

USERS ACCEPTANCE OF NEW MEDIA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES OF PUITM (UITM LIBRARY)

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This paper investigates the issue of user's acceptance of new media presence in public relations and marketing activities of UiTM libraries. User's acceptance of new media used in public relations and marketing activities of UiTM library is important because it influence user's attitudes towards library services. Once positive attitude received in accepting new media used by the library, it will definitely produce better outcomes from the user towards using library services. This issue had to be addressed through four research objectives: 1) to identify what are the most preference new media used by library user when they are using library services 2) to determine how new media (NM) used in public relations (PR) and marketing activities influence user's attitude towards library services 3) to unravel challenges faced by the user's when dealing with new media in public relations (PR) and marketing activities of UiTM library and 4) to discover user feedback of new media used in public relations (PR) and marketing activities by UiTM library that contribute to the users acceptance of new media used by PUITM. This research will contribute to the extension to help Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak (PUiTM) to come out with a proper guideline specifically to improve the quality and continuous improvement of PR and marketing activities done by UiTM libraries. Moreover, it fits within the broader university strategy to recognize students' communication preferences by harnessing the development of technology especially using new media; universities can provide better-personalized services in supporting learning and research activities.

Keywords: Library users, User's acceptance, New media, PR and marketing activities, library services.

Introduction

At present, the role of academic library is becoming very different from what it traditionally has been. Academic library must clearly understand their vision, mission and goals to support teaching, research and learning to provide adequate instructional programs (Raza & Nath, 2007). The development and transformational of communication and information technology (ICT) in libraries during the last twenty years has altogether changed the concept of a library in providing best quality services, since the library user is also changed compared to the traditional library. From the academic perspectives, academic library have experimented variety of approaches in providing information resources, and research assistance towards their user because the recent shift of technology have brought changes in the way students use academic libraries and library resources. Thus, librarians also believed that new media tools are suitable not only to communicate with users but also to facilitate the interaction of librarians with each other (Chu & Meulemans, 2008).

Libraries face new challenges as users' behaviour changes in response to new technological developments. The value and library functionality nowadays are being question because of the generations (Gen X and Gen Y) are more demanding and they are more trusting the power of search

engines like Yahoo, Google, Wikipedia and others (De Rosa, et. al, 2007). Many studies have been carried out highlighting on communication problems between academic libraries and their library user. Nevertheless, previous studies have extensively explored the use of social media at association meetings, conference, seminar works and in library newsletters, but no empirical study has yet been conducted that relates to determining users acceptance of new media presence especially in public relations and marketing activities for academic libraries.

The scope of this study were limited to UiTM libraries within Shah Alam and the informants selected were library users especially UiTM students who are using facilities and services provided by UiTM libraries. The originality findings from this study were expected to contribute to the extension of knowledge and improving UiTM library services. More precisely, there is no such study to date undertaking of new media application in the environment of academic library setting. Therefore, this study is a significant move in identifying the issues or problems that occur in new media in public relations and marketing activities for libraries to meet the new challenges.

Assessment of library services is an ongoing process and provides the library with the opportunity for continuous improvement of their services. It also as a way to align the library's strategic plans to meet user needs. Other than that, this research can also help the library management to come out with a proper guideline specifically to improve the quality and continuous improvement of PR and marketing activities by UiTM libraries. This makes it possible to understand what probably affects library user and understand the actual situation at UiTM library. Moreover, information and findings provided by this study could be shared among UiTM management as a base for their further development and improvement of library services.

Literature Review

Academic library is a unique resource centre which always supports the teaching and research needs of the University's staff and students. According to Taylor (1999) the library user is undisputed, the most important person in any library setting and should be treated as important clientele. Studies shows that individual perceptions of information technologies are likely to be influenced by the characteristics of information technologies they use it and also by the way people around them evaluate or use the systems (Rogers, 1986; Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, 1987).

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggests users formulate a positive attitude toward the technology when they perceive the technology to be useful and easy to use. The introduction of digital libraries during the last two decades has finally changed the concepts of libraries where library services and resources are no longer confined to the walls of the physical library. However, for the digital services to be utilized effectively and efficiently, library should develop effective media strategy to make sure library end users accept and use them.

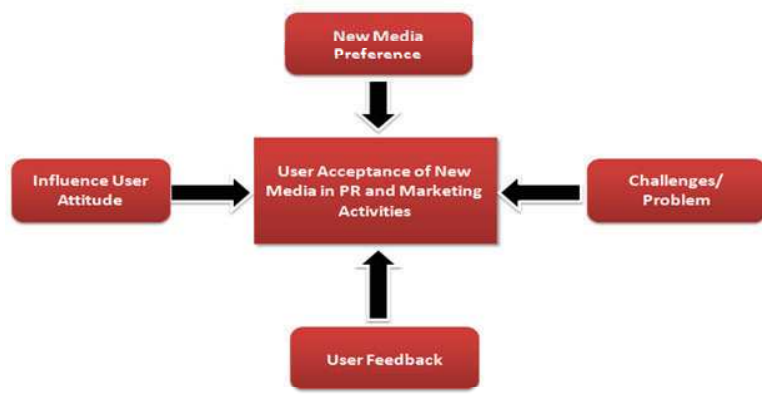
In the last ten years, the convergence between technologies and communication technologies had shown the remarkable rise of interactive media. Library should able to transform and meets the user demands in the communication of K-Knowledge era (Green, 2000). The development of new media represents an emerging suite of applications that are interactive, context-rich, and easy to use. At the same time, the rapid development of new digital media is seen as the nearly rapid response by traditional media (Flew, 2002). With new media technologies and applications, the entire user and audience has the ability to generate content, making it a more interactive process.

According to Convertive (2011) various online applications can be utilized by the user such as blog, wikis, social bookmarking, media-sharing services, social networking, collaborative editing tools, syndication, and modification technologies. Effective PR and marketing activity appear to be crucial for understanding user needs and puts the user at the centre of overall activities by any library organization (Lozano, 2000). Practice of public relations is not only limits to publicity in mass media or appearance in public events or programs. It involves many aspect of a process from research, analysis, policy formation, programming, communication, marketing and feedback from numerous publics (Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 2007).

Libraries need to remain aware of what their user want and need to help institutions develop a cohesive and comprehensive strategic plan for the implementation of new technologies across campus. The use of technology by students, academic libraries, and institutions of higher education needs to be a coordinated effort in order for all sides to take full advantage of what new technologies have to offer. The variety sources of information have grown and it is easier to find those sources with the powerful of search engines that are available today. The formations of new media content allow interactive user feedback and creative participation where they can access to any digital content without limits. Kress (1992) has argued about the relationship between convergent technologies of new media with the implication towards the user competence. Thus, the libraries' core activity resides in the intangible services of facilitating access to information and they still seek to influence the use of library services from their user (Mittermeyer, 2003).

At the same time, the new media age offer various choices and also create dilemmas among the users where communication scholars have raised concerns about changes phase of technology in terms of the effects on influencing consumer behaviour, attitude, affect, and cognition. Bell (1974) and Toffler (1980) highlight the impact of the information society took highly positive attitude towards new technologies and social impact. On the other hand, Bowman and Tamborini (2012) describe interactivity as the defining component of “new media,” introducing two-way feedback into entertainment media result the passive audience becoming active users. Specifically, digital interactive of the new media will allow interactive feedback from the user where the ability to produce, distribute, and still consume media entertainment while simultaneously enjoying on-demand and real-time access.

The conceptual framework provides in depth analysis of user acceptance of new media used in PR and marketing activities by UiTM libraries in terms of the categories of new media preference, how new media influence user attitude towards library services, challenges/problem faced by library users and what are the user feedback of new media used in PR and marketing activities by PUiTM.



Methodology

The qualitative approach of research design was applied in this research where the researcher was interested to understand user acceptance by the informants on the subject matter and later being documented from their perspectives as a library user. Qualitative research methods were focusing on viewing experiences from the perspective of those involved especially the library users. The intent is not only to share research findings but at the same time to stimulate interest in an alternate research methodology that seems useful in library profession that seems as concrete aspects of social science world (Leonard & Debra 2009).

According to Seale (1999) an in-depth interview is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method that is well suited for describing both program processes and outcomes from the perspective of the target audience which library user were selected as the informants. These informants were selected on the basis of typical sampling, a subset of the purposive sampling are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study. According to Patton (as cited in Merriam, 1998) purposive or purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, thus involving the selection of sample from which the most can be learned.

In this approach, the selection of participants, settings or other sampling units is criterion based or purposive (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002). The sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study. The choice of library users was therefore made from those who often frequented PUiTM library resources and had experience used library services and facilities. This is because the user fit the characteristics of the library user who experience using new media used in PR and marketing activities of PUiTM libraries. The informants were selected based on the characteristic that enabled them to contribute towards the research.

Data Analysis – In-Depth Interview

The data were analyzed by utilizing the thematic analysis by deriving themes from the in-depth interviews. Later, the researchers make selection of and choices regarding data collection procedures, interviews, documents, and observation. In the process of analyzing the data, the thematic analysis method was utilized in this study to further elicit the information derived from the in-depth interviews. This is where the data were organized into a more manageable volume and structure to allow for a generation of themes that relates to the study. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that thematic analysis as a way of seeing and a process for coding qualitative information. In this phase, the researcher has gone further by coming out with the actual themes that will be presented in the data analysis. The sample must be appropriate, consisting of respondent that suit informants selection who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic. This is important to ensure efficient and effective saturation of categories, with optimal quality data and minimum dross. Morse (1991) explains about sampling adequacy, evidenced by saturation and replication means that sufficient data to account for all aspects of the phenomenon have been obtained by the researcher. Saturating data is continuing bringing new participants into the study until the data set is complete and data replicates. Moreover, saturating data ensures replication in themes categories; replication verifies, and ensures comprehension and completeness of data analyzes (Stenbacka, 2001).

Findings and Discussions

The findings of the research were categorized into four sections. First of all, in terms of most new media preference by library user, the data derived from the informants have contributed the themes of- i) Facebook and ii) Twitter. Secondly, the researcher has come out with the themes based on new media used influence user's attitudes towards library service which are i) creates user loyalty towards library services, ii) build closer relationship with user, iii) Allow interactive feedback and participation, iv) create user awareness about library services , and v) change user perception about library. Thirdly, the researcher derived a few themes from the informants experience towards challenges faced by the user's when dealing with new media in public relations (PR) and marketing activities of UiTM library - i) lack of promotion and information broadcast, ii) lack exposure to library skills, iii) the ability to give feedback and quick response from the library, iv) users have had bad experiences with past or present service, v) lack of technical support to assists new users. Fourth, the researcher has come out with the themes

indicating user feedback of new media used by UiTM library- i) library information is outdated and irrelevant, ii) frustrated and give up waiting for prompt response, iii) lack of human service, iv) uncertainty to channel library enquiry, v) new media used do not provide sufficient and enough information, and vi) provide friendly and helpful guidance.

Table 2. Research Findings.

No.	Themes	Findings
1.	Most new media preference by library user	i) Facebook and ii) Twitter
2.	New media used influence user's attitudes towards library service	i) Creates user loyalty towards library services, ii) build closer relationship with user, iii) Allow interactive feedback and participation, iv) create user awareness about library services , and v) change user perception about library.
3.	Challenges faced by the user's when dealing with new media in public relations (PR) and marketing activities of UiTM library	i) Lack of promotion and information broadcast, ii) lack exposure to library skills, iii) the ability to give feedback and quick response from the library, iv) users have had bad experiences with past or present service, v) lack of technical support to assists new users.
4.	User feedback of new media used by UiTM library	i) Library information is outdated and irrelevant, ii) frustrated and give up waiting for prompt response, iii) lack of human service, iv) uncertainty to channel library enquiry, v) new media used do not provide sufficient and enough information, and vi) provide friendly and helpful guidance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Finally, the researcher had come to a conclusion whereby new media had changed the way people encounter and use information. This is where UiTM library can utilized the new media in their public relations and marketing library services and at the same time helps libraries to get closer to their users. Moreover, strategic use of technology and new media platform will make a library become more effective to engage with their prospective consumers or potential customers. The capabilities of new media will provides library to engage more closely with their user because the potential of using new media are about active dialogue and engagement, which demands considerable time, resource and library commitment to being successful. Therefore, the challenges faced by the library users when dealing with new media in PR and marketing activities of UiTM library should be resolved with their strategic planning.

As for recommendations, a similar study can be conducted in by implementing the quantitative method in order to get more views from larger amount of respondents. Questionnaires can be formulated for the implementation of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in order to help the quantitative researcher to understand user acceptance of new media used in public relations and marketing used by UiTM library. Secondly, the researcher has also come out with the recommendation of utilizing the same structure of research but with different sets of informants. In this research, the informants chosen to undergo the in-depth interview were selected only limited to UiTM students only.

Moreover, a different set of informants such as UiTM academic and administration staff can be an important call for user-focused research and at the same time will further extend the scope of the research. This type of data can help libraries to develop targeted PR and marketing activities for specific, identifiable populations. In sum, the similar research can also be conducted by switching the focus of the

research from the perspective of the library user to the perspective of librarian and library staff. Such improvisation can help future researcher to determine the actual source of problems that occur in the new media acceptance involving library management and their staff, thus deducting the sense of biases the current research that have been done initially.

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