WCES 2014

Assessing Information Needs and Interaction Needs for Library Facebook

Lih-Juan ChanLin[a], Yu-Ren Su[b] *

[a]*Department of Library & Information Science, Fu Jen Catholic University, Xinzhuang Dist., NewTaipei City 24205, Taiwan (R.O.C.)*
[b]*Department of Library & Information Science, Fu Jen Catholic University, Xinzhuang Dist., NewTaipei City 24205, Taiwan (R.O.C.)*

Abstract

In this study, students' information needs and interaction needs regarding library Facebook were studied. Questionnaires were distributed to library users. Results of the study reveal that among various information needs for using library Facebook. "Announcement and promotion of new books" is rated as the highest information need, and "Sharing of new books" is rated as the highest interaction need (16 items). Correlation analyses indicate that users' use of Facebook functions significantly correlated with the information needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.223$, $p = 0.000$) and the interaction need of library Facebook ($r = 0.223$, $p = 0.000$); information need of library Facebook significantly correlated with interaction need of library Facebook ($r = 0.637$, $p = 0.000$).

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of WCES 2014

Keywords: social media, social network, information need, library, Facebook

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, online social network technologies have continued to grow exponentially. The use various social networking platforms have become an integral part of people's daily life, and many service providers have sought to monetize their products (Chan, 2012). Online marketing is one area where much effort has been made, and many commercial enterprises have found success in using social networks to promote their brands. As the most popular social networking site in the world, Facebook has made a great impact on communication.

*Yu-Ren Su. Tel.: +886-2-2905-6387.
E-mail address: lawrence113218@gmail.com

Facebook users include individuals and institutions which recognize its value in promoting their activities or products. Librarians are also becoming interested in the potential benefits of using social networking tools to communicate, collaborate and converse with their customers (Neo & Calvert, 2011). In recent years, many libraries have used Facebook as a means to provide information and to communicate with readers (Grgic & Mucnjak, 2012). Previous literature has discussed and analyzed the use of Facebook in academic libraries for a variety of outreach and marketing activities (Calvi, Cassela & Nuijten, 2010; Chan, 2012; Grgic & Mucnjak, 2012). However, it may be essential to consider whether the use of Facebook meets its intended purposes (Jabcoson, 2011). In this study, students' information needs and interaction needs toward library Facebook were studied.

2. Method

The Fu-Jen Catholic University (FJU) Library is a student-centered research institution, with more than 25,000 students. The University Library has developed several technology-driven initiatives to facilitate communication and learning among students and faculty members. In September 2011, FJU library began using a social networking platform, Facebook, to communicate with readers. Since the vast majority of students (as well as many librarians) were active users of Facebook, it appeared to be a natural opportunity to reach and communicate with students. The library had two major goals for the sites: (1) to provide information for the promotion of library resources and services; and (2) to provide interaction between library and users. This study explores the users' need for library Facebook , since there is a lack of research studies in this area. Students' information needs and interaction needs toward library Facebook were studied. A set of questionnaire items using a 1-5 point Likert scale was responded among users of the Fu-Jen Catholic University Library, and data from 567 library users were gathered.

3. Result

Within the 567 responses gathered, the library users included undergraduate and graduate students, teaching and administrative staff, alumni and off-campus residents, including 155 males (27%) and 412 females (73%). The results of the study reveal that library patrons use the functions of Facebook, and following the functions of Facebook, the most commonly used function is "Like". The results of the study reveal that among various information needs for using library Facebook, "Announcement and promotion of new books" is rated as the highest information need, and "Sharing of new books" is rated as highest interaction need. Table 1-3 summarizes the research findings. Table 4 indicates that patrons' use of Facebook functions is significantly correlated with the information needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.223$, $p = 0.000$) and interaction needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.223$, $p = 0.000$); while the information needs of library Facebook are significantly correlated with the interaction needs of library Facebook ($r = 0.637$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 1. Use the functions of Facebook (FB)

Item	Level of frequent (N) Very infrequent ←→Very frequent					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Like	9	21	101	178	258	4.16	0.950
Messages	8	21	98	224	216	4.09	0.907
Groups	16	24	87	240	200	4.03	0.964
News feed	19	23	110	235	180	3.94	0.987
Photos	17	57	151	222	120	3.65	1.016
Chat room	41	51	130	192	153	3.64	1.177
Share	44	87	175	180	81	3.29	1.126
Activities	39	109	226	142	51	3.10	1.031
Films	48	119	215	137	48	3.03	1.063
Games	212	126	99	94	36	2.32	1.297