Content Marketing Strategies via Instagram for Indonesian Libraries

Widiatmoko Adi Putranto
Archival Science Study Program, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
widiatmokoputranto@ugm.ac.id

Ashry Noviana Fajry
Library of Center for Trade Education and Training of Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Trade, Depok, Indonesia
fajay001@mymail.unisa.edu.au

Abstract:
The ability to develop content marketing strategies is an emerging skill in the digital marketing world. By using Instagram, a prominent social media platform, marketers can post pictures with interesting captions, popular hashtags and distinctive pattern of object arrangement and selection. Numerous libraries in Indonesia manage their own Instagram accounts for the same reason of offering greater possibilities in knowledge access and discovery. This paper aims to examine how libraries develop content marketing strategies in Instagram and their challenges in developing the strategies. This study is developed by conducting quantitative and qualitative approach combining surveys, observation and broad literature reviews to obtain holistic insights. The findings indicate that in general, Indonesian libraries’ Instagram accounts still have a lot of room for improvement and opportunity to deal with the challenges, and can benefit from studying and implementing a more refined and well-managed content marketing strategy.

Keywords: content marketing, Instagram, Indonesia, social media, libraries

Introduction
The massive development of information technology and digital environment have allowed social media as one of the most powerful tools for marketing and promotion. It means that businesses that refuse to acknowledge their social media presence and management are at risk of losing the competition and being seen as irrelevant.
As social media has been recognized as an effective marketing channel due to its ability to reach wider audience (Garczynski 2016), companies have started to manage their content in social media professionally. The transformation of consumers’ behaviour means that they are less likely to be attracted to traditional advertorial content, and are more interested in informative content when they access social media accounts or company websites (Howley, 2017). Therefore, creating high-quality content which can improve customers’ engagement is essential (Kotler et al., 2017a).

In this context, content marketing emerges as one of the prominent marketing techniques. Pulizzi (2012) describes content marketing as a marketing technique by using high-quality content without including direct promotional content. Similarly, du Plessis (2017) defines content marketing as the process of creating and disseminating valuable content to attract brand images to attract more customers. More specifically, Kotler et al. (2017a) defines content marketing as ‘a marketing approach that involves creating, distributing, and amplifying content that is interesting, relevant, and useful to a clearly defined audience group in order to create conversations about the content.’

However, managing content marketing in social media is not an easy task. According to a research conducted by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs, the majority of 90 % of all companies deploying content marketing faced difficulties in content creation that improves customers’ engagement (Pulizzi, 2012b). Most organisations miss the pre-production and post-distribution steps in their content marketing strategy (Kotler et al., 2017a). Therefore, organizations must pay more attention in managing content marketing process in order to gain maximum results. For example, Global Recruitment Company Kelly Services allocates more than half of their marketing budget for creating and distributing content (Pulizzi, 2012b).

Generally speaking, information institutions such as libraries, archives and museums are no different with other types of business. Without the awareness to adopt recent methods in marketing, institutions may not receive the exposure they need, especially when they rely on the customers’ interest in using their services to survive. In the era where the existence of physical libraries may come as questionable, it is imperative that libraries be treated as a business in order to encourage professional management (Velazquez, 2014) as well as to increase the quality of the service (Berstler & Nectoux, 2013) to avoid irrelevancy.

This paper aims to discuss how libraries develop content marketing strategies in social media of Instagram and highlights the challenges as well as the opportunities in composing the strategies. Although a wide range of literatures discusses content marketing strategies in social media platforms, there is still a lack of studies on content marketing strategies for libraries through Instagram, specifically in Indonesia. Therefore, this study is developed as a preliminary step to address this gap.

**Instagram Adoption in Libraries**

Launched in 2010, Instagram is currently one of the biggest social media platforms in the world (Statista, 2018) with over 500 million active users, 4.2 billion likes and 95 billion photos uploaded daily (Aslam, 2018). This leads to numerous organisations, profit and non-profit, choosing Instagram as their choice of marketing tool. A survey conducted by Biçen Aras (2014) shows that Instagram is the most adopted social media tool by libraries after Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube.

The features include the ability to post images, videos, live streaming and daily stories. Libraries can maximize the use of these features to share content, such as their collection and activities to their users. As mentioned by Augustyniak & Orzechowski (2017), sharing library collection in social media platforms is an effective way to inform users about the libraries’ profiles. Fernandez, (2015) points out that in the digital era, it is important for
libraries to adopt newest technology to offering their services, while Liew (2005) states that digital services that provide access to the collection for the users will have more value in promoting the institution. In addition, this platform may improve communication between the users and the libraries through the comment section and direct messages. Besides, by posting activities within the libraries, libraries can show their human side to the users (King, 2015). As mentioned by Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan (2017b), human centricity is one essential aspect of marketing process today.

Hansson (2015) argues that it is necessary for libraries to shift their perspective beyond offering physical and digital reference but also increasing the users’ digital literacy. Another study by Putranto points out the significance of curation while addressing the audience’s need in creating the content (Putranto, 2017a). On the other hand, Abbott, Donaghey, Hare, & Hopkins (2013) mention time allocation, privacy issues, engaging content creation, and indicators to measure its success as four of the most significant issues in adopting social network for libraries. These challenges show that managing content for libraries is more complicated than it seems.

Discussion

A. Indonesian libraries’ Instagram accounts

Indonesia is one of the countries with the biggest number of Instagram users in the world (Statista, 2018). In 2016, CNN estimated around 22 million users across the nation (Fajrina, 2016). With the significantly growing number of young people using the social media, it is important to consider how that the Net Generation is more visual-oriented audience (Mi & Nesta, 2006).

Libraries in Indonesia are generally aware with the trend and many also established their own accounts. In order to find out the use of Instagram in Indonesian libraries, this study conducted a small survey among 57 librarians from various libraries in Indonesia. In addition, ten library Instagram accounts were chosen based on their content quality and interaction activity with the followers as a part of observation. According to the survey, 61.4% of the librarians reported to have an official library Instagram account. They acknowledge that this platform has the potential to be a sophisticated yet contextual tool to promote their institutions and the programs, or to share their collections, information and knowledge. Almost all respondents of the survey were aware of the objectives of creating Instagram accounts, namely for enhancing the usage of the library services, and increasing the brand of the libraries as well as the main institutions.

However, some of these institutional accounts are less popular compared to the personal accounts of prominent figures or even online shops judging by the number of the followers or the likes they received in each post. The result of the survey reveals that 47.1% of respondents mention that their libraries have less than 500 followers. Some institutions were “late” in joining the Instagram trend, as 57.1% of respondents reported that the accounts were only made in the last three years. This indicates that librarians need to be more aware and sensitive to the rapid development of social media trends.

In terms of user segmentation, most respondents (77.1%) said the libraries are segmenting their audiences mostly from the age (77.3%) instead of professions (22.7%). Moreover, while more than half respondents said they already have a specific team (57.1%) and a coordinator (54.3%) to manage the library Instagram accounts, most of the respondents lacked time management (62.9%), a written-down social media policy (84.4%), content evaluation (66.6%), and specific budget allocation (91.2%).

In terms of content creation, it can be argued that the pictures in the gallery feed are rarely curated. According to the survey, 73.5% of respondents said the libraries manage Instagram content without using curation techniques. According to the observation, in terms
of content quality, most libraries share information regarding information related to their services, such as their service hours and their upcoming programs or events. Only a small number of galleries share their collection. Some galleries are filled with some ceremonious activities such as meetings or welcoming guests.

On the other hand, the policy in managing social media is often limited in technical aspect. For example, an institution may regulate the account to create a content once in a week. Thus, the account administrator or responsible librarians would post any news, agenda or even random activity of the institutions just to be complied with the regulation. Moreover, the subjectivity level is also high due to the absence of the aesthetic or curation standard. The survey found that 85.7% of Instagram content are subjectively created by the librarians. The consideration of what can be considered as aesthetic picture or how to take a beautiful photo may shift drastically. The question on regulating abstract element such aesthetics remains.

Finally, the challenges that most respondents face include the lack of human resources in terms of number (58.5%) and skills (38.2%). Another crucial barrier for libraries in improving Instagram content is the lack of attention of the head of library or other leaders. Most respondents agreed that a specific social media workshop would be useful for them. Furthermore, because most Instagram accounts are created by the librarians’ personal initiative, the management of the content arguably becomes less professional. There are no requirements or control for performance report or evaluation, as indicated by 71.4% of the subjects.

B. Content marketing strategies for Indonesian libraries through Instagram

This study suggests that strategies in creating, curating and arranging content can be approached more comprehensively by analyzing the dynamic of libraries’ stakeholders as well as the contextually factors in order to keep the institutions to be relevant and sustainable. Based on various studies, content marketing strategies generally involve a similar outline, containing several steps, namely defining their objectives, segmenting the audience, planning content, creating content, distributing content, and at last evaluating and thinking of ways to improve the content (Augustyniak & Orzechowski, 2017; Content Marketing Institute, 2017; Kotler et al., 2017a; Linn, 2015). These strategies may be treated as an alternative or a reference in examining the development of Indonesian libraries’ Instagram account.

**Defining objectives**

Due to the different characteristics of Instagram from other social media platforms, institutions must understand the purpose of their Instagram accounts clearly. Defining the objectives in implementing content marketing strategy is essential for the next steps, i.e. consider what and how the content would be and also all the elements in composing the content creation and curation (Content Marketing Institute, 2017; Kotler et al., 2017a; Linn, 2015). For instance, libraries should decide whether the account will be used only for online presence or they also want to use it as a tool for marketing promotion. Respondents of the survey place the lack of attention from the board management among the third-top challenges in managing content of Instagram.

**Segmenting audiences**

Indonesian libraries need to be aware who are the audiences of their Instagram account or determine what kind of audience they want for the account. They should pay attention to the target market of the users they want to attract in order to determine the content of the account. Naturally, each type of audience will require different treatment, depending on the interest. As different group of people has different characteristics, needs and expectation, knowing how every group of audiences interact in social media is essential in order to create
content effectively (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015). In Instagram for business accounts, the gender and age range of the followers can be easily viewed in the insight feed. The libraries can identify who their major followers are and how to develop content for them. If they want segmenting younger audience, they have to be aware not only of what they concern of but also how the content should be shared. For instance, formal description of caption may suit for the website but seem boring for Instagram. Audience segmentation will help libraries to decide what content to be included in the account. Libraries should not use only their internal point of view, but rather see the management through the audience’s perspective.

Planning content

This phase involves a range of activities such as forming a team, defining social media policy, deciding time-line, and choosing format, theme and description for the content (Augustyniak & Orzechowski, 2017; Kotler et al., 2017a). Without any planning process, libraries may fail to deliver content that perfectly address their objective and segmented audience. Linn (2015) mentioned that deciding main topics, content formats, social media platforms, content marketing leader, key performance index and monitoring are essential activities in the planning step of content marketing strategy. Nevertheless, 68.6% of respondents state that their institutions have no policy to regulate the content. The survey also points out that the lack of skills in content management is in fact one of their biggest concerns in content marketing.

Creating content

As the most fundamental phase in a content marketing process, libraries need to understand what they really want to be the content as well as how and why it will be created in relation to the audience, institution brand and any other aspects. Based on the survey, 82.7% of respondents realized that a content should be important as well as interesting from both institution’s and user’s point of view. Creating content can be both easy and complicated especially with the development of ‘mass creativity’ in the field of photography, design and animation. It is interesting to note that respondents place the lack of equipment as the third most challenging issue. With smartphone and free application, libraries now may create content which previously require hours of labour work in design studio. Pictures with special effect, edited and manipulated photo or carefully-designed digital poster can now be created easier. Combined with the ubiquity of smartphone, libraries may generate multiple choices of content range from news and announcement, workshops, meetings, special programs, special collections or even just daily activities such as librarians-selfie, picture of books, shelves or trolleys, computer or furniture. The lack of human resource to manage the Instagram account moreover becomes the top challenge for libraries. Most of the content in Indonesian libraries’ Instagram accounts are created by the librarians and only 22.9% which involved supporting team such as publication and communication staff.

However, libraries may be overwhelmed with the huge number of files, news or pictures they may have as the choice. This means that the creativity process in this step does not only concern creating content but also curating it. Libraries need to select which content that can be considered as having quality and value that are in line with the objectives. Curating is also about eliminating. For example, among 10 pictures of workshop activities there may be several pictures which are similar or having less quality and as the result, can be eliminated. The galleries arrangement can also be the consideration. For instance, if the account shared pictures of program activities in the previous post, it may seem more refreshing to share something not similar in the gallery. It may be unwise to share multiple monotonous photographs of meetings, colleague visitations or the collection themselves. Besides preventing users from being overwhelmed too, the big number of information
nowadays seems to be unattractive. Instead, people prefer to see something that is less but curated.

In addition, it is also important to put aesthetic consideration in each of the content. We may be able to create photographs easily these days but as Bhaskar (2017) argued, “quantity sometimes hampers quality.” It is important for libraries to think how they could present their collection to be unique and visually appealing. Speaking about aesthetic pictures in Instagram, libraries can learn as well from both online shops and other prominent figures. These accounts arguably are aware that aesthetically pictures or visually interesting design for news will attract viewers more.

In addition to support from social media team, libraries may also involve third parties to create the content for them (Kotler et al., 2017a). At some extent, this can be considered as too much. According to the survey, only 5.7% libraries involve graphic designer to create their Instagram content. However, it is also important to note back about how strong and influencing social media nowadays. Third parties such as design studio, photographers or influencers or people from different disciplines like historians, archivists or curators may help libraries to produce specific content that appropriate with their objectives and segmented audiences.

Distributing content
Kotler et al. (2017a) describe three main media channels that can be used to disseminate content, which are owned, paid and earned channels, e.g. library newsletter, poster, brochures, any form of advertisement whether in the paper, social media, or television, and the followers themselves. The last point is particularly intriguing because a social media veteran has been known to employ certain strategies in order to involve or manipulate their followers into disseminating or promoting their accounts or contents.

Instagram provides two main feeds for sharing content, i.e. the main channel where the content will show in other people’s feed and be kept in the account’s gallery; and the ‘story’ option where any content posted will only last for 24 hours. This is another aspect that the account owner needs to take into account carefully. The temporary state of Instagram story also allows the main gallery to be more aesthetically oriented rather than just a channel for information-sharing. With the changing algorithm, Instagram does not present the news feed chronologically based on the posting time, but more on the relevance and popularity of the content. In addition, considering the best time to post the content is crucial as posting when the highest traffic of activities in the platform can increase the views and the interaction with the followers. The account owner may check their “golden hours” through the insight menu.

Amplifying content
Content amplification strategy is important to build earned media distribution (Kotler et al., 2017a). As, the role of influencers or communities to disseminate content will strengthen the content distribution, monitoring their engagement in the content is necessary in this phase. Some sort of acknowledgement such as reposting pictures from the followers may be a form of strategy in this step.

Evaluating content
Content evaluation is vital in order to ensure the quality of the content. However, more than 50% of the surveyed libraries in Indonesia have yet to develop an evaluation for their Instagram accounts. It is assumed that many Instagram accounts are managed by the librarians without supervised by the organizations. Therefore, the librarians mostly just post the content without considering how far the content meet the objectives developed. As mentioned before, Kotler et al. (2017a) have developed metric criteria for evaluating content,
which are visible, relatable, search, action and share. For visible and relatable can be seen from how many views and likes in every post. In Instagram for business, users can check how many viewers and how the interaction happened of every content in the insight feed. In terms of search, it can also be checked in insight feed too in discovery menu. For action, it can be seen from the number of library users after content marketing has been developed. If the number of library users increase, it can be said that content marketing success in improving library usage level. In terms of share, it can be seen from how many users repost the content. This metric can be evaluated monthly included on monthly library reports.

**Improving content**

Once the evaluation is done, the next immediate step is the constant effort in improving the content by learning and gaining references as much as possible, whether it is through art exhibition or trends, or keeping up with the news to stay relevant. Certainly the skills of the human resources should be one of the main focuses by involving them in workshops or trainings in the related fields, such as communication, graphic design, journalistic, social media strategies and photography class.

Moreover, as the behaviour of audiences in the digital world quickly changes, it is crucial to improve content periodically. Therefore, experimenting different themes, format and channels regularly in order to improve content marketing is necessary (Kotler et al., 2017a).

**Conclusion**

Adopting trends for marketing strategy could help libraries to achieve their business sustainability to ensure that they keep relevant with the spirit of the age. Managing the content of the social media account of Instagram requires not only about the awareness of the ‘what’ but also the ‘why’ and ‘how’. Wilson (2012) emphasizes that the new demands, along with the development of information technology, will force libraries to evolve. Social media essentially challenges us to think more comprehensively both from the perspectives of librarians and the users.

In other words, the libraries need to start handling Instagram accounts like developing a new project, which consists of a series of activities from planning to evaluating in a strict time line. The libraries should consider social media management beyond technical points such as posting frequency or sharing everything happening. Besides analyzing what the segmented target wants and needs, libraries need to examine the market’s taste to find the appropriate arrangement in creating the Instagram content. With the changing preferences from the users in aesthetical, communication or even cultural elements in social media it is important for libraries to be consistently up to date by considering what content to be shared to ensure not only the institution marketing and relevancy, but also the preservation and sustainability of the people, ideas and resources they have. If users see libraries as something contextual, there are bigger chances that they may find out more about it including the history, resources or the cultural heritage collection. Investing significant resources to manage the content marketing strategies in Instagram can be challenging but in an era where online existence is a daily need, it can be proved as worth it.

**Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank all respondents from the libraries throughout Indonesia for participating in this study. Your help and support provided us insight and new perspectives for our analysis and examination. We would also like to acknowledge our colleagues from
the institutions and the community whose support have helped and inspired us to learn, and develop the ideas during the process of writing this paper.

References