**Utica Public Library:**

**Social Library Project**

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**Table of Contents**

*Literature Review 3*

*Project Plan 13*

*Marketing Plan 39*

*Assessment Plan 62*

*Appendix 79*

***Literature Review***

When planned and managed well, social networking tools and social media sites can be an easy and effective way for libraries to connect with users. Social networking tools can seem countless and overwhelming for user organizations that are new to their use but, as Breeding points out, social networking tools can both supplement and complement in-person interactions and tangible resources (Breeding). The social networking world is also a great place to find new users, market the library and its offerings, and gather valuable feedback from the library community.

Many libraries may be questioning whether or not social media is worth the time, money, and energy spent to develop and maintain. It is true that there are social sites out there that cost money or a lot of time and work to create and monitor. It is also true, however, that there are many sites that are just the opposite.

Social networking is all about making and sharing connections and information. People want to know. They want to know what the popular trends are, what new gadgets and services are available to them, and they want to know other people’s opinions of these things. In order to do so, people must make connections. The more the better. Why shouldn’t their library be one of these connections and sources of information? Social media is a great way for libraries to share themselves with the plethora of users and potential users in the virtual world.

While there are some drawbacks and difficulties associated with the use of social media sites for libraries, there are also many positive aspects. With a minimal budget and minimal time required for set-up and maintenance, social media sites can open up a whole new world of users, potential users, marketing opportunities, and assessment strategies for a library and its services. Using social media is a great way for libraries and users to communicate and share endless amounts of information almost instantly. Bring the library to the users!

**Planning a User Attack**

Implementing a social media project can truly be “cheap and easy” and Kay Cahill of the Vancouver Public Library is adamant about that. A good place to start is to follow Cahill’s lead and work with only social networking tools that require minimal set-up and maintenance time, which can include using sites with built in templates (Cahill). Minimal set-up and maintenance is good for busy librarians who may find the new project somewhat overwhelming.

The next step to tracking down appropriate sites is to do some side by side comparisons of features, usability, syntax, hosting requirements, and more (Chase). For the purposes of the Social Library Project at the Utica Public Library, we are looking at services that are easily compatible with most home computers, also making them the more popular and more commonly used tools. This will allow for the least amount of stress on stakeholders as well as available facilities.

Cheryl Peltier-Davis describes the use of popular sites as pushing services where the users want it. These sites and tools are already popular in the social networking world. By bringing the library out into this community, the library is essentially “invading their social worlds.” (Peltier-Davis). This is a strategy that retail competition of the library has been utilizing for some time now.

Once each site has been chosen and initial set-up has been made, library staff may begin the self teaching aspect. During this time it is important that staff “play around” with each site, adding and removing content, communicating amongst each other, and simply exploring the options the site has to offer. Helene Blowers, through her Learning 2.0 program, emphasizes the importance of this play and practice time. It is a good chance for librarians to familiarize themselves with the social networking tools and discover what questions they may have regarding the service. They may even then use the social networking tool to communicate and ask and answer those questions amongst each other (Blowers).

When library staff is comfortable with use, they may begin adding content and beta-testing. Cahill has suggested, as she did for the Vancouver Public Library, that social networking tools and sites are able to be in a perpetual beta state. They are dynamic and always changing according to new content and user needs, so it is not necessary for the library or librarians to have a sense of static information when implementing the tools (Cahill).

**Social Marketing**

While social media marketing is a hot topic, much of the discussion and hype is about how social media can be used to market a product, service, or organization. For the Utica Public Library, however, we are looking for ways to market the library’s social media use. In order to develop a social media following for the library to advertise its services to, it must first market to community members to develop the social media following.

Casey and Stevens point out the value of word-of-mouth marketing techniques, or grapevine marketing. They note that libraries have both internal and external grapevines through which information and ideas can travel. The internal grapevine allows for word-of-mouth marketing among librarians, staff, volunteers, and board members for promotion of the marketing object. The external grapevine is communication among users and potential users in the community and this communication level can have a great affect on the marketing impact (24).

There is also a link between the two grapevines that comes when internal sources communicate with external sources. (24) This link is established when, for example, librarians talk to users about the marketing object, or when volunteers talk with friends and family. This inevitably leads to continued communication through the external grapevine, expanding the reach of word-of-mouth marketing.

The problem with word of mouth marketing, however, is that internal members cannot control what is being said in the external grapevine. Casey and Stephens suggest that, even when there is a fear of negative discussion, trying to silence the grapevine is even more detrimental to the organization or object (24). It is important, therefore, for internal sources to create as positive a discussion and keep the marketing object as useful, up-to-date, or purpose serving as possible.

Casey and Stephens also suggest more physical means of library public relations. They suggest featuring photos, real positive testimonies, and recommendations from users on the website, in brochures, on flyers, or in catalogs (24). Keeping material real and human is a way to connect with users who are looking for positive interactions with their libraries, be it in person or via the web.

Vrana and Barbaric make similar suggestions. They studied five different public libraries in the capital of Croatia. The study revealed the most effective means of marketing to be things such as featuring spots on the website to promote the service (435-444). The study also revealed that print materials such as posters, leaflets, brochures, and bookmarks were great ways to advertise services and improve the visibility of public libraries (435-444).

Vrana and Barbaric also note that marketing for an internet environment is somewhat different than marketing for a physical environment. Vrana and Barbaric have taken the four P’s of marketing and adapted them to four C’s of marketing for internet environments. The four C’s, as follows, have been taken into consideration throughout the development of the marketing plan: Product=Customer, Place=Convenience (online, website), Price=Cost to the user (time and energy put into accessing the library’s internet services), and Promotion=Communication (435-444).

Fisher and Pride also outline a wide variety of marketing and public relations tools and techniques. In addition to the four P’s (or C’s) of marketing, Fisher and Pride add a fifth. The fifth P, which the Utica Public Library’s marketing plan will utilize, is Partnerships. Partnerships, according to Fisher and Pride, can play a very important role in complementing the library’s marketing resources and strategy (52). To expand its resources in partnership, the Utica Public Library will coordinate with the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees to help target and provide information to the area’s large international population.

There are many commonalities throughout the literature of marketing web services to library users. The major factors that fit into the Utica Public Library’s plan and budget have been incorporated into the marketing plan. The marketing plan will include the following strategies: word-of-mouth, flyers, brochures, presentations, television news spots, and radio advertisements.

**Assessing the Outcome**

Alison Circle stated that, “If people have to work for it, they’ll walk away” (Circle). One of the main attractions of social media for the average user is that it is easy to use. Ease of use translates for ease of interacting with users by libraries. Tracking how effective these interactions are is not quite as easy.

As Stuart notes, the amount of specificity of quantitative data provided by social media can vary greatly from site to site. It can also vary at times within the same site depending on the subscriber’s level of use, or whether or not the subscriber is paying for the service (pp. 22-24). Quantitative data provided on the sites, such as number of users, followers, friends, etc. of the library is a good indication of initial and potential interest of users, but does not hint at the users’ activity level or interaction with the library via the site (Stuart, pp. 22-24).

Fichter suggests a “Trinity Approach,” as developed by Avinash Kaushik, as a way to get a well rounded, both quantitative and qualitative measure of the library’s social media success (Fichter 2008, pp. 54-57). The trinity approach has three increasingly qualitative analytic perspectives. The first aspect is behavioral. Behavioral data relies on numbers and is where quantitative data come from. Behavioral data can answer questions such as: How many followers does the library have on this site? How many comments were made today? How many of our followers are teenagers or young adults? (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57).

The second angle of the trinity approach is to look at outcomes. Outcomes as qualitative results can answer questions such as: Have users found the service useful? Is the service therefore meeting its initial goals? Is the service mutually beneficial to the user as well as the library? Are users utilizing our provided links to catalogs and databases? (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57).

With the outcome data, the library can then look at the third and final aspect of the trinity approach- experience. Experience is how the library is reacting to the qualitative data. Why are users doing what they are doing? How is the library listening to their feedback? (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57). Following these questions, the library can then act on the findings and give the users more of what they want or like and less of what they don’t.

Both Fichter and Stuart emphasize the importance of qualitative measurements to determine the success of a library’s social media use. Fichter points out that people are more likely to trust information regarding companies (and libraries) “if it comes from ‘a person like me’” (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57). This idea makes it easier for libraries to make connections and build relationships with users when the librarians interact through social media sites. It is important that librarians make this connection and keep on top of user comments and concerns because the relationship could just as easily (or even more easily) turn sour, and word of mouth picks up from there.

Cahill emphasizes the importance of logging user feedback on the sites. With a log of feedback the library can see trends as to what users feel is working or not working for particular sites as well as the social library project as a whole. (Cahill, pp. 140-155). A feedback log also allows the library to keep track of the ratio of positive to negative user feedback. How much is positive, negative, and neutral? How much of the feedback is constructive and helpful? (Fichter, 2009).

The effectiveness of social media use in libraries is a current trending topic. Quantitative information is easy to obtain but is limited in amount and what it can tell about the impact of its use. Qualitative data is more difficult to obtain but it can give a much more detailed and useful success story.

Implementing the social library project can help the Utica Public Library make more connections throughout the community, share information and services with users, provide a platform for questions and feedback, and more. In addition to implementation, marketing and assessing the project can help further develop the library’s social media presence and in turn, help the library to fulfill its mission “to provide access to the entire sum of human knowledge, inside and outside the library building, and to provide people of all ages in the Utica community and Mid-York Library System opportunities for reading, learning, growth, and improvement.”

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***Project Plan:***

***Social Library Project***

**Introduction**

The Social Library plan will increase awareness of the Utica Public Library, will spread many of the library’s services out into the social networking community, and it will increase communication and the sharing of information among the library’s internal and external stakeholders. The Social Library plan is designed to incorporate social networking tools and social media sites into the day to day activities of the library. While the library has already implemented the use of some widely used social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the Social Library plan looks to further develop the use of those networks as well as introduce additional social networking tools for the use and benefit of the library and its stakeholders.

The Social Library plan will work over time to increase the library’s presence in the social media world. With the implementation of each additional tool, the library will be expanding its base further into the realm of users and potential users. Although there is no one singular demographic that the library seeks to target, there is an emphasis on extending awareness to teens and young adults. The Social Library plan can be optimal for reaching the library’s target audience, through sites like MySpace, in addition to other library stakeholders.

The plan will be implemented gradually over time and will include both formal and informal training of librarians and library staff. Some of the training will be based on, and utilize, some of the staff training and implementation concepts presented by the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County Learning 2.0 website (further discussed in the Relevant Literature section). These aspects of the Social Library Plan are self taught with deadlines by which to report. The self teaching method will allow busy library staff to learn, explore, experiment and HAVE FUN with the social networking tools in what time they can find, within a certain time period. The formal training will be introductory to each learning stage and will also allow for updates and summaries of each completed stage. It will also serve to help keep staff feeling unified within the rather individualized 2.0 realm.

The project is designed to incorporate the use of six new social media sites for the library. The recommended types of sites are a blog, wiki, IM and IM aggregator, photo sharing site, additional social networking site such as MySpace, and video sharing site such as Youtube. The plan is also flexible to include other social media and social networking sites according to usage and changing technology.

Each of these types of sites has different benefits that it can offer the library. By creating a blog, the library can relay to followers updates about the library, current events, future events, plans, changes in hours, or projects underway. Through a wiki, library staff can create information hubs for both internal and external users. IM services can be created to have instantaneous interactions with users and answer questions as they arrive through a different media than in person, email, or phone. An IM aggregator allows the library to view and access various IM accounts through one window.

Photo and video sharing sites allow viewers to have more personal images and encounters from a distance. They can see what is happening with the library and can feel more connected to it. Video sharing sites also allow for things ranging from virtual tours of the library tutorials to be posted. If, for example, the library is often getting inquiries about how to use a certain database, they library can create a tutorial and post it. MySpace is also a strong addition because over half of 12 to 17 year olds use social networking sites and 85% of that use is via MySpace. Although Facebook is increasing in popularity, it only held 7% of users 12-17 in 2007 (378).

Once responsible staff is comfortable with use of the sites, the focus will turn to content. Each social media site presents content to users differently. The responsible parties will have to decide, for each site, what type of information and/or service is best shared through that site and how it should be directed to users. Librarians may have to rely on early user feedback to help increase the usefulness of information given and therefore the value or the site to the library.

**Relationship to Library Strategic Planning**

“The mission of the Utica Public Library is to provide access to the entire sum of human knowledge, inside and outside the library building, and to provide people of all ages in the Utica community and Mid-York Library System opportunities for reading, learning, growth, and improvement.”

The Social Library Project Plan meshes very well with the Utica Public Library’s mission. The mission notes that the Utica Public Library seeks to provide access to all knowledge possibly accessed, not just that held within the physical library itself. The included phrase, “inside and outside the library building” can be related directly to information on the web and accessed via social networking tools, among other things. By implementing new social networking tools and web 2.0 technologies into the library, information and access to it is being spread further and further out into the community, and beyond.

According to E-marketer.com, social media sites are primarily used by young adults ages 18 to 24. Contact with the social networking tools, however, will not necessarily be limited to young adults or the immediate local community as their use is spreading rapidly. Social networks can have far reaching impacts on many different people in many different locations, fulfilling and extending beyond the focus of the library’s mission to reach “people of all ages in the Utica community and Mid-York Library System.”

**User Needs Assessment**

*Internal Stakeholders*

* Librarians: Librarians work to fulfill the information wants and needs of patrons and continue to seek out new and better methods of reaching users
* Library Staff: Library staff members seek to help the organization thrive and to help successfully fulfill the library’s mission on an ongoing basis.
* Board Members and Executives: Board members and executives look for the most effective and cost effective means of serving the community.

*External Stakeholders*

* Current Library Patrons: Current users are people who utilize the library’s existing facilities and services, who may benefit from the social media services.
* Potential Library Patrons: Potential users are those who could benefit from the library’s facilities or services but are not currently making use of them. Potential patrons may not be aware of the library, of the services it offers, or may not be able to physically access the library and its services for one reason or another.
* Other Libraries: Other libraries may look to the Utica Public Library’s use of social networking tools and sites or may use the tools to find information about the library to be used as examples.

*Service Users*

* Library Staff/Librarians:
  + Who would like to communicate internally amongst each other regarding various library projects and happenings.
  + Who would like to share information with the public regarding various library projects and information for which they are responsible.
* Library Patrons:
  + Current users who wish to expand their use of the library and its services to web 2.0 services that can be accessed at home or anywhere via the internet.
  + Potential users:
    - Those who are aware of an information want or need who do not currently use the library’s services due to difficulty of access or ease of access of other sources, but will utilize the library’s resources if they provide the same or greater ease.
    - Those who are not aware that they may benefit from the library’s services, who are already a part of the social networking world, and will utilize the library’s services if the library comes to them via social networking.
  + Young Adults: People ages 18-24 are primary users of social networking tools and social media sites. The library can utilize the sites to target this age group by providing information and links to services of interest, such as events, or help with college course work.

*Needs Based on Internal Assessments*

While there have been no official assessments, library staff have noted some valuable information regarding needs. The library is lacking in ideas for opportunities, events, and other ways to target young adults and non-user community members. The library wants an expanded user base all around and feels that it is time to get outside the box of traditional library tricks in order to attract modern day users.

It may also not be necessary to complete an official internal assessment of needs. The Social Media Project is designed to incorporate means of feedback, assessment, and constructive criticism on a continual basis, allowing for user needs to be met as they arise.

*Needs Based on External Assessments*

Again, no official assessments have been conducted. The library hopes through the social networking Social Library Project to access users and non users in the community. With this access, the library can further discover where its weaknesses lie as far as external stakeholders are concerned. Feedback can be expressed regarding what users want on the websites and well as from the physical library and its services and events. The library hopes to fill some currently unknown external needs in the process.

*Benefits and Opportunities for Users*

* Library Staff:
  + Increased communication that will be provided by the social networking tools.
    - Among librarians and library staff
    - Among library staff and patrons
    - With other libraries
    - With board members and executives
  + Ability to cooperate with each other as well as other users on projects and manage content in an organized and progressive manner.
* Patrons:
  + Easier access to the library’s information and many of its services from a distance.
    - Can link to databases and commonly used or requested services
    - Links to genealogy resources for community members
    - Information regarding the library’s hours, events, and services
  + Ability to communicate with librarians and share information amongst each other almost instantaneously.
* Other Libraries:
  + Use of the Utica Public Library’s social networking utilization as an example for own use.
  + Gain knowledge of events and services that the library offers that may also be beneficial to them.

*Costs and Risks for Users*

* Library Staff:
  + Will have to find or make time in likely already tight schedules for both formal and informal trainings.
  + Will have to use creative skills and abilities to keep social networking projects flowing smoothly over time.
  + May have difficulty learning, may feel uncomfortable learning informally
* Patrons:
  + Current Patrons who currently use the library but do not have internet access from home or elsewhere outside the library will have much less opportunity to use and experience the new tools.
  + Potential Patrons
    - Who are already engulfed in the social networking world:
      * May be moving on to new tools very quickly.
      * Technology is changing often and may be outdated before reaching the most high-tech potential users.
* Other Libraries:
  + Adopting of ideas and services that are not adequately suited to other library, yielding unsuccessful projects.

*Estimated Demand for Service*

Unfortunately the library does not have specific statistics for young adult library use. Fortunately, however, the Social Library Project has a broader vision and can incorporate some general statistics. In January of 2010 the library saw 12,793 visitors and checked out 13, 845 items. These numbers may include overlap, as they do not account for individual persons, only for bodies and works in and out of the library. Utica’s population, according to the City of Utica’s website, is 60,651 ([www.cityofutica.com](http://www.cityofutica.com/), 2009). Based on these numbers, twenty-one percent (21%) of Utica residents used the library in January. With likely overlap of library patrons, however, it is likely more near fifteen percent (15%) of the population is taking advantage of the library’s physical facilities and services.

It is not known how many homes in the Utica area have access to the internet, or how many internet users are also social networking users (but the Social Library Assessment Plan does incorporate analytics to track the number of hits to the web page). The US Census Bureau released on February 17, 2010, that over seventy-three percent (73.5%) of individuals have internet access in their homes and these numbers have grown each year it is studied(US Census Bureau, Feb. 17, 2010). To take on the US standard, then, roughly seventy percent (70%) of Utica homes have internet access. This is a far greater percentage than that of current library users.

It cannot be assumed that each household with internet access will access the library’s social networking sites. It also cannot be assumed that potential users of the social networking sites are or are not current library users. While there is bound to be some overlap, with a 70% user base, the internet is likely to provide a fair number of new users to the library’s social networking sites. It seems fair, then, to estimate that ten percent (10%) of each population of current library users and internet users will access the library’s social networking sites within its initial stages in the first year yielding roughly 5,500 accesses and the numbers will continue to grow over time as word spreads throughout the library and internet communities.

**Relevant Literature**

Implementing social networking tools can truly be “cheap and easy” and Kay Cahill of the Vancouver Public Library is adamant about that. A good place to start is to follow Cahill’s lead and work with only social networking tools that require minimal set-up and maintenance time, which can include using sites with built in templates (Cahill). Minimal set-up and maintenance is good for busy librarians who may find the new project somewhat overwhelming.

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Content and its presentation can have a great impact on the value of the social media site for the library. It will be important for responsible librarians choose wisely the information and services they want available one each site, and also to listen to user feedback regarding content. If users are not finding the information they are looking for through the sites, the sites are not fully serving their functional purpose.

**Recommendations for Action**

*Goals and Outcomes*

The following are goals of the Social Library Project.

* Increase awareness of the library and its services with teens and throughout the rest of the community.
* Interact with users and potential users through social networking sites.
* Provide remote access to information and information sharing.
* The library displays to users that it is a modern, flexible and ever growing institution and that it is user focused and committed to fulfilling their information wants and needs.

The following are outcomes of the service associated with the above goals.

* The library will see an increasing population of users on the social networking sites.
* Users will provide feedback to the library through the social networking sites.
* Users will be able to use the tools to access reference services and databases.
* New users and current users remain dedicated to the library.

*Budget*

Implementing social networking tools can be done on extremely small budgets. It is possible for the Utica Public Library to initiate and follow through with the Social Library Project with very minimal funds. In fact, the project will mainly require costs in terms of time and effort, with financial costs coming into play mainly during the marketing phase, if at all.

Most of the popular social networking sites are consumer sites and free of charge to users. This is part of what makes them both popular and effective. This also makes it easier for the library to take on the role of user for many of the sites without a grand budget. In the planning for use of sites, the project rules out sites that cost money to use and sites that would require the purchase of new software or hardware. Therefore, the budget for the actual sites is $0.

The success of the Vancouver Public Library’s Virtual Branch project must be taken into consideration when discussing costs. The project was so wildly effective and popular that two new positions were created to man the brunt of the workload (Cahill). At the Utica Public Library, thus far, there are primarily two responsible parties. Both parties have specific duties up to this point, but with the addition of new social media site use and the development of existing sites, those duties could potentially become rather overwhelming. The Social Library plan has taken this potential situation into account and has planned to incorporate all library staff if necessary. All librarians and staff may not want this additional workload or responsibility, so the plan has included a motivational staff appreciation event for those who wish to participate.

The cost for current librarian work on the project is $0 as the responsibilities are already held by two employees. The additional cost for other willing staff is time that they will have to create to contribute to the project. Additionally, should the library need to include additional manpower for the project, the cost of an appreciation event for willing employees is roughly two hundred and fifty dollars ($250) for cost of supplies and food.

The following chart displays a breakdown of the costs of the project implementation phase of the social library plan.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Cost | Funding Source | Notes |
| Social Networking tools- acquisition, set-up, implementation, etc. | $0 |  | The library will be using tools and sites that are available for no cost, via the internet.  Staff time will be required for tool comparison, set-up, staff training, implementation, and follow through |
| Time |
| Staff motivation/appreciation | $250 | Fundraising efforts, technical funds | It will require time to explain the project and its benefits to staff to motivate them, it will also require time and some funds to plan the appreciation event and acquire prize items and food, etc. |
| Time: 3 hours. |  |

Fig. 1. Cost analysis chart for project implementation.

*Responsible Parties*

* Library Staff:
  + Project Manager(s): James and Joshua have been given primary responsibility for the library website and social media sites thus far, therefore they will be most likely to serve as project managers. They will be responsible for a great deal of the implementation process. The time commitment is substantial and will require daily involvement. An initial time commitment of one to three hours per day for up to six weeks may be required. Competencies necessary to successfully complete project manager’s tasks include the ability to think critically and quickly, the ability to adapt to and enable and foster change, strong sense of organizational and motivational tactics, the ability to monitor trends in technology and resources, and an enjoyment of technology as well as leadership. Responsibilities include:
    - selecting initial social networking tools and sites to be reviewed by computer staff
    - set-up of initial social networking tool or site and keep updated
    - lead formal trainings/information sessions to introduce staff to each new tool to be implemented
    - monitor staff’s self taught training
    - Plan staff appreciation event upon completion of all trainings, etc.
      * acquire snacks and prizes for staff event
  + IT or Computer Service oriented staff will be responsible for analyzing the impact of acceptable tools on the library’s computers and server systems to discover those with the least impact. The time commitment is one to three hours per week for up to six weeks. Competencies required include an understanding of network capabilities, the ability to install necessary software or hardware if needed, the ability to monitor technology trends.
  + Other Staff: Time commitment is on an optional basis. Staff may choose to be a part of the project and learn how to contribute to the sites if desired or if their time and help are needed. If so, the time commitment is according to staff schedules when staff can find time to train or contribute. From 0 to 3 hours per week ideally. Competencies necessary include the ability to create user centered content according to professional subject area or relevant topic and willingness to participate.
    - Participate in formal and informal trainings to develop understanding of the new tools
    - Develop content relevant to individual staff duties and responsibilities to be presented internally or externally via the social networking sites
* Beta Testers: Time commitment is one hour to 3 hours depending on how much feedback or discussion the user wishes to engage in. Competencies required include willingness to participate, ability to use a computer, ability to communicate with potential users.
  + Some library users will be asked to beta test the social networking sites after the library staff has finished training for each new tool.
    - Provide feedback regarding the sites
  + Spread the word among other library users, potential users, and non users about the library’s use of social networking tools
* Service users: Implementation of site use can be initiated by the library but service users must be involved on an interactive level for the sites to become fully effective. Time commitment is entirely voluntary and dependent upon the individual users’ information wants and needs. Competencies required include the ability to access and utilize social media sites, the desire to gain information and utilize services presented by the library, and an interest in the library.
  + Access library services, reference, and databases via the sites
  + provide feedback to the library staff regarding strengths and weaknesses of the sites and other user wants and needs that the sites may address

*Action Plan*

The stage-task-activity chart below represents actions to be taken to initiate and implement the Social Library Project.

Social Library Project

Research

Implementation

Development

User needs assessments

Network compatibility assessment

Interaction with users via sites

Beta testing

Selection of sites to utilize

Creation of presence on sites

Staff training

Present the library and included information and links in a clear and user friendly manner

Determine content to be included on sites

Respond to user questions, comments and feedback via the sites

Six different sites based upon compatibility and functionality with library goals

Fig. 2. Stage-task-activity chart for service implementation.

*Timeline*

The following is a chart detailing the timeline for the implementation, assessment, and maintenance of the Social Library Project for the Utica Public Library. The service is designed to be implemented over the course of 8 weeks but can be extended to accommodate for available staff time, resources, and additional social media sites if desired.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What | Who | When |
| *Implementation*  Analyze various social networking tools and sites options for chosen tools for popularity, cost, and relevance to the library’s goal | Project manager | Weeks 1-6. One new site will be selected and presence initiated per week for six weeks. |
| Analyze above selected tools and sites for library computer network compatibility, narrow options | IT or Computer specialist at library | Weeks 1-6. On an ongoing basis according to when project manager selects tools and sites that meet budget, time, and goal criteria |
| Set-up of chosen sites | Project manager | Weeks 1-6.On an ongoing basis after selection of tools and sites has been completed. |
| Staff motivation | Project manager | Week 1. |
| Formal Training/ question and answer period | Project manager facilitates, interested staff participate | Weeks 1-6. 1 hour per week. At the initiation of each new tool after project manager has completed setup |
| Informal Training | Participating Staff | After each formal training on an individual as needed basis and within two week period after initial 6 weeks of setup. |
| Event planning, ordering food, acquiring prizes | Project Manager | Week 6 |
| Staff Appreciation Event | All participating staff | Week 8. After all tools have been setup, and two week informal trainings are complete. |
| *Assessment*  Pilot Testing | Staff, Current library user volunteer beta testers | Weeks 6-8. Also ongoing following each two week informal training period. |
| Perpetual Beta State | All service users | Week 6 and ongoing as soon as use begins |
| *Maintenance*  Updating library information such as hours, services, offered, and events planned | Library staff responsible for the planning and organization of each site. | Week 6 and ongoing as new information in available |
| Content Management- making sure content posted by staff and external users is appropriate and relevant in accordance with the library’s mission | Project Manager, all library staff. | Week 6 and ongoing |
| Providing services: answering reference and other information questions presented via the sites, perpetual beta state | All participating library staff, primarily reference staff. | Week 6 and ongoing |

Fig. 3. Timeline for implementation chart.

*Communication Plan*

Project managers will need to communicate with each other and with board members and executives regarding the plan. They will need to keep executives as well as other library staff informed of ideas and progress and the project unfolds. Participating staff will need to be informed about and trained how to use the sites.

Library staff will need to communicate with each other regarding the type and amount of content to be held on each specific site. They may use the sites to communicate with one another regarding what they feel is appropriate, inappropriate, working, not working, etc.

Project managers and staff will also need to communicate with library users as beta testers. They will have to find willing users to participate in the beta test and discuss with them what types of feedback the library is looking for. Beta testers will in turn have to relay their thoughts and feelings regarding the sites to library staff and project managers.

*Pilot Test*

Pilot testing of the social networking sites will be on an ongoing basis throughout the implementation of the new sites by participating library staff beginning in week 1. Current library users will be asked to access the sites as the library staff completes trainings on them in weeks 6 through 8. This testing period will allow for feedback and further testing of the sites before the project is completed. The beta testing will also help make library users feel in touch with the library and as though they are a part of the planning process, as their input can have an effect on the sites that they are testing. The testing will also give the library staff a chance to work with the sites and gain an idea of how users will use them once they are fully initiated.

*Scalability*

If the amount of users accessing the sites, asking questions on one site, or providing feedback on a site is too much for that site’s staff supervisor to keep up with, the work may be divided. It would be best to divide the work among the busiest access points with that of the least busy access points, and so on.

Another option if there is too much access and feedback to keep up with is that a re-evaluation of the social networking sites could take place. It is possible that the popularity of a different site being used is so minimal in comparison, or the popularity of a different site has passed, that the library can terminate use of that specific site. This would allow staff to focus more attention on the sites with the most use.

*SWOT*

The following chart displays the potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Social Library Project Plan

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strengths   * Allows all library staff to participate and be a part of the project * Allows some users to feel more connected to the library through pilot testing efforts * Gives the library a more competitive edge among competitive retail and non profits * Low cost * Low maintenance * Easy access * Many different social media sites and social networking tools to choose from | Weaknesses   * Requires time out of already busy library schedules for setup, training, testing, and maintenance * Low filtering of user comments prior to publishing * Not all staff may want to participate or enjoy the experience |
| Opportunities   * New friends of the library * New library patrons * Show of library’s modernity and social networking savvy * Possibly make connections with other library’s and librarians who use the sites * Be a trend setter and role model for other local libraries * Learn more wants and needs of library users and non-users * Expand library’s outreach further into the community | Threats   * Inappropriate user use, vulgar language, user content, etc. * Computer viruses can spread through social networking sites * Low staff motivation |

Fig. 4. Chart displaying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Social Library project.

*Limitations and Assumptions*

* Many more social networking tools and sites than can be used by the library
* Cannot assume that all librarians and library staff will want to participate
* Services may be added or cut depending on use and library staff’s willingness to be involved in the project. Some librarians may not see the point or understand why the physical library is not enough.
* Cannot assume that all users of the library and its services will be users of its social networking services
* Cannot assume that social networking users in the community will want to hear from the library
* Technology can change rapidly. Services implemented today may quickly be in need of updating or become obsolete while new services may spring up tomorrow.
* May need to develop a Legal Terms of Service if users are not using services properly or appropriately for publication on library host sites.
* Cannot assume that content is static, it must change daily with new information and resources

**Reflection**

I really enjoyed this project a lot more than the literature review, which surprises me. I had great difficulty understanding what was being asked for with the literature review and still did not fully understand the relationship of the various parts of the PMA until halfway through this Project Plan. I feel that I now have a better understanding of the assignment and the direction it is taking and I hope that that is reflected in my Project Plan.

I had lots of questions come up during the plan, some of which have not yet been answered. Those questions, however, are for my host librarian. I have found, through both papers so far, that it is not easy to rely on someone else for your information needs. I have been very frustrated with my host librarian’s untimely responses via email. Many of the questions I have needed answered, I was not aware of until I was in the middle of working them out and realized I needed more information. When he does answer, however, he gives very appropriate and helpful responses.

Through this project plan I have learned that I need to dive into the questions that are being asked of me for the assignment first thing. This way, I can lay out what I already know and what questions I still have that need to be answered by a third party, or potentially more research. Some of the questions I had to ask of my host librarian and myself are, “What exactly is the library looking to accomplish with this new service?” “What amount of time is reasonable for a project of this size?” “How do I figure out a budget with a limitation of ‘no budget’?” and many more.

I still have a lot to learn about the PMA and all of its parts. As an English major undergraduate, I did a lot of writing. Most of the writing, however, was analytical based upon readings, thoughts, and feelings. While I got really good at that over the years, I have had little to no practice in writing any type of documents associated with the PMA project. This is very new to me. It is a challenge and I like that. It is difficult, however, to incorporate this different type of research into such a different type of document in a functional manner. Something I hope will come with time and practice.

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***Marketing Plan:***

***Social Library Project***

**Introduction**

In order to successfully establish a place in the social media world, people need to know it exists. The Social Library Project has great potential to reach new and potential users and to achieve its goals and produce positive outcomes. To do this, the library will have to implement some marketing strategies to help make people more aware of the library’s presence in their internet communities, thus drawing them in and hopefully turning them into loyal friends, followers, and users.

The Utica Public Library has an established presence on Facebook, both for the library itself and for youth services, as well as Twitter. The library has recently updated its webpage to help market its Facebook and Twitter accounts, but as the library increases its use of social media to reach the public, there will also need to be an increase in efforts to market its growing internet presence.

The library’s website is a great place to begin the marketing process, but it is limited in the audience it reaches. There is a definite need to increase marketing of the social media sites employed by the Utica Public Library. At present, there is a complete lack of physical marketing material involved. There is also a lack of public relations involved. There has been no mention of the growing presence of the library anywhere in the TV, radio, or news world. This plan will help to organize and develop ideas for physical materials and PR efforts to help market and promote the library’s social media presence.

In order to have an effective physical marketing plan, the library will create flyers and brochures promoting its social media presence. The flyers can be posted and brochures placed or handed out in and around the library. They can also be put in well trafficked locations throughout the community. Some places to begin putting materials could be on the bulletin boards at churches, supermarkets, Laundromats, local schools (from elementary all the way up through the university level), and even some smaller, more eclectic locations such as coffee shops like the Tramontane Café or Café Domenico.

The library will also have to take into consideration the large population of refugees and other foreign speakers in the Utica area when creating a marketing campaign. With so many refugees in the area working to become citizens, easy access to the library could prove a valuable resource and tool for these learners. The library could help itself reach the goal of the Social Library project by targeting some of the most common foreign populations of the city. For example, placing some translated materials about the Social Library in hubs such as the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees. It will be beneficial for the Library to communicate with the Center on an ongoing basis to find what groups could benefit most at a given time from the library and what social networking sites they use most, helping the library decide which languages to market with, and possibly help with the translation as well. The library, however, may need or want to reciprocate some services and, for example, offer internet or social networking training for refugees.

**Relevant Literature**

While social media marketing is a hot topic, much of the discussion and hype is about how social media can be used to market a product, service, or organization. For the Utica Public Library, however, we are looking for ways to market the library’s social media use. In order to develop a social media following for the library to advertise its services to, it must first market to community members to develop the social media following.

Casey and Stevens point out the value of word-of-mouth marketing techniques, or grapevine marketing. They note that libraries have both internal and external grapevines through which information and ideas can travel. The internal grapevine allows for word-of-mouth marketing among librarians, staff, volunteers, and board members for promotion of the marketing object. The external grapevine is communication among users and potential users in the community and this communication level can have a great affect on the marketing impact (24).

There is also a link between the two grapevines that comes when internal sources communicate with external sources. (24) This link is established when, for example, librarians talk to users about the marketing object, or when volunteers talk with friends and family. This inevitably leads to continued communication through the external grapevine, expanding the reach of word-of-mouth marketing.

The problem with word of mouth marketing, however, is that internal members cannot control what is being said in the external grapevine. Casey and Stephens suggest that, even when there is a fear of negative discussion, trying to silence the grapevine is even more detrimental to the organization or object (24). It is important, therefore, for internal sources to create as positive a discussion and keep the marketing object as useful, up-to-date, or purpose serving as possible.

Casey and Stephens also suggest more physical means of library public relations. They suggest featuring photos, real positive testimonies, and recommendations from users on the website, in brochures, on flyers, or in catalogs (24). Keeping material real and human is a way to connect with users who are looking for positive interactions with their libraries, be it in person or via the web.

Vrana and Barbaric make similar suggestions. They studied five different public libraries in the capital of Croatia. The study revealed the most effective means of marketing to be things such as featuring spots on the website to promote the service (435-444). The study also revealed that print materials such as posters, leaflets, brochures, and bookmarks were great ways to advertise services and improve the visibility of public libraries (435-444).

Vrana and Barbaric also note that marketing for an internet environment is somewhat different than marketing for a physical environment. Vrana and Barbaric have taken the four P’s of marketing and adapted them to four C’s of marketing for internet environments. The four C’s, as follows, have been taken into consideration throughout the development of the marketing plan: Product=Customer, Place=Convenience (online, website), Price=Cost to the user (time and energy put into accessing the library’s internet services), and Promotion=Communication (435-444).

Fisher and Pride also outline a wide variety of marketing and public relations tools and techniques. In addition to the four P’s (or C’s) of marketing, Fisher and Pride add a fifth. The fifth P, which the Utica Public Library’s marketing plan will utilize, is Partnerships. Partnerships, according to Fisher and Pride, can play a very important role in complementing the library’s marketing resources and strategy (52). To expand its resources in partnership, the Utica Public Library will coordinate with the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees to help target and provide information to the area’s large international population.

There are many commonalities throughout the literature of marketing web services to library users. The major factors that fit into the Utica Public Library’s plan and budget have been incorporated into the marketing plan. The marketing plan will include the following strategies: word-of-mouth, flyers, brochures, presentations, television news spots, and radio advertisements.

**Marketing Goals and Outcomes**

The following are goals and related outcomes for the library’s Social Library Project Marketing Plan. Through the marketing campaign, the library would like to achieve these goals and hopes to see at least these estimated related outcomes:

* The library’s social media sites will become more popular and more widely used
  + The number of friends, followers, views, etc. will increase as measured through each social media website.
  + The library will see an increase in use of on-line accessible services provided by the sites, including reference questions and database access by an estimated 5 to 10 uses per week.
* Community members will have better knowledge of the library and its social media use
  + The number of phone and in person queries regarding the library will decrease measurably
* The library itself will develop a stronger presence in the community as awareness increases
  + Non-users will become users as measured through an increase of library traffic flow and number of different library cards accessing services

**Target Audiences**

The Social Library Project has the ability to reach many different people of many different demographics. The marketing plan for the project, therefore, also has a wide range of target audiences. These audiences are divided into two sub-groups, the internal target audiences and the external target audiences, as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Internal Audience** | **Description of Audience** | **Means of Target Marketing** | **Reasons for Targeting** |
| **Library Board and other Executives** | * Responsible for approval of various library projects and decisions * Help in gaining and allocating funds to the library and its services | * Word of mouth * Flyer and brochure presentation * Media coverage | * The board and directors can help increase funds for the project * May be more supportive of the project if they are a part of the marketing process (i.e. in the news) |
| **Librarians and Library Staff** | * Employees of the library who will either use or contribute to the social media sites | * Word of mouth * Presentation and demonstration of use of the social media sites | * Will be responsible for content, delivering reference services, and more on the sites * Want staff on board and eager as possible so that sites are well maintained, attractive, and useful to users |
| **Library Volunteers** | * Members of the community who come to the library to help in various ways | * Word of mouth * Flyers and brochures * Presentation of social media sites | As community members looking to help the library, they can play a strong role in spreading word about the social media presence out into the community |

Fig. 1. Table shows the Internal Target Audiences of the Marketing Plan, along with audience description, means of targeting and reasons for targeting.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **External Audience** | **Audience Description** | **Means of Target Marketing** | **Reasons for Targeting** |
| **Current Library Users/Adults** | * Members of the community who use the library and/or its web presence | * Word of mouth * Brochures and flyers * Library website | * Current users can spread word of their experiences to others * Current users may find certain new web access sites more convenient or suiting to their needs |
| **Non-users already engaged in the social media world** | * Members of the community who are potential users of the library * Have access to the internet and are already involved with at least one social media community * Are generally comfortable with their ability to use the internet and social media sites | * Library website * Word of mouth * Media outlets * Social media sites | * This group is already comfortable with internet use but may have a gap in information needs that the library can fill * Potential users of the web presence can turn into users of the web presence who can also turn into users of the physical library |
| **Non-users without regular internet access** | * This group has the least access to the web and therefore the library’s web presence * This group is a small portion of the larger community but may have many unmet information needs due to lack of use and access | * News media * Radio * Flyers and brochures | * Unrecognized or unmet information needs can be addressed that could affect what the library knows about the community as a whole and its wants and needs and can therefore have an impact on services and materials offered |
| **Students- primarily middle school age and up** | * This is a large group that can include students of a variety of ages in the community, from middle school to the university level * Students can generally access the internet via school if there is no access at home * This group has many different information needs | * Flyers and brochures * Word of mouth * Radio * Television * Website | * Students have a wide range of information needs that may not be met at their school libraries * Students can learn about the library and what it offers via the social media sites * Students can spread word of the library’s happenings to others |
| **International Community Members** | * Refugees from other countries who come to Utica to find new homes and work to become citizens * Immigrants from other countries who are attracted to Utica’s diverse population * A wide range of nationalities and languages are included in this group | * Flyers and brochures * Word of mouth | * This group can have many information wants and needs that can be met by the library * There is a large international population in Utica, word of mouth can be very effective |

Fig. 2. Table shows the External Target Audiences along with audience descriptions, means of targeting, and reasons for targeting with the marketing plan.

**Positioning Statement**

The Social Library Project will become a means of bringing the library out into the community it works to serve. The project will help the library expand its ability to fulfill its mission and provide access to the sum of knowledge to an ever increasing and changing user population. The project will also help to modernize the library and to give it new life in an increasingly technological world.

**Key Messages** For each of the target audiences (as given in the above tables) there will be a different key marketing message. The key messages will be given to encourage each audience to support, be a part of, and utilize the Social Library Project.

Internal Target Audiences:

* *Library Board and Executives*
  + Bring the library to the community and into the future!
* *Librarians and Library Staff*
  + Be a part of the library’s future. Interact with friends of the library.
* *Library Volunteers*
  + Help your library help you!

External Target Audiences:

* *Current Library Users*
  + Friend the library and open up a new world of information!
* *Non-users already engaged in the social media world*
  + Learn and grow with the library by friending us now!
* *Non-users without regular internet access*
  + Get answers to questions you didn’t even know you had.
* *Students*
  + Friend us and find new information at your fingertips.
* *International Community Members*
  + .Friend the library, we can help you learn.

**Message Delivery Strategies**

*Tools*

There will be a few different tools incorporated into spreading the message of the Social Library Project including flyers, brochures, a news spot, radio advertisement, visibility on the library website, presentation/demonstration, and word of mouth.

* Flyers
  + Will be created in English and translated into at least two other languages that are widely used locally
  + Flyers will be distributed and posted by volunteers
  + Will be placed in high traffic and target locations throughout the community such as grocery stores, shopping centers, the Resource Center for Refugees, foreign markets, Laundromats, given to schools to hang and distribute among teachers and students, community centers, and coffee shops in addition to the library itself.
* Brochures/Bookmarks
  + Will be created in English and translated into at least two other languages that are common locally
  + Will be distributed by volunteers and library staff
  + Will be placed in high traffic areas along with flyers
  + Will offered to patrons of the physical library when exiting the building
* News Story
  + Will be established by communicating with the local community news station
  + Spot can be done by a member of the board to keep them involved with and excited about the project
* Radio Public Service Announcement
  + A brief mention of the Social Library on the Utica College radio station and/or other local stations that can be replayed on an ongoing basis
  + Will help target young adults and students
* Website/Social Media Sites
  + Updates to the website as new social media sites are incorporated into the library’s use
  + Mentions on sites of other site use
* Presentation/Demonstration
  + For librarians, staff and volunteers
  + A brief showing of the social media pages while discussing their advantages to the library can encourage participation in the project as well as personal use of the social library
* Word of Mouth
  + Librarians, staff and volunteers can only control what they say about the social media project
  + Mentions and links via public access computer backgrounds and screen savers
  + Important to speak positively to as many potential users as possible
  + Word can spread fast throughout the community

*Action Plan and Timeline*

The marketing plan is designed to be implemented over a three week span after the initial establishment of the project. Some of the tasks are, however, ongoing and can continue to evolve throughout the life of the Social Library Project. The following is an action plan with timeline of steps to be taken for the marketing campaign of the Social Library Project.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Who** | **What** | **When- Timeline** |
| **Establish Social Library Project through the project plan** | * James * Joshua * Other library employees who participate in content and reference | * Social media web presence via   + Website   + Twitter   + Facebook   + Myspace   + Blog   + Wiki   + IM aggregator | Before main marketing campaign begins  This allows some time for beta testing the sites and building content |
| **Website** | * James | * Updating website to represent all social media utilized by the library * Making links visible and easy to access | Week Zero  Upon implementation of the Social Library Project |
| **Presentation/**  **Demonstration** | Hosting presentation   * James * Joshua   Attending   * Librarians * Library Staff * Volunteers * Board | * An brief introduction and opportunity for staff to see and explore the Social Library Project * Familiarization with the sites and what they offer * Build up of positive ideas for word of mouth campaign | Week One  A three hour allotted time for presentation of the sites and some experimental use time |
| **Word of Mouth** | * Librarians * Library staff * Volunteers * Library Board | Spreading the word to friends, family, and library patrons of the library’s web presence | * Week one as soon as all involved have been introduced to the sites * On an ongoing basis |
| **Brochures and Flyers** | * James * Joshua * Volunteers | Designing and developing the flyers and brochures to be copied and distributed by volunteers | * Week zero for creation, during beta testing weeks * Week one and ongoing as volunteers are available for distribution |
| **Translations** | * Librarian * MVRCR staff or volunteer * volunteers | * Collaboration with the MVRCR to decide which languages to translate flyers and brochures * Translation of the flyer and brochure * Proof reading by a native speaker | * Week one or as MVRCR is available to help. * To be distributed by volunteers with other materials |
| **News Story** | * Board member, executive, or PR specialist to present the story * James or Joshua to plan | * Contact with the News station by librarian to set up community highlight spot * Presentation by board member, executive, or PR specialist | * Week two to contact the news station by librarian * Whenever News offers/agrees to spot for presentation |
| **Radio PSA** | * James or Joshua | * Will decide what slogan or information to give radio station * Will contact radio station and establish advertisement | * Week Three * Whenever station makes announcement |

Fig. 3. Table showing the action plan and timeline for the Social Library Marketing Plan.

**Budget**

While financial resources allocated to the Social Library Project are minimal to none, there are costs involved with the implementation, marketing, and assessment of any project. In an effort to keep the financial budget low, staff time cost is somewhat high. The main project workers, James and Joshua, will have the most time commitment required. Also included are other library employees, volunteers, board members, and coordinators for the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees. Once initial implementation and creation of materials is completed, however, time will be relatively low.

The total financial cost of the marketing campaign is an estimated two hundred dollars ($325.00), which brings the total cost of the Social Library Project thus far to four hundred and fifty dollars ($575.00). Below is a table of the budget associated with the marketing campaign tasks for the Social Library Project.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Resources Required** | **Cost** |
| **Implementation of Social Library Project** | Time, staff power, money as presented in the Project Plan Budget | Many weeks, much staff time, and $250 as broken down in project plan budget |
| **Website** | * Staff Time | * One day initially to establish website presence and ensure links are visible and working properly * An hour of time on a weekly basis for updates according to new social media use by the library and to maintain working links |
| **Presentation/ Demonstration** | * Staff time * Volunteers’ time | * Two hours allotted to familiarize staff and volunteers to the sites and services |
| **Word of Mouth** | * Time   + Librarian   + Staff   + Board   + Volunteers   + Patrons   + users | * 10 minutes per day   Allot ten cumulative minutes per day talking to patrons, friends, family, etc of grapevine discussion |
| **Brochures and flyers** | * Time   + James   + Joshua   + Volunteers * Materials   + Paper   + Ink * Transportation * Money   + Materials   + Transportation | * One week of planning and creating materials for 2 hours each day * Volunteer distribution of materials on an ongoing basis as available * $25 for ink * $150 for toner * $50 for paper * $50 at .50c/mile federal mileage rate for transportation |
| **Translations** | * Time   + Librarian   + MVRCR staff or volunteer | * 3 hours of coordination with MVRCR staff * 1 hour translation * 2 hours to reproduce translated materials * Distribution and production costs included with other materials, no additional cost |
| **TV Community Highlight Story** | * Time   + James or Joshua   + Board Member, executive, or PR specialist | * One hour from James or Joshua to contact news source and set schedule * One hour from board member to go to news station and film |
| **Radio PSA** | * Time   + James and Joshua | * Two hours to plan idea of slogan or advertisement to be given * Half an hour to contact radio station and order advertisement |
| **Total Marketing Campaign Costs** | * Time:   Staff, librarian, volunteer, board, etc.   * Money | * 17 hours total * $325 total |

Fig. 4. Table shows the costs associated with the Social Library Marketing Campaign.

*Responsible Parties*

At present, James Kallies and Joshua Carlson are responsible for the Social Library Project and all of its aspects. James is a Reference Librarian who has been working on the library’s website and Joshua is the Director of Youth Services and has been thus far responsible for updating the library’s Facebook and Twitter accounts. James and Joshua will be responsible for much of the marketing campaign implementation. There will, however, be many commitments required of others to make the marketing campaign effective. The table below shows responsible parties, competencies required, time commitments required, and deliverables for the marketing plan.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Staff Responsible** | **Required Competencies** | **Time Commitment** | **Deliverables** |
| **James and Joshua** | * Understanding of social media tools and web services * Ability to communicate well with others * Willingness to consider input from staff, volunteers, board members, and community members * Willingness to dedicate time and energy to marketing * Ability to create effective marketing materials | * Three weeks of time for 1 to 3 hours a day | * Brochures * Flyers * Website links * TV and Radio spots |
| **Librarians and other library staff** | * Willingness to learn about the social media tools involved * Desire to reach out into the community * Ability to coordinate with others * Person to person as well as web social skills | * 10 minutes per day for word of mouth campaign * Half hour per day offering brochures, coordinating, and planning ideas for the social library project | * Coordination agreement with MVRCR * Translated materials * More social media followers |
| **Volunteers** | * Desire to help the library progress * Willingness to communicate with others and distribute materials | * Time varies according to volunteer schedules- at least 15 minutes of proactive social library discussion or material distribution per day of participation | * Knowledge of social library project within the community * Materials posted and given around the community |
| **Board Members** | * Desire to see the library thrive * Flexibility * Willingness to help allocate funds * Strong people skills | * 3 hours for presentation/ demonstration time * 1 hour for informal training and exploration of sites * One hour for TV spot | * Funding for the project * Promotion of the project within the community * TV News presentation |
| **MVRCR staff help** | * Desire to see materials and information that can help the refugee community * Willingness to participate | * 3 hours to coordinate and translate materials * 1 hour to proofread | * Translated materials in the form of brochures, flyers, bookmarks, etc. |

Fig. 5. Table shows Responsible parties, required competencies, time commitments, and deliverables.

**Mockups of Selected Marketing Materials**

Mockups can be found in the appendix following the Social Library Plan. They are a few examples of various materials that could be used to market the Social Library Project. The examples display a variety of design and complexity that can be used depending on target audience or desire for elaboration.

**Reflection**

Overall I had major anxiety about the marketing plan. I am not sure why, but this whole project, all parts together, has been really difficult for me to grasp its concept. I think it comes from being an English major mainly working with literature. When I finally got over my anxiety this time, however, I found it to be much more enjoyable and flow much more smoothly than the last two, and certainly more so than it appears on the assignment document. Hopefully it turned out from an outsider’s perspective as well as it did in mine.

I am still having some trouble with communication with my host librarian, but I have got the information I need. I had to learn to ask far in advance, and so be it, I am sure he is busy. I did get frustrated during work on the marketing plan, though. I often am checking the Utica Public Library’s website, along with my email and other sources looking for information and things. Then I noticed that the Library’s webpage has been updated and they have created a new facebook page. I think this is when I started to feel very anxious about the project, as I was feeling that my work is obsolete, or well on its way, before I have even completed it. I know that is not the case; there is still much more that can be done and much more I can do to help.

This was good for me in the sense that I am sure things are always busy, every changing, and moving rapidly in the library world. The reality is, they can’t sit around and wait three or four months for my project to be completed. They have to work, and they have to fight to keep the library up-to-date and able to thrive. I guess this was a nice dose of reality.

Also, getting the project plan back made me realize where I need to change how I am looking at the project and what I can do differently and better. I worked to address those things in the marketing plan and hopefully I moved up at least one step in the right direction. This has been a learning experience for me. I am happy to be learning and actively engaging in the business side of things. I feel like it is giving me a head start into library leadership and as frustrating and difficult as these projects are, they get better with each one as I become more comfortable with it. Now, I think if I can realize this and not be less intimidated when the assessment plan comes, I will feel like I have made much personal progress as well.

**Works Cited: Marketing Plan**

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***Assessment Plan:***

***Social Library Project***

**Introduction**

Along with planning and marketing, assessment is a key component to developing a successful service project within the library community. Assessments allow the library to discover what aspects of the service are working well and those that are not working well to meet the service goals and outcomes. One strong benefit of implementing a social media presence in a library is the ease of gathering quantitative data. Social networking sites and social media often incorporate quantitative data tracking measures and other websites and web services can provide this as well.

Qualitative information, on the other hand, is not so easy to draw from social media and requires an extra effort for evaluators. The social media world is malleable and often changing and updating, making it necessary to implement a continuous cycle of assessment. Additionally, assessment of social media is a fairly new concept so research and practice is somewhat scarce. As the Utica Public Library and progresses with the project and library assessments of social media become better practice, a new and different assessment plan and cycle may be implemented.

A separate plan will be developed for each individual outcome. Various methods of assessment and data presentation will be incorporated into the assessment plan for the Social Library Project. With the results based on assessments, the library will be able to make changes to the Social Library service to better achieve its goals and outcomes. With a continuous assessment cycle, the library can continue to grow to further meet the ever changing information needs of service users. Assessment can also, therefore, play a critical role in helping the library remain focused on its mission as the library and user world expands and grows.

*Goals of the Service*

The following are the goals associated with the Social Library Project. These goals, as well as the following outcomes, are the same goals as stated in the earlier Project Plan.

* Increase awareness of the library and its services with teens and throughout the rest of the community.
* Interact with users and potential users through social networking sites.
* Provide remote access to information and information sharing.
* The library displays to users that it is a modern, flexible and ever growing institution and that it is user focused and committed to fulfilling their information wants and needs.

*Outcomes of the Service*

The following outcomes are given in order of priority for assessment. The first outcome is listed as the highest priority because without a user base, the rest of the goals and outcomes can be nullified. Without users, the social media sites would simply be in existence and taking up staff time. Next is feedback given through the sites. This type of feedback is important because often it is instantaneous. Users can comment at any time about their level of satisfaction with the sites they are trying to use. It represents how the user feels in that immediate point in time. Immediate feedback allows the library to understand what frustrations users are having while using the sites, without asking them later to try to remember.

Users accessing services and databases through the sites is in keeping with the library’s mission to spread the sum of knowledge to all community members, both inside and outside of the library. Remote access expands the library’s reach of knowledge and information sharing further out into the community. Finally, keeping users dedicated to the library is critical for the library’s future. Users will become dedicated if they feel that the library is giving them what they want and need from the library, as well as keeping in touch with the modern pace of their lives. The library is not a thing of the past and developing a dedicated following of users can help to make this even more true.

* The library will see an increasing population of users on the social networking sites.
* Users will provide feedback to the library through the social networking sites.
* Users will be able to use the sites to access reference services and databases.
* New users and current users remain dedicated to the library.

**Relevant Literature**

Alison Circle stated that, “If people have to work for it, they’ll walk away” (Circle). One of the main attractions of social media for the average user is that it is easy to use. Ease of use translates for ease of interacting with users by libraries. Tracking how effective these interactions are is not quite as easy.

As Stuart notes, the amount of specificity of quantitative data provided by social media can vary greatly from site to site. It can also vary at times within the same site depending on the subscriber’s level of use, or whether or not the subscriber is paying for the service (pp. 22-24). Quantitative data provided on the sites, such as number of users, followers, friends, etc. of the library is a good indication of initial and potential interest of users, but does not hint at the users’ activity level or interaction with the library via the site (Stuart, pp. 22-24).

Fichter suggests a “Trinity Approach,” as developed by Avinash Kaushik, as a way to get a well rounded, both quantitative and qualitative measure of the library’s social media success (Fichter 2008, pp. 54-57). The trinity approach has three increasingly qualitative analytic perspectives. The first aspect is behavioral. Behavioral data relies on numbers and is where quantitative data come from. Behavioral data can answer questions such as: How many followers does the library have on this site? How many comments were made today? How many of our followers are teenagers or young adults? (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57).

The second angle of the trinity approach is to look at outcomes. Outcomes as qualitative results can answer questions such as: Have users found the service useful? Is the service therefore meeting its initial goals? Is the service mutually beneficial to the user as well as the library? Are users utilizing our provided links to catalogs and databases? (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57).

With the outcome data, the library can then look at the third and final aspect of the trinity approach- experience. Experience is how the library is reacting to the qualitative data. Why are users doing what they are doing? How is the library listening to their feedback? (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57). Following these questions, the library can then act on the findings and give the users more of what they want or like and less of what they don’t.

Both Fichter and Stuart emphasize the importance of qualitative measurements to determine the success of a library’s social media use. Fichter points out that people are more likely to trust information regarding companies (and libraries) “if it comes from ‘a person like me’” (Fichter, 2008, pp. 54-57). This idea makes it easier for libraries to make connections and build relationships with users when the librarians interact through social media sites. It is important that librarians make this connection and keep on top of user comments and concerns because the relationship could just as easily (or even more easily) turn sour, and word of mouth picks up from there.

Cahill emphasizes the importance of logging user feedback on the sites. With a log of feedback the library can see trends as to what users feel is working or not working for particular sites as well as the social library project as a whole. (Cahill, pp. 140-155). A feedback log also allows the library to keep track of the ratio of positive to negative user feedback. How much is positive, negative, and neutral? How much of the feedback is constructive and helpful? (Fichter, 2009).

The effectiveness of social media use in libraries is a current trending topic. Quantitative information is easy to obtain but is limited in amount and what it can tell about the impact of its use. Qualitative data is more difficult to obtain but it can give a much more detailed and useful success story.

**Assessment Plan for Outcomes**

The following tables represent individual assessment plans for each outcome. Each outcome is focused at a target audience and is presented with ideas for methods for the assessment and reporting of data. The outcomes have a recommendation for action based on the assessment and list the party responsible. In addition, an individual timeline for assessment is given for each outcome.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome 1: The library will see an increasing number of users on the social networking sites** | |
| **Target Audience** | External service users including current library users, non-users who are already in the social media world, non-users without regular internet access, students, adults, and other community members with information wants and needs. |
| **Methods and Tools for Evidence Collection** | The method for evidence collection is **counting or number tracking**. The number of users or followers can very often be taken directly from the site in question. This outcome is quantitative and based on numbers so the responsible librarian will simply log the number of users or followers on a weekly basis to track increases. This will have to be done on each site utilized by the library. |
| **Recommendations for Pilot Assessment** | A pilot test can be done with the initiation of the social media sites as they are introduced to the public. The librarian will note where to find the numbers and track them on a daily basis for the initial week. |
| **Alternative Methods and Tools** | Analytics tools or web link management to gather **statistics**. The library uses Joomla to host its website. Joomla offers web link management that can track for the library how many times each link has been clicked on. More in depth management systems can also be added to track how many people sign up for services and how long they stay on each page. Data can be printed out at any time. |
| **Analysis of Evidence (Data Plan)** | Daily trends at first, followed by weekly trends can be monitored and data compiled at the end of four weeks. The number of users or followers and the number of times each site was linked to can be counted. This is quantitative only. |
| **How Assessors Will Know the Outcome Has Been Met** | Assessors will know the outcome has been met if at the end of the month the numbers have increased for followers and uses of the links. |
| **Result Scenarios and Decision Making Indicators** | Outcome Met: Outcome has been met if the numbers have increased. If outcome is met, the service should remain in place with that site in use.  Outcome Not Met: The outcome has not been met if the number of users remains the same or decreases throughout the month. If the outcome is not met due to low marketing success, the library can try to market the service differently and in a different location and re-evaluate next month. If the outcome is not met because the service is losing popularity among community members and users the library should poll users to find out what services they are using instead, and consider a move to those services as well.  Outcome Exceeded: For the purpose of this specific outcome, the outcome cannot be exceeded. |
| **Recommendations for Reporting** | The data for this outcome would be best reported with a line graph. Each site could have its own graph or a different line could be used for each social media site, with number of users on the vertical axis over time on the horizontal axis. Information should be gathered daily to weekly and should be graphed on a monthly basis. After six months a graph of the trends from month to month may be compiled for a more long term trend presentation. Once enough data is gathered to observe trends, presentation of graphs with an explanation should be made to the library board and funding sources. |
| **Responsible Parties** | James and Joshua have been identified as the two primary librarians responsible for website and social networking for the library. They will have the most and most easy access to this information and should therefore be responsible for gathering and reporting data. |
| **Timeline for Action** | After beta testing, numbers should be tracked weekly. Monthly summaries of numbers can be gathered and then turned into graphs. After six months and a year, a month to month summary and graph can be developed. After one year the cycle can begin again. Newly initiated social media sites can pick up the assessment according to the continuous cycle, at the beginning of the first full month after initiation. |

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| **Outcome 2: Users will provide feedback to the library through the social networking sites** | |
| **Target Audience** | Users of the library’s social media sites. |
| **Methods and Tools for Evidence Collection** | The librarian can post **surveys or polls** around the library, its social media use, events, etc. on the individual sites to elicit responses from users. While not all users will respond, it will help give the library an idea of what they are looking for as well as how many of its followers are active users of its sites. One each month on a different site, so that each site has a survey done within a six month cycle. |
| **Recommendations for Pilot Assessment** | Librarians can make initial posts to the sites to observe how and where comments can be made by users and found by the librarian. |
| **Alternative Methods and Tools** | Voluntary feedback by users will be **tracked** by the librarian. Feedback can come in the form of emails, posts or comments on the library’s sites, direct messages, etc. |
| **Analysis of Evidence (Data Plan)** | Librarians can keep and track answers to the survey questions to find out what users think about the library’s use of social media. Results can be compiled to find common answers. |
| **How Assessors Will Know the Outcome Has Been Met** | Outcome is met if there is a 30% or higher response rate for an individual survey. |
| **Result Scenarios and Decision Making Indicators** | Outcome Met: Outcome is met if 30% of followers or users respond throughout the surveys for individual sites. Some users may follow the library on multiple sites and not take the survey each time, even if it is different. When users respond, the library should keep what aspects users are primarily happy with and look to eliminate those that users are unhappy with, depending upon the purpose of the survey.  Outcome Not Met: Outcome is not met if less than 30% of users respond. If the outcome is not met, the library should consider restructuring the survey. Possibly more open ended questions or more options for answers are needed.  Outcome Exceeded: Outcome is exceeded if greater than 30% of site users respond. If outcome is exceeded, the library should consider using this type of survey again. The library should also then take action on the users’ responses. |
| **Recommendations for Reporting** | Responses to the user surveys can be presented through a bar graph of the statistics for each question. A bulleted report can also be incorporated to point out notable trends and responses to open ended questions. The report can be given at the end of the month in which the survey was conducted. |
| **Responsible Parties** | James and Joshua have primary responsibility over the library’s internet presence. |
| **Timeline for Action** | One social media site utilized by the library can have a survey each month, with presentation of findings at the end of that month, over the course of six months. After the sixth month all results can be displayed together and the cycle starts again. |

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| **Outcome 3: Users will be able to use the social media sites to access reference services and databases.** | |
| **Target Audience** | Social media site users. |
| **Methods and Tools for Evidence Collection** | The library can collect **statistical** evidence through the use of an analytics tool. The library uses Joomla to host its website. Joomla now offers a Google Analytics component extension that allows system administrators to view site attendance, visitors by IP address, page views, traffic sources, referring pages, and much more. With these analytics, the library can easy convert the data into useable information that can provide both quantitative and qualitative results. System administrator can track how many times the online catalog, databases, and other services are accessed and used through the social media sites. |
| **Recommendations for Pilot Assessment** | For a pilot assessment of the effectiveness of the analytics tool, the librarian can experiment with the Google Analytics component and print out results from desired fields upon initial implementation. |
| **Alternative Methods and Tools** | Librarians can **observe** the number of times users come into the library to use these services on a weekly basis. |
| **Analysis of Evidence (Data Plan)** | Evidence can be automatically tracked and compiled at any time through the analytics tool. Data should be compiled and presented on a monthly basis through the course of a six month assessment cycle. |
| **How Assessors Will Know the Outcome Has Been Met** | The outcome has been met if 10% of use of the library catalog, databases, and other online-available services is being accessed through the social media sites. |
| **Result Scenarios and Decision Making Indicators** | Outcome Met: If services are being accessed 10% of the time though the social media sites, the outcome has been met. If the outcome has been met, the library can continue to use the sites as it was.  Outcome Not Met: The outcome is not met if there is not an increase of access up to 10% of service use through the social media sites. If the outcome is not met after one month, the library can continue to assess through the six month cycle. If, after six months the outcome is still not met, the library will need to make adjustments to visibility, marketing, and ease of access to the services.  Outcome Exceeded: The outcome is exceeded if access to the services via the social networking sites accounts for greater than 10% of service use. If the outcome is exceeded the library can continue to use the sites as it was. |
| **Recommendations for Reporting** | Data from Google Analytics can be presented in a variety of ways. The evidence can be presented in graphical form to display the ratio of number of users to the social media sites to accesses of the catalog, databases, and other services. Graphical results can be accompanied by a discussion of the findings in relation to use of these services in the physical library. |
| **Responsible Parties** | James and Joshua are responsible for the majority of website and social media for the library. They can use the analytics tool to track a variety of evidence sources. |
| **Timeline for Action** | Data should initially be compiled on a monthly basis until six months. This can be lead into a six month assessment cycle. |

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| --- | --- |
| **Outcome 4: New users and current users remain dedicated to the library. (The library sites have “Active Users.”)** | |
| **Target Audience** | Users, followers, friends, etc. of the library on the social media sites. |
| **Methods and Tools for Evidence Collection** | This evidence is the most qualitative that will be gathered for the Social Library Project. Evidence collection will consist of monitoring and counting the number of comments made through **small-scale systemic observation**. While still statistical, the evidence collected will focus on the purpose of the comments, posts, emails, etc. Librarians will have to record daily comments in terms of positives- Users are using the site for its intended purpose, have good or productive things to say about the library, are offering constructive feedback, are expressing happiness with the library’s use of the site; negatives- conversation is dominated by outside or library irrelevant conversation, users provide negative feedback, are unhappy with the way the library uses the site; or neutrals- users are indifferent or find the services mediocre. |
| **Recommendations for Pilot Assessment** | There is no formal pilot test for this outcome assessment. However, librarians can start by focusing on one particular site for a period of one week. |
| **Alternative Methods and Tools** | Librarians could Google Search the library’s name to find rankings and positive, negative, and neutral comments and feedback from users. Librarians could also search the library’s name on specialized social media search engines for the same feedback. |
| **Analysis of Evidence (Data Plan)** | Google Analytics can be used through the Joomla host service. The analytics tool can compile a preselected set of data in a variety of forms. |
| **How Assessors Will Know the Outcome Has Been Met** | This outcome is difficult to have a finite measurement of success. For initial assessment, assessors will know that the outcome has been met when there is a majority of positive feedback and a minority of negative feedback. |
| **Result Scenarios and Decision Making Indicators** | Outcome Met: The outcome has been met when there is a majority of positive feedback in relation to negative and neutral. If the outcome is met, the library will still have to consider any negative feedback and make adjustments. Where feedback is positive, the library can remain the same. Where feedback is neutral, the library may make adjustments based upon related feedback.  Outcome Not Met: The outcome has not been met if there is more negative and/or neutral feedback than there is positive, indicating users are not fully dedicated to the services. If the outcome is not met, the library must look at the negative feedback and make adjustments accordingly.  Outcome Exceeded: The outcome is exceeded if there is zero negative feedback; neutral feedback may still be present. With no negative feedback, the library can focus on enhancing the positive areas and addressing the neutral areas to help turn the neutral users into positive, dedicated, and active users. |
| **Recommendations for Reporting** | Feedback can be reported through a bar chart relating the number on the vertical axis to the type of feedback- positive (active, dedicated users), negative (active, potential non-users), and neutral (active users). Feedback should be reported on a monthly basis through a six month assessment cycle. |
| **Responsible Parties** | James and Joshua as well as any other librarians monitoring the social media sites will be responsible for noting types of feedback. James and Joshua will be responsible for using the analytics tool to develop findings in chart format. |
| **Timeline for Action** | The assessment cycle will be a period of six months. Feedback will be tracked daily and compiled for trends at the end of each month. |

**Timeline for Continuous Assessment**

The timeline for assessment is, within the first six months, a monthly compilation of findings for each outcome. After the first six months, the results can be compiled on a six month basis. While six months is short-term in general for evaluation, it is necessary in the world of social media to have a shorter time scale.

With the Social Library Project, it is necessary to analyze, revise, re-develop, and re-implement on a regular basis. The social media world is in a state of constant change and in order for the library to remain effective through social media, the library must adapt as well.

Six months can also sound intimidating for library employees and those responsible for assessment. With the Social Library Assessment Plan, however, much of the evidence collection is done small-scale and can easily be incorporated into daily routine. Other data is given through the sites and the analytics automatically, allowing the responsible party to simply compile evidence at the end of each cycle.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment Activity | Who | When |
| Small Scale Systemic Observation | Participating Librarians for visual observations  Project managers for compilation of analytic data | Week 1 on a daily basis for visual observation.  Week 4 and monthly over a six month assessment cycle for analytics |
| Counting number of users or followers on sites | Librarian responsible for management of each individual site | At the end of each week beginning with week 1. On a monthly cycle up to six months. |
| Surveys or polls of site users | Librarian responsible for management of each site | One site can host a survey each month beginning at week 4 on a six month cycle. |
| Data Analysis via analytics tools | Project managers | Week 4 and once a month on a six month cycle. However, data can be compiled at any desired time. |
| Monthly review of evaluation data | Project Managers | Week 4 and once a month on a six month cycle |
| Updating sites according to assessment findings | Librarians responsible for individual sites | Ongoing beginning with week 4. |
| Six month monthly trends review | Project Managers | Month 6 |

**Impact Rubric**

The following impact rubric is an example of success measurement for the indicators addressed by the above outcomes. The rubric displays ranking levels including beginning, progressing, and exemplary with descriptions of the indicators at each level.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Beginning** | **Progressing** | **Exemplary** | **Data Source** |
| **Users** | Each social media site has only followers or friends who are already active library users, are library staff members, or are other libraries | 25% to 50% of friends and followers on the social media sites are new site users | Greater than 50% of friends and followers are new library users | Librarian observation  Survey responses |
| **Feedback** | There is minimal response, less than 15%, to surveys and polls | 15% to 30% of followers respond to user surveys and polls | Greater than 30% of followers respond to surveys and polls | Survey responses |
| **Information Access** | The traffic flow and the number of participants at events increases by 5%  Inquiries regarding library hours and events decreases by 2% | Traffic flow and number of participants increases by 5% to 20% of original number.  Inquiries regarding library hours and events decreases by 2% to 10% | Traffic flow and number of participants increases by greater than 20% of the original number within the first year of service.  Inquiries regarding library hours and events decreases by greater than 10% | Observations by library employees |
| **Service Access** | Library services access is through social media sites less than 5% of the time | Library catalogs, databases, and other services are being accessed through social media sites 5% to 15% of the time | Library services are accessed via social media sites greater than 15% of the time they are used | Observations and Google Analytics |
| **Dedication** | Less than 25% of comments and findings regarding the library are positive.  The library sees interaction on the site from a few primary users regularly | 25% to 50% of comments and findings regarding the library are positive.  The library sees interaction on the sites from two dozen or so users regularly | There are zero negative comments and findings regarding the library with at least 50% being positive.  The library sees interaction on the sites from a variety of users (25 or more) on a regular basis | Library staff observations, Google Search, alexa.com rankings via Google Analytics extension of Joomla |

**Reflection**

This time I am trying something different with the reflection section. I have created it at the initiation of writing the plan and will continue to add things as I progress. Hopefully this will help monitor where my troubles arise as well as where I need to go back and edit a little extra in the end.

I am having trouble figuring out what priority order to put my outcomes in. I have changed and tried to fix up my goals a little from the project plan and the outcomes have been updated a little as well. I am having a hard time knowing if these are OK or not, but also having a hard time putting myself in the library perspective and deciding which is a higher priority. I have worked out what I think, but it is hard as an outsider. I also feel like I need more outcomes but am having a hard time realizing any additional measurable outcomes.

For the assessment plan, I am re-writing my relevant literature section. I was not entirely sure what direction things were taking at the initiation of the literature review and my sections needed to be done over. My difficulty with this is that there is so much information that it is hard to narrow it down and find what is most relevant. I also found it interesting that a lot of the literature that I found for use is written by the same few authors.

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***Appendix:***

***Social Library Project***

**Marketing Mockups**

The following mockups have been created for the marketing portion of the plan. Given are two flyers, which can easily be converted into posters, and attached is one brochure, which can easily be truncated and turned into a bookmark.

**Check out your**



The Utica Public Library is expanding its horizons and moving into your world. Information you want, when you want it, right at the tips of your fingers.

**Check us out on:**

**FACEBOOK**

**TWITTER**

**MYSPACE**

**BLOGSPOT**

[**Www.uticapubliclibrary.org**](http://Www.uticapubliclibrary.org)

# Social Library

### Utica Public Library