The Use of Social Media in IIUM Library

By: Yusrina Abu Bakar
Senior Librarian
Head, Publication & Promotion Committee

Years after the millennium see the shift of website displays from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Web 2.0 refers to the use of technology that goes beyond promoting and viewing of information to a more interactive feedback to the information provided. This is made possible by the provision of networking websites like Facebook (FB), Twitter, wikis, Youtube, video sharing, web applications, blogs and many more within the organisations’ web pages. These mediums, known as Social Media, act as the instrument of communication between the website providers and their users or viewers; and also communication medium between the users. For the IIUM library, the social media provides more opportunity to reach its customers, promote its services, and give its customers chances to interact with the Library and each other in a more direct and informal manner.

IIUM Library’s rendezvous with social media starts with the use of Facebook in March 2010. To date the FB page which is famously known as “The Official IIUM Library” has attracted more than 9,400 “friends”. The friends comprise of the current IIUM students, staff, lecturers, alumni, and also the public who are interested in IIUM Library and the information that are provided within the FB Page. Since its inception, The Official IIUM Library FB has updated its friends with news about the Library and also on any valuable information which are deemed valuable for research.

The Library’s social media is maintained by the Library’s Publication and Promotion Committee. The Committee’s five members take turns on a weekly basis to update and answer any enquiries within the FB Page. In middle of 2013, the IIUM Web Steering Committee requested that all agencies in IIUM, be it Kulliyyah, Divisions, Centres, etc., to come up with at least four social media within their homepages. Due to that, the Publication and Promotion Committee had a long deliberation on which social media to be adopted by the Library. The factors considered are the usability, attractiveness to customers and ease of maintenance. Due to this, the Committee has added three more social media, namely Twitter, Instagram and Blog to the existing Facebook. All of these media can be accessed through the Library Homepage and the Library Research Gateway page.

Twitter is chosen on the basis that not everybody prefers or has an FB account. To customers without FB account, they can interact with the Library using their Twitter account. Similar to FB, the Library’s Twitter which is known as IIUM Library @ LibIIUM, provides library customers with updates on the Library services and anything that has to do with research. Since it was set up in middle of July 2013, it has caught the attention of 73 “followers”. The Committee hopes to attract more followers once extensive promotion is done on the existence of the Twitter page.

Instagram is an excellent medium to those who prefer information in a pictorial format. The Library has been using Instagram since end of July 2013 to pose pictures of the library and the services, facilities and collection it has. To date the Library’s Instagram, known as IIUM_Library, has more than 50 “followers”. In the future, the Library will put up pictures on upcoming events, behind the scene photos, library customers, visitors and many more on Instagram.

The IIUM Library Blog is a space where the Library can place more information in an article format for the reading pleasure of its readers. Readers on the other hand can raise questions and comments to the articles to ensure better understanding on the subject matter. The blog also provides links to other research sites that are deemed valuable to be shared to all. The blog was set up in early of October and the Publication and Promotion Committee is still in the learning stage on how to properly handle a blog. It is hoped that as time goes by, the blog will capture the attention of the library customers and be highly valued by them.

The use of Social Media by IIUM Library has helped it tremendously in marketing its services, facilities and collections. Other than that, it has helped to overcome problems since library customers are now more direct and sincere in notifying the library of their satisfaction and dissatisfaction on anything related to the library. To the IIUM Library, Social Media has definitely helped it to be more humane in its offer of services and over time it is hoped that library and customers will work together in “building” a better library for the benefit of current and future generations of IIUM Library customers.