

E-marketing of Information and Services in Libraries: Tools and Applications

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Abstract - E-marketing is a process of planning, executing, and promoting the products and services by using Information Communication Technologies (ICT) to meet the users' need. The concept, E-marketing of information and services of libraries is quite innovative because the traditional concept has been changed from marketing to 'E', i.e. E-marketing. Now, today's world is preferring to have the digital environment, libraries are also no exceptions and trying to achieve their goals. This paper focuses how libraries can adopt and implement e-marketing aspects to utilize and improve the information products and services more effectively by applying different information communication technologies and web 2.0 tools.

Keywords: E-marketing, ICT, Information Services, Digital Environment and Web 2.0

I. INTRODUCTION

The present development of the ICT has made drastic changes in every fields and tries to meet the needs and expectations of the users or customers. Marketing is the study and management of exchange relationships (**Wikipedia**)⁶ and it includes the activities like promoting and advertising of any products and services. Marketing is an important part of a library systems like any other organizations and institutions. Traditional marketing essentials are applied in the e-marketing to attract users and to increase the usage of the library and information products. Libraries are also trying to adopt the recent advancement of technologies in every systems and its subsystems. E-marketing is derived from the traditional marketing concept by the help of information communication technologies and web 2.0 tools which consist websites, blogs, RSS feeds, social networking sites and electronic mailing System etc. This paper will define how the libraries will be able to adopt the e-marketing aspects and its tools which also can be applied for promotional activities.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Some related papers have been selected for the reviewing of the literature and it has been discussed below.

Mohapatra (2017)⁷ discussed about E-Marketing efforts in his paper that libraries need to be served through electronic media for user satisfactory services in the basis of cost, time, place etc., because only satisfied users come back again and again and dissatisfied users will find some other suppliers of information to meet their information need. Sukula and Babbar (2016)⁹ said in their paper about the various practices taking place at Central Library (JNU)

which have been customised and functioning as tools of marketing. The in-depth analysis of these practices and services has been showing the endeavors in the direction of building relations with user community to achieve optimum use of library resources, specially the digital kinds. Sumadevi S (2014)¹⁰ defined importance of introducing e-marketing in a modern library and information centre to enable it to improve its processes and activities, optimize resource utilization, and deliver high quality, value added services to its users. Kaushik and Arora (2012)⁴ identified six blogs on marketing of library services are active and cover variety of features, frequency, file formats, web resource categories and subjects including marketing. Das and Karn (2008)¹ highlighted in their paper that the marketing concept of today's library and information centers covering various topics such as management of libraries and commitment to customers satisfaction.

III. CONCEPT OF MARKETING AND E-MARKETING

Marketing simulates the impact in business, industrial organizations and other institutions and it became a managerial part. It is emphatically different from selling aspect. Marketing means something different and it is customer/user oriented rather than product-oriented. **Kotler (2010)**⁵ defined marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with the others. On the other hand, e-marketing helps in creating, distributing, promoting and prices products and services of any institution over the internet through digital environment as well as tools. E-marketing sets major platforms for any organization that they can achieve their goals.

IV. MARKETING MIX AND THE SALIENT FEATURES

McCarthy (1960)² in his book “Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach” introduced the 4Ps which include Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, the marketing mix as it is widely known, moreover it is crucial in marketing functions. The product will make the reputation of the library as a source of up-to-date information based on users’ requirement. Pricing is an important element which determines the charges and the value of the products because information processing involves costs. In the emerging market of the economy, libraries are driving towards the pricing fact. The place is another feature of the marketing mix, it depends on the distribution channel which should be the central part. Nowadays libraries are impacted by new ICTs which helps users to access information remotely. Lastly, promotion deals making communication with the patrons, it can be done by advertising, newsletters, patron events (trainings, e-learning, webinars), and internet etc. Above discussed marketing mix is a powerful concept which keeps marketing tasks from other activities of the organization, and representation of the promotion.

V. INFORMATION SOURCES AND SERVICES IN LIBRARIES

The process of information generation is executed by various circumstances and the process helps the users to get their required information sources which are consolidated and repackaged. Basically, information sources are divided into two major parts, Documentary and Non-Documentary. According to Grogan (1976)³ Documentary sources are categorized into three categories i.e firstly, Primary sources which include scholarly periodicals, newspapers, research reports, and thesis & dissertations etc. Secondly, Secondary sources which include books, bibliography, yearbooks etc. and thirdly, Tertiary sources like bibliography of bibliographies, encyclopedias, directories etc. Non-Documentary sources are mainly the Institutions or Organizations, Humans, Mass Media other than print media, and Internet. Library provides all three categories of information sources by different services which are also grouped by two major parts; Reactive Service (Reference & Digital Reference Service, Bibliographic service, Literature Search Service, and Document Delivery Service etc.) which is based on responses of users’ requests. Proactive services (Current awareness Service, Selective Dissemination of Information, indexing and abstracting etc.) are based on anticipation of users’ requests. Information analysis, condensation services, evaluative service, and translation service are the other important services. The application of semantic technologies and ontology will make impact in the modern library services.

VI. WHY E-MARKETING IN LIBRARIES?

Generally libraries are categorized by four different types

viz., National Library, Academic Library, Public Library, and Special Library. In libraries, there are different groups of user, potential and other is actual. Both the users are not aware of the library products and services. Basically, they are quite satisfied with what they get from the library but unable to explore more. In the emerging electronic environment, ICTs and Internet have the power to improve image of a library whether it is academic or public or special library, and offers the opportunity to enhance its products and services. It is very easy to think but hard to implement, but after implementing the all set ups, it will be more user centric and more effective for the libraries which can reach the user groups by applying the e-marketing tools which are adequately and amply known to the users.

VII. DIFFERENT TYPES OF E-MARKETING TOOLS FOR LIBRARIES AND ITS APPLICATION

There are numerous e-marketing tools, the most usable tools and their potent areas have been broadly categorized and discussed here;

7.1 Website

A website is a set of Texts, images, contents, media which can be accessed via the internet by a unique address or uniform resource locator. The website contains various related and interlinked web pages under a single domain and any individuals can access it as a navigator to find the required information. For libraries, a website can be one of the best tools which can attract the attention of the users for e-marketing. The library website is a platform where users and library professionals can interact and communicate with information services. Website collates databases, e-texts and e-journals, and Online Public Access Catalogue to represent the library system virtually. Moreover, it avails the internal products and resources. For Information gathering, generating, organizing, and accessing, a website can play a vital role and library professionals can make use of it adequately.

7.2 Blogs

A blog is an online self-publishing and social networking platform where one can post and share the articles, photos, and videos on the web in a chronological series. There is number of ways that libraries can use blogs for their promotional activities. The most conspicuous application is frequently library news updates and a blog engages user community through upcoming programs, events, and value added services etc. Blogging software like Wordpress (www.wordpress.com), TypePad (www.typepad.com), and Blogger (www.blogger.com) made it more easier for anyone to create a blog for promoting the information and library service. The resources in doc, pdf, mp3, mp4, jpeg, and many more formats are sharable in a blog. Now, *Vlogging* became the very popular since 2005, short videos which support texts, images, and other data formats can be

shared through web syndication, as youtube is one of the well known platforms for vlogging. Libraries can make short videos of their activities, cultural programs and events, job-career resources, teaching resources, and information-media literacy etc.

7.3 Social Networking

Social Networking Site (SNS) is a process of relationship building among a group of peoples to connect, interact, share ideas-activities with each other. Facebook is one of the most feasible E-marketing tools to connect user groups by creating a page or group where ideas and information diffusion can be made up. LinkedIn can be a powerful resource for libraries and librarians and that will work for career development and as a resource to assist library users. Twitter, Myspace are one of the most popular and important SNSs can be personified for the marketing, as libraries can easily reach, communicate and promote their products and services. For information dissemination or distribution and promotion, Youtube, TeacherTube, SecondLife, SlideShare, StumbleUpon, DaftDoggy, PBWiki, Wikipedia, Pinterest, Instagram (APIs) offer a great way to do the particular work. These Web 2.0 SNSs can be implemented for alerting services, digital reference service, notification of new periodicals, information related to the conference, seminar and workshops and other activities of any library etc. With these social networking tools, it can be easier than ever for the libraries to stay in touch, organized, and well-connected with the patrons.

7.4 Electronic Mailing (E-mail)

Mobile phones, moreover smartphones have revitalized the emailing system which can reach a larger potential patron base, and advertise programs and service without investing a lot in new technology or software because emailing is an open platform. It is one of the most preferred channels to keep patrons informed about the activities of the library. It increases the product awareness. 'Ask a Librarian' is the innovative way for virtual reference service, patrons can ask and get the required information by e-mail. With email marketing software, libraries can rectify users' data, based on their specific needs and can appreciate to use information more.

7.5 Messaging

It is an immediate, mobile friendly, cost-effective and simple platform for communicating with the user group. Libraries can use SMS for purposes, including notification for items available for pickup, due date reminders, information on the availability of library resources and promotional activities. Some free messaging gateways are 160by2, way2sms, ultoo, fullonsms, and site2sms etc. To promote reference service, "Text Reference Service" can be applied to attract the users, the term will be like "Send Message a Librarian". Apart from that, Whatsapp is another freeware, cross-platform messaging, and Voice over IP

service platform where any libraries can create a group by adding its user community and share their functioning activities and interact for better upliftments.

7.6 Mobile App and Web OPAC(Online Public Access Catalogue)

The development of the mobile app is one of the most prosperous areas in every field, even in libraries. A mobile application can be used for marketing to create an opportunity to build demand for the product or service. Apps are such handy outlets for all kinds of news regarding library activities. By an app, a user can scan the barcode of a book or the resource and his/her smartphone will tell him/her which is the nearest library has it and if it is on the shelves or racks. In India, the National Digital Library(NDL) has its own app which is available in Google Play Store and Apple App Store and NDL is especially for digital resources which can be accessed by registration. Like NDL, other libraries can develop a mobile app for representing the promotional activities and information products. Web OPAC is another key aspect for searching the traditional and web-based information resources (Online Resources). It links to the full text resources if there is the availability of it. It enables to use hypertext links through bibliographic records. The integration of mobile app and Web OPAC can be a powerful marketing tool for enhancing the collection and e-collection of the library as users can reach and use it easily.

7.7 Podcast

As sound assumes listeners to hear the emotion of the words, now podcast is one of the creative tools for e-marketing. It is an online audio-based program which can be availed, listened and downloaded from the website by the users. So, academic or public libraries can use the podcast platform as an efficient and easy method to share news and information, promote programs and services, and distribute other important content to their patrons. Merely, libraries can do a recording of author talks, storytelling aspects and other mixes of voices, the podcast can attract or engage users by taking them to the next level of information service in a unique manner. Libraries can use free podcast hosting tools viz., Buzzsprout, Podigee, and Suncloud which can be applied in website or blogs. Apple podcasts, Spotify, and Google podcasts are the most popular platforms or apps for listening the podcast. More participation with the user community can be increased by linking the podcast to the website, social networking sites or blogs.

7.8 RSS Feeds

RSS (Rich Site Summary/Really Simple Syndication) is a type of web feed which allows users to access updates to online content in a standardized, computer-readable format (Wikipedia)⁸. It can challenge Library and Information Marketing problems which we generally face. It is quite a

simple way that allows any content to get delivered to the end users without spamming. RSS can be applied in numerous library services, such as Alerting Service, Selective Dissemination of Information(SDI), Current Awareness Service(CAS), and Bibliographic service etc., by that users can make use of information products more. Libraries can create such feeds and promote its products by using RSS reader apps (feedbin, panda, and selfoss etc) which are commercially and freely available.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Marketing in libraries can be said as an effort to bring new patrons or programs, that can create the attraction of the new and the existing information products and services. There are such traditional tools like workshops lecture series, exhibition, and seminars etc. for marketing of the information and library services. But the environment of the library and its service has rigorously changed. As per the changing context of library users towards information resources and services in the digital era, the need for e-marketing is picked out and emphasized. E-marketing can be possible in other ways like virtual tours of the library, online exhibition, library bookmarking, and google ads etc. Based on traditional elements of marketing, libraries need to make plans to implement the e-marketing tools for enhancing the best usage of the information sources, library services and improvement of the library image.

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