Chapter 16
Social Media and Library Collaboration:
Analysis of Government Libraries (Kaguvi Building)

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp has become an integral part of everyday communication in Zimbabwe. These platforms allow libraries and librarians to work collaboratively. Anchored on the diffusion of technology theory, this chapter analyzed the availability of social media in the Ministry of Health and Child Care Library, Ministry of Environment Library, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development Library, and Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency Library. The researcher interviewed six library professionals and found out that government librarians are using social media platforms to promote access to information and support freedom of information. The study noted that government libraries are still facing challenges such as lack of administrative support and lack of clear collaboration policies. These challenges are affecting collaboration initiatives. Accordingly, the researcher recommended managers to support their libraries with financial resources if government librarians are to effectively apply social media in their work areas.

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media platforms has influenced communication and connections among people (Olajide, Otunla, & Omotayo, 2017). Social media is beneficial in many ways, for example, it has improved access to information, enhanced the capacity to classify and utilise information, promoted freedom to access information and enhanced information sharing. This rise of social media has also revolutionised socialisation and knowledge sharing. Web 3.0 platforms are useful for information and knowledge sharing. Social media enables information and knowledge exchanges among individuals, groups, families and communities of practice (COP), communities of interest (COI) and many other networks or associations. In Zimbabwe, most people engage with social media platforms using information and communication technologies (ICTs). Huan and Eric (2010) opine that social media platforms have enabled users to build and reinforce connections among people and have transformed traditional communities to information societies, where the creation, handling, dissemination and control of information have developed into a critical political, economic and socio-cultural action.

The application of Web 3.0 in libraries and related institutions has also revolutionised information generation, processing, organisation, discovery, retrieval and dissemination. Wanjiru (2009, p. 97) asserts that social media applications have enhanced information sharing information literacy, service delivery and supported teaching, learning and research. Olajide et al. (2017, p. 80) opine that social media platforms enable library services to be accessible to users without requiring that “users should come physically to the library”. These platforms also permit libraries, and related institutions, and users to cooperate and work collaboratively.

This chapter, thus, ascertained the availability of social media platforms at the government libraries housed at the Kaguvi Building in Harare, Zimbabwe, namely the Ministry of Health and Child Care Library (MoHCCL), Ministry of Environment Library (MoEL), Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development Library (MoTIDL) and Zimbabwe National Statistics (ZimStat) Library. Collins and Quan-Hasse (2012) assert that social media platforms are utilised by libraries to market services to current and prospective library patrons and information seekers. Anari (2013) adds that numerous libraries are embracing social media platforms to establish and maintain an environment
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