# Use of Social Media in Library Services: A Best Practice at Binghamton University Library

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**Abstract**

*Social media denotes the websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. In this digital era modern libraries use social media as a platform for knowledge sharing, information dissemination and communication. This paper describes use of social media in Binghamton university libraries. Authors have taken Facebook, twitter, YouTube and Pinterest for study. The study focus two aspects: type of content published and user engagement to evaluate the response.*

**Keywords:** Binghamton University Library, Facebook, Social Media, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest

## 1.  Introduction

Social media has transformed every sphere of life. It exists everywhere from searching day to day news to interact your family members or community. One cannot deny that it is powerful. It is an interactive platform where content can be created, distributed and shared to a large amount of audience in least time. Content can include any type of information, document, videos and photos. It encourages the users to participate in social media.

Social media opens the door for library and other business firm for easy and convenient marketing of their products and services. It is interactive. They get feedback from customers which helps them to understand what actually the customers' requirements. Now a day many libraries also adopt social media channels for reaching to their users. Social media channels are freely available and easy to use. Only you need to participate. Then you can create your own contents. Library can easily promote about its products and services. Users can access in any device- desktop, laptop or mobile phone. Library reaches to its user's door step. It helps users to get access their library content anytime anywhere. Library can easily reach large number of users anywhere anytime they want. Library can also build an online community and engage their users sharing useful and interesting information. By this library can attract attention of users towards library which gives much visibility for and usage of library service and resources and increase reputation of library.

To implement social media as a channel of communication and interaction with customers one need to develop a social media strategy. Social media strategy includes organization's decision about the following concepts:

(i)  Goal and Objective: What will be the goals and objectives for using social media as a channel?

(ii)  Audience:  Who are the audience? What they want to consume? Where do they engage?

(iii) Channel to use: Which can be the best social media channel to use?

(iv) User engagement: What can be interesting topics and content to attract their attention? How they can actively interact and give their feedback?

Various types of social media channels can be used by library for different purpose. Some of them are like information communication (Facebook, twitter, blog etc.), Content creation (YouTube, Wikipedia etc.) and knowledge organization (Net vibe, Delicious etc.).

Binghamton University is one of top ranking world Class University in New York, USA. It offers students a broad, interdisciplinary education with international perspective. Binghamton university library has also developed a digitized and modern library. Binghamton university central library use various modern tools and social media channels for communicating with users and give information about library services.

## 2. Purpose of Study

The authors have taken social media use of Binghamton university library as a best practice. The purpose of this study is to highlight various popular social media channels and its features.

- ❖ To understand how social media can be used for dissemination of library services and products.

- ❖ To throw light which type of contents can be posted in social media by library.

- ❖ To study user's engagement to know how audience of library participate or respond in social media.

- ❖ To encourage other libraries to use social media for developing awareness about library resources and increase their visibility and reputation.

## 3. Methodology

The authors have taken a case study of use of social media in Binghamton University library. For this study data have been collected by visiting various social networking sites of Binghamton University library and go through various types of contents posted within six months' period. After data collection all data have been analyzed type of services given and try to understand users' engagement to know how far it is responded by its users. Authors also collect data through Facebook chat with librarian to know about certain queries about social media policy and use, which is responsible for posting social media content, type of content to be posted, policy regarding reviewing or deleting comments.

## 4. Use of Social Media in Binghamton University Library

Binghamton university library has its various type of social media channel. One Library professional is in charge of managing all SM account. It has its own social media strategy. Mainly post related to Binghamton university library related, Parent organization related and content related to libraries and reading overall. Usually they have a policy to remove comments by audience if they are inappropriate. Authors have taken only Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest platform for the study.

### 4.1. FACEBOOK (website: https://www.facebook.com/BinghamtonUnivLibraries/ )

Facebook is the most popular most growing social networking site. One need to create an account in Facebook to participate. It helps mainly for profile development, discussion board, create communities

and pages; through its wall post one can share text message, videos and photos. Instant chat is also possible in Facebook. Audience can like share and comment on post.

Binghamton University maintains a Facebook account which is frequently post messages, videos and photos related to library and various activities. It helps for marketing and sharing of information, promoting communication, visibility and interaction with users. From analyzing data posted in Facebook page of BU Library. The type of information which has shared is as follows:

| Type of service | Services provided is about |
| --- | --- |
| Event promotion | - Awards received library (SLA Conference fellowship)<br>- Program/Events/News.<br>- Information about scholarship/Seminar conducted by library<br>- Information about scholarship. |
| Library service Promotion | - New staff (Their specialization & Work)<br>- Reference service (Summer session –timing)<br>- Picture of students studying in reading area (libraries beyond studying).<br>- New library services-Hiring staff for SM/Cataloging & Metadata management librarian. |
| Resource promotion | - Special collection picture (Note).<br>- Photos of various section of library.<br>- Finding books from fine art collection<br>- New resources (Library) (Announcement for easier discovery and access).<br>- Digital book.-New research from institute |
| Teaching tool promotion | - How to manage your research citation at our reference work (give link to online resource helps).<br>- Using Google scholar for academic research.<br>- How to conduct research for your class (link to research guide). |
| Promote courses | - Another reason to study library science. |

**4.2. TWITTER** (website: https://twitter.com/bingulibraries)

It's a most popular social media platform now a day. It consists of broadcasting of short messages to world that can be useful & interest to someone. It has some feature and restriction as well. A tweet is only 140 characters available to share information.

One can post text messages, image or short video. Users can group posts together by topic or type by use of hashtags. It also had an adding and following feature. Binghamton University tweets and retweets about various library related topics: event, day celebration, new resource added, new recruitments, special collection etc.

**4.3 YOUTUBE** (website: https://www.youtube.com/user/BinghamtonULibraries )

YouTube is a free-hosting video streaming websites that allows all members to watch, store and share video content. Binghamton University has created various type of video collection, playlists to make patrons aware and teach about various library resources.

| Type of service | Services provided is about: |
|---|---|
| Information about how to use database | - How to Use Scopus. <br> - How to Use Web of Science, Emerald etc. <br> - How to Use ScienceDirect |
| Library orientation program | - Library of Congress Classification: How books are organized in Academic Libraries. <br> - Locating a Book on the Shelf. <br> - How to Use Library Different Section. <br> - Why Use Library Resource. |
| Research helps | - How to Use Research Guide, Google Scholar etc. <br> - How to Use Reference Management Tools. <br> - How to Check Plagiarism. <br> - How to Search NBER Working Papers. <br> - Citation help. |
| Subject-specific databases | - How to Use EconLit <br> - How to Use Business Insights: <br> - How to Use MRIPlus |

**4.4 PINTEREST**

(website: https://in.pinterest.com/buspecialcollec/ )

It's an online service that allows its user to share images through social networking. It has feature like pin, boards, Guided Search, following etc. Collection of pin is called "board" in Pinterest. Through Pinterest Binghamton University library share:

❖ Rare book covers;

❖ Different pages of book;

❖ Binghamton university architecture;

❖ Local history;

❖ Column collection;

❖ Civil war collection;

❖ Visitors of special collection

❖ Book of the month;

❖ About different events of library and BU.

**5. Users Engagement in Social Media of Binghamton University Library:**

Users' engagement in social media is a major way to understand whether your main goal to use social media is fulfilling or not. Mainly this can be known by studying the followers, comments, like to post, tweet followers etc. Binghamton University library has got a better response for its audience. The statistics is as follows:

| Name of SM Channel | Followers | Likes/views |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 1381 | 1312 |
| Twitter | 1447 | 7612 |
| YouTube | 250 | 86123 |
| Pinterest | 175 | - |

## 6. Prospects and constraints of using Social Media in Academic Library

Social media are free and open websites that helps library users to simply sign up an account and participate in collaborative content creation and use. It creates many prospects for library to give effective services. Some of them are like:

### 6.1. 24*7 User Engagement

Face book, Twitter helps library in staying connected and follow large number of patrons anytime anywhere. Social media channel like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest give interesting and multimedia environment which assists library to connect with potential users and add new users to library.

### 6.2 Quick Prompt Information Delivery

Twitter tweet and facebook wall post make it convenient for library in providing immediate information to its clienteles and also get instant reaction from them. It acts as an effective feedback mechanism to understand interest of area of users.

In Facebook library users can like and comment on a post an share post to their facebook friends. In twitter patrons can subscribe various library related content and retweet on post.

### 6.3 Marketing the Product and Services

Facebook and Twitter can help in effective promotion and marketing of library services- about library, distributes news, events, services or resources etc.

It assists in maintaining good relation with customers and develop and customize its post keeping in mind target audience. It results in increasing value to library reputation and social media presence.

### 6.4. User Orientation and Visual Content

In Youtube helps library can create video in developing various subscribed products- how to use them and also orientation about library. Library orientation video can be posted in twitter and Facebook post.

### 6.5. Cas Service VIA SM

Social media is a popular platform to share new arrival, table of content of subscribed journals, research publication of institute through post.

### 6.6. Multimedia and Visual Environment:

Pint rest gives platform to create info graphic, floor map via photo. Facebook and Twitter also helps for sharing image and videos.

**Despite of all prospects SM also creates some challenges to manage and maintain.**

**7.1**. Twitter Facebook are addictive and clienteles can waste valuable time.

7.2 Facebook Twitter are open forum so institute need to develop policy and guideline for proper management. Social media is also known for bias content, diversion can be created.

**7.3.** Contents posted in social media also difficult to gain trust and also copyright issue.

**7.4.** Many people create fake accounts and post bad comments on Facebook post and Tweet. It is not easy to review comments.

7.5 Spamming is difficult to control in social media.

**7.6.** Protection from criticism and protecting data privacy is not easy in social media.

## 8. Findings and Conclusion

Academic library who use social media channel for communication, they use it as institution, not as an individual. While posting messages the style of language is always need to be formal and decent. Their main aim is usability, promotion and marketing of services & product and develop interaction with users. Social media acts as a bridge between valuable content and audience. Library use all posts which are relevant and add value to its patrons. Though services from library to library may vary. Use of social media in Binghamton university library can be a model for other libraries to use social media as a platform for communication and marketing.

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