

SOCIAL NETWORKING (SN) TOOLS FOR LIBRARIES

Seminar at The University of British Columbia Library

SAMUEL KAI-WAH CHU

Associate Professor, Division of Information and Technology Studies, Faculty of Education

Deputy Director, Centre for Information Technology in Education

The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

E-mail: samchu@hkucc.hku.hk

DORA YU-TING CHEN

Technical Assistant,

Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong,

Pokfulam, Hong Kong

E-mail: [REDACTED]

twitter

 Blogger

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Linked  in[®]

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Social networking (SN) tools?

Seminar outline

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Part 1

- Chu, S.K.W. & Du, H. (2012). Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries. *Journal of Librarianship & Information Science* ([Draft version](#))
- 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

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- I. Introduction of social networking websites

- II. Introduction of our research

- III. Findings and discussion

- IV. Conclusion

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I. Introduction of social networking websites

What are social networking websites?

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- Boroughs (2010)
 - ▣ Social networking websites allow users to share interests and communicate with others

What are social networking websites?

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- 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?

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- 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?

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- 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

The use of social networking in libraries

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

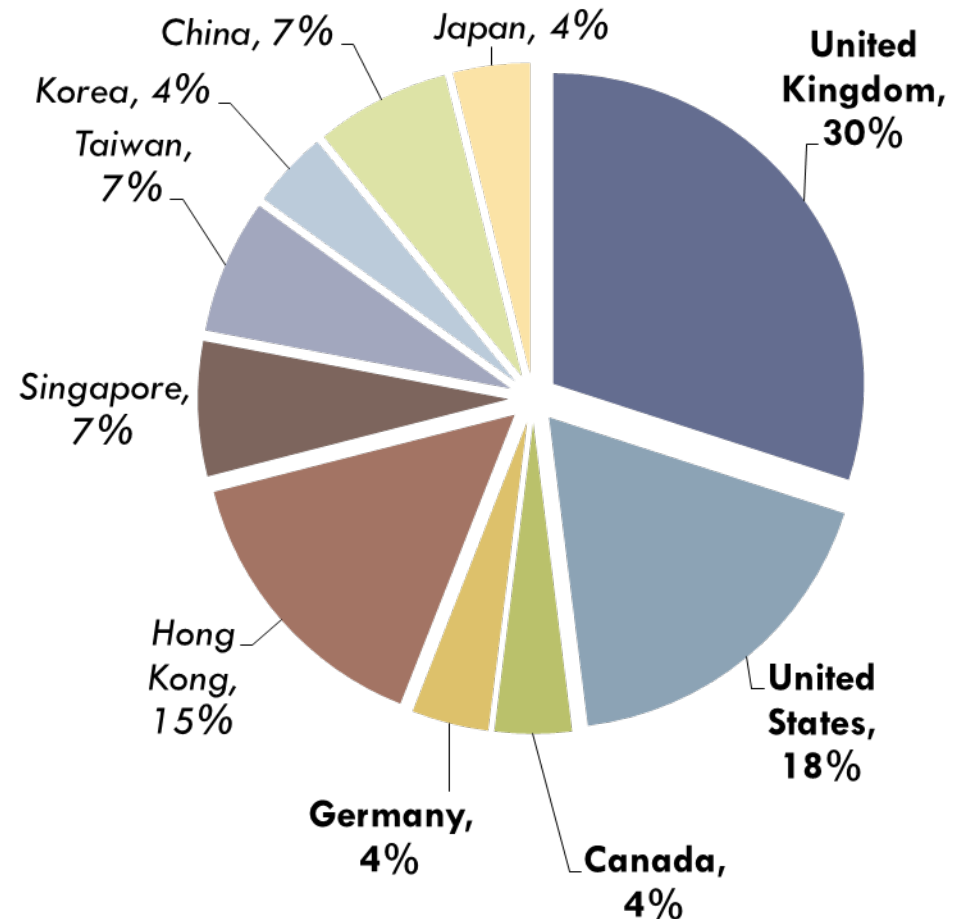
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- Total responses: 38
- 27 (71.1%) use social networking tools for academic library work
- 5 (13.1%) potential users
- 6 (15.8%) do not plan to use social networking tools

Findings and discussion

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- Location of libraries who have been using social networking tools



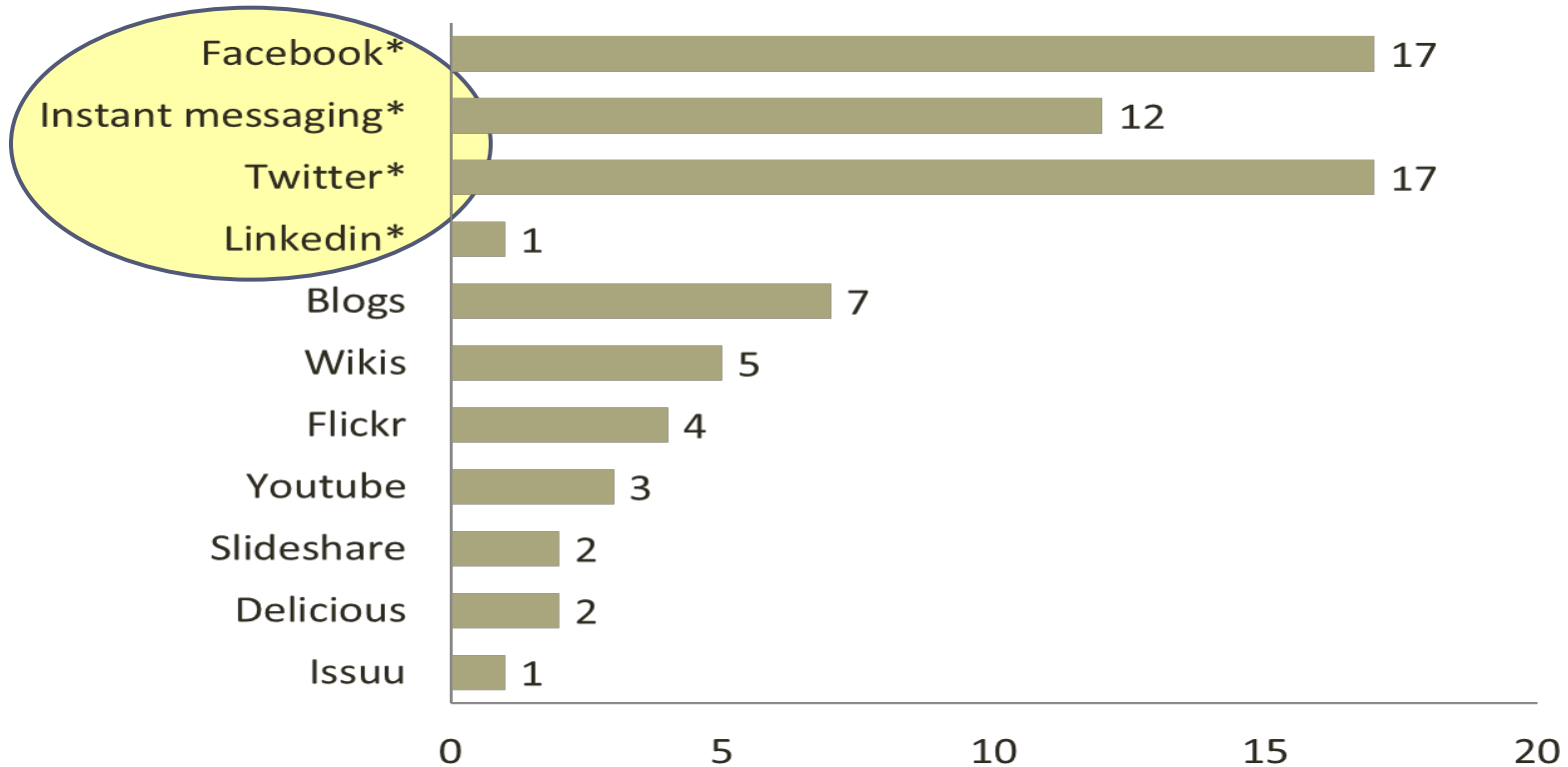
Findings and discussion

- 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

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□ Social networking tools used by various libraries



• Items marked with an asterisk (*) fall into the narrow definition of social networking tools.

Findings and discussion

□ Networking tools used by various departments

Departments	Social networking tools						
	Facebook*	Instant Messaging*	Twitter*	Blogs	Flickr	Wikis	YouTube
Public Services							
Academic Liaison	✓		✓				✓
Academic Support		✓	✓				
Audio-visual			✓				
Archives				✓	✓	✓	
Circulations			✓	✓			
Communications	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Customer Services	✓		✓				
General Service			✓				
Information Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Relations	✓		✓				
Reference	✓	✓	✓	✓			
User Education	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Technical Services							
Cataloging				✓			
Equipment Management						✓	
I.T. Services				✓	✓	✓	

Table 1. Tools used by various departments.

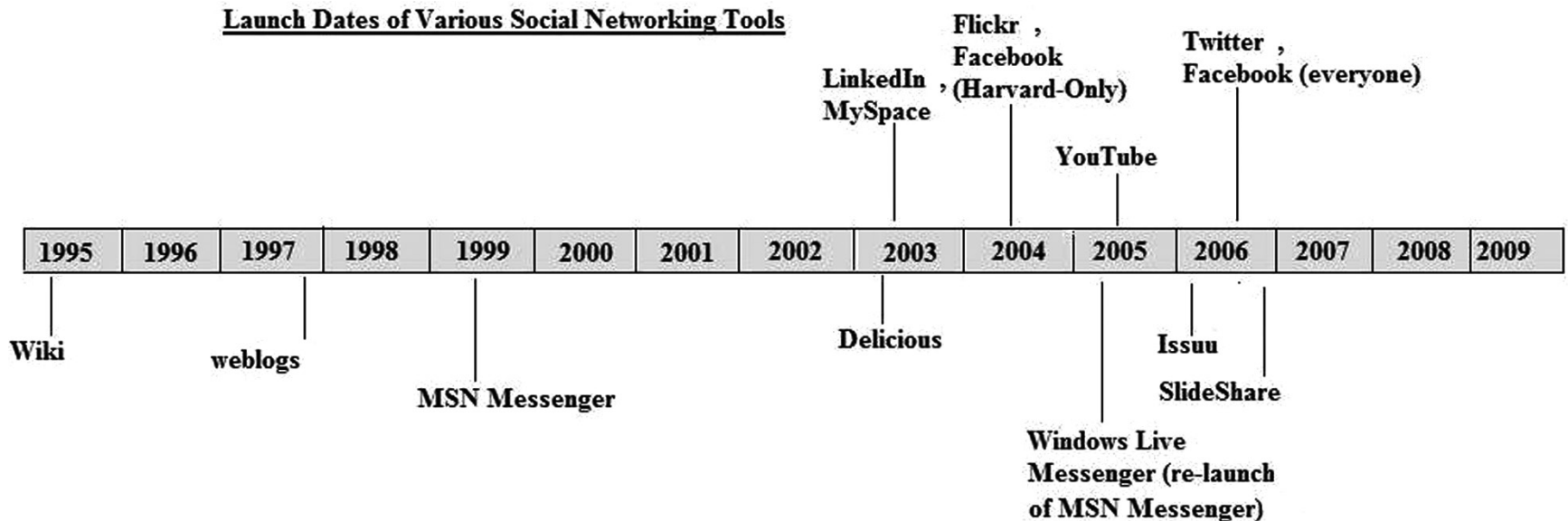
Note: Items marked with an asterisk (*) fall into the narrower definition of social networking tools.

- Why didn't any technical services departments use any SN tools that fall under the narrow definition?

Findings and discussion

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- Launch dates of various social networking tools



Findings and discussion

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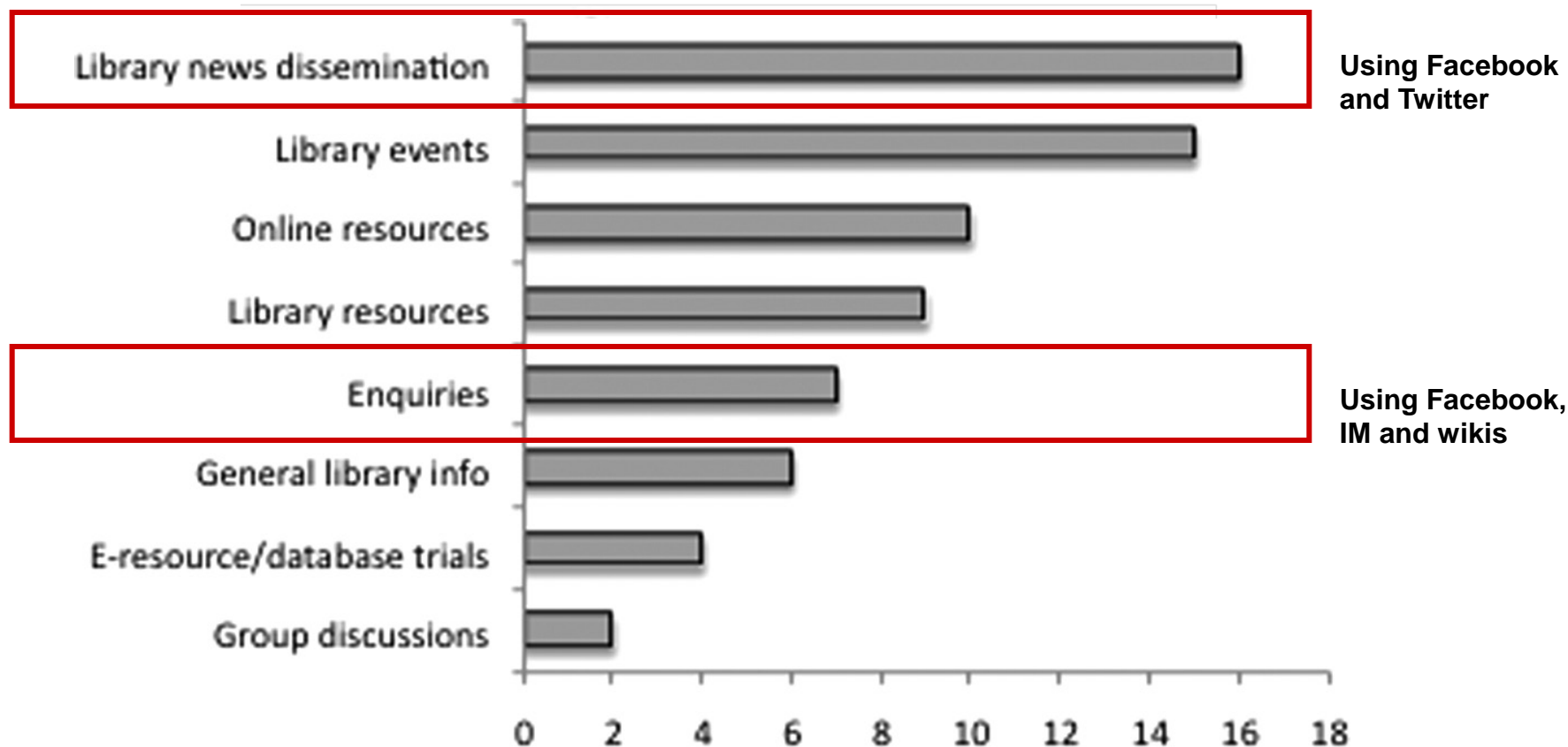
Purposes
for using
social
networking
tools

Social networking tools								
Purposes	Facebook*	Instant Messaging*	LinkedIn*	Twitter*	Blogs	Flickr	Wikis	YouTube
INFORMATION								
Information sharing					✓	✓		✓
Links sharing						✓		
Photo sharing						✓		
Sharing library videos (instructions/guides)							✓	
Video sharing						✓		✓
MARKETING AND PUBLICITY								
Publicity	✓			✓				
Public Relations				✓				
Marketing	✓			✓				
News dissemination	✓			✓				
Calendar							✓	
Course information							✓	
Library notices					✓			
List of current and new library collections					✓			
ENQUIRY-RELATED SERVICES								
Enquiry services	✓	✓					✓	
FAQ							✓	
Interaction with students	✓			✓				
Online reference services		✓						
Online help services		✓		✓				
LIBRARIAN COMMUNICATION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT								
Connection with other librarians			✓					
Monitoring publications and conferences				✓				
Staff communication	✓	✓						✓

Findings and discussion

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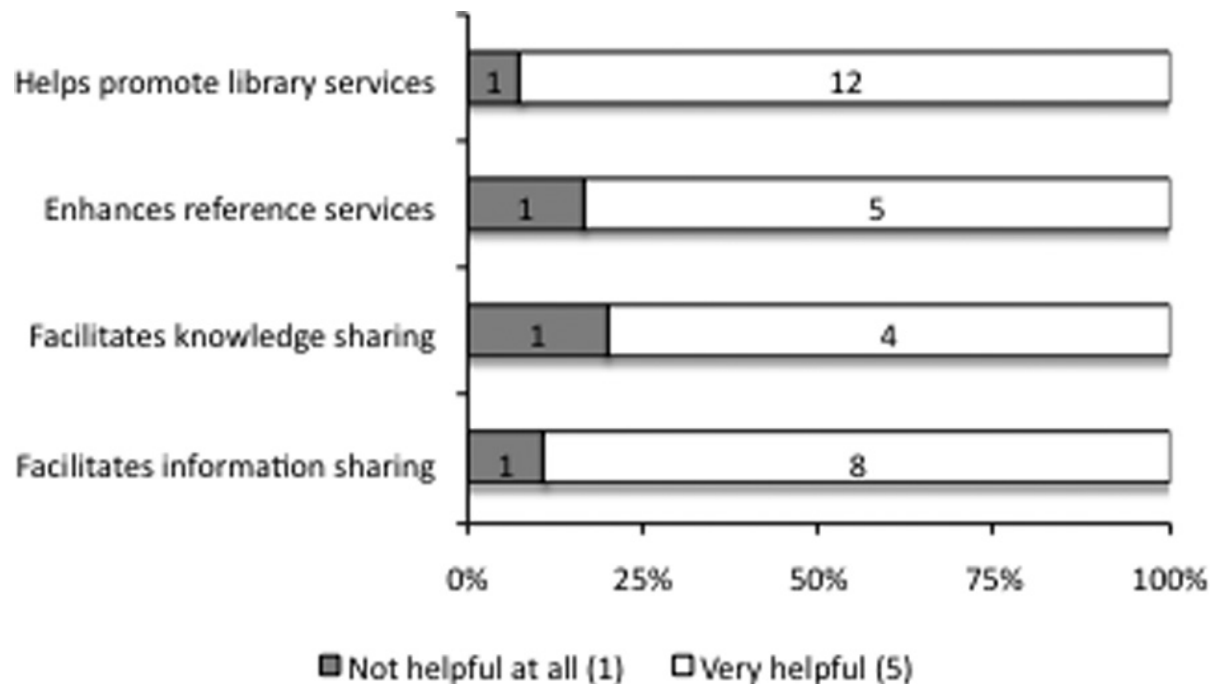
□ Libraries' purposes for using social networking tools



Findings and discussion

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- Respondent librarians' perceptions on the benefits of using social networking tools



Findings and discussion

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- 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

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

	No. of responses	Percentage
Yes	10/26	38.5%
No	16/26	61.5%

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)

Findings and discussion

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- 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

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- 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

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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

Conclusion - 2

- 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

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Thank you!

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Q & A