often collect and store user data, raising privacy concerns. Librarians need to be cautious about the privacy and security implications of using social media tools and ensure the protection of user information (Nwagwu, 2018).
3. **Time and Resource Constraints:** Maintaining an active presence on social media requires time and resources. Librarians may face challenges in dedicating sufficient time to manage social media accounts and create engaging content while balancing their other responsibilities (Kumar & Ravi, 2018).



4. **Information Accuracy and Reliability:** Social media platforms can be prone to misinformation and fake news. Librarians must critically evaluate the information shared on these platforms and ensure that they share accurate and reliable content (Nwagwu, 2018).
5. **Technology and Access Barriers:** Some librarians may face challenges related to technology infrastructure and access to social media tools. Limited internet connectivity, outdated equipment, or restrictive institutional policies can hinder their effective use of social media (Kumar & Ravi, 2018).

### **The way forward in the use of social media for knowledge sharing by librarians in university libraries in South-South Nigeria**

To overcome the challenges associated with social media tools for knowledge sharing in academic libraries in Nigeria, several strategies can be implemented. These include:

1. **Infrastructure Development:** Infrastructure development refers to the process of creating, improving, or expanding physical structures, systems, and facilities necessary for the functioning of a society or organization. It involves the construction, maintenance, and enhancement of various components such as transportation networks, energy systems, communication networks, water and sanitation facilities, and other essential infrastructure elements. It aims to provide reliable and efficient services to support economic activities, social well-

being, and sustainable development. In the context of social media tools for knowledge sharing in academic libraries, infrastructure development could involve improving internet connectivity, expanding broadband networks, upgrading server capacity, ensuring stable power supply, and establishing appropriate hardware and software systems to support the effective use of social media platforms. Efforts should be made to improve internet connectivity and power supply infrastructure to ensure reliable access to social media tools (Ogundipe & Aina, 2017).

2. **Digital Literacy Training:** This refers to educational programs or initiatives aimed at equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively navigate and utilize digital technologies. It encompasses a range of abilities related to using digital tools, understanding digital information, and engaging with digital content in a meaningful way. Librarians and users should receive training on digital literacy skills, including navigating social media platforms, evaluating information, and protecting privacy and security (Ogundipe & Aina, 2017). Workshops, seminars, and online courses can be organized to enhance digital skills among library staff and users.

3. **Multilingual Communication:** This refers to the practice of using multiple languages to facilitate effective communication and interaction between individuals or groups who speak different languages. It involves the ability to convey information, exchange ideas, and engage in meaningful conversations across language





barriers. Libraries can adopt multilingual strategies to cater to the linguistic diversity in Nigeria. This can involve providing content in various local languages and considering cultural nuances in social media communication (Ogundipe & Aina, 2017).

**4. Information Verification and Fact-Checking:** These are processes aimed at assessing the accuracy, reliability, and credibility of information. In an era of widespread information sharing through various channels, including social media and online platforms, verifying the authenticity of information is crucial to prevent the spread of misinformation and promote accurate knowledge dissemination. It involves conducting thorough research and investigation to confirm the validity of the information. This typically includes cross-referencing multiple sources, consulting authoritative references, and assessing the reputation and expertise of the original source. Verification helps ensure that the information is based on reliable evidence and aligns with established facts. Librarians should play an active role in promoting information literacy by verifying the accuracy and reliability of information shared through social media platforms. Collaborating with other information professionals and fact-checking organizations can help ensure the dissemination of credible information (Akobo & Ojo, 2020).

**5. Privacy and Security Measures:** As the name connotes it, refer to strategies, practices, and technologies implemented to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of personal or sensitive

information. These measures aim to safeguard individuals' privacy rights, prevent unauthorized access, and mitigate the risk of data breaches or misuse. It typically focus on preserving individuals' rights to control their personal information. Libraries should prioritize the implementation of privacy and security measures to protect user data and safeguard against cyber threats. This can include educating users about privacy settings, implementing strong password policies, and staying updated on cybersecurity best practices (Akobo & Ojo, 2020).

**6. Collaboration and Partnerships:** This refers to cooperative efforts between individuals, organizations, or institutions to achieve shared goals or mutually beneficial outcomes. It involves working together, pooling resources, and leveraging complementary expertise to achieve results that may be challenging or impossible to attain individually. It involves actively engaging with others, sharing information, ideas, and resources, and coordinating efforts to accomplish a common objective. Collaborative efforts among libraries, educational institutions, and government agencies can help address the challenges collectively. Sharing resources, knowledge, and best practices can lead to more effective use of social media tools for knowledge sharing (Ogundipe & Aina, 2017).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, social media has become a valuable tool for knowledge sharing in academic libraries, offering opportunities to connect with users, share information, and



foster collaboration. By understanding the concept, significance, types, and challenges associated with social media use, academic libraries can harness the power of these platforms to enhance their services, engage with their user communities, and contribute to the broader dissemination of knowledge.

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