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USE OF FACEBOOK FAN PAGES IN POLISH PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES (2011–2024)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which Polish provincial public libraries used the Facebook platform by analyzing their fan pages from 2011 to 2024, focusing on factors such as the number of fans, frequency of publications, type of content, hashtags and level of user interaction. The results show that Facebook played a significant role in the activities of libraries, enabling them to reach a wider audience and contribute effectively to building an engaged community. This was a standard social media tool, as all the libraries surveyed used this social networking site in their activities. However, the level of user engagement varied among the libraries. This article presents original empirical research that should be of value to public librarians in general and more specifically to those in Poland since, to date, there has been no comparative analysis of Polish provincial public libraries' activity on Facebook over several years.

KEYWORDS: provincial public libraries, social media, Facebook, fan pages

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, social networks have become an integral communication and promotional tool for many institutions, including cultural ones.¹ In Poland, Facebook is the most popular social media site² and plays an important role in interaction and relationship building with the users of institutions such as museums, archives, or galleries. It seems to be their first choice,³ and the situation is no different for the Polish provincial public libraries, which have been using Facebook as one of their main tools for years.

This article presents the findings of a study conducted on the use of Facebook, by Polish provincial libraries. The study set out to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Which social networks do the Polish provincial libraries use? When were their fan pages created?

RQ2: Which library was the first to create a Facebook fan page and which one was the last?

RQ3: What type of content do these institutions share on Facebook during the study period?

RQ4: How many users follow the fan pages on Facebook and how many of them are fans?

RQ5: Are the posts published on Facebook popular with the users? To what extent do the users respond to these posts?

RQ6: What is the posts' interaction rate for each library?

RQ7: Are there posts published by fans?

RQ8: What is the number of responses to posts published by each library? Which library's posts generate most responses? How many of them are user comments?

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- 1 M. Przybysz, T. Knecht, 'Wykorzystanie social media w muzeum - korzyści i zagrożenia', *Studia Elckie*, 2020 no. 22 (3), p. 325.
 - 2 Empemedia, 'Digital Poland 2024 - raport social media w Polsce', *Empemedia*, 2024 March 6 [online:] <https://empemedia.pl/digital-poland-2024-raport-social-media-w-polsce> [Accessed January 20, 2025].
 - 3 P. Krysiński, 'Niewłaściwe wykorzystywanie mediów społecznościowych jako narzędzi zarządzania wizerunkiem instytucji sektora GLAM. Casus Facebooka i Instagrama', *Zarządzanie Biblioteką*, 2019 no. 1(11), p. 13.

RQ9: What are the most frequent hashtags in the posts?

RQ10: Which libraries are the most active on Facebook?

The article presents original empirical research on a comparative analysis of the activity of Polish provincial libraries on Facebook over a period of 14 years. No such previous study has been identified, and the results should be of interest primarily to employees of public libraries and other GLAM institutions which use Facebook in their daily work and are interested in related issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Articles about the use of social networking sites in Polish public libraries have been appearing in academic and popular science literature, with a fairly detailed review of the research recently published by Mariola Antczak and Monika Wachowicz.⁴ The ever-changing information landscape of the users forces the libraries to modify their activities to keep pace with the technological evolution of information media. This includes employing modern mobile and interactive web solutions in the delivery of their services. Thus, Web 2.0 and social networking sites have been used to grant their patrons more opportunities to participate in the creation of messages and in the organization and creation of multimedia content available on the World Wide Web.⁵

Initially, libraries have participated in this interactive social media revolution by developing Library 2.0 phenomenon, which facilitates community-based creation of digital content and allows libraries to offer certain online services. The significance of Library 2.0 within the field was observed by the large number of publications on the topic in many countries worldwide.⁶ This includes Poland, where many articles on the use of Web 2.0 tools by

4 M. Antczak, M. Wachowicz, 'Serwisy społecznościowe polskich wojewódzkich bibliotek publicznych w świetle badań ilościowych (2004–2023)', *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, 2024 no. 92 (2), pp. 234–236.

5 G. Gmiterek, *Biblioteka w środowisku społecznościowego Internetu: biblioteka 2.0*, Warszawa 2012, p. 14.

6 Ibidem, p. 16.

libraries, including social networking sites, have been and continue to be produced. Notable among these publications is the 2007 article by Adam Dudczak and Bożena Jaskowska, 'Library 2.0 - rewolucja i przełom, czy kolejny etap rozwoju współczesnego bibliotekarstwa?'. The authors drew attention to the 'liberation' of information and knowledge and emphasized the need to develop librarians' technological skills in order to transform their libraries into user-oriented and technologically advanced institutions of democratization.⁷ Agnieszka Koszowska commented on one of the major strengths of Library 2.0 which is the centrality of the users as well as their interaction with the librarians in the creation of information content.⁸ It has also been recognized that this kind of online interactivity is an excellent way of promoting library services and attracting new users, referred to as Patrons 2.0.⁹

Before 2010, librarians' use of social networking sites in Poland included marketing library resources and services, actively seeking new users, providing access to collections through hosting services (which allow for the sharing of documents of various types), inviting users to co-create resources and posting e-gadgets (including the library catalog window).¹⁰ Since then, the Polish articles have tended to address the use of social networking sites as tools for building the image of libraries, expanding channels of communication with the public, providing library services, creating a social photo gallery,¹¹ and social networking sites as a source

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- 7 B. Jaskowska, A. Dudczak, 'Library 2.0 - rewolucja i przełom, czy kolejny etap rozwoju współczesnego bibliotekarstwa?', *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, 2007 vol. 75 (3), p. 360.
 - 8 A. Koszowska, *Biblioteka 2.0. Usługi biblioteczne z wykorzystaniem technologii i narzędzi Web 2.0*, [online:] https://sbc.org.pl/Content/10970/06_Koszowska_Biblioteka20.pdf [Accessed January 20, 2025].
 - 9 M. Filipczak, 'Jak daleko stąd do nowoczesności - w stronę biblioteki drugiej generacji', *EBIB - Elektroniczny Biuletyn Informacyjny Bibliotekarzy*, 2008 vol. 1 (92), [online:] <https://www.ebib.pl/2008/92/a.php?filipczak> [Accessed January 20, 2025].
 - 10 A. Koszowska, *Biblioteka 2.0...*, op. cit..
 - 11 B. Jaskowska, *Bądźmy tam gdzie oni! Elementy social media marketingu w bibliotece*, [online:] <https://open.icm.edu.pl/items/e5786928-a7cf-45e9-b285-888f0bd98e1a> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

of information about local events.¹² All authors stressed the importance and necessity of using these tools in promoting and informing patrons about the various activities undertaken by the libraries as well as showing a more private face of these institutions.¹³

According to Antczak and Wachowicz, “over the course of the second decade of the 21st century, interest in the use of social networking sites by cultural and educational institutions (including libraries) has consistently increased”.¹⁴ However, it should be noted that the tools used by the libraries have kept changing over time. A dozen years ago, for example, there were discussions about the virtual world of Second Life,¹⁵ and the Google+ service or *naszaklasa.pl*, which was the Polish equivalent of classmates.com. The latter two services were analyzed by Magdalena Wójcik¹⁶ in terms of their library activity, among other things, to determine whether public libraries were interested in setting up accounts on these social networks.

However, despite the changes occurring relative to the different platforms, the main purpose of the libraries’ social media presence seems to remain the same – to keep up with the users, with the objective of providing a two-way communication in order to improve the quality of the library services, to enhance the service offerings,

12 M. Wójcik, ‘Profile bibliotek publicznych w serwisie Facebook jako źródło informacji o wydarzeniach lokalnych: komunikat z badań pilotażowych’, in: *Biblioteki pedagogiczne lokalnie: małe ojczyzny, duże perspektywy*, ed. M. Ślusarek, B. Janik, W. Bukowczan, Kraków 2022.

13 M. Lamberti, M. Theus, ‘Media społecznościowe w polskich bibliotekach, archiwach i muzeach’, *Biblioteka*, 2016 vol. 20 (29), p. 187.

14 M. Antczak, M. Wachowicz, ‘Serwisy społecznościowe...’, op. cit., p. 235.

15 Ł. Niedziałek, ‘Second Life’ w bibliotekach – szanse i zagrożenia wprowadzenia systemu w Polsce’, *Bibliotheca Nostra. Śląski Kwartalnik Naukowy*, 2007 vol. 1, pp. 19–21 ; G. Matyjaszczyk, ‘Miejsce biblioteki w Second Life, nowej wirtualnej rzeczywistości’, *EBIB – Elektroniczny Biuletyn Informacyjny Bibliotekarzy*, 2007 vol. 7 (88) [online:] <https://www.ebib.pl/2007/88/a.php?matyjaszczyk> [Accessed January 20, 2025] ; D. Bednarczyk, ‘Kolejne wcielenie bibliotek – biblioteki w Second Life’ *Warsztaty Bibliotekarskie*, 2008 vol. 1–2, [online:] <http://www.pedagogiczna.edu.pl/warsztat/2008/1-2/080105.htm> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

16 M. Wójcik, ‘Małe biblioteki publiczne w serwisach społecznościowych’, in: *Sfera kultury, sfera nauki: współczesny obraz biblioteki*, ed. M. Wojciechowska, Bydgoszcz 2014, pp. 37–46.

and to build an engaged community around the organization.¹⁷ Undoubtedly, social networking sites have proven to be useful in this regard, especially as they make it possible to reach not only current users but also potential ones who, for various reasons, have not yet tapped into the many services offered by libraries. The use of social networking sites can, therefore, become a powerful tool to not only retain existing users, but also to facilitate acquiring new ones.

All provincial public libraries in Poland use social networking sites. Antczak and Wachowicz¹⁸ observed that they already had at least one account each between 2008 and 2013. However, the current use of these sites varies in degree. Some libraries have created accounts solely on Facebook and YouTube, which is not surprising as the two are the most popular in Poland.¹⁹ In the case of cultural institutions, Facebook was identified as the main tool for communication with users and promotion.²⁰ Some libraries have set up accounts on several popular platforms. In addition to Facebook and YouTube, they are present on Instagram, the X service and, in three cases, on TikTok. It was observed that provincial public libraries wanting to keep up with technological changes and user expectations are increasingly using fan pages as a tool to promote their resources, services and events, since social media allow easy and quick communication with patrons through the use of multimedia and interactive content, including live streaming. They can also respond to users' questions and comments on an ongoing basis. Moreover, social media can be used to engage users to participate in the activities and events of these libraries. Overall, social media have opened up new opportunities for libraries to reach current and potential users and to effectively promote their services to them.

17 B. Jaskowska, *Bądźmy tam gdzie oni...*, op. cit..

18 M. Antczak, M. Wachowicz, 'Serwisy społecznościowe...', op. cit. p. 232.

19 D. Mizerska, '#NMInsights: Social Media 2024 [RAPORT GEMIUS, PBI i IAB POLSKA]', *Nowy Marketing*, 2024 July 2, [online:] <https://nowymarketing.pl/nmin-sights-social-media-2024-raport-gemius-pbi-i-iab-polska/> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

20 M. Lamberti, M. Theus, 'Media społecznościowe...', op. cit. p. 193-194.

METHODS

A quantitative approach was adopted for the study with a survey of the social media accounts of 18 public libraries in Poland, undertaken in November 2024. The administrative division of Poland is based on voivodeships, each of which has its own main public library based on the ‘Library Act’ of 27 June 1997, which states that ‘the provincial self-government should organize and run at least one provincial public library’.²¹ However, although there are 16 provinces in Poland, 18 provincial public libraries exist because two voivodeships have two capitals and each has an extra public library due to the territorial reform of 1999.

A library’s website is regarded as its official online business card, which is part of the institution’s online information and promotion system.²² Therefore, the websites of the libraries were the primary source of information about the fan pages created by these institutions. Some libraries had links to several fan pages on their website, devoted to various library events, branch activities, and digital libraries, among other things. However, there was always a main Facebook fan page created for the particular provincial public library, and so this was the fan page that was used during the collection and analysis of the data.

The research data on the individual fan pages were collected via the Fanpage Karma tool, which was also used to analyze the data about the libraries and the users. The information collected spanned the time period from January 1, 2011 (most libraries already had fan pages), to November 4, 2024 (the date of data collection). The use of Fanpage Karma made it possible to accurately determine the coefficients regarding the number of user reactions to the library content shared and to identify the hashtags used by the librarians. It made it easier to visually represent the research

21 “Ustawa z dnia 27 czerwca 1997 r. o bibliotekach (Dz. U. z 2022 r., poz. 2393)”, *Inter-netowy System Aktów Prawnych*, June 27, [online:] <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu19970850539> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

22 A. Wałek, ‘Strony WWW bibliotek jako element promocji i narzędzie komunikacji z użytkownikiem’, *Fides. Biuletyn Bibliotek Kościelnych*, 2014 vol. 1 (38), p. 110.

results and to organize the analyzed content. Fanpage Karma is a web-based service for monitoring social network activity and content shared on fan pages (e.g., of institutions), and it only provides publicly available data, which reduces the risk of any objections or doubts regarding the privacy and confidentiality of personal data used while conducting the research.

During the analyses, I took into account the following coefficients: number of users who have followed or liked the profile; post interaction rate (average interactions on posts per follower per post); number of posts and posts per day; reactions, comments and shares (the sum of publicly accessible interactions - likes, hearts, comments, shares etc. of all posts in the selected period); number of link posts, picture posts, video posts, reels; the number of posts by fans and number of comments. Fanpage Karma also enabled the analysis of the hashtags published by the libraries, which I found useful as my aim was also to see which hashtags were used during the period studied and how many times a particular hashtag appeared in the posts. Hashtags are not only a way to organize content on social networks but also a valuable source of information about the institutions' strategy, objectives and the way they communicate with their users. They also throw light on the libraries' main activities, such as promoting reading, promoting local culture, organizing cultural and educational events. The libraries also employ specific hashtags with their name or acronym,²³ which patrons are encouraged to use when posting pictures from their visits to the institution.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

The use of social networking sites by Polish regional public libraries is now standard. All 18 libraries use at least two such tools. Since 2021, they are all on Facebook, and since 2022, they all use

23 P. Milc, 'Polskie biblioteki akademickie w Instagramie', *Biblioteka i Edukacja*, 2018 vol. 13.

YouTube.²⁴ The first established social media account among the libraries was a YouTube channel created by the Pomeranian Library in Szczecin as early as January 2008. However, the majority of the library social media accounts were set up in the second decade of the 21st century. It was observed that the provincial libraries were also experimenting with relatively new services, one of which was TikTok, with accounts being set up since 2021. The first one was created for the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź. To date, only three of the provincial libraries have created TikTok accounts but the number is expected to increase, given that it is one of the most popular tools among Generation Z,²⁵ even though a controversial one. According to researchers at the University of Ottawa: “Security concerns have been raised over TikTok’s collection, use and disclosure of the personal information of its users. Its data collection methods provide access to a lot of content on mobile devices, and the company collects sensitive data about users even when they don’t save or share content”.²⁶

The findings relative to Instagram, second in popularity to YouTube overall, show that it is used by 82% of Generation Z in Poland.²⁷ Meanwhile, in June 2024, p. J. Dixon found that Instagram was the most popular social networking platform among the same generation in the US.²⁸ This popularity is not reflected in how the Polish provincial public libraries use it.. In three cases, no information about an Instagram profile was found on the libraries’ websites. On the other hand, while the Instagram icon was vis-

24 M. Antczak, M. Wachowicz, ‘Serwisy społecznościowe...’, op. cit., p. 242.

25 S. J. Dixon, ‘U.S. Gen Z social network usage 2024, by brand’, *Statista*, 2024 September 5, [online:] <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1490558/us-gen-z-social-media-usage-by-brand#statisticContainer> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

26 uOttawa, *Recommendations regarding TikTok use and privacy risks*, [online:] <https://www.uottawa.ca/about-us/information-technology/services/security/tiktok-use-privacy-risks> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

27 A. Landowska, ‘Raport Gen Z o sobie i otaczającym ich świecie. Jakie są polskie Zetki?’ *They Digital*, 2024 April 11, [online:] <https://swps.pl/centrum-prasowe/informacje-prasowe/35311-zetki-o-zetkach-jakie-jest-pokolenie-zet-w-polsce> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

28 S. J. Dixon, ‘U.S. Gen Z...’ op. cit.,.

ible on the website of the Provincial Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań, at the time of this study, the profile was unavailable (link: www.instagram.com/wbpicakpoznan). As for the few institutions that chose to employ Instagram, they set up accounts between January 2013 (the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz) and October 2020 (the Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce).

The number of accounts on X (Twitter) was also somewhat unsatisfactory. Although it is generally a popular and dynamic platform in Poland, the interest in using it among provincial public libraries was relatively low. Only seven out of eighteen libraries used the service. One may speculate that the platform's nature deems it a less-than-ideal tool for the librarians' purposes. The choice of social media platform by a library depends to a large extent on user expectations, and it has been observed that the most popular social networks usually offer a more user-friendly and intuitive interface and allow more advanced forms of interaction with users (e.g., live streaming, creating groups or pages dedicated to library events). These and other factors may be the reason why X (Twitter) is not used as often in the activities of regional libraries.

Table 1 presents information on 18 library accounts on different social networks. The dates of the creation of the accounts are also presented (in months and years). Information on the accounts set up as the first and the last is shown in bold. The details of the account's creation are usually provided in its description. Sometimes, however, the date of the first published post served as the basis for estimating the date of the account's creation.

TABLE 1. INFORMATION ON ACCOUNTS IN EACH PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY. DATA COLLECTED FROM THE WEBSITES OF PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES ON 3-4 NOVEMBER 2024

Name of the library	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter (X)	YouTube	TikTok
The Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce	2009 (November)	2020 (October)	-----	2012 (August)	-----
The Provincial Public Library in Kraków	2010 (January)	2017 (February)	-----	2013 (July)	-----
The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Gdańsk	2010 (June)	2015 (October)	-----	2011 (December)	-----

Name of the library	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter (X)	YouTube	TikTok
The Voivodeship Public Library in Olsztyn	2010 (June)	2018 (April)	-----	2009 (December)	-----
The Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin	2010 (July)	-----	-----	2020 (May)	-----
The Silesian Library in Katowice	2010 (July)	2018 (November)	-----	2014 (April)	-----
The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra	2010 (August)	2017 (February)	2017 (February)	2014 (February)	-----
The Warsaw Public Library - Central Library of Masovian Voivodeship	2010 (August)	2013 (October)	2013 (October)	2013 (February)	2024 (May)
The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gorzów Wielkopolski	2010 (October)	2018 (October)	2012 (October)	2011 (June)	-----
The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz	2011 (January)	2013 (January)	2012 (lipiec)	2011 (March)	-----
The Pomeranian Library in Szczecin	2011 (January)	2015 (March)	2019 (June)	2008 (January)	-----
The Voivodeship Public Library in Opole	2011 (January)	2017 (May)	-----	2012 (January)	-----
The Copernicus Library in Toruń	2011 (February)	2017 (May)	2010 (March)	2020 (April)	-----
The Podlachian Library in Białystok	2011 (February)	2015 (March)	2015 (March)	2014 (October)	2023 (August)
The Lower Silesian Public Library	2011 (March)	2017 (January)	-----	2022 (July)	-----
The Provincial and Municipal Public Library in Rzeszów	2012 (May)	-----	-----	2012 (May)	-----
The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź	2013 (November)	-----	-----	2020 (April)	2021 (September)
The Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań	2021 (January)	-----	-----	2017 (May)	-----

FACEBOOK IN PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

As mentioned earlier, Facebook was by far the most widely used service in various cultural, educational or scientific institutions in Poland, including the provincial public libraries with the first fan pages set up in November 2009 and eight in existence by 2010, shortly after Polish language version became available. This shows that the libraries were responding fairly quickly to the emergence of new social networking tools and their growing popularity with users. The last to set up its fan page was The Regional Public Library

and Culture Animation Center in Poznań (January 2021) but it had previously used another account called Wypożyczalnia WBPiCAK w Poznaniu (link: www.facebook.com/WBPiCAK), now defunct. Therefore, data from this archived account could not be analyzed in detail. However, the library's website found in the Internet Archive (dated 29 February 2012) reveals that the archived fan page provided information about the library's rules and regulations, instructions on how to use the catalogue, book recommendations, as well as invitations to its activities and local cultural events.²⁹

FANS AND FOLLOWERS

To determine the popularity of a given fan page, note is usually taken of the number of fans and followers. The former are defined as those who like a Facebook page, thereby expressing their interest and support, as well as their desire to receive regular updates and actively participate in the life of the page by commenting, sharing or responding to posts. They differ from observers who only want to see what is happening on the page but are not as engaged as fans. The choose to follow it to receive notifications without showing public support by clicking the 'like' button. Followers connect with the page in a more casual way to stay up-to-date with its activity. As Park (2022) succinctly states, "Followers come and go, but fans are often forever".³⁰

The 18 provincial public libraries accumulated in total 139,236 fans and 154,148 followers on their fan pages on the day of the research. The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gdańsk tallied the most fans (17,107), while the Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce had the least (4,034). In comparison, the Regional Public Library

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- 29 Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna i Centrum Animacji Kultury w Poznaniu, 'Nasze działania na Facebooku', *Internet Archive*, 2012 February 29, [online:] <https://web.archive.org/web/20200514201521/https://www.wbp.poznan.pl/dzialania-na-facebooku/> [Accessed January 20, 2025].
- 30 H. Park, 'Council Post: Fans And Followers: How They Differ And What It Means For Content Creators', *Forbes*, 2022 September 9 <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescommunicationscouncil/2022/09/09/fans-and-followers-how-they-differ-and-what-it-means-for-content-creators/> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

and Culture Animation Center in Poznań, whose fan page has been active for the shortest time, had 5,320 fans. Noticeably, the library which had set up its fan page the earliest did not have the largest number of fans, which would indicate that the time of the setting up of the fan page was not the most relevant factor in its popularity. It can be assumed that the users' interest in a specific library and its Facebook activity played a larger role. However, to establish this more precisely would require additional qualitative research.

In terms of followers, the provincial libraries were followed by 154,148 users in total, with the largest number again recorded by the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gdansk (18,424), and the smallest by the Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce (4,282). A surprising result was that the Warsaw Public Library - Central Library of Masovian Voivodeship, with its 9,749 followers and 8,890 fans, was not among the leaders, but ranked seventh. The Warsaw Library is one of the largest and oldest public libraries in Poland, hence it came as a surprise that it trailed behind libraries in Gdańsk, Kraków, Katowice, and even ones in smaller cities, such as Białystok, Szczecin or Toruń.

Table 2 presents the dates of each library's Facebook fan page creation and the number of fans and followers for individual institutions.

TABLE 2: DATES OF FAN PAGE SETUPS. INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF FANS AND FOLLOWERS FOR EACH FAN PAGE

No.	Name of the library	The date of fan page creation	Fans	Followers
1	The Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce	5 listopada 2009	4,034	4,282
2	The Provincial Public Library in Kraków	6 stycznia 2010	15,722	16,495
3	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Gdańsk	10 czerwca 2010	17,107	18,424
4	The Voivodeship Public Library in Olsztyn	16 czerwca 2010	4,820	5,719
5	The Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin	13 lipca 2010	4,479	5,358
6	The Silesian Library in Katowice	19 lipca 2010	10,457	11,272
7	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Zielona Góra	11 sierpnia 2010	6,433	7,319
8	The Warsaw Public Library - Central Library of Masovian Voivodeship	23 sierpnia 2010	8,890	9,749
9	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Gorzów Wielkopolski	7 października 2010	4,206	4,718

No.	Name of the library	The date of fan page creation	Fans	Followers
10	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz	18 stycznia 2011	6,578	7,061
11	The Pomeranian Library in Szczecin	28 stycznia 2011	10,006	11,024
12	The Voivodeship Public Library in Opole	28 stycznia 2011	4,446	5,152
13	The Copernicus Library in Toruń	4 lutego 2011	9,561	10,795
14	The Podlachian Library in Białystok	11 lutego 2011	10,025	6,545
15	The Lower Silesian Public Library	21 marca 2011	5,449	6,150
16	The Provincial and City Public Library in Rzeszów	30 maja 2012	5,634	6,170
17	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Łódź	22 listopada 2013	6,069	6,545
18	The Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań	25 stycznia 2021	5,320	6,051
TOTAL		-----	139,236	154,148

ACTIVITY OF THE PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES ON FACEBOOK

The activity of the provincial public libraries in Poland and the degree of interaction with their users can be determined through the analysis of the data provided by Fanpage Karma presented in Table 3. The first of these data sets is for the post interaction rate, which is the average interactions on posts per follower per post. This shows how successful each post was in getting users to engage with it. With this metric, you can compare the quality of posts from profiles of all sizes, which is expressed as the average number of total interactions (like, love, wow, haha reactions etc., comments and shares) per user per post. The indicator does not include the days on which no posts were published³¹ and is calculated by Fanpage Karma according to the following rule: 'Number of reactions divided by the posts and divided by the number of followers. A profile with 200 followers gets a total of 30 responses to its 10 posts, then the interaction is 1.5% ($30/10/200 = 0.015 = 1.5\%$)'.³²

31 Fanpage Karma, 'Post Interaction', *Fanpage Karma Academy*, [online:] https://academy.fanpagekarma.com/en/hrf_faq/post-interaction-3/ [Accessed January 20, 2025].

32 Fanpage Karma, 'Post Interaction', *Fanpage Karma Academy*, [online:] https://academy.fanpagekarma.com/en/hrf_faq/post-interaction-2/ [Accessed January 20, 2025].

Based on this methodology, the Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań had the highest post interaction rate (index 0,9%) even though it set up itsfan page as the last one of the libraries studied. The Voivodeship Public Library in Opole was second (0.58%), and the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź third (0.53%). The latter two created their fan pages in January 2011 and November 2013, respectively. The number of fans and followers of the library in Opole is one of the lower ones (4,446 fans and 5,152 followers). However, the activity of this user group was above average. The library in Łódź had 6,069 fans and 6,545 followers. These numbers are among the average values for all provincial public libraries in Poland. Nonetheless, the post interaction rate was one of the highest, indicating that the users were highly engaged in interacting with posts on this fan page.

The lowest values for this indicator were found on the fan pages of the libraries in Kraków (0.21%), Gdańsk (0.18%) and Warsaw (0.13%), which had the highest number of fans and followers. This did not translate into higher user engagement in interactions with published posts. The possible explanation of this discrepancy could be the fact that the library in Poznań had the smallest number of posts on its fan page, but they appeared in a relatively short time, and the user response was significant. In contrast, the libraries in Kraków, Gdańsk, and Warsaw had set up their fan pages in 2010, so their data covered a period of almost thirteen years, yet their numbers were much lower.

TABLE 3. INFORMATION ON POST INTERACTION RATE, NUMBER OF POSTS PUBLISHED BY LIBRARIES AND POSTS PER DAY

No.	Name of the library	Post interaction rate	Number of posts	Posts per day
1	The Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce	0,32%	2,717	0,5
2	The Provincial Public Library in Kraków	0,21%	4,214	0,8
3	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Gdańsk	0,18%	6,229	1,2
4	The Voivodeship Public Library in Olsztyn	0,5%	7,572	1,0
5	The Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin	0,48%	2,676	0,5
6	The Silesian Library in Katowice	0,39%	3,530	0,6

No.	Name of the library	Post interaction rate	Number of posts	Posts per day
7	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra	0,31%	8,108	1,6
8	The Warsaw Public Library – Central Library of Masovian Voivodeship	0,13%	5,410	1,0
9	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gorzów Wielkopolski	0,41%	6,884	1,3
10	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz	0,26%	4,181	0,8
11	The Pomeranian Library in Szczecin	0,31%	7,572	1,4
12	The Voivodeship Public Library in Opole	0,58%	8,095	1,6
13	The Copernicus Library in Toruń	0,29%	5,516	1,0
14	The Podlachian Library in Białystok	0,53%	8,617	1,7
15	The Lower Silesian Public Library in Wrocław	0,27%	6,657	1,3
16	The Provincial and Municipal Public Library in Rzeszów	0,38%	6,757	1,3
17	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź	0,53%	7,695	1,5
18	The Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań	0,9%	2,143	0,4
TOTAL		-----	102,551	20,2

During the study period, all provincial libraries published a total of 102,551 posts, with the largest number generated by the Podlachian Library in Białystok (8,617 posts/1.7 posts per day), followed by the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra (8,108 posts/1.6 posts per day) and the Voivodeship Public Library in Opole (8,095 posts/1.6 posts per day). The two libraries with the fewest posts published were the Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin (2,676 posts) and the Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań (2,143 posts). For the period under analysis, the rate of posts per day was also the lowest in these two institutions.

The situation looks different when we consider the period from 21 January 2021 (the date from which all the libraries had their fan pages set up) to 4 November 2024 (the date of data collection). In total, the libraries published 41,106 posts. The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra published the most posts (3,679/2.6 posts per day), followed by the Voivodeship and Muni-

pal Public Library in Gorzów Wielkopolski (3,342 posts/2.4 posts per day), and the Voivodship and Municipal Public Library in Rzeszów (3,145 posts/2.2 posts per day). The library in Poznań published 2,146 posts (1.5 per day).

POSTS BY FANS

The data in Table 4 focus on posts published by fans, which is a growing phenomenon on social media.³³ User-generated content (UGC) refers to any content created by fans of an institution or brand. It is usually perceived as heightening the authenticity of an institution's image on social media and can be used to promote it. This content takes various forms, for example, images, videos, recommendations, ratings, blog posts and social media. These means of presenting content reflect users' trust in the institution and their original relationship. The demand for genuine, user-sourced content will, in all likelihood, continue to grow. Posts from fans can also account for the fan page's increasing popularity and result in users having a significant role in shaping an institution's image. Many ways exist for libraries to use UGC on their Facebook fan page, such as organizing a competition for patrons to submit photos or videos of themselves in the library, or having user-generated content published in stories. Alternatively, the library can initiate a discussion among its users on a current hot topic, like a well-known film or book, and encourage participation.

The Fanpage Karma tool offers the option to analyze posts published by library users (fans) where the authors have tagged a particular library. In this way, the information published by users is directly linked to the fan pages of the respective institutions. (The tool does not grant access to private posts, which are only available to a limited group of users). Such posts are generally indicative of a special relationship between the library and its users and it can be assumed that the more posts by fans, the greater the trust in the institution.

33 D. Cruz, 'Top UGC Trends to Follow in 2024', *Inbeat*, 2024 January 2, [online:] <https://www.inbeat.co/articles/ugc-trends-in-2022/> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

From the publicly available data, there were 3,244 posts by fans for the period studied, with the largest number belonging to the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra (568 posts), followed by the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gdansk (473 posts) and the Podlachian Library in Białystok (350 posts). The fewest posts were published on the fan pages of the Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce (9 posts), the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz (10 posts) and the Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin (11 posts).

The libraries with the highest number of posts by fans did not necessarily have the highest number of user reactions to published posts, with 'number' here referring to the sum of publicly accessible interactions - likes, hearts, comments, pins, shares, etc. of all posts in the selected period. The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź had the most reactions (163,796). However, it only had 184 posts published by fans, so in this respect, the library ranked sixth. The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gdańsk, whose fan page was linked to in 350 posts, ranked second in reactions (158,188). It was followed by the Pomeranian Library in Szczecin with 149,681 reactions and 158 fan posts. The fan page of the Library in Zielona Góra accumulated 104,346 reactions which may seem like a large number, but in comparison with the leaders (Łódź, Gdańsk, Szczecin), they were significantly smaller. It can thus be concluded that the number of posts by fans was not directly correlated with the number of user reactions to the posts published by the libraries. There were, however, some significant differences in this case.

Overall, the total number of reactions to posts published by libraries on their fan pages was 1,638,586, and the three libraries with the lowest number of reactions were the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz (48,792), the Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań (34,413) and the Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce (25,160). However, an interesting situation emerged when it came to examining the user comments under posts published by the libraries, as shown in Table 4.

In general, comments are considered to more user-engaging than reactions, so it is worth paying attention to this indicator as well. The total number of comments on the fan pages of libraries was 96,498. The largest number of comments was accumulated by the Library in Białystok (11,112) and constituted 11.5% of all comments on the posts published by the libraries. The Library in Gdańsk placed second (10,657/11%), and the Library in Kraków third (8,010/8.3%). On the other hand, the Library in Warsaw (2,910/3%), the Library in Poznań (1,357/1.4%), and the Library in Kielce (1,162/1.2%) had the fewest comments on their posts.

TABLE 4. INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF POSTS BY FANS AND THE NUMBER OF USER RESPONSES, ESPECIALLY COMMENTS

No.	Name of the library	Posts by fans	Total reactions, comments, shares	Number of Comments
1	The Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce	9	25,160	1,162
2	The -Voivodeship Public Library in Kraków	270	99,984	8,011
3	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gdańsk	473	132,268	10,686
4	The Voivodeship Public Library in Olsztyn	133	68,722	6,154
5	The Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin	11	49,196	3,017
6	The Silesian Library in Katowice	17	95,458	5,189
7	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra	568	104,346	6,089
8	The Warsaw Public Library - Central Library of the Masovian Voivodeship	167	58,027	2,910
9	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gorzów Wielkopolski	125	72,235	3,414
10	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz	10	48,792	3,309
11	The Pomeranian Library in Szczecin	158	149,681	7,538
12	The Voivodeship Public Library in Opole	146	91,439	5,120
13	The Copernicus Library in Toruń	171	116,123	7,388
14	The Podlachian Library in Białystok	350	158,188	11,114
15	The Lower Silesian Public Library	87	65,895	3,252
16	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Rzeszów	328	104,863	3,441
17	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź	184	163,796	7,419
18	The Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań	37	34,413	1,357
TOTAL		3244	1,638,586	96,498

TYPES OF POSTS PUBLISHED BY LIBRARIES

The last indicator for which data were analyzed was the type of posts they publish (Table 5), which included pictures, links, videos and reels. For the study period, the 18 libraries published mostly picture posts (73,779 in total), with the largest number coming from the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Łódź (7,363), followed by the Voivodeship Public Library in Opole (5,972) and the Pomeranian Library in Szczecin (5,495). The three libraries with the fewest picture posts were the Silesian Library in Katowice (1,696), the Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań (1,691) and the Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin (1,569). Picture posts were unquestionably the most popular way of presenting content on Facebook by the users of the Polish provincial public libraries.

The second most popular posts by type were the so-called link-posts (posts in URL format), which totaled 17,509. The largest number of such posts was published by the Podlachian Library in Białystok (1,810), followed by the Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra (1,707) and the Lower Silesian Public Library in Wrocław (1,572). The three with the lowest number were the Library in Lublin (537), Poznań (252) and Łódź (168). Decidedly fewer libraries published video posts (8,420 in total), although, as mentioned earlier, video content has become increasingly popular in recent years. As a result, almost every social media platform offers advanced video publishing tools (including live streaming). In the case of Facebook, in 2020, “more than 1.25 billion people visited every month to discover and share videos from millions of creators and publishers”.³⁴ This did not translate into a significant trend for the Polish provincial public libraries, with the largest number being published by the Library in Zielona Góra (1,129). Next came the Library in Białystok (801), followed by the Library in Rzeszów (661).

34 P. Rajwat, ‘The Evolution of Facebook Watch’, *Meta*, 2020 September 3, [online:] <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/09/the-evolution-of-facebook-watch/> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

Those with the fewest video posts were the Library in Wrocław (253), Poznań (186) and Łódź (132).

Another analyzed type of post were the reels, which were added by Facebook in 2021 in response to the rapidly growing popularity of the short film app TikTok.³⁵ Facebook then identified reels as a key feature among its priorities.³⁶ In 2021, the reel was the fastest-growing content format on social media, and the trend continues today.³⁷ However, this pattern was not evident based on the data collected from the Polish provincial libraries. Few reels were posted (419 in total), with the top three libraries in this respect being the Library in Białystok (142), the Library in Wrocław (59), and the Library in Warsaw (44). The three with the lowest number of reels were the Library in Opole (3), Olsztyn (3) and Rzeszów (1). When broken down into years, 321 reels were published in 2024, 93 in 2023, and only 11 in 2022. The low number of reels may result from the lack of adequate equipment and staff with the skills necessary to create them. Additionally, the librarians may be unaware of the potential of reels as a marketing tool or have not been informed on how to use this format to promote the libraries' offerings. Overcoming these limitations will enable the libraries to adopt new ways of presenting their content on Facebook, especially since reels can be an effective tool for promoting the libraries' collections and services.

TABLE 5. TYPES OF POSTS PUBLISHED BY POLISH PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

No.	Name of the library	Link-posts	Picture Posts	Video-posts	Reels
1	The Voivodeship Public Library in Kielce	539	1,775	295	27
2	The Voivodeship Public Library in Kraków	596	3,110	293	14
3	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Gdańsk	1,299	4,295	448	6

35 E. Culliford, 'Facebook launches Reels globally, betting on 'fastest growing' format', *Reuters*, 2022 February 22, [online:] <https://www.reuters.com/technology/facebook-launches-reels-globally-betting-fastest-growing-format-2022-02-22> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

36 Ibidem.

37 A. Das, M. Hritihika, 'The Effect of Reels on Attention among Young and Middle-Aged Adults', *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 2004, vol. 12 (13), p. 348.

No.	Name of the library	Link-posts	Picture Posts	Video-posts	Reels
4	The Voivodeship Public Library in Olsztyn	551	4,604	315	3
5	The Voivodeship Public Library in Lublin	538	1,569	482	6
6	The Silesian Library in Katowice	1,059	1,697	452	12
7	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Zielona Góra	1,707	5,129	1,130	17
8	The Warsaw Public Library - Central Library of Masovian Voivodeship	630	4,251	326	44
9	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Gorzów Wielkopolski	1,323	4,799	650	7
10	The Voivodeship and Municipal Public Library in Bydgoszcz	866	2,845	350	6
11	The Pomeranian Library in Szczecin	1,226	5,526	607	34
12	The Voivodeship Public Library in Opole	1,431	5,972	621	3
13	The Copernicus Library in Toruń	948	3,946	415	27
14	The Podlachian Library in Białystok	1,810	5,496	801	142
15	The Lower Silesian Public Library	1,572	4,679	253	59
16	The Provincial and City Public Library in Rzeszów	997	5,036	661	1
17	The Voivodeship and City Public Library in Łódź	168	7,363	132	6
18	The Regional Public Library and Culture Animation Center in Poznań	252	1,692	186	5
SUM		17,509	73,779	8,420	419

HASHTAGS

Hashtags on social networks play an important role in reaching users who are interested in a particular topic or trend. As Meta aptly acknowledges, “Hashtags turn topics and phrases into clickable links in posts on your profile or Page. When people click a hashtag or search for a hashtag, they’ll see a result that contains the hashtag so they can learn more about topics that interest them”.³⁸ In the case of public libraries, hashtags can effectively help to support their activities and wider readership. These elements also serve the function of grouping posts into specific thematic categories (e.g., #newsinlibrary, #conferenceinlibrary), making it easy

38 Meta, ‘Use #Hashtags on Facebook’, *Meta for media*, 2016 March 21, [online:] <https://www.facebook.com/formedia/blog/using-hashtags-on-facebook> [Accessed January 20, 2025].

for users to find content on topics that interest them. Hashtags also serve a marketing function, supporting and promoting library events (e.g., #LibrariesWeek), and they can also help create a community around a national cultural event (e.g., #NationalReading). Libraries use hashtags to interact by informing users about competitions or to encourage users to create posts containing a particular hashtag. These activities help to establish an image of the library as a modern and socially engaged institution.

During the period under analysis, the provincial public libraries used a number of hashtags, with the fifteen most popular being: #biblioteka (Eng. #library) 1569 times; #bibliotekaśląska (Eng. #SilesianLibrary) 1346 times; #WiMBPwRzeszowie (Eng. #ProvincialandCityPublicLibraryino.zeszow) 1343 times; #Książnica (Eng. #CopernicusLibraryinTorun) 1279 times; #bibliotekaśląskapoleca (Eng. #SilesianLibraryrecommends) 1146 times; #Toruń (Eng. #Torun) 1103 times; #LubieTuByc (Eng. #Ilikebeinghere) 1027 times; #KujawyPomorze (Eng. #KuyaviaPomerania) 907 times; #prusa3 (Eng. #3prusastreet) 850 times; #gdanskczyta (Eng. #Gdanskreads) 842 times; #bibliotekawojewodzkapoznan (Eng. #regionalpubliclibraryPoznan) 759 times; #Rzeszów (Eng. #Rzeszow) 703 times; #wimbpwrzeszowie (Eng. #provincialandcitypubliclibraryino.zeszow) 679 times; #pomorskieczyta (Eng. #pomeraniareads) 666 times; #Biblioteka (Eng. #Library) 632 times.

Significantly, one of the fifty most popular hashtags used by Polish libraries during the pandemic was #zostanwdomu (#stayathome) 266 times.

CONCLUSION

The above study aimed to analyze the experiences of provincial public libraries in Poland regarding their use of Facebook. The findings show that this was a standard social media tool, as all the libraries surveyed used it in their activities. The libraries' practice to date shows that their level of involvement in publishing information on Facebook varied and that, in general, users appreciated and responded to library content. Nevertheless, there is a need to

further develop the skills of librarians to increase the level of engagement with current fan-page users, especially with respect to reaching out through social networks to people who do not use library services.

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