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The Effectiveness of Social Media As A Promotional Medium Of The University Of Sumatera Utara (USU) Library

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine how effective social media is as a promotion for the University of Sumatera Utara (USU) library. Analyzed the problem with a descriptive qualitative method, and collected the data through observation, interviews, and library research. The writers interviewed three informants from the USU library. The results showed that the promotion conducted by the USU library is running well and effectively, proven by several promotions posted on social media. Promotion is also done by maximizing social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Tiktok. The promotions carried out by this library are very diverse, including the promotion of training activities, such as scientific writing training, promotion of meeting room service facilities, online borrowing facilities, to journal access facilities for the academic community. It can get feedback or suggestions for its activities or promotions through social media. The information available through promotions on social media is a bridge for the USU academic community, especially students, to visit the USU library website and study in more depth the existing facilities. Promotional content is displayed through images and videos, highlighting information with an attractive visual appearance.

Keywords: Library; University of Sumatera Utara; Social Media, Promotion

1. Introduction

Libraries play an essential role in information and communication technology. Library promotion is one of the activities carried out to introduce the latest collections, services, and information to users so they can find out and be interested in using the collections, services, and information in the library, proven by the various services provided in the library which become more effective and efficient.

Library promotion activities have often been carried out in libraries, including distributing brochures, making events, lectures, and exhibitions. However, library promotion has also experienced developments, initially using printed or conventional promotions; now, with the development of library promotion technology, it has

begun to enter into digital promotions by utilizing social media. Social media is easier to use in disseminating library information.

The university library is the heart of the academic community within the university, playing a role in realizing the goals of the university. College library users are diverse, consisting of students, teaching staff, researchers, and the entire university community. The library must also be alert in the face of various service developments so that library users still get the best facilities.

Currently, there is a shift in habits, where previously services were generally carried out in person (face to face), now also done online, which is one of the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic that has hit the world since 2019. Due to this fact, libraries and users are getting used to information technology.

The University of Sumatera Utara (USU) Library is increasingly providing online services to make it easier to use and more accessible for users. One of which is utilizing social media as a medium for library promotion. Other social media used by this library are *Instagram*, *Facebook*, and *YouTube*. From this phenomenon, we can see the effectiveness of using social media as a media promotion for the University of Sumatera Utara library, given the habits that came during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was carried out in a hybrid manner by adopting offline and online models.

1.1. Network Society and Social Media

Network Society is a concept widely initiated and discussed by experts in describing community communication activities that take place through information and communication technology based on digital networks or the internet. Network Society is a phenomenon that was first gradually introduced through Marshall McLuhan's ideas through his global village concept [3]. Individual communication activities in the context of the Network Society occur because of the support of various features that accompany the development of information and communication technology based on digital technology. This base is the main facility that encourages communication activities of networked communities with technological mediation or commonly known as Computer-mediated communication (CMC). With this encouragement and offer, contextually, the phenomenon of networked society in the concept of Network Society is maximized so that they, as users of this technology can simultaneously create, distribute, use and utilize the information for various interests, be it economic, political, as well as socio-cultural.

One of the many forms of offer that can facilitate community members in communication activities to fulfil their interests is social media applications (Social media). The concept introduced by professor J.A. Barnes [4] in 1954 was defined as an application that allows individuals to interact with other individuals and create a social network (network society). This social structure of individual or organizational elements shows how they relate. Social media invites anyone interested to participate by making contributions openly, making comments, and sharing information in a fast and unlimited time, reducing distance, space and time.

There are many social media networking services with their respective superior features. These features provide an exciting interaction space. Many ways of communication can be used by users to interact or obtain information from this social media, whether through chat, messaging, or email. It also makes social media an up-and-coming digital platform for individuals and groups (organizations) to carry out promotional activities, including the University of Sumatera Utara (USU) Library.

1.2. Library Promotion

Promotion is part of library services to communicate various activities and services available by utilizing various attractive and innovative promotional strategies. Libraries are, in practice, user-oriented. In this case, library users experience social changes from time to time. In a broader context, Libraries work professionally

by separating personal needs and professional obligations, giving optimum service and information, including the ones needed by the users [9].

Library promotion, according to Edsall [8], aims to provide awareness to the public about library services, encourage public interest in using the library, and develop public understanding to support library activities. Along with the technology development, the library also follows by increasing the use of information and communication technology in managing the library. Today's library users are dominated mainly by the Net Generation, the generation born and grew up in the sophistication of information technology and the internet. [10] The characteristics of net generation include freedom, customization, scrutiny, integrity, collaboration, entertainment, speed, and innovation. Therefore, the USU Library must also adapt its promotion design to the characteristics of the net generation as library users.

2. Research Methods

The research method in this study uses a qualitative approach. This approach determines finding, collecting, processing, and analyzing research data. According to Sugiyono (2007), the qualitative research method is based on the postpositivism philosophy. Researchers often use this method to research the condition of natural objects, where the researcher is a critical instrument, and the data collection techniques use data triangulation and inductive data analysis so that the results emphasize more on generalization. Qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon of descriptive data generated from people or observed behavior by conducting in-depth interviews to find a transparent model. This research took place at the University of North Sumatra Library at Jl. No.1 Library, Padang Bulan, Kec. Medan Baru, Medan City, North Sumatra 20155. The reason for choosing the location of this research is the University of North Sumatra library because this library has a library promotion strategy that is useful for users and various other university libraries.

Data collection is an attempt to limit research in gathering information. The data collection technique used in this research is a field study, namely direct research conducted on the object under study. The writers collected the data through observation, structured and unstructured interviews, and a literature review. Technically, the writers carried out the research process through six stages: processing and preparing data for analysis, reading the entire data, coding data, themes and descriptions, linking themes and descriptions, and interpreting themes and descriptions.

3. Results And Discussion

Social media is very effective in announcing or promoting activities and new service facilities in a library [1]. The promotions carried out by the USU Library are very diverse, including the promotion of training activities, such as scientific writing training, promotion of meeting room service facilities, online borrowing facilities, to journal access facilities for the academic community. Activities carried out by this library are carried out both inside and outside the library. Some examples of activities and facilities held and provided by the USU Library are scientific writing training for students and facilities for using The Gade Creative Lounge meeting room. The training activities and facilities in the USU Library provide new knowledge as learning for students in supporting their lecture activities.

To convey these various activities and facilities to users, the USU library needs publication media to reach every user. It has used and optimized social media to promote existing activities and services. Social media can get feedback or suggestions from activities or promotions. Students or the general public (social media followers) provide feedback through the comment column or direct messages. It uses social media to promote various services and activities, including Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube. [6] Libraries can use social media

to promote activities, including Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, Google Plus, and Flickr. However, for now, Instagram is the most effective social media used by the USU Library. It will target Tiktok for promotional activities in the future. [5] Besides providing academic training, library social media can also help promote services and various activities or events.

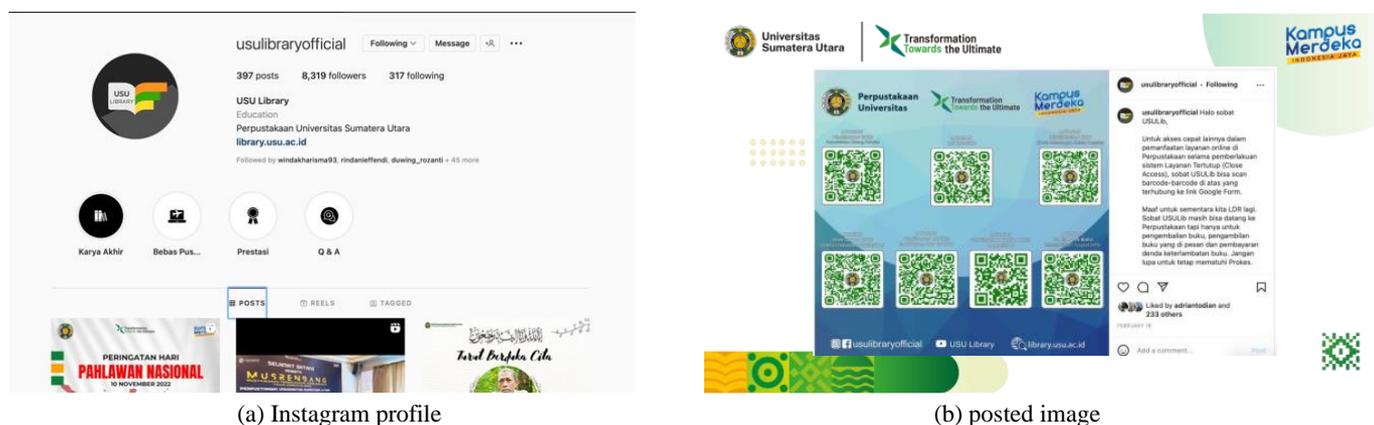(a) Instagram profile   (b) posted image

Figure 1. USU Library's Instagram view

USU library's promotion focuses on digital platforms (social media) due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic outbreak has encouraged it to provide online services, so until now, it has become a trend among the USU academic community, especially students. Students, mostly the net generation, tend to access information through social media and online news portals. It is due to the characteristics of new media: interactivity, virtual, and networked [7].

The use of social media is essential as a promotional medium for the USU Library because most library users have social media. The information available through promotions on social media is a bridge for the USU academic community, especially students, to visit the USU library website and study in more depth the existing facilities. Librarians can show the advantages and uniqueness of a library (collections, facilities, latest information, original posters, and many more) on social media by updating their status, uploading photos of various library activities, or only bibliographic data [2]. [11] The number of active social media users in Indonesia was 191 million in January 2022. This number increased compared to the previous year when social media users increased by 12.35%. Seeing the trend, the number of social media users in Indonesia continues to increase every year.

Social media promotion generally goes well and effectively through several existing services. Existing promotional content is displayed through images and videos highlighting information with an attractive visual appearance. One indicator that shows the existence of users is that the more people who give comments, likes, and followers, the better the response from users. [1] Libraries could capture the best moments and promotions and share photos of activities that have been carried out.

4. Conclusions

The promotion of the USU Library through social media is going well and effectively. Promotion on social media also produces an interactivity effect between the USU Library and users through user feedback. Various types of services and activities in the USU Library can be promoted properly and are right on target.

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