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#### RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Evaluation of the use of twitter in the library system of the Federal University of Sergipe digital marketing strategies

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The advent of the internet provided connectivity that brought down barriers, especially in communication. Society is in a network, and interaction is a major factor; in this context, information units must be present and adapted to the digital environment. Digital marketing presents itself as a strategy for success and proposes the use of metrics to measure the organization's participation in this environment. This article aims to analyze the use of twitter from the Library System of the Federal University of Sergipe (SIBIUFS) as a digital marketing strategy. The investigation is characterized as exploratory and descriptive, with a qualitative and quantitative approach. The instruments used for data collection were a questionnaire structured in an electronic form, sent via email to the social network manager, and a form built to analyze SIBIUFS' posts on twitter in 2018, through the application of audience and engagement metrics. Through the analysis of the data collected, it was concluded that SIBIUFS' performance in the use of digital marketing strategies in social networks is still timid and demands the creation of a policy that regulates all marketing practices implemented in the unit and, thus, contribute to the increase of the degree of user interaction, enabling the dissemination and sharing of information, in addition to promoting the library environment.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Marketing. University libraries. Measurement. User studies.

### Avaliação do uso do *twitter* no sistema de bibliotecas da Universidade Federal de Sergipe estratégias de marketing digital

#### **RESUMO**

O advento da internet proporcionou a conectividade, que promoveu uma queda das barreiras, principalmente na comunicação. A sociedade está em rede e a interação é fator preponderante; nesse contexto, as unidades de informação devem estar presentes e se adequarem ao ambiente digital. O marketing digital se apresenta como uma estratégia para o sucesso e propõe o uso de métricas para aferir a participação da organização neste ambiente. Este artigo tem o objetivo de analisar a utilização do *twitter* do Sistema de Bibliotecas da Universidade Federal de

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Sergipe (SIBIUFS) como estratégia de marketing digital. A investigação tem caráter exploratório e descritivo, com abordagem quali-quantitativa. Os instrumentos utilizados para coleta dos dados foram um questionário estruturado em formulário eletrônico, enviado através de *e-mail* ao gestor da rede social, e um formulário construído para análise das postagens da mídia *twitter* do SIBIUFS realizadas no ano de 2018, através da aplicação das métricas de audiência e engajamento. Mediante análise dos dados coletados, concluiu-se que a atuação do SIBIUFS na utilização de estratégias de marketing digital nas redes sociais ainda é tímida e demanda a criação de uma política que regulamente todas as práticas de marketing implementadas na unidade e, assim, contribuir para o crescimento do grau de interação de seus usuários, possibilitar a disseminação e o compartilhamento de informações, além de promover o ambiente da biblioteca.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Marketing. Bibliotecas universitárias. Metrias da informação e comunicação. Estudo de usuários.



JITA: FB. Marketing

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#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Internet has provoked a series of transformations in contemporary society, especially in communication. Distances have been reduced for those who have access to technological devices and master their respective languages, given the brutal inequalities in relation to economic elites and populations in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability in poor or developing countries. The Internet is an environment that provides interaction, thus generating a large network of relationships. In this universe, social networks stand out for democratizing access and sharing of information; characteristics that have attracted institutions to this new way of establishing relationships and creating links with their public.

In this context where the connectivity made possible by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) allows interaction between different cultures, new ways of acting with more attentive and critical consumers/users emerge. It is essential that institutions make a change in their organizational culture, as well as in their management models. Successful management models are those that are customer/citizen oriented. Digital marketing is the strategy that must be adopted by organizations, because it allows measuring communication and interaction actions through the use of metrics, enabling the planning and/or creation of management goals for the use of digital platforms.

Thus, libraries should be increasingly present in the digital environment, especially through the use of digital social media to disseminate their products and services. The construction of this presence should be planned through the development of marketing strategies aimed at facilitating interaction with users and meeting their demands.

The Library System of the Federal University of Sergipe (SIBIUFS) was implemented by Resolution no 49/2014/CONSU that approved its internal regulation. The system is composed of the Central Library (BICEN), Community Library (BICOM), Health Campus Library (BISAU), Itabaiana Campus Library (BICAMPI), Laranjeiras Campus Library (BICAL), Lagarto Campus Library (BILAG) and Sertão Campus Library (BISER), Its governing body is the Central Library, which aims to develop activities of collection, treatment, storage, recovery and dissemination of information, providing support to teaching, research and extension programs (UFS, 2014).

The SIBIUFS is present in the digital environment with a website and two social networks: Instagram and twitter. For the realization of the study the twitter was chosen, because the SIBIUFS already has account in the referred social network for more than ten years, while Instagram was only adopted in the second semester of the year 2019, with few posts for analysis.

The present study aims to analyze the use of twitter of the Library System of the Federal University of Sergipe (SIBIUFS) as a digital marketing strategy, through the use of metrics: audience, which aim to identify the amount of published content and views; and engagement, which seek to verify the degree of interaction of the public with the published content and the organization.

#### 2 MARKETING AND INFORMATION UNITS

Horizontality and inclusion are factors that are strongly inserted in contemporary society; the main reason for this change was the creation and popularization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which, with their connectivity and scope, have

created a new reality where social groups of the most diverse economic, political, religious, etc., have channels of expression and social representation (KOTLER, 2017, p. 22).

In this scenario pointed out by Kotler (2017), citizens assume a more critical posture and deposit more credibility in the evaluations and indications of consumers and users than in the marketing companies developed by the organizations, whether private or public, for profit or not.

According to the American Marketing Association (2004 apud BONIFÁCIO, 2015, p. 368), marketing can be defined as "a management process that involves the creation, communication, delivery and exchange of offers that have value for customers, partners and society in general. Regarding its meaning, the word Market-ing means market in action, being defined as the constant changes that have been happening in the market.

Thus, Kotler (2017) presents the evolution of marketing techniques, stating that initially were focused on the product, then turned to the consumer. After that, the human being became the central aspect and currently combines online and offline interactions between companies and consumers. In face of so many transformations, it is very important that the professionals are attentive and updated.

In turn, Longo (2014) discusses the changes that are happening in society, especially in consumer habits of this era, which he calls post-digital. The author points out how professionals should be attentive to these transformations, emphasizing the importance of obtaining a balance between what is urgent (pending) and future opportunities (trends), tactical and strategic, and between underestimating the long term and overestimating the short term.

For Long (2014), it is important that managers seek the ability to change and adapt quickly, requiring the abandonment of immediacy, as well as the creation of strategies aimed at better performance of organizations, through the study of organizational culture and mission. Therefore, Longo (2014, p. 42-43) warns that "the best thing to do is to build the road for the future to arrive faster" and try to be a pioneer, because:

[...] we already live in the post-digital era, and now the future comes faster because it destroys barriers. The post-digital era is like a road full of curves where you have to combine speed and caution, attention to the present and vision of the future, adaptability and constancy. [...] the challenge is to make the curve and foresee the next ones on the road" (LONGO, 2014, p. 43).

In this sense pointed out by Longo (2014), if properly employed, the organization's investment in digital marketing may benefit communication and the strengthening of its relationship with its client/public. According to Macedo (2014), digital marketing allows various means and ways to promote content, interactions with the public and advertisements. He believes that such actions can be evaluated through metrics applied to digital media, being the main ones: audience, engagement, influence, conversion, financial, brand and segmentation. Macedo (2014) states that there is no consensus among authors on which metrics are best used and stresses the importance of choosing the metric according to the platform that will be measured.

Information Science has its interdisciplinary relationships with various disciplines, which connect through technological advancement, the information society and the creation of new fields of application, some with more intensity than others. However, Bonifacio (2015) points out that the relationship between Marketing and Information Science is apparently multidisciplinary, since there is only an exchange of concepts and methods, and emphasizes the importance of reciprocal collaboration between researchers in the areas.

According to Boniface (2015, p. 369), it is in "managing information about customers and managing the information needs of customers that marketing and information science find a common basis for action. Therefore, the author believes that managers of information units should understand the demands and interests of their users to create services and products and, through the management of these relationships, benefit both parties, because it is by managing information about users, as well as their informational demands, that marketing and information science can act together.

The main task of managing a marketing oriented organization, whatever that organization may be, including an information unit, is to determine the needs and desires of its target market to satisfy them with adequate design, communication and distribution, in addition to a competitively viable offer price for products and services (AMARAL, 2008, p. 34).

Studies on marketing in information science in Brazil are still incipient; there are few researchers developing work on this topic. It is inferred that this occurs because the information units do not have lucrative purposes and the marketing is directly linked to marketing actions. However, the researcher Sueli Angélica do Amaral stands out in this context, with studies and research that deal with marketing in information units, which culminated in the publication of books and articles of which she is the author or co-author (AMARAL, 2008; BONIFÁCIO, 2015; NEVES, 2018).

The concept of information marketing comes from the idea of traditional marketing applied to information organizations and aims to meet the demands coming from its audience, enabling the strengthening of relationships. It is materialized through the creation, implantation and divulgation of products and services (AMARAL, 2007). Considering the relevance of the use of digital marketing in information units and based on several scholars in the area, the following concept was developed:

Digital marketing for information units is understood as an important strategy for institutions such as libraries to enhance the attraction of member users, the exponential dissemination of their information products and services and as a resource capable of providing the librarian with the necessary strategies to develop the digital presence in social media (NEVES, 2018, p. 219).

Amaral (2008) states that promotion is the main marketing activity performed in information units. Because it is a communication activity, these organizations use it to inform, make known and/or encourage the use of products, services and the organizational environment.

With the democratization of the Internet and the advent of social media, society is on a network. In this scenario, organizations, including libraries, are faced with the challenge of integrating and consolidating themselves in the digital environment.

Social media are important tools for the marketing of information units, since they provide the interaction between the organization and its public. In this context, the use of these tools by the university library is ideal, since their main role is to support teaching, research and extension activities by promoting access to information, considering that most of their users are highly connected young people, eager to build new knowledge.

This interaction will contribute not only to the elaboration and dissemination of services and/or products that meet users' demands, but also to the improvement of the environment, besides serving as a basis for decision making. However, it is essential that this action is planned according to the mission, vision and values of the organization, so that the activity is consolidated in an adequate and continuous way. For the university library to act effectively in the digital environment:

[...] it is necessary to join efforts to bring relevant digital content to your community. Your digital presence will consist of your information products and services guided by web 2.0, taking into account the needs and participation of the community involved, disseminating and creating relevant and engaging content via social media (PRADO; CORREIA, 2016, p. 169).

Prado and Correia (2016) explain that the presence of libraries, mainly university libraries, in the digital environment demands the achievement of four phases: the existence phase (interaction with users), the attraction phase (expansion of interaction from the first contacts), the relationship phase (monitoring of interactions) and the engagement phase, which will only happen if the others are successfully carried out, because this is the phase in which the public of the institution follows and shares.

#### 3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES AND DATA ANALYSIS

The present study is an exploratory and descriptive research, of a quali-quantitative nature that seeks to evaluate the use of the twitter posts of SIBIUFS as a marketing strategy. In order to achieve the proposed objective of the research, a bibliographical research was initially carried out, which consists of a search in the literature for concepts of various authors, who guided the construction of the work.

The survey of data occurred by means of manual collection and filling of a form built for classification, accounting and analysis of the posts made in the period from January 1st to December 31st, 2018, through access to the twitter media page of the SIBIUFS.

Later, a verification of the main aspects that demonstrate the general performance of the media for the application of the metrics of the digital marketing of audience and engagement was carried out, explained in **Chart 1:** 

Chart 1. Metrics used in the study

METRIC GROUP	DESCRIPTION
<ul> <li>Audience metrics:</li> <li>Followers</li> <li>Frequency of publication</li> <li>Post classification</li> </ul>	For Cerqueira e Silva (2011, p. 132) the audience or reach metric "refers to the effective degree of dissemination of a certain content, or degree of potential dissemination that a profile has.  Macedo (2014, p. 32) considers that audience metrics "aim to understand how much content is being exposed in the media and what the size of the audience reached by the information disclosed".

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Engagement metrics:  Retweets (shares) Comments Tanned (Likes)	As for the engagement metric, Cerqueira e Silva (2011, p. 132) states that it "refers to the degree of participation of a certain profile or group of people in relation to a theme or issue. For Macedo (2014, p. 36), these metrics aim to "evaluate how and how much the public is interacting with the brands and their contents".

Source: authors' production, 2019.

In the qualitative approach, an interview was conducted with the librarian responsible for managing the social network twitter at SIBIUFS, by sending the questions via e-mail.

The answers attributed by the professional were analyzed through the application of organizational procedures, codification, categorization and inference, according to the conception of Bardin Content Analysis (2011).

#### 3.1 Presentation and analysis of results

The SIBIUFS twitter account is found by username @bibufs, your entry into this social network dates back to September 2009 and, until the date of collection of the information, had the following data related in **Chart 2:** 

Chart 2. SIBIUFS twitter account data

Data	Quantity
Total followers	1539
Total posts	1201
Total followed	152

Source: https://twitter.com/bibufs, 2019.

The posts were collected and separated monthly according to **Table 1**.

**Table 1**. Monthly posts in the year 2018

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	GENERAL POSTING		TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	Posting	Retweeted		
January	7	5	12	10%
February	4	5	9	8%
March	12	4	16	14%

April	5	2	7	6%
May	15	1	16	14%
June	10	2	12	10%
July	9	3	12	10%
August	4	1	5	4%
September	3	3	6	5%
October	10	0	10	8%
November	7	3	10	8%
December	3	0	3	3%
Total	89	29	118	100%

Source: https://twitter.com/bibufs, 2019.

Table 1 indicates that in all of 2018 the SIBIUFS posted 118 tweets; however, of this total, 29 were retweeted (shared) from other institutions, with the highest incidence of posts occurring in the month of May, with 14%, and the annual average is 9.8 posts. Given the data collected, it is inferred that there is no regularity in these publications.

In the scope of social networks, it is essential the publication of updated content and with regular frequency to stimulate the interest of the user in following them. Thus, the chances of promoting engagement will be greater if the content published on social networks is relevant to the audience reached (MACEDO 2014, p. 32).

After the collection, the tweets were classified as messages of notices, events, services and others, so we can identify which type of post the SIBIUFS performs with greater incidence, as shown in **Table 2**:

Table 2. Classification of posts

TYPES OF POSTS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
WARNINGS	50	56%
EVENTS	11	12%
SERVICES	15	17%
OTHERS	13	15%
TOTAL	89	100%

Source: https://twitter.com/bibufs, 2019.

Regarding the nature of the SIBIUFS posts on twitter, **Table 2** shows that more than half (56%) of all posts published by the system are warnings. These messages consist of informing the public about

the working hours and/or changes in library regulations, followed by the services category, with 17%, which includes the disclosure of services available to the public; soon after, other publications appear, with 15%. These are random posts that do not fall into any other category. Finally, there are the events held, with 12%. These postings disclose events promoted by the library, the university and other institutions.

For Amaral (2008), the promotion is a marketing strategy that should be adopted by the institution that intends to attract users, publish, and encourage the use of products, services and behaviors. In this case, the data presented in **Table 2** indicate that the SIBIUFS, in its performance on twitter, employs the promotion through interaction with its followers, always seeking to keep them well informed about its operation, its guidelines and the services available, thus creating a closer and more reliable relationship with its audience.

According to Macedo (2014), the audience metric aims to verify the amount of content being published, as well as its visibility. In view of the above, it was identified that SIBIUFS has a good number of followers when compared to some libraries and/or library systems of Federal Universities of the Northeast (UF/NE) that have a twitter account, as shown in **Chart 3.** However, when compared to the accounts mentioned above, it can be inferred that the number of posts made by SIBIUFS is still brief, which reveals that this is a little used marketing strategy.

**Chart 3**. Presence of UF/NE Library Systems

UF/NE LIBRARY SYSTEMS	PRESENCE ON TWITTER	ELECTRONIC ADDRESS	TOTAL FOLLOWERS
SIBIUFS	It has a twitter account.	https://twitter.com/bibufs.	1539 <b>9</b>
SIB/UFPE	The system has no twitter account, only the Central Library and three Sector Libraries.	https://twitter.com/BC_UFPE https://twitter.com/BibCCSUFPE https://twitter.com/bibcfch https://twitter.com/bibccsaufpe	497
SISBI/UFRN	PRESENCE ON TWITTER	https://twitter.com/bczm_ufrn	2988
Systemoteque/UFPB	The system does not have a twitter account, only the Central Library and a Sector Library.	https://twitter.com/BC_UFPB_Oficial https://twitter.com/BIBLIOCCEN_UFPB	1574
Library/UFC system	It has a twitter account.	https://twitter.com/UFCBibliotecas	1690

Source: authors' production, 2019.

The engagement metric measures the amount of interactions that the public has with the platform, the content and the institution (MACEDO, 2014), being considered the main indicator of success or failure of digital marketing. For Araújo and Araújo (2018, p. 187), the enjoyment of a post is an approval and "less effort from the user", while sharing is a way to

promote greater dissemination of a post. Comments are the way users can express their opinion. In this aspect, SIBIUFS presented, in the year 2018, 104 tanned content published, 31 retweets (sharing) and 3 comments, as shown in **Graph 1**:

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Comments
Retweet
Likes

January April July October

Graph 1. SIBIUFS posts engagement

Source: https://twitter.com/bibufs, 2019.

**Graph 1** shows the level of engagement of the publications on SIBIUFS twitter and, according to the data available, it is understood that there is still no engagement in the posts. This conclusion is due to the small number of comments found, as well as sharing and tasting, taking into account the number of followers that the system holds. To create engagement in social networks, it is not enough to keep the content updated; it is necessary to establish and preserve the dialogue with the followers, because "because they are the genuine environments of interaction and collaboration, they demand attentive conversational practices ready to answer comments or questions from users" (ARAÚJO, 2018, p. 8-9).

Based on the study of the data presented, it was necessary to understand the reason for the low number of interactions. To this end, an analysis was made of the librarian's speech about his knowledge of marketing strategies in social network management.

In the first question, it was inquired about the existence of a document that regulates the management of social networks and its perception about its relevance. On this point, the librarian informed that there was no normative document and highlighted the importance of its construction.

[...] it would be important to standardize the communication of the SIBIUFS, to allow decentralization, if necessary, and to create a communication identity. Furthermore, it would better establish communication workflows and their routines (LIBRARY).

According to Prado and Correa (2016, p. 175), an organization that has well-developed guidelines that demonstrate knowledge of the community where it operates and the potential of its team, "integrating the production, dissemination, interaction and monitoring of content", will possibly be able to promote and establish an active and remarkable digital presence. To do so, these guidelines should consider: planning; social and behavioral aspects; ethical and

legal aspects; languages and types of content; monitoring and metrics; crisis management and evaluation schedule.

Thus, the planning provides for the involvement of the entire organization in the execution of actions. Therefore, to adopt marketing strategies in information units, it is necessary to have a previous planning that will enable "the anticipation and articulation of all decisions related to the management of a certain service or product" (ROCHA; SILVA; MAIA, 2012, p. 354).

In the second, third and fourth questions, the librarian was asked about his knowledge of digital marketing at graduation, how he was trained to manage social networks and whether the institution contributed to this training. In this question, the interviewee informed that digital marketing was not approached in his graduation and that the competence in twitter management was acquired "through personal use [...]", not occurring an incentive from the organization in this area.

In face of the informational explosion and the technological advance, it is essential that the librarian develops skills and knows the necessary tools to act efficiently in informational environments. Rocha, Silva and Maia (2012) emphasize that it is essential to know the client/user of the library, as well as identify their habits, desires and needs; for this reason, it is relevant that marketing is also part of the formation of the information professional.

Therefore, it is fundamental that, besides the professional undertaking in the acquisition of new knowledge to develop skills, the institution where the service is carried out fosters learning, making available or facilitating access to courses.

In the fifth question, the librarian was asked if he felt prepared to act in the management of the twitter social network. The answer was affirmative; however, with reservations for some skills that he considers necessary and does not possess them, demanding help from others. The following presents the manifestation that supports the mentioned information. "For the textual part, more specifically, I feel prepared, but in the part of images and videos not completely, always being necessary help from other professionals" (LIBRARY).

#### 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to analyze SIBIUS twitter to identify, through the use of audience and engagement metrics, whether social networking is used as a digital marketing strategy. The data analysis indicates that SIBIUFS has a good presence in the digital environment; however, it still does not make use of the social media capacity for marketing. The reflections exposed in this work are not conclusive, they have the purpose of providing subsidies to expand the discussions on the subject.

The SIBIUFS social network is used, mainly, for the publication of notices, news, events and services of the informational units that comprise the system. The number of posts is still shy and there is no regularity of publication. Given the analysis of the engagement metric data, it can be concluded that the reduced number of tastes, sharing and comments indicates that the interaction with the user is still very incipient.

In this scenario, it is important that the system management builds a marketing plan that takes into account the various social media, as well as the planning and management of the content to be posted, in addition to investing in promoting the development of skills by librarians in the use of digital marketing strategies. These actions will contribute to increase the degree of interaction of its users, enable the dissemination and sharing of information, and foster the library environment.

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