Research Article

Enhancing Library Engagement and Awareness Through Social Media Platforms

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	With changing library functions in this era of digitisation, social media platforms facilitate outreach and engagement of users at educational institutes. The present study investigates the utilisation of social media for marketing library and information services within academic libraries. It examines the extent to which these platforms have been integrated into library practices, evaluates the perceptions of both librarians and users regarding their effectiveness, and identifies key challenges impeding successful implementation. These challenges include insufficient training for library professionals, lack of strategic planning, and limited institutional support for sustained social media engagement. Using mixed-method approaches that include surveys, interviews, and social media analytics, the study elicits the outcomes of the success of the social media campaigns. It provides recommendations for enhancing engagement as well as helping overcome challenges. The study reveals that although academic libraries have launched social media tools, there is enormous potential to improve engagement and institutional support for more effective outreach. **Keywords:** library engagement, Social media.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The rapidly changing role of libraries in the digital world entails a fast-changing challenge of maintaining relevance in a highly connected and dynamic environment. For students, faculty, and librarians, digital transformation is a rapidly developing sector. Academic libraries have shifted to working more cooperatively with users in collaboration with a shifting technology services landscape (Deja et al., 2021). Libraries are no longer just physical depositories of knowledge but are more proactive in gaining the user's engagement through various digital channels. With a reach of hundreds of millions of people and interactive functions, social media has become an essential tool for libraries to promote their resources and services in an effective manner (Stellefson et al., 2020). The use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have been accessible tools to academic institutions in reaching all possible users, rapidly informing the target users, and increasing the visibility of library services as a whole (Maresova et al., 2020). Academic libraries are essential to the institutions' operations and offer access to various information resources. Over the past few years, academic libraries have begun using social media to promote their services to reach more users (Winata et al., 2021). This study examines to what extent academic libraries utilise different mediums of social media for promoting their resources and services and assesses the perception of librarians and users towards such strategies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Most of the studies on the use of social media in academic libraries are either based on the experiences of institutions in the West or general reviews on the potentiality of social media for library marketing. While these studies paint broad trends and benefits, they hardly reveal how such focused, technologically-groomed users come to academic institutes to tap these services. Furthermore, academic libraries have issues like resources, institutional support, and digital infrastructure, which have not been adequately examined. This research fills such gaps by focusing on academic libraries, providing a comprehensive study of their social media efforts and librarian and user perceptions. This focused approach gives new insights into how social media might be effectively used in an academic environment that values technological innovation and user involvement.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aims of this research are as follows:

● To determine the most used social media sites to promote library services and resources.

● To investigate the perceptions of librarians regarding the relevance and effectiveness of social media tools in promoting library services.

- To identify the challenges and barriers librarians face in implementing social media strategy for marketing.

- To suggest how social media tools can better engage libraries with audiences for resource access.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve this end, the study answers the following research questions:

1.   What are the most used social media sites to promote library services and resources?

2.   What is the perception of librarians and users of the effectiveness of social media in library resource promotion?

3.   What are libraries' most significant challenges and limitations while using social media for marketing?

4.   How do libraries strengthen their social media strategy to enhance user engagement and library visibility?

1.5 Significance of the Study:

The relevance of the research lies in the ability it possesses to highlight actionable insights on using social media as an academic library marketing tool within an institute. As technology and user behaviours keep evolving, libraries must adjust to new communication methods to stay relevant. Social media provides an inexpensive and far-reaching platform that libraries can use to reach and advertise their resources and services to the younger, more tech-savvy audiences with whom they are used to interact digitally (Anwar, M., & Zhiwei, T., 2019). By understanding how social media may be integrated in the best possible way into library marketing plans, academic institutes can enhance the visibility of their information services, increase user engagement, and allow resources at the right time. Thus, this research aims to shed light on the difficulties librarians have, in particular when attempting to access technology resources, such as Insufficient funding and training and insufficient institutional support. Studies have demonstrated how to overcome these obstacles (AlAwadhi & Al-Daihani, 2019).

1.6 Scope of the Study

In the given context, the focus would be on social media usage for marketing library and information services within the selected universities of North India. The NIRF ranking of these universities is shown in the Table:1

Table 1: NIRF Rankings 2023: University

Name of the University- Place	Score	Rank
Punjab University, Chandigarh	54.86	25
Punjabi University, Patiala	-	-
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	50.19	48

Source: https://www.nirfindia.org/Rankings/2023/UniversityRanking.html

Social media is used on university websites to provide information services. Promoting library events and services on social media platforms can help university libraries improve their services.

Table 2: Social media Platforms used by the University

Name of the University	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Instagram
Punjab University, Chandigarh	✓	✓			✓
Punjabi University, Patiala	✓	✓			
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar		✓			✓

Source: University websites

Research indicates that most universities use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as shown in Table 2. The library's services are now much more visible, thanks to social media usage. There is still more to be done to promote user engagement and connection. This means elaborating on the scope of the social media tools used, the perceptions of librarians and users, and the practical difficulties of implementing the strategies. It does not encompass other digital marketing or information-dissemination strategies outside social media's purview, such as email marketing or

website-based services. However, it will go into great depth on how social media might help libraries in the educational ecosystem provide better services (Rachman & Putri, 2018).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media in Libraries Introduction.

Academic libraries have drastically changed from the actual setup as a repository of books in physical form to the modern digital platforms of today (Singha, A., & Das, R. K., 2021). The innate desire of humans for expression, communication, and sharing has given rise to various platforms and media. Many libraries create social media profiles to promote their services and engage with potential patrons, especially young people (Jones, M. J., & Harvey, M., 2019). Users now have equal access to the Internet thanks to its expanding prevalence, accessibility through various portable devices, and readily available collaboration platforms. The innate desire of humans for expression, communication, and sharing has given rise to various platforms and media. Users now have equal access to the Internet thanks to its expanding prevalence, accessibility through various portable devices, and readily available collaboration platforms. (Agarwal, S., Mondal, A., & Nath, A., 2011). Today, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have become valuable resources for libraries to reach more users, update things in real-time, and eventually deliver more customised experiences to the users' access. Academic libraries can accomplish their goals, especially in terms of infrastructure and services, thanks to the growing nature of social media. Furthermore, social media has become essential for academic librarians' marketing, collaboration, and communication. (Magoi et al., 2019). The services provided by academic libraries have changed significantly since the advent of ICT. In order to fulfil the changing demands of students, professors, and researchers, managing academic library services in the digital era necessitates a strategic approach that integrates technology, user involvement, and adaptability (Akinola, 2022). These libraries regard social media as an additional promotional outlet for increased engagement and community building. A social media community-building model is presented and examined by academic librarians. The results show how crucial strategy and social media interaction are for building new relationships with library users (Young & Rossmann, 2015).

One of the key challenges libraries encounter is aligning their social media strategies with evolving user expectations. In the second decade of the 21st century, libraries particularly academic libraries face mounting pressures to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of their patrons. Users increasingly demand fast, user-friendly, and uninterrupted access to information, alongside flexible, collaborative spaces for individual and group work (Seal, 2015). Therefore, effective social media marketing in libraries necessitates adopting relevant platforms and developing a coherent strategy that fosters engagement, facilitates interaction, and delivers personalised services tailored to user preferences.

2.2 International Social Media Patterns for Marketing the Library.

Recent research studies reveal that world libraries, particularly North American, European, and Asian libraries, take great advantage of using social media. According to a study, the top 100 university libraries in the US have an overwhelming amount of Web 2.0 applications implemented and used. SNS is the most often used Web 2.0 tool, as evidenced by social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter in all 100 academic libraries under investigation. Higher education is now under more pressure than ever, and university competitiveness has intensified as a result of globalisation. Higher education institutions have responded by beginning to view their internet presence as a possible competitive advantage (Maresova et al., 2020).

In order to promote and provide improved library services, these academic libraries are creating plans for maximising the potential of social media and identifying the distinctive features of various apps. (Boateng & Quan, 2014). This study attempts to assess the efficacy of using social media as a platform for marketing using a survey on the University of Hong Kong Libraries' (HKUL) Facebook page. Nowadays, libraries have been increasingly emphasising marketing to meet the demands of their users and make library-user interactions easier. In the Internet era, social media appears to be a relatively "simple" tool that librarians can use to advertise their collections and services (Cheng et al., 2020). In European countries, libraries use social media like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to notify users of new resources, promote library events, or enhance user engagement. According to this assessment, social media is becoming a valuable auxiliary resource for academic libraries in developing nations. It is used for social media sharing, communication with library patrons, professional and self-development of librarians, library services marketing and promotion, and social engagement. Social media has allowed academic libraries to communicate with the public, discuss information sharing, and enhance library services (Magoi et al., 2019). Additionally, Chinese and Korean academic libraries actively use social media, such as WeChat and KakaoTalk, to reach technological users. As per the statistics, almost one-third of the libraries advertise their collections and services on WeChat, utilising this marketing strategy. The majority of the 39 libraries in China still utilise the most basic features. The primary applications of WeChat include generic social networking services (SNSs) and automated features for interaction and information retrieval, such as user self-service, keyword-identified reference auto-responders, and information sharing (Xu et al., 2015). The study examines how academic libraries in Kuwait use social media to offer services and

resources. Academic libraries generate, deliver, and share information resources and services with users using social media as a leverage tool. Using social media marketing, academic libraries can create networks where people can interact and share information requirements. It may also raise users' knowledge of academic libraries and the resources, services, events, activities, and recent additions to the institution. (AlAwadhi & Al-Daihani, 2019). While using social media as a communication tool, academic libraries act as institutions rather than individuals. Sentences should always be formal and well-mannered when posting messages. Their primary goals are developing user interaction, service and product marketing, and usability. Important content and audiences are connected through social media. Any posts that are worthwhile and beneficial to the library's customers are used. However, there may be differences in services amongst libraries. A good example of how other libraries might use social media as a platform for marketing and outreach is the Binghamton University Library (Sahu & Naik, 2019). Dwumah et al. (2023) conducted a study exploring how international students utilize social media during their academic journey in Chinese universities. The research emphasizes social media's role in facilitating knowledge sharing, fostering interpersonal interaction, and providing entertainment. The findings highlight how these platforms support both academic engagement and social integration, ultimately enhancing the overall student experience in a foreign educational environment.

2.3 Social Media Adoption by Academic Libraries: A Study on India

In India, social media can take many forms, including instant messaging, blogs, vlogs, and online groups. Because of its enormous user base, Facebook looked to be a significant social media platform and came out on top. Due to social media's explosive growth, educational institutions have many opportunities to further their research and instruction (Rao et al., 2019). Even though Indian libraries have now begun to explore the prospects of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the usage in general, more so for marketing purposes, a study conducted on Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women Library's Facebook page. The results provide more credence to the idea that social networking services, like Facebook, may effectively engage users at a low cost, regardless of the size of the academic library. Additionally, it was discovered that Facebook collaboration and communication worked significantly better than more conventional methods (Giri et al., 2014). Social media usage by Indian academic libraries is still relatively low compared to the international standard. The use of social media in libraries is not a recent development; it has been popular for over ten years. Globally, academic libraries are adopting social media platforms to connect with their patrons and advertise their goods and services. According to the report, the vast majority of academic libraries do not make use of social media. Nonetheless, their parent organisations utilise a few social media platforms, including Ask a Librarian, Facebook, Twitter, and RSS feeds. The report also shows that many libraries use email services, followed by blogs and YouTube services (Shah & Khan, 2019). According to the empirical inquiry, the use and utility of social media in transmitting resource materials, collaborative learning, and engagement with colleagues and professors would assist students in becoming more enthusiastic and dynamic. This study offers guidance to corporate stakeholders in developing strategies related to social media use for collaborative learning (Ansari & Khan, 2020).

3. RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In the current digital era, social networking sites have become an integral part of daily life, particularly among youth. The pressure to maintain an active and appealing online presence has grown significantly, influencing perceptions of social identity and visibility. Parlak and Başkale (2023) observed that the increased duration of daily social media usage among students correlates with a higher incidence of social media addiction, as illustrated in Figure 1. This growing dependency highlights the psychological and behavioural impacts of excessive social media engagement on young users.

During the past ten years, social media use has increased, and naturally, so has the amount of time people spend online. In the United States, adults use digital media—which includes websites and apps that can be accessed on smartphones, tablets, PCs, and other connected devices like game consoles for almost six hours per day. As shown in Fig, nearly all of this rise has been fueled by more time spent on smartphones and tablets. With the rise of social media (Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, 2019), how many hours do adults spend daily on social media?

As mentioned in Table 3. the most recent data available for 2024, Facebook is the most popular and extensively utilised social networking platform globally. With 3.06 billion monthly active users, Facebook is used by 37% of global users at least once a month.
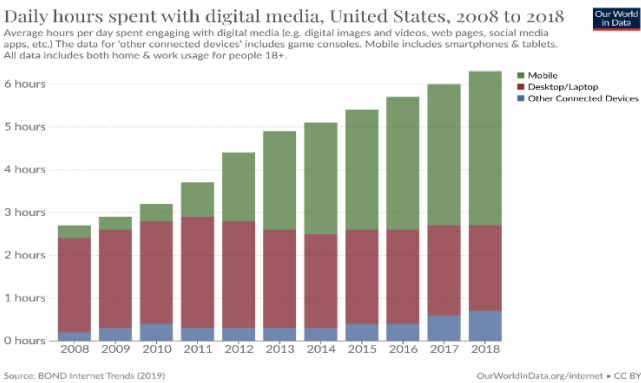
**Figure 1: Daily hours spent with digital media**

YouTube is the second most popular social network, with 2.7 billion users. Today's top five social media platforms have more than 2 billion active users.

Table 3: Top five Social media platforms

Ranking	Social Media Network	Monthly Active Users
1	Facebook	3.06 Billion
2	Youtube	2.70 Billion
3	Whatsapp	2.40 Billion
4	Instagram	2.35 Billion
5	TikTok	1.67 Billion

Source: https://explodingtopics.com/blog/top-social-media-platforms

As per Figure 2, the Most used social media platform and tool is Facebook, the world's largest social network, with more than 3.03 billion monthly active users (as of 2024).
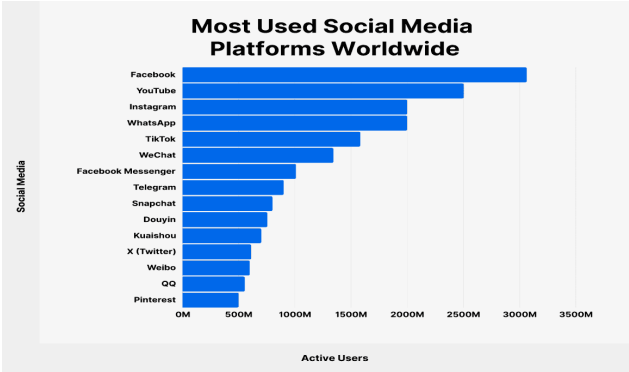
Source: Statista   **Figure 2: Most used social media platforms worldwide**

As illustrated in Figure 3, India has the highest number of Facebook users globally. The platform enables individuals to create personal profiles, connect with others by adding them as friends, and share content through status updates and messages. Organisations and brands also utilise Facebook by creating official pages, which users can engage with by liking and following them. X (formerly Twitter) functions as a micro-blogging and social networking service where individuals and groups share brief updates (limited to 280 characters), facilitating real-time communication. Instagram, a widely used photo and video-sharing platform, offers users the ability to enhance content with filters, frames, and effects before disseminating it across various networks. LinkedIn serves as a professional networking site that fosters the exchange of information and ideas among individuals within similar fields. YouTube and Vimeo are prominent platforms for hosting, sharing, and viewing videos, while blogs provide a digital space for in-depth, informal discussions and commentary on targeted topics.
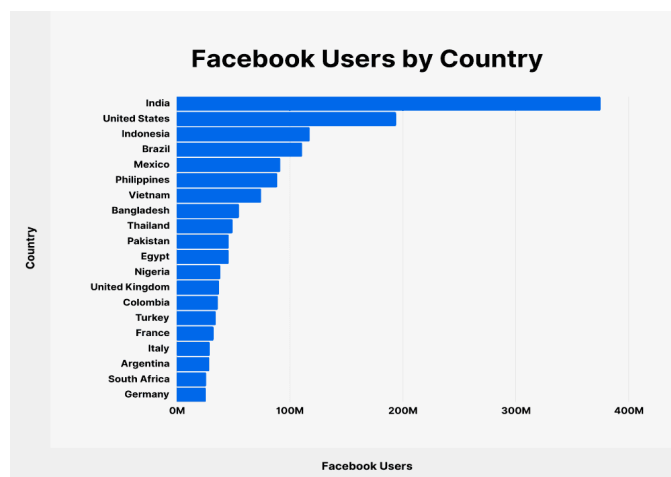
**Source:** statista   **Fig 3. Facebook Users by country**

This paper will discuss how academic libraries could enhance their use of digital communication tools to reach the target audience and to promote library resources.   According to the most recent trends in youth participation with social media platforms, spending the majority of their time watching videos, chatting with family and friends, sharing photographs, and so on, Facebook is one of the most popular platforms for marketers; everyone wants to engage these users for the benefit of the institution. That is why librarians should continue to focus on these platforms in order to engage users to enhance library services; this will help the user while also increasing the research output of the institute.

CHALLENGES IN THE ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS BY LIBRARIES

Since social media has had a significant and widespread impact on modern life, it offers libraries a variety of options for service delivery beyond traditional methods. Because of the incredible growth in services provided via the internet, libraries and information centres need to adapt and function more effectively to meet contemporary users' information needs. Many researchers have concluded that the biggest obstacles faced by academic libraries are related to social media applications. There are specific difficulties associated with using social media in academic libraries. These difficulties include the need for librarians to receive the necessary training and skill development to use social media platforms effectively, worries about data security and privacy, information overload brought on by the abundance of available content, and the requirement for methods to assess the results and impact of social media initiatives (Okeke & Asifor, 2023). Many libraries also suffer from unclear social media policy issues, which lead to confused engagement efforts. This study focuses on the policies and goals that must be set when university libraries use social media efficiently (Aras, 2014). Another critical challenge is digital literacy because, generally, librarians do not have any professional training in managing and communicating attractive content using social media. Digital literacy would improve information retrieval and dissemination skills, proficiency in integrating new technologies into library operations, and efficiency in the supply of information materials. The survey found a plethora of areas in which ICT training was required. The survey also discovered that a number of problems prevented university library staff from receiving ICT training (Anene & Oweipere, 2021). With such kinds of challenges, some libraries also face infrastructural barriers, such as a shortage of reliable internet infrastructure and outdated hardware, especially in developing countries. These issues require a multi-dimensional strategy: increased capacity-building programs and institutional support. A study reveals that the main barriers to online university services were inadequate finance, erratic power supplies, and inadequate telecommunications infrastructures. It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of electronic infrastructures, identify gaps in the services offered to users, and offer recommendations for improvement (Asogwa et al., 2015). There may also be institutional hurdles, such as a lack of support or recognition of the value of social media in promoting library services. In some academic environments, a traditional attitude favours traditional communication and promotion techniques, resulting in resistance to embracing more modern marketing strategies. To overcome this institutional inertia, librarians must advocate for the value of social media in reaching more significant and varied audiences, particularly in today's digital age. Addressing these problems necessitates professional development, institutional support, and effective impact assessment tools, all required for librarians to execute and sustain successful social media marketing strategies for library services.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS INCREASE USER ENGAGEMENT

The perception of librarians and users regarding the effectiveness of social media in promoting library resources reflects both opportunities and challenges. Librarians generally acknowledge that social media platforms provide a powerful avenue for reaching a broader audience, particularly students and faculty active on digital platforms. Through social media, libraries can quickly disseminate information about new resources, upcoming events, and research tools, making them more visible and accessible to users. This real-time interaction enhances user engagement and fosters a sense of connection between the library and its community. Additionally, users often find social media a convenient medium for discovering library services, primarily through visual, concise, and easily shareable content, such as videos and infographics. These formats are particularly effective in catching users' attention and encouraging participation. Furthermore, consumers frequently find social media to be an effective medium for discovering library services, particularly through visual, brief, and easily shareable content such as films and infographics. These formats are incredibly successful at capturing users' attention and encouraging participation.

Source: https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics/#additional-resources
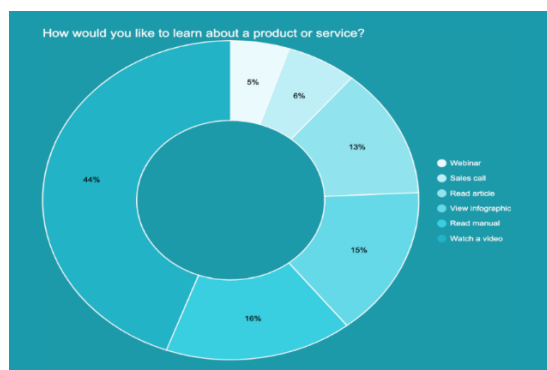
Fig.4 How would you learn about a product or service

As per Fig.4. The best way to learn about a new product or service, according to 44% of respondents, is through short videos. Librarians should use this information to develop their social media posting strategy. Both users and librarians are aware of these restrictions, even if social media is a valuable tool for promoting resources. Concerns regarding the sustainability of social media initiatives, especially with regard to sustaining regular, excellent material with little staff and funding, may be voiced by librarians. Moreover, some users may still favour more conventional means of connection with libraries, such as emails or in-person visits, especially those less tech-savvy. This implies that although social media is widely appealing, it might not completely replace conventional outreach methods and that the success of social media depends on the target audience.

ENGAGING USERS FOR RESOURCE ACCESS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA.

Librarians can use various social media sites to interact with users and promote library services. The following are a few of the best platforms:

Facebook: With features like posts, events, and groups, Facebook offers libraries a flexible way to interact with a broad audience. Librarians can post information about forthcoming workshops, new resources, and library events on Facebook. Because of the platform's interactive features, users may share posts, leave comments, and participate in discussions, promoting a feeling of community. Furthermore, real-time interaction during webinars or Q&A sessions is made possible by Facebook's live streaming feature, which improves user engagement with library services.

X(Twitter): Libraries can utilise Twitter as a helpful platform to convey brief updates, news about resources, or event reminders because it is perfect for rapid, real-time communication. Using hashtags, librarians can participate in scholarly discussions and raise awareness of library services among a specific audience. Because the platform promotes succinct messages, librarians can utilise it to interact with users by providing them with pertinent academic content, research assistance, or fast suggestions. The quick engagement characteristic of Twitter encourages prompt communication between users and libraries.

Instagram: Because Instagram is so visually appealing, libraries may use it to engage users with images and videos. Librarians can use Instagram to give study advice or infographics, advertise services, and highlight new books. You may make brief, interactive content like tutorials, live updates, or virtual library tours with features like Instagram Stories and IGTV. Through Instagram's visual storytelling capabilities, libraries may target a younger demographic and create more dynamic and captivating resource promotion.

LinkedIn: Libraries can interact with scholars, academics, and professionals on LinkedIn, a professional networking site. It works exceptionally well for sharing research resources, promoting scholarly content, and having professional

interactions with teachers or students. LinkedIn is a valuable tool for increasing the visibility of academic library services in a professional network since librarians may exchange publications, research advice, and updates on academic resources.

YouTube: Libraries can provide recorded webinars, resource demonstrations, and video tutorials on YouTube, which is a great medium for long-form educational content. With YouTube, librarians may make and distribute virtual library tours, teach users how to use digital databases and offer research advice. With its emphasis on video content, YouTube enables libraries to interact with users more thoroughly and visibly, facilitating the accessibility of difficult information.

Pinterest: Librarians can arrange and distribute visual materials on library resources, services, and study advice using Pinterest. Librarians may quickly find and store helpful information by curating reading lists, resource guides, and research advice on topical boards. Especially for academic resources that can be too much to handle in traditional formats, Pinterest's visual format encourages learning through pictures. It provides libraries with an innovative way to display content in an orderly and approachable fashion.

WhatsApp: With WhatsApp, libraries may interact with users directly and intimately via instant chat. Librarians can set up groups to instantly provide updates to teachers and students, resource links, and newsletters. WhatsApp offers a quick and effective way to communicate, making it especially helpful for reminding people about deadlines, resource availability, or forthcoming library activities. Because it is mobile-friendly, libraries may stay in touch with their patrons no matter where they are.

TikTok: Libraries may reach younger audiences fun and innovatively with TikTok's short-form video format. TikTok allows librarians to make short films that showcase new materials, provide study advice, or publicise library activities in an engaging and approachable manner. Libraries may more easily reach a wider audience thanks to the platform's algorithm-driven content discovery, which raises their profile among students who might not otherwise interact with traditional outreach methods.

Social media platforms give academic libraries various tools for interacting with patrons and advertising their services. Every platform has special qualities that can accommodate different library audience needs. While Instagram and YouTube offer visually stimulating settings for promoting resources through photographs and videos, Facebook and Twitter enable widespread, real-time contact and community participation. Pinterest aids in the creative organization and presentation of resources, while LinkedIn strengthens professional ties with academics and researchers. With WhatsApp, direct, personal engagement with users is possible, while younger audiences can be reached using TikTok's contemporary, entertaining strategy. Lastly, libraries may improve their visibility, boost user engagement, and offer their academic communities more easily accessible and user-friendly services by carefully utilising these platforms. By carefully utilising these media, librarians can improve user engagement, promote library resources, and establish a more dynamic and connected library environment.

CONCLUSION

In the evolving landscape of academic libraries, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for enhancing user engagement and promoting library services. This study revealed that while academic libraries in India, particularly in North India, have started integrating platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, their use of in-depth and strategic planning remains limited. Librarians and users alike acknowledge the potential of social media to expand the visibility and accessibility of library resources, foster real-time communication, and build vibrant user communities. However, challenges such as lack of digital literacy, inadequate training, insufficient institutional support, and infrastructural limitations continue to hinder the full utilisation of these tools. The findings suggest that libraries can significantly enhance their digital presence and service delivery with a targeted approach—including capacity-building for librarians, institutional investment in ICT infrastructure, development of formal social media strategies, and content creation tailored to user preferences. Platforms such as Facebook Live, Instagram Stories, and WhatsApp updates offer immense potential for creative engagement. At the same time, professional networks like LinkedIn and content-rich sites like YouTube can serve educational and scholarly communication goals. Ultimately, academic libraries must adopt a user-centric and adaptive digital communication strategy to remain relevant in a tech-driven educational environment. By embracing the strengths of each social media platform and aligning their outreach efforts with user behaviour and institutional goals, libraries can transition from traditional repositories to dynamic, interactive knowledge hubs.

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