Chapter 2

Social Media and Copyright in Digital Libraries

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines copyright issues surrounding the use of social media platforms for services delivery in digital library environments. The chapter traces the evolutionary development of online participation, where people of common interest communicate, share and contribute content on the social cyberspace. The chapter also discusses social media, digital libraries, copyright and intellectual property right (IPR), digital rights management (DRM) and social media, copyright challenges in digital libraries and some recommendations on how best to overcome the challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has been the front runner of discussion for almost a decade now due to its unprecedented popularity and acceptance in the media world. Its use has permeated virtually all facets of activities including the academia and scholarly communication world. Libraries are also not left out because of the ubiquitous use of this interactive tool among its teeming techno-savvy users for information and communication. Social media which includes social networking involves the use of Internet and mobile applications for interaction, communication and the exchange of information in various formats. Adigun et. al (2015) submitted that social networking can be seen as an evolutionary development of online participation, where people of common interest communicate, share and contribute content on the social cyberspace. This is possible due to advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

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New invents has crept into the field of information communication following the impact of emerging information technology tools such as computer systems, Internets, and mobile phones, to mention but a few. Tokunbo, et. al (2013) were of the opinion that the new media, promoted by Internet technology exhibit an integration and convergence of the existing media to extend the frontiers of the possibilities of the media of communication. The new media, that resulted from the ICTs invention, incorporated the characteristics of the old or traditional media, and extended the potentials and possibilities into which both the “old” and “new” media could be put into use for social interaction.

Digital libraries on the other hand are revolutionary in the information world. It has broken the barriers of access to information which was a major challenge for libraries worldwide. In the traditional libraries, when printed books where purchased, the libraries own these resources. The ownership issue is however quite different for digital resources. Digital libraries have their resources in digitized form and access is usually via a computing or mobile device usually with the use of Internet. Digital libraries thus come with its own twist of social interaction because of the nature of the format of its resources which does not restrict access to only the parent library. Accordingly, the digital library is known less for the extent and nature of the collections it owns than for the networked information space it defines through its online services. Phrases like “virtual library,” “electronic library,” “library without walls” and, most recently, “digital library,” all have been used interchangeably to describe this broad concept. An interesting concept of digital libraries by Smith (2001) pays attention not only on the organized and focused collection of digital objects, including text, images, video and audio. It also focus on the advantage of digitization which is the easy, fast, and convenient access to the world’s information regardless of where that information is stored at any time, from anywhere in the world. This is a situation of accessing massive contents that might not necessarily originate from a single library.

In the entire world, the protection of literary and artistic work is not new. This brings in the issue of copyright over a particular work which is very important. Copyright Infringement can be very common when there are exchanges of information in various formats on the social cyberspace. It enables the creator of the work to have a sole responsibility over his/her work and to enjoy the work of his/her hand. This will motivate such creators to invest more in creativity since it is profitable to do so.

According to Bothma et. al (2014), copyright is the legal, exclusive right that is granted to copyright owners to regulate the use of their intellectual creation for a limited period of time. A copyright is a law that gives the owner of a document, book, or other pieces of information and artistic work in the library or elsewhere, the right to decide what others can do with it. Beatrice (2007) defined copyright as the monopoly rights granted to authors and creators in order to make sure that adequate returns are made from their work so as to encourage the creation of intellectual works. Therefore, it is the duty of any library and librarian to protect the right of ownership of library materials. There have been increasing concerns from authors and social media users in the Nigerian libraries - just like other developing countries all over the world - over illegal use of materials in the library. This is because, pirates do not bear origination of published materials yet they use, sell and profit from copyright products in the information markets depriving the publishers and authors of the benefits of their works.

Digital libraries digitize their resources in print or other formats for fair use usually for educational/non-profit purposes. Librarians or even users however can take advantage of this and share these resources on social networking sites without taking into cognizance the legal implications. It is no news that unauthorized use (copying, editing, sharing etc.) of other people’s intellectual contents without their permission is a violation of their copyright. What then is the situation in digital libraries especially