InfoSphere :

NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF INFORMATION

Preserving the Past, Valuing Present, Enriching the Future

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

Fakulti
Sains Maklumat

InfoSphere:
Navigating the World of Information

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Preface

It gives me great pleasure to present *InfoSphere: Navigating the World of Information*, a collective effort that brings together insightful discussions, empirical findings, and critical reflections from academics in information management, library management, records management, and information and communication technology (ICT).

In today's digital era, the vast and complex landscape of information continues to expand at an unprecedented pace. The convergence of technology and information systems has transformed how data is created, organized, stored, and utilized. This book aims to navigate that dynamic "infosphere" , a term that reflects the interconnected environment in which information flows seamlessly across platforms, disciplines, and contexts.

The chapters compiled here explore diverse perspectives and contemporary issues shaping the management of information resources and services. From emerging trends in digital librarianship and knowledge governance to innovations in ICT applications and recordkeeping practices, each contribution highlights the growing importance of integrating technology, policy, and human expertise in managing information effectively.

This publication also serves as a reflection of our faculty's commitment to advancing scholarship and practice in the information domain. It showcases the intellectual depth and interdisciplinary collaboration among academics who continue to shape the future of information work.

As the Chief Editor, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all the contributing authors for their dedication and scholarly rigor, and to the editorial team for their meticulous effort in ensuring the quality and coherence of this volume. Special thanks are also extended to the Faculty of Information Science and Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor for their continuous support and encouragement in realizing this publication.

I hope that *InfoSphere: Navigating the World of Information* will inspire readers among students, educators, researchers, and practitioners alike to engage critically with the evolving information landscape and to contribute meaningfully to its advancement.

Azura Abdul Jamil @ Kamarudzzaman
Chief Editor
InfoSphere: Navigating the World of Information
2025

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UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

By Rabiatul Adawiyah Kamarulzaman, Nurul Huda Izzati Jamil, Razifah Othman and Suhaila Osman
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1.0 Introduction

Social media has become one of the most transformative forces in the information age, reshaping how people create, share, and consume knowledge globally. Defined as digital platforms that facilitate communication, collaboration, and user-generated content, social media enables individuals and organizations to interact dynamically within online communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Verishagen, 2018). From Facebook and Instagram to emerging platforms such as TikTok and Threads, social media landscape continues to expand, influencing not only social behavior but also the way information professionals engage with users.

For information professionals—such as librarians, archivists, and digital curators—social media is more than a communication tool; it is a strategic medium for knowledge dissemination, community engagement, and professional visibility (Quesenberry, 2020; Tuten, 2020). The rise of Web 2.0 has transformed information agencies from gatekeepers of information into active participants in a participatory digital culture (Zhixian, 2016). In this environment, information professionals must develop competencies in social media literacy, analytics, and ethical communication to remain relevant in the digital ecosystem (Kingsnorth, 2019; Manca, 2021).

Moreover, the convergence of information and social technologies has redefined the nature of credibility and authority in information exchange. Traditional information gatekeeping—once centralized in libraries or agencies—has shifted toward decentralized, user-driven environments. This transformation calls for professionals who can balance openness with critical evaluation, fostering information integrity while embracing participatory innovation (Jeyasekar & Saravanan, 2019). Understanding the evolution, categories, and strategic use of social media therefore becomes vital for every information professional operating in today's knowledge-driven world.

2.0 The Evolution of Social Media

The development of social media can be traced through three broad phases: early beginnings (1970s–1990s), mainstream growth (2000s–2010s), and diversification in the present era. Each phase reflects technological innovation and changing user behaviour, progressively shaping how societies create and share knowledge online.

Early Beginnings (1970s–1990s).
Social interaction occurred primarily through bulletin board systems (BBS) and early networking communities that allowed message exchange and file sharing. Platforms such as SixDegrees (1997) introduced profile-based networking, while LiveJournal (1999) encouraged early blogging and community discussions (Nurul Huda Izzati bt Jamil, 2024). Although limited by bandwidth and accessibility, these early tools laid the groundwork for social connectivity.

Mainstream Expansion (2000s–2010s).
Friendster (2002) and MySpace (2003) popularized online communities, followed by Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), and Twitter (2006), which revolutionized networking, video sharing, and microblogging (Nurul Huda Izzati bt Jamil, 2024). Each reflected Web 2.0's participatory engagement—users as both consumers and creators. Each of these platforms reflected the Web 2.0 principle of participatory engagement—where users became both consumers and creators of information. This period also saw the rise of professional networks such as LinkedIn (2003), transforming how professionals connect and collaborate globally (Boateng & Liu, 2023).

Diversification (2010s–Present).
Social media landscape expanded into multimedia and immersive experiences. Instagram (2010) emphasized visual storytelling, Snapchat (2011) introduced ephemeral content, and TikTok (2016) redefined creative engagement through short-form videos. Meanwhile, Meta's investment in the metaverse and Horizon Workrooms reflects a shift toward **Augmented Reality (AR)** and **Virtual Reality (VR)** as tools for immersive social interaction (IMD164 Chapter 1, 2024). These technologies allow information professionals to explore new dimensions of outreach—such as virtual library tours, 3D learning environments, and interactive exhibitions.
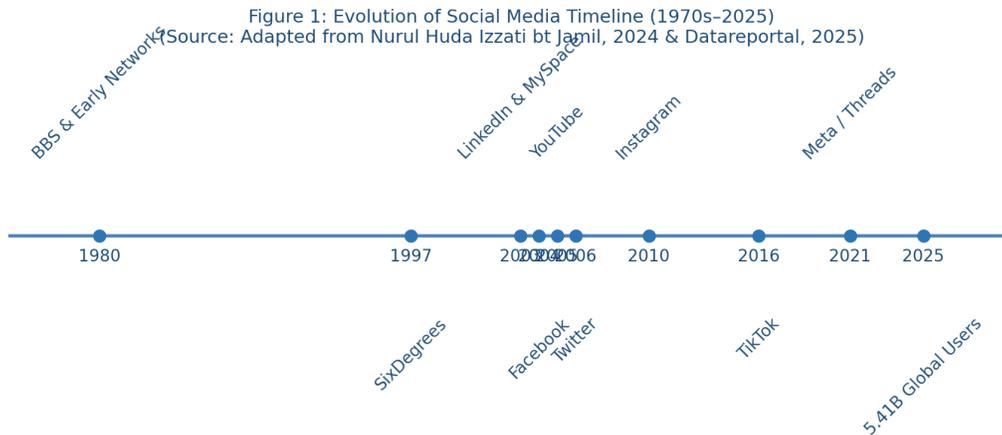

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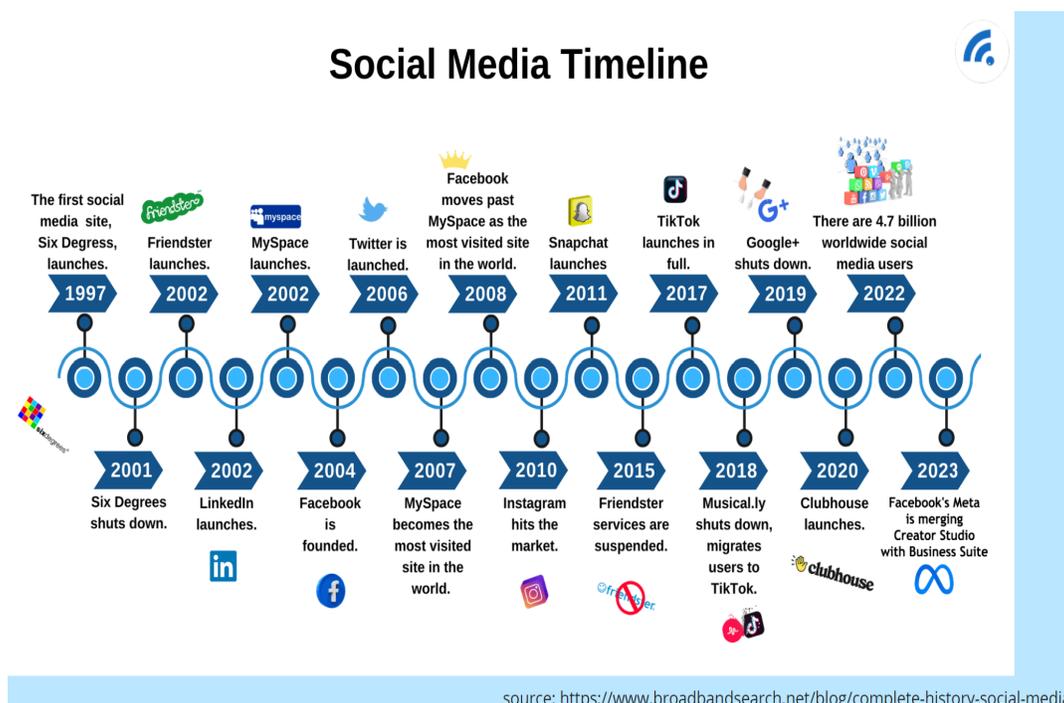
Figure 1: *Evolution of Social Media Timeline (1970s–2025)*
Source: Adapted from Nurul Huda Izzati bt Jamil (2024) & Datareportal (2025).

By **2025**, global social media users reached approximately **5.41 billion**, representing more than two-thirds of the world's population (Datareportal, 2025). Facebook remains the most dominant platform, followed by YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and WeChat. This widespread adoption underscores the urgency for information professionals to understand the evolution, affordances, and implications of social media use in organizational and educational contexts. As social media becomes more intertwined with artificial intelligence (AI) and extended reality (XR), its potential to redefine information work continues to grow (Kingsnorth, 2019; Quesenberry, 2020).

3.0 Mainstream Social Media Categories and Their Relevance to Information Work

Social media today can be categorized into several mainstream types, each serving unique communicative and informational purposes. Understanding these categories helps information professionals identify which platforms best support their institutional goals and user engagement strategies.

Video-based and visual-first media now dominate information consumption. Information professionals' harness these to promote resources, educate users, and cultivate institutional identity (Boateng & Liu, 2023).

Table 1: *Categories of Mainstream Social Media and Their Relevance to Information Work*

Category	Examples	Information Use by Professionals
Social Networking Sites	Facebook, LinkedIn	Community engagement, networking
Video Hosting	YouTube, TikTok	Tutorials, outreach, e-learning
Media Sharing	Instagram, Pinterest	Visual storytelling, digital exhibitions
Blogging / Microblogging	WordPress, X (formerly Twitter)	Updates, research highlights
Messaging Apps	WhatsApp, Telegram	Real-time reference services
Discussion Forums	Reddit, Quora	Knowledge exchange, crowdsourcing

Source: Adapted from Nurul Huda Izzati bt Jamil (2024).

4.0 The Role of Information Professionals in the Social Media Era

The contemporary role of information professionals has evolved from custodians of knowledge to digital communicators, content strategists, and data analysts. In the era of participatory media, these professionals must integrate social media literacy into their daily functions to remain relevant and impactful (Al-Daihani & Abrahams, 2018).

4.1 Social Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship

Social media literacy encompasses the capacity to evaluate, verify, and ethically manage information online. Professionals act as *digital stewards* guiding communities against misinformation (Manca, 2021).

4.2 Expanded Job Scopes

- **Digital Engagement Librarian / Social Media Curator** – manages an organization's online presence, develops multimedia content, and monitors engagement analytics.
- **Digital Marketing & Outreach Specialist** – designs campaigns to promote digital resources, reading programs, and library services through platforms like Instagram and TikTok.
- **Information & Media Literacy Trainer** – conducts workshops to strengthen public competencies in evaluating online information and combating misinformation.
- **Online Community Manager / Knowledge Facilitator** – nurtures digital communities (e.g., book clubs, alumni networks, or research groups) to encourage continuous engagement.
- **Data & Analytics Officer** – interprets user engagement data to optimize content strategy and service delivery.
- **Content Creator / Multimedia Archivist** – produces infographics, podcasts, and short videos to transform static collections into interactive narratives.

These emerging roles require multidisciplinary expertise that blends communication, data analytics, and design thinking with core information science principles (Boateng & Liu, 2023). Professional associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) have also emphasized digital fluency, online collaboration, and ethical content management as essential competencies for the twenty-first-century information workforce (ALA, 2023).

4.3 Strategic Use of social media in Information Services

Social media also supports the strategic goals of libraries and information centers through branding, community engagement, and service innovation. By adopting frameworks such as Quesenberry's (2020) *social media strategy model*, institutions can integrate consistent content planning, audience segmentation, and performance measurement into their operations. The emphasis is no longer on "posting for visibility," but on building authentic relationships and fostering participatory knowledge exchange.

Furthermore, analytics tools provided by platforms like Facebook Insights, Instagram Analytics, and TikTok Business Suite allow professionals to assess reach, engagement, and impact (Kingsnorth, 2019). Data-driven insights help librarians evaluate which content resonates most with users, enabling adaptive learning and evidence-based decision-making.

4.4 Ethical and Professional Challenges

Despite its benefits, the integration of social media in information work poses challenges related to privacy, data ownership, and ethical communication. Information professionals must ensure that user data collected through social platforms complies with institutional and legal standards (Jeyasekar & Saravanan, 2019). They must also uphold professional integrity by maintaining neutrality, avoiding biased content, and respecting cultural sensitivity in digital interactions (Tuten, 2020).

Ultimately, the effectiveness of social media use depends on the professional's ability to merge ethical awareness with innovative engagement. When strategically managed, social media becomes a bridge between institutions and the communities they serve—transforming libraries and information centers into dynamic, interactive knowledge hubs.
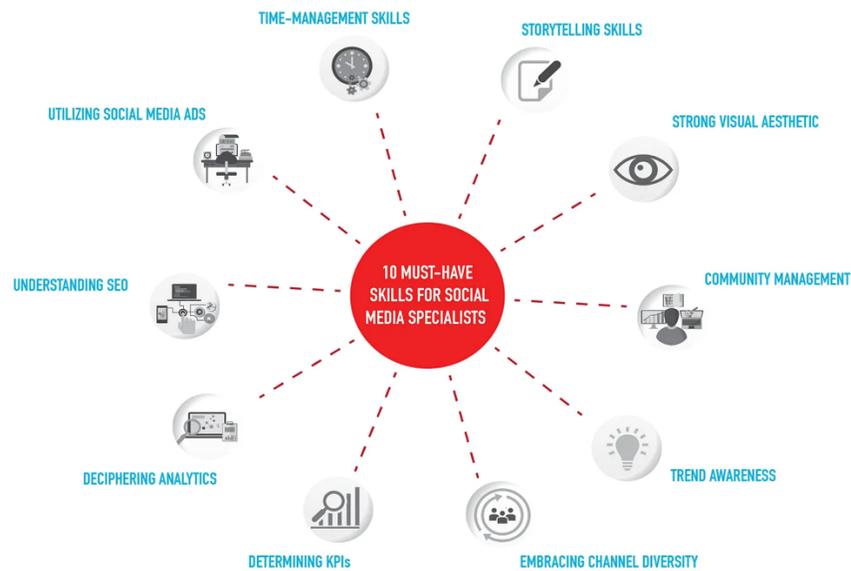
Figure 2: *Social Media Skills Framework for Information Professionals*
Source: https://medium.com/academyusmc/10-must-have-skills-for-social-media-specialist-a010ad817dee

5.0 Challenges and Ethical Considerations

While social media offers vast opportunities for communication, it also presents complex challenges that directly affect information professionals. Among the most pressing are **information credibility, data privacy, digital burnout, and ethical content management** (Manca, 2021). The open nature of social media blurs the line between verified information and misinformation, making it essential for professionals to assume the role of *digital gatekeepers* who guide users toward credible sources. Librarians and archivists now find themselves combating fake news and algorithmic bias while promoting media literacy within their communities (Parveen et al., 2016).

Another major concern involves **privacy and data ethics**. The collection of user data by social platforms for analytics and advertising raises questions about informed consent and data ownership (Jeyasekar & Saravanan, 2019). Information professionals who manage institutional accounts must comply with privacy laws such as the *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)* and local data policies to ensure that user information is handled transparently and ethically (Al-Daihani & Abrahams, 2018). They are expected to balance outreach efforts with confidentiality, ensuring that institutional communication remains respectful of user rights.

Additionally, the **rapid pace of digital change** can lead to professional fatigue and skills gaps. Continuous technological evolution demands constant learning—analytics dashboards, algorithmic updates, and emerging platforms require ongoing adaptation (Kingsnorth, 2019). To address this, institutions should invest in staff training and foster a culture of digital resilience. Ethical social media use also requires emotional intelligence,

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inclusivity, and cross-cultural awareness to ensure that content reflects the diversity of audiences and avoids reinforcing stereotypes.

The **ethical dimension of engagement** extends to tone, representation, and advocacy. Social media allows professionals to voice institutional values, but this power must be used responsibly. Every post, image, or comment contributes to the public perception of an institution. Thus, ethical stewardship of digital identity has become an integral aspect of professional accountability in the information field (Tuten, 2020).
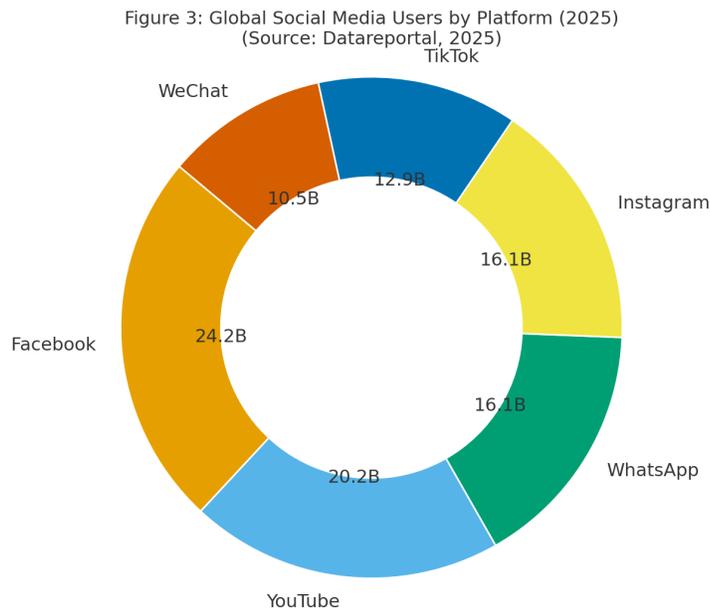
Figure 3: Global Social Media Users by Platform (2025)
(Source: Datareportal, 2025)

Figure 3: Global social media users by platform 2025
Source: Datareportal (2025).

6.0 Conclusion and Future Trends

Social media continues to redefine the information landscape by bridging boundaries between institutions and their communities. For information professionals, mastery of these platforms is not optional—it is a core competency that influences visibility, credibility, and service effectiveness. From disseminating scholarly communication to engaging marginalized audiences, social media empowers professionals to extend the reach and relevance of information services (Quesenberry, 2020).

Looking ahead, the **future of social media in information work** lies in the integration of *artificial intelligence (AI), extended reality (XR)*, and *semantic web technologies*. AI-driven personalization will enable libraries to tailor services according to user profiles,

while XR will support immersive knowledge experiences such as virtual archives, augmented exhibitions, and 3D learning spaces (IMD164 Chapter 1, 2024). These developments will push information professionals to adopt hybrid roles—part technologist, part educator, and part community advocate.

Ultimately, the effective use of social media depends on professional ethics, digital literacy, and a deep understanding of human interaction. When guided by these principles, social media ceases to be a mere promotional tool; it becomes an instrument of empowerment, connecting knowledge institutions with the people they serve. As the digital era advances, information professionals who embrace innovation, inclusivity, and integrity will continue to shape the future of global information exchange.

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