MARKETING THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY WITH ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK ADVERTISING

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For now at least, “online social network advertising” means “Facebook advertising”
900 million registered users, 425 million of which log on every day

1. Source: Facebook, Inc. IPO filing document
Librarians aware of Facebook for many years, but initial response was lukewarm (Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis, 2007)

Problems with early Facebook functionality – institutional profiles removed without warning

Resolved with introduction of Facebook Pages – now common for libraries to have one
WE’VE GOT 1,318 FANS!! SO WHAT?

- Facebook users generally do not seek out information on the social network - content comes to them (Miller & Jensen, 2007)
- Majority comes via the **News Feed**, a core Facebook feature
FACEBOOK NEWS FEED

- Populated by friend updates PLUS posts by Pages that the user has indicated they like
- If they like a particular post, their connections on Facebook can see this in their own News Feeds
Some might argue that it is better to use simple language, but according to this article difficult words are good for us.

At any rate, you can always quickly look up new words in the Library's subscription to the online version of the Oxford English Dictionary – much better than free online dictionaries: http://goo.gl/0dsRv

In defence of obscure words
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mag-17777556

We chase "fast culture" at our peril – unusual words and difficult art are good for us.
MORE FANS, GREATER REACH

Reach is a measure of the number of people who have seen a post.

With posts averaging a reach of 300-500 people, the HKBU Facebook Page is significantly contributing to overall visibility of Library services and initiatives.

Reach is driven by number of fans.
HOW CAN WE ATTRACT MORE FANS?

- Publicity within the Library/University
- Add social plugins to the Library website
- Promote to students during Library workshops
- Paid advertising on Facebook itself...
FACEBOOK ADS

- Can target ads only to HKBU students
- Can exclude existing fans
- “Sponsored Story” ad type incorporates social features
- Tight control over budget
HKBU CAMPAIGN 2011

- Campaign goal: compare regular Facebook ads with “Sponsored Stories”
- Which would attract more fans?

Regular adverts

Sponsored story
CAMPAIGN RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advert Name</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Clicks</th>
<th>Connections (new fans attracted)</th>
<th>Total Spent (US$)</th>
<th>Cost per connection (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored Story</td>
<td>463,607</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>$61.97</td>
<td>$0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Event Photo</td>
<td>72,038</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$11.89</td>
<td>$1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Desk Photo</td>
<td>177,907</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$22.26</td>
<td>$2.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Sponsored story generated highest absolute number of new fans
- Also incurred the lowest cost
PRIVACY AND FACEBOOK

I give private information on corporations to you for free, and I’m a villain.

I give your private information to corporations for money, and I’m Man of the Year.

Source: http://captainthermostat.tumblr.com/post/2815161022
FACEBOOK ADS FOR SERVICES

- Fans are important, however:
  - Not all Page posts are read by every fan
  - Majority of students will not be fans (for now...)
- Potential solution: Use ads to directly promote library services
HKBU MOBILE PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

Campaign goal:

Test efficacy of Facebook ads in raising awareness of a specific Library service
HKBU MOBILE PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

- Two ad types used
- Regular ad linked directly to Library website announcement
- Page post ad allows promotion of Page content to non-fans
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular advert</td>
<td>42,278</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$5.19</td>
<td>$0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page post advert</td>
<td>179,041</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$19.96</td>
<td>$0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Focus on clicks rather than connections
- Total clicks not as high as hoped, but costs trivial
CONCLUSION

- Paid ads increase the impact of a Facebook Page by attracting more fans
- They can also be used to directly promote library services
- Academic libraries can consider using ads to enhance outreach efforts to new generation users in the increasingly important online social networking space