

Chapter 10

Social Media as Weapon of Mass Instruction in Training Library and Information Science Students

Oluwatomisin Temitope Akinola
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines social media as a weapon of mass instruction in the training of library and information science students in Nigeria from the perspective of Library and Information Science (LIS) students. Survey research approach was adopted while the population comprised the Library and Information Science undergraduates selected from two universities offering LIS as course of studies. A self-designed questionnaire titled Social Media Instructional and Training Questionnaire (SMITQ) with $r = 0.82$ was used for the collection of data. Four research questions were developed and answered by the study. The results reveal that the majority of the undergraduate students were of the opinion that social media is very relevant in the training of library and information science students and can be used as weapon of mass instruction. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Wikis were the social media identified that can be used as weapons of mass instruction in LIS education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. Borrowing from Mandela, one could submit that with well executed education and training, learning will become a household name in the world. The convergence of the media has expanded the usage of internet that gave birth to social media. Social

media is a concept that has given people a common platform for sharing their news, views and opinions regarding the happenings around them. Not only this, social media is also being used by advertisers and companies for their promotions, professionals (e.g. information scientists) also use the social media for searching and recruiting, students for internships and educators as social learning etc.

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The exchange of thoughts, messages, or information by students, lecturers and professionals by speech, signals, writing, or behavior is possible through the social media platform. The limitless connectivity and potential to create an open social order and system of interaction and collaboration have been made possible only because of the various social media platforms. We can see the impact of social media in every walk of life. Some people prefer social networking sites for accessing information because it reduces physical strain, save the time, minimize expenses and confirm accuracy of information from diverse sources. However in Nigeria, the social media platform has not been properly infused into the education system especially in Library and information which could have been caused by lack of fund, lack of expertise and training on how to accurately use social sites for learning.

The world is becoming glocal from global and thus constricting its economic, societal, political and cultural borders. The convergence of media has expanded the usage of internet that gave birth to social media. Due to the increase in use of new ICT technologies in everyday life, the implementation of these technologies in learning activities becomes a necessity. Educating students and people online is mostly referred to as e-learning, although the e-learning platforms are implemented in universities all around the world, the educational methods, techniques and educational software tools used are not frequently updated to meet the new form of information technologies. An example is the social networking sites which are very popular, being accessed regularly by most students and teachers, but not yet considered an instrument for learning and teaching in many universities. However, Lee and McLoughlin (2008) consider social networking sites as educational tools because students and lecturers can use them for communication and social support as well as for discovering and sharing knowledge. However, because of their advantages in communication, these social networking sites have a huge potential for education.

Social sites can be used to build a powerful network keeping in touch with as many LIS students as you can through social media. These platforms can help students build a powerful network that can be exploited to benefit their lectures and share experiences from various perspectives. Furthermore social media can help connect with other classes online, get free expert consulting from other experts in LIS field from other countries. Based on these benefits, it has been observed nowadays that some lecturers and students are now using social media to facilitate their teaching. However, there are limited studies available to determine whether or not social media is useful as medium of mass instruction at the undergraduate level in Nigeria. Similarly, research seems to be silent on the use of social media for teaching and learning in the Nigeria university context. It is in the light of this that this study examines the use of social media as weapon of mass instruction in training of Library and Information Science professionals.

Statement of the Problem

Availability of well-trained manpower to provide quality library and information services, that are required for national development is hinged on quality LIS education. Provision of quality LIS education, in turn, is dependent on the ability of LIS schools to keep up with and adapt to the changes in the field of LIS education. One significant aspect of instructors' development that encourages and facilitates more interaction with the Millennial Generation of students is teaching that utilizes social media innovatively. While traditional face-to-face instruction offers numerous advantages for learning, it is constrained by time and space. Thus, while not ignoring traditional approaches, it is important to focus on social media as a set of additional learning tools.

Researchers (e.g. Cain & Policastri, 2011) have found that when used as a teaching tool, new social media applications may offer distinct advantages for teaching today's students. Researchers have

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