# A STUDY OF USE AND UTILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PROMOTION OF TODAY'S LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

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**Abstract:**-Social media has become the prime need of the day for the people to stay in touch with each other. The impact of social networking sites can be seen in each and every aspect of human activities. Library and Information Services are also affected by the usefulness of Social media tools and now Library and Information Professionals are also using social networking sites to promote various services of their respective libraries in the users' community. The users also find it easy to get in touch with Library and Information Services by using Social Networking tools by simply sitting at a place. This study deals with the usage and importance of selected tools and techniques of social media which are now widely used by Library and Information Center for the promotion of their services and invite users for interaction in knowledge searching process. The study reveals the usefulness of social media tools for Library and Information Professionals and highlights the utility of social networking sites on day to day proceedings of the present day Libraries and Information centers of all types.

**Keywords:** social media, social networking, blogs, digital library, facebook, digital reference service, youtube; twitter, wikis, flickr

## 1.INTRODUCTION

In today's world interaction among people is very important for establishing contacts between each other as well as to discuss or share views on different aspects of life. For this type of interaction, social media is playing an important role in joining one individual of a community to the other member of any community. Interaction among people has reached up to the level, that they are now sharing each and every aspect of their social life using social networking sites. This is the time when people want to stay in touch with the others even without physical presence. Social media in social networking form is very much popular which gives direct access to its patrons with a simple login formality. As the impact of Social media is felt in each and every sphere of human activities, Library and Information Science field is not an exception of it. Libraries impart their services to the users of all categories and communication or interaction between the users and Library professionals enhances the effective utilization of Library resources. In the area of Library and Information Science, Information providers are directly related to public/ users where interaction skills play important role. Information Science being service oriented field, many of the social media tools can be best applied for faster and effective service depending upon the need of clientele or patron. Keeping this in view, this profession has adopted all the phases of technological advances from time to time, right from computer based services to internet based social networking.

## 2. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media refers to all those tools, software, techniques and applications mostly accessible online and used by the people to stay connected with their peers without changing their positions. According to Wikipeadia, Social Media includes web-based and mobile based technologies which are used to turn communication into

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interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals. It is ubiquitously accessible, and enabled by scalable communication techniques. social media may be classified as following. 1

- Social Networking
- Wikis
- Blogs
- Social Book marking
- Video Sharing tools and services

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the applications of social media in Library and Information activities.
- To know about the tools and services of social media those are useful in Library and Information Services.
- To know about the present and future scenario of social media tools in providing useful services to the Library users.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

Print and online scholarly journals were scanned and information and screenshots from different Library's sites has been collected for this study.

## 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Only few Libraries' websites which are using some of the popular social networking tools have been taken and searched for the collection of required information.

## 6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mandal 2 studied about blog or weblog and explain blog technology, its features and various steps of the creation of a blog. He gives the full account of use of blogs in Library and Information services for users, links to recommended internet sources, book reviews, book discussions, research tips, communication among libraries, alerting services, promote library events and collection development. Sachs, Eckel and Langan concluded 3 that Facebook is one of the fastest growing social networking sites. They also measured user comfort and satisfaction with a library's presence on Facebook of Western Michigan University. The majority of respondents found Facebook to be a useful and engaging medium to learn about library resources and services. The result of this study indicates that an effective Library Facebook page must maintain a balance between providing pertinent and useful information and preserving patron privacy. The survey of 14 peer institutions concludes that most libraries use Facebook for marketing and outreach purposes. Jacobson 4 reported that use of Facebook in the libraries is to identify discrepancies between intended goals and actual use. Results of the test reveal that the two ranks are not statistically different but there is a noticeable difference when looking at the perceived and actual ranking qualitatively. Clements 5 reported that, because of the rapid development in social networking software and use, open source software is chosen as the most appropriate option. It discussed about the implementation of an instant messaging reference service in the context of online student learning experience. Brantley 6 studied using library-specific terms to search public social networking sites, blog search engines and social book marking sites for activity associated with librarian and library users. The result follows a curve resembling the 80/20 rule and also resembles Chris Anderson's long tail effect, in which very few authors create the vast amount of content. Ramos and Abrigo 7 reveal that the full potential of Reference 2.0 has not yet been maximized. When it comes to reference services in academic libraries, students and faculty members have chosen to go online and used tools like, Ask-a-Librarian, web forms, e-mail and Facebook. A significant increase in the number of reference transaction was observed after integrating Web 2.0 and digital reference tools to its information services. Forsyth and Perry 8 studied about the recording events, promoting collections, and services which dominate the public library use of Flickr. It allows an easy sharing of images of events, people can comment on library images including events in they participated in.

## 7. WHY PEOPLE USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

- Sharing of views/ ideas to each other.
- Sending awareness on any of the current problem.
- Disseminating information possessed by them and wanted to make them highlighted.
- Support to a valid cause or asking support for a cause.
- This is assumed to be the fast means to spread awareness with in a very short span of time.

## 8. UTILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

As social media is affecting each and every corner of human activities, therefore libraries can not be spared from using social media tools for day to day activities. As Libraries are social institutions and can use social media to disseminate various user oriented services. We can say that libraries when use social media will definitely help their users in such a way that they can get their desired services while sitting at a place and also stay connected with their peer group. It is the demand of time for libraries to use social media as a strong tool and expand their outreach towards user's satisfaction.

❖ Social media can help as a great tool for libraries to expand their services.
❖ Discussion can be held about the satisfaction of the services provided by the libraries.
❖ Helpful in getting opinions from the users and making reforms according to the suggestions.
❖ Social media is helpful in providing Virtual Reference Service.
❖ Users can be notified about the decisions taken for the betterment of the services.
❖ Reminders for various occasions can be issued to the persons concerned.
❖ There is no need for the users to present in the library to know about latest advancements. They can be online to know the latest updates. Many libraries provide Rich site summary (RSS) feeds to aware users on latest news and save their precious time.
❖ Tools like Slide Share are being used to demonstrate users about important topics.
❖ Video sharing tools like You Tube is being used to archive video clips of some important seminars and occasions.
❖ Social book marking sites like Delicious are used to share the bookmarks and promote the use of online resources.
❖ Social networking site for like Library and Information Science (LIS) Links is being used by the working Library professions to discuss various aspects related to Library and Information Services.

## 9. LIBRARIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN PRESENT SCENARIO

● Libraries are using You Tube videos as a marketing channel and also an educational medium.
● Many Libraries are using social media tools to educate users and marketing of resources and services.
● Many libraries will seek ways to create mobile apps for providing various services and not just from its website.
● As more database venders create mobile apps, libraries will be able to offer more services to patrons via mobile.
● Book review sites such as Good reads and Library thing will be used by more libraries as tool for offering book reviews and for locating new books to read.
● Libraries can use online gaming sites as a marketing tool.
● Libraries can use Google apps for a variety of functions including e-mail.

## 10. APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS IN PRESENT DAY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

### 10.1 Blogs

Blog is an online diary where one can post information (not only text but also audio, photographs and videos) on a regular basis. There are some related terms in creating blogs like blogger, blogging, blogging software, blogrolling, blogsphere. Blogging software makes it easier for people to create blogs. Blogrolling is the act of moving from one blog to another and blogosphere is the world or community of blogs and blogging. 9
Libraries are quite aware to use blogs in their routine as lots of blogs are written every day by the librarians to inform their patrons about the latest advance in the field of Library and Information Science. It helps the people to know about others view on certain issues by commenting on a particular blog. Library users also eagerly wait to update themselves by reading useful blogs.

**Fig. 1 Blogs service at Library of Congress. 10**



## 10.2 Flickr

Flickr is used to share pictures and photographs. It is one of the famous tools in social media.

The two main uses of Flickr are for recording events and promoting collections of Libraries. Other specified uses included tours of libraries, providing photos to press and social media for promotional purposes, photography competitions, sharing information about library initiatives with other library professionals, exhibits at shows, advertising the library building, display of heritage images and fun. 11

Recording events, promoting collections and services dominate the public library use of Flickr. What is available, both collection and services and the recording of events (as both a promotion and a record) can be shared. Flickr allows an easy sharing of images of events and people can comment on the library images including events in which they participated.

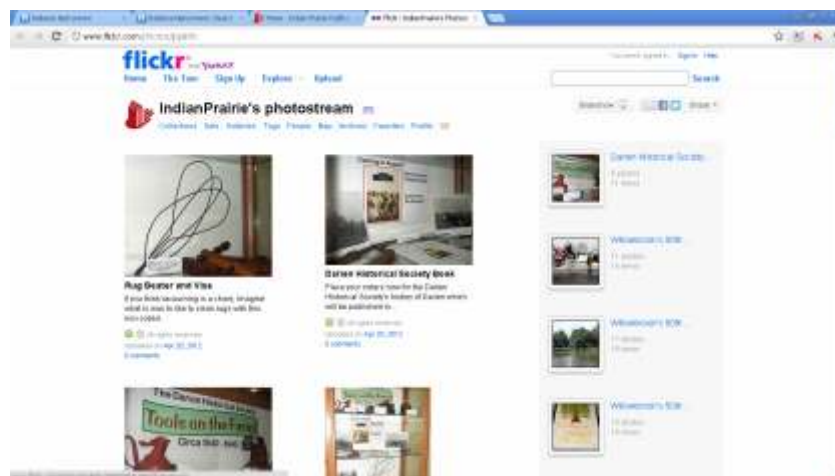**Fig. 2 Flickr's service at Indian Pairie Library 12**

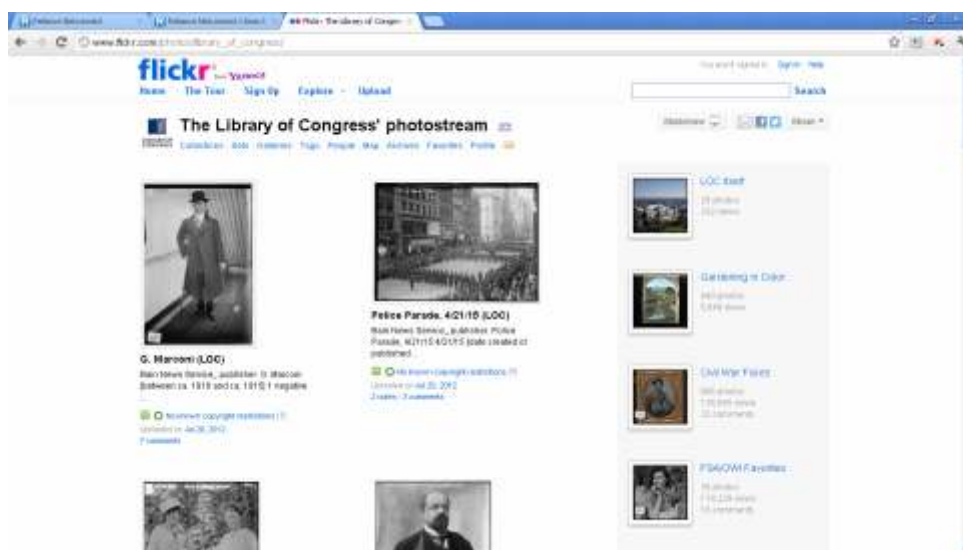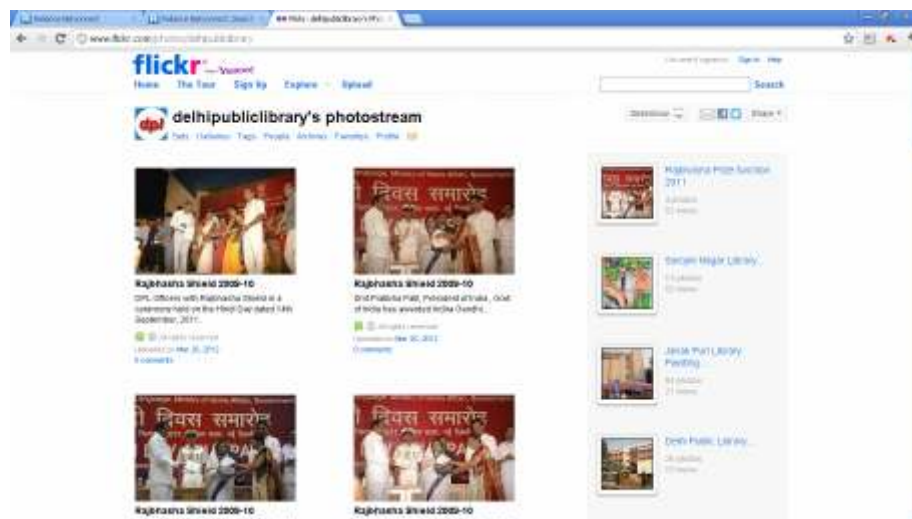**Fig. 3  Flickr's service at  Library of Congress 13**



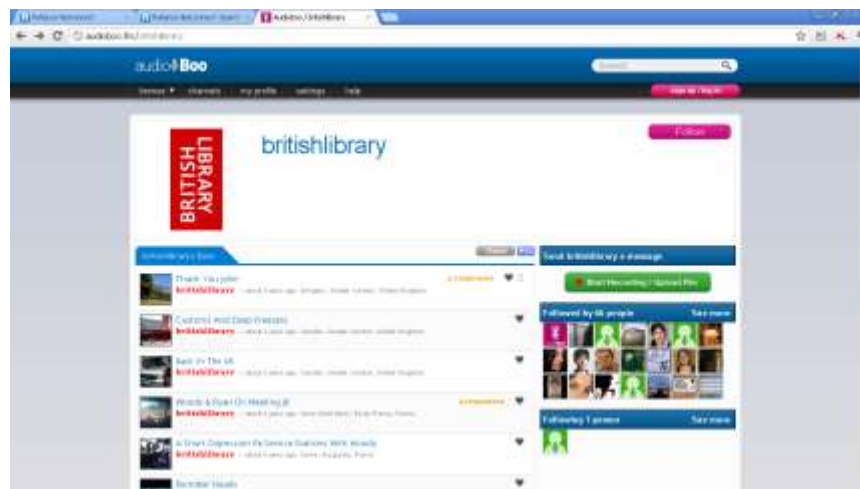**Fig. 4  Flickr's service at Delhi Public Library 14**



### 10.3 LibGuides

LibGuides is used to embed subject guide within the facebook page through the social networking medium and to expand the chat and message function available through Facebook itself. Harlen Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of  Michigan has created a Facebook page incorporating a catalogue search function, ask a librarian, LibGuides, a world cat search and links to all essential library web pages. Essentially the goal of creating a Facebook page is to provide customized library services within Facebook itself rather than merely redirecting users to the official website. 15

### 10.4 Podcasting

It is a type of digital media consisting of an episode series of audio files subscribed to and download through web syndication or streamed online to a computer or mobile device. British Library is using this tool to audio sounds to disseminate to its users.

**Fig. 5  Podcasting service at British Library. 16**



## 10.6 Pinterest

Pinterest could be quite useful for public libraries and other types of libraries having a large audience. Libraries can attain interest of users using Pinterest by creating a board for new books received within the past few weeks or months and for each one of the major collections and sharing the most popular items as pins or by creating boards with pins for the library display's or rare collections.

## 10.7 You Tube

You Tube is the video sharing media which helps the libraries to share the important videos of lectures, meetings, seminars and lesson plans to its patrons. There are so many libraries using this media to publicize their contents so that the users can take advantage of all the lectures and important meeting which they might have missed. Libraries are uploading content on You Tube that is useful to maximum number of people.
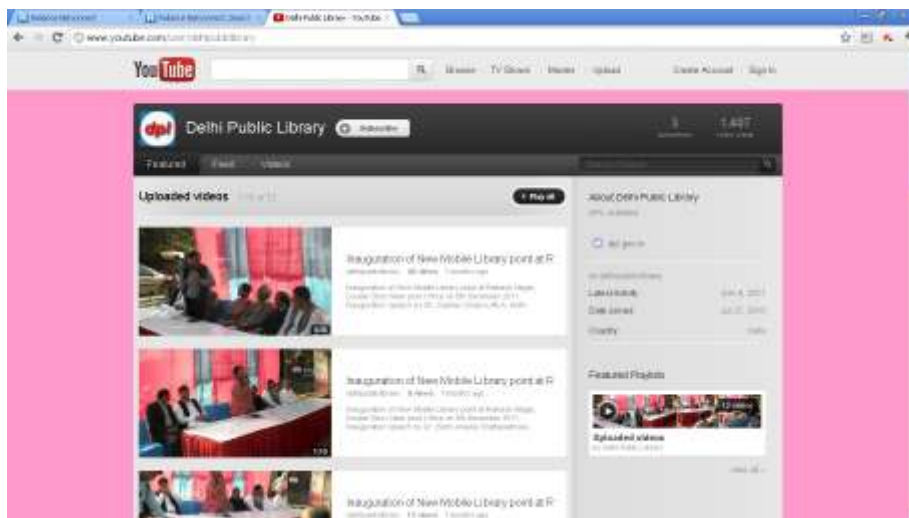
**Fig. 6 You Tube service at Delhi Public Library. 17**

**Fig. 7  You Tube service at Library of Congress 18**



## 10.8 Facebook

Facebook is one of famous Social networking site which is used by youth to stay connected with their friends. It helps to find their old friends and to make new friends and to share photos and videos. A lot of studies regarding the Facebook applicability in libraries explore that Facebook has become a chief media for the libraries to make their patrons informed and invide them to share their views on different topics. It is increasing the libraries' applicability and provides the users a big platform for the exploration and use of library tools and services.

**Fig. 8 Facebook service at Library of Congress 19**

**Fig. 9  Facebook service at Delhi Public Library 20**



**Fig. 10 Facebook service at Indian Prairies Library 21**



### 10.9 Twitter

Twitter is also quite popular these days. The messages by the people for the people in the form of tweets help to know about the views of a particular person over an issue. The reaction on a tweet by the other people by following the same tweet shows that they are really interested in the discussion. In libraries, Librarians are also using Twitter to get users reactions over some important issues. As this is a real time work and instant responses one can get, shows the popularity of Twitter in the libraries. Libraries like Delhi Public Library, Library of congress and Indian Prairies Libraries use Twitter to make their patrons and the professionals to stay connected all the time. Information regarding latest advancements can be shared by library professions to the patrons and also can get their opinions regarding the same issue.

**Fig. 11  Twitter  service at Delhi Public library 22**



**Fig. 12 Twitter  service at Library of Congress 23**
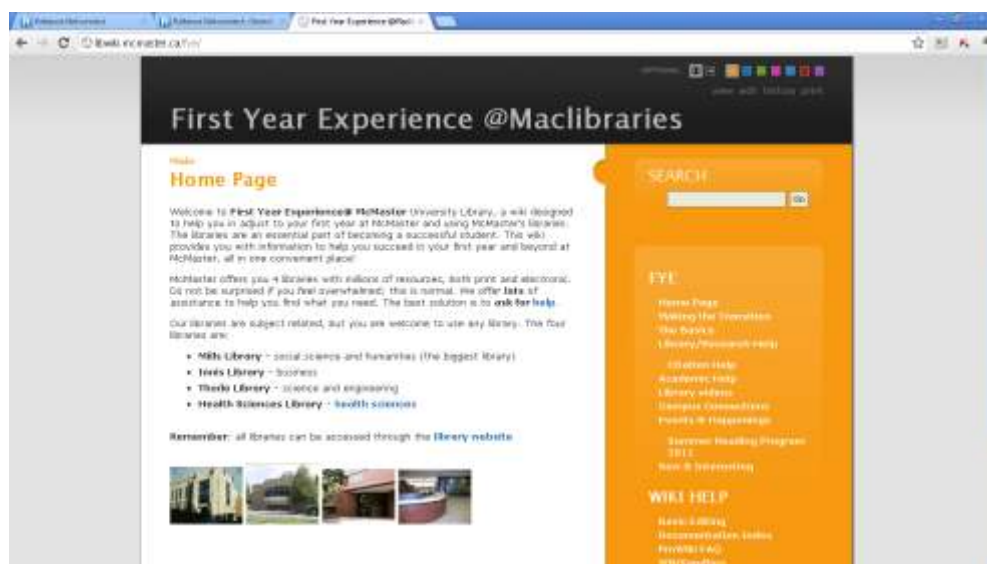


### 10.10 Wikis

Wikis are collaborative web pages allowing for high user participation. They allow users to create web pages and documents as a collaborative community. Wiki users can edit the content as they read and related pages are linked with in the text to make it easy to move from the wiki to another related site. Within academic libraries, Wikis are primarily used for the creation of collaborative subject guides. Academic libraries can create subject Wikis with links to resources on a chosen topic or for a particular class, including information regarding relevant databases and search tips tailored to that subject. 24

**Fig. 13 Wiki service at Queen's University Library 25**



**Fig. 14 Wiki service at Mc master University Library 26**



### 10.11 Moodle

Moodle i.e. Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment is a free source e- learning software platform. It is also known as Learning Management System. It was originally developed by Martin Dongiamad to help education, to create online courses with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of academic content. It is available under GNU license. 27

**Some of the special features of Moodle is:-**

- ❖ Assignment submission.
- ❖ Discussion forum.
- ❖ Blog.
- ❖ File download.
- ❖ Grading.
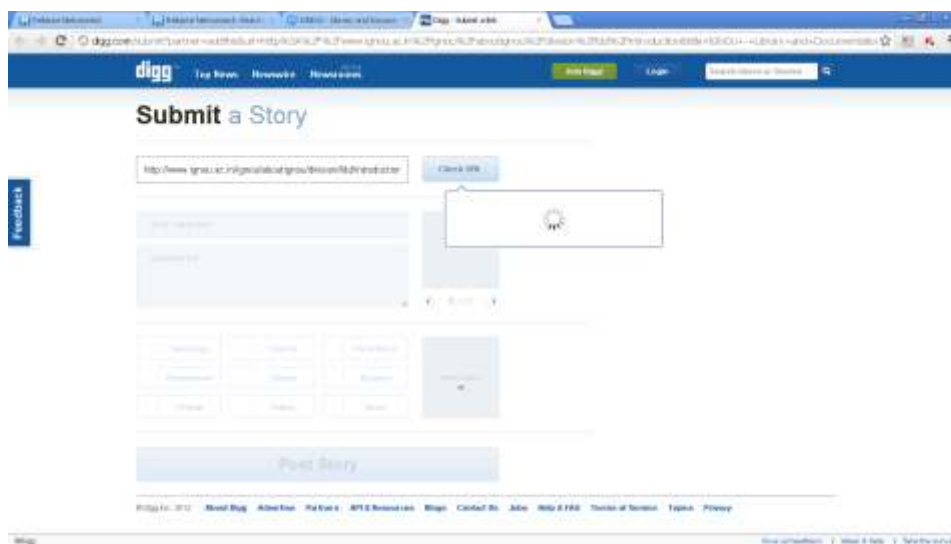
❖ Instant messaging.
❖ Online calendar.
❖ Online news.

**Fig. 15  Moodle service at New York Theological Seminary Library 28**



### 10.12 Digg

Digg is a social news website. Its originalities lies in such library operations where the users are allowed to vote for web content up or down that is called digging. 29 The Digg service in Indira Gandhi National Open University's library is used to submit content from the user's side.
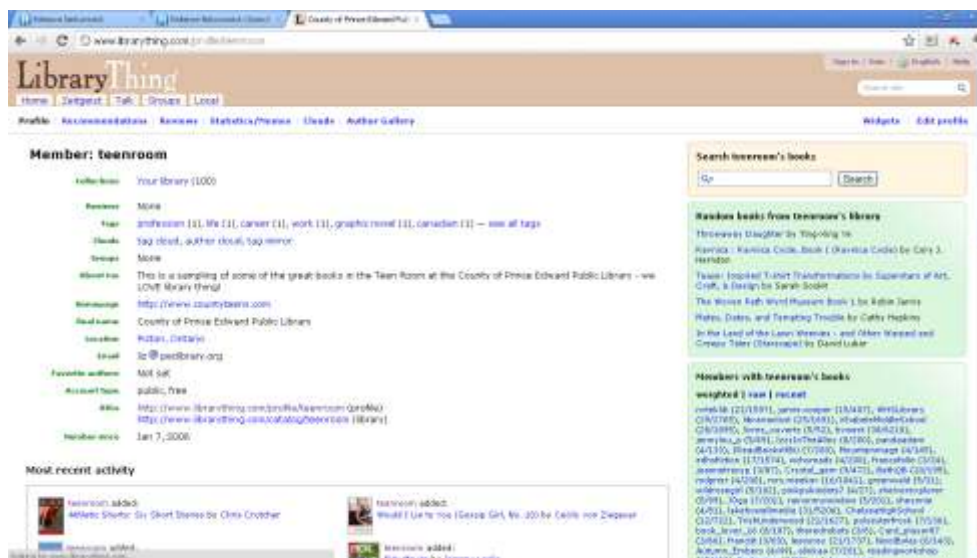
**Fig. 16  Digg service  at IGNOU's Library 30**



### 10.13 LibraryThing

According to Wikipedia LibraryThing is a social cataloguing web application for storing and sharing book catalogs and various types of book metadata. The primary feature of LibraryThing is the cataloguing of books by importing data from libraries through Z39.50 connections. 31
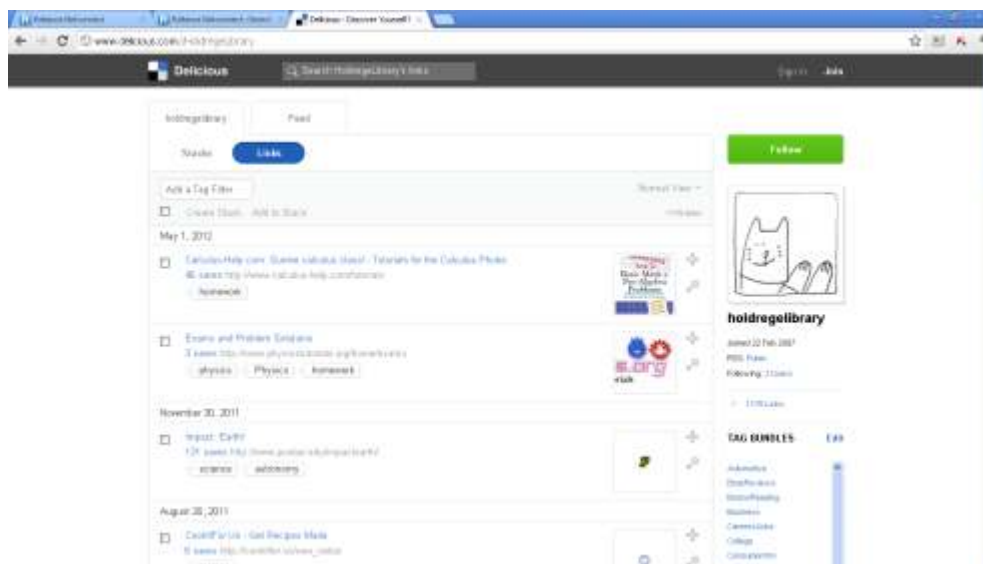
**Fig. 17  LibraryThing service at Country of Prince Edward Public Library. 32**



### 10.14 Delicious

It is one the most important social book marking tools for storing and discovering web bookmarks. It helps library patrons to share their personal bookmarks so that their distant friends can also use it without saving it in to their system.  33

**Fig. 18  Delicious service at Holdrege Library. 34**



### 10.15 Slide Share

According to Wikipedia, Slideshare is a web2.0 based slide hosting service. Library professionals can upload files privately or publicly for the use of the patrons so that the users of libraries may be demonstrated some of the important topics through the library's website. 35

**Fig. 19  Slide Share service at Ohio Public Library. 36**



## 11. LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is a technology dependent tool. Without necessary ICT enabled Infrastructure, it is not possible to go with it. The people may afraid to share their personal details online as they treat it as a risk. It is seen that only few libraries are using social media tools to their websites. For the authenticity of reference services delivered to them, the users prefer to have reference services by visiting personally. In India very few libraries are using social media tools and their usage is confined with Face book, Twitter, Flickr and You Tube only. Social Networking tools can only be useful to the users who are having internet accessibility at their place. In India digital divide comes in the way of full utilization of Social Media tools.

## 12. FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN LIBRARIES

Social Media will become an indispensable part of each activity of modern virtual libraries.  As the Information managers will not help users in face to face mode, these tools will definitely help users to fetch information from the vast ocean of library databases. Social Media will ensure the applicability of virtual reference service. The users will find Social Networking a useful, reliable and time saving tool to connect with library recourses as well as with their friends simultaneously. Social Networking sites will upgrade their usability in library activities and more and more users' participation is expected to take the services up to the mark.

## 13. CONCLUSION

Social media with its tools and services are very useful in providing Library and Information services to users. Here the most important step is to make the users aware about the effective use of Social Networking. You Tube, Facebook, Twitter and Flickr are identified as the prime social media tools which are being used by many Libraries these days. Some of the libraries are inviting their patrons for healthy discussion over some topics with the help of blogs. Social media tools are a boon for library services but they will be effective only after bridging the gap of digital divide and by spreading necessary awareness regarding their effective usage among the masses.

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