

Health sciences libraries and public health education awareness in social media platforms

Mesra Şendir

Koç University Suna Kıraç Library,
İstanbul, Turkey

Abstract

Information sciences in the current social media age cannot be thought of separately from social media platforms. The most popular of these platforms are Facebook and Twitter with regard to free and easy access and use. How can health sciences libraries and medical librarians help the users reach information services using these social media? The principal argument is that academic health sciences libraries should support their users by invoking public health education in social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The Koç University School of Nursing Library's objective is to use Facebook's insight attribute in order to evaluate how many people can reach public health education information using social media. In order to develop our argument, the methodology was defined by analysing our goals and metrics. This study focused on subject titles such as: injections, breast cancer, diabetics, first aid, hypertension, air pollution, infectious diseases, tuberculosis, quit smoking, cervical cancer, birth control, AIDS, etc. and content management tools such as like, share, timeline, photo post. The aim of this analysis was to discuss how medical libraries can use social media efficiently.

Key words: public health; social media; education; health sciences; libraries; Web 2.0.

Introduction

Social networking, a cultural phenomenon among a wide variety of internet users, is considered a major development in the twenty-first century web (1). All social networks have different nature and distinctive, typical terms such as: wiki's, blogs, photo-video sharing, pinning, tagging sites, news feedings, etc. What do today's library users want? We asked what platform would our users prefer? Library users continue to want basic services – competence, reliability, responsiveness, timeliness, honesty and a caring approach and they want assistance with information access (2).

Social media and libraries

Facebook became a topic of research in library and information science scholarships in 2007, thus representing the scholar's interest in the emerging social phenomenon (3). Most of the articles found in library publications are written from a librarian's perspective, explaining the essence of Facebook, and describing different ways in which Facebook might be used by librarians to promote library services. Facebook has attracted researchers' interest in different subjects such

as users' patterns regarding offline and online activities, online identities, technological capacities of social connections and cultural patterns, and social networking as an educational tool (4). The general consensus in the health care and public health community is that we need to pay attention to social media (5).

Many countries have decided to choose social media platforms as the best way to support public health education. Facebook country statistics reveal that Turkey has one of the highest ratings in Facebook and posts on Facebook are generally in Turkish. This study compared usage statistics through Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and Libguides. It is suggested that librarians should be aware of the Facebook phenomenon, and that those who are enthusiastic about social networking are encouraged to share their ideas for the use of Facebook in order to promote library services and events.

Reports

In this explanatory study the Facebook activity log was analyzed by options from the accessible page activity such as offers, events, notes, questions, post by others, comments, posts, photos, video, spam, about:

Address for correspondence: Mesra Şendir, School of Medicine, Koç University Suna Kıraç Library Rumelifeneri Yolu, 34450, Sarıyer-İstanbul. Tel: +902123381441; Fax: +902123381321; E-mail: msendir@ku.edu.tr

- all post published can be analyzed;
- *Post reach* (the number of people who saw posts) compare average performance over time organic or paid;
- *Likes, comments* and *shares* (these actions will help you reach more people);
- *Hide, Report as Spam* and *Unlikes* (these actions will decrease the number of people you reach);
- *Total reach* (The number of people who saw any activity from the page including posts, posts by other people, *Page like* adverts, mentions and check-ins);
- where *Page likes* came from (the number of times the Page was *liked*, broken down by where and when it happened);
- *insights export* is changed to align with the new Insights: Export data directly to Excel (.xls) or comma-separated text format (.csv). Choose either *Page level data* or *Page post level data*. You may select any date range, with a maximum of 500 posts at a time. Select *data range as date / select export*. The new export is available to preview. You can use the old export through to the end of the year;
- promote posts: Easy to promote *posts* so more people see them in the newsfeed targeting the people and their friends who like your page or people can choose target;

- compare the performance (total page *likes*, new page *likes, posts* this week, engagement this week) of page and *posts* with similar pages on Facebook.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to raise the awareness of users on the services and flexibility of the library by focusing the service offers to specific target groups according to the relevant users' need.

The library:

- concentrated on active online hours to improve social media experiences;
- defined the goals and set targets for accomplishment via social media efforts;
- decided on tactics to measure the success of the strategy;
- executed the strategy by defining and measuring;
- prepared a social media post calendar monthly and maintained;
- adapted the adjustments from emerging best practices;
- designed a completed social media communication plan.

References

1. Aharony N. Facebook use in libraries: an exploratory analysis. *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives*. 2012;64(4):358-372. Available from: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/338/6104/267>
2. Schmidt, J. Promoting library services in a Google world. *Library Management* . 2007;28(6-7):337 – 346. Available from Emerald with Full Text <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1617030>
3. Facebook as a social search engine and the implications for libraries in the twenty-first Century. *Library Hi Tech*. 2008; 26(4):543. Available from Emerald with Full Text <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/07378830810920888>
4. Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. The Benefits of Facebook “Friends”: Social Capital and college students’ use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 2007;12(4):1144. Available from Wiley Online Library with Full Text <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x/pdf>
5. Wesolowski A, Eagle N, Tatem AJ et al. Quantifying the impact of human mobility on malaria. *Science* 2012;338:267–70. Available from: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/338/6104/267>