Social Media and Libraries:
An Annotated Bibliography

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Abstract: “At the 2011 ALA conference, social media was still a topic of many discussions. For the past few years, librarians have shared their efforts to incorporate social networking applications like Facebook and Twitter as part of library services. Some librarians have taken on the challenge of establishing a social network for their library, while others have given up on the idea. At first pass, it appears that librarians, who are known for their resourcefulness, are still wrestling with issues of best practices concerning social media. While social media applications in the current generation still have a long life ahead of them, a new social network is emerging, and with it a new way to organize the information flow and avoid the kitchen sink effect of information. In this article, the author introduces the Google+ Project (known simply as Google+) which incorporates the social networking template used by Facebook and Twitter. The changes to networking that Google+ brings, however, may likely influence the direction of future networks. The general format of Google+ is similar to Facebook’s interface. For librarians wanting to create an information stream directly to their patrons, all they would have to do is create a “Library Circle” and then place patrons into that circle as they are added to their Google+ network. While the fate of Google+ is still uncertain, the author anticipates elements such as circles and hangouts to be standard features within the next wave of social networking applications.”

Annotation: The article is based on discussion at the 2011 American Library Association (ALA) conference. It summarizes an answer to the question, “How can we best use social media to serve patrons?” Specifically discusses Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Social Networking 2.0. With so much information coming from social media, the stream needs to be filtered and organized. Modern librarians have a unique opportunity to teach patrons how to manage their own social networks. The advent of social media makes the need for

Search Strategy: The keyword search, listed below, netted over 1000 results. From there, I limited the search in ERIC to show only “peer reviewed” articles and then limited the publication type to “journal articles.” This greatly narrowed down the search and I was able to browse article titles and abstracts. Unfortunately, ERIC did not offer the full-text version of this article so I conducted a Google search for <“The Need for a Social Network 2.0.” and “Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian, 30(4), 264-267. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639269.2011.622259

Annotated Bibliography

This led me to the Taylor and Francis Website where I was able to access the full-text article (for free) at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01639269.2011.622259.

**Database:** ERIC database (EJ957726)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword Searching

**Search String:** social(network OR social(media OR blog OR wiki OR facebook OR twitter AND library

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** After locating the article through the steps above, the article was also located in LISA, using the delimiters “peer reviewed” and “scholarly journal.” Ulrich’s lists the journal as refereed. The website for Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian lists it as a “peer reviewed journal.”


**Abstract:** “To assume the role of technology leaders and information literacy specialists in their schools, librarians need access to the most current information. And, they do this by helping each other. There are many definitions, but professional learning networks (PLNs) involve sharing work-related ideas with a network of colleagues via various digital communications (and even face-to-face) for the betterment of one’s professional practice. A robust PLN employs different technologies to network around different content types. Heavy-hitters include Twitter for micro-blogging (follow the #tlchat hashtag); Google Reader for aggregating blog feeds; FourSquare for geolocation to follow colleagues at conference or other sites; professional networking sites, including FaceBook (join professional groups), Google+, and Edmodo (password-protected); and specialty sites, such as Diigo (bookmark sharing), Goodreads, Shelfari, and LibraryThing (book info sharing); or SlideShare (presentations) and Scribd
This article presents five reasons why school librarians need robust PLNs and offers some advice for effective participation in a PLN.

**Annotation:** Intended for school libraries, the article provides concise information for an information professional in any field. The article discusses the importance of developing a professional learning network (PLN). A PLN is a digital network through to share work-related ideas. Unlike other articles, this one outlines how to utilize social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LibraryThing (and others) for professional development among colleagues.

**Search Strategy:** From the last article I found, I clicked the “show related items” link in ERIC. From here, I browsed several articles and abstracts to find this one.

**Database:** ERIC database (EJ976158)

**Method of Searching:** Browsing from “show related items” in the ERIC database. The full-text version was not available through Drexel’s Hagerty Library; however, I was able to find it on the ALA’s website.


**Search String:** social network OR social media OR blog OR wiki OR facebook OR twitter AND library

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** After locating the article through the “show related items” link in ERIC, I then found the article in LISA, using the delimiters “peer reviewed” and “scholarly journal.” Ulrich’s lists Knowledge Quest as refereed journal, published by the American Library Association.

Abstract: “In a recent survey on the use of social networking sites, the Pew Internet & American Life project (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011) reported that 13% of adults who use a social networking site use Twitter. The author, who has been managing the Twitter account for Ohio University’s Alden Library for the past 18 months, has found that despite the generally low adoption of Twitter by Internet users, it has indeed proven to be a powerful tool for communicating with some of their patrons, especially students and other organizations at Ohio University. In this article, she discusses the basics of what Twitter is and what it can do, how to set up an account and share content, and how to determine if Twitter is right for your library.”

Annotation: The article was written by Jessica Hagman who manages the Twitter account for Ohio University’s Alden Library (@aldenlibrary). Hagman discusses how to determine if Twitter is right for your library, setting up an account, sharing content, and how to engage the community and gather information about their individual needs. It also discusses the concept of using Twitter to better understand the community’s opinion of the library.

Search Strategy: I limited the search in ERIC to show only “peer reviewed” articles and then limited the publication type to “journal articles.” From there I was able to browse article titles and abstracts. Unfortunately, ERIC did not offer the full-text version of this article so I conducted a Google search for “Joining the twitter conversation”. This led me to the Taylor and Francis website where I was able to access the full-text article (for free) at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15228959.2012.650564

Database: ERIC Database (EJ963623)

Method of Searching: Keyword Search

Search String: social()network OR social()media OR blog OR wiki OR facebook OR twitter AND library

Scholarly/Referred Status: After locating the article through the steps above, I then found it in LISA, using the delimiters “peer reviewed” and “scholarly journal.” Ulrich’s lists Public Services Quarterly as refereed. The Public Services Quarterly website also lists the journal as “peer reviewed.”

Abstract: “The purpose of this paper is to follow up on the 2009 publication "Building a virtual branch at Vancouver Public Library (VPL) using Web 2.0 tools" and to explore the work that VPL has been doing in the social media space over the past two years.

Design/methodology/approach -- Following the launch of its new web site in 2008, Vancouver Public Library has continued to expand its online presence, both via its own web properties and in the social media space. At the core of the library's approach to web services is the desire to take the community development model online, and engage with communities in the spaces of their choosing. Findings -- The Web Team has been active in moving into the social media space, and was an early adopter of popular social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The social bookmarking site Delicious also became an integral part of the new web site, being used as a management tool for the library's extensive collection of recommended web links. Since 2008 the Web Team has piloted a variety of other Web 2.0 and social media tools, pushing the library's online presence into new spaces while continuing to build on the successes experienced by its established accounts. Originality/value -- Libraries are very conscious of the need to leverage social media tools to engage with patrons, but are also facing the challenge of managing these tools with reduced staff and funding. VPL's success in this space offers a model of how to use these tools effectively to engage patrons, develop community, and maximize resources in a time of constrained budgets.”

Annotation: This paper is based on the real-life example of Vancouver Public Library’s (VPL) use of social media over the past two years. While very long, the article is detailed and allows other to learn from the mistakes and triumphs of VPL’s experience in the virtual world. The article outlines the library’s policies, priorities, and goals as they pertain to social media. The library strives to provide “meaningful and worthwhile online services” to its patrons.

Search Strategy: I limited my search in ERIC to display only “peer reviewed” articles and then limited the publication type to “journal articles.” From there I was able to browse article titles and abstracts to select this source. Unfortunately, ERIC did not offer the full-text version of the article; however the full-text was available in LISA at

Abstract: “Purpose - In all projections for 2011, ROI has become one of the great challenges of social media marketing for the business environment. However, in the case of non-profit organizations, there is no need for such calculations. It is not as necessary to know how the effort made in these media compares to the benefits that can be obtained. This paper aims to compare the parameters governing social media ROI at an enterprise level and at the level of non-profit institutions. Additionally, the use of social media tools in a strategic plan and to save costs in the institution is discussed. Design/methodology/approach - Where ROI is defined as a mere indicator of return on investment, it involves the direct costs and revenues of each transaction. Combining the world of social media marketing, which is full of intangibles, with the current crisis makes knowing “real” return one of the greatest current needs. When demanding returns from institutions that have never been analyzed from this standpoint, it is important to understand how a tool like this can be used to justify an entity’s visibility, brand improvement and ultimately, an increase in the institution's quality and use by users. Also, it should be taken into account that while in 2010 branding was the primary goal of communication in social media, this year in view of the increasingly endemic crisis, a ROI analysis can help an institution to evidence how the cost savings inherent in using these as opposed to former marketing tools substantiate their use. However, this interest involves a great risk of simplification. Findings -
The analysis used to measure ROI can follow these lines: The consumption by previous users can be compared with that of current arrivals on the network. Comparisons can be made between the behavior of a user prior to following the library on social media and after doing so. The extent to which the success of new developments, events etc. has improved after being communicated in social networks can be measured. The influence of brand perception on users' consumption and the extent to which the new media have changed this perception can be measured. Originality/value - Conducting a ROI analysis of a library's social media marketing campaign can help it evaluate various aspects in the library. Social media can be considered as an interesting information dissemination tool requiring only minimal effort which can be used by the library to promote reading and publicize its informational and cultural efforts. Social media can also be used as dynamic, provision of service and marketing resources with a clear reduction in costs compared to other more traditional types of advertising and publicizing. Given that in the management of these tools, it is the contents and ideas that are essential rather than the economic resources available, social media are particularly useful for small and medium libraries as they provide the possibility of increasing the visibility of the institution and improving its service and its users' experience. Opening a new channel of communication with users on the internet is a challenge for libraries that can be optimized with the development of a strategy for the use of social media. The library should make an effort to manage these resources efficiently and obtain the largest possible return on their use.”

Annotation: This technical article explains the importance of calculating the return on investment (ROI) for social media marketing within a non-profit organization. It also discusses how to save money by using various social media tools in place of traditional services. The article explains how to conduct an ROI analysis of an organization’s social media marketing campaign. This valuable source could be used by a library to justify the need and advantages of its social network marketing campaign.

Search Strategy: I used the Command Line search in ProQuest and limited the results to “full-text” and “peer reviewed.” From there, I was able to browse article titles and abstracts. The full-text for this article was available through ProQuest.

Database: ProQuest

Method of Searching: Keyword search
Search String: social media AND library

Scholarly/Referred Status: After locating the article through the steps above, I copied and pasted the title to find it in LISA. I already knew it was "peer reviewed" because of the search delimiter I used in ProQuest. LISA also had the full-text available. Ulrich’s lists The Bottom Line (UK) as refereed.


Abstract: "Chapter 6 of Library Technology Reports (vol. 48, no. 6) "Running the Digital Branch: Guidelines for Operating the Library Website" by David Lee King discusses the use of social media to support the digital branch, including reasons to use social media to connect to customers and specific social media tools. The chapter examines goals for social media use and best practices."

Annotation: David Lee King is the digital services director at Topeka & Shawnee County (Kansas) Public Library. King discusses the importance of selecting the correct social media tools to make the most of a library’s social media outreach program. King outlines how to create plans and goals for social media tools. The author talks about working directly with patrons to determine what they want from the library’s social media efforts. A library should use its own strategic plan to determine its goals for social media. Social media tools discussed include Facebook, Twitter, Google Alerts, Flickr, FourSquare, YouTube, Google+, Goodreads, and Pinterest. While it’s not advised to tackle them all, the article provides succinct information on how to choose which social media sites will best benefit one’s library.

Search Strategy: I used the Command Line search in ProQuest and limited the results to “full-text” and “peer reviewed.” From there, I was able to browse article titles and abstracts. The full-text for this article was available through ProQuest.

Database: ProQuest
Method of Searching: Keyword search

Search String: social media AND library

Scholarly/Referred Status: Ulrich’s lists Library Technology Reports as refereed source, which is published by the American Library Association. The full-text article was also found in LISA.


Abstract: “Has your library discussed creating a Flickr account, a MySpace teen website, or a blog? David discussed the current social networking transformation taking place, and applied those changes to a library setting. He explained and demonstrated several Web 2.0 tools; including blogs, RSS, Flickr, as well as many “ friending” sites like Facebook and Twitter. Finally, David reviewed the changes a library needs to make to meet and participate in our new online and participatory world.”

Annotation: David Lee King is the digital services director at Topeka & Shawnee County (Kansas) Public Library. This article is an overview of a presentation given by King and recorded by Stephanie Willen Brown. The article was then published in The Serials Librarian journal. As social media continues to change, King talks about how libraries have to adapt and try new technologies in an effort to stay current. He outlines various aspects of social media such as tagging, commenting, user-supplied content, web as a platform, mashups, friending, blogs, and friending sites. More specific to libraries, the article discusses extending the library catalog.

Search Strategy: I conducted an advanced search in ProQuest with the search term au(David Lee King). Additionally, I limited the search to “peer reviewed,” the source type to “scholarly journals,” and the document type to “journal articles.” The full-text was obtained by clicking the “Get full text” link on the ProQuest page for the article. This took me to the Taylor & Francis website where the full-text could be accessed:
http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy2.library.drexel.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/03615260802672452

Abstract: “Chapter 4 of Library Technology Reports (vol 48, no. 6) "Running the Digital Branch: Guidelines for Operating the Library Website" by David Lee King discusses how to create teams, leverage meetings, and set goals. A variety of digital branch teams are discussed, including social media teams. Meetings that are necessary for running the digital branch and digital branch goals are also described.”

Annotation: This is an informative article by David Lee King about operating a library website. It is intended for an information professional within a library setting. Unlike other articles, this one describes the roles of library staff members in the social outreach process. While the title deals with operating a library website, the article itself also deals with social media. The article compares a library’s online presence as its “digital branch,” and gives detailed information on how it should be managed. Extensive information is provided on the staff requirements for taking on this challenge and the roles for each.

Search Strategy: I used the search terms “social media” AND library in LISA and then narrowed the results to “scholarly journals.” I browsed the titles and read through several abstracts to find this article.

Abstract: “Even when library technology doesn't appear to interact directly with policy, technology decisions need to be measured against appropriate policies. Here, Crawford discusses the two areas in which policy may affect technology decisions-the library policies and social policy issues.”

Annotation: Crawford discusses the importance of measuring technology issues against current library policy. Of interest was a section talking about how libraries should strive to serve the underserved members of a community. However, when related to technology, one has to consider how this affects the community, especially the underserved. For example, if a library writes a policy that it will only circulate Blu-Ray DVSs, instead of traditional DVDs, who will be affected by this? Do the majority of the people in a community have a Blu-Ray player? It is important to keep the advancement of technology in line with the resources that are available to your patrons.

Search Strategy: I used the search terms “social media” AND library in ProQuest, searching all 35 databases. From there, I narrowed the results to “scholarly journals.” I browsed the titles and read through several abstracts to find this one article. Once again, I chose it because it's related to library policy, one of my favorite topics of discussion. The full-text was available as a PDF through ProQuest.

Database: LISA

Method of Searching: Browsing

Abstract: “With digital technology libraries can archive considerable resources of detailed information about their users. This data is generally regarded as confidential between the library and the individual, but it has potential interest for commercial organizations, law enforcement and security agencies, and libraries themselves, to assist in marketing their services. The Privacy in the Digital Library Environment project at Loughborough University, 2000-2002, investigated the issues this raises. Findings suggested that users had low levels of anxiety about privacy when using libraries, but this was because they expected that libraries would not pass on personal data to other bodies. Librarians, while respecting privacy as a professional value in principle, did not give it a high rating against other values. Additionally, a significant minority of libraries was not well prepared for data protection. To assist the professional community, guidelines for privacy policy were drawn up on the basis of suggestions made by survey respondents.”

Annotation: Privacy is an important issue for information professionals. The American Library Association (ALA) code of ethics outlines the responsibility a library has for protecting the privacy rights of its patrons. This article discusses the importance of maintaining patron privacy in the digital world. It also talks about patron expectations of privacy based on survey responses. Of special interest is a section that includes 11 guidelines for a library that is developing a digital privacy policy and social media.

Search Strategy: I used the search terms “social media” AND library in ProQuest, searching all 35 databases. From there, I narrowed the results to “scholarly journals.” I browsed the titles and read through several abstracts to find this one article. The full-text was available in ProQuest.

Abstract: “Microblogs are ubiquitous participant Web technologies that enable users to share information, interact with content, and generate resources. Librarians can use these applications for library services, instructional activities, and event promotion. For librarians and patrons, these technologies can be combined with other social media to develop personal learning networks (PLNs) for teaching, learning, and research. As PLN tools, microblogs can provide librarians with many opportunities to build cohorts of professional support and gain access to materials not readily accessible in traditional formats. This article provides an overview of issues to consider when using microblogs as library tools.”

Annotation: According to the article, microblogs, such as Twitter, offer an excellent opportunity for libraries to expand access and the delivery of information services. Guidelines and policy should always govern the use of microblogs as an outreach tool. Microblogs also bring the library to the patrons, rather than requiring them to come in to a building. This helps meet the needs of those who are homebound or disabled, although it would require them to have a computer with Internet access. It shows the benefits in using social media as another tool to reach a variety of patrons.

Search Strategy: For this article, I used Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA) to search for “social media” AND library OR libraries, and narrowed the results to “academic journals. I browsed through several article abstracts to find this one. The full PDF version was available through LISTA.

Abstract: “Libraries are offering more services through social media Web sites like Twitter and Facebook, and this presence online is encouraging more conversation between libraries and patrons, including collection development requests. A review of popular Twitter and Facebook library profiles reveals the most successful accounts to be those where the library actively engages its users online. Through these media, libraries can have direct, immediate conversations with patrons that result in patron-initiated material requests.”

Annotation: This article was selected because it specifically lists information about Facebook. Many of the other sources cover Twitter, but it seems more difficult to find information on Facebook. According to the article, as libraries increase their usage Facebook, conversations with their patrons will also increase, including direct requests from the patrons regarding collection development. The article offers real-life examples and actual screenshots from various libraries social media pages that deal with collection development requests. This is a great example of a way to utilize social media to increase the quality of patron services, while minimizing additional costs to the library.

Search Strategy: For this article, I used advanced search in the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA). I used the Boolean/phrase search method; chose “article” as the

Abstract: "As Facebook has come to dominate the social networking site arena, more libraries have created their own library pages on Facebook to create library awareness and to function as a marketing tool. This paper examines reported versus actual use of Facebook in libraries to identify discrepancies between intended goals and actual use. The results of a 2009 study about the use of Facebook in libraries are used as a guide to gauge the perceived and actual uses for Facebook in this study. Results of the test reveal that the two ranks are not statistically different, but that there is a noticeable difference when looking at the perceived and actual rankings qualitatively."

Annotation: A very stat-heavy article, but the author provides useful tools for measuring the reach of audience through Facebook. It also offers “site observation forms” to help staff and patrons evaluate the effectiveness of the library’s Facebook page. It suggests that librarians shouldn’t get too attached to Facebook as technology continues to evolve, we must be ready to embrace whatever is next.
Search Strategy: For this article, I used advanced search in the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA). I used the Boolean/phrase search method; chose “article” as the document type; “academic journal” as the publication type; and English for the language. This time I had the good sense to further refine the results to “linked full text.” This one click eliminated the process of looking at the article and then trying to determine if the full text was available through Drexel.

Database: Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts

Method of Searching: Still rocking the keyword search.

Search String: library or libraries AND social media

Scholarly/Referred Status: This article could not be found in LISA, but I’m going to use it because I used the “academic journal” delimiter in my original search and I feel confident about the status of the article. Secondly, Ulrich’s lists Reference & User Services Quarterly as a refereed journal published by the American Library Association.


Abstract: “This article highlights the advantages of librarians and libraries establishing a professional or institutional presence on Twitter. This basic introduction to the web service also discusses innovative ways to shape your Twitter account into a successful professional development, reference, and outreach resource.”

Annotation: This article talks about the benefits of developing an active Twitter account for one’s library. It goes on to suggest strategies for using Twitter as a successful professional development, reference, and outreach resource. This article was chosen because it details the concept of expanding library services through social media outlets. Not only can Twitter be used as an advertising tool for the library, but it can help develop relationships and conversations
between the library staff and the patrons. The article stressed the need to take all comments seriously and respond to tweets in a professional, respectful manner.

Search Strategy: For this article, I used advanced search in LISTA. I used the Boolean/phrase search method; chose “article” as the document type; “academic journal” as the publication type; English for the language, and further refined the results to show “linked full text” only.

Database: Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts

Method of Searching: Keyword search

Search String: library or libraries AND social media

Scholarly/Referred Status: After locating the article through the steps above, I also found it in LISA, using the delimiters “peer reviewed” and “scholarly journal.” Ulrich’s lists The Reference Librarian as a journal as refereed journal.