

ISRG Journal of Education, Humanities and Literature (ISRGJEHL)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Edu Humanit Lit

ISSN: 2584-2544 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjehl/>

Volume – I Issue- V (September-October) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



Social Media and User-Centric Library Services

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| Received: 21.10.2024 | Accepted: 26.10.2024 | Published: 29.10.2024

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Abstract

In the age of digital transformation, social media has become a powerful tool for libraries to enhance user-centric services. For libraries in India, embracing user-centric approaches through social media can lead to more effective communication and service delivery. This article explores how libraries in India are utilizing social media to offer better services to their users. By examining scientific libraries and their innovative approaches, we highlight some examples and case studies that demonstrate the impact of social media on library services. This article explores the impact of user-centric library services on scientific libraries, emphasizing how these services improve user engagement, resource accessibility, collaboration, and innovation. The focus is on improving accessibility, engagement, and user satisfaction through strategic use of social media platforms.

Keywords: Social Media, User-Centric Services, Indian Libraries, Scientific Libraries, Case Studies, Digital Transformation

Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has become a vital tool for communication and engagement across various sectors. Social media has transformed various aspects of daily life, and libraries are no exception. Libraries, traditionally seen as repositories of books and knowledge, are increasingly adopting social media to enhance their services, reach a broader audience, and engage with their communities. Libraries, including scientific libraries in India, are increasingly using social media to connect with their users,

enhance their services, and promote their resources. This article explores the reasons why social media is essential for libraries and how it can transform their operations and outreach. This article also discusses how social media platforms are being utilized to create user-centric library services in the Indian context, with a focus on scientific libraries. It also explores the various impacts of user-centric library services on libraries especially scientific libraries and their broader implications for scientific research.



Social media has fundamentally altered the landscape of communication and information sharing across various sectors, including libraries. Its impact on libraries is profound, offering new avenues for engagement, outreach, and service enhancement. Some of the major social media platforms used by almost every library to provide their services are : Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, You Tube, Telegram. These Social media platforms to offer libraries new ways to interact with their patrons.

These platforms allow libraries to:

1. Enhanced Communication

Immediate Updates: Social media allows libraries to provide real-time updates about events, new arrivals, and changes in service hours. *For instance*, a library can quickly notify users about upcoming book sales, workshops, or temporary closures.

Two-Way Interaction: Social media platforms facilitate direct communication between libraries and their users. Libraries can respond to queries, feedback, and comments promptly, fostering a more interactive and responsive service environment.

2. Increased Visibility and Outreach

Wider Audience Reach: Social media extends the reach of libraries beyond their physical locations. By creating and sharing engaging content, libraries can attract and inform users who may not visit in person regularly.

Promotion of Services: Libraries can use social media to highlight their services, such as digital resources, study programs, and community events. *For example*, a library might use Instagram to showcase new books or Facebook to advertise literacy programs.

Libraries can also use social media to announce new services, upcoming events, and important updates. *For example*, the National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR) in India uses 'X' to share news about their research, publications, and events.

3. Community Building

User Engagement: Social media provides a platform for libraries to engage with their community through discussions, polls, and interactive content. This engagement can help libraries understand user needs and preferences better. *For Example:* The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Library at Bombay actively uses Instagram to post about new acquisitions and research highlights, encouraging student engagement.

Event Promotion: Libraries can build a sense of community by promoting events such as author talks, book clubs, and educational workshops. Social media helps in generating buzz and increasing attendance for these events. *For example*, Central Secretariat

Library, New Delhi uses social media platform for advertising their upcoming events like lecture, exhibitions, author meet etc.

4. Digital Literacy and Learning

Educational Content: Libraries can share educational content and resources on social media, including research tips, reading lists, and informational articles. This content can help users develop digital literacy and improve their research skills.

Workshops and Training: Social media can be used to promote and organize online workshops and training sessions, making it easier for users to access learning opportunities and improve their digital skills.

5. Feedback and Improvement

Gathering Insights: Social media platforms offer valuable insights into user preferences and behaviors through likes, shares, and comments. Libraries can use this feedback to improve their services and tailor their offerings to better meet user needs.

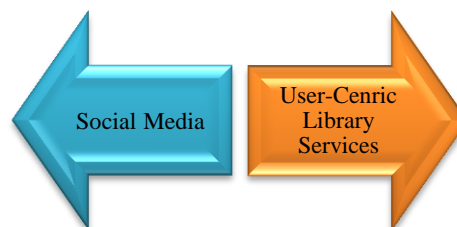
Surveys and Polls: Libraries can conduct surveys and polls via social media to gather opinions on various aspects of their services, such as new programs, resource needs, and user satisfaction.

6. Enhancing Library Collections

Showcasing Resources: Libraries can use social media to highlight their collections, including rare books, new acquisitions, and special archives. This exposure can attract researchers and enthusiasts interested in specific topics.

Crowdsourcing Content: Social media can be used to crowdsource information and materials for special projects or collections, such as local history archives or community-driven research initiatives.

Social Media and User-Centric Library Services in India



User-centric library services are designed to prioritize and meet the needs of library users. These services are tailored to enhance user satisfaction, engagement, and accessibility. In the digital age, social media has emerged as a critical tool for libraries to deliver and improve these user-centric services. In libraries user-centric library services entail and how social media can be effectively used to enhance them.

User-Centric Library Services:

User-centric library services focus on the needs, preferences, and behaviours of library users. Key aspects include:

1. **Personalized Assistance:** Tailoring services to individual user needs, such as providing custom research support or targeted information.
2. **Enhanced Accessibility:** Ensuring that library services and resources are easily accessible to all users, including those with disabilities or those who cannot visit in person.

3. **Engagement and Interaction:** Creating opportunities for users to interact with the library through various channels and participate in library events and programs.
4. **Feedback and Improvement:** Continuously gathering user feedback to improve services and address any issues users may encounter.
5. **Educational Support:** Offering resources and training to help users develop their information literacy and research skills.

Common User-Centric Services in Libraries: These are the common library services, where we use different social media in different ways keeping users at the centre:

- Document Delivery Services
- Sharing of Consortia based Resources Services
- Online Database Search and Retrieval Services
- Blogs and Wikis
- Email services
- Current Awareness Services
- Bulletin Board Services
- OPAC and WebOPAC Services
- Teleconference Services
- Webinars Services
- Video Conferencing Services
- Virtual Reference Services
- Interlibrary Loan on online and offline resources Services
- RFID Services
- CCTV services (issue based)

The above mentioned categories of services are commonly developed based on User needs. Having these services in your library, the centric, the library resources are then having best use and the users will be very satisfied.

The Role of Social Media in Enhancing User-Centric Library Services

Social media platforms provide libraries with new ways to deliver and enhance user-centric services. Here's how they can be effectively utilized:

1. Personalized Assistance / Reference Service:

- **Real-Time Queries:** Libraries can use platforms like Twitter and Facebook to offer real-time responses to user queries. This allows users to get immediate assistance with research questions or access issues.
- **Chatbots and Automated Responses:** Libraries can implement chatbots on platforms like Facebook Messenger to provide 24/7 support for common queries and guide users to relevant resources.

Example: The **University of Delhi Library** uses 'X' to respond to student questions about library resources and services, providing personalized help and guidance.

2. Enhanced Accessibility

- **Virtual Tours and Tutorials:** Libraries can create and share virtual tours of their facilities and online tutorials for using their resources. This helps users who cannot visit in person to access library services remotely.
- **Inclusive Content:** Social media allows libraries to post content in multiple formats, including text, video, and audio, making it accessible to users with different needs.

Example: The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Library in Bombay** offers video tutorials and virtual tours on YouTube, making their resources more accessible to a broader audience.

3. Engagement and Interaction

- **Interactive Content:** Libraries can engage users through interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and live Q&A sessions on platforms like Instagram and Facebook.
- **Event Promotion:** Social media is an effective tool for promoting library events, workshops, and book clubs, encouraging user participation and interaction.

Example: The **National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR)** uses Facebook Live to host interactive sessions with researchers and experts, fostering user engagement.

4. Feedback and Improvement

- **Surveys and Polls:** Libraries can use social media to conduct surveys and polls to gather feedback from users about library services and programs.
- **Monitoring User Sentiment:** By tracking mentions and comments on social media, libraries can monitor user sentiment and address any issues or concerns promptly.

Example: The **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Library** uses Facebook polls to gather user feedback on new services and resource needs, allowing them to make data-driven improvements.

5. Educational Support

- **Resource Sharing:** Libraries can share educational content, such as research tips, reading lists, and information literacy guides, on social media to support user learning.
- **Online Workshops:** Social media platforms can be used to promote and conduct online workshops and training sessions on various research and information skills.

Example: The **Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) Library** shares research tips and educational resources on Instagram, helping users enhance their research skills and knowledge.

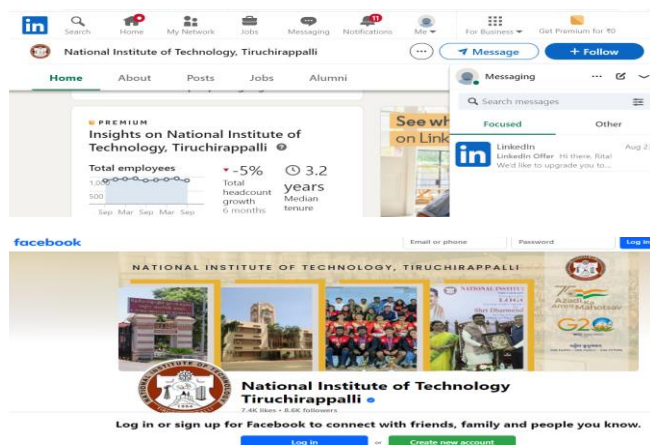
Impact on User-Centric Services

The integration of social media into library services has led to several positive outcomes:

- **Increased Accessibility:** Users can access information and updates from libraries anytime and anywhere, making services more accessible.
- **Enhanced Engagement:** Social media facilitates two-way communication, allowing libraries to receive feedback and engage in meaningful interactions with users.
- **Improved Visibility:** Libraries gain greater visibility through social media, attracting more users and showcasing their services and resources effectively.

3. National Institute of Technology (NIT) Tiruchirappalli

- Approach: NIT Tiruchirappalli utilizes Facebook and Instagram to host educational webinars and tutorials. They also promote their new resources and library services through engaging posts.
- Outcome: Enhanced user engagement and better utilization of library resources, with positive feedback from students and researchers.



4. National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Library

- Approach: To help users keep up-to-date, NCBI produces the online NCBI News and offers RSS feeds and mailing lists, along with a presence on Facebook, 'X' and YouTube.
- Outcome: Increased direct interaction of users with the library and its services and keeping them updated about the new activities taking place in the institution through social media



Case Studies

1. Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) Library

- Approach: IPC Library uses Facebook, WhatsApp and email services to update users with the latest information and provide various alerting and reference services. They also conduct surveys using google form to know users need.
- Outcome: Saved the user's time as they get the latest information on their related subject areas via email and Facebook. Users stay updated on library activities and new information.



2. Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Library

- Approach: IISc leverages 'X' to share updates on new research publications, library events, and workshops. They also conduct surveys and polls to understand user preferences.
- Outcome: Increased interaction and feedback from the academic community, allowing the library to tailor its services more effectively.



Conclusion

Social media is revolutionizing library services in India, especially in scientific libraries. By leveraging social media platforms, libraries can offer more user-centric services, enhance engagement, and improve accessibility. The Examples of some Institutions and Case Studies of Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Library, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Tiruchirappalli, and National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Library highlight how libraries can effectively use social media to meet the needs of their users and adapt to the digital age. The shift towards

user-centric library services is having a transformative effect on libraries. By enhancing user engagement, improving resource access, increasing collaboration, and fostering innovation, these services are redefining the role of libraries in the research ecosystem. The findings highlight the growing importance of user-centric strategies in advancing scientific inquiry and supporting the research community.

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