

Social Media for Creative Libraries

By Phil Bradley

Facet Publishing

London

2015

256pp.

£49.95 (\$99.95)

ISBN: 978-1-85604-713-5 (Paperback)

Keywords Libraries, Innovation, Social media, Networking, Information centers, Management

Review DOI 10.1108/PROG-03-2016-0033

Affected by digital revolution, globalization, and economic changes, the wide-ranging developments and advancements in the world of many fields including librarianship whether scientifically or professionally are undeniable. In the twenty-first century where competition, change, challenge, funding declines, and economic pressures have been surrounding various individual, organizational, and social aspects of human's life, making the cosmos of information and knowledge via libraries, information centers, and other-related channels, a more accessible, welcoming, inspiring, surprising, empowering, and creative place seems to be much more difficult than before. One of the main preconditions of alleviating such a problem is innovative creative action. Undoubtedly, information organizations like libraries can play their roles more effectively as well as creatively provided that they crusade to bring about positive absorbing changes through a variety of services embracing new technologies with creative energy. Underscoring the huge effect of social media on the way that the world in general works and communicates, and indicating that "people are realizing that they have more power than ever before to create their own content, to share material with other people, to hold companies to account or indeed perhaps change the political structures of the country that they live in" (p. xii), the present book aims to concentrate on what activities information professionals carry out, and to see how these tools can assist them in those activities – how they can be done quicker, faster, cheaper, and more effectively. It consists of ten chapters. Chapter 1, "An introduction to social media" provides readers with an understanding about what social media is, its difference compared to what we have had in the past, and how it will change libraries. Due to the importance of the quality of the content disseminated on the internet, Chapter 2, "Authority checking" focuses on some notes and ways to check the authority and validity of such information with an emphasis on Facebook and Twitter. Chapter 3, "Guiding tools" introduces some tools (e.g., Symbaloo, Pearltrees, Google customized search engines, Delicious, Diigo, etc.) by which libraries can better manage the good information materials using new interesting ways. Chapter 4, "Current awareness and selective dissemination of information resources" attempts to present an applied response to the question "How do you keep up to date?" through tablet-based applications like "Zite" and "Flipboard," web-based curation tools such as "Scoop.it!," "Paper.li," "Learnist," and "Swayy," and News curation by e-mail like "Curate Me" and "News.me." For different reasons – teaching, communicating, promoting, marketing, displaying, informing, and providing – libraries need to make creatively use of presentation tools. To these ends, Chapter 5, "Presentation tools" examines some of these interesting tools including Knovio, Presentain, Office Mix, Participoll, Prezi,



Meograph, Timeglider, Powtoon, and so on. Chapter 6, “Teaching and training” looks at teaching users based on e-learning philosophy. Screencasting, screenshot, and interactive training via a variety of social media tools are presented. Highlighting that “we can’t expect people to come into the library any longer – we have to go out to them, and remember that ‘Outside the library is still the library’” (p. 85), Chapter 7, “Communication” deals with some types of communication and their respective tools (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, blogs, chat rooms, Wikis, and Google Docs). In response to the reality that “unfortunately, as a profession we are often accused (rightly so in my opinion) of keeping too quiet about what we do and the facilities that are available for our members and patrons” (p. 111), and as complementary to Chapters 7 and 8, “Marketing and promotion – the groundwork and 9, Marketing and promotion – the practicalities” theoretically and practically prepare libraries to enhance, market, as well as promote their services through coming out from behind the desks and serving much more intelligently. Like a feasibility study, the former covers some considerations and elements concerning the successful implementation of marketing and promotion practices. The latter demonstrates how libraries can creatively promote themselves using images, photographs, infographics, podcastings, videos, and augmented reality designed, manipulated, and disseminated by lots of different tools such as Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, etc. Taking a managerial approach, as closing part, Chapter 10, “Creating a social media policy” addresses why an organization needs a social media policy, defines social media, points out social media policies for specific tools, and considers some necessary remarks (the chain of command, dealing with criticism, do’s and don’ts, legal issues, and updating a written policy). And finally, in the form of an appendix entitled “Social media disasters” the author reminds that we should be wary of social media mistakes which in turn may be potentially harmful to our reputation. Structurally, the work is well-designed reinforced with good figures, cases, URLs, and above all, the knowledge and experience of Phil Bradley as an information specialist. Totally, this logically ordered and well-thought-out book that leans slightly toward the side of practice, emphasizing implementation and real-world practices, has a dynamic look to the importance, role, and utilization of social media tools as platform(s) for providing exciting, creative, and effective services, responding to users’ queries, doing joint interactive works, sharing real-life experiences, implementing e-learning, enhancing digital collections, and diminishing intra-inter knowledge gap. From Library and Information Science standpoint, the role of social media in managing information and good governance of library services in the age of click and disintermediation is underscored. In my opinion, reading this admirable, interesting, multilayered, easy-to-read, practical, and educational guide narrating the social media big bang can benefit librarians, library managers, internet studies researchers, digital scholars, infopreneurs, educators, professors, and end-users. Flexibly and creatively, stand on the shoulders of social media!

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