SLA 2006 Poster

*Interacting with Non-Traditional Users, Resources, & Materials*

Social Web & Communication Tools:
Social Bookmarking, Instant Messaging, Weblogs & RSS Feeds

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**Social Software**

- Support for conversational interaction between individuals or groups
- Support for social feedback
- Support for social networks

Social Bookmarking – What?

- “Shared lists of user-created Internet bookmarks” (Wikipedia, May 22, 2006)
- Store personal list of bookmarks online
- Bookmarks can be viewed by anyone, or made private
- Tagging: giving descriptive terms (tags) to the bookmark
- Folksonomy: the whole of a group of tags
- Tags and users have been syndicated into RSS feeds

Social Bookmarking - Who? Why?

- **Who?** Researchers and students
- **Why?**
  - Identify those with similar research interests; potential collaboration
  - Information seeking & popularity factor: how many others have bookmarked the same paper?
  - Who is using the same tags?
  - Can create lists of e-readings for research groups, classes, etc. to access
  - Convenience: accessible from anywhere with Internet access
Social Bookmarking - How?

- Create an account at connotea.org or citeulike.org
- Go to Web page/article, etc. of interest
- Click on bookmarklet to add URL (provided to you after you register)
- Add tags, comments

Social Bookmarking - Connotea, CiteULike

- **Connotea.org** (from Nature Pub. Group, still experimental)
  - *More Signal, Less Noise*: made for academics
  - Saves bibliographic information
  - Recognizes many scientific journals and websites (PubMed, e-prints, …)
  - Import/export references in RIS format - works with desktop reference management software
  - Works with standards (e.g. DOIs, OpenURL)
  - Create groups

- **CiteULike.org**
  - Similar, but also: export into EndNote, or BibTeX to build bibliography
  - Watchlist: list of bookmarks within CiteULike that match your criteria
Basic Connotea page for the tag blog. Left side shows other users who have used the same tag; clicking on the user brings back that user’s bookmarks tagged with blog. Middle shows a bookmark entry with article title, Smarter …, user who bookmarked it, and the tags given by the user. Right side shows tools within Connotea, including creating groups, remarks about tags, importing and exporting RIS files. Related tags shows terminology with which users have tagged the same bookmarks.

Bookmarklets for CiteULike and Connotea; connecting to CiteULike
When logged into CiteULike or Connotea, clicking on the bookmarklet allows a user to add a bookmark to their collection. The CiteULike page shows some of the fields that can be entered. Others include editor, journal, volume, issue, chapter, edition, pages, year, etc.
Social Bookmarking - Conclusion

Though not widely used in academia, these tools are becoming popular. As they gain critical mass, they could become destinations for knowledge-sharing or information-seekers looking for the knowledge of a combined group of experts. While perhaps not directly related to libraries, social bookmarking in academia is something to be aware of, if not for its possible role in changing information-seeking, then as a new tool for information management.

Instant Messaging (IM) – What?

• One-to-one real-time computer-based “conversations” via text boxes
• IM application indicates when buddies are online, idle, offline, etc.
• IM application notifies user of incoming messages
• Interaction feels similar to conversation in the same physical space
• Trillian: Allows many IM accounts to be displayed in one window
• meebo: Allows several IM accounts to be displayed; allows Web access to IM accounts
IM - Who? Why?

- **Who?** Instructors/librarians and students
- **Why?**
  - *Instructors/librarians:*
    - Offers increased availability
    - Alternative to set office hours, email, phone or desk reference: we all have phone numbers, why not IM accounts?
    - **Trillian:** makes it unnecessary to load all IM programs onto your machine
    - **meebo:** accessible from anywhere with an Internet connection
    - Interoffice communication
  - *Students:*
    - Social tool among peers
    - May be more comfortable communicating with IM because of perceived distance and therefore safety

IM - How?

- You will still need IM accounts from various providers. Trillian has direct connections to register for new accounts. Popular ones include:
  - AOL’s Instant Messenger (AIM), ICQ,
  - Microsoft’s MSN Messenger, IRC (Internet Relay Chat),
  - Yahoo! and GoogleTalk
- Give others your account name to add to their buddy list
Trillian allows buddies to be placed into different categories. It also shows which buddy is subscribed to which provider (red for Yahoo!, blue for MSN, etc.).

Clicking on a buddy who is online opens up a screen (right). Typed text is chronological and indicates who typed what. Most IM programs allow basic text editing, emoticons and URLs.

This screen shows all accounts available through Trillian. More can be added; if you do not have an account through a provider, register directly via Trillian.
IM - Conclusion

IM is another option for communicating with users one-one-one that is more immediate than email yet less intrusive than phone. Trillian and meebo consolidate many IM accounts into one access point, making accounts easier to keep track of. Widespread social use among students means it is potentially student-friendly for reference. One drawback is the need to add your account name to a “buddy list” - which students may be reluctant to do.
Weblogs – What?

• A.K.A. blogs: Similar to online diaries with chronological entries
• Entries can link to Web pages, other blogs, etc.
• Entries are archived, can be keyword indexed
• Entries can be commented upon; comments are archived with entries
• Usually updated irregularly, though frequently (~ once per month or more)
• Can be syndicated into RSS feeds

Weblogs - Who? Why?

• **Who?** Instructors/librarians and students
• **Why?**
  - *Instructors/librarians:*
    - Within a department – can create a group blog for knowledge-sharing and management tool, decreasing email, e.g. reference blog for discussing desk issues (Reichardt and Harder 2005)
    - Adjunct to instruction – for discussion, communication
    - Communication tool for new acquisitions, library news
    - Less formal space for discussing academic issues
  - *Students:*
    - Group workspace, course content journaling, portfolios
    - Librarians can monitor student blog workspaces, or be members, offering help or suggestions as necessary
Weblogs - How?

- Get blogging software, e.g. register at Blogger.com (free, online)
- Name your new blog (it must be unique)
- Add content by adding *new posts*. Blogger.com has a WYSIWYG editor
- Add members to your group under *Settings* to enable them to post. They must also register

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**Administrative and public sides of a blogger.com blog**

**Admin (left screen):** Each entry is listed in reverse-chronological order and can be edited, deleted, or kept as a draft. The public face of the blog can be changed in the template section.

**Public (right screen):** The blog itself lists the title of the blog, *Chemistry Library News* near the top. Entries are posted in reverse chronological order, with dates on the left, *Trial for Science Backfiles*. Archived entry titles are listed on the right, near the bottom of the screen. Clicking on the links goes to the page for the entry.
Weblogs - Conclusion

Blogs are an easy way to communicate to many via the Web. Compared to editing a Web page, entries are relatively easy to post and can be contributed by more than one person. In a library setting, a blog can be used within a department; archiving makes messages retrievable. Blogs can also be used to communicate news to users, or as an instruction page after a session.

RSS Feeds – What?

- **Automatic Web surfing**: RSS feeds send new information when they are updated
- **Feeds** can be TOCs, news, search results from databases, blog entries…
- You’ll need: an RSS **aggregator** or reader, and feeds of interest
RSS Feeds - Who?

• For: Researchers and students
• From: Journals, electronic indexes, bloggers

RSS Feeds - Why?

• Current awareness – many publishers are providing this option
• “Pull” technology: no need to provide personal information to subscribe to feeds, therefore no spam
• Decreases email
RSS Feeds - How?

- Get an RSS aggregator, e.g. register at Bloglines.com (free, online)
- Find a feed, usually indicated by orange RSS or XML buttons, but also may indicate "subscribe" or similar
- Right-click to copy the shortcut/link
- Go to Bloglines and add the link as a feed
- In Bloglines, you will see a list of feeds on the left. Click on the feed name to see the latest content. Once you click on the feed name, Bloglines assumes you have read the content and will not display anything else until there is new content for that feed.

Adding a feed for the table of contents of *Social History of Medicine* to Bloglines

Bloglines screen (right screen): also shows a list of subscribed feeds on its left. The second feed, labeled *(oil sands) WN TI* is a search alert from Compendex.
RSS Feeds - Conclusion

RSS feeds provide an alternative to email alerts. More publishers are providing notification of TOCs and news through RSS feeds. There are currently few databases providing search alerts, however, this option will become more prevalent. Since blogs and some social bookmarking tools also provide RSS feeds, aggregators can provide a single spot for keeping up with research.

Readings – Social Bookmarking

- Connotea: www.connotea.org
- CiteULike: www.citeulike.org

* Recommended reading
Readings – Instant Messaging (IM)

• Abram S. 2004. Twenty reasons to love IM. Information Outlook 8(10): 40-42.
  – Geared towards special librarians
  – General article on using IM for interoffice communication and reference; impact of IM on email
  – Web-based chat reference systems go head-to-head with instant messaging. Speed of interaction, cost, time ROI/availability, training, target market, software, features, computer requirements, privacy and community are compared.
  – Using IM for virtual office hours for faculty members teaching semester-long classes
  – A general article on using IM for reference and interoffice communication; discusses challenges.

* Recommended reading

Readings – Weblogs

• Blogger: www.blogger.com
  – Free online blogging software
  – Drag and Drop version: www.idu.leeds.ac.uk/dragndrop/bloguse
• Technorati.com’s State of the Blogosphere reports.
  http://technorati.com/weblog/blogosphere/index.html
  – Reports on the growth of blogs

* Recommended reading
Readings – RSS Feeds

• Bloglines: www.bloglines.com
  – Free online RSS aggregator / feed reader

• List of Chemistry journals providing RSS feeds (from Tom Keays, Syracuse University):
  http://tomkeays.com/chemistry/ej/index.php?rss=1

• Ly A. August 8, 2005. RSS feeds college students’ diet for research. USA Today [Online].

* Recommended reading

Readings - General

  [2006 June 4].
  – Provides a general definition of social software

• * Educause Learning Initiative’s 7 Things You Should Know About... series
  http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?page_id=7495&bhcp=1
  – “concise information on emerging learning technologies and related practices. Each brief focuses on a single technology or practice and describes: what it is, how it works, where it is going, why it matters to teaching and learning”

* Recommended reading
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