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Use of Social Networking Sites by Academic Librarians in Six Selected States of Nigeria

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The attractiveness of social networking sites (SNSs) has extended to almost all professionals in numerous human organizations including the library. Librarians as a result of this development are now making use of these sites to connect to other libraries and librarians both within and outside their environment. However, it is observed that the use and benefits derived from social networking sites by Nigerian librarians, generally, and those in academic libraries, particularly, has not been well documented. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the use of social networking sites to both the libraries and the librarians in selected academic libraries in six Nigerian States. A survey research design approach was adopted. The simple random study drew upon 200 academic librarians from academic libraries across six selected States in Nigeria. Five research questions were raised and answered by the study. The results demonstrate that Facebook and Twitter are mostly used by academic librarians. Academic librarians are making use of SNSs on a weekly basis and partially on a daily basis. Many potential benefits of SNSs were indicated both to the librarians and their libraries such as creating opportunity to connect with people across the globe, which includes those that have never been seen and those that one is not sure of coming in contact with. It was also found that SNSs give opportunity for academic libraries to incorporate SNSs as a means of creating more interactive user centered library and information services. Examples of the defects identified associated with SNSs include sexual harassment, cybercrime, fraud, and

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spreading of spam. It is expected that the outcomes of this study will serve as pioneer data upon which future related studies will be anchored.

KEYWORDS *librarians, networking, social networking sites, academic libraries, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordability and accessibility. The tremendous popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook, Flickr, Myspace, Nickdl, and so forth present libraries with unique opportunities for reaching students. According to Suraweere et al. (2011), social networking is the way the twenty-first century communicates now. The term social networking refers to a process of relationship building among a group of people who have a common interest. Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

Some social networks have additional features, such as the ability to create groups that share common interests or affiliations, upload live videos and hold discussions in forums. Social networking sites allow professionals to exchange information, opportunities, and ideas. Professionals in many fields are now able to stay informed with new knowledge about their field. Currently, social networks are being used by teachers, lecturers, and students as a communication tool. Many students are using a wide range of social networking sites; teachers and lecturers have begun to familiarize themselves with this trend and are now using it to their advantage. Teachers, lecturers, and professors are doing everything from creating chat room forums and groups to extend classroom, discussion to posting assignments, tests, and quizzes to assisting with homework outside of the classroom setting. Social networks are also being used to foster teacher parent communication. These sites make it possible and more convenient for parents to ask questions and voice concerns without having to meet face to face.

The attractiveness of social networking sites have extended to almost all professionals in various human organizations including the library. Librarians as a result of this development are now seeing making use of these sites to connect to other libraries and librarians both within and outside their environment. The use of online social networks by libraries and information organizations is also increasingly prevalent and a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users, as well as extending

the services provided to individual libraries (Suraweere et al. 2011). According to Landis (2010), social networking is rapidly infiltrating the information environment, and it is essential that librarians understand how best to use these sites and tools with their work to better serve their users and reach people who have never before used the library. However, it is observed that the use and benefits derived from social networking sites by Nigeria librarians, generally, and those in academic libraries, particularly, has not been well documented.

It is against this backdrop that this study examined a survey of use and benefits of social networking sites to both the libraries and the librarians in selected academic libraries in three Nigerian States. It is expected that the outcomes from this study will serve as pioneer data upon which future related studies will be anchored.

To achieve this objective, this study specifically identified the types of social networking sites librarians are familiar with and use regularly, the frequency of use of the social networking sites by the librarian, the purpose of using the social networking sites, the benefits or the importance of social networking sites to the librarian and to their libraries, and how concerned are the librarians about the private issue on social networking sites. The study also determined the challenges of using social networking sites by the librarians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term social networking refers to a process of relationship building among a group of people who have a common interest (What is Social Networking 2010). Also, social networking is the grouping of individuals into specific groups, such as small rural communities or a neighborhood subdivision. Although social networking is possible in person, especially in the workplace, universities, and high schools, it is most popular online. The internet is filled with millions of individuals who are looking to meet other people, to gather and share firsthand information and experiences about love partners, developing friendships or professional alliances, finding employment, business-to-business marketing, and so forth. When it comes to online social networking websites, they are commonly known as social networking web sites and promote a number of social network services. It allows users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within the individual networks. In general social networking services allow users to create a profile for themselves and can be broken down into two broad categories. Internal Social Networking (ISN) and External Social Networking (ESN) (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and Bebo, etc.) (Suraweere 2011). As it has been observed, social networks is becoming an increasing requirement for libraries. Many libraries are finding that when used properly, it can be a great tool to

save money and promote library services and collections. The tremendous popularity of social networking sites now presents libraries with unique opportunities for reaching out to their clientele. Relevant to this, Murphy and Mulaison (2009) asserted that social networking sites are becoming central forums for accessing and sharing information. Librarians are responding to the popularity and utility of social networking sites by using them as central media for interacting with library patrons for traditional and novel services.

Extant literature has confirmed that there are benefits associated with social networking sites. Without mincing words the benefits of social networking sites both to the libraries and the librarians are innumerable. For instance, Landis (2010) stated that social network sites enable libraries to pull themselves out of the dark ages of the pre-Internet era and inject themselves into the current information environment. They provide libraries with a new, exciting form of communication for reaching users and nonusers. In relation to this, Fernandez (2009) pointed out that the benefits of maintaining a presence on social networking sites is clear, because they allow libraries to reach out to patrons in the world of Web 2.0, a virtual world that many patrons already inhabit with ease. Unfortunately, the major social networking websites in the United States today, Facebook and MySpace, are motivated by profit. This can be a problem, because their profits are dependent on the free flow of personal information about their customers. In this context, a deep understanding of libraries' ethical stance is particularly important because social networking websites represent a moving target. Social networking sites can, and do, rapidly change their specific features and privacy policies. Librarians cannot exert direct control over the social networking sites they interact with, but they can prepare themselves for potential conflicts with a firm understanding of their own ethical priorities. Combined with up-to-date knowledge about the motivations and practical consequences of social networking sites, this will ensure that libraries are prepared to deal with the consequences of using these sites.

Social networking sites as a class of technologies have an incentive and historical record indicating that librarians view privacy differently than do libraries, often to the detriment of the privacy of their users (Fernandez 2009). This does not mean that libraries do not recognize the importance of privacy as a tool for gaining user trust or that all SNSs will disregard user concerns about the issue. The bottom line is that the profitability of SNSs, even their very existence, depends upon their users transmitting information about themselves freely. Because of the benefits, users are willing to sign up. The providers set rules for the space, and they make the transmission of personal information easier even necessary (Fernandez 2010).

Academic librarians have highlighted several uses of Facebook for academic library outreach. One of the primary uses of Facebook by academic libraries is to market the library with a library fan page. Libraries advertise hours, location, and Web site information. By linking to the library's

Web site, the Facebook page acts as a portal to the library (Farkas 2007). As students frequently use outside search engines for academic research, even a basic Facebook page can serve as a reminder to use the resources available at an academic library (Farkas 2007). Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities (Chu and Meulemans 2008). Essentially, Facebook pages provide a marketing tool for the services available to students at their academic library.

Some social networks have additional features, such as the ability to create groups that share common interests or affiliations, upload stream live videos and hold discussions in forums. Another social network allows professionals to exchange information, opportunities, and ideas. Professionals are able to stay informed with new knowledge about their field. Clyde (2004) identified other benefits of social networking sites as including: provision of news or information for users; provision of links to recommended Internet resources; book reviews; information about new books; provision of entertainment or amusement for users; provision of news or information for librarians; book discussions; provision of news or information for trustees; and provision of research tips and communication among librarians (in a library system).

Similarly, there are reports of studies conducted related to the use of social networking sites by librarian and libraries. Chu and Du (2012) investigated the use of social networking tools in academic libraries, examining the extent of their use, library staff's perceptions of their usefulness and challenges, and factors influencing decisions to use or not to use such tools. Invitations to participate in a web-based survey were sent to 140 university libraries from Asia, North America, and Europe. Responses were received from 38 libraries (response rate: 27.1%). Twenty-seven libraries (71.1%) used social networking tools, five (13.1%) were potential users, and six (15.8%) did not plan to use them at all. Facebook and Twitter were the most commonly adopted tools in university libraries. Most library staff had positive perceptions on the usefulness of social networking tools, but hesitancy among library staff and limited participation of users (i.e., students) were perceived to be hindrances. This study offers insights for academic librarians to make informed decisions in applying social networking tools.

Dickson and Holley (2010) examined the use of the major social networking tools in academic libraries in the United States. The paper also considered the concerns about use both from students and within the academic library. The paper summarized findings from articles published since 2006 found in the Library Literature and Information Full Text database. The findings revealed that social networking can be an effective method of student outreach in academic libraries if libraries take care to respect student privacy and to provide equal coverage for all subject areas.

Chu and Meulemans (2008) reviewed literature to provide current context of social networking sites, the usage and viability of related technologies in academic libraries, and the role of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in facilitating student learning. Data from a survey and focus group provide insight into how students are using MySpace and Facebook. Findings were discussed to consider appropriate implementations of MySpace/Facebook in a university library setting, specifically on the pedagogical and practical feasibility of integrating social software in library instruction, reference, and outreach.

Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) examined how Nigerian Libraries can leverage on social networking and social media skills to provide dynamic library services in the face of dwindling economic problems in Nigeria. This article attempts to examine the present scenario in library services delivery with these new and emerging technologies. Challenges faced by Nigerian libraries in the use of these social media are investigated and possible solutions proffered. Similarly, Alonge (2012) discussed social networking as a new tool in information management, using Facebook as a case study. It explicates how social networking can enhance library outreach and librarians' collaboration. It presents social networking as new tool in information management that is capable of creating future prospects, opportunities, and hope for library users, and information and library professionals. For the purpose of this work, three groups were created on Facebook. One for library users and two for Librarians: Academic Library Users, African Librarian, and Nigerian Librarians. The author concluded that social networking sites could be effectively used to disseminate information and promote pleasant professional relationship among librarians and library users. It encourages academic collaboration. With Facebook group, pictures of memorable events could be shared, news could be posted, and meetings, conferences, and workshops could be announced.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that limited literature available on the use of social networking sites by libraries and librarians especially those in Africa and Nigeria in particular. In the light of this, this study examined the use and benefits of social networking sites among librarians in selected academic libraries in three state of Nigeria including Kwara, Oyo, and Osun States. To achieve this objective, the following research questions were raised and answered by the study.

1. What social networking sites are used by academic librarians?
2. How often do the academic librarians use social networking sites?
3. Of what importance is social networking sites to the academic librarians?
4. Of what importance are the social networking sites to academic libraries?
5. What is the academic librarians perception about the negative effects associated with the social networking sites?

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the method adopted to carry out the study including the design, population and sample, the instrument for data collection, procedure of administration, data analysis, and presentation of results.

Design

The study adopts a pure quantitative method using a survey approach. This approach was chosen to allow the researcher to draw on large sample that is representative of the total population (Babbie 2004). Moreover, a survey approach was chosen because it is the most prominent approach used in previous related studies, because it is inexpensive especially when it is self-administered, and because it is useful when describing the characteristics of a larger population.

Population

The population for this study was comprised of academic librarians working in academic libraries across six States in Nigeria including Kwara, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, and Lagos. This group was chosen because little has been documented about them, thus far, regarding the use of social networking sites.

Sample Selection

There are many academic libraries in Kwara, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, and Lagos States, Nigeria. The study focused on Librarians from University libraries, Polytechnic Libraries, and Colleges of Education Libraries. A total of 200 academic librarians were selected through simple random sampling from each of the states. The 200 librarians that took part in the study represent the sample for this study.

Data Collection Instrument

Data on this study was collected through a self-designed questionnaire, the development of which was informed by the objectives of the study and literature review.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire used in this study, an *a* test re-tests reliability method of two-week intervals using Cronbach Alpha was adopted to determine the overall reliability. The correlation co-efficient of 0.75 and above suggests the questionnaire was highly reliable and can be

recommended for future use (Marsh and Hocevar 1988). Before testing the reliability of the questionnaire used in this study, it was assumed that if the reliability co-efficient falls below 0.76, this would still not stop its use in this study except that recommendation for the future use of the instrument would not be made. The 23 items questionnaire had overall reliability of 0.84, exceeding the minimum standard of 0.80 suggested for basic research (Wang and Tang 2003).

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers to the respondents in all the selected academic libraries across the three states. All the respondents were administered the questionnaire in their respective library. The administration exercise took fifteen working days. A total of 227 copies of questionnaire were administered and 200 copies were returned, completely filled. This provided an 88% return rate. This number was eventually used for data analysis in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Methods used for the analysis of the collected data involved percentages and frequency count. The results of the analyses are presented as shown in Table 1.

The demographic information of respondents who took part in the study reveals that 109 (54.5%) were male while 91 (45.5%) were female. This indicates that more males than females took part in the study. Moreover, the demographic information on the respondents' state of origin reveals that 40 respondents each representing (20%) were drawn from Oyo and Lagos States; while 30 respondents each representing (15%) were drawn from Osun, Ondo, and Ogun States, respectively.

On the age distribution of respondents, the results indicate that the majority 83 respondents representing (41.5%) fall between the ages of 31–35 years. This is followed by 50 respondents between the ages of 36–40 years, representing (25%), and 30 respondents' ages 25–30 years, representing (15%). Results indicated 28 respondents between the age group of 41–45 years, representing (14%); 7 respondents ages 46–50 years, representing (3.5%); and 2 respondents in the age group of 51 years and above, representing (1%) of the total respondents. This indicates that majority of respondents who participated in this study were youth.

The respondents' demographic information also revealed the respondents' years of working experience in Library and Information Science profession. The results indicated that 120 respondents (60%) had 0–10 years working experience and 65 respondents (32.5%) had 11–20 years of working

TABLE 1 Demographic information $N = 200$

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage%
Gender		
Male	109	54.5
Female	91	45.5
Total	200	100.0
Respondents Per State		
Kwara State	30	15.0
Oyo State	40	20.0
Osun State	30	15.0
Ondo State	30	15.0
Ogun State	30	15.0
Lagos State	40	20.0
Total	200	100.0
Age of the Respondents		
25–30 years	30	15.0
31–35 years	83	41.5
36–40 years	50	25.0
41–45 years	28	14.0
46–50 years	7	3.5
51 years +	2	1.0
Total	200	100.0
Working Experience		
0–10 years	120	60.0
11–20 years	65	32.5
21–30 years	13	6.5
31–35 years	2	1.0
Total	200	100.0

experience. Furthermore, 13 respondents (6.5%) had 21–30 years of working experience and 2 respondents (1%) had 31–35 years of working experience.

Social Networking Sites Used by Academic Librarians

Respondents indicated the types of social networking they used. The result is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Networking sites and academic librarian $N = 200$

S/N	Types of Social Networking Sites	Frequency	%
a.	Facebook	80	40.0
b.	Twitter	54	27.0
c.	LinkedIn	38	19.0
d.	Flickr	13	6.5
e.	YouTube	7	3.5
f.	Net log	3	1.5
g.	MySpace	3	1.5
h.	Fotolog	1	0.5
i.	Yookos	1	0.5
j.	Bebo	-	-

The results in Table 2 show the common social networking sites used by academic librarians in Ilorin. The majority of the respondents (40%) indicated Facebook. This is followed by (27%) of the respondents who indicated Twitter and (19%) LinkedIn. Other social networking sites indicated by the respondents were Flickr (6.5%), YouTube (3.5%), Netlog (1.5%), and MySpace (1.5%). Fotolog and Yookos were each indicated by (0.5%) of the respondents. No respondent indicated Bebo or any other social networking sites. The results demonstrate that Facebook and Twitter are mostly used by the academic librarians in Nigeria. This is in agreement with the report by Chu and Du (2012) who revealed that Facebook and Twitter were the most commonly adopted tools in university libraries. Similarly, the results corroborates the report by Dickson and Holley (2010) that Facebook appears to be the most logical social networking site to be used by an academic library. Most recent discussions about social networking focus on Facebook rather than other SNSs. This is also evident from the higher number of social networking articles on Facebook in the Library Literature and Information Full Text database in November 2009, with 95 articles appearing in a basic search for “Facebook” compared to 50 articles for “MySpace” (Dickson and Holley 2010).

Extent of Academic Librarians' Use of Social Networking Sites

To determine the extent to which academic librarians make use of SNSs, they indicated how often they use the SNSs. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 reveal that more than half of the respondents (62.5%) use the SNSs on a weekly basis while (25%) use it on a daily basis. In addition, (10%) of the respondents indicated using the SNSs on a fortnight basis while only (2.5%) of the respondents indicated using the SNSs on a monthly basis. This result indicates that academic librarians are making use of SNSs on weekly basis and partially on a daily basis.

Importance of Social Networking Sites to Nigerian Academic Librarians

To determine the importance and the benefits academic librarian derived from making use of social networking sites, they were asked to indicate the

TABLE 3 Academic librarian frequency of using networking sites $N = 30$

S/N	Frequency of Use	Frequency	%
a.	On a daily basis	50	25.0
b.	Weekly	125	62.5
c.	Fortnightly	20	10.0
d.	Monthly	5	2.5

importance or the benefits of SNSs to themselves in an open ended format. Many benefits were indicated including use for personal and professional development, library information provision, and other uses.

On the use for personal development, the respondents indicated that they have opportunity to connect with people across the globe including those that have never been seen and which they are not sure of coming in contact with face to face. Results also indicated that it is used to connect friends and families and having contact with friends and relatives whom they have lost contact with, and that it create opportunity to interact with people from different tribes and keep them busy during leisure hours. Similarly, respondents indicated that they use SNSs for entertaining themselves especially when they have feeling of boredom. For instance, one respondents emphasized that "I log-on to my SNS account when situation seems to be boring and by so doing; I do come across friends to chat with or better still receive a very interesting post that excited me throughout the day."

In terms of professional development, it was indicated that SNSs provide opportunity for sharing of knowledge, and serve as source of educational information. Knowledge sharing in librarianship is now seen as a good means of professional development that could lead to innovation and creativity. Information that educates librarians on the latest development on various aspects of librarianship and information science are received from SNSs. The types of such information include workshop, seminars, congresses, conventions, conferences, and training for better development and continue relevance. As a result of this, it was indicated they have the opportunity of creating a forum comprised of like-minded librarians who share common interests. Through this forum, they narrate different experiences, share ideas, and brainstorm on burning issues relating to their professional and career development. This is in relation to the uses and benefits earlier identified by (Suraweere et al. 2011) who observed that social networks provide opportunity to create groups that share common interests or affiliations, upload stream live videos, hold discussions in forums, and allow professionals to exchange information, opportunities, and ideas. With this, librarians are able to stay informed with new knowledge in their field. This corroborates the benefit identified in this study as a medium for sharing knowledge. The fact that SNSs are being use as teaching and learning tools by the teachers and learners confirms the present results that SNSs are useful for the collection of educational information. This is by the creation of chat room forums and groups to extend classroom, discussion to posting assignments, tests, and quizzes for assisting with homework outside of the classroom setting. Relevant to this, it was pointed out that SNSs are used by the librarians to teach themselves. A librarian who is knowledgeable in an area or having a new idea that others do not have puts such into writing and circulate it on the discussion forum. At times, fellow librarians are alerted to hook on to a live chat anchor by another librarian, frequently on the other side of the

globe. With these results, there are many benefits academic librarians derive from social networking sites.

Other benefits and uses indicated include users' opportunity to upload a picture of selves and create a "profile." Librarians now have the opportunity of creating and setting up a personal blog where they upload their picture(s) and their daily activities including their professional achievements. In such a blog, they upload the report of research they have conducted or participated or upload articles they published in journals or papers presented in learning conferences or workshops. This is inline again with the observation by Suraweere et al. (2011) that there are sites that help people to build up network and relationships among themselves.

Importance of Social Networking Sites to Nigerian Academic Libraries

To determine the importance or the benefits/uses of social networking sites to the library, librarians were asked to indicate the importance or the benefits of SNSs to their library in an open ended format. Parts of the responses indicated include the fact that social networking by academic libraries has many possibilities within the realm of student outreach. Some libraries may choose to use several social networking methods simultaneously while others may only use one preferred option. Yet, using the various social networking sites available does not guarantee success or effectiveness as an outreach method. "One respondent stated clearly that academic libraries can incorporate SNSs as a means of creating more interactive user centered library and information services."

It is also evident from the results that SNSs are a source of information for academic libraries. This is because they are tools that academic libraries can use to promote their services or to provide a means of communication with their clients. Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities (Chu and Meulemans 2008). Essentially, Facebook pages provide a marketing tool for the services available to students at their academic library.

Another potential benefit identified with the SNSs is that it helps to improve library's reputation with as little advertising as possible. One respondent has this to say "social networks can boost your image as thought leaders in the field and library users start to acknowledge your business as reliable and an excellent source of information/products that suit their requirements."

By linking to the library's Web site, the SNSs page acts as a portal to the library (Farkas 2007). Since students frequently use outside search engines for academic research, even a basic Facebook page can serve as a reminder to use the resources available at an academic library (Farkas 2007). Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities (Chu and Meulemans 2008). Essentially, Facebook

pages provide a marketing tool for the services available to students at their academic library embed subject guides within any of the SNSs page through a library guide application (iLibrarian 2007). Moreover, some academic libraries are also embedding the “ask-a-librarian” feature within the Facebook page to provide reference services through the social networking medium and to expand the chat and message function available through Facebook itself. The Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of Michigan created a Facebook page incorporating a catalogue search function, “ask-a-librarian,”

Nigerian Academic Librarians’ and the Negative Effects of Social Networking Sites

To capture data on this subject matter, respondents were asked to indicate the negative effects of SNSs. Respondents indicated security risks to the libraries and librarians specifically and to the generality of the people.

The libraries and librarians are fully embracing social media sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Libraries use them to connect with and engage patrons, increase library visibility, and communicate information, as well as to connect with old friends, sell themselves, stay up to date with the world, and keep in touch with family. However, there are serious security risks involved with most social sites such as bad users (e.g., hackers who are finding it easy to use these sites to cause trouble). Scammers, stalkers, phishers, spammers, and every other kind of evil-doer on the internet are finding new ways to get into the librarians’ or libraries’ social networks every day. They are using the librarians’ and libraries’ links to spread malware and spam, and they are always one step ahead. They are using it to create havoc in social media sites with crackers, malware, spam, control botnets, black hat, and so forth.

No doubt, information spreads easily on SNSs because most people use these sites for sharing links and other data and people tend to assume what is being shared is safe. It is the one-on-one communication that looks innocent, but may not be. This is because bad users are now stealing librarians’ logins and asking for money from their friends or people on their mailing list. This is a serious security/risk that demands the librarians take steps to protect themselves. Similar to this is the identity theft that is also a threat to the Librarians as SNSs users. This threat may be bolstered by online social networking sites that may readily provide identity thieves with exactly the type of information they require from users who share information of a sensitive nature such as address, birth date, and phone numbers, among others.

Furthermore, SNSs are time-consuming. This is because, if given opportunity, some librarians can spend the rest hour checking their email, their Facebook profile, their MySpace Web page, updating their Twitter account, and their LinkedIn account. And, it does not happen only once a day but

rather throughout the day. In other words, this lowers the morale and reduces the librarians' productivity. The time spent using social networking applications is one reason why many libraries are reluctant to allow librarians to use sites like Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn during office hours. At the same time, however, libraries are starting to appreciate that social networking has its advantages, and there are many libraries that have adopted social networking sites as another avenue to gain a better presence online and a wider audience.

On the other hand, respondents indicated that generally SNSs resulted in the commitment of sexual crime. One respondent made reference to a case in the United States involving a 16 year-old girl from Michigan who disappeared from her family's home and was eventually found in the Middle East to meet a 25 year-old man she had met on the Internet, precisely, MySpace. The young lady was advised to go back home once she had arrived at the airport in Jordan. She did go back home, thankfully, but one can only wonder why she had wanted to meet this man in the first place. This kind of crime is alarming as a result of the use of SNSs.

Another identified security/risk issue of SNSs is that it is too open, especially to all manner of hazards such as cybercrime. This corroborates the position by Hall (2012) who indicated that most social networking sites are open to all, especially MySpace, where people are exposed to harassment, bullying, or sexual advances. Cyber-bullying and harassment are most often perpetrated toward teens and tends to happen most frequently to older girls and to teens of either gender who have a strong online presence. Hall added that this take several forms including publicizing private instant messages, text messages or e-mails; posting threatening messages; and posting photos that will cause embarrassments and spreading rumors.

Respondents also point out that hackers are attracted to social networking sites because they see it as the potential avenue to commit fraudulent acts and launch spam and malware attacks. As a result of this, we now see more than 50,000 applications available on Facebook alone. Therefore, Nigerian librarian and the libraries need to make every effort to provide protection against malware. Some of these viruses have the potential to be used to infect libraries' computers with malicious code which, in turn, can be used to collect data from the user's site. Messaging social networking sites are also a concern and the Koobface worm is just one example of how messages are used to spread malicious code and worms.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined, through a descriptive survey, the use and benefits of social networking sites to the academic librarians and their libraries. The results, thus far, have revealed that Facebook and Twitter are the most

frequently used by academic librarians. Academic librarians are making use of SNSs on a weekly basis and partially on a daily basis. Many potential benefits of SNSs were indicated both for the librarians and their libraries including creating opportunities to connect with people across the globe, including those that have never been seen and with which one may never come into contact. Similarly, academic libraries now have opportunities to incorporate SNSs as a means of creating more interactive user-centered library and information services. The findings in this study are considered significant in view of the fact that it is one of the pioneer studies on SNSs sites, academic libraries, and librarians in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has identified the problems security/risks issues associated with SNSs; in the light of this, the following are recommended. Social networking should not be avoided in the Nigerian academic libraries that are intending to reach out to their users, especially the students. The ultimate goal of librarians is to make library resources available to students. If social networking helps to achieve that goal, it should be actively pursued. However, social networking outreach must factor in the aforementioned concerns to effectively use this new technology. Any outreach via social networking must be considered by the individual user to determine which sites are most used by students, as well as how students can use library resources on a social networking platform. Chu and Meulemans (2008, 83) cautioned that “given” the dynamic natures of MySpace/Facebook, as with all new technology, libraries should proceed to adopt appropriate SNSs to their campus after analysis of the user population and consideration of overall objectives. Libraries must continuously monitor how their social networking attempts are working among their users and make any necessary adjustments to their platforms to ensure that the new service is effective.

There is need for access restriction. Nigerian Librarians and the users should be allowed to access social networking sites during their lunch break, as well as before and after office hours. In other words, libraries authority should endeavor to implement time-based access to these and other sites. Moreover, there is need to educate and train staff. This is very important. Most librarians are not aware how their actions online can cause security issues for the library. They should be educated, in a language they understand, how a simple click on a link they receive or an application they download can result in malware infecting their machine and the network. Additionally, Nigerian librarians are advised not to click on suspicious links and to pay attention when giving out personal details online. The fact that librarians are clever enough to have an online profile does not mean they are technically savvy or that they have a high level of security awareness.

Nigerian academic libraries should have a social media policy. They should make sure the people who are running social media accounts have a clear understanding of the goals. Proper training for employees should be conducted, if only to clear up issues regarding official social media policies. Academic libraries in Nigeria should have a coordinator(s) and champion(s). In other words, they should have a social media manager, or a team that has part of their time at work dedicated to managing a social media presence. Academic Libraries should have privacy settings configured appropriately to various library information and photo albums. Also, they should monitor the official library social media accounts to be able to notice when trouble starts.

As SNSs provide a thorough analysis of users' privacy settings, as well as a detailed synopsis of how these settings affect which parts (if any) of a user's profile that other visitors can see (Atkinson et al. 2007), producing privacy guides within the context of a university library could clarify what this summary actually means to the user. In addition to alerting students and staff to the potential dangers of using online social networks, it would be feasible to create targeted privacy guides that make it explicitly clear what each aspect of the SNSs' privacy settings means from a user perspective and to make a list of recommendations for how users can keep their information as safe as possible. As Farkas (2007, 23) rightly said, libraries "have an important role in educating patrons about the dangers of putting personal information online and the ways they can participate in online communities while protecting themselves."

Use of social networking sites in academic libraries has the potential to yield great results, but librarians must consider the most effective methods for their particular library and student population.

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