

Use of Social Media in Libraries

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Generation Libraries**



Abstract

This paper examines how Libraries can leverage on social networking and Social Media skills to provide dynamic library services in the face of dwindling economic problems in India. The unprecedented technological advancement of the 21st century, no doubt has impacted on library services globally and in India in particular. The Social Media hype has gradually crept into the library profession with social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, Library Thing, it has become evident that our services will need to change to meet the growing needs of our end users. Libraries in India have been challenged like never before to render more proactive and more value added services to meet the ever changing needs of our patrons. This paper is therefore, an attempt to examine the present scenario in library services delivery with these new and emerging technologies. Challenges faced by Indian libraries in the use of these Social Media are investigated and possible solutions proffered.

Keyword: Social Networking, Libraries, Library services

Overview



A library networks is broadly described as a group of libraries community together with some agreement of understanding to help each other with a new to satisfying the information needs of their clientele or users example inflibnet.

Social connections have become very important and have improved the library profession tremendously in India. social networking refers to a process of relationship building among a group with a common interest. Social Media emerged in India principally for the purpose of socializing. The Facebook initially was used only for social discussions, however over time, particularly by the turn of the 21st century the grouping of individuals into specific groups emerged. Professional groups started to spring up and within time the library profession had its own group with the sole purpose of sharing ideas and gathering first hand information regarding the profession. Undoubtedly, as a growing economy the use of these media often meet with challenges which are succinctly discussed in this paper and strategies for the enhancement of library services through these media have been proffered.



What is Social Media?

“The best way to define Social Media is to break it down. Media is an instrument on communication, like a newspaper or a radio, so Social Media would be a social instrument of communication.

- In [Web 2.0](#) terms, this would be a website that doesn't just give you information, but interacts with you while giving you that information. This interaction can be as simple as asking for your comments or letting you vote on an article, or it can be as complex as [Flixster](#) recommending movies to you based on the ratings of other people with similar interests.
- Think of regular media as a one-way street where you can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but you have very limited ability to give your thoughts on the matter.
- Social Media, on the other hand, is a two-way street that gives you the ability to communicate too



Definition & Concept

- “Social Media are primarily Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings.” - *Wikipedia*
- “An umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words and pictures.” - *Anvil Media*



Here's what they defined it as...

- Social Media is like going to a large party. Put on your best outfit, try to be entertaining, don't put own foot in mouth
- Social Media = Sharing Caring Conversations Online
- A place to hang out and communicate with your own networks of contacts, friends and peers about stuff that interests you
- Social Media = The facilitation and practice of engagement and conversation online
- People. Technology. Communication. Ideas. Choice.
- It's new groups of online media which share things like openness, 'connectedness' participation, conversation and community
- Definition of Social Media: Media that allows discussion and interaction, as opposed to broadcast only.
- My definition of Social Media 'the Internet's original purpose-not a new phenomena' but there are other forms of 'offline'
- Talking online with people you don't know in the hope that they'll become customers!
- A set of websites that allows users to directly interact with each other

- The definition of Social Media du jour is, simply, '140 characters or less'
- This year's equivalent of WAP portals
- A place where people go connect with other people. I guess the 'love' column in London Paper could even be a Social Media. It isn't limited to online media
- No holds barred informal networking and content sharing
- Internet tools developed and defined in part by the people who use them and that connect those people in some way Social Media.
- Social Media is a open platform, free form, uncensored conversation between millions of people worldwide without borders.
- Our web tomorrow, today
- Something non-institutional involving a level discursive playing field...or something like that
- Social Media is getting a msg across in as few words as possible, in as little time as possible, to as many people as possible
- Engage, share, spread, cooperate, interact, learn, enjoy
- An online communication community where networks formed by the members shape the flow and formation of the content?
- Social Media is how Internet changed social networking by using all the different web tools to communicate socially.
- It is a thing of opposites; compelling and annoying, time wasting and time efficient, useful and useless.



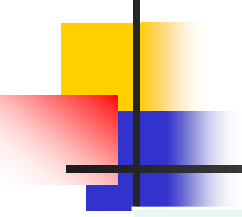
Objectives of the Study

- The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:
- To explore the respondent's attitude towards the use of social media in marketing of library resources and services.
- To provide possible implication of social media for marketing library and information products and services.
- To investigate the problems in utilizing social media for marketing purposes in libraries.



Purposes of Social Media Usage in Libraries

It was inquired from the respondents that what should be the purpose of social media usage in libraries and information centers. Participants of the study strongly agreed that social media should be used for marketing of library product and services and to build discussion groups and collaborative work. They were agreed that it should be used for fund raising, to spread news and service alerts, to provide quick updates to online users and to push library news and press release among online users.

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1. Marketing of library product and services
 2. Marketing specific adult programs and services
 3. Marketing specific children's and youth services programs
 4. To modernize the library image and e-reputation
 5. To reach a new audience of potential users
 6. To push library news and press release
 7. To provide quick updates to users
 8. To build discussion groups and collaborative work
 9. To spread news and service alerts
 10. For fund raising



Guideline about Social Web

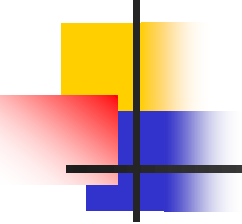
- It is easy to confuse Social Media with social news because we often refer to members of the news as "the media." Adding to the confusion is the fact that a social news site is also a Social Media site because it falls into that broader category.
- But social news is not the same thing as Social Media anymore than a banana is the same thing as fruit. A banana is a type of fruit, but fruit can also be grapes, strawberries, or lemons. And while social news is Social Media, social networking and wikis are also Social Media.

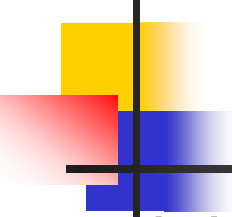


What Are Some Social Media Websites?

Now that we have answered the question of what is Social Media, we can move on to Social Media websites. Because Social Media is such a broad term, it covers a large range of websites. But the one common link between these websites is that you are able to interact with the website and interact with other visitors.

Here are some examples of Social Media websites :

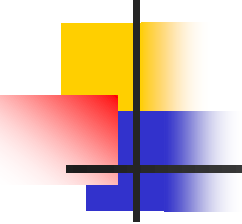
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- **Social Bookmarking.** ([Del.icio.us](#), [Blinklist](#), [Simpy](#)) Interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people.
 - **Social News.** ([Digg](#), [Propeller](#), [Reddit](#)) Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.
 - **Social Networking.** ([Facebook](#), [Hi5](#), [Last.FM](#)) Interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions.
 - **Social Photo and Video Sharing.** ([YouTube](#), [Flickr](#)) Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions.
 - **Wikis.** ([Wikipedia](#), [Wikia](#)) Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.

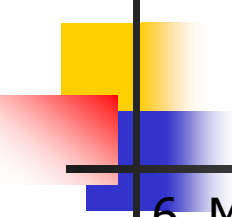


And these websites are not the only Social Media websites. Any website that invites you to interact with the site and with other visitors falls into the definition of Social Media

Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

1. *Andreas Kaplan* and Michael Haenlein define Social Media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."

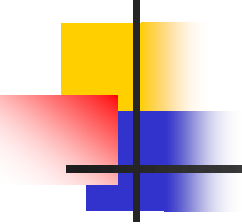
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2. Furthermore, Social Media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create , discuss, and modify user-generated content. It introduces substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities and individuals.
 3. Social Media differentiates from traditional/industrial media in many aspects such as quality.
 4. reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence
 5. There are many effects that stem from internet usage. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with Social Media sites than any other type of site. At the same time, the total time spent on Social Media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 37 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 88 billion minutes in July 2011.



6. Much of the critic of Social Media are about its exclusiveness a most sites do not allow the transfer of information from one to another, disparity of information available, issues with trustworthiness and reliability of information presented, concentration, ownership of media content, and the meaning of interactions created by Social Media. However, it is also argued that Social Media has positive effects such as allowing the democratization of the internet

7. while also allowing individuals to advertise themselves and form friendships

8. Most people associate Social Media with positive outcomes, yet this is not always the case. Due to the increase in Social Media websites, there seems to be a positive correlation between the usage of such media with cyber bullying, online sexual predators and the decrease in face-to-face interactions. Social Media may expose children to images of alcohol, tobacco, and sexual behaviors.



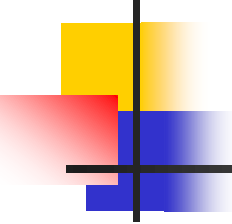
9. Geocities, created in 1994, was one of the first Social Media sites. The concept was for users to create their own websites.

10. Facebook is a key example of a Social Media site, with over one billion active users in October 2012.



Managing Social Media

- There is an increasing trend towards using Social Media monitoring tools that allow marketers to search, track and analyses conversation on the web about their brand or about topics of interest. This can be useful in PR management and campaign tracking, allowing the user to measure return on investment, competitor-auditing and general public engagement. Tools range from free, basic applications to subscription-based, more in-depth tools.
- The honeycomb framework defines how Social Media services focus on some or all of seven functional building blocks. These building blocks help explain the engagement needs of the Social Media audience.



For instance, [Linked In](#) users are thought to care mostly about identity, reputation and relationships, whereas YouTube's primary features are sharing, conversations, groups and reputation. Many companies build their own social containers that attempt to link the seven functional building blocks around their brands. These are private communities that engage people around a more narrow theme, as in around a particular brand, vocation or hobby, rather than Social Media containers such as [Google+](#) or [Facebook](#) and also [Twitter](#). PR departments face significant challenges in dealing with viral negative sentiment directed at organizations or individuals on Social Media platforms, which may be a reaction to an announcement or event.

How works Social Media in Library



Facebook:

Most popular now because it is librarian- friendly, with many applications like JSTOR search, World Cat, and much more. Librarians can interact with users to know their information need. Libraries try to link some of these specialized library applications to Facebook.

MySpace:

In Academic institutions where the students are; libraries have taken advantage of this site o post, calendar, custom catalog search tools, and blog features to improve their presence.

Blogs:

Here, librarians can periodically post messages; share information on a particular subject or issue, and allow users to contribute to content. They can write articles, news on topical issues and expect an instant reaction from their users.



- ***Wikis:***

Is a free online encyclopedia that gives a background knowledge and definition of concepts. It offers a platform for users to access, edit and contribute to content. This is a collaborative web page for developing web content.

- ***LinkedIn:***

Librarians can get patrons connected with specialists in their particular field of interest via LinkedIn. Librarians can use this platform to render specialized services such as Strategic Dissemination of Information (SDI).

- ***Twitter:***

A micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections. Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status update. Librarians can use this platform to give users firsthand information on the on-going national elections. Users can send Instant Messages (IM) on complaints or ask questions on a particular issue and get a feedback on the spot using twitter.



- ***YouTube:***

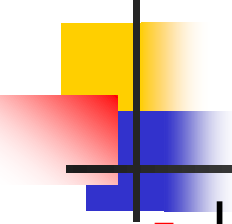
In institutions in india, events such as important highlights of inaugural lectures, conferences and workshops are disseminated via the YouTube.

- ***Flickr:***

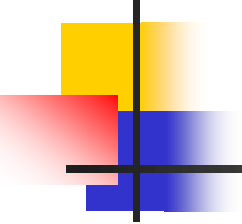
Librarians can use this tool to share and distribute new images of library collections. Cover page of new arrivals of both books and journals can be disseminated to users via Flickr.

- ***Library Thing:***

A tool that enriches the library OPAC. Once an account is created, a list of books with ISBNs is sent to Library Thing which sends back a piece of code which is pasted into the footer of the Library OPAC.

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- Librarians can utilize this to send a list of current publications to users. The Changing Library Environment Today, libraries are using the latest technologies and trends to make their services popular and user friendly. The concept of a library as physical place where one can visit to get information is rapidly changing to a social cyberspace where users access, communicate and contribute to existing knowledge. This is because the modern library of the 21st century is characterized with collective knowledge creation and enabling technologies; and also a movement away from the old stereotype, conventional and one directional library services to users to a more dynamic, two-way communicational network environment

Social Networking: a Platform for Open Access to Knowledge

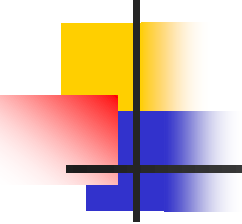
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- Social networking sites are constantly promoting open access to knowledge. Open access is the term used to refer to resources that are openly available to users with no requirements for authentication or payment. It is a model that presents free access to publications. In an open access platform, users are not charged for access to articles or other resources, and are free to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to full texts of these resources, provided they do not violate copyright rules, search, browse, filter, find, collaborate and have online open access to knowledge and contribute to web content.



Social Networking Opportunities for Libraries

Social networking presents some important opportunities to libraries which include marketing of library services and reference services.

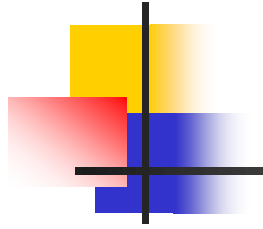
- **Marketing of library services** – the growing population of patrons and librarians that make use of social networking is an indication that it is an ideal vehicle for marketing the services of libraries to patrons. Flickr is an excellent marketing tool which could be used by librarians to sensitize the users on general library services. Most students are not aware of the different services offered in the library such as **reservation of books, reference services** and **Strategic Dissemination of Information (SDI)**. Librarians can spread awareness of library services to those who may not be aware of these services via Social Media. Librarians can also develop **subject-specific blogs** and play a leading role in advocating the use of blogs for scholarly communication and commenting on research findings.

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- **Reference Services** – the use of social networking tools enable librarians to identify library patrons on the social cyberspace and pro-actively provide the type of information that would normally result from reference service. Social networking tools are not only being used as a vehicle for promoting services, programs and new resources but they are also used for reference service. Students are using tools like Ask a Librarian, and twitter to ask questions in “real time and this is assisting in promoting the library as a relevant, efficient and helpful place.

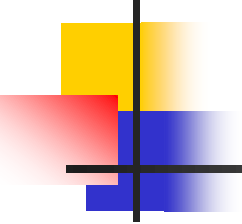


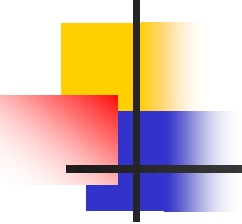
Future Roles of Librarians

Libraries play important roles in providing information for research and access to knowledge. In order to stay relevant in the socially networked environment and meet the growing needs of their users, libraries therefore need to pro-actively embrace the new technologies and face the challenges for better services delivery. Librarians are responding to the popularity of social networking sites and their expanding role in the creation, use, and sharing of information by engaging them as a central medium for interacting with library patrons and providing services to meet their information needs. The ways in which people communicate, acquire and share knowledge, will inevitably have an impact on the library, its services, and its staff. Librarians should follow the public conversations, posts, updates, and events of these key individuals, and pro-actively offer advice, resources, and help.



He should act as an active participant of the social space and be able to identify the needs of the members of the library communities and to proffer solutions by offering information, links to the websites that are relevant to their information needs; and even direct offers of help. There is an urgent need for libraries to adopt the new social networking tools in their services as a strategy to embrace change while promoting a participatory role for library users in knowledge creation. The growing use of social networking tools calls for librarians to develop 21st century skills on digital technologies. Libraries can connect their social networking sites with their library Websites to links to their catalog, chat reference pages, research guides, calendar of events, news etc. Some of the roles of the social networking librarian include: understanding and articulating the nature of social networking sites, creating webpage and content, establishing friendly user interface over the network, creating online database management, evaluating and applying information, and assisting users with skill acquisition. Other skills for a social networking literate librarian include: searching and navigating the web, creating social network space, teaching, and providing quality online library services

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- 1. Identity management** – Librarians should be able to examine profiles of users to mirror their information needs and match them with the library collections.
 - 2. Network awareness** - Should be able to share views and create awareness of the different social network sites and their uses.
 - 3. Expert search** – The 21st century librarian should be an expert in web navigation; able to find friends of friends, and potential library users with common interest.
 - 4. Contact management** – Librarians can cross-link people and ideas among the conglomerate of different groups.
 - 5. Context awareness** – should be diversified in knowledge and able to link information to people's profiles. The important characteristics of social networking (SN) in libraries are:



6. Participatory - Users have the opportunity to actively engage in the construction of knowledge rather than being passive consumers of content;

7. Educative – Users are kept abreast of the latest developments and can have open access to knowledge;

8. Collaborative –Social Network ensures knowledge sharing, establishes communication link with experts and allows users to develop a team working skill;

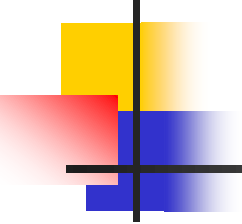
9. Fascinating – It is inspiring, interesting and users can be engrossed in the use of social network sites; some users garner information with these sites in an easy and unencumbered manner; and

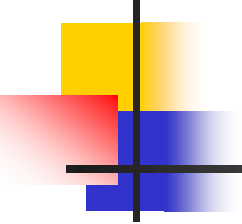
10. Flexibility – Easy content creation and sharing, easy to update files and personal contact.



Library as Educator

- Libraries should play important roles in educating patrons about the new technologies and the social networking skills. We can educate our users on new skills and competencies needed to flourish in the new environment. Users need to know how to navigate the web as new method of learning requires a form of connectivity with other people as knowledge is no longer acquired in a linear manner. Librarians can and should educate patrons on the use of these social networking tools to adapt to new ways of accessing, communicating and sharing knowledge. Brilliant use of the social cyberspace promotes opens access to knowledge. Challenges of Social Networking.

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- **Lack of Awareness** – Most librarians in the developing countries are not aware of social networking services, even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive uses of these sites for library services. Users are also not aware of the protocols involved in social communication. Many students and possibly even some of the academic staff may be unaware that there is a subject specialist in their discipline. It is important for librarians to initiate contact with clients and experiment with developing a “public self”.
 - **Bandwidth problem** – Most institutions have limited bandwidth to support this practice. Poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation.
 - **Technophobia** – Many librarians and users are afraid of handling computers. They make the traditional library services their comfort zone and are not eager to embrace change.

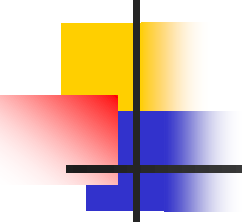
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- **Lack of maintenance culture** – Maintenance culture is seriously lacking in most institutions in developing countries. The few available technologies are in moribund conditions that may not support remote access to information.
 - **Unreliable power supply** –The low supply of electricity discourage people from participating in the online forum.
 - **Lack of training of staff** – Most librarians lack the 21 st century skills that could be required to adopt the social networking tools for effective library services.
 - **Copyright Issue** – The free access to information where people copy, paste and edit without acknowledging the authority is a serious challenge to copyright management.



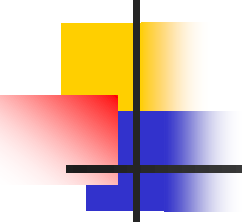
Advantage of use of Social Media



- Social media is integral to market library
- Social media capture potential users of the library
- Social media offers more than just traditional ways of marketing library services
- Social media helps students to use library
- Social media allows user to create, connect, converse, to contribute, vote and share information
- It helps libraries to get closer to the users
- It helps libraries in building collaborative network with the users
- It is great way to grab the attention of new users
- Social media helps students in locating library resources

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- Social media facilitates knowledge sharing
 - Social media helps to feed user with information
 - Social media helps in promoting distance learning

Disadvantage or Problems use of Social Media

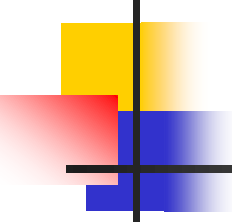
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- Too many social media tools to learn
 - Lack of time to use social media
 - Lack of privacy and identity theft
 - Confidentiality of information
 - Lack of knowledge how to use it
 - Inadequate funding for libraries
 - Inadequate library staff
 - Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media
 - Inadequate training opportunities for library staff
 - Electricity failure
 - Slow speed of Internet

Conclusions



The above identified challenges could be solved through the following strategies:

- Organizing a public awareness forum such as library orientation, conferences, symposia, workshops to create awareness and educate librarians and users on the social networking services and applications.
- Embracing current change in order to remain relevant and adapt to the new ICT driven environment.
- Imbibing a maintenance culture so as to manage the few available ICT facilities effectively.
- Provision of stable power supply will encourage and facilitate the effective use of these tools.
- Pro-active training of librarians to acquire 21st century skills to adapt to the changing ICT environment.

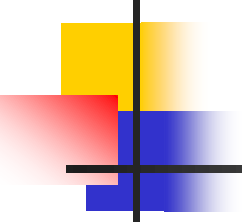
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- Government should take an active role in providing ICT facilities to institutions.
 - Educating the public on the issue of copyright law and violation.

In conclusion, this paper has tried to examine the concept of social networking and its application to library services for a pro-active awareness and training to educate both the librarians and the users on the invaluable importance of utilizing social networking in library services.

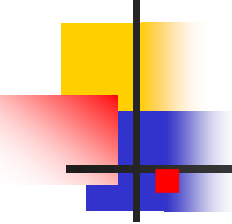
Recommendations



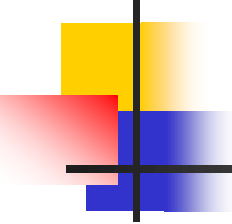
- On the basis of results, study provides the following recommendations:
 - Keeping in view the importance of social media for marketing library among internet users, internet service must be provided in all types of libraries in order to utilize social media tools.
 - All libraries should develop their web site.
 - Libraries should create their social media marketing plan and social media services.
 - In competitive environment libraries should employ social media to communicate the library mission.
 - It is recommended that libraries should provide their patrons with tools for accessing social media by developing social media page on library web site.

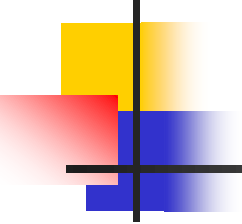
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- Facebook is much popular among teens; it is recommended that libraries should develop their Facebook page on their web sites. It would keep the library fresh in teen's minds.
 - Librarians must be educated and trained in using social media tools for marketing library resources and services.
 - Library associations, alumnae and LIS schools should play their role in popularizing the use of social media among LIS professionals.
 - Library schools in their syllabus should emphasize on the practical aspects of marketing and using social media for this purpose.
 - Future research should be conducted to investigate the use of different social media among students and general public.

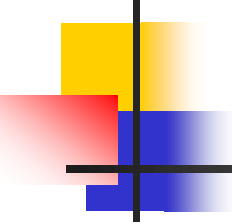
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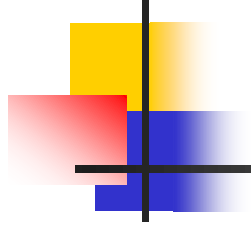
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Thank you