White Paper: Social Media in the library - best practice

Research Brief

The way social media tools are selected and used in the library changes regularly in an evolving digital and social climate. Taylor & Francis is producing a White Paper that analyses the challenges and opportunities presented by social media as a communication tool in the library. The White Paper will consider its use in the library and how this differs by librarian job role. Our sample will be taken from academic librarians around the world, which may also allow us to examine differences by geographic location. The goal: to establish how librarians are currently using social media in their roles, the most useful social media tools and best applications for these tools in a library setting.

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Slideshare, blogs, Pinterest are just some of the mainstream social media networking sites available. The opportunities social media presents to the library community includes but is not restricted to user engagement, professional networking, informational exchange and increasing the discoverability of existing online resources at the library. With so many tools available, multiple uses and so many librarians making use of these tools in their library, Taylor & Francis wants to determine common practices associated with each tool and how this varies by job role.

The research paper will be based on findings from focus groups in the US, UK and India. In depth tele interviews with those who have researched the impact of social media tools in their library will also be conducted to include some detailed case studies. Finally an online survey will be distributed globally to outline best positive outcomes of social media tools in the library with a series of recommendations for maximum impact in the library.

Objective

- To research and present a White Paper on challenges and opportunities presented by social media comparing its uses in the library to establish the most useful types of social media and best methods for disseminating and using these tools in a library setting
- To identify whether a librarian’s use of social media differs by role – are subject librarians doing different things to electronic resources librarians?
- To identify if and how use of social media varies on an international level and what can be learnt from this knowledge
- To identify whether there are social networking tools that librarians are using inside their university that are different to mainstream social media – for example their own blogs, intranets, listservs

The White Paper audience

Academic librarians