"UM in the News": Marketing and promotion in social media platforms

N.A, Hazidah[1]; N.N, Edzan[1];I, Y, Mahbob[1];Hasmawati[2]
[1]University of Malaya Library, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA
hazidah@um.edu.my, edzan@um.edu.my,mahbobyusof@um.edu.my
[2]UniversitiKuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA
hasmawati@iprom.unikl.edu.my

Abstract

Today's technology has made it possible for news to be disseminated in the quickest manner. Users, especially from the higher learning institutions, need to stay connected with news in order to complete some of their learning processes. The aim of this paper is to analyse the strategies used in marketing and promoting of news by the University of MalayaLibrary (UML). The effectiveness of these strategies will be analyzedvia the number of pages viewed, shares, clicks and viral lift. The study is descriptive in nature in which it will describe the strategies used by the UMLto market and promote news and also the effectiveness of these strategies. It is hoped that this study will provide some insights on the marketing and promotion of news by libraries especially at higher learning institutions.

Keywords: Marketing and promotion of news;Social media networks;Marketing strategies;News clippings

Introduction

Advancements in technology and telecommunication have affected broadcasting in a positive manner. Nowadays, e-commerce websites and online newspapers are becoming more common. Published newspapers are still very popular but on the other hand, people are also eager to check the headlines from online newspapers as well (Berna& Attila, 2010). Other factors which contribute to the selection of online newspapers or news websites include: the nature of news is changing because of the digital world's 24-hours news cycle (Robert & Kirsten, 2007); immediacy and virtually unlimited space; and the hyperlinks to the news websites which are potential doorways leading readers into the site. Studies show that link analysis is a novel and useful method that users can gauge online readership and potential impact of news sites (Yijun&Liwen,2005). Meanwhile, Boczkowski's (2004) study reveals that online newspapers appear as one of the digital genres that have attracted the most research attention.

What is news?The traditional view is that news is information about recent events or happenings, especially reported by newspapers, periodicals, radio or television. News is the presentation of such information, as in a newspaper or on a newscast, while, an online newspaper is a newspaper that exists on the World Wide Web or the Internet.

Carlos' (2009) exploratory research discovered that newspaper reading is motivated by five key factors: knowing current news bringing forth knowledge that enables readers to interact with family and friends; searching for specific information such as stock prices and results of sport competitions; keeping informed about breaking news or current affairs; making it a leisure or entertainment activity; or being a habit where by reading a newspaper at a particular time or location has become part of many people's daily routine.

University of Malaya Library's initiative in marketing and promotion of news

University of Malaya in the News

The University of Malaya Library (UML) has made it possible for news to be disseminated within the library website. UM in the News was initiated by Dr. Nor Edzan Haji CheNasir, UML's Chief Librarian in 2008. Among the five Research Universities, UM Library is the only University library that provides with this application. It also allows users to share the news by just clicking at the "share" button provided in each news clippings.

"UM in the News" is news coverage relating to the University of Malaya (UM) and its staff, students and alumni that have appeared in the local, regional and national newspapers. It also provides newspaper reports and pictorial coverage of events, announcements and achievements of the university. It can be accessed via http://umlib.um.edu.my/newscut.asp.The primary objective of "UM in the News" is to collect and housed all news published in the newspapers relating to UM in order to enhance the Library's services towards institutional repositories development. However, as for now, UML only uploadscurrent news clippings.

Data generated from Google Analyticsshows that the number of hits for the news clippings vary from month to month (Figure 1) but the average hits per month is 3,465.6. The highest hit is in August (4,528) and the least hit is in May (2,355). This means 2,930 pages were viewed a total of 41,587 times in the year 2010.
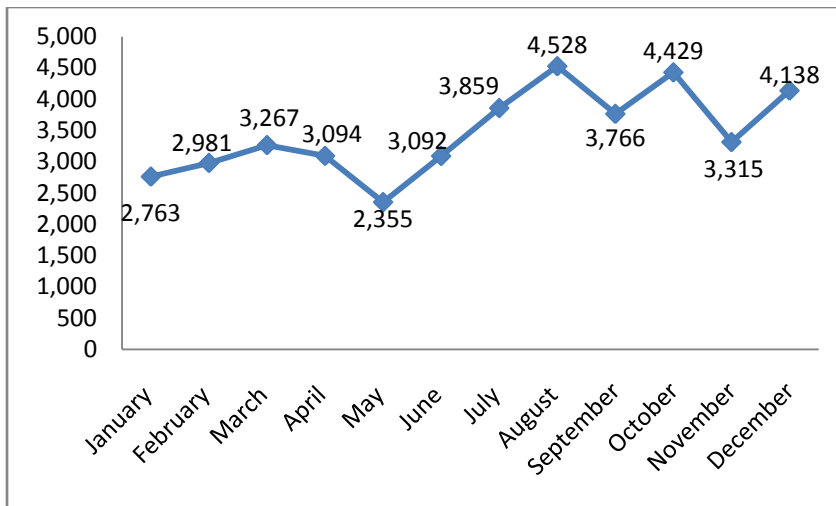
Figure 1: UM in the News:Monthly Pages Viewed (Jan – Dec 2010)

Geographic trends

In order to plan marketing and promotion strategies, it is necessary to know about geographic trends.Table 1 illustrates the top 10 ranking of countries according to their shares on the UML's news clippings. The data portrayed in this table pertains to November 2010 until February 2011.

Top Countries	Shares	Clicks	Viral Lift
Malaysia	210	354	169%
United Kingdom	3	21	700%
Indonesia	3	2	67%
United States	3	4	133%
Japan	2	19	950%
United Arab Emirates	1	0	0%
Singapore	0	14	0%
Australia	0	7	0%
Hong Kong	0	3	0%
New Zealand	0	3	0%

Table 1: Geographic trends on sharing UM Library news clippings – top 10 countries

Strategies used in marketing news clippingsand the effectiveness of these strategies

Several strategies have been used to facilitate the users in accessing the news clippings. These include:

a) Highlight latest news clippings on the first page of the UML'swebsite

With this strategy, users can view the latest news clippings uploaded without having to click on the particular site, unless they want to read more news clippings. Reports generated by AddThisAnalytics show that 55% of the users access news clippings from UML'swebsite domain (Table 2).

Top Domains	Percentages
www.umlib.um.edu.my	55%
www.google.com.my	20%
www.facebook.com	12%
www.google.com	4%
Search.yahoo.com	2%

Table 2: Top domains

b) Provide search browsing in several modes–Users may use several browsing modes such as search by subject, by month and by newspaper categories.

Sources	News Clippings	Subjects	News Clippings
BeritaHarian	629	Academia - Opinion	150
Utusan Malaysia	450	Students - Activities	131
Sin Chew Daily	445	UM- Alumni	112
The Star	249	UMMC- Services	96
New Straits Times	208	Ranking	56
Sunday Star	120	UM- Lecturers	55
New Sunday Times	115	UM- Research	55
The Sun	46	UM- Activities	52
BeritaMinggu	44	Educ, Higher- M'sia	46
MakkalOsai	43	UM- Commentaries	41
Mingguan Malaysia	42	UM- Convocation	36
Malay Mail	41	Crime Malaysia	35
Harian Metro	30	Students - Elections	34
Kosmo	24	UM Indian StdDept	32
UtusanMelayu	10	Academia Award	32
New Sabah Times	5	Conference	31
Lain-lain	3	THE- QS	30
Access	2	MOE	28
Nanyang Siang Pau	2	E-Voting	28
Star Metro	1	Job Hunting- M'sia	28

Table 3: UML's news sources (as at 24th January 2011)

Table 4: UML's news clippings top 20 subjects (as at 24th January 2011)

The UML's news clipping are from different newspapers (Table 3). Most of them are from *BeritaHarian* with a total of 629 news clippings. *Utusan Malaysia* ranked second in reporting news about the university (450 news clippings) and *Sin Chew Daily* ranked third with 445 news clippings. The rest of the newspapers which are significant in reporting about the university are *The Star*, *New Straits Times*, *Sunday Star* and *New Sunday Times*.

In terms of subject classifications, the news clippings are mainly related to Academia's Opinions (150), Students' Activities (131), Alumni (112) and UMMC Services (96). These are the most significant subjects that appeared in the newspapers. The rest are less significant involving subjects such as Lecturers, Researches, Activities and Commentaries (Table 4).

c) **Social sharing** – Users can share the news clippings on the social media by clicking on the "sharing widgets" provided by AddThis.AddThis is a social bookmarking tool that iseasy to implement and is able to help in planning and provide a clear picture about the effectiveness ofsocial media as marketing tools and promotional strategies. Table 5 illustrates themajority of the users (119 shares) use "Tools - print" for sharing purpose. Facebook is the most popular social media used to share information with 631% viral lift compared to the other social media, where bythis can be considered as a successful and effective strategy.Facebook generated 404 clicks from 64 shares (Table 5).Most of this Viral Lift (called V-Lift) are from visitors who clicked on the news clippings from their friends' Facebook. Of the figure, only a few are from the email but none came from Google, Twitter, MySpace, Delicious and GMail. In summary, Table 6 shows the top services by thesocial mediacategory.

Top services	Shares	Clicks	Viral Lift
Print	119	0	0%
Facebook	64	404	631%
Email	23	29	126%
Google	7	0	0%
Twitter	4	0	0%
MySpace	3	0	0%
Delicious	1	0	0%
Gmail	1	0	0%

Time period: Nov 2010 – Feb 2011
Table 5: Daily shares to top services

Top services Category	Shares
Tools	119
Social Networks	67
Email/IM Service	24
Bookmarking Site	8
Blogging Platform	4

Time period: Nov 2010 – Feb 2011
Table 6: Top services by category

d) **Social medias as a marketing tools**- A part from these strategies, the UML also use social networking such as Facebook, Delicious and Wordpress as a platform to market and promote news clippings by manually posting the link from the news clipping and

providingpermanent links on the social medias. These social media are also used to disseminate information on opening hours, latest services offered, notifications on services or internet disruption, information about online databases, sharing knowledge, recommendations of reading materials, announcement on the latest events in UM or UML itself.Hence, users or social mediahabitués can easily access the news clippings through the network services.To expand its reach, UM's websitealso provides permanent links to the "UM in the News". This is another way for UML and the UM to disseminate news clippings. Users can surf thesite viahttp://www.facebook.com/pages/ The-University-of-Malaya library/ 28382147400.

As for Delicious, news clippings can be inserted directly by clicking the icon found on every news clippings.Users are free to add the news clippings into their Delicious account. User's can also tag the uploaded material. However, whatever is tagged, would require moderation from the librarians. The librarians will approve or disapprove the tags and upon approval, the tag can be added to the record.

Future Initiatives

There is a need for the UML to utilize other strategies and available social media tools to disseminate news about the University other than the ones mentioned above, in order to enhance user's accessibility to "UM in the News" in the near future.

a) **Search engine optimization (SEO)–**News clippings search will become easier with a search engine. Therefore, UML is planning to provide a search engine in "UM in the News". Users do not have to search the news clippings manually. All they need to do is just type-in a keyword or atitle on the search engine's browser provided and they will get relevant hits.

b) **Expend content by uploading archived news clipping -** In order to expend the Library's collections towards web archiving, archived news clippings will also be uploaded into "UM in the News". Thus, users may access old news clippings online without having to come to the Library.

c) **Text version for mobile devices –**UML is also planning to provide text version for mobile devices to disseminate the latest news clippings. It is convenient for the users to read the news directly on their mobile devices in a text version.

d) **Twitter -** In the first quarter of 2010, 4 billion tweets were posted (Wikipedia, 2010). With the vast number of ongoingconversations, the UML can use Twitter to its advantage. Users can quickly share information with those who are interested in the UML's news and services, follow up with status updates and also build relationships. The viral effect it has

generated over the years makes Twitter an effective social media for posting news daily headlines and update UML's followers. Users just need to find the public stream and follow the conversation of their interest.

e) **RSS (Really Simple Syndication) -** RSS is a web syndication that is a family web feed format used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video. As of 27 January 2011, the syndic8.com website has been indexing 1,404 (out of 630,990) feeds with subject tags and 4,597,192 items with subject tags.UML can apply this web syndication which will allows users to syndicate their site content besides providing an easy means to share and view headlines and contents. It also can be used toinform users that the news clippings have been uploaded and allows personalised views for different sites. In addition, it lists news with title, date and description which makes it convenient for users.

f) **Tag clouds –**tag cloudsoffer a more convenient and intuitive navigation for "UM in the News". They can provide users with an instant illustration of the main topics, giving a very specific and precise orientation of the news clippings' content. Since human beings tend to think in concepts and models, it is easier to get an idea of the content if the main concepts are given straight away — in digestible pieces, and prioritized by their weight. In fact, the main advantage of tag clouds lies in their ability to highlight the most important and/or popular subjects dynamically which is not the case in conventional navigation menus.

g) **MyWeboo -** MyWeboo is social news that has an interesting concept because it allows users to manage their web files from various social networks all in one place. Since it is working with Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Flicker, Photobucket, Picasa, Delicious, Wretch, Amazon S3 and Your PC (Windows), UML may take this opportunitiesto market and promote news clippings as it functions like a one stop manager that makes it easy for users to control web files from various social media. Since its official launch in June 2010, MyWeboo has attracted a lot of users and is now growing rapidly.

Advantages and limitations of social media foronline marketing

Online marketing is inexpensive when one examines the ratio of cost to the attainment of the target audience. UML can reach a wide group of users for a small fraction of traditional advertising budgets. The nature of the medium allows users to read the news clippings conveniently. Therefore,UML has the advantage of appealing to users in a medium that can bring results quickly. However, the strategy and overall effectiveness of marketing campaigns depend on the library goals and users' satisfaction analysis.

In addition, the UML's management also has the advantage of measuring statistics easily and inexpensively; almost all aspects of an online marketing promotion can be traced, measured, and tested. UMLcan use a variety of methods, such as RSS feed and send to personal users' emails. Therefore, UMLcan determine which news are more appealing to the users. The results of promotion can be measured and tracked immediately because online marketing initiatives usually require users to visit a website, and to perform a targeted action.

Meanwhile, there are some limitations to online marketing especially when the service providersterminate their services.Users are no longer able to access the applications. Furthermore, while social media can be a very useful tool, there are copyright and licensing, institutional factors, and the providers' own policiesto keep in mind.Last but not least, in order to provide efficient and up-to-date service, competent staffs are required to manage the related tasks.

Conclusion

Unlike in the past where people were only depending on newspapers, television and radio for news, in recent times, news can be obtained through various media. The Internet has made it possible for people to get updated news of events anytime and anywhere they are, as long as they are connected. Social media create another dimension for people not only to stay in touch with their associates but it can also be use to promote products and services. The viral effect that the social media developed, has made it possible for services to be quickly made known faster than the old ways of advertising. In fact, a great number of people use social networkto interact with each other. Consequently, news or news clippingsshould be made available through the social media for prompt and widespread dissemination of news by libraries. Through various social media, a variety of information can be shared and readers may choose the one that suits their preference whether local, regional or international.Analytics tool such as Google and AddThis are very useful in planning and providing information about the effectiveness of the strategies used. However, not all social media can be applied because it requires a strong commitment from the Library. Libraries are free to choose any of the suggested social media in order to market and promote their news.

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