



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

The Journal of Academic Librarianship



Australian Academic Librarians' Perceptions of Effective Web 2.0 Tools Used to Market Services and Resources

Zhixian Yi *

School of Information Studies, Faculty of Education, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag 588, Boorooma Street, Wagga Wagga, NSW 2678, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 January 2014

Accepted 28 February 2014

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Academic librarian

Perceptions

Effective Web 2.0 tools

Marketing services and resources

ABSTRACT

This study examines how Australian academic librarians perceive effective Web 2.0 tools used to market library services and resources and the factors influencing perceptions of the Web 2.0 tools used. An online survey was sent to 400 academic librarians in 37 Australian universities. The response rate was 57.5%. The qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. The collected quantitative and qualitative data were analysed using descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (ordinal regressions). The key findings show that demographics, human capital and library variables play an important and significant role in predicting librarians' perceptions of effective Web 2.0 tools used to market services and resources. This paper provides a better understanding of academic librarians' attitudes, views as well as effective Web 2.0 tools used to market their services and resources. Librarians can use the results to reflect on the effectiveness of the Web 2.0 tools used, to balance the weight of the factors' influences and to better understand various effective Web 2.0 tools to enable them to market academic library services and resources more effectively in the future.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid developments of computer technology and information technologies, change is constant in libraries, archives, museums and other information agencies. The current and important technological changes affecting information organisations' operations, services and resources include mobile applications, "cloud computing, augmented and virtual reality, discovery tools, open content, open source software, and new social networking tools" (ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee, 2010, p. 287).

New and evolving technologies are being applied in a variety of areas in modern society. Undoubtedly, an information organisation will be one of the first organisations using these new technologies. Currently, there is an increase in the creation and publication of non-print materials, with online and electronic materials becoming more common. Digitisation in libraries, archives and other information agencies is a new trend. Information technologies, especially Web 2.0, have provided more options for people to access information.

The proliferation of information comes to the average person via the rapid developments of information technologies and an abundance of information tools and sources. Web 2.0 technologies facilitate access to information in new ways. Thus, as information seekers keep pace with the rapid change in technology and embrace its offerings, their new information needs are increasing. Web 2.0 has had a significant

impact on the operations of information agencies', services and resources, as well as the work of information professionals.

Web 2.0 is a term that was first documented by Tim O'Reilly (2005) on his website. O'Reilly (2005) mentioned that Web 2.0 principles include "the web as platform" and "harnessing collective intelligence". To elaborate, Web 2.0 refers to a basic change from the static and non-interactive websites to the dynamically generated, more sophisticated and more user friendly websites through a greater range of software applications. These include blogs, wikis and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace and Twitter) that enable users to interact with the web and allow sharing and collaboration with others. This fundamental change in the web was so great and significant that it became known as Web 2.0 and its influence on libraries, archives, museums and other information agencies is far reaching.

To keep pace with evolving information technologies, librarians use a group of software applications including blogs, wikis and podcasting, media-sharing tools such as YouTube and Flickr, and social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook (Hinchliffe & Leon, 2011; Moulaison & Corrado, 2011) to market their services and resources with mixed success. Xia (2009) examined how librarians marketed their libraries and services using Facebook in research universities. However, it was not conclusive about which Web 2.0 tool was more effective than any other Web 2.0 tool in marketing services and resources.

Currently, Web 3.0, Web 4.0 and Web 5.0 are being talked about. However, for millions of people worldwide, Web 2.0 has become commonplace in their daily lives. Effective Web 2.0 tools used to market services and resources are the foci of this study which examines how

* Tel.: +61 2 69332416.

E-mail address: gyi@csu.edu.au.

Australian academic librarians perceived effective Web 2.0 tools used to market their services and resources and the factors influencing their perceptions of the particular tools used.

The value of this study exists in the provision of a better understanding of academic librarians' attitudes and views and the effective Web 2.0 tools used to market their services and resources. Librarians may use the results to reflect on the effectiveness of these Web 2.0 tools, to balance the weight of the factors' influences and to better understand various effective Web 2.0 tools. This will enable them to market academic library services and resources more effectively in the future. The research findings are relevant for librarians who would like to better understand and explore the phenomenon of library tweets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Web 2.0 technologies have been readily adopted by information organisations. With the enormous popularity of Web 2.0's platforms, libraries, archives, museums and other information agencies have embraced them as a method of promoting themselves and marketing services and resources for their clients.

Searches conducted in library and information science and related databases show the rising number of publications regarding libraries and their increasing use of Web 2.0 tools. However given this rise in availability, the number of scholarly articles relating to the use of Web 2.0 tools in any sector for marketing services and resources is not high. Some studies have been conducted to investigate the application of Web 2.0 tools in university libraries (Kim & Abbas, 2010; Nguyen, 2008; Tripathi & Kumar, 2010; Xu, Ouyang, & Chu, 2009) however the focus has been on their use as enhancements to library services, rather than a means for specifically marketing services and resources. Khan and Bhatti (2012) conducted a study which explored the usefulness of social media as a marketing tool in university libraries. The study had positive survey feedback, however the focus was on the perceived usefulness of social media for marketing rather than direct examples of application. Yet another study on usage of Web 2.0 tools in university libraries explored the extent to which university librarians used (or were willing to use) these applications in the library (Baro, Ebiagbe, & Godfrey, 2013).

What a large amount of the literature does agree on is that use of Web 2.0 tools is about the interaction, it is about users being contributors to the library they are part of, thereby fostering trust, encouraging participation, building relationships and therefore higher usage (Aharony, 2010; Breeding, 2009; Burkhardt, 2010; Farkis, 2007; Hendrix, Chiarella, Hasman, Murphy, & Zafron, 2009; Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009).

Marketing and promotion has always been of prime importance, with libraries rapidly recognising that doing this well will increase their prominence to users. Over the years, the methods for marketing have evolved and changed, moving from the linear style of print materials, to incorporating more of the fluid and multilateral approach of social media. The move to this approach is highlighted by several authors who say that social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, are now the new generation of word of mouth marketing (Landis, 2007; Mack, Behler, Roberts, & Rimland, 2007; Park, 2010). Ismail (2010), cautions on ensuring student preferences are determined first, rather than assuming the move to using Web 2.0 is guaranteed to work. Studies reinforcing the importance of this have been conducted previously, such as those by Granfield and Robertson (2008) and Naylor, Stoffel, and Van Der Laan (2008). However, although Ismail's, 2010 article outlines surprising results in relation to the preference of social media use for library interaction by students, the focus of the article is mainly on research assistance, as opposed to the more primary approach of marketing via Web 2.0 tools.

Wikis and blogs, as well as social networking and information sharing sites such as Facebook, Flickr and YouTube create new types of content. Information professionals utilise tools such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), tagging and bookmarking as a means of promotion.

Using instant messaging services, information professionals and clients are able to communicate instantaneously on the web.

Nowadays, individuals and organisations using blogs is commonplace. The blog is a powerful tool in communicating timely information and an important component as an outreach tool of libraries, archives, museums and other information agencies. The Web provides the platform for blogs, such as Blogspot (www.blogspot.com) or Wordpress (www.wordpress.com), which can be utilised for promotion and publicity of services and new resources and for the introduction of new acquisitions and subscriptions.

Blogs encourage user interaction through their comments feature, which allows users to provide feedback regarding the information. Information professionals can post news and events occurring in their organisations. Blogs allow for the provision of easy-to-update information for users, while also encouraging patrons to comment and interact on the information by inviting client feedback.

A favourite networking site for people of all ages to keep in touch is Facebook. Facebook's own definition is as "a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and co-workers" (Facebook, 2013). As at March 2013, Facebook had 1.11 billion active users. By its very nature, Facebook is an effective means for marketing to users, with claims as early as 2007 that libraries cannot ignore this growing trend in their younger users (Breeding, 2007, p. 30). Breeding (2007) maintains that Facebook's constant changes, even in its early days, provides continual interest to users, constantly strengthening engagement, something further that information professionals need to consider. Landis (2007) and Farkis (2007) explain this further, saying that using Facebook can be an effective way to market events and resources to non-traditional users, making the library more visible and potentially removing barriers.

Information organisations are now developing applications to assist clients in using services and resources and creating groups on Facebook that can be kept up to date with the services and resources offered. A broad study by Hendrix et al. (2009) on the use of Facebook by over 70 librarians found that most libraries used the social networking site to predominantly market their services. Xia (2009) conducted a narrower study, whose prime focus was on using Facebook Groups to market services in academic libraries. He found that regular and consistent use of the group, for example notifying members of new services and resources, maintained a positive connection between the library and its users, in a more casual manner than traditional means. A further study by Garcia-Milian, Norton, and Tennant (2012) suggests that the more likes a library's Facebook page has, the greater the potential for engagement with users via this medium.

Flickr is a photo sharing website which allows users to store, sort, search and post photographs and to create discussion groups. Besides posting materials for promotion purposes, information professionals can post photos of the organisation and staff to provide a virtual tour of their agency. They can also use Flickr as a potential source for acquisitions—local history collections can find Flickr a rich resource from which they may acquire (after agreement with the owners of the material) significant collection material.

Instant messaging systems enable instant communication between staff and clients with by using text message, voice over IP (VoIP) or video conferencing. This technology is employed to provide chat services and provide synchronous or real-time online communication between information professionals and users (such as in a reference situation). It allows co-browsing and file sharing of materials. In addition, the conversations between users and information professionals can be recorded as text.

Twitter is social networking tool that is becoming increasingly popular, namely due to its ability to showcase interesting events, features or news in 140 characters or less. Because of this, users are required to make their tweet much more meaningful in order to capture relevant information. In turn, readers do not need to read lengthy posts to ascertain what is being said.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6842308>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6842308>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)