



*Journal of Advances in
Science and Technology*

*Vol. V, Issue No. X, August-
2013, ISSN 2230-9659*

FACEBOOK: A POWERFUL ONLINE TOOL OF INFORMATION SHARING AND DISSEMINATION

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

Facebook: A Powerful Online Tool of Information Sharing and Dissemination

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Abstract – The present internet era is characterized with many new innovative tools. Over the year we have been experiencing the internet playing many of roles as a new medium of communication: vehicle for online dissemination of news and views: platform for e-commerce, e-learning, e-library etc. facebook is one of the fastest growing social networking sites. Academic librarians need to pay attention to the trends and behaviors of the students.

Evidence suggests that students are increasingly using the Internet to conduct research for classes and to socialize with each other. Social networking websites, particularly Facebook, play an important role in many college students' lives and should not be ignored by information professionals, especially public service academic librarians. Facebook provides a preexisting online community that reflects the real campus community, which librarians can utilize to better understand students and to offer useful and applicable library services.

This paper is an attempt to describe the meaning and definition of facebook as a online phenomenon of the internet world. The origin and growth of facebook with historical perspective has been discussed in detail. An account of the role of facebook in the context of library and information science has been described.

INTRODUCTION

Facebook founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

According to the Webopedia (2005), Facebook is the name of a social networking site (SNS) that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, post photos, share links and exchange other information. Facebook users can see only the profiles of confirmed friends and the people in their networks. Facebook is an online network open to college students at certain universities. Students make up their own profiles which include a picture, name, birthdate, interests, and classes. They can then search for other students at their university or another university that has the facebook. One can add people they know or random people as their "friends" Urban dictionary (November 5, 2004). Wikipedia (2004)...Facebook is an online social networking service headquartered in Menlo Park, California. Its name comes from a colloquialism for the directory given to students at some American

universities. Facebook was founded on February 4, 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg.

After registering to use the site, users may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, exchange messages, post status updates and photos, and receive notifications when others update their profiles. Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorize their friends into lists such as "People from Work" or "Close Friends". Facebook had over one billion active users as of September 2012.

It concludes from the above definitions that facebook is a social networking site that connects peoples with one another and exchanges their ideas, views or opinions overtime. These are interactive allowing visitors to leave comments, message each other via widgets on the blogs and it is the interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites .It has affected the social life and activity of people in various ways. It is just like social phenomena that not just connect people together but generate and contributes the web contents itself. It enables users to choose their own privacy settings and choose who can see specific part of their life. It gives an

opportunity to make community and receive fast, quick respond to feed back.

FACEBOOK-HISTORY

In February 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, with the help of his college roommates and fellows and Harvard university students, launched a website that would change online social interaction forever. In January, 2004 Mark Zuckerberg initially wrote the code for facebook with the name of "The Facebook". On February, 2004 Mark Zuckerberg launched it. The Facebook started on the campus of Harvard University and Within 24 hours of going live, The Facebook was a community of 1200 Harvard University students. The network was extended and by April 2004, The Facebook was available on all Ivy League servers. The website membership was initially limited by founders to Harvard students but after time by time this membership was enhanced from Boston to whole USA and Canada by September 2006 to everyone of age 13 and older to make a group with a valid e-mail address. Before the facebook it was the facemash, which was the pre-dredecessor and opened on October 28, 2003. The website was setup as a type of "hot or not" game for Harvard students. The website allows visitors to compare to students pictures side by side and let them choose who was hot and who was not. On October 25, 2010 entrepreneur and banker Rahul Jain auctioned off facemash.com to empire for \$30,201.

The \$500,000 investment was a start, but Zuckerberg and friends had big plans for The Facebook. Seeing the potential value in The Facebook, Jim Breyer and Accel Partners ponied up \$12.7 million to assist Zuckerberg in the expansion of his virtual empire. So by October 2004, Zuckerberg had the money, the manpower, and the institutional backing to go global. Betatesting continued on within the American University population for the next year, and in August 2005, The Facebook dropped the "The" and Facebook.com was registered for \$200,000. The network opened up, and within months anyone with a valid institutional email address from over 30,000 organizations across the planet were eligible for membership, including high school students, government employees and the corporate community.

From the students of Harvard university facebook achieved 1230 million users till December 31, 2013. From starting of facebook users are exposed to 1500 pieces of potential contents everyday till now.

HOE TO USE FACEBOOK

As with other social networking sites, you must register before starting to use Facebook at www.facebook.com. Facebook originally required a valid e-mail address for registration. To do library outreach to students, you must belong to the same "network" that they do. Your network is determined by the institutional name in your registered e-mail address, so the e-mail address you use to register

must contain the same institution name as those of the students you will be contacting. After registering, you create a profile. This is a page of information about library and its collection.

USES OF FACEBOOK FOR LIBRARY & INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

- The primary function of any library is to acquire, store and disseminate the information, in the same way facebook also explores the information variously through pages and groups.
- There is n number of pages which provides the many information or specific knowledge as books in traditional libraries.
- As we know that facebook is a social media site, so as a virtual library it provides the virtual platform for discussions in groups, which enhance not only the social exposure but also provide the new dimensions to library and library professionals.
- Facebook provides many options to share information with users. On facebook we can share all type of knowledgeable virtual contents like photos, videos, ppts and pdfs etc to others.
- Facebook helps students or research scholar to develop practical research skills that they need in a world where knowledge construction and dissemination make increasing use of online information network.
- Facebook works as a tool to mobilize library services among younger generation of LIS Professionals.
- Similarly as to get aware of the users about new arrivals library have make notices, in the same way facebook also shows new information in the form of notification.
- The faculty of Library and Information Science may get share information with their users on facebook.
- SNS, Facebook that will help to embark their wide knowledge to the student's community outside the classroom.
- Facebook can work as a tool for interaction among the students and teachers.
- The popularity of social networking sites is increasing among the educated people especially adult youth in college and universities and by LIS Professionals.

- Facebook also provide face to face interaction through online web cam service. It is a powerful internet based virtual service used by library professionals for different purposes.
- In virtual era facebook also provide marketing services on web pages, groups etc. library professionals can use it for libraries or services regarding traditional libraries they have.
- Due to technological reach facebook easily provide its every virtual service on minimum base cost. That's why it provides one of the cheapest virtual library services to its users even on cell phones.

LINKS ON FACEBOOK FOR LIBRARIES

- Catalogue Search
- Article Database Search
- Meta search
- Library News
- Library Information

CONCLUSION

The importance of the phenomena of facebook as an innovative emerging tool of the internet is sure to have its impact on the tomorrow's world of communication and dissemination of information in libraries, journalism and similar other bodies realizing the dynamic role of facebook. This tool gives an upper hand to library and information professionals to disseminate and share information in faster and in an innovative way, which is not possible through other conventional methods. Facebook help the library professionals to reach all users at one time with more effective way. Many big libraries make their profile on facebook and users can know about the collection and services of a particular library through their facebook profile.

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