

Home	Table of Contents	Titles & Subject Index	Authors Index
----------------------	-----------------------------------	--	-------------------------------

Creating a digital footprint as a means of optimizing the personal branding of librarians in the digital society

[Helen Nneka Eke](#)

Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria. Email: helen.eke (at) unn.edu.ng

Received August 6, 2012; Accepted October 15, 2012

Abstract

The paper vividly x-rays and brings into limelight, the concept of personal branding of librarians in the contemporary age and corporate world where there exist a lot of competitions among various scholars. The element of digital footprint creation is meticulously handled in a bid to unravel the secrets that could be of immense benefits to librarians in the journey of becoming renowned scholars, and how they can reach their professional apex using the tool of personal branding elements and digital footprint tools both to reach their clients and employers and to compete with their contemporaries. Due to the need for librarians to embrace the unleashed steps in creating a digital footprint of themselves in the present dynamic information environment and emerging knowledge society, the various online avenues are revealed, which can lead the way for librarians in the journey of making a mark in the digital society. The concept of digital structural change is also raised, in connection with building a digital society. Some major points are raised in the paper which would immensely aid the contemporary librarian in building a lasting positive image, and reaching the apex in the library profession. Such major points as: personal branding of librarians, and managing your digital footprints. The paper adopts the methodology of simple literature review and personal practical experience. The paper reveals a practical case of digital footprint management.

Keywords

Digital footprint; Personal branding; Librarians; Digital structural change; Digital society

Introduction

Since the inception of library profession, there has been this notion that librarians are traditional practitioners. Librarians were more often than not, seen by the public as archaic book shelve keepers with very large and roundish binoculars like that of Harry Potter's and always reading all the books in the library. Then there were no traces of information technology being imbibed in the library for operations. The existence of librarians proved that of analogue-minded set of individuals that dust books, shelves and serve library patrons with materials they need for their researches. This perception of librarians by other professionals created a kind of inferiority complex among the librarians such that they began to doubt themselves. Some began to qualify their status as 'professional librarian', whereas a librarian ought to be a librarian. This inferior rating of librarians is evident in a blog entitled: 'The Other Librarian' talking about "Ten Reasons Why 'Professional

Librarian' is an Oxymoron". One of the ten points raised was that 'librarianship is too generalized to claim expertise'. Then point 10 states: 'nobody can name a great librarian'. But now, things have drastically changed; new technologies are emerging and being imbibed in libraries. More so, great librarians are emerging and globally announced owing to the fact that technology is being utilized by such librarians for self marketing and branding of services. Somebody like *Meredith Farkas* is well known in the area of social networking in libraries and is the founder of the information-wants-to-be-free blog where emerging issues are discussed. Another household name is *Michael Stephens* and some other librarians. The society now holds librarians in high esteem because they have started involving themselves in self upgrading or branding as the case may be. Librarians now brand themselves in the online medium so as to fit into the digital society. Personal branding is about creating a positive image of oneself as a practitioner, be it a medical doctor, chemist, pastor, imam, teacher, professor, a librarian or any other professional in a given field. This creation of a positive image involves putting extra effort to make oneself pronounced and valued by clients.

For the librarian, it is paramount to add value to services to clients by positioning oneself in a strategic point where information is seen through us wherein we serve as pointers in a classy way, to information. Branding the librarian involves much more than what was taught in the library school because not many teach about personal branding to librarians in higher institutions. As a librarian, branding oneself should involve knowing who you are, who your patrons are, what your values and goals are and the importance of information. Success in library practice should be tied to personal branding efforts. For instance, take away the library building, but the librarian still remains a librarian; take away the library furniture, but the clients will still need the help of the librarian. In such a situation where there exist no building, no chairs, no tables, no books, what would the librarian do? This is where personal branding comes in to play. It is only a librarian that has the tips of personal branding that can be relevant in such a situation. The difference between a librarian and another librarian is "personal branding".

Verily, a guru in personal branding would say that in such a situation, the librarian that does not frown at the library clients, does not blame it all on management, finds a way to smile and show the people ways of locating materials in the virtual space – that is a *libdigizen* (*LIBrarian DIGItal citZEN*: branded librarian in the digital age). A branded librarian will succeed with all brands of clients and situations. That is when one graduates from ordinary brand to building a strong brand. As stated by [McNally and Speak](#) (2003), a strong personal brand will help you succeed because it means that you are communicating the sense of purpose, vision and values that reflects and embodies you to other people. It is pertinent to note, that there is dearth of literature in the area of branding in libraries and personal branding of librarians in particular. This is in agreement with the observation of [Singh](#) (2011) that 'there is a dearth of literature concerning branding in the library world. As a consequence, the LIS profession lacks a deeper understanding of the process of developing a deliberate branding culture'. This paper is not meant to serve as a pure research paper or empirical study, rather it is a mini- guide to helping librarians just like any other professional, build their brand, optimize their brand extension level by creating a digital footprint of themselves and possibly, the library, in the digital society.

What is digital footprint?

This is also referred to as digital shadow. Footprints leave a mark just like the physical footprint of humans leave a mark on the ground. You are perceived by the mark you leave in the digital world. Most times we leave marks in every environment we go by the way of what we say, what we do, or what we write. In the digital world, we leave footprints of what we write and upload on the web. Such footprints are there for others to see and rate.

A *digital footprint* is a trail left by an entity's interactions in a digital environment; including their usage of TV, mobile phone, Internet and World Wide Web, mobile web and other devices and sensors. Digital footprints provide data on what an entity has performed in the digital environment; and are valuable in assisting behavioral targeting, personalization, targeted marketing, digital reputation, and other social media or social graphing services. A digital footprint can be defined as: "The record of your interactions with the digital world and how the data that is left behind can be exploited" (Fish, 2010). Your digital footprint covers not only your online interactions in social media, but business transactions. For instance, if you buy a commodity online through *eBay* or *Amazon*, your name is stored in the database and could be traced to the commodity you purchased online. Librarians can build their digital footprints as a way of optimizing their brand.

The Digital Society- Digital City, Citizens and Digital Structural Change

The 'digital city' concept is of recent vintage. A digital society is that society that harbors digital citizens; a place where digital language is spoken and digital impressions made. In the context of this paper, a digital society comprises computers, digital environment, the digital librarian, and digital users. In a digital society, the library becomes even more important for people to be able to connect to what's going on in towns and cities across the world (Miller, 2011). In a digital society, we have who we call digital citizens. What qualifies one to become a digital citizen is the ability to operate comfortably in a digital environment or digital city. Schuler (2012) recorded that a digital city has at least two plausible meanings: (1) a city that is being transformed or re-oriented through digital technology and (2) a digital representation or reflection of some aspects of an actual or imagined city. Imagine a digital city with some citizens moping like blind immigrants that are ignorant of the occurrences in the city. This scenario is typical of a world where all members are digitally literate except some few groups which might include librarians. Why is this imagination being breathed upon? This is owing to the fact that librarians have the tendencies of becoming endangered species in this technologically innovative world where many professionals deliver in the virtual world, thereby becoming digital citizens that operate comfortably in the digital environment or in this context, digital city. Digital citizens form a community network.

Community network is a representation of a digital city. Here, there exist interactions among professionals of same values, ethics, vision and goals. In the digital society there is a digital structural change where there is increase in use of modern network technologies which is changing people's daily social and economic lives. Deutsche Bank Research (2011) identified five open source movements that digital structural change is encouraging, thus: (i) *corporate (social media)* (ii) *open innovation* (iii) *open government* (iv) *open access* (v) *open/free culture*. In the digital structural change, there is movement from passiveness to activeness. That is, digital citizens no longer remain passive like in the time of Web 1.0 (democratized web), rather they participate actively (Web 2.0) wherein the web is no longer static and meant for behind-the-scene managers of the web. Activeness involves citizens creating online documents and making comments on other documents and online sheets/forms created by other citizens. There tends to be interaction and participation which is real time. Gone are the days where companies sought for expensive ways of advertising their products.

In the present digital world, just upload a product on the online medium and you see thousands of digital citizens tagging and commenting on such a product. Likewise in the library virtual world, books are advertised and tagged which attracts comments and this spreads in a matter of seconds. This is brought about by digital structural change which involves *openness*. Librarians could take advantage of this to spread abroad their products,

thereby marketing their resources in the digital society. In this scenario, the librarians become digital citizens and librarians as digital citizens do not only market their resources, but emerge in the digital society, showcasing their relevance in the digital society.

Emergence of Librarians in the Digital Society: Librarians becoming digital citizens

Librarians have always been hidden among other scholars, both in the digital society and otherwise. It is believed that librarians are not to be seen outside the library- they are hidden inside the library wherein they are known for, in a bid to locate hidden treasures in form of books, (ancient and modern) in the service of reader citizens. It is high time the image of librarians got portrayed beyond this level of identity to the level of they, being projected as digital citizens just as other professionals. In the competitive world we live in, there is need for every individual to project his/personality; you do not wait for your company to do that for you because your company cannot be hired but you. There are nine (9) elements of digital citizenship which librarians ought to know. This is evident in the blog: Digital Citizenship: using technology appropriately. These nine elements identified by [Mark Ribble](#) (2012) are:

- *Digital access* - full electronic participation in society.
- *Digital commerce* - electronic buying and selling of goods.
- *Digital communication* - electronic exchange of information.
- *Digital literacy* - process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.
- *Digital etiquette* - electronic standards of conduct or procedure.
- *Digital law* - electronic responsibility for actions and deeds.
- *Digital rights and responsibilities* - those freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world.
- *Digital health and wellness* - physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world.
- *Digital security (self protection)* - electronic precautions to guarantee safety

Reference will be made to some of the above elements in the course of this paper. But for a brief detail of the points, visit the blog. Does it now entail that mere reading this paper makes you a *libdigizen* since you are already aware of the nine elements raised? The answer is 'No'. This is because being aware of a concept goes beyond perusal. It is implementation, practice, living a daily life in it. Librarians ought to make themselves visible and relevant in the online medium – digital. In the journey of discovering the value of librarians; their visibility and relevance in the digital society, the following question comes up thus: *How do librarians emerge in the digital society?* In an attempt to answer the above raised question, the writer opines that librarians could adopt the strategy of *personal branding in the online medium*. Personal branding is a compound word meant to aid professionals in discovering themselves and creating a positive self image.

Personal Branding: Strategies for Librarians

Branding does not only pertain to products that are queued for sale in the marketplace; personal branding is now a function of a paradigm shift from the world of product marketing to that of human marketing. This singular shift has resulted in what is termed *personal branding*. If branding in itself is all about the building up of the value of products, therefore personal branding becomes the value updating of persons in a bid to make a positive mark in the corporate world. A personal brand is a personal identity that stimulates precise, meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that person stands for ([Montoya](#), 2002b).

Bringing the history of personal branding to light, reference made to [Wikipedia](#) (2012) reveals that 'personal branding, self-positioning and all individual branding by whatever name, was first introduced in 1937 in the book *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. He introduced the idea "*Chapter 6. Organized Planning*", in the section "*Planning the Sale of Services*". He speaks about the "ways and means of marketing personal services". The idea surfaced later in the 1981 book: "*Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*", by Al Ries and Jack Trout. More specifically in "*Chapter 23. Positioning Yourself and Your Career - You can benefit by using positioning strategy to advance your own career*". Key principle: Don't try to do everything yourself. Find a horse to ride". It was later popularized by Tom Peters and more recently by Dan Schawbel and preached emphatically by [William Arruda](#) who defines personal branding as 'understanding what your unique promise of value is' ([BrandChannel](#), 2012). Montoya (2002) wrote:

Personal branding does the same for people as the marketers do for products... Personal branding is a strategic process - it is about intentionally taking control of how others perceive you and managing those perceptions strategically to help you achieve your goals ... A personal brand, then, is "the public projection of certain aspects of a person's personality, skills or values that stimulate precise, meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that person stands for" ([Montoya](#), 2002b).

Librarians are responsible for the way their clients and the public view them and the services they render. To create a brand of you as a librarian, the writer suggests the following steps:

- 1. Recognize your purpose of being a librarian:** A renowned preacher of the gospel, Dr. Myles Munroe would always say 'where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable'. Many librarians today are accidental librarians. This means that many librarians ventured into librarianship probably because their dream course failed them an opportunity. A research conducted by [Okoye](#) (2010) reveals as one of its major findings, that females (38.46%) than males (26.67%) considered LIS when they could not secure admission to their first choice, and that 52.78% of the total respondents did not enter University of Nigeria Department of Library and Information Science out of volition, conviction and commitment to the course of librarianship, but were propelled by extraneous circumstances. This of course, would contribute to the low self esteem of many librarians. In fact, the writer of this paper states categorically here, that 'the reason for the low self esteem of many librarians is the fact that they never chose library science as their first choice course of study in the university, and this affects their personal branding opportunities'. This hampers their contribution to the society. Have you ever wondered why some other professionals do not know what librarians do? This is because librarians that do not know their purpose do not feel comfortable talking about what they do to their counterparts they would have wished to be in the same field with. This should be tackled seriously as to boost the personal brand opportunities of such librarians. When a librarian prepares his/her mind to be a librarian, there is the tendency to map out goals and visions. This helps in building personal brand. Personal brand has to do with understanding your purpose first, then how you would add value to your purpose to reach out to the crowd.
- 2. Develop a positive and unique vision statement:** A vision statement reveals your aim as a librarian. People have different visions in life; what they pursue and how they want to be viewed. Your vision statement comes in concise terms that summarize what you represent as a professional; what you aim at, your long-term goal.

3. **Get a Signature:** A signature is a purposed indelible mark representing an individual's name or initials. It usually comes at the end of a letter. In the online medium these days, there is room for creation of e-mail signature where one can scan and paste a signature and it remains there for every mail sent out to recipients. Signatures involve more than the scanned signature. A signature could be someone's initials or name(s) followed by address, phone number, online identification like e-mails, blogs, Facebook profile page, and other social networks wherein the individual is involved. For building a positive brand, it is good for librarians to include their title such as: *University Librarian, Deputy University Librarian, Principal Librarian*, and others. This should be consistent in all mails or letters sent out as it creates a lasting impression. As promotion comes, there is also need for update in cadre.
4. **Get a complimentary card:** Most often, librarians attend conferences and meet with fellow librarians from other places, and they wish to exchange contact details. This is where the use of complimentary card is important. This is because, a complimentary card contains not just the person's name, but qualification, cadre, contact address and phone number. A very important field which many people omit in their cards is 'slogan'. Slogan is one of the elements of a brand. Complimentary cards help shape your brand and usage of a slogan would help project the librarian to the outside world. These elements should be consistent. Consistency is the key to developing a lasting positive brand.
5. **Create a Positive Digital Footprint of yourself:** This is the crux of this paper. This entails taking personal branding to a higher level – that of projecting the image of the librarian beyond the local level; crossing the threshold of invisibility and locality to that of visibility and internationality, respectively. First, we ought to grasp the concept of digital footprint and then marry it with how it can optimize the personal branding of librarians.

How Librarians Can Create Their Digital Footprints to Optimize Their Personal Brand

- **Join academic communities online:** There are certain academic groups or forums where a librarian can join or sign up, to enable his/her footprint to be established and spread wide. Such communities are: *Academia.edu, LinkedIn, Bepress (for uploading of research articles), Articlesbase, institutional forums*, etc. Academia.edu, bepress.com announces your scholarly works. It enables you publish such works, including your curriculum vitae online so that people will see and read all about you and your works. Power point presentations could also be uploaded in such platforms, especially bepress.com.
- **Upload Personal Documents and videos online:** Documents like power points could be uploaded in *Slideshare* and videos could be uploaded in *YouTube*. Pictures are usually shared using *Flickr*. The *Flickr* platform enables.
- **Create websites and blogs with your name as domain name:** When you create a blog or website (especially personal ones), it is important that you choose a domain name that bears your name or the name of such website or blog bears your name. For instance, a personal website or blog of Abel Smith' (hypothetical name) should look like this: www.abelsmith.com or where the domain name has been taken by another Abel Smith (because so many Abel Smiths may be in existence), you could have: www.abelsmithwebsite.com. For the blog, you could have: www.abelsblog.blogspot.com (for blogger). [William Arruda](#), personal branding guru would always say: 'buy a domain name ... even if you are not ready or your kids are yet to be born, buy a domain name now, against the future'.
- **Add contents to wikis and other online encyclopedias:** Adding comments to wikis and online encyclopedias leaves your name on pages of such platforms.

- **Participate in online discussion forums:** Participating in online discussion forums like Nigerian Library Association (NLA) forum announces you in the digital society. Here, you are advised to leave your posts with a signature of your name and affiliation. This activity does not just identify you among your professional colleagues, but registers your name in the digital world.
- **Cross-link and post your links:** When you create links of your posts or website or blog, you publicize yourself online, thereby spreading your digital footprint. When you comment on any other post, you could link your name to another forum or blog where your name appears. This spreads your digital footprint like magic.
- **Create Google Alerts:** This enables you to know when your name is mentioned online. By registering for Google alerts, you get alerted on your mail whenever your books are cited or whenever a tag of you is created.
- **Comment on other people's blogs and pages:** Comments made on blogs and online pages stores your name in the database of search engines. This is possible especially when you leave your digital signature of your name on such comments. Note that when you comment as *anonymous*, your digital footprint will be hidden. Although some people use *anonymous* to guard against some traces, especially when security is involved based on the nature of comments made.
- **Brand your office environment:** Your office environment speaks a lot about you. If you are an academic staff, your office should contain shelves for books and a conference table, as it projects your image as someone that is ready to collaborate with others. Imagine an office with only one chair and one table. It shows the person as an academic staff does not have the spirit of collaboration. If there is need to paste a sticker on your door, it should portray your vision statement.

Managing Your Digital Footprint

Not all digital footprints are positive and leave positive marks. Therefore, the management of one's digital footprint becomes paramount in a bid to maintain a positive digital identity. Management of digital footprint is necessary as employers now use such to trace the activities of their employees online. The [Careers Advisory Service](#) (2012) advises that people should capitalize on their digital footprint owing to the fact that some employment sectors (e.g. advertising, public relations and the media) may expect and actively encourage you to have a digital footprint. They may look for examples of your online creativity, for instance on blogs, profiles or videos. According to a survey from KOMO News, reported by [Esteban](#) (1999):

One in five employers search social networking sites for information about job applicants. Your digital footprint doesn't just stop with social networking sites. Did you know if you have a GPS system in your car, that newer models have data boxes in them just like black boxes on airplanes? Those GPS data boxes in your car record where you drive, what directions you inquire about, and more. Everything you text on your phone or post on a blog is saved as part of your digital shadow. Every time you use an ATM machine or a credit and debit card, your digital footprint gets bigger. If you use a card to pass through the toll booth on your way to work, you are leaving a digital shadow ([Esteban](#), 2009).

Moreover, companies and organizations trace the digital footprints of applicants and that enables them to summarize their personality. The size of your digital footprint and digital shadow may help you or hurt you. Your digital footprint is important if you are looking for a job, trying to get admitted to college, or have an employer that has policies about how you use the computer, both on and off the job. According to [Careerbright](#) (2012), "*One in five employers use social networking sites to research job candidates, and close to 59% of them are influenced by your online presence.*" [Careers Advisory Service](#) (2012) unleashed

some nuggets regarding digital footprint creation and remarked that potential employers have also been known to reject applicants on the basis of information discovered online. [Adir](#) (2009) stated that employers and college admissions officials search the Internet for names of job applicants and college applicants to see what kind of background you really have that you might not have revealed on official documents. College officials and employers frequently monitor social networking sites and take punitive actions against questionable behavior. This is perfectly legal to do. Imagine a situation whereby there are thousands of applicants for a particular position in a firm, and the recruitment panel decides to Google such applicants. For the ones that have positive digital footprint, they may be shortlisted for interview, but the ones that have negative digital footprint, they may be delisted. For instance if a particular applicant's Facebook profile has a pornographic picture as a profile picture, that speaks volumes about the person's personality and the firm may not deem it fit to consider such an applicant to come represent their company. Such things like Facebook profile pictures, Facebook updates and comments on friends' walls, comments on blogs, and write-up on any social network platform, affect the rating of an individual. To throw more light on this, imagine a situation whereby a librarian applies for the position of university librarian in a reputable University and such a person's name is Googled before he is called for interview. Assuming all the Internet throws up about him are negative, for instance the Facebook page has the profile picture as a nude picture or probably his last Facebook or twitter update was: 'I hate working for university libraries, because I like being independent'. Such a comment can either deliver the job or get him lose out on the offer. Most often people do not know how to manage their digital footprint. The Internet is not where one would do stuff and get away with them. Activities online ought to be managed because your image is involved. It is pertinent to note that companies and organizations now prefer to Google your name before they call you for interview. Management of digital footprint is not only for applicants, but employees. A recent case is reported March 29, 2012 by [Olson Bluvshstein](#), of how some employees complained about their employers on Facebook and are facing the threat of being fired. Such misdemeanor from the employees is absolute poor management of digital footprint.

The following steps can enable you manage your digital footprint as a *libdigizen*:

- 1. Form a habit of making positive comments on people's social media posts:** Do not insult people online as it goes a long way to boost the negative image of you. You never can tell who is reading such comments, and for the first time too. As they say, 'first impression matters'.
- 2. Always clear your cache, download and browsing history.** Now how do you do that? Browsing history is the list of sites you've visited that are shown in the History menu, the Library window's History list, and the Location bar autocomplete's address list. Download history is the list of files you've downloaded that are shown in the Downloads window.
- 3. Utilize MyWebCareer (a Microsoft BizSpark One company) to uncover and evaluate your digital footprint:** This is a free online service that enables you uncover your online footprint (discover and evaluate online references to your career), explore your network (explore your connections with people, companies, and themes), monitor your professional brand (get notified when your online footprint or career score changes and also boost your career score. [Careerbright](#) (2012) explains that your Career Score is based on real-time analysis of your online presence, behavior, and accomplishments and how these will be perceived and valued by potential employers or business colleagues. You could visit [MyWebCareer](#) to sign up for a free account on this service platform. Signing up only takes seconds – simply connect your LinkedIn or Facebook account in one click. [MyWebCareer](#) is career-specific. Figure 1 shows the page that throws up when you sign up with either Facebook or LinkedIn account.

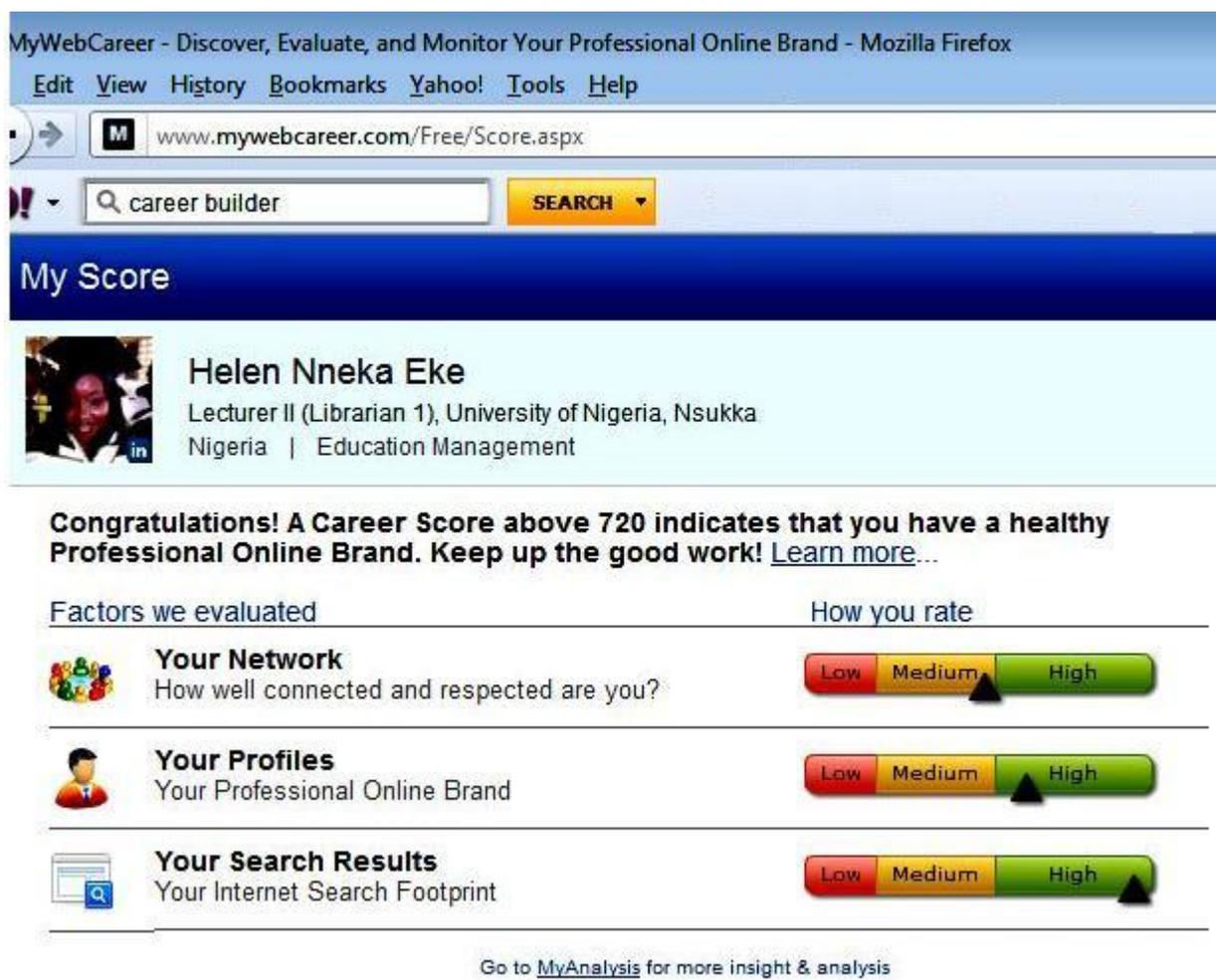


Figure 1. WebCareer Registration

Figure 1 reveals the evaluated factors of the individual searched for which are: **Your network** (how well respected and connected are you?); **Your profile** (your professional online brand); and **Your Search Results** (your Internet search footprint). It also reveals how you rate (How the individual rates, i.e. low, medium, high).

4. **Monitor your online presence:** [William Arruda](#), a personal branding guru once said: 'if you are not on Google, you do not exist.' From one of the video clips on his channel, [William Arruda](#) (2012) in an interview commented that: "When someone Googles you, they evaluate the results based on five measures: Volume, Relevance, Purity, Diversity and Validation. Validation is an extremely important measure because it adds credibility. Validation is all about having others speak for you". This shows how important it is to monitor your online presence. Have you ever 'Googled' your name? So many people, including the writer of this paper, do this on a daily basis. How do you know what is added online against your name if you do not 'Google' yourself? We all have to grow online. Growing online is like when kids are born, they grow and keep growing until they establish a certain height where they are termed 'mature'; no more doubt about their state. They are now known as adults. This is same with online presence, you become born when your name is found once on Google, then, you keep growing online and your digital footprint expands until it comes to a stage where your name can be found up to the tenth page of Google which could form a benchmark for digital identity maturity level. [Madden et al.](#) (2007) conducted a research on 'Online identity management and search in the age of transparency', and from the findings of the research it was found out that Just 3% of self-searchers report that they make a regular habit of it and 22% say they search using their name "every once in a while." Three-quarters of self-searchers (74%) have checked up on

their digital footprints only once or twice. The project reveals also that Just 3% of self-searchers report that they make a regular habit of it and 22% say they search using their name "every once in a while." Three-quarters of self-searchers (74%) have checked up on their digital footprints only once or twice. Table 1 shows a summary of the project findings:

Table 1. Digital Footprints: Summary of Findings at a Glance

The nature of personal information is changing in the age of Web 2.0.
Internet users are becoming more aware of their digital footprint; 47% have searched for information about themselves online, up from just 22% five years ago.
Few monitor their online presence with great regularity.
Most internet users are not concerned about the amount of information available about them online, and most do not take steps to limit that information.
Internet users have reason to be uncertain about the availability of personal data; 60% of those who search for their names actually find information about themselves online, but 38% say their searches come up short.
One in ten internet users have a job that requires them to self-promote or market their name online.
Among adults who create social networking profiles, transparency is the norm.
More than half of all adult internet users have used a search engine to follow others' footprints.
Basic contact information tops most searchers' wish lists.

Source: [Madden et al. \(2007\)](#).

Conclusion

In summary, digital footprint is all about online identity mapping and management. It vividly x-rays how one can map his/her digital identity via certain platforms. Personal Branding is all about showcasing your image online as a serious and relevant librarian. For how long shall individuals remain in their shells, not learning to move out of their traditional and usual environment? It takes little effort to establish oneself and create a long lasting image of you in people's minds. It is high time librarians left their comfort zones moved to meeting new people in the world by creating digital footprints. Participating in virtual conferences where we register with our names registers the names online and also, publishing of works online where other librarians can see, gives you credibility. People read about others and establish their digital footprint level by reading and downloading their works. It is highly recommended therefore, that librarians make great untiring efforts to create a massive digital footprint of them in a bid to announcing themselves to the world of various clients, employers and contemporaries. The points raised in the paper are so crucial to librarians as the world is moving far beyond where we are now. The digital society is taking over the society of traditional way of operations, aiming at a better personal brand.

References

- Adir, A. (2009). *Will your digital footprint cost you a job and college admission?* Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://voices.yahoo.com/will-digital-footprint-cost-job-college-2741408.html>
- Arruda, W. (2012). *Personal branding: Crowd sourcing for people*. Personal Branding TV. Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://www.personalbranding.tv/personal-branding-crowd-sourcing-for-people/>

- BrandChannel (2012). [The fundamentals of branding](http://www.brandchannel.com/features_effect.asp?pf_id=183). Retrieved May 21, 2012, from http://www.brandchannel.com/features_effect.asp?pf_id=183
- Careerbright (2012). [You have been searched - What did we find about you?](http://careerbright.com/tag/why-knowing-your-digital-footprint-is-important) Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://careerbright.com/tag/why-knowing-your-digital-footprint-is-important>
- Careers Advisory Service (2012). [Digital footprint: Manage your online presence to enhance your career prospects](http://www.open.ac.uk/careers/digital-footprint.php). Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://www.open.ac.uk/careers/digital-footprint.php>
- Deutsche Bank Research (2011). [The digital society: New ways to more transparency, participation and innovation](http://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR_INTERNET_EN-PROD/PROD0000000000276332.pdf). Retrieved May 21, 2012, from http://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR_INTERNET_EN-PROD/PROD0000000000276332.pdf
- Esteban, M. (2009). [Know your digital footprint](http://www.komonews.com/news/problemsolvers/39757357.html). KOMO News. Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://www.komonews.com/news/problemsolvers/39757357.html>
- Fish, T. (2010). [Definition of a digital footprint \(again\)](http://blog.mydigitalfootprint.com/definition-of-digital-footprint-again). My Digital Footprint. Retrieved December 21, 2012, from <http://blog.mydigitalfootprint.com/definition-of-digital-footprint-again>
- Madden, M., Fox, S., Smith, A., & Vitak, J. (2007). [Digital footprints: Online identity management and search in the age of transparency](http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2007/PIP_Digital_Footprints.pdf). Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved May 21, 2012, from http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2007/PIP_Digital_Footprints.pdf
- McNally, D., & Speak, K.D. (2003). *Be your own Brand - A breakthrough formula for standing out from the crowd*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Miller, E.R. (2011). [In a digital society, libraries become important places for people to engage and connect to their city](http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2011/11/3/digital-society-libraries-become-important-places-for-people-to-engage-and-connect/). Knight Blog. Posted Nov. 3, 2011, 12:13 p.m. Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2011/11/3/digital-society-libraries-become-important-places-for-people-to-engage-and-connect/>
- Montoya, P. (2002a). [The brand called you. Part One - What is personal branding](http://www.petermontoya.com/pdfs/tbcy-chapter1.pdf). Retrieved May 21, 2012, from <http://www.petermontoya.com/pdfs/tbcy-chapter1.pdf>
- Montoya, P. (2002b). *The personal branding phenomenon*. London: Personal Branding Press.
- Okoye, M.O. (2010) Choosing librarianship as a career: A gender analysis of library and information science (LIS) undergraduates in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. *Paper presented at the 2nd Professional Summit on Information Technology*, organized by Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 3rd-7th May, 2010. Pp. 40-55.
- Olson Bluvshstein, N.E., N.O. (2012). [Looking for insight into how other businesses use social media?](http://www.networkedlawyers.com/category/employment-policies/) <http://www.networkedlawyers.com/category/employment-policies/>
- Personal branding. (n.d.). In [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_branding). Retrieved March 3, 2012, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_branding
- Ribble, M. (2012). [Nine themes of digital citizenship](http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html). Digital citizenship: Using technology appropriately. Retrieved May 21, 2012, from http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html
- Schuler, D. (2002). [Digital cities and digital citizens](http://www.scn.org/commnet/Papers/digital-citizens.html). M. Tanabe, P. Besselaar and T. Ishida (Eds.), *Digital Cities II: Computational and Sociological Approaches. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, State-of-the-Art Survey*, 2362, Springer-Verlag, pp. 72-82. Retrieved February 3, 2012, from <http://www.scn.org/commnet/Papers/digital-citizens.html>
- Singh, R. (2011). Rebranding academic libraries in the experience culture. *CULS Proceedings*, Vol. 1, pp. 91-95.

Bibliographic information of this paper for citing:

Eke, Helen Nneka (2012). "Creating a digital footprint as a means of optimizing the personal branding of librarians in the digital society." *Webology*, 9(2), Article 100.
Available at: <http://www.webology.org/2012/v9n2/a100.html>

Copyright © 2012, Helen Nneka Eke.

