Marketing and Promotion of Library Services Using Web 2.0: An Annotated Mediagraphy

T. Ivie
B. McKay
F. May
J. Mitchell
H. Mortimer, et al.
Marketing and Promotion of Library Services Using Web 2.0: An Annotated Mediagraphy

by Tom Ivie, Bev McKay, Fiona May, Jill Mitchell, Holly Mortimer, and Lizzy Walker

Marketing and promotion are important for any organization that provides services to consumers. Marketing and promotion allow an organization to inform, remind, or persuade the consumer by sharing information about goods or services, community involvement, or societal impact. Simply stated, these efforts encompass anything libraries do to let the community know who they are, what they do, and what they offer. The goal of marketing is to keep the product in the minds of the customer: in the case of libraries it is to keep the customer aware of the library, to provide them with knowledge about the library's physical features, resources, services, programs, and events, and to let them know about the benefits libraries offer. Marketing and promotion benefit the library by increasing usage, educating users, and increasing or at least maintaining a positive perception of the library.

Libraries often attempt to create, develop, or maintain a recognizable brand for the consumer. This requires approaching the situation from the users’ viewpoint by getting into their space. Many libraries have found Web 2.0 platforms to be effective as most of today's consumers utilize some form of social media. Libraries can communicate to consumers through podcasts, blogs, social bookmarking, social networking, videos, photos, wikis, and mobile apps.

This annotated mediagraphy provides online sources for information on marketing and promoting libraries using Web 2.0, including YouTube videos, blogs, and articles on podcasting, mobile apps, and Facebook.

Sections:
- Websites
- YouTube Videos
- Blogs, Wikis and Mobile Apps
- Facebook

Websites


Information Today maintains a multi-faceted website whose articles, links, and information are useful to many librarians. It focuses on knowledge management and marketing for the information, knowledge, and content management sector. This web guide points to articles, books, periodicals, directories, and online products to help libraries become more marketable. Although this website has a plethora of information for marketing the library, it also includes links to several other information management sites.


One-stop shopping for libraries implementing technology is available at ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP). They publish policy briefs, including the recent, "There's an App for That! Libraries and Mobile Technology: An introduction to public policy considerations." In the brief, consultant Timothy Vollmer discusses policy and legal considerations regarding mobile apps, including digital rights management, licensing, and accessibility. Other documents consider copyright, best practices, and the future of libraries as related to technology. OITP states the purpose of its publications as follows: "OITP
produces and disseminates publications to inform and engage national policymakers, the library community, and other relevant communities." This site is useful in focusing the ongoing conversation among library workers about marketing tools that work.

YouTube Videos


One of ALA's 2009 presidential candidates, Kenton Oliver, used YouTube to respond to a question regarding his candidacy. He was asked how he feels about ALA using social media to promote library advocacy. Oliver states that as librarians become comfortable with social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and live blogging, ALA should accordingly expand its use of these forms of communication to promote libraries. As a candidate for president of this influential organization, Oliver used YouTube to promote ALA specifically and libraries in general.


Take a library tour on a book cart with a funny host who points out useful places and items in a college library. The video offers a light-hearted example of a college library introduction for new students. The information desk staffer gives a brief directional tour in the format of an airline stewardess. The reference librarian gives a brief synopsis of the materials available, access to thousands of sources, and offers the help of the reference librarian. While this video is humorous, it also provides general information for the academic student user. A follow up video for returning students or for more advanced library research would be welcome. However, the filming and production of this video was fluid and well done.


Need some inspiration for a "shout out" to your local library? Here it is! This YouTube broadcast, produced by the New York Public Library, is a compilation of celebrities describing why the library is important. It is intended to motivate patrons to search out the places, people, and information the library has to offer. While the celebrities discuss the library in esoteric terms, they also reminisce about memories from childhood. They cite formative adult experiences as well, noting the importance of keeping libraries open. Towards the end of the video there is a segment that has everyday, ordinary people explain what the library means to them. There were so many celebrities involved in this project that the library could have made it into several videos. It is a well-produced promotional video. So stand up and give your library a Shout Out!


Culled from YouTube, Stephens posts a clever bit of popular culture horror combined with a public service announcement dedicated to keeping libraries open. The Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenberg County in Charlotte, North Carolina, produced a series of short films to illustrate the need for funding. Stephens’ blogging of this video benefits the PLCMC Library, as well as reaching out to bloggers who follow his feeds.


The Teen Advisory Board of Pueblo City-County Library created this promotion while they learned about creating videos. A tour of Teen Central, the students set up books to fall down domino-style through the area as the tour progresses. The action provides visual interest as the books meander through the library.
stacks; highlighting the books, graphic novels, and magazines in the collection. They also make their way through the well-lit study, reading, and computer areas. The domino tour ends at a computer catalog terminal. The video does not offer any dialogue but uses an upbeat sound track and on-screen titles to describe the various areas of Teen Central. This video was a well-done student production that could be followed up with similar tours through other areas of the library.

Blogs, Wikis and Mobile Apps


Many librarians appreciate blogger Sara Houghton-Jan, “The Librarian in Black,” from San Jose Public Library. Her comments on the subject of the integration of digital formats and library use are interesting. The first article addresses Wilde, Cranston, and Feldman from Colorado State University, who made use of Facebook advertisements and Google AdWords to reach out to library users. Also featured are “librarians' efforts” to get exposure for their library’s name. The post provides examples of what can be done to increase patronage through multimedia advertising.


This wiki page, devoted to library podcasting, provides a variety of information for libraries seeking to distribute information to their patrons. It is affiliated with "Library Success," a freely accessible wiki. The page offers a list of links to libraries and related organizations that offer podcasts. There are over fifty institutions listed, from Arizona State University to the Wadsworth, Ohio, Public Library. Following the list of links, there are instructions for how to create and publicize podcasts, including links to copyright-friendly music sites useful for creating soundtracks. Lastly, the entry includes references to a series of journal articles on the topic of library podcasting. This wiki is a fantastic starting point for any library interested in incorporating podcasting into its services.


Gale, a division of Cengage Learning, has developed two applications for mobile phones, one for Android devices and one for iOS devices. The applications, AccessMyLibrary Public Edition and College Edition, will allow users to access Gale resources through their phones. The Public Edition gives users access by utilizing subscriptions from libraries within a ten-mile radius of the user’s location. The College Edition offers students access to Gale subscriptions provided by their academic libraries. Students can log in anywhere and anytime by using their school email address. The applications are free and available from the iTunes store and the Android Marketplace. Public and academic libraries can increase patronage by publicizing the applications to their communities and making links available on library websites.


The New York Public Library has developed a mobile application for the technologically savvy patron. The New York Public Library Mobile Beta site supports a mobile OPAC and allows users to browse library locations, search the online catalog or the Web, view a digital gallery, find information about current exhibitions, and view their account information. The user is also able to ask a librarian via phone or email. The site includes FAQs and information about Mobile Beta. Finally, the site provides opportunities for users to provide feedback to enhance the interactivity and resources available.

Facebook

Sekyere, K. (2009). Too much Hullabaloo about Facebook in Libraries! Is it really
Why do libraries need Facebook? With 85% of four-year university students using this social networking medium, it seems obvious that libraries (particularly academic libraries) should incorporate Facebook as a marketing tool. The flip side of having libraries on Facebook, however, is the question of whether users want to interact with libraries on social networking sites. While some people view Facebook as a waste of time, librarians can use it to increase a library's visibility or highlight upcoming events. Librarians report that they receive requests for assistance from students via Facebook. Libraries can use Facebook for communicating, public relations, and networking. Librarians will find this article useful as support in persuading administrators that having a library Facebook page will help promote happenings in the library.


This article offers excellent ideas to bring libraries up to speed on Web 2.0. College students visit Facebook more frequently than the library website, according to Thornton, a Tennessee college librarian. By setting up a fan page in Facebook, libraries can list the services they offer, share photos, and inform users of the latest news. Facebook also offers an easy to use application development platform. Libraries can develop a search widget and provide students with the ability to search the library's catalog from within Facebook. Getting users to join/like a library's Facebook page is the key, and until that happens the library has no way of keeping them informed. Because this is a crucial part of the process, Thornton believes that libraries must be aggressive in promoting their Facebook pages.

Tom Ivie, Bev McKay, Fiona May, Jill Mitchell, Holly Mortimer, and Lizzy Walker are Idaho library students in the SWIM cohort of the College of Information at the University of North Texas.

The Idaho Librarian (ISSN: 2151-7738) is a publication of the Idaho Library Association.