SOCIAL NETWORKING (SN) TOOLS FOR LIBRARIES

Seminar at The University of British Columbia Library

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April. 2012
Social networking (SN) tools?
Seminar outline

Part 1

- Studied Tools: Facebook, Instant messaging, Twitter, Flickr, Blog, Wiki, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.
- Data collected from Jun. 2010 to Aug. 2010

Part 2

- A further study on “How Libraries Use Social Networking tools to Interact with Users”
- Studied Tools: Facebook & Twitter (Twitter-like Weibo)
- Data collected from Jan. 2011 to Aug. 2011
Part 1: Social networking tools for academic libraries

I. Introduction of social networking websites

II. Introduction of our research

III. Findings and discussion

IV. Conclusion
I. Introduction of social networking websites
What are social networking websites?

- Boroughs (2010)
  - Social networking websites allow users to share interests and communicate with others
What are social networking websites?

- Barsky and Purdon (2006)
  - Collect data about members and store them in user profiles to be shared
  - Free and easy to create personal pages
  - Allow members to share web pages with friends and search for new friends
What are social networking websites?

- Boyd and Ellison (2007)

Social networking websites need to fulfill three criteria

- Construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system
- Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection
- View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system
What are social networking websites?

- Taylor-Smith and Lindner (2009)
  - Blogs should be regarded as a social networking tool because blogs support the formation of social connection through blog-roll activities

- Jones and Conceicao (2008)
  - Wikis, blogs, chat rooms, instant messengers, message boards and social bookmarking are also social networking tools since participation technologies are used to facilitate members’ interaction
II. Our Research

Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries
What most US library directors think (De Rosa, Cantrell, Havens, Hawk, Jenkins, Gauder, Limes & Cellentani, 2007):

- Libraries do not have a role in social networking
- Libraries are places for learning and information
- There are concerns about inadequate time and resources spent on social networking
The use of social networking in libraries

- The potential of using social networking in libraries
  - Chu and Meulemans (2008)
    - Easily identify which librarians are available to help
    - Communicate with colleagues to efficiently answer enquiries
    - Enhance library’s social visibility
    - Contribute knowledge and information
    - Promote new library collections
  - Graham, Faix, and Hartman (2009)
    - Provide reference assistance and library tours
    - Promote services
    - Unexpectedly improve colleague relations
Challenges in the use of social networking tools in libraries

- However, the use of social networking tools is not always well-received
  - Chu and Meulemans (2008): students were not eager to communicate with professors or parents via Facebook or MySpace, preferring the use of email
  - Connell’s survey (2009): a challenge to get users to treat librarians as friends
Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries

Main objectives of our research

- To examine the application of social networking tools in academic libraries in different countries/regions
- To investigate the perceived effectiveness of tools for information/knowledge sharing and the enhancement of library services
- To identify the reasons for libraries to use (or not use) social networking tools
Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries

- Instrument: online questionnaire via SurveyMonkey
- Sampling: the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings
  - Of the top 600, 70 Asian universities and 70 Western universities of similar ranking were identified
  - Target: a contact person of the reference department in the main library
Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries

- Instrument: questionnaire for libraries that were already using social networking tools
  - Identify the types of social networking tools being used
  - Examine librarians’ opinions on usefulness of the tools
  - Perceived advantages and disadvantages of using these social networking tools
  - Benefits, difficulties, and cost for using social networking tools
3. What kinds of social networking tools do various departments of your library use?

- Facebook
- MySpace
- Twitter
- Instant Messaging (QQ, MSN, etc.)
- Hi5
- Friendster
- Bebo
- Orkut
- LinkedIn
- Others (please specify)
Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries

- Instrument: questionnaire for libraries that were not using social networking tools
  - The library’s plan for using (or not using) social networking tools in the future
  - The motivation and the reasons behind the using (or not using) of social networking tools
III. Findings and discussion
Findings and discussion

- Total responses: 38
- 27 (71.1%) use social networking tools for academic library work
- 5 (13.1%) potential users
- 6 (15.8%) do not plan to use social networking tools
Findings and discussion

- Location of libraries who have been using social networking tools

![Pie chart showing the distribution of libraries using social networking tools by location. The United Kingdom leads with 30%, followed by the United States with 18%, Canada with 4%, Germany with 4%, Singapore with 7%, Taiwan with 7%, China with 7%, Japan with 4%, Korea with 4%, and Hong Kong with 15%.]
Findings and discussion

- Other social networking tools used by librarians
  - Respondents were asked to indicate any other social networking tools they were using besides the ones listed in our survey (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, IM, Twitter, etc.)
  - Responses included blogs, Delicious, Flickr, Issuu, Slideshare, Wikis, and Youtube
Findings and discussion

Social networking tools used by various libraries

Facebook* 17
Instant messaging* 12
Twitter* 17
Linkedin* 1

Blogs 7
Wikis 5
Flickr 4
Youtube 3
Slideshare 2
Delicious 2
Issuu 1

Items marked with an asterisk (*) fall into the narrow definition of social networking tools.
## Findings and discussion

### Networking tools used by various departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Facebook*</th>
<th>Instant Messaging*</th>
<th>Twitter*</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Flickr</th>
<th>Wikis</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Services</strong></td>
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</table>

Table 1. Tools used by various departments.

*Note: Items marked with an asterisk (*) fall into the narrower definition of social networking tools.*

- Why didn’t any technical services departments use any SN tools that fall under the narrow definition?
Findings and discussion

- Launch dates of various social networking tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tool</th>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Wiki</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Weblogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>MSN Messenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>MySpace</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Flickr</td>
</tr>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Facebook (Harvard-Only)</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Facebook (everyone)</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Delicious</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Issuu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>SlideShare</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Windows Live Messenger (re-launch of MSN Messenger)</td>
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# Findings and discussion

## Purposes for using social networking tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Instant Messaging</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Flickr</th>
<th>Wikis</th>
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<td>(instructions/guides)</td>
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<td>List of current and new library</td>
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<td>collections</td>
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<td>Online reference services</td>
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<td>Online help services</td>
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<td>Connection with other librarians</td>
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<td>Monitoring publications and</td>
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<td>conferences</td>
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</table>
## Findings and discussion

- Libraries’ purposes for using social networking tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Using Facebook and Twitter</th>
<th>Using Facebook, IM and wikis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Library news dissemination</td>
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<td>Library events</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-resource/database trials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
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</table>

The chart shows the distribution of purposes for using social networking tools, with library news dissemination being the most common. The chart also indicates that Facebook and Twitter are preferred for library news dissemination, while Facebook, IM, and wikis are preferred for library resources and enquires.
Findings and discussion

- Respondent librarians’ perceptions on the benefits of using social networking tools
Costs and benefits involved in using social networking tools

- 18 respondents (66.7%): the costs involved ranged from minimal to almost none, while benefits were certain and obvious.
- The main cost was perceived to be time in initial stages.
- 2 respondents: denied any benefits accrued from using social networking tools because they did not use the tools.
- 3 respondents: unclear due to no formal ways to assess the benefits.
- 1 respondent: benefits not accrued yet (just started using these tools), but hopeful and optimistic towards the potential benefits.
Findings and discussion

- Challenges and difficulties in implementing social networking tools in the library
  - 2 respondents: there were no major difficulties in implementing the tools
  - Challenges and difficulties reported by others include:
    - Mastering the technology
    - Inadequacy of resources (time, staff training, manpower)
    - Engaging users (staff and students) in using social networking tools
    - Achieving an informal yet presentable tone of communication with students
Findings and discussion

- Training offered by libraries on the use of social networking tools and their content
  - In-house training on the use of social networking tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16/26</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Training contents included Web 2.0 and social networking tools in general (R13, R19, R24)*

*Training in the use of specific tools was also given, such as the use of Twitter (R7)*
Adopting other and/or abandoning social networking tools

- 13/27 respondents: would welcome any new tools that could aid the library in promoting and enhancing services
- 12/27 respondents: would not stop using any current social networking tools they already used
Findings and discussion

- For libraries which were not using any social networking tools
  - 11 respondent libraries in total
    - 5 (45%) of them planned to use social networking tools in the future
    - 1 of them would begin the use of Facebook and Twitter within 6 months
    - 1 of them would conduct a survey among students to gather feedback about the implementation plan
IV. Conclusion
Conclusion - 1

- 77.1% of responding academic libraries are using social networking tools.
- Social networking tools are beneficial (66.7% of the responding libraries) in promoting library services, interacting with students, and communicating within internal staff.
- Benefits are perceived to outweigh the costs (66.7% of the responding libraries).
- Key challenges to address are limited time and the perceived inadequacy of staff in following technological developments.
A number of libraries’ interest in adopting these tools depend on the response of library patrons.

The phenomenon of social networking tools is likely to continue evolving rapidly.

It is worthwhile for libraries to consider the potential benefits of adopting these tools.


Thank you!