

Digital Marketing Strategies and Challenges in Bayero University Kano Library

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Abstract

Academic libraries play a vital role in providing access to learning and information resources that support research, teaching, and learning activities within educational institutions. However, the use of subscribed databases is not sufficient; effective promotion and marketing are required to ensure their use by students, faculty, and researchers. This research investigates the digital marketing strategies of subscribed databases employed by librarians at Bayero University Kano to promote the use of subscribed databases and the challenges associated with these strategies. The study employs a structured survey administered to library staff, including academic and non-academic librarians, to gather quantitative data on the types of digital marketing strategies they adopted for marketing subscribed databases and challenges associated with digital marketing strategies. A questionnaire, in the form of a Likert scale, was the instrument for data collection. The population of the study was 121 librarians. 92 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. A total of 68 respondents completed and returned the questionnaires. We systematically analyzed the data using the quantitative method. The findings revealed that prominent digital marketing tools such as WhatsApp, e-mailing, Facebook, university e-bulletin, text messaging, and e-newsletter are utilized for the digital marketing of subscribers at Bayero University, Kano.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Subscribed Databases, Academic Libraries, Bayero University Kano, Librarians.

Introduction

Amidst the swift progress of information and technology, academic institutions are consistently adopting digital innovations to improve the educational and research experiences of their communities. Bayero University, renowned for its intellectual prowess and groundbreaking ideas, occupies a leading position in this era of profound change. The library is filled with a vast collection of excellent digital resources and subscribed databases, which are waiting to be discovered. These resources have the potential to greatly enhance intellectual activities and improve the academic environment.

Today electronic databases have become the backbone of many academic libraries around the globe. This is largely due to its advantages over the print resources. Libraries spend colossal

amount of resources on online databases in a bid to enhance teaching, learning and research in institutions of higher learning. (Larson, 2017)

In the rapidly evolving landscape of academia, academic libraries stands as a beacon of knowledge, embracing the digital era with open arms. Amidst its shelves of printed volumes and quiet study corners, a wealth of subscribed databases quietly awaits exploration, promising to revolutionize the way students and faculty access information. As we navigate the intricate intersection of technology and education, the importance of adeptly marketing these subscribed databases becomes evident. Web portals are also important tools for users to access and utilize library and information services over a network. This is because an informative homepage provides users with helpful information about the library, its collection, and services. (Selvam & Subramanian, 2016)

This study investigates the area of digital marketing of the subscribed online databases in Bayero University Library," shedding light on the strategies and approaches necessary to Increase the level of awareness and the utilization of these digital treasures of scholarly journals , articles, special collections and books by the university community of users.

Problem Statement

Bayero University, Kano, despite offering a wealth of subscribed databases and digital resources, faces significant challenges in effectively promoting these resources to the university community. Limited digital marketing expertise within the library staff, coupled with a lack of targeted strategies, has resulted in low awareness and utilization rates among students, faculty, and researchers. Furthermore, the absence of effective collaboration between the library and academic departments hinders the integration of library resources into the teaching and research process, further exacerbating the problem.

Research Objectives

1. To find out the types of digital marketing strategies adopted in Bayero University Kano library.
2. To find out challenges associated with digital marketing strategies in Bayero University Kano Library.

Review of Related Literature

Digital Marketing is a shift or transition from the traditional methods of marketing to electronic marketing using the Internet (websites, social media, online forums, emails, etc.). Digital marketing has become a relevant strategy to leverage the competitiveness of libraries, being an efficient communication channel for prospecting users, enabling increased utilizations as well as promoting the profitability of the libraries. (Junior Cardoso da Silva et al., 2023).

Digital media platforms can be employed to notify users and potential users on the various services, especially specialized services offered by the library such as selective dissemination of information, electronic information resources, research consulting services, data management, and digital resources services among others. (Salami et al., 2020).

Akinnawo (2018) marketing is the process by which individuals or groups obtain what they need by creating, offering and exchanging products and services with others. Edom & Edom, (2019) referred marketing as those instruments through which information is transmitted to its members. Horsfall, (2020) stated that marketing involves advocating for libraries, publicizing resources and services, convincing people of the value and relevance of the library.

Rennick et al., (2020) conducted a study on targeted email advertising to inform university students about library resources relevant to their major. They found that appending database advertisements to reservation emails was ineffective in terms of students recalling the advertisements or clicking the links. However, the study did show that very few respondents disapproved of receiving advertisements and indicated that the selected library databases were relevant to their needs. Also, Dugan, (2011) implemented a simple marketing strategy of sending weekly emails highlighting one database at a time to faculty, resulting in positive reactions and increased usage. Similarly, Abrams and Tidal (2020) observed the impact of various promotional materials, including email, in marketing electronic resources at a University library. These studies provide evidence of the effectiveness of targeted email campaigns in raising awareness and driving traffic to library databases.

Effective marketing strategies In academic libraries do not end with email campaigns it include library publicity, public relations, updating notice boards, improving library image, user orientation, training programs, print media advertising, newsletters, brochures, flyers, word-of-mouth endorsements, and personal sales by librarians. (Aderibigbe & Farouk, 2017). Thus, promoting subscribed databases in academic libraries through digital marketing necessitates a deliberate approach customized to meet the requirements and inclinations of students, faculty, and researchers.

University library subscribed to different online databases for the benefits of its actual and potential users. Bayero University Library subscribed to Sciencedirect, AJLS (Aggregated Journal Library Subscription), EBSCOhost, JSTOR, HeinOnline, Springer, among others. Sciencedirect is a widely used academic database providing access to a vast collection of scientific and technical research articles as rightly observed by Smith and Johnson (2018) where they highlighted the importance of Sciencedirect in supporting scientific research and scholarly communication, with users expressing high satisfaction levels with its content coverage and search functionalities. Aggregated Journal Library Subscription is another comprehensive collection of scholarly journals from Africa, covering various disciplines. In a study conducted by Garcia and Chen (2019) investigates user satisfaction with AJLS and similar databases, emphasizing the value of these platforms in promoting African scholarship and addressing information gaps in the region. EBSCOhost is another multifaceted database platform offering access to academic journals, e-books, magazines, and other resources. White and Davis (2017) discuss trends and challenges in the selection and management of databases like EBSCOhost in libraries, emphasizing the evolving role of digital resources in library collection development.

JSTOR is renowned for its extensive collection of scholarly journals, primary sources, and books, spanning various disciplines. Lee and Park (2020) examine usage patterns of JSTOR in academic libraries, shedding light on the information-seeking behavior of researchers and the impact of digital archives on historical research. HeinOnline is a subject-based database providing access to legal research and law collections like law journals, statutes, case law, and historical legal documents. Martinez and Johnson (2018) assess user satisfaction and information retrieval

effectiveness of HeinOnline pointing out its critical role in supporting legal research and education. Springer provides access to a wide range of academic journals, books, and reference works across numerous disciplines. Wang and Li (2021) explore current practices and future directions in the provision of multimedia databases like Springer in academic libraries, addressing issues related to collection management and user engagement.

Types of Digital Marketing Strategies for Marketing of Subscribed Databases in Academic Libraries

Targeted Email marketing: Email marketing remains a powerful tool for nurturing leads, retaining customers, and driving conversions. Research by Smith (2020), highlights the importance of personalization, segmentation, and automation in email marketing campaigns. Develop segmented email lists based on user demographics, academic disciplines, and research interests. Send targeted email campaigns highlighting specific databases relevant to each audience segment, along with personalized recommendations and usage tips. Not every user that visits the library is aware of library databases. Library keeps users' records like their phone numbers and emails. With emails library can invite subscribers to events, share news and updates, promote products and services. Increase both patron's retention and loyalty by sending emails. Emails can be sent individually to patrons. (Nsirim, 2022). Develop an email marketing campaign to regularly update the university community about newly added resources, upcoming webinars, or training sessions related to the subscribed data. Consider segmenting your email list to target specific groups like faculty, researchers, or students.

E-Newsletter Marketing: The electronic newsletter is a useful communication instrument, containing information regarding the sending institution and the receivers' interests. Its explicit objective is not that of selling a product or a service, but that of putting the basis and consolidating a relation between the Libraries and the Users. Keeping a close and positive relation with the Librarians (clients, potential clients, partners, and others) is the newsletter's specificity. The communication process must be faultless, delivered in a professional way, in a pleasant form, with a relevant content from the receiver's perspective and with the opportunity to offer a relevant and useful feedback in real time. (Racolța-Paina, & Ianuș, 2007).

The newsletter is also another important strategy that can be adopted by public libraries to market their resources and services. It helps to remind the clients of the existence of the library, and also provide information to actual customers and to potential customers. It also helps to raise the credibility of the resources, and also leads readers to sending their need and to receive feedback (Hudak, Kianickova, & Madlenak, 2017).

Social Media; Facebook, Twitter, whatsApp, LinkedIn and Instagram: Social media also acts as a strategy that helps us to access information at different destinations; it therefore allows users to create, share and receive information from one individual to another. This could be a useful strategy to bring change in the learning process of library clients. Anwar & Zhiwei, (2019). Posited that, Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram are utilize to raise awareness of subscribed databases in academic libraries. Share regular updates, database features, user testimonials, and tips for effective database usage. Moreover, Facebook is that the best tool to market

library sources and services and provides a platform to plug library sources and services with low expenditures. What is more, Facebook helps the library workers to advertise their product and maximize the employment of their sources and services to the potential users

Facebook allows users to create a profile, upload and share photographs, share personal information and connect with others who share similar interest. Libraries can communicate, interact, market and promote their activities and services through Facebook. Facebook can also be employed in libraries to share relevant links of open source information resources to users. Academic libraries can also be used to interact with users to know their information needs. (Hallaran, 2012).

Instant Messaging: Instant messaging can be defined as a platform that supports Internet-based synchronous text chat, with a point to point communication between users on the same system. Instant messaging is a useful tool that can be employed in academic libraries to promote the use of online information resources and service. (Salami et al., 2020)

Library Website Optimization: Optimize the library website to prominently feature subscribed databases and provide easy access to relevant resources. Create dedicated landing pages, search guides, and tutorials to help users navigate and discover the full range of available databases. In-Person and Virtual Events: Host in-person or virtual events such as library orientations, information sessions, and webinars to promote subscribed databases. Invite database vendors, subject matter experts, and library staff to present on database features, tips for effective searching, and advanced research techniques. Library websites are the most significant marketing tool. Constant updating of library websites helps to promote library activities. The websites act as the gateway to access the e-resources such as journals, books, databases subscribed by the library. Access to the online catalogue provides the quick link to the collections of the library (Waral, 2020).

User Training and Support: extensive training and support services to enable users to optimize the benefits of their subscribed databases. Librarians offer one-on-one consultations, group training sessions, and online tutorials to address user questions, troubleshoot issues, and promote effective database usage. (Abrams & Tidal, 2020).

Challenges of Academic Libraries in Adopting Digital Marketing Strategies for Marketing of Subscribed Databases

Academic libraries encounter numerous hurdles while implementing digital marketing initiatives. The issues involve maintaining online reputation and digital identity, establishing continuous connection with customers, users, readers, and meeting users' expectations while proving value to management. There are challenges related to the use of social media marketing, such as engaging with clientele, enabling participation in library services, and addressing challenges faced by the user groups (Razilan et al., 2023). Inconsistent definitions, standards, and expectations also limit the effectiveness of digital initiatives in academic libraries, requiring familiarity with software development, systems administration, and library practices (Williams 2023). There is also lack of digital skills among librarians, lack of ICT infrastructure, lack of awareness of the public's right to information, lack of funds, and lack of training and retraining

of library staff (Horsfall, 2020). Overall, academic libraries face challenges in adapting to the digital age and implementing effective marketing strategies (Haralambos, Ventis 2023).

Academic libraries invest significantly in acquiring electronic resources, but user awareness and utilization rates vary widely. Studies have found that many users are unaware of the availability of e-resources in their institutions. Lack of searching skills among end-users and low competency among librarians on e-resources and e-platforms also contribute to the insufficient use of e-resources. However, some studies have shown that a majority of users are aware of the electronic resources provided by libraries and use them for research and learning purposes. Challenges in accessing e-resources include high cost of personal internet data, low internet bandwidth, and difficulties in finding accurate information. To encourage the use of e-resources, recommendations include regular training on their use and collaboration between libraries and lecturers to create awareness in the lecture hall. (Hong & Thong, 2015)

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research describes a particular phenomenon or event and its characteristics in terms of a specific population sample (Nassaji, 2015). From the perspective of Sieyew (2019), the descriptive design provides an essential profile of a phenomenon originating from an organization, person, or industry. Ary et al. (2018) stated that a research design is a general procedure chosen to integrate distinctive parts of a study in a coherent way to address the research problem. This study utilized quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of digital marketing strategies and challenge in Bayero University Kano Library. The population consist of (121) academic and Non-Academic Professional librarians. A random sampling technique was employed to select participants from each group. A structured survey was administered for gather quantitative data on Digital Marketing Strategies and challenges in Bayero University library Kano. The survey will include close-ended questions with Likert-scale responses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of data collected. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, was calculated.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section presents and discusses the findings in accordance with the objectives of the study

Table 1: how long have you been affiliated with Bayero university Kano

Years	Frequency	Percent
1-5 Year	19	27.9
6-10 Year	21	30.9
11-15 Year	15	22.1
16 Above	13	19.1
	68	100.0

Table 1: shows the years of experiences of the respondent in Bayero University, Kano where 15 (22.1%) of the respondents have the experiences between 11 to 15 years, followed by those with

13 (19.1%) respondents with 16 and above and other (27.9%). and others with 19 (27.9), and 21 (30.9) fall within the range of 1-5 and 6-11 years respectively.

Table 2: Role of the Librarians at the University Library

S/N	Role at Bayero University Kano	Frequency	Percentage
1	Academic Librarians	33	48.5
2	Non –Academic Librarians	35	51.5
		68	

The Above table show the difference role or category of the respondents where Non-Academics Staff have the highest percentage 35(51.5%) followed by the Academic Librarians with 33(48.5%).

Objective 1: Digital marketing strategies are used by Librarians in Bayero University Kano Library

Digital marketing strategies used by Librarians in Bayero University Kano Library

Types of Digital Marketing Strategies		Frequency/ Percentage	
		Yes	No
1.	I use Facebook to market subscribed databases	46 (67.6)	22 (32.4)
2.	I use whatsapp to market subscribed databases	57 (83.8)	11 (16.2)
3.	I use Twitter to market subscribed databases	33 (48.5)	35 (51.5)
4.	I use Instagram to market subscribed databases	28 (41.2)	40 (58.5)
5.	I use LinkedIn to market subscribed databases	26 (38.2)	42 (61.8)
6.	I use Library Website to market subscribed databases	44 (64.7)	24 (35.3)
7.	I use E-Flyer to market subscribed databases	42 (61.8)	26 (38.2)
8.	I use E-Posters to market subscribed databases	33 (48.5)	33 (48.5)
9.	I use University E-Bulletin to market subscribed databases	44 (64.7)	24 (35.3)
10.	I use Library E-Newsletter to market subscribed databases	40 (58.8)	28 (41.2)
11.	I use E-mailing Users to marketing subscribed databases	49 (72.1)	19 (27.9)
12.	I use Text Messaging to market subscribed databases	43 (63.2)	25 (36.8)

Regarding the Digital marketing strategies used by Librarians for marketing subscribed database in Bayero University Kano, the results in Table 1. show that the majority of respondents 57 (83.8%), used whatsapp frequently followed by 49 (72.1%), 46 (67.6%), 44 (64.7%), 43 (63.2), 40 (58.8), respondents reported that they used E-mailing, Facebook and University E-Bulletin, Text Messaging, and E-Newsletter, for the Digital Marketing of subscribed.

Also, other 33 (48.5), 28 (41.2), 26 (38.2), respondents reported that they used Twitter, E-Posters, Instagram, LinkedIn, for the Digital Marketing of subscribed databases.

Although librarians use a wide range of digital marketing strategies, they are selective in their use, specifically Facebook, E-Mailing, WhatsApp which are used sometimes.

These findings supported by the assertion of (Anwar & Zhiwei, 2019). This posited that, Facebook is that the best tool to market library sources and services and provides a platform to plug library sources and services with low expenditures. What is more, Facebook helps the library workers to

advertise their product and maximize the employment of their sources and services to the potential users.

The finding therefore, affirms Usman (2015) view that Facebook is the leading form of social media tool used in Nigeria enjoyed by even the least literate individuals, and evidently among librarians in AkwaIbom State.

Table 2: Challenges associated with the adoption of digital marketing strategies in Bayero University Kano Library

Challenges	Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Neutral		Agree/Strongly Agree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Limited resources hinder the implementation of effective digital marketing strategies for promoting subscribed databases.	14	20.7	8	11.8	46	67.7
Lack of staff expertise in digital marketing poses challenges in promoting subscribed databases effectively.	15	22.1	6	8.8	47	69.2
irregular training on their use and collaboration between libraries and lecturers to create awareness	12	17.6	10	14.7	46	67.6
high cost of personal internet data to low internet bandwidth, and difficulties in finding accurate information	9	13.2	15	22.1	44	64.8

As indicated in Table 2. 47 (69.2%). of the respondents agreed that, Lack of staff expertise in digital marketing poses challenges in promoting subscribed databases effectively, with the adoption of digital marketing strategies in Bayero University Kano Library however, 46 (67.7%). of the respondents have agreed that, Limited resources hinder the implementation of effective digital marketing strategies for promoting subscribed databases. and irregular training on their use and collaboration between libraries and lecturers to create awareness.

While 44 (64.8%) which is the least have agreed that, high cost of personal internet data to low internet bandwidth, and difficulties in finding accurate information is challenge associated with the adoption of digital marketing strategies in Bayero University Kano.

The finding corroborate with assertion of (Horsfall, 2020). viewed that, effective marketing of library and information services in the digital age requires overcoming challenges such as ignorance among librarians, lack of ICT infrastructure, lack of awareness of the public's right to information, lack of funds, and lack of training and retraining of library staff.

Conclusion

This study investigated the Digital marketing of subscribed databases by the Librarians in Bayero University Kano. Specifically, the study investigated the prominent digital marketing strategies used by the librarians for marketing the subscribed databases.

The study found that whatsapp is the most useful digital marketing strategy which is highly used for marketing subscribed databases. Consequently, it was recommended that the library should develop its own Facebook page, WhatsApp group and create a social media handles with different digital media to enhance interaction with the users and promote the use of subscribed databases.

Recommendations

1. A thorough audit of the library's digital marketing practices, including strategies like social media, email campaigns, website content, and SEO, should be conducted. The library should also explore emerging trends like video content, influencer partnerships, and personalized marketing to enhance its promotional efforts.
2. The library should implement a feedback mechanism to identify and address challenges in its digital marketing strategies, including surveys and focus groups with students, faculty, and staff. This will inform targeted interventions like training programs and resource reallocation.

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