

University of Southern California

From the Selected Works of Win Shih

2016

Expanding Professional Network and Growth through Social Media

Win Shih

Jeannette E. Pierce, *University of Missouri*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/win_shih/29/

Expanding Professional Network and Growth through Social Media

Paper presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting, Cleveland, OH

Win Shih

University of Southern California, USA

Jeannette E. Pierce

University of Missouri, USA

Introduction

Libraries play a critical role in supporting the vision of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, UN 2030 Agenda (United Nations, 2015) and the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development (IFLA, 2014). Library and information professionals, therefore, are in a pivotal position to spearhead this new endeavor and make information and knowledge accessible to their constituencies for the betterment of their lives. Social media tools, employing the latest information and communications technologies, offer a collaborative platform for library and information professionals to create, share, and exchange information, career interests, innovative ideas, and best practices in virtual community and network. Furthermore, these tools are widely accessible, inexpensive, and mobile. They enable library professionals to connect, form partnerships, lead, advocate, and strategically influence decision-makers in an unprecedented manner. At the micro and personal level, social media tools further offer a low-cost option for developing personal learning networks, amplifying access to resources, building a grassroots community of practice, and strengthening professional reach and growth.

Review of Literature

Professional literature and anecdotal evidence suggest that many librarians are using social media for professional development. However, most empirical studies on this topic appear in the literature of the health care profession (e.g. Flickinger, O'Hagan, & Chisolm, 2015; Fuoco & Leveridge, 2015) and in the field of education (e.g. Carpenter & Krutka, 2014; Donelan, 2016; Rhode, Richter, & Gowen, 2015). In the library literature, several authors have advocated for using social media for professional development and provided valuable advice and how-to guidance (Bell, Dempsey, & Fister, 2015; Cooke, 2012; Forrestal, 2011; LaGarde & Whitehead, 2012; O'Connell, 2013; Stranack, 2012; Suffield, 2015; Turbitt, 2012). Additional discussion on creating personal learning networks employing social media can be found in less formal channels, such as blogs. However, there are relatively few empirical research studies that gather evidence to support such endeavors by library professionals (Dalton, 2013; Moreillon, 2015). Two studies identified positive results of using social media services as an important venue for building professional learning networks. Ford and Tolmie (2016) conducted an online survey, as well as a focus group interview, on how medical librarians use Twitter to collaborate with colleagues. Their findings show that Twitter is used by medical librarians at different degrees with varying success. They use it to share and communicate ideas, resources, seek help, and networking. In another study, Moreillon (2015) conducted a survey, interviews, and content analysis of in an online learning community of school librarians employing Twitter chats. She

found that this grassroots community of practice offered an affinity space that allowed its participants to share knowledge, network, and collaborate.

Two other studies, produced mixed results. In an online survey of cataloging professionals on their opinion and use of three conventional and three social media sources for professional development, Terrill (2014) found that each type of source had its strengths and limitations. Traditional information sources, including journal articles, conferences, and electronic discussion lists, are rated higher in importance, reliability, and participation than social media tools. Furthermore, there was a noticeable difference in usage pattern by participant's age. In another study, Dalton (2013) surveyed new LIS professionals about their attitude towards using Twitter in professional learning and networking and found that perceived time commitment and information overload, as well as lack of knowledge about the tool are the major hindrance of adoption. She noted that participants "have yet to fully embrace Twitter and are still somewhat unsure of how to integrate it fully within their professional workflows" (p. 108).

Research Objectives

This exploratory study aims to investigate the behavior of individual library professionals about their use or non-use of social media tools. Specifically, we are interested in learning how they employ a wide range of social media tools, including blogs, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), microblogging (e.g. Twitter, Snapchat), photo and video sharing sites (e.g. Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube), and RSS feeds, to keep up with work-related knowledge and skills, to expand their network, and to form collaborative working relationships. Moreover, we would like to identify the motivations, perceived benefits, challenges and concerns of using social media services and other emerging technologies in building one's learning network. The main research questions addressed are:

- How do library and information professionals currently use social media tools for professional development?
- What are the preferred social media platforms and why?
- What are the positive aspects, challenges, and concerns of using social media tools for professional development?
- What are the preferences among conventional channels and social media tools for professional development?

Methodology

This exploratory research utilizes structured interviews in soliciting qualitative data from 12 library professionals. Convenience sampling is used in recruiting the subjects within a short time frame. The 12 participants from five higher education institutions are acquaintances of the researchers. The interviews were conducted from May 20 to 26, 2016. Table 1 provides a summary of the background of the participants. The survey instrument (see Appendix) contains 16 questions in three categories. The first group of five questions focuses on the usage patterns

of social media. The next group of ten questions seeks comments on the motivation, benefits, and obstacles of using social media for professional development. Participant's demographic information is gathered from the last question.

Table 1.

Participant Characteristics

Area of Work	Administration	Information Technology	Public Services	Technical Services
Participant(s)	2	1	8	1
Years in Profession	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20+ Years
Participant(s)	4	5	1	2
Library Type	Academic Library	Health Sciences Library		
Participants	9	3		

Results**Social Media Usage**

Face Book and Twitter are the two most popular social media tools mentioned by the participants for both personal and professional use, followed by LinkedIn and Instagram. Other tools, only mentioned once by participants, include Pinterest, Podcasts, Scoop-It, SLACK, Snapchat, Yik Yak, and YouTube. When asked which is the primary tool used for professional development, Twitter emerged as the most popular one, followed by Face Book. Table 2 summarizes the usage of social media tools mentioned by participants.

Table 2.

Social Media Usage

Social Media	Face Book	Twitter	LinkedIn	Instagram
Use regularly	11	11	5	4
Primary	4	8	0	0

Frequency of Use

All but one participants reported that they use social media service(s) at least once a day. Some participants further stated that they check it multiple times throughout the day, as well as on week nights and weekends. Several participants reported that they have built a routine of accessing social media in a systematic manner:

I am on Twitter a lot. I check it several times a day. People say that every hour you should take a break to refresh your mind, so that is Twitter for me. When I need a break, I just get on Twitter and see what's happening. I am on it a lot.

I try to post at least two tweets a day... Sometimes, I feel I don't spend enough time on social media. There was times where I ask "did I post something today? Oops, let me post something."

I check [Facebook and Twitter] daily. Facebook, every three hours and Twitter twice a day. I commute on train, so I have more time to check.

I check Facebook daily, twice a day. Once in the morning and once during lunch time.

One librarian, who is a heavy contributor on both Facebook and Twitter, reported that she uses TweetDeck on weekends to schedule tweet events and postings related to her professional interests for the incoming week and manages multiple accounts. As an application interacting directly with Twitter, TweetDeck allows advanced users to manage multiple Twitter accounts simultaneously, schedule Tweets for posting, and managing their Tweet collections through its dashboard (Twitter, 2016b).

Not all social media have equal usage by participants. Twitter seems to gather the most frequent use on a daily basis, followed by Facebook. Other social media, such as LinkedIn, YouTube, are used on weekly basis for professional development. Frequency of use is also affected by occasions, especially at conferences. Backchanneling is a common practice at conferences where attendees use tools like Twitter to discuss the various presentations in near real time, is one of the benefits of using Twitter (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014). A few participants stated that their usage of social media rose when attending conferences:

Interestingly at conferences, I become more active on Twitter. You follow a hashtag, and you start twitting. After the conferences, I am quieter.

If I am at a conference or presenting at a conference, I might say "heard this at a conference or saw [so and so] at ALA annual conference."

[I] especially like to use Twitter when attending a conference to read and share comments during a program.

I didn't get to attend MLA [Medical Library Association conference] this year. I monitor the conference Twitter feeds multiple times a day... I am able to monitor the discussion via Twitter.

Devices Used

To grow its followers, social media tools are available on multiple platforms and accessible on multiple devices. Due to its ubiquity, most of the survey participants access social

media from multiple devices, from desktop to smart phone, pending on the occasion, location, the social media, or personal preference. Several participants did indicate that they use their desktop at work, but use mobile devices (smart phone and tablet) outside of work:

At work, I mostly do it on my desktop. But I check it with my cell phone when I am on the train or in bed. It is about 50 percent laptop and desktop; 50 percent cell phone.

For Twitter, definitely it's my phone, then desktop, then iPad. For Facebook, it's desktop first, followed by iPad, and phone. For Instagram, it is phone and then iPad.

For Twitter, I use smart phone as well as desktop. Also I use iPad a little, especially at conference, so I can preserve the power of my smart phone.

iPhone, especially for podcasts; iPad for Pinterest, Twitter, and for reading.

[I] use desktop when looking for real ideas so that it is easy to save items of interest.

[I] tend to use Twitter on mobile phone and when at events.

Participation

When asked the level of their participation on social media sites, ten participants considered themselves more as readers, than as contributors. Two participants indicated that they are equally divided between a reader and a contributor:

Mixed. I would say, more reader (60%) contributor (40%).

70% as a reader and 30% as a contributor.

On Twitter, I am 80% as a reader.

I am mostly re-tweeting and responding to people. It's about 60% sharing things and 40% having something to say.

Both. I share articles relevant to medical libraries, rare book, and medical library history.

Both. Try to contribute to conversations.

However, such involvement can vary by social media tool or by occasion, such as attending conferences:

On Facebook, I am more a contributor. On Twitter, I mostly follow and read. Interestingly at conferences, I become more active on Twitter. You follow a hashtag, and you start tweeting. After the conferences, I am quieter.

I am more a reader, but do tweet when attending conference programs.

Positive Aspects of Social Media

When asked about the value of using social media for professional development, participants were able to articulate numerous benefits. The participants unanimously agreed that social media services offer exceptionally high value as an opportunity for professional development. The following sections highlight three valuable aspects of social media for professional development.

Professional development. Participants described using social media in a variety of ways to facilitate their professional development. They use social media tools to learn about new ideas, keep up with trends, and share or acquire professional information resources. The three types of uses tend to overlap and reinforce each other. Social media facilitates collective learning by bringing together diverse views and ideas. Several participants indicated that they use social media regularly to expand their knowledge about areas outside their daily domains and to monitor ideas of respected individuals. One subject reported that she was curious about “scholarly communication” and searched Twitter to find out what it is about. She learned about a weekly chat organized by a group of scholarly communication librarians and started attending those chat sessions. She also began following opinion leaders. With her growing knowledge, she later collaborated with her supervisor to propose and eventually win a grant from the library director to host a one-day workshop on this topic for librarians in her library. In another example, an access librarian from an academic library explained that she was able to help her library better manage concerns about homeless patrons in her library by sharing information she had learned from public librarians conversing on the ALA Think Tank Facebook group. A library director indicated that she learned about ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID), a persistent ID used to uniquely identify academic authors and contributors, via social media. She then shared it with the Assistant Provost for Research at her institution.

Keeping up with the latest trends, news, and hot topics is another commonly mentioned benefit by the participants. The real-time and responsive features of social media makes it ideal for maintaining currency and receiving timely updates. One public service librarian pointed out that she learned about the decision to change the subject heading of “Illegal Aliens” on Facebook, much earlier than reading the article in *American Libraries* magazine. Another librarian mentioned that she monitored discussion of a weekly medical librarian chat session, as well as the backchannel from the MLA conference to keep herself in the loop.

Sharing and acquiring professional information resources is also a key benefit mentioned by the participants. With the convenience of mashing up and integration from other Internet resource, social media has the advantage of creating and distributing shared content and curated resources. One participant indicated that she always shared campus events through Twitter. Another librarian stated that she shared relevant articles, blog entries, and news using bitly, a URL shortener, with her Twitter followers. One participant further mentioned that she shared relevant articles she encountered on Twitter with her supervisor all the time. One other librarian reported that her Facebook friend learned about using Google Docs as an active learning exercise

in her instruction and shared it on her page. Consequently, she was able to use this technique in her classes.

Networking. Social networking tools are designed to facilitate the inter-communication of a closely-knit circle of friends. Used wisely, social media can assist in the development and expansion of one's invisible college. This network provides a supportive community and has the potential to create opportunities for collaboration. Many participants fully recognize the utility of making connections or keeping in touch with other professionals across the country and around the world in the digital environment. Several participants indicated that they keep up with long-term colleagues through social media:

It's a way to keep up with people at other libraries. You see others once a year at conference. [Social media] is to keep up with them in between ... to know what they are working on and going on with their life.

The ARL Leadership, Career, and Development fellowship program that I was part of it has a Facebook page. That one is mainly [for keeping in touch] if someone gets a promotion or has a publication.

Building professional connections, expanding network, and even forming partnership is another highly rated value by the participants:

I do a lot of LinkedIn, in addition to Twitter. I use LinkedIn just to connect with people. Like I meet somebody at the conference or on campus, or my professors, that's professional connecting.

I have actually reached out to people in Twitter where I find out they are education librarians. They will be in a conference I am in and I will say "Hey, I will be there too. Maybe we can meet up." It is kind of way of networking. You kind of already break the ice through Twitter, so it is not that weirdness when you meet. It's like online dating, but professional meeting.

As for meeting new people, I was recently at a distance librarian conference and I was following its hash tag. There was this librarian who kept coming up. I like her tweets. So, I messaged her and we were connecting. We actually have a phone meeting tomorrow. We just want to talk about how we work with our students and faculty. Maybe I would met her at the conference, but this is one way of getting in touch with her and ... We did talk at the conference in person, but Twitter really initiated it.

Joining or forming a supportive community or developing the so-called affinity space through social media services is mentioned by several participants. Four librarians specifically mentioned that they closely follow the critical librarianship discussion (#critlib; <http://critlib.org/>) on Twitter. Another librarian described her view of Twitter as "I found a really good community of scholars and writers and thinkers there." A librarian further pointed out that her Twitter community interact both virtually and in person:

The Twitter community that I belong to is actively sharing. When I go to conferences, I put my Twitter handle ... on my name tag because a lot of colleagues know me and I know them. I have noticed that people put their Twitter handle on their name tag.

Several participants use social media to battle isolation:

At [my library], we can get pretty siloed and we can feel pretty far away from colleagues who don't do the same work as we do. I found Twitter is a good way to figure out what others are talking about; what other professionals are thinking and writing about.

I find that I am limited in having people to talk to at workplace... So, I can be isolated. [Facebook] is an easy contact to lot of people ... a lot of diversity ideas and different types of views from other types of libraries, personalities and such. I also like reading about stuff happening in the public libraries and academic libraries.

Developing a professional presence. Libraries strategically employ social media to promote their resources and services, as well as reach out to a broader audience. Likewise, librarians can enhance their connection with their users by strategically managing their online profile. The two library administrators in this survey pointed out the importance of raising faculty profiles on campus through social media. A librarian attributed her motivation of using Twitter is that many of her faculty and students are on Twitter. By joining the platform, she not only follows their activities and research interests, but is also more visible herself. Another librarian uses LinkedIn to connect with her faculty and other colleagues on campus.

Individually, librarians can strategically manage their online profile to build their professional presence and enhance their career. One librarian stated that she is "thinking about strategically using social media to boost her professional image and for career development." Another librarian is so concerned about her tweets that she has "gone back and deleted my tweets due to the concern that they will be used not in the way I meant." However, another participant cautioned not overdoing it as over exposure or too much self-promotion might "exhaust your audience."

Finally, librarians utilize social media to promote their services at work. Several librarians indicated that they broadcast library events (e.g. international "Hug Your Librarian" Day), highlight library services, share presentation, and provide information about new resources on their social media accounts. Another participant, who is working on a book proposal and is named as one of Library Journal's Movers and Shakers, disclosed that it is helpful to demonstrate to her publisher that she has enough Twitter followers who might actually purchase her book.

Downside of Social Media

Concerns centered around privacy and work-life balance. Some also mentioned concern about remaining authentic. Privacy is the most mentioned concern by participants. Most

articulated the primary challenge of using social media is defining personal and professional boundaries. One participant offered a good example:

[I]f I am job searching and maybe I want to reach out to my professional network to get information about writing cover letter. However, I don't want everyone to know that I am on the job market ... I don't want to be not in control of the conversation.

Another participant further mentioned that in her library they regularly google job applicants or search them in social media sites to verify the facts stated in their application, as well as to unearth additional personal information or evidences. Therefore, when she works with students she forewarns them about what they post on the Internet and be mindful of managing their social media presence.

Most participants have developed their own philosophy and strategies to manage potential privacy issues. Several participants plainly pointed out that they have no expectation of privacy on the Internet and there is some risk in using social media. The approaches shared by participants include:

- Don't post personal, controversial comments or statements that can hurt others.
- Think carefully before posting; be thoughtful about the boundaries.
- Maximize privacy and security settings on your social media account.
- Use group privacy rules to control who can view posts.
- Block, mute, disconnect, or defriend a follower if necessary.
- Be judicious about what you want to reveal in your social media profile.
- Keep things positive – no “vaguebooking” (being intentionally vague to elicit comments).

None of the participants have created separate accounts for personal and professional use. Several participants stated that they intentionally use Twitter and LinkedIn for professional purposes, but find it more difficult to separate personal and professional use on Facebook or Instagram. A single account approach means that it is not always clear cut how to manage personal and professional use. As one participant pointed out:

Mixing work and personal can lead to concerns or guilt about whether using time appropriately. It works both ways. It's a concern in general about what's appropriate.

Several participants confided that social media can easily consume personal time and that they can feel overloaded with information:

It is very easy to check out the ALA Think Tank, and the next thing you know [is] that I am off on my page and looking at my friend's posts or comment and liking it. It is very easy to do that and hard to separate out the personal and fun.

You can get immersed in tweets and Facebook ... It is a time suck ... kind of taking you into a rabbit hole. You are in it and start clicking links and after an hour and you realize you have spent an hour on it.

It takes a good deal of my free time just to manage what there are already, so I don't really want to add anything [i.e. social media tools] more.

One participant, who is one of the moderator of a Twitter group on a topic that can be considered controversial by some, brought up the issue of safety. Due to the sensitive topic of her group, she was targeted by a right wing group that posted her photos on their website. She offered the following advice:

Women online have to be extra careful; you meet creepy people. You need to be careful who you communicate with ... [You] have this idea of who to stay away from; who to block; who not to engage with.

Most participants acknowledged Twitter's 140-character limitation of Tweet length. However, not every participant viewed this constraint negatively. One avid Twitter user remarked that "I like the 140-char limit because it makes me think. I have a problem of speaking before thinking a lot of times. Twitter makes me think things thru because this 140-char limitation." Another participant thought that the limitation helps to keep postings short and sweet. "Otherwise, you might end up writing a book."

Another seasoned Twitter user offered another positive view on this limitation:

Twitter is limited to [140] characters, so you have to be more strategic on what you are going to say. Or if you are going to link out to an article or something on the Web, rather than just saying see this, you say 'Do you use social media in your research? Pew Center study result' and then link to the article. I use bitly (URL shortener) to shorten the URL and I look at how many times people look at the article (bitly provides link usage statistics)."

Another heavy Twitter user revealed that she also uses Twitter search bar as a way to delve into an unfamiliar topic. The Twitter search helps her to identify where the conversation is happening and who the major players are before deeper engagement with the topic. According to another participant, Twitter is changing this limitation to allow more characters (Twitter, 2016a). So, this drawback might no longer an issue soon.

Social Media and Traditional Professional Development

All participants indicated that they continue to use the traditional channels, such as conferences, professional literature, listservs, webinars, and formal education, for professional

development, in addition to engaging with social media services. Participants stressed that each type of professional development has unique value. They complement, supplement, interconnect, and feed on each other. Social media services, however, offer the following strengths and utilities:

- Affordable, negligible cost
- Efficiency
- Brevity, easy bites of information
- Accessibility, instant access from anywhere at any time on mobile devices
- Ubiquity on multiple platforms (web, mobile applications)
- Currency, real-time, immediacy
- Flexibility and differentiation; allow customization and personalization instead of not one-size fits-all
- Interdisciplinary, multifaceted
- Short and easy bites of information
- Mashup and linking lead or open door to other things
- Easy options for sharing information with others

Social Media and Performance Review

When asked if they included their professional social media activities in their annual report or performance review, most of the participants indicated that it never occurred to them that such engagement was worth mentioning. One librarian reported that she mentioned her contribution to an ARL blog as it was a formal activity. Another mentioned her ongoing editorial responsibilities for a professional blog as something that could be mentioned. Several participants explained that their level of involvement does not warrant mentioning:

I am not using social media very heavily, mostly used to stay current and to avoid the “library bubble.”

[I am] more of a lurker. [It] would be difficult to measure and articulate benefit.

It doesn't feel like legitimate. Maybe when I start moderating a group, I will include it [in my annual report.] Right now I feel I am just a participant.

Other librarians further questioned whether library administrators would accept this type of activity as legitimate:

I am not sure about the value that my supervisor, my Dean, or Associate Dean put on it. So, I don't know putting "I go on Twitter twice a day" they will find it valuable. I think social media definitely valuable. But it is one of those things that I don't know how people see it.

I guess in a way it still feels too much like playing even though it is professionally related.

With the gradual acceptance of using alternative metrics, such as Altmetrics, to measure activities on social media and other online services, it is imperative for library professionals to learn how those metrics are calculated and their relevance (Collister & Deliyannides, 2016; Roemer & Borchardt, 2015). A better understanding Altmetrics will help to inform us about the value of assessing professional activities on social media platforms and the relevance of incorporating such metrics in performance reviews, as well as rank and promotion decisions.

Discussion

Responses from the study participants yield a number of results on how and why library professionals employ social media tools for professional development. Several salient themes related to our research questions have emerged. First, a majority of our participants use social media multiple times each day for both personal and professional purposes. Twitter is the most popular social media platform for professional development activities due to its currency and options for customizing what content is viewed. The convenience and the ease of use of social media mobile applications makes smart phone the default device of choice for accessing social media sites. However, participants also use social media on their desktops, especially in cases where the content needs to be downloaded or saved.

Second, the majority of the survey participants are more consumers than contributors of social media content. They are mostly observing the discussion and occasionally forwarding or retweeting relevant postings to friends. Some of them enjoy the benefit of lurking and being anonymous. However, they do use the social media to promote or share local events. Additionally, several mentioned becoming more active participants when attending conferences through backchanneling.

Third, although professional use of social media services are multifaceted, acquiring and sharing information, finding a community, connecting with existing and new colleagues are the most popular motivations. All the participants shared concerns about privacy and professional identify. However, they don't view these concerns as significant enough to prohibit use of social media and they do not see the need to create a separate social media account and identity for professional use. Instead, they have developed strategies or common practice to protect sensitive personal information, as well as to enhance security. They also tend to self-monitor what is shared on social media, avoiding antagonistic comments and controversial issues.

Lastly, survey participants continue to rely on and value conventional professional channels for professional development. They see social media offers a different value that complements rather than competes with conventional channels. However, the participants have yet to see their use of social media as significant enough to report in their performance review. Several participants stressed the greater importance of face-to-face opportunities to interact with professional colleagues.

Limitation and Delimitation of the Research

There are several important limitations in this self-report study. First, it is assumed that the participants' answers will reflect what they truly believe. It is possible that their responses might include subjective view or pre-conceived belief and hence are not representative of their actual practice. Furthermore, the subjects of the study were acquaintances of the researchers. They were selected based their availability and willingness. There is likely an acquaintance bias in which the interviewers and interviewees may influence each other's responses. The responses, as well as the relatively small sample size, are unlikely to reflect the actual practice of the entire population. Finally, the number of participants interviewed was not large enough to fully determine the reliability and validity of the interview questions. Due to these limitations, the generalizability of the findings is limited.

Several delimitations narrow the scope of this study. First, the participants are all from libraries affiliated with higher education institutions. Furthermore, two-thirds of them work in public services. Their usage of social media may be quite different from librarians from other types of libraries and functional areas. Lastly, three quarters of the participants have been in the profession less than ten years. They might be more technically savvy and inclined to adopt newer and alternative ways of professional development.

Recommendations for Future Research

While the analysis of the survey responses presented in this paper expands our understanding of social media as a new means of professional development practice, there is a need for an ongoing and deeper examination of this topic. Built on the insights learned from this study, future research incorporating a larger and more representative sample size, more rigid research design, and fully tested instrument will increase the reliability and validity of the outcomes. Future research should look deeper into possible behavioral, motivational, and at any differences related to demographic factors, including participants' affiliation (e.g. academic, public, school, and special libraries), functional area (e.g. public services, technical services, and technology), geographical location, career stage, and age. Future research might further clarify the relationship between conventional professional development channels and social media outlets. More exploration on the differences in utility value and appropriateness of different social medial tools might offer practical value to practitioners in choosing the right tools for use. Additional investigation in the area of privacy and security in social media use can also be relevant and applicable. A more in-depth examination of social media as a professional development tool will also help the profession consider when and how this type of activity should be considered as part of professional practice and performance.

Conclusion

The landscape of the social web continues to evolve rapidly. As library professionals invest more energy and time in social media activities, either for promoting library resources and services or for engaging in professional development activities, we should pay more attention to what we gain as a profession from this activity. We should continually assess its benefits and challenges. It is hoped this research will contribute to the existing literature and create new conversations among the professionals. It is also hoped that the information shared can shed some light on work-related social media usage by library professionals, especially those activities related to professional development and networking. Our findings can further inform library professionals and library administrators in planning, engaging, assessing, and thus supporting, as well as allocating resources for, such activities.

With a fuller understanding of the capabilities and innovative usages of social media tools, library professionals can better leverage the latest technologies and develop strategies to enhance professional growth and promote sustainable development and democratic society. Consequently, we contribute to the attainment of the sustainable development goals outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda (United Nations, 2015) and the Lyon Declaration (IFLA, 2014).

References

- Bell, S., Dempsey, L., & Fister, B. (2015). *New roles for the road ahead: Essays commissioned for ACRL's 75th anniversary*. Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/publications/whitepapers/new_roles_75th.pdf
- Carpenter, J. P., & Krutka, D. G. (2014). How and why educators use Twitter: A survey of the field. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 46(4), 414-434.
- Collister, L. B., & Deliyannides, T. S. (2016). Altmetrics: Documenting the story of research. *Against the Grain*, 28(1). Retrieved from <http://www.against-the-grain.com/2016/04/v28-1-altmetrics/#respond>
- Cooke, N. A. (2012). Professional development 2.0 for librarians: Developing an online personal learning network (PLN). *Library Hi Tech News*, 29(3), 1-9.
- Dalton, M. (2013). "What Would I Tweet?": Exploring new professionals' attitude towards Twitter as a tool for professional development. *Library Innovation*, 4(2), 101-110.
- Donelan, H. (2016). Social media for professional development and networking opportunities in academia. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 40(5), 706-729. DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2015.1014321
- Flickinger, T. E., O'Hagan, T., & Chisolm, M. S. (2015). Developing a curriculum to promote professionalism for medical students using social media: Pilot of a workshop and blog-based intervention. *JMIR Medical Education*, 1(2), e17. DOI: [10.2196/mededu.4886](https://doi.org/10.2196/mededu.4886)
- Ford, C., & Tolmie, D. (2016). Breaking the limits of time and space: How Twitter is helping #medlibs collaborate and communicate. A descriptive study. *Journal of Hospital Librarianship*, 16(2), 116-131.
- Forrestal, V. (2011). Making Twitter work: A guide for the uninitiated, the skeptical, and the pragmatic. *Reference Librarian*, 52(1/2), 146-151.
- Fuoco, M., & Leveridge, M. J. (2015) Early adopters or laggards?: Attitudes toward and use of social media among urologists. *BJU International*, 115(3), 491-497.
- IFLA. (2014). *Lyon declaration on access to information and development*. Den Haag, Netherlands: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Retrieved from <http://www.lyondeclaration.org/>
- LaGarde, J., & Whitehead, T. (2012). Power up your professional learning. *Knowledge Quest*, 41(2), 8-13.

- Moreillon, J. (2015). #school librarians tweet for professional development: A netnographic case study of #txlchat. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 21(2), 127-137.
- O'Connell, J. (2013). Building a vibrant future for school librarians through online conversations for professional development. *IASL Conference Report*, 236-241.
- Rhode, J., Richter, S., & Gowen, P. (2015). Measuring digital professional development: Analytics for the use of web and social media. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 7(1), 19-31.
- Roemer, R. C., & Borchardt, R. (2015). Altmetrics. *Library Technology Reports*, 51(5), 1-37.
- Stranack, K. (2012). The connected librarian: Using social media for "Do It Yourself" professional development. *Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 7(1), 1-5.
- Suffield, E. (2015). My first twelve months: How social media helped me develop as a school librarian. *School Librarian*, 63(2), 136-138.
- Terrill, L. J. (2014). Catalogers' perceptions and use of social media and conventional information sources for professional development. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 52(2), 181-228.
- Turbitt, S. (2012). Join the conversation — thoughts on social media by a librarian-in-training. *Access*, 26(3), 34-35.
- Twitter. (2016a). *Coming soon: Express even more in 140 characters*. Retrieved from <https://blog.twitter.com/express-even-more-in-140-characters>
- Twitter. (2016b). *Getting started with TweetDeck*. Retrieved from <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169620>.
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. New York, NY: United Nations. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

Appendix

Social Media and Professional Development -- Interview questions:

Date & Time:

Subject:

1. Do you use social media tools for professional networking and development?
2. Which specific social media groups or tools do you actively participate in or follow?
3. For the tools or groups that you use most regularly, how often do you use them for this purpose?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Multiple times per week
 - c. Multiple times per month
 - d. Rarely
4. What types of device do you prefer to use when using social media? (desktop, laptop, mobile phone, tablet)
5. Are you more a reader or author?
6. What are the benefits and value of the tools that you identified?
7. Do you experience or perceive any obstacles to using social media for professional purposes?
8. How do you handle mixing personal and professional boundaries or identities?
9. Are you concerned about privacy?
10. Do you use more than one account? One for professional and one for personal use?
11. What other types of professional development and networking activities do you value?
 - a. Conferences
 - b. Professional Literature
 - c. Workshops
 - d. MOOCs
 - e. Formal Education – course work, degrees
 - f. E-mail listservs
 - g. Webinars
 - h. Other
12. How does your use of social media and networking tools relate to other forms of professional development?

13. Can you describe a specific instance of using something learned via social media to enhance or change something you are doing for your job?

14. Do you include social media activities in your performance review or rank & promotion materials? If so, how do you include these activities?

15. Do you have any other things to share?

16. Demographic Questions:

- What is your position title?

- How long have you been in the library profession?
 - 1-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - 20+ years

- Is your institution a...:
 - Public Library
 - University/College Library
 - Health Library
 - Special Library