THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA BASED SERVICE DELIVERY AT MUNI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, UGANDA

By

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Background

⟶ Muni University is one of the baby public Universities in Uganda, started in 2013

⟶ The first Public University in Uganda to be started without inheriting any existing institution

⟶ Most of finances are spent on brick and mortar to meet the NHCE minimum standard requirements

⟶ The University is located in a region that has poor <u>electricity supply</u> and <u>poor internet infrastructure</u>

⟶ In order to be relevant both locally and internationally, the founders of University adopted ICT as the driving force in executing it's mandate

⟶ The university passed a policy that mandates every student that joins the university to come with a mobile device as a tool to enhance their learning.

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⟶ The funding challenges and other priorities of the university, made the library to opt for cheaper and readily available technologies to provide its services.

⟶ Mobile technologies and social media are widely used today for various purposes (Gikas and Grant, 2013:18; Xu, et al 2014:22)

⟶ It was predicted that over 26 million (49%) people in Uganda will access the internet through mobile devices in 2019 (Cartesian, 2015:11).

     o Unfortunately the recent tax law of introducing Over-The-Top (OTT) may have a negave impact on use Social media.

⟶ Government Backbone Network (GNET) infrastructure and expansion of broadband connectivity by Telcoms companies is leading to decreasing costs of Internet.

Research Question and objectives of the study

Research question

❑ How can Muni university library use mobile technologies for improved social media based library services?

Research sub questions

⟶What are the practical applications of social media and mobile technologies in libraries?

⟶What are the library user's perceptions towards use of mobile technologies for accessing social media library services?

⟶What are the possible barriers that are central to effective use of mobile technologies for social media based library services?

⟶What are the strategies for effective utilisation of social media for accessing library services?

Key findings from Literature

Mobile Technology

⟶ Technologies that enable **access and sharing** of **electronic content** by computing devices that are **transportable** like cell phones and smartphones, tablet computers, Kindle Fires, laptops, and netbooks

⟶ Mobile technologies have become cheaper and facilitating quicker and easy access to the internet and information

⟶The mobility and portability of mobile devices promotes learning at any location without geographical limitation

⟶ The 21st Centaury students in higher education own mobile devices which are useful for accessing educational information

⟶ Librarians and faculty should promote mobile learning by acquiring learning content accessible through mobile devices and develop mobile apps

⟶The term **"mobile social media"** has been coined as result of the convergence of mobile and social media.

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Social Media

→ An online service that allows members to establish relationships and to share information about themselves and their interests with friends, professional colleagues and others by means of a public or private profile

→ Commonly used social media tools used in Academic libraries include: Facebook; Twitter; YouTube and podcasts; Blogs; Flickr; Del.icio.us; Altmetrics; Wikis; and Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

→ These tools have positively influenced library operations because the contemporary library users are active on social media

→ Library users use social media to access subject guides, MOPAC, mobile website, library map, and e-resources, and reference services (bookmarks, e-journals and databases).

Research Method

→ The study adopted both qualitative and quantitate research approaches,

→ A sample of 200 students that registered in the 2015/2016 academic year were targeted and all the four (4) library staff,

→ Purposive sampling was used to select respondents,

→ Open ended and close ended Questionnaires and interviews guide was used as data collection tools

→ Questionnaires was administered to students and

→ The Library staff were Interviewed.

Findings - Students

⟶ **88 (88%)** respondent to the questionnaire

⟶ **96.6%** owned mobile devices and social media accounts that were used for both academic and personal purposes

⟶Majority of the library users owned **Smart phone (76.1%); Laptops (71.6%); Tablets (20.5%)**

⟶ **95.5% (84)** of the respondents use their mobile devices for accessing social media platforms- either through **applications (apps) or via mobile browsers.**

⟶ Agreed that mobile technologies and social media are useful for accessing library services and resources

⟶ Library users were **not consulted** before acquisition of Kindle Fires.

⟶ **The commonly used Social Media tools used were: Facebook; Twitter, Instant Messenger like WhatsApp & Facebook Messenger; YouTube, and others**

Findings - Librarians

⟶ All library staff were interviewed **(4) excluding the researcher**

⟶Librarians agreed that mobile technologies are a valuable & "cheaper" means of providing such services.

⟶Library Services and Resources Provided through Mobile Technologies and Social Media:

1. Loaning of Kindle Fires and Laptops to patrons
2. Electronic Journals and Databases
3. Mobile Library Webpage and the MOPAC
4. Provision of reference service (SDI and CAS) through the library Facebook page and WhatsApp
5. Marketing library resources and services

Challenges in use of mobile technologies and social media in libraries

⟶ **Poor ICT infrastructure - broadband penetration was low. The LAN was been built, small Internet bandwidth**

⟶ **Inadequate skills by both librarians and library users**

⟶ **Unreliable electricity- Not connected to the national grid**

⟶ **Cost of Integrating Mobile Technology- procurement**

⟶ **Mobile device concerns- small size and eye strain**

⟶ **Sustainability**

Conclusions

⟶ Contemporary library users are heavy consumers of social media.

⟶ Many libraries in worldwide are using social media technologies and mobile services for providing library services and resources.

⟶ These technologies offer relatively cheap opportunity for provision of Library Services and resources

⟶ Proper Planning and acquisition of adequate resources (human resource and finances) and collaborations with other institutions within and without the continent is necessary for successful of adoption of any technology especially in Africa.

Recommendations

1. **Appoint a library staff specifically to manage and promote social media, mobile and emerging technology;**

2. **Need to develop a policy and strategy pertaining the use of emerging technologies within the library & entire university;**

3. **Rigorously market the library's social media platforms to all library users;**

4. **Increase the number of library Kindle Fires and laptops to meet the growing number of library users;**

5. **Train library users on effective use of social media and devices, such Kindles and other mobile devices;**

6. **The Management of the Library should improve the internet connectivity;**

7. **Install a solar system in the library as an alternative to the unreliable electricity.**

Progress since completion of research

⟶ Currently Muni University actively uses Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter for provision of services and resources

⟶ Continue to advocate for the use of Mobile Technologies and Social Media use in Education.

⟶ A librarian was assigned the responsibility of managing and promoting the library social media and mobile technologies

⟶ University Social Media policy is been developed after presentation of the findings of this study to the university community

⟶ The library has continued to acquire more kindle Fires whose demand outweighs the current numbers

⟶ The library in collaboration with Peace Corps (Lecturer) in Dept. of Nursing won a grant to procure 20 laptops loaned to students

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Thank you

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