

Catalogue & Index

Periodical of the Chartered Institute of Library and
Information Professionals (CILIP) Cataloguing & Indexing
Group

June 2013, Issue 171

Editorial

Welcome to issue 171 of Catalogue and Index, the theme for this issue is social media. These articles look at how social media tools are being used by cataloguers to network, share information and communicate effectively with each other. We also explore how library catalogues can be integrated into a social media tool (Facebook) and have a review of social cataloguing tools (LibraryThing and GoodReads).

A key theme running through the articles is how social media can, and is, being used to make cataloguers more visible and demonstrate our professionalism to the wider library community. The articles also provide helpful advice on good practice with social media.

Whether you are currently using social media or not, I hope you find each article interesting and useful.

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Cataloguing and social media – is it really a good idea?

Claire Choong, Senior Library Assistant (Cataloguing), Canterbury Christ Church University

In my opinion, the short answer is 'yes'! There is a lot to consider when thinking about using social media in any context, but with planning and preparation and adherence to good practice, I think that social media can be of great benefit to cataloguers and those they catalogue for. I've recently been involved with setting up a Twitter account for our library, so I hope this article will be of benefit to other people thinking about using social media in an official capacity for the first time.

Benefits

Social media is an excellent way to increase visibility and awareness of cataloguing as a profession and ourselves, as cataloguers. As we know, plenty of people are unaware of or don't know much about what we do, so it is important for us to be able to communicate our value to our employers, as well as to those who use the catalogues we help to create. The fact that we're using social media indicates that we are actively seeking to communicate with our stakeholders. As well as being able to send out messages, social media provides a mechanism for stakeholders to feed back to us about the catalogue, giving a more accurate picture of user satisfaction levels and what kinds of information they need or would like to have from the records we provide.

More than this, social media provides excellent forums for the cataloguing community. This can be particularly valuable to new cataloguers, or cataloguers who work alone or are the only cataloguer in their institution. Social media enables people to make contact, share ideas and support one another. It is notable that cataloguers have a strong presence on social media; on Twitter particularly, but also through various blogs and wikis. Some forms of social media, such as blogs, can also be great tools for helping us reflect on what we do, and its democratic nature means that everyone can have a voice (if they want one).

Planning and preparation – considering problems and risks

Although there are clear benefits to using social media, it's not for everyone, so it's important to think about whether we really do have the time, expertise and resources to set up and manage social media accounts. This is particularly important for solo cataloguers, or people in small teams. While it might be great to be able to share information and get support from other cataloguers, it's a different thing to manage an 'official' Twitter account or blog, where you're committed to posting regularly to a personal account where it doesn't matter if you have a massive cataloguing backlog and no time to post.

So, it's a good idea to do some research. There are lots of cataloguers using social media already, so you could have a look at some of their accounts. Try and look at institutions similar to yours and see what they do, to get some ideas of how you might use social media in your own institution. If you're already using social media for personal use, this in itself can be a great source of example and information – contact any cataloguers you might know and see if they have any tips or advice from their experiences of using social media as cataloguers. Also, look at various forms of social media – YouTube, Flickr and wikis, as well as the more obvious Twitter, Facebook and blogs.

Try to decide what particular type of social media is right for you and your institution. Not everyone or all institutions will have the capacity or ability in terms of time and resources in order to manage Twitter and Facebook accounts as well as a blog, for example, but you might be able to manage one (or maybe two) of these.

The next stage is to plan. It might seem odd to say that, because social media is often seen as something used 'casually' or 'on the fly', but to set up and manage an account effectively actually takes quite a bit of planning. Your institution may require a proposal and/or strategy document, which will focus the planning process somewhat! Things you might want to think about include:

- Which particular social media tools you want to use, and why you want to use them
- Who is going to manage them, and how they're going to do this. (E.g. will you have a rota for the management of a Facebook account? How are you going to handle any complaints or queries received via social media? When will the accounts be staffed?)
- Who is your target audience?
- What resources will you need (staffing and equipment) to set up and manage the social media account(s)?
- How much time will be taken up with managing the account(s). Do you really have time to do this? How often are you going to post/tweet/write?
- Is there a need for staff training in the use of social media tools? If so, how is this going to be delivered?
- Branding. It's good to have a strong and consistent brand image to be applied across social media accounts so that your audience can instantly recognise the accounts as being "official".
- How are you going to promote your social media accounts? (E.g. links on main library website, links to/from existing institutional social media accounts).

What are you going to tweet/post/write about?

If you're not sure that social media is for you (or your institution) you may wish to consider piloting an account. That way, if it doesn't work out well, you know you only have to continue for a finite amount of time! It can also be reassuring for managers to know that a new tool is going to be piloted and evaluated thoroughly before they need to think about agreeing to its long-term use.

Other things to bear in mind are that the use of social media should be sensitive to and work cooperatively with the remit of other groups/services within the institution. You don't want to tread on anyone's toes or duplicate work, so try to liaise with other library staff involved with promotion of the library (for example the web team if you have one) and perhaps the institution's marketing department, if there is one. It is also worth finding out whether your institution has a social media policy – if so, you will need to adhere to this, and it may influence your choice of social media tool or even whether you want to go ahead and use social media at all.

If you work in a larger institution it's likely that other departments and teams will already be using some form of social media to communicate with their users and stakeholder, so liaising with them can be a great way of picking up tips, and you may be able to ask them to promote your social media accounts through theirs (e.g. via re-tweets on Twitter). We found that we received a lot more followers on Twitter once the Student Union re-tweeted some of our tweets!

Unfortunately, you may receive complaints about the service from users via social media – even if these may not be about cataloguing people might try to contact the library via the 'cataloguing' account. It's a good idea to have a strategy for dealing with any complaints, and also for dealing with any more involved queries you might

receive. It's not a good idea to have lengthy discussions or conversations of a sensitive nature in a public forum, so try to set up a mechanism for dealing with these 'offline' – perhaps provide a generic email address for the complainant to use instead. If the complaints/queries relate to another aspect of the library service you can refer them to the appropriate team.

Getting started

If you decide to go ahead with using social media, you will now need to implement your branding strategy, set up a rota for managing the account(s) (if you have more than one person doing this) and make sure you have something to tweet/post/write about! You might find it helpful to have a list of 'regular' subjects you can post about for when news is slow!

We integrated a list of things to tweet about with our rota for the management of our Twitter account, so that people not only knew when it was their turn to manage the account, but also knew they had at least something to tweet about that week! Ideas for things to post about include:

- What we do!
- Library news
- New acquisitions
- Items of interest in your collection(s)
- Opening and closing times (e.g. for vacations)
- Library catalogue/e-resource downtime
- Reports from staff development events
- Statistics (e.g. how many new items have been catalogued this month/week/year, top books borrowed, top e-books)
- Information for academic staff about book ordering/link to book order form/reminders about deadlines for ordering new books
- Requesting and responding to feedback from users
- Improvements made to library services in general, or bibliographic services in particular

Obviously, what you choose to write about will depend to a certain extent on the social media tool you're using and how creative you want to be with it. Most social media tools can be linked in some way, but, as mentioned above, not everyone will have the resources to be able to manage more than one account.

Personally, I think it's great to include images with posts (whichever social media tool you're using) but if you do this they need to be of good quality otherwise it can make your account look unprofessional. If you're not skilled with a camera see if you can find someone who is!

You might want (or need) to keep statistics or other data about your accounts, for example how many followers/views the account has had, as well as more qualitative material that you could use for evaluating the account at a later date. It can be tricky to keep track of conversations held via social media, but there are tools available to help you do this. Storify is a useful tool for keeping records of conversations on Twitter,

for example. In terms of quantitative statistics, most social media tools provide these quite readily.

Evaluation and reflection

Even if you're not doing a pilot, it's probably a good idea to do some sort of evaluation of and/or reflection your use of social media every so often. You should try to think about if the social media tool you chose to use is working in the way you hoped it would – is it of benefit to your stakeholders or to you? If not, you need to consider whether or not to continue using it.

Other things to consider are the amount of time it's taking to manage the account. Has it been manageable? Even if it has, can you continue with the commitment in the long term? If you're struggling but feel that the benefits of using social media make it worth continuing with, try and find someone to help you, even if they're not part of the cataloguing/acquisitions team. I know this might be easier said than done!

Doing an evaluation or simply reflecting on what you've done so far is a good opportunity to consider any changes you might like to make. Perhaps you could expand to use an additional social media tool, or try a different tool if the one you chose didn't really work for you. There are plenty out there, so don't get disheartened if (for example) you find that can't find the time to write a regular blog post – try Twitter instead, or maybe even an Instagram or Flickr account showing interesting new acquisitions. It's important to find the tools that suit you, and also to remember that it's OK to stop doing something if it's not working.

Good luck!

Introduction

With a theme of social media running throughout this issue of *Catalogue & Index* it seemed the ideal time to explore some of the issues surrounding the practice of blogging and cataloguing. In this case we are not discussing examples of individuals talking about what they do, or their opinion on topical issues, but the idea of blogging from a cataloguing department as a whole. We both have responsibility for our departmental blogs, but one of us is from an academic library and the other from a public library, and so we are going to offer two different perspectives from the world of departmental blogging.

Why did you start the blog and what are you trying to achieve?

NS: I suppose the key word is 'visibility'. As a section we provide a range of services (acquisitions, inter-library loans and database management as well as cataloguing) to the City's libraries, but we don't enjoy their high public profile (we have some well-known reference libraries as well as lending libraries) and we don't have readers as such. We are also physically hidden from sight (we work in a basement). The perception is that a lack of obvious visibility within the Department sometimes leads to our contribution being undervalued. I suspect that's felt to be a common problem by cataloguers and 'backroom staff' in general, in both public and academic libraries. So an important objective is simply to increase our profile and make people aware of who we are and what we do.

The blog is also intended to give the staff here an opportunity to reflect on what we are doing, express opinions and exercise a little creativity and we do aim to involve everybody in the Section, not just the Cataloguers. Importantly, too, it allows us to make contact with fellow LIS professionals outside the City, share experiences and contribute to debates.

KP: The Cataloguing department at Cardiff University, as part of the larger Collection Management Services, is situated in a building that is at the very edge of the University footprint. We are not in a library but an administration block, and as such often feel rather removed from our library colleagues, and the rhythm of student life. We feel we could be easily forgotten, tucked away where we are, and we have less opportunity to mix with other library staff than if we were based in one of the libraries. We do what we can to make ourselves more visible, but it often feels that there is a faint mist obscuring the 'arcane' practices of collection management, and sometimes colleagues don't really know what we get up to down here.

Several individuals in the department have their own blogs and twitter accounts, and it began to emerge that through their postings other staff were beginning to have a better understanding of some of our processes and our frustrations, and therefore the next logical step seemed to be to create a departmental blog. As most of the libraries at the University already had blogs themselves, we also felt we would be following in line with them.

Are you both pitching to the same audience or to different communities?

NS: I think we're pitching to several different potential communities and that different types of post are likely to appeal more to one or other of them. I suppose you could describe the approach we have adopted as a 'magazine format' – we publish a variety of types of article; some opinion pieces, some factual reporting, some primarily visual.

The first potential audience would be our own staff: the people who work in our own section, of course, but also staff in other sections within the Libraries Department and potentially elsewhere within the organisation. The second would be other LIS professionals, particularly the cataloguing community. Thirdly, we hope that some of our posts will appeal to our readers – the people who use our libraries.

Some of our posts are expressions of opinion about matters of professional interest, or relate to cataloguing and classification, which I would expect to appeal to other LIS professionals. The ones which are more specifically about some aspect of our everyday work I would expect to be of more interest to staff. Sometimes we write about the stock we handle or aspects of the public catalogue, which might appeal most to our readers.

Some posts I'd expect to appeal to more than one audience. For instance, we encourage people who have attended conferences or certain types of training event to write reports about them on the blog. By doing so we can share the knowledge gained more widely within the Department, but also with anyone in the wider community who might be interested in that topic.

I'd imagine that our audience is less clearly defined than that of a blog written by an academic or special library, which I would expect to be targeted fairly specifically at the library users – the staff and students or researchers who use the library. I know that some libraries write blogs that are essentially newsletters for their readers translated into blog form, which is a perfectly valid approach. I think, in our case, although it is important to think about our audiences, it would be a mistake to limit ourselves too narrowly to any one of them.

KP: I agree that we are pitching to a different audience than City Bibs. The initial aim of our blog was to make ourselves and our processes more visible, but first we had to consider who we actually wanted to make ourselves visible to. Did we want to shout out to cataloguers on the other side of the globe, or talk to a colleague a mile away? Would our 'conversation' be different either way? After much consideration we decided that primarily we wanted to highlight our work and existence to the University in general – so library colleagues, students, academics, etc. We hoped that what we had to say might also be of interest to other cataloguers, librarians, information professionals, or anyone in general, but that they would not be the main intended audience. Are we limiting the appeal of our blog by having a narrow focus? Perhaps, but we believe that by strengthening understanding at a local level, our work will be appreciated to a greater extent, and may ultimately prove to be beneficial to the profession in general.

Defining our audience also helped to shape the topic of our posts. We blog about 'interesting' new books that we are cataloguing (to highlight what is going into our collections); we mention books that are written by Cardiff University authors (to advertise the talents and interests of our academics – and to let the students know what their lecturers are publishing on); we are also talking about our cataloguing and classification practices – this is done to break down barriers, to demystify our workflows, to explain to people how books get to the library, what the numbers on the spine labels mean, and to demonstrate that there is a lot of work going on behind scenes. Thus we are also building up a knowledge bank of practices that can be referred back to when staff or students have a query.

We aim to have one blog post a week which is normally published on a Monday, although during holiday periods we are less strict with this timetable. We then publicise each post at varying times throughout the week. Having regular posts keeps us current, and helps to ensure interest.

Are you reaching the people you were expecting to reach?

NS: Yes, I think so. We have various ways of promoting the blog, which enable us to reach different audiences. Internally, we let people know by e-mail when a new post is published and provide a link. This results in a fairly regular readership within the Department. We have also promoted it through Departmental newsletters, by making a presentation at a Staff Meeting attended by all staff and through other channels of internal communication. I think most people are now aware that we are writing a blog and, as we were the first section to write one, we have been able to offer other sections help and advice when they have started blogs of their own.

In practice, the majority of our readership is probably among cataloguers and other LIS professionals (our most widely read posts have been the ones about matters of professional interest) and we've found that the most effective way of reaching them is via Twitter, where most of our followers are other professionals.

Cataloguers, in particular, are very active on Twitter, and we have been lucky in that one or two of the most visible of them have helped us reach a wider audience by RT-ing links to our posts to their followers. We do also publish our posts on the aggregator *Planet Cataloging*, which is particularly useful in reaching cataloguers in the USA.

We have had some interest from users of our libraries (particularly for posts about aspects of our stock). One way in which we try to reach them is by having a link to the blog on the public catalogue. One of our libraries, in particular, which has a Twitter account that is followed by large numbers of their readers, has helped by RT-ing our posts linking to the blog.

I think, incidentally, that making use of Twitter is now essential for anyone who is thinking of setting up a blog of any description (unless they already have a very high profile). That is where the conversation is now and an isolated standalone blog is likely to find itself left out of that conversation.

KP: To some extent yes, we are reaching our target audience, but we also accept that most students won't automatically want to read a blog about cataloguing. However, the library staff are reading it, so at least one of our aims of enlightening our colleagues is being achieved, and they are passing information on to students.

Within a few weeks of setting up the blog, we also set up a Twitter account, with the prime reason to advertise our posts. Initially we had discarded this idea, as a department we didn't feel we had anything to say, unlike a library Twitter account which can promote its services, and directly engage with user groups; however, it soon became evident that the best way to promote the blog was through tweeting. As Nick has noted above, these days you really have to be part of that conversation, and ensure your blog is intrinsically linked to a Twitter account.

Our tweets get fed into the general library Twitter feed which displays on the library page of the portal that all the staff and students log into. We are also re-tweeted by several of the library accounts too, especially when we have posted something that is directly relevant to their library, such as a post about a new book they have just received. In this way we are reaching students, even if they do not follow us directly.

If we write a post that we think has some relevance outside the world of the university, then I will personally re-tweet it to my own Twitter followers (who are mostly library professionals) in the hope that the wider cataloguing community will read it.

How much time and effort goes into the blog, and whose time and effort is it?

NS: On a day-to-day basis it isn't very time consuming. I manage and edit the blog and probably look at it a couple of times a day to see if there have been any comments. In terms of writing the posts, we aim to involve as many people as possible within the section, so it should not take up too much of any one individual's time, given that we only post once a month or so.

KP: Technically the blog is supposed to be a team effort, and all five cataloguers are supposed to contribute; in practice, as the person who initially set up the blog, I write the most posts, but am gradually encouraging my colleagues to join in. We all keep an eye out for interesting books that pass through our hands and which might prove to be fodder for a blog post, but as we are all extremely busy we cannot spend too much time writing a post. Books cannot sit on our desks for days or weeks waiting for the moment when we can dedicate an appreciable amount of time to the task, they need to be sent through to the site libraries. Hence, we are having to develop a new skill; the ability to swiftly absorb and then communicate the pertinent points of interest of an item. If one is focussed it doesn't have to take that much time to write a post on an interesting book, but this can take practice.

Posts that are written about cataloguing practices do however take a bit longer, but as they are not 'time sensitive' they can wait until an opportune moment arrives. Earlier this year I spent a day working from home, due to snow causing transport difficulties, and I was able to put together four posts for the blog. These then sat in draft format waiting for a time when they would be needed.

Are your managers supportive or oblivious?

NS: Supportive – which I don't think would have been the case a few years ago. I think most organisations are now officially enthusiastic about using social media to publicise themselves and engage with their customers, and we are no different in that respect. A small caveat (and I'm not talking here about our own management) would be that managers in general have a tendency to assess success in terms of 'measurables' and what is easily measurable in the world of social media is sometimes less than meaningful, or does not mean what it appears to at first sight.

KP: We are also lucky in that writing for the blog is seen to fall within our normal work remit, and doesn't have to take place outside working hours. Our line manager, and indeed the University Librarian are supportive of our efforts, and our blog is seen to complement the other site library blogs.

Does the fact that it is an "official" blog from your institution cramp your style?

NS: Only to the extent that, realistically, there are limits as to how controversial, provocative or 'off message' you can afford to be. On the other hand, I don't think the fact that it is an 'official' blog should prevent you publishing posts that are original, idiosyncratic and thought-provoking. If it does, then (unless you are simply using the blog to convey hard information) it's unlikely to be very popular or successful. The best way of increasing visibility and promoting engagement is, to put it crudely, to write interesting articles that engage people's attention and make them want to engage with the authors (and, in the blogosphere, which is a competitive place, that is likely to involve being at least a little opinionated).

In practice, I find that it's usually less a matter of having to rein contributors in than of encouraging them to write in a less formal, more conversational style. I think it is worth admitting that a lot of institutional blogs (not only in libraries) are frankly pretty dire and many of them short-lived. There are many reasons for this (trying to write too much, unrealistic expectations about readership) but I suspect another is that they are written by people who have no real enthusiasm for blogs and blogging but feel obliged to produce one anyway. I think it helps that we have a variety of different people contributing, and I certainly encourage them to cultivate their individual styles, rather than trying to adopt a single, 'official' voice when writing for the blog.

KP: As the blog is representative of our department, the library service, and ultimately the University in general, we of course have to be aware of what we are writing. The aim of the blog though is not one of controversy, or uncomfortable truths, or even to provoke reactions; it is really about information, and thus it is unlikely that we are really going to feel 'cramped' with regards to what we are writing. As a couple of us have personal blogs, we could always write there instead if we felt the need to vent or provoke. The department blog is not the platform for this.

I also agree with Nick about encouraging personal styles in the contributors, some of our staff worry that they don't have the right kind of 'voice' but I think this comes with practice, and should just be a natural extension of who they are.

Conclusion

It is becoming increasingly evident that librarians need to be aware of, and engage with, many social media tools. Having a blog and twitter account for a cataloguing department just seems like the next logical step in promoting ourselves, improving our visibility, and demonstrating to colleagues that we aren't just chained to a pc in the basement, measuring books and ranting indecipherably about Marc records. We can now directly engage with a variety of audiences and user groups, and espouse our relevant skills and contribution to the profession.

<http://citybibs.wordpress.com/>

@citybibs

<http://cardiffcataloguers.wordpress.com/>

@CUCataloguing

Are you struggling to keep up? Is the speed of life getting you down? Are you befuddled and confused by the latest techno-jargon? Let me assuage your fears and set you on the path to enlightenment!

Background - my first web pages were not work-related!

Ok, so first the bad news: In today's technological world, if you stop, even for a nanosecond, you're likely to get left behind and will struggle to re-join the race. But, the good news is: It's not as hard as you might think to jump on those bandwagons and enjoy the offerings of Web 2.0/3.0. Trust me, I know because way back in 1995, when the internet was just beginning to take off and freeing itself from the shackles of the geeks and the gophers, I was taking off on a journey of my own. With a self-confidence borne of ignorance I embraced the internet with open arms. I had so much to share with the rest of the world, and the internet offered me the opportunity to reach a larger audience than just relatives, friends and neighbours. But first, the big hurdle! html! How could I create a web page? Even in those early days there were some pretty whizzy pages around, but I had no idea where to start.

My institution already hosted web pages for staff, so that took care of that bit, leaving me with the hard task of learning html! You cannot begin to imagine how surprised and thrilled I was when I finally got to grips with html and produced page upon page on things that interested me. However, nothing could have prepared me for the interest shown by other people across the globe: I regularly received emails from people asking about the NCT or the NCT (!) or the latest FLW event, or how to join Parents At Work! And, of course, although surprised by the questions, being a librarian, I was more than happy to investigate for people.

As the web gradually developed into a predominantly authoritative source of information, with fewer personal home pages and more commercial activity, so becoming the place to market your company, sell your goods, upload your information, and to make money, my institution stopped hosting personal web pages, and my knowledge of html and associated things dwindled, becoming useless as new techniques were developed – think javascript, perl, php ...

So, what next? Enter the social web. Web 2.0. For a long time I wondered what on earth people were talking about when they enthused about web 2.0. Like many developments until it actually took off, it was difficult to see what sort of effect it would have on life – working life, social life, my own life even!

Why the wiki?

Having learned html all those years ago and let that skill lapse, in 2007 I found myself in a new world, one inhabited by my children, and I didn't want to get left behind. I wanted to join this new generation web, I wanted to set up my personal homepages again, and I wanted to help people. Of course, if I were more tech-savvy, I would also be able to keep up with what my kids were doing. So, as I've already said, I didn't want to be left behind [**Reason number 1** in favour of a wiki – for my own continuing professional development!]. But, rather than trying to help the world at large with its information needs, I had a specific problem at work, and it was this that I wanted to address by creating the wiki.

Inundated with emails pertaining to cataloguing, coming from every possible source, dumping documents on a shared drive at work, or on the VLE, the intranet, or the staff portal, leaving my USB stick at home when I needed it at work, I decided I needed to be more organised, so I investigated wikis and blogs as a way of sharing information with my cataloguing colleagues. Over the years I had found some very helpful websites about cataloguing, like *Lynne's Cataloging Aids* (LeGrow, 2011), and I wanted to produce something very similar, but my tidy mind wanted everything to be categorised and easily retrieved, and wikis seemed to offer that organisation I so craved. Initially, the idea of a blog looked interesting, but on closer inspection it seemed to be more like a diary than the kind of web page substitute I had in mind, although I have since taken to using a blog (powered

by Blogger) to “consider my profession in public”(2009). Trying a wiki proved to be more successful, as here was a format that was ideally suited to storing and easily accessing training documents, links to other websites, glossaries, news items, rule changes etc., all of which should/would be of interest to my cataloguers. [**Reasons number 2** – information overload - **and 3** – helping the cataloguing team keep up!]

Quite taken with this idea of a wiki, I set off to look at some of the different software that was available, seeing how easy it was to use, sussing out what it could do etc.. Having looked at several platforms (for example, peanut butter, wetpaint, etc.) I decided to create my wiki on wikispaces. I composed a highly imaginative, creative title for this new beast - “cataloguers wiki” (2007) - but because I wasn’t sure what characters could be included in the wiki’s name I omitted the apostrophe! I still don’t know the answer to that question, but I cringe every time I have occasion to type the name!!

Another reason for choosing wikispaces was because the software provider offered a variety of access levels, dependant on whether or not you paid a subscription, and what level of subscription you paid. I opted for the free version, which probably has a few limitations, but suited my purpose: After all, I was doing it for the benefit of my work colleagues, but I was doing the actual work from home, so I was reluctant to pay for the service. Also, at the time, my institution did not have a policy on the use of social media, so I tried to keep things fairly general and of interest to cataloguers anywhere, hoping to remain anonymous (so maybe keeping our internal training documents on the wiki wasn’t an idea I would take forward).

Who's using the wiki?

As I’ve already said, the wiki was originally set up to help me and my cataloguers keep up with changes to cataloguing and other aspects of the profession that either might have an impact on what we do, or might be of interest to us. So, for example, whilst it may not have seemed directly relevant to cataloguers at the time, I created a section on the wiki for Institutional Repositories, as at the time I was also involved in the repository pilot project. Since then, however, we’ve employed a Repository Officer, so my input was no longer needed, and, as such, I haven’t updated that page for quite some time. Again, things have moved on a bit and we are now in a position where the cataloguers are inputting records to the repository again, so maybe I need to re-think those pages.

In order to help make/keep the wiki relevant, all my cataloguers have editing rights on the wiki, but in reality it’s only me who ever adds anything to it! I think they are generally too busy to keep up with what I put in it too, because most of the links are to information that is desirable rather than essential, interesting rather than “I can’t do my job without knowing this” kind of stuff.

How often my cataloguers use it, I couldn’t actually say, but like all good software, there are some statistics that are provided as standard. I’ve never really looked at these in any detail until I came to write this article, so I was astonished to see how many hits the wiki gets and the apparent different geographical location of visitors to the site!

Overleaf, in Charts 1-6, you can see each page listed and the number of hits each page has had over its lifetime to April 2013.

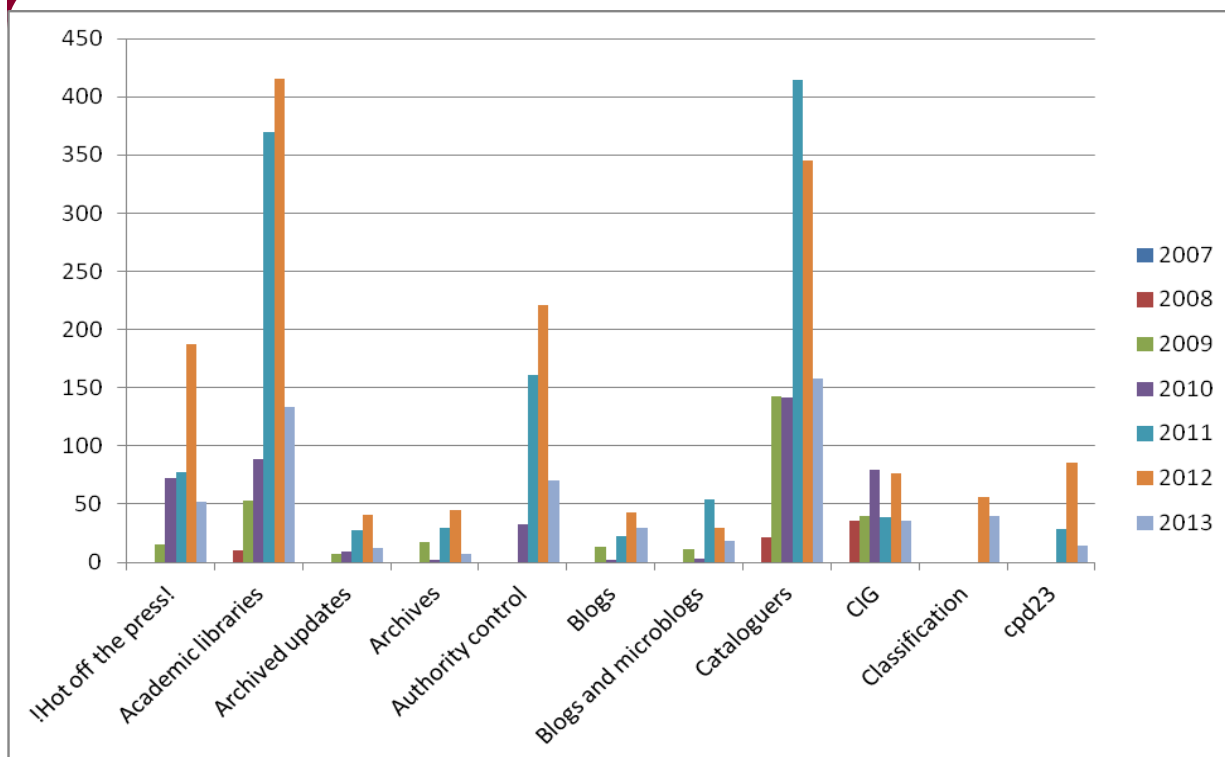


Chart 1: ! to C

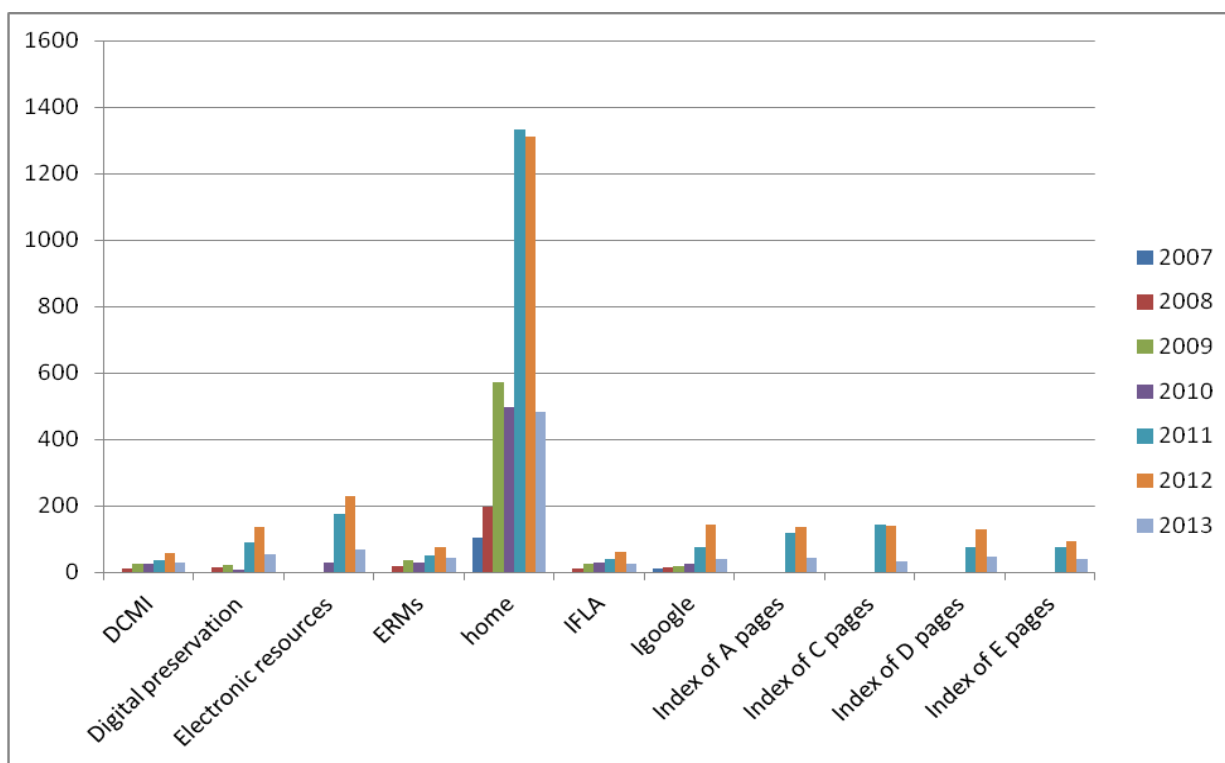


Chart 2: D to I

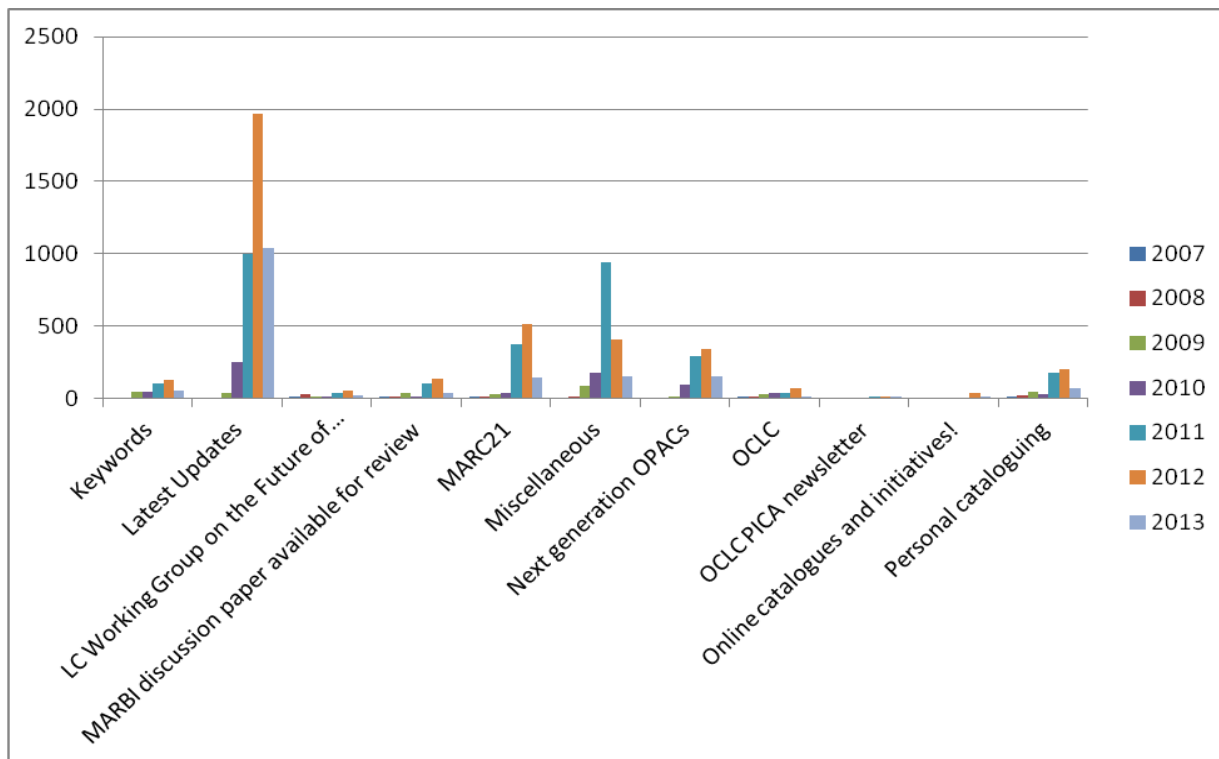


Chart 3: I to L

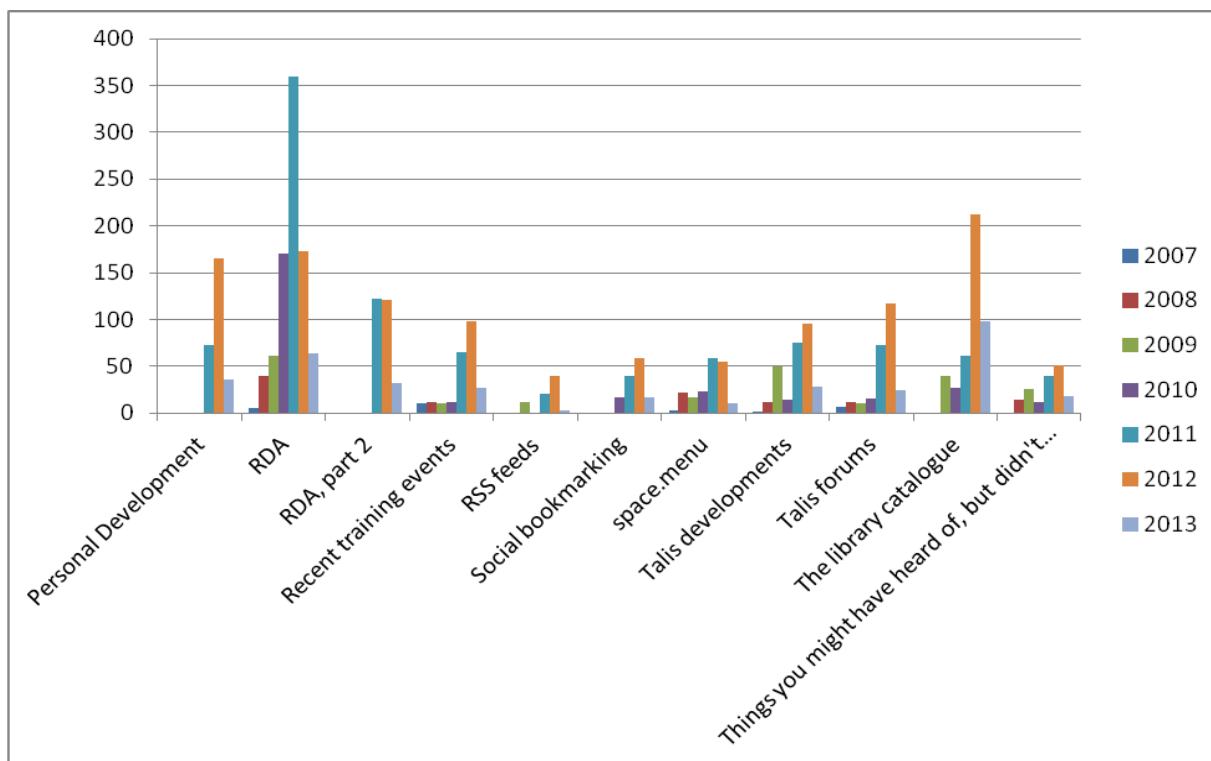


Chart 4: K to P

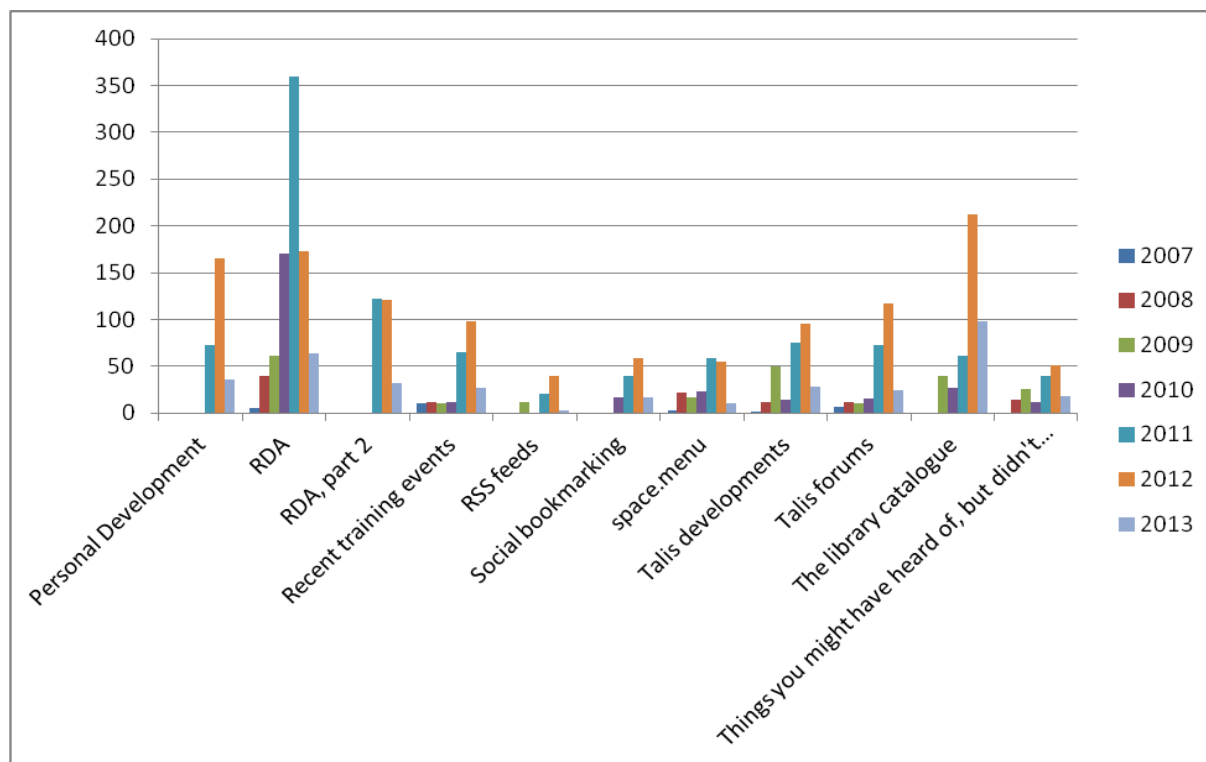


Chart 5: P to T

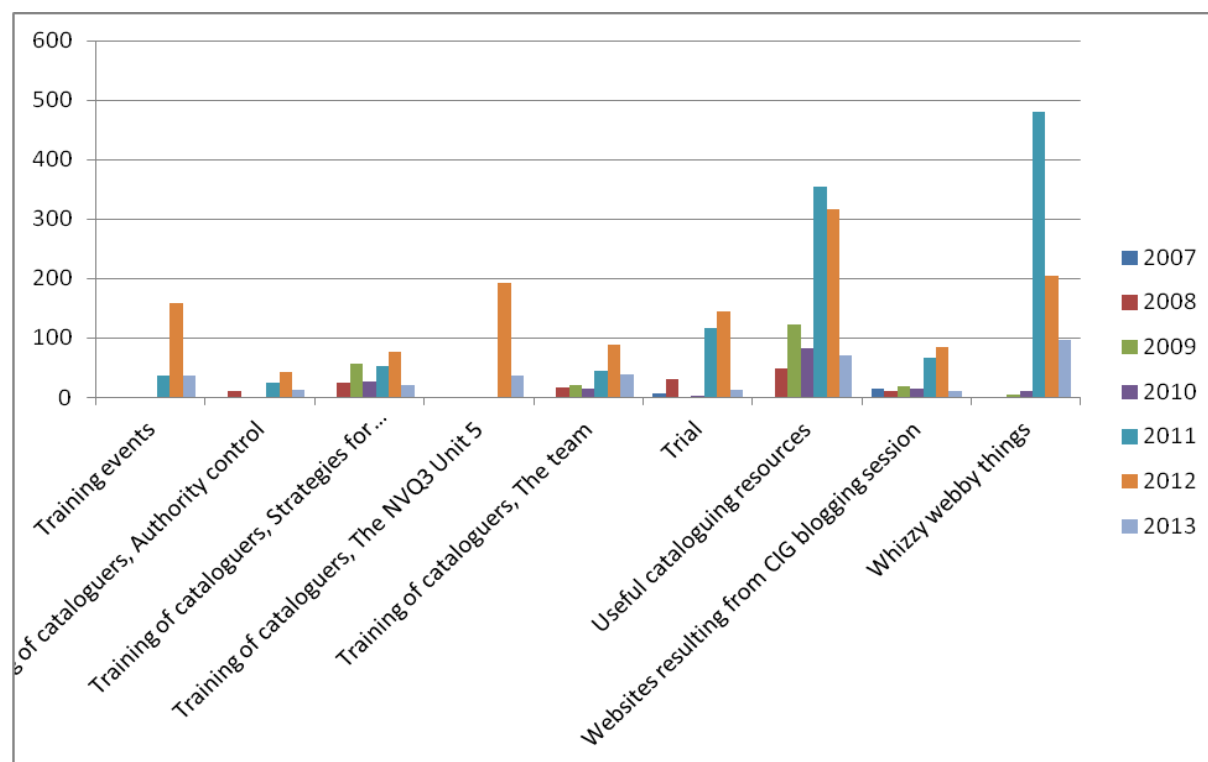


Chart 6: T to W

The following charts show the total number of page views during the life of the wiki (Chart 7), and the number of unique visitors to the wiki (Chart 8).

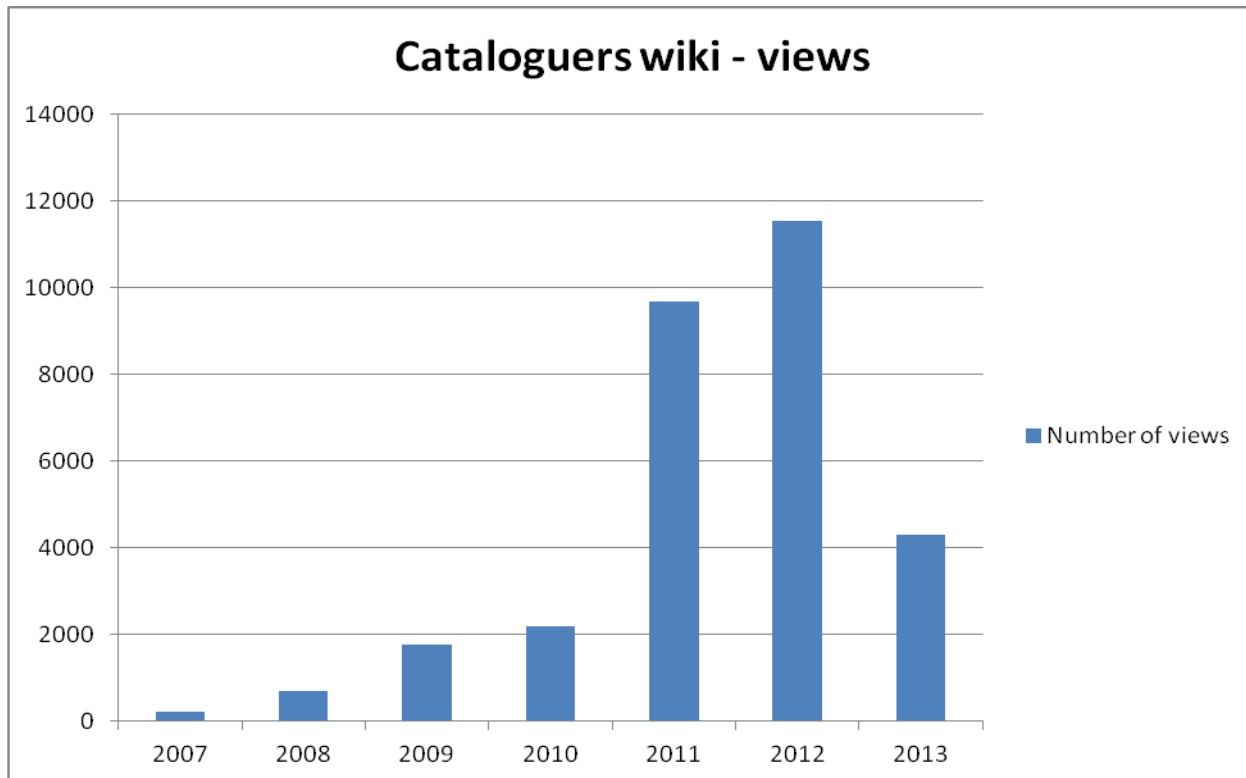


Chart 7: Number of views each year

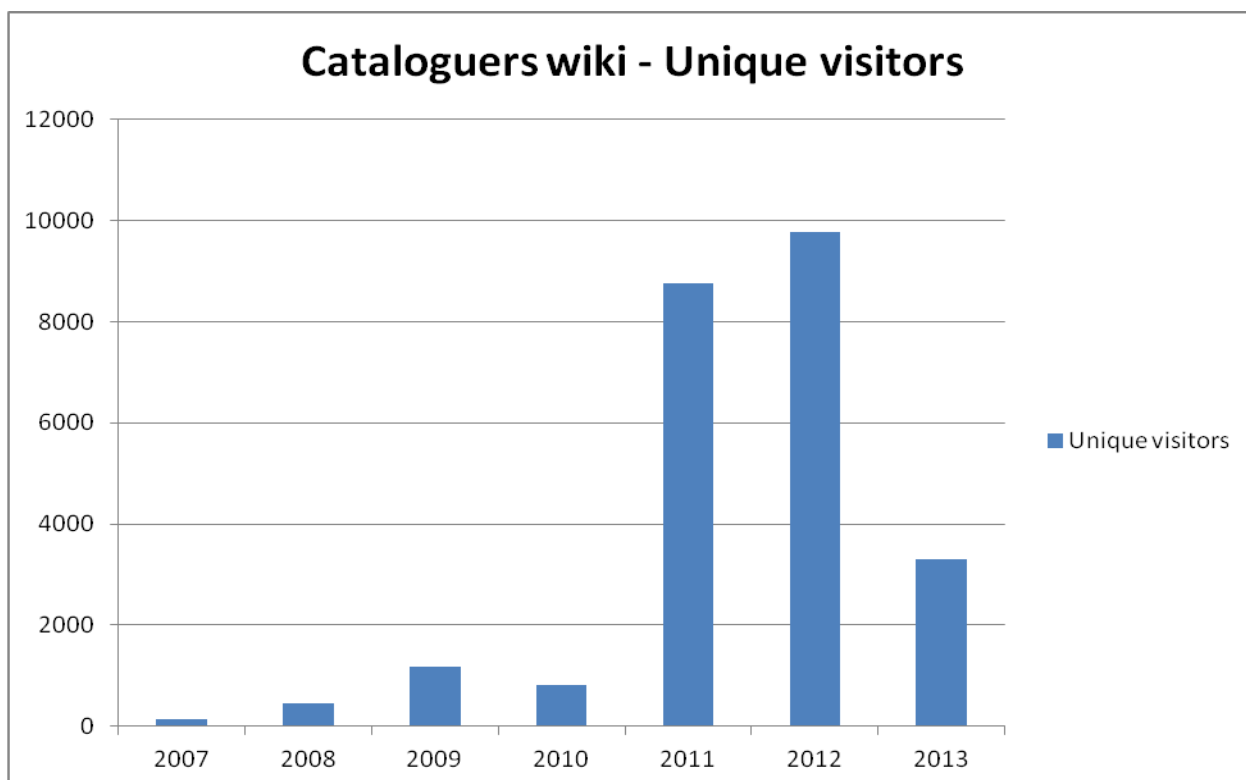


Chart 8: Number of unique visitors each year

Where are the people coming from?

The wiki has a list of 246 countries from whence access might come, which ranges from Andorra to Zimbabwe. Curiously, hits on the wiki have come from as many as 109 of these countries, from United Arab Emirates, to Zimbabwe, and including places the wiki classes as “unknown geographical locations”, “anonymous proxies” and “satellite providers”.

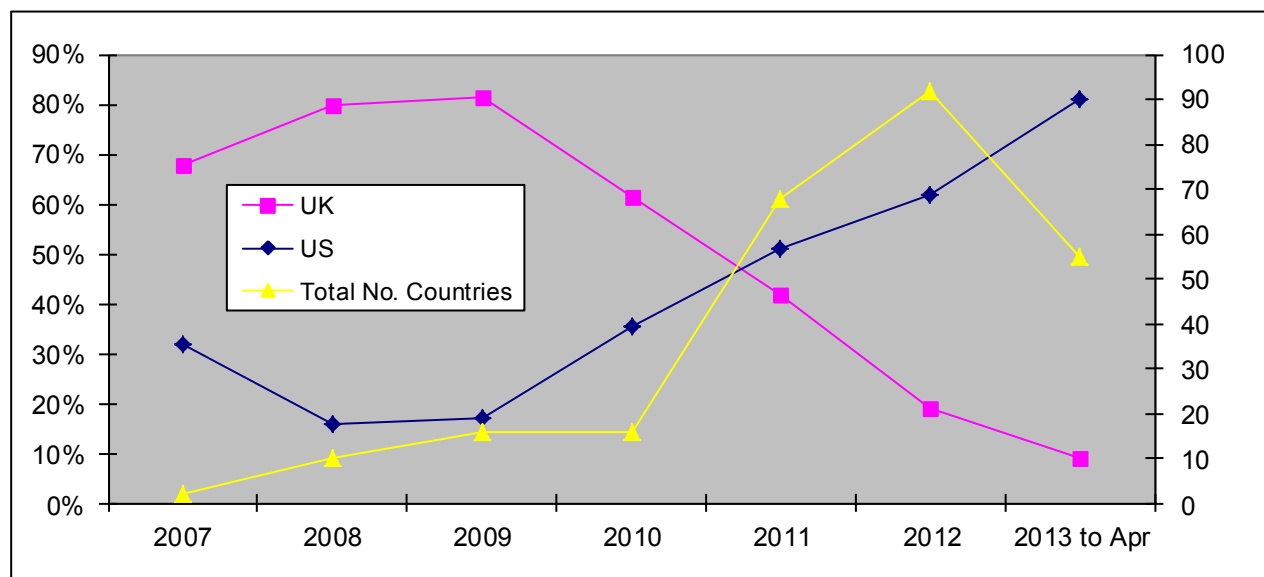
The table below (Table 1) shows the percentage of accesses from countries where the access is 1% or greater.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 to Apr
UK	68%	80%	81.5%	61.5%	42%	19%	9%
US	32%	16%	17%	35.5%	51%	62%	81%
Other Sig-nificant		Saudi Arabia 1.5%				Germany 7.5%, China 2.5%, Canada 1.5%, India 1%	Ukraine 2%, Germany 2%, India 2%, China 1%
Others		7 equal-ling 3.5%	7 equal-ling 1.5%	14 equal-ling 3%	66 equal-ling 7%	86 equalling 6.5%	29 equalling 3%
Total Countries	2	10	16	16	68	92	55

Table 1: Country accesses and percentage accesses

As with some of the other charts, this raises several questions: Why has the wiki become more popular in the US than the UK over its lifetime? Were there really librarians in 92 different countries accessing the wiki in 2012? And again, are people landing here by intent or mistake?

The chart below (Chart 9) shows the total percentage of accesses to the wiki made from the UK (pink) and the US (blue). The yellow line is read against the right hand axis and indicates the number of different countries from whence access came, so for example, access to the wiki came from 92 different countries in 2012.



What does this tell me?

This, of course, provides me with a dilemma! Who am I actually creating this wiki for, since visitors seem to be worldwide? How can I gather more qualitative data? Yes, I know there were over 150 hits on the site on 11 April 2013, but did users find what they wanted to, or were they wasting their time? How many pages did they look at? Did they make one visit or did they come back again? Are they cataloguers? Did they arrive at the wiki by mistake or design? If I knew the answers to these questions, then I might be able to customise the content in a better way.

The effort required to maintain and update the wiki

At one point I was adding items to the wiki on an almost daily basis, but nowadays, it's more likely to be weekly. This is because a) I am now using a tablet at home and whilst I can identify interesting articles, I've still not worked out how to copy and paste a url! b) I got a bit disillusioned as the wikispaces software appears not to be very sophisticated, (which, of course, was why I chose it, because it was easy to use!) or maybe my knowledge of it just isn't good enough, c) also because one of my main sources of information was my custom searches on iGoogle, and since the announcement that this is being dispensed with I've struggled to find the best way to retrieve similar information. On the maintenance issue, I confess the one thing I never do is go back and check that the links still work, so a lot of them are probably now useless.

Drawbacks

As far as I can see there are only a few drawbacks to using a wiki, one major one being the time it takes to keep it up-to-date, but it could just be that I am disorganised! I have links to interesting things scattered everywhere: Sometimes I save urls as bookmarks, sometimes I email them to myself, sometimes I favourite things on Twitter, or like things on Facebook, and sometimes I store links on my tablet! I did have a go with Evernote, but gave up on that when there was a password leak, so trying to pull all these links together can get quite messy!

Another issue is encouraging my cataloguers to update the wiki, which is available for anyone to see, but only the cataloguers have the power to edit and add things. In order to produce some good and interesting stuff they need have no knowledge of anything other than how to type. Obviously, there are whizzier features that can be incorporated, but these do require a little more tenacity to get to grips with.

A further drawback is the limitations on the text editing. This causes me enormous frustration, as I format something the way I want it to appear, but as soon as I save it and view the finished article, the formatting has changed somewhere along the line! It may just be that I haven't invested enough time in understanding how it works, but, as I've already said, time is something I'm a little bit short of!

Finally, I would really love to include some of those whizzy features that I know are possible, and I'd really love to put more descriptive text with my links. I am fully aware that the pages look quite boring, basic and uninspiring, and I would love to be more creative with them, and include more interesting content, but I'm afraid it all links back to that first drawback!

The future

Overall the effort involved in keeping the wiki up-to-date is enormous, and although I am happy to continue to put that effort in, without that quantitative data I'm not sure how worthwhile the wiki is. It does, however, suit me as a place where I can find things that I've remembered about, which is easier than looking in my web browser favourites, which is so huge it's hard to manage, so I do access the wiki and retrieve stuff I know I've put in there that I wouldn't be able to find again otherwise! Whether or not that is reason enough to continue remains to be seen. As an exercise in cpd, this certainly fitted the bill for me, and I will be quite keen to embrace whatever new technology comes along if it helps someone out there somewhere.

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Dyer, Lynne (2009) Blog [WWW]. Available from: <http://bloggingcataloguing.blogspot.com/> [Accessed 29 April 2013].

Dyer, Lynne (2007) Cataloguers' wiki [WWW]. Available from: <http://cataloguers.wikispaces.com/> [Accessed 29 April 2013].

NB As a visitor to the wiki you are not able to view the associated statistics. A copy of the country codes used by Wikispaces is available from the author on request.

Networking is a word that often strikes fear into the hearts of new and experienced professionals alike. They know that their colleagues and peers are able to create a professional network but they don't have a clue where to begin themselves. The good news is that social media tools can help to break down barriers and take the work out of networking!

What networking is and what it isn't

There are many misconceptions about networking. People think that it's something only top executives or those trying to grow their own business do but this is far from true. We all network every day in different ways, we just don't call it networking. Say you are looking for a restaurant for your birthday dinner and ask your friends for some recommendations. Someone suggests a particular venue based on previous experience – the food was excellent, the price was reasonable and the service was good. This is a form of networking. Personal recommendations and experience carry more weight than advertising, especially if they come from people that we trust – our network. Through networking what you are really doing is making yourself and what you do known to other people who might be able to help you in the future. They may need help themselves or even recommend you to others based on your knowledge and experience. The truth is that with all the social media tools available today there are very few barriers to who can network.

Another common misconception is that networking is something scary, especially if you are not naturally outgoing. Whilst it's true that being an extrovert makes the process a little easier, introverts can still network as long as they take their time and plan plenty of breaks to gather themselves. At its heart networking is about making connections and being part of a community.

Why is networking important for cataloguers?

Having a strong cataloguing community is an important way to promote the profession. If cataloguers are seen as active, both within their field and the wider information world, then they can demonstrate our professionalism.

Although cataloguers are no longer always relegated to the 'dusty basement' some elements of the stereotype still linger. It may be that cataloguers don't get as much interaction with colleagues in other departments as they would like or that they only do cataloguing as part of a larger role rather than as a specialism. There are also many solo cataloguers who struggle to find someone to turn to for cataloguing advice. Having access to an active group of professionals can help cataloguers whether they have questions or just want to keep up with current debates, especially if they are new to the profession.

There is a strong cataloguing community out there, especially online. This group works hard to promote cataloguing both within their own organisations and the wider library community. It's important to take advantage of this community but it can be intimidating to just start joining in. Networking can take place either online or off but it is important to remember the general principles before you start either.

General networking tips

There are some basics that it is important to remember, whichever type of networking you are involved in.

It's important to be yourself when networking. Trying to be someone you're not, however impressive you think it makes you sound, can be very hard work and you are much more likely to make a foolish mistake.

When building your network you want to build a rapport with people and this is much easier when you're being true to yourself. There's a lot of worry when networking that people won't want anything to do with you. It's important not to be intimidated by this and focus on the consequences of people saying *yes* rather than *no*. Having said that, cataloguers are a very friendly bunch who usually jump at the chance to help people so don't worry too much!

Spend some time developing an *elevator pitch*. This is a short and punchy couple of sentences that sum who you are and what you do. The idea originated from the question 'what would you say if you were in a lift with the CEO of your company and you only had thirty seconds to sell yourself professionally'? Elevator pitches are a good way to consolidate your thinking about yourself and the image you want to project. They also make eye-catching headlines on your social media profiles...

Online networking

Using social media tools is an excellent way to establish a professional network, especially if you're intimidated by the thought of face-to-face networking. Using social media you can reach people all over the world and at all levels of the profession. The online cataloguing community is particularly strong and welcoming which can lead to some interesting discussions.

The first step in online networking is to establish a consistent profile. Try to have the same photograph on your profiles – a simple head and shoulders shot is ideal. This way people can see who they are networking with, and may even recognise you from previous events. You can let your personality shine through but remember that you are creating a professional online identity so be careful in your image choice.

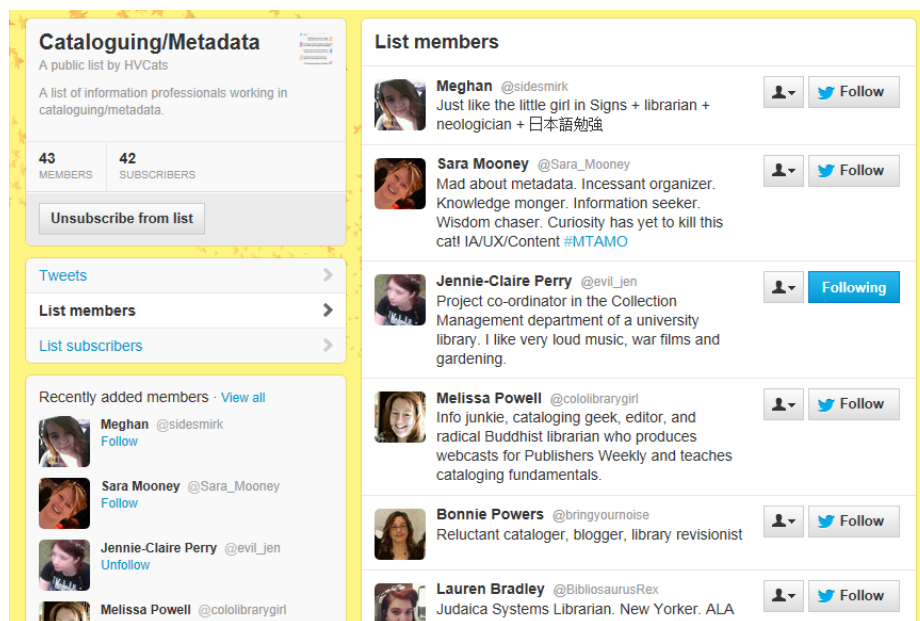
What follows is an exploration of some of the most popular social media tools used for professional networking. Although there are many sites out there, with more being added every day, the sites below are well established meaning that you are more likely to find people that you know or want to network with.

Twitter

Twitter is probably the most active social media platform for cataloguers. For those who are unfamiliar with Twitter it's a micro-blogging platform that allows you to post short messages of no more than 140 characters. Once you have signed up for an account it is easy to start making connections. An excellent place to begin is by using someone else's hard work and looking at a list of cataloguing people on Twitter! The excellent HVCats website (<http://highvisibilitycataloguing.wordpress.com/>) has set up a list of tweeting cataloguers, as shown overleaf:

(<http://highvisibilitycataloguing.wordpress.com/>) has set up a list of tweeting cataloguers, as shown below:

Once you have found a list which is appropriate you can just start following people. Most people have open accounts that anyone can follow but if you see a small padlock next to a name then it means that their account is private. You can still follow them but you will have to wait for approval before their tweets are visible to you. Lists can be created by anyone on Twitter and are a useful tool for organising who you follow. You can have lists for personal and professional purposes, or for different aspects of your professional life. Once you have followed some people and have seen what they tweet about you can follow others that they interact with - you will be surprised at how fast your network starts to build.



(<https://twitter.com/HVCats/cataloguing-metadata>)

The next step to networking on Twitter is to get involved in some conversations that interest you. People can feel a little strange about this, almost as if it's barging in on someone's private moment, but if the original posters intended their conversation to be private they wouldn't be having it on Twitter! Remember that you are limited to 140 characters so use them wisely. Hashtags in Twitter can be used to follow a conversation or event, even if you don't personally follow all the participants. Look out for the # symbol followed by text highlighted in blue. Click on this and you can see all the tweets tagged with this hashtag. Follow along with a conversation and jump in if you feel you have something to say, especially if you have an answer to a question that someone is asking. You can also use Twitter to promote information that you find professionally relevant or even use it to share your blog posts. Twitter can be an excellent way to develop a network but it's important to use it to interact rather than just to push out information about yourself and what you are doing. Get into conversations with other people and respond when they tweet you otherwise you're not making the most of the networking opportunities that Twitter offers.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is probably the most widely known social media tool for networking. It was set up specifically for professionals to network with each other and is now often used by people, including employers, to see the professional history of others.

Whereas other tools can have a balance of the personal and the professional, LinkedIn should only be used to showcase your professional persona. Once you have registered for a profile the site gives you clear instructions on things to include. There are sections detailing your work experience, any publications or projects you have been involved in as well as your contact information.

Summary

During my time at Cambridge University Library I have held a number of cataloguing related roles. Currently I am cataloguing modern material in the English Cataloguing Department.

My professional interests include cataloguing and library advocacy. I am particularly interested in promoting the role of the cataloguer and cataloguing department, both internally and externally. I also take an interest in social media and its role in libraries, and researched the impact of social media marketing in libraries as part of my MSc dissertation.

Experience

Senior Cataloguer University of Cambridge

August 2012 – Present (10 months) | Cambridge, United Kingdom

As a senior cataloguer I am responsible for checking the work of junior and intermediate staff to make sure it meets the standards needed. I also provide training in cataloguing and classification to junior staff. In addition to cataloguing I undertake authority work, regularly submitting new headings to Library of Congress.



Cataloguer University of Cambridge

September 2007 – August 2012 (5 years)

I catalogue both modern materials and early Twentieth century books. I also have experience of cataloguing rare books and importing large files of bibliographic data.



Don't worry if you don't feel you have much to add to begin with, you can always update your profile as your career develops. It's important to begin with an up to date CV in order to showcase your achievements as well as a short statement that reflects who you are. If you're having problems writing your personal statement then why not use or adapt your elevator pitch as this can be a useful starting point.

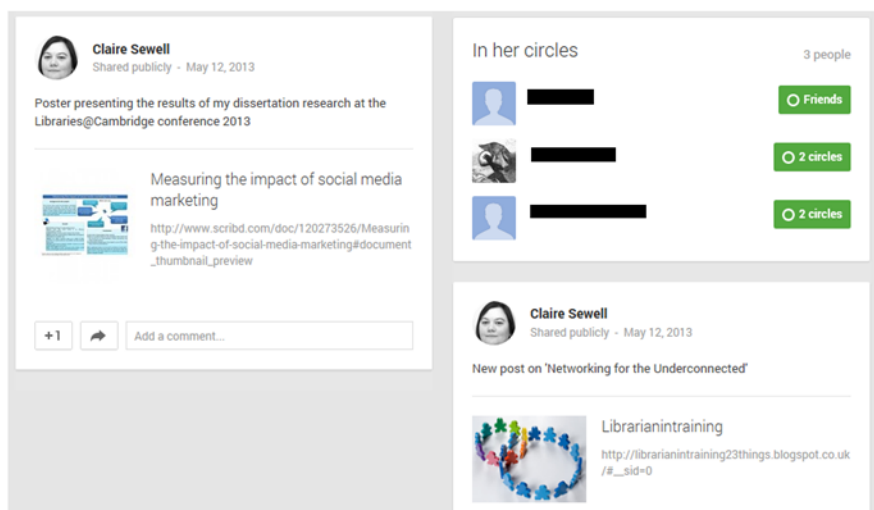
Once you have established your profile you can begin to make connections. Start by looking for people you know through your real life work or your studies. Whereas sites like Twitter let you follow anyone LinkedIn takes a much more professionally orientated approach and will ask how you know the person that you're attempting to connect with. Joining a group is one of the best ways to grow your LinkedIn network.

There are groups dedicated to many professional causes and organisations, for example I'm a member of the CILIP group. Groups are used as forums for discussion and it's important to remain active in order to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise. Much like Twitter, don't be afraid to join in a conversation if you feel you have something to say. Being active in a group will help you to connect with its members and grow your professional network. Since groups require a time commitment it's important to join groups that reflect your interests. Start with one or two groups and see how much you can contribute - you may even wind up starting your own group!

As you develop as a professional you can use your profile to keep your connections up to date. LinkedIn allows you to share blog posts, links to articles or presentations that you have given. This is a great way of letting a wide audience know what you have been working on and can lead to new connections or even new projects.

Google+

Google+ is a relatively new tool, having been launched in 2011. Although similar to Facebook it has some advantages that make it more appropriate for professional networking. With Google+ you can add friends or colleagues to your network but you can put them into individual circles depending on who they are, for example you can have a circle for cataloguers, one for people that you already work with and another for your friends. The advantage of this is that you can control what individual parts of your network see – something that can be handy if you want to maintain a separate professional and personal identity online.



Much like LinkedIn there are groups called 'communities' that you can join to discuss your interests and you can share updates on your activities in much the same way. A major advantage of Google+ is the hangouts feature which allows you to video-conference other members. This has been used by a growing number of people to hold online events and in the future could be the best way to combine online and face to face networking.

So what now?

You can bring your social media presence together in a number of ways. Instead of posting updates on each site simultaneously you can link your accounts together so that, for instance, your blog can post regular updates straight to your LinkedIn profile. A word of caution about this, remember that you are trying to maintain a *professional* social media presence so it's important to make sure that any content shared across sites is appropriate. You don't want pictures of that drunken night from Facebook showing up on your LinkedIn profile! If you think that this might be a problem for you it's worthwhile considering having separate accounts, one for professional and one for personal use. Just remember that this can get confusing. Ultimately it's about finding what works best for you.

To ease yourself into networking it's sometimes a good idea to start networking with a specific goal in mind. If you're attending an event such as Umbrella then why not tweet that you're going and see if you get any responses? This can be a valuable way to 'meet' people before the event and is a great confidence booster. At the other end of the scale why not organise a meet up of your online network in real life? Twitter users in the same area often do this (they're called tweet-ups) and they can be a valuable way to extend your network. It is much easier to network with people face to face when you feel as though you know them through their social media presence.

It's important to use both online and real life networking when attempting to build or grow your professional network. Social media can be the ideal route for someone new to networking but it shouldn't be used exclusively at the expense of face-to-face networking.

Use social media as a supplement to your real-life networking so you can develop your skills in both. This way you can reap the full benefits and this could lead to valuable future opportunities. The sky's the limit - just forget the myths, get out there and give it a try!

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The Reluctant Networker / Neil Munz-Jones

LinkedIn Made Easy: Business Social Networking Simplified / Linda Parkinson-Hardman

Crafting an Elevator Pitch: Introducing your Company Quickly and Compellingly. Retrieved from: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/elevator-pitch.htm>

This article looks at how Twitter is used at professional events like conferences, meetings, workshops, seminar etc. For those who don't know Twitter: It is a micro-blogging site – you sign up, create brief messages of max. 140 characters (tweets), and 'follow' others i.e. read their tweets in your timeline. Different from being Facebook friends you can follow someone who doesn't follow you back and vice versa. Although this could lead to rather arbitrary babble, if you choose those you follow wisely (e.g. mainly cataloguers) you will get useful links, learn about current affairs in your area of interest, can follow conversations and participate in discussions (i.e. mention or reply to "@username"), and get to know people before meeting them which is a great ice-breaker. If nothing else Twitter is one giant conversation and best used as such – i.e. say something about yourself, share things that are interesting to your audience, comment on their statements, repeat their statements you found interesting (i.e. retweet by using "RT"), and observe courtesy as if talking face-to-face.

If Twitter is that virtualised conversation, this begs the question whether it is at all useful at an event when you can have a real-life discussions. Would it not be more appropriate to give all your attention to the speaker, the presentation and the other delegates rather than spurting snippets out into the WWW? Before I argue that you can do all these even better by tweeting, let's look at how this parallel conversation works.

Usually tweets can only be read by your followers... unless you include a hashtag, a brief 'name' (often abbreviation or acronym) for the event preceded by the hash sign "#". This can then be searched for, so that people who don't normally follow you can see your tweet. I suppose hashtags were originally crowd-sourced but now event organisers recognise their value for discoverability and decide on and promote one beforehand. For them, live tweets are simply publicity, a bit like live coverage on radio or TV. For the audience this backchannel allows for much more active participation. So the benefits for tweeters, followers, speakers and organisers are (or at least can be):

- The audience is forced to concentrate.
- The attending audience gets more content.
- The non-attending audience get content (at all).
- The audience can participate (even without attending or when too shy to speak up).
- The audience can connect with each other.
- The event reaches beyond those attending.
- The attending audience engages (better).
- The audience can pose and answer(!) questions.
- The audience can give immediate feedback.

A word of caution for live tweeters: Tweeting a session is all consuming —listening, condensing it into a tweet and reading what others tweet is intense. The 'condensing' bit is the real challenge and inevitably it carries the risk of over-simplification or even distortion of what is being said. When boiling down the audible and visual presentation into 140 character chunks I find it helpful to remind myself of the conversational aspect, so asking myself: what is absolutely essential to someone just (re-)joining this conversation?

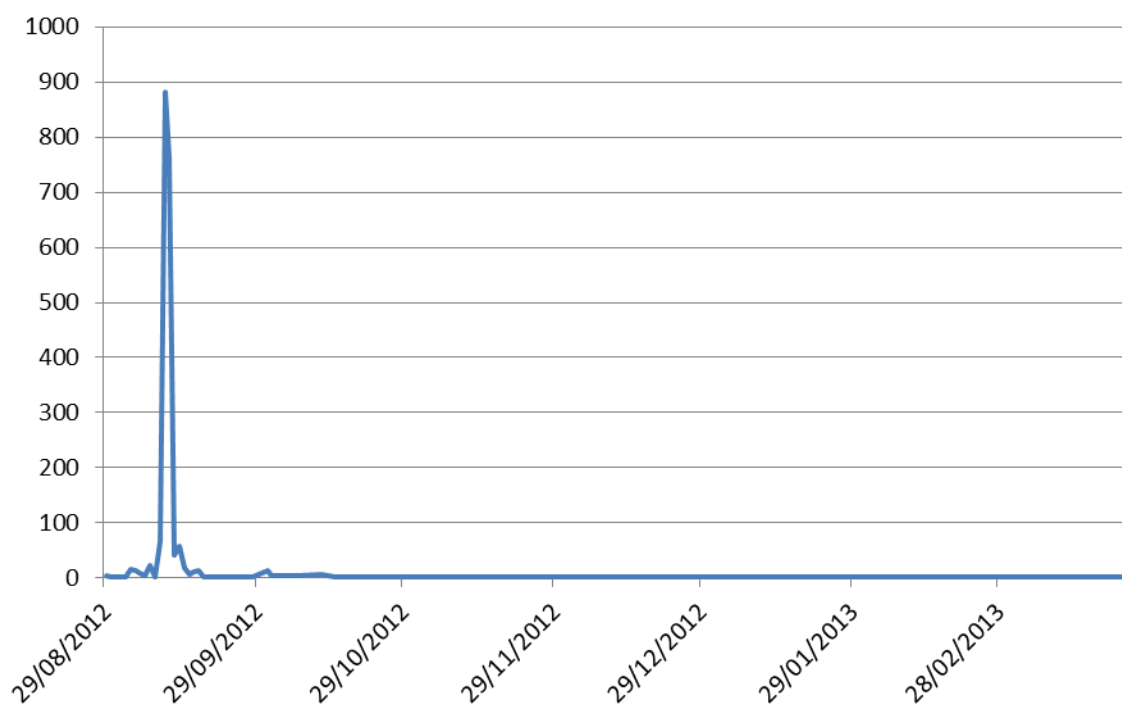
Distortion was exactly the reason one presenter once gave when he asked us not to tweet. (This has happened only once to me and needless to say that I respected that). Other speakers might fear negative comments... although more commonly organisers and presenters seem to feel that the value of amplifying an event via

Twitter outweighs the risk of mal-representation; and there is also the idea that the ‘crowd’ (i.e. sum of tweet-ers) will correct any aberration—if not directly then simply by the mass of more adequate tweets. Whether that really works is a different matter...

Obviously, if the speaker has a Twitter handle it’s helpful to include that; alongside any links they give —this can be a bit tricky on the fly though unless they are already shortened and remain on the slide long enough; in that case I have plugged them in at the end of the session. It is even more important to give the URL of the presentation is or will be made available online; this gives yourself, any attendants and those following via Twitter something to go (and come back) to.

Event tweeting can still be very useful after the event too: there are various tools (e.g. <https://storify.com/>, <http://www.tweetarchivist.com/>) available to archive particular tweets which allows you to evaluate afterwards what’s been said, by whom, when, from where etc. As an example here are some figures from last year’s CIG conference (#cig12).

Tweets over time at #cig12

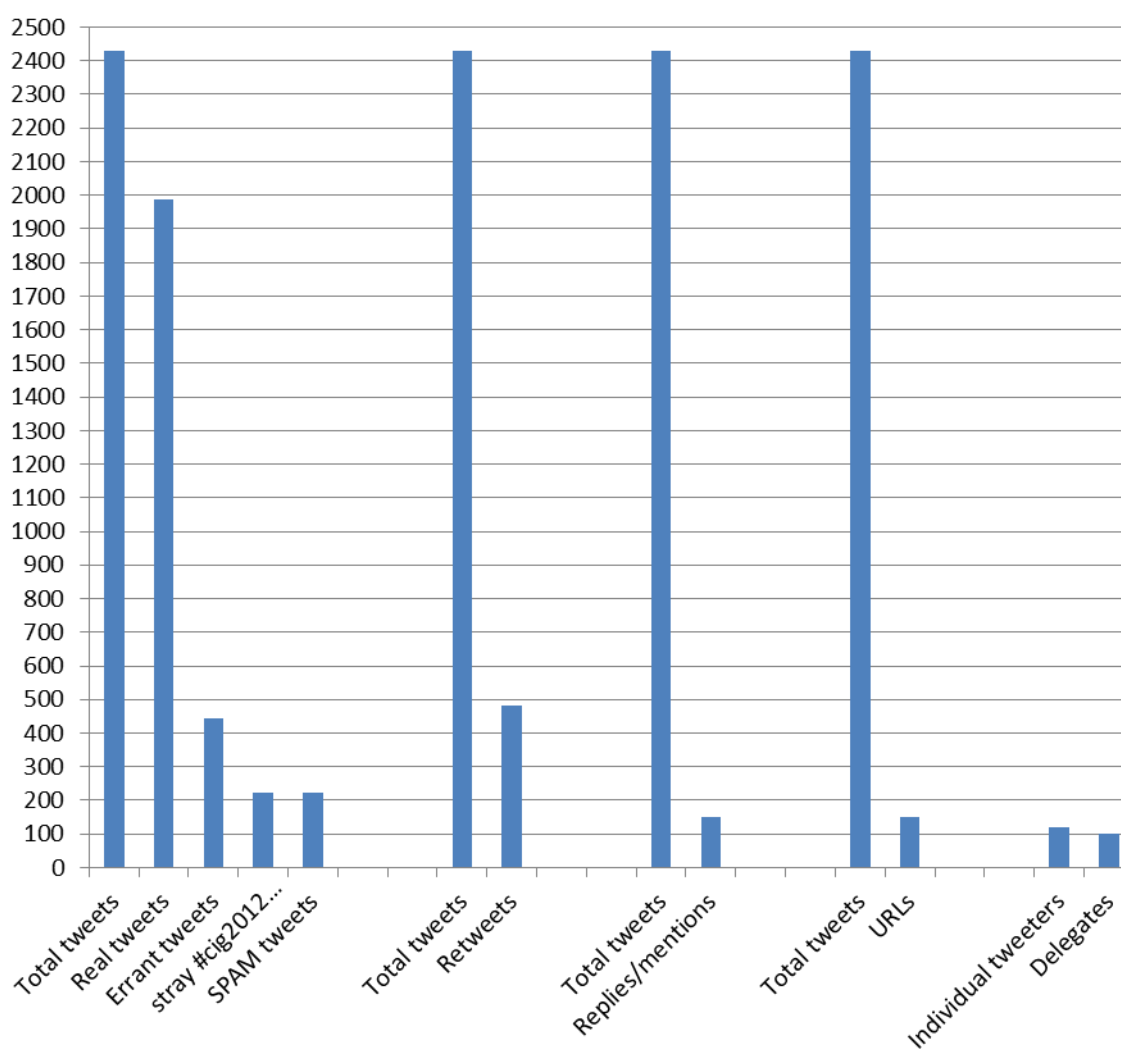


Not shown in this timeline is that in the afternoon of the first conference day (10th September) the hashtag #cig12 was trending in the UK! Hashtags are automatically monitored and if the frequency reaches a threshold they are displayed on the Twitter page. (This immediately attracted spam tweets with “#cig12” which was a bit annoying but most delegates/tweeters took this lightly.)

Around the same time as the CIG conference there was Canadian conference on gaming that had a very similar hashtag: #cig2012; some of their participants used #cig12 instead. This was quickly noted and – again via Twitter itself – addressed. For the word cloud only genuine tweets were used; and the following graph gives some overall numbers.



#cig12 in figures



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Jeff Hurt: The Conference Backchannel: Bonus Or Bomb? (on <http://jeffhurtblog.com/2011/02/24/conference-backchannel-bonus-or-bomb/> published on 24/2/2011, visited on 6/6/2013)

Brunel Library's background in social media

At Brunel University Library, we maintain a keen watch on technology trends and have been using social media since 2009. Our Twitter account¹, set up June 2009, has 1277 followers as of February 2013, and we average 2.4 tweets a day. Our Facebook page² was set up in October 2009 and now has 2424 likes. With social media's focus being on communication and interaction, both sites are monitored constantly so that they are not simply streams for pushing news and updates, but places for conversations and debate.

In its past forms, Facebook has allowed for easy development of apps, and we wrote a catalogue search app for Facebook in 2010. Users could add this "box" to their page and use it to search the catalogue for books and journals from within Facebook; they could click items to link out to the catalogue to place reservations.

We did not include a My Account feature due to initial time constraints and the fact that the account side was more complicated; as the systems librarian, I developed the app, but am not a developer and have limited coding skills. We did not prioritise time to develop the account side later, as we did not see high usage of the app. As Facebook revised its page structures, and development platforms changed, the app was retired after around a year; it was decided to retire it rather than do the necessary re-coding to keep it working, again due to limited time and development resources.

When SirsiDynix announced their Social Library product³ in late 2011, we were therefore very interested: it was a more functionality-rich Facebook app and we would not have the maintenance and development overheads. Social Library was to consist of two sides: one being the search and account features, and the other being the bookshelf feature, where users could save lists of items and create and share bookshelves.

Getting approval for Social Library

The case to purchase Social Library was relatively easy to make and we were successful in getting the spending approved. At a time when student fees were rising and students were expecting more, it was important to show that the Library was still investing in and expanding services, yet we had already made great service improvements and had fewer opportunities for quick wins.

We were unable to release a mobile Library website so were especially keen to expand services in mobile-friendly environments to fill the gap. The possibility of paying bills through the account feature of Social Library was also particularly appealing as our online payment function in the Library catalogue is somewhat restrictive for users (pending our upgrade in summer 2013).

The sharing aspect of Social Library would also make it an excellent tool for viral promotion and enhancing the Library image with minimal staff input; marketing was an area we weren't investing heavily in, so again this showed added value to the app. Furthermore, with this interactive aspect, as well as our growing base of users liking our page on Facebook, we hoped it could draw more users than a simple search-only app so we were

¹ http://twitter.com/brunel_library

² <https://www.facebook.com/bruneluniversitylibrary>

³ <http://www.sirsidynix.com/sociallibrary>

optimistic that there might be a better uptake from students this time.

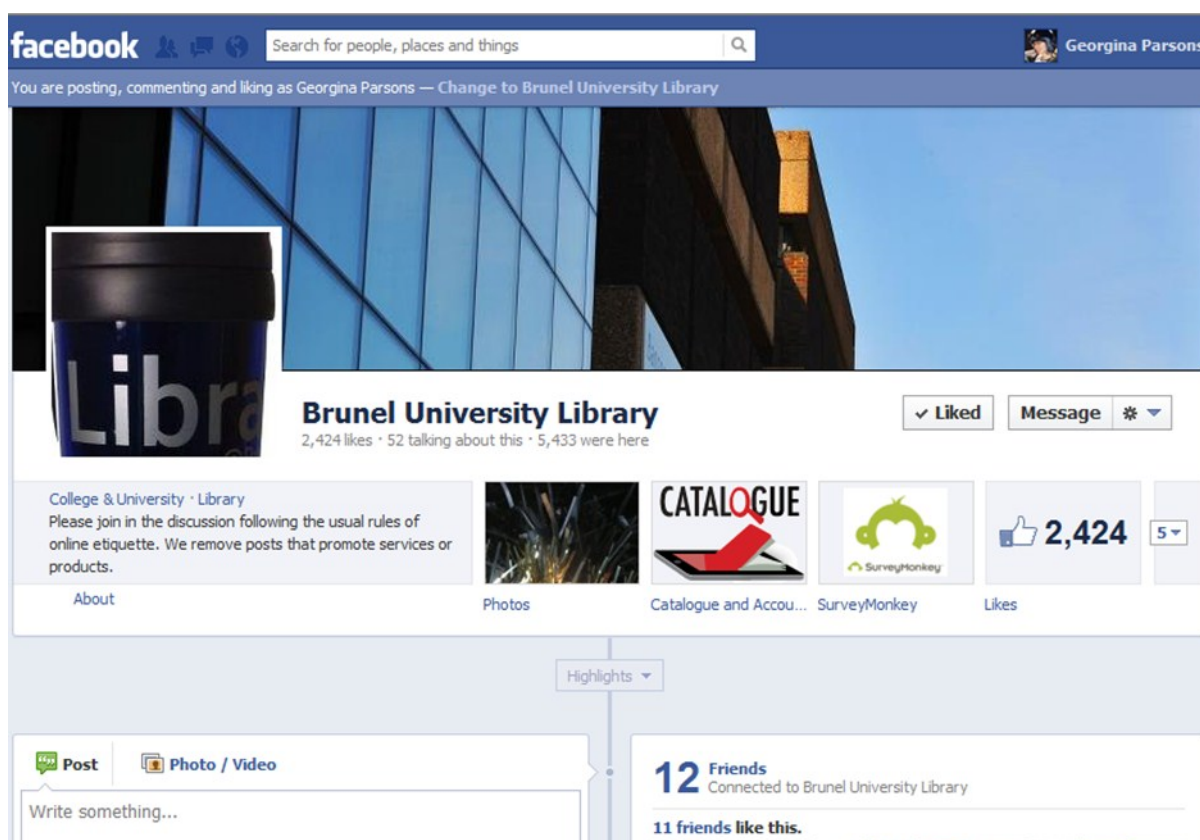
Finally, it is always pleasing to benefit from an early adopter discount!

Beta testing and go-live

In January 2012, beta testing of Social Library began. SirsiDynix have an excellent history of working with customers before products are released, which does require staff time investment from the customer, but allows for very thorough testing and confidence and knowledge in the product from the outset.

Most bugs were ironed out very quickly – the benefit of beta testing being the direct contact with the developers to allow for fast resolution of issues – so the first release was satisfactory with no major problems. At this stage, Social Library consisted of just the catalogue search and account side, as the bookshelf aspect was set aside in order for it to be redeveloped for fuller integration with other SirsiDynix products.

May 2012 saw the official release of Social Library 1.0.4 and it was added prominently to our Facebook page with the default label “Catalogue and Account” (although a shorter name might be better on the display):



The installation was extremely simple and well-documented by SirsiDynix, with the admin time needed no more than a few hours. Similarly, any updates are controlled by SirsiDynix with email notification to sites to alert them to any major changes.

Initial promotion

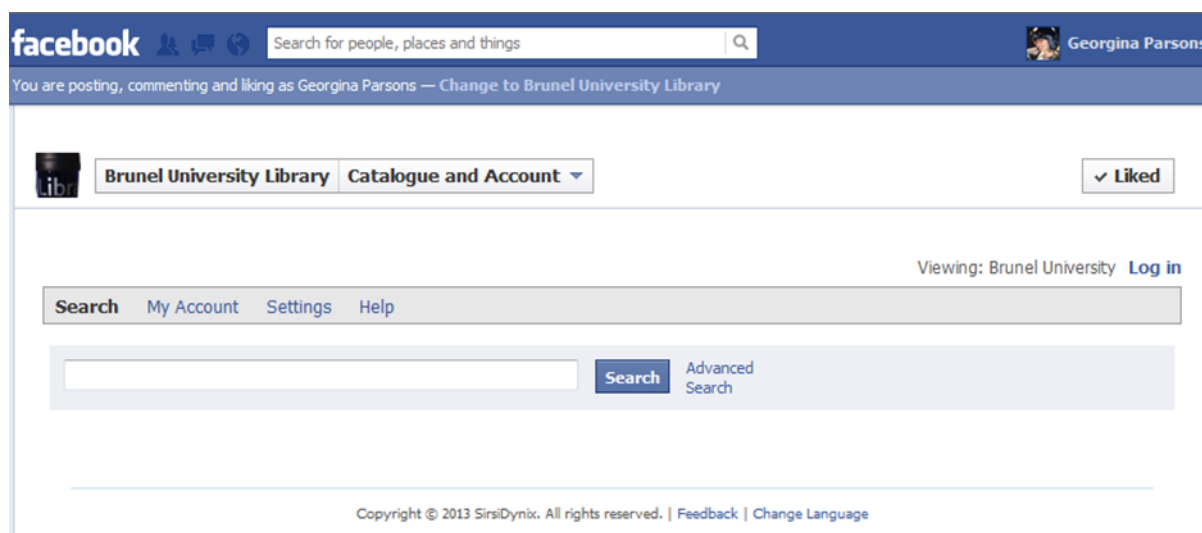
We promoted the new feature on our existing social media channels, as potential users would already be there, with mentions on Twitter and Facebook and of course ensuring it is visible on the page. It is additionally mentioned on our website, under our “Getting Started”⁴ section where we provide information on renewing; and in our knowledge base/reference software, LibAnswers, in an FAQ on renewals⁵.

When informing students about account management options (for example, when they’re asking for fines to be waived because of a reminder email they did not see), we also point out the various options available to them, including the Facebook features amongst other services.

We promote Social Library primarily for account management as Summon is our main search front-end encompassing e-books and e-journals as well as catalogue content, so we do encourage users to use that instead of the opac.

An overview of the app interface

The app homescreen is clean with a top bar of menu functions, with Settings only available to administrative users:



It is simple to use for a quick search, but there are no options for limiting by item type or location, and the Advanced Search takes a very different approach from that of the opac:

⁴ <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/services/library/about/library-101/renewing>

⁵ <http://libanswers.brunel.ac.uk/a.php?qid=78822>

Advanced Search

Find items that have

Keywords:
Title:
Author:
Subject:

Don't show items that have

Keywords:
Title:
Author:
Subject:

Limiting and filtering is not possible either from the search results screen, however the majority of searches on our opac and on Summon are quick keyword searches, so this may not be an issue to many users.


The search results screen is very clean with the expected feature of Facebook's "like" button by each item; it is not a simple "like" but rather a "share" feature, as it provides a pop-up for you to add a comment before posting the item to Facebook in your activity stream. There is also a "send" feature which allows the user to send the item to contacts using Facebook messages.

[Search](#) [My Account](#) [Settings](#) [Help](#)

[Home](#) » [Search Results](#)

[Advanced Search](#)

1-2 of 2 Items





1

Number-crunching : taming unruly computational problems from mathematical physics to science fiction : a collection of challenging problems in mathematical physics that roar like lions when attacked analytically, but which purr like kittens when confronted by a high-speed electronic computer and its powerful scientific software (plus some speculations for the future from science fiction)

Author: Nahin, Paul J.

Available: 1

Format: 




0

Schrödinger's kittens : and the search for reality

Author: Gribbin, John, 1946-

Available: 1

Format: 

1-2 of 2 Items


Cover art and other enrichment is displayed using the customer's Syndetics subscription where available.

The display is fully controlled by SirsiDynix with no options for customisation by the customer; this is generally not a problem although can cause confusion because of the difference from the opac. For instance the format icons are hidden on our opac because the way they are automatically set means they are not always accurate for our stock, and the "available" number does not offer the useful additional detail of the opac hitlist (giving the library and location).






The full item detail display screen is again very attractive with practical expanding boxes for enriched content such as the summary.


[Search](#) [My Account](#) [Settings](#) [Help](#)

Home » Search Results » Item Details



Number-crunching : taming unruly computational problems from mathematical physics to science fiction : a collection of challenging problems in mathematical physics that roar like lions when attacked analytically, but which purr like kittens when confronted by a high-speed electronic computer and its powerful scientific software (plus some speculations for the future from science fiction)

 +1  Tweet  Like  Send  You like this.

Author: Nahin, Paul J.
ISBN: 9780691144252
Publisher: Princeton University Press,
Publication Date: c2011.
Format: 

▼ Available Copies

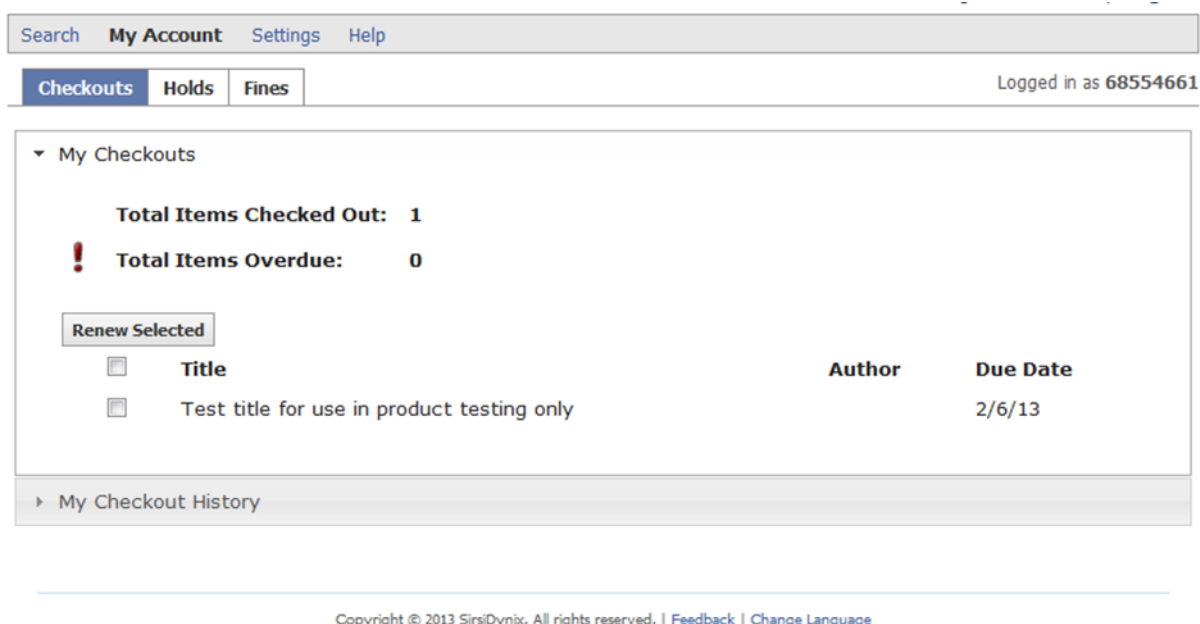
Libraries	Material Type	Shelf Number	Status
UXBRIDGE	LONGLOAN	QC20.7.E4N33 2011	Shelves - floor 2

► Summary

When clicking "My Account" the user is prompted to log in and then has a menu of three functions. The appearance is smooth and uses concertina boxes again for sections within a page, and includes by default both checkout history and payment history.

However, there is again currently no customisation so sites that do not charge fines cannot hide this tab, and we have been unable to rename "Holds" to "Reservations" which can lead to confusion. Having requested further local control, this is an area being reviewed by SirsiDynix, with some enhancements planned for an update later this year.

Example account screen:



Outstanding development issues

Whilst bug fixes and tweaks were very rapid and we achieved quick feedback during beta testing, there have been few changes since Social Library's launch, apart from the introduction of Google Analytics integration in version 1.1 in late 2012. This release did not include bug fixes and several issues are outstanding; as with any software, there are minor issues which can be overlooked, but there are also some we see as critical.

In the earlier screenshot of the item details page, the availability box has column labels we would like to re-name (a minor issue and they may suit some libraries, but we would not refer to a "Shelf Number", and "material type" is somewhat misleading for some of our records); it also displays the LMS's internal policy names rather than the public-facing descriptions for both "Libraries" and "Material Type". This is a critical problem when internal names (which cannot be edited) such as 18VID-24HR are displayed as such, instead of their human-readable description of "18-rated DVD (3 day loan)". This is a long-term problem initially caused by practical restraints in the web services used, but where we are still awaiting a fix.

In the My Account screenshot, the date of "2/6/13" refers to a due date of the 6th of February 2013, because there is no "UK" version of the app (although currency can be configured and the Fines screen does show amounts in £). This is a more recent problem caused by an unannounced change from the previous display where the month was displayed in letters, therefore the month-day-year order was not ambiguous.

A recent update from SirsiDynix does, however, confirm that the above key issues are now scheduled to be addressed in the Social Library 1.1.1 release at the end of April 2013.

Social Library evaluation and usage

The interface design is excellent with a very smooth, attractive, and intuitive layout and simple functioning throughout. The stability of the app has also been impressive, with only brief and intermittent access issues that are not replicable across browsers, so may reflect the unreliability of the Facebook platform rather than the app.

However, the two major issues mentioned above do mean that we are reluctant to promote the app further until these are resolved, and the lack of customisation is a drawback for us.

We have also learnt that the payment of fines through Social Library will only be supported with PayPal, whereas we use a different system (Capita's AXIS) supported by SirsiDynix on the opac but not in this app.

There are additional areas where improvements we had hoped for cannot be implemented, for reasons outside SirsiDynix's control. For example, we had wrongly assumed that this could be used from a mobile device; Facebook's page setup means that apps on pages are not accessible in Facebook mobile. Additionally, during beta testing many customers asked about the use of Facebook notifications as alerts when items are due, to take full advantage of the integration possibilities, but this is not possible due to Facebook coding/access limits.

Google Analytics for January 2013 shows 37 visits by 24 people to our Social Library instance; six of seven exit pages were areas of My Account. Transaction reporting in Symphony 3.3.1 required some configuration updates but from 3.4.1 renewal counts should be straightforward. Our average stats on the Library catalogue are 30 000 searches and 15 000 logins per month; Brunel's population is approximately 15 000 students and around 2 500 staff.

Whilst usage of Social Library therefore appears very low, there is no one clear and simple reason, but a variety of key areas that can be considered.

After our initial announcements, we have relied on general communications and FAQs rather than a marketing push. When the date and item displays are corrected we will be in a better place to promote Social Library again and try to increase usage.

However, not all staff and students may be on Facebook or simply may not want to combine work with their personal online presence (certainly, our Library page has only 2 424 likes, so it is unwise to consider our full user base as potential users of Social Library).

Currently the app does not offer many functionality enhancements over the Library catalogue, and, as Social Library is not accessible on Facebook mobile so users will necessarily be on a PC or tablet, the catalogue is logically a more efficient choice for searches and account functionality. As and when the bookshelves feature is introduced to Social Library (we await further news later this year), perhaps users will see more appeal in the app; this would also be a good feature to use in promotion.

Social Library is almost a year old so we are looking forward to seeing how it develops, and what user take-up might be achievable in the future.

Georgina Parsons is happy to be contacted for further information on Brunel Library's Social Library experience.

Goodreads and LibraryThing are the two most popular social cataloguing sites on the Web: sites that allow users to catalogue their own books using metadata and slick interfaces. In March 2013, Goodreads announced that it would be acquired by Amazon.com. This transaction prompted much wailing and gnashing of teeth in the bibliotwitoblogosphere with users worried about the impact that Amazon.com – a commercial bookseller – would have on Goodreads' previously neutral online community of book-lovers. Following this announcement, the author of this article decided to compare the two sites to see if Amazon.com's acquisition is an indicator of superior quality and to explore the phenomenon of social cataloguing (1).

Assorted facts (2)

Goodreads:

Founder(s): Otis Chandler and Elizabeth Chandler

Launch date: December 2006

Based in: San Francisco, CA, USA

No. of staff: 35

Users: Approx. 17,000,000

Books: Approx. 550,000,000

Reviews: Approx. 23,000,000

Owned by: Majority share: Amazon.com

Cost: Free (with ads)

No. of Twitter followers: 647,067

No. of words in their Wikipedia article: 1682

No. of capitalised letters in their company's logo name: 0

No. of concatenated words in the company's name: 2

Date the author joined Goodreads: 16 March 2013

No. of books that the author has on Goodreads: 476

No. of 'friends' that the author has on Goodreads: 30

LibraryThing:

Founder(s):	Tim Spalding
Launch date:	29 August 2005
Based in:	Portland, ME, USA
No. of staff:	9ish
Users:	Approx. 1,650,000
Books:	Approx. 80,000,000
Owned by:	60% Tim Spalding; 40% divided (somehow) between AbeBooks (owned by Amazon.com) and Bowker (owned by Cambridge Information Group)
Cost:	Free for up to 200 books; \$10 for one-year membership; \$25 for lifetime membership
No. of Twitter followers:	8742 (though Tim Spalding has 14,680)
No. of words in their Wikipedia article:	667
No. of capitalised letters in their company's logo name:	2
No. of concatenated words in the company's name:	2
Date the author joined LibraryThing:	3 September 2010
No. of books that the author has on LibraryThing:	491
No. of 'friends' that the author has on LibraryThing:	9

A short history of social cataloguing

Software for managing digital collections is commonly used by technologically-connected people (3). iTunes, Winamp, Spotify, Clementine, etc. are programs that organise digital music files. Other software like calibre, iBooks, and the Sony Reader Store organise ebooks and digital text files. Operating systems are built on frameworks of file organisation with a multitude of programs acting as mini-metadata-repositories for digital files of various formats.

Social cataloguing sites emerged in 2005 around the time that social networking and Web 2.0 started to become a defining technology in our digital lives. Bibliographic cataloguing sites were among the first and are probably the most popular but alongside these there exists a range of cataloguing sites devoted to other information mediums: films, music, scholarly references, recipes, etc. These platforms allow users to store, list, and organise their personal collections in much the same way, on a smaller scale, that library catalogues – from card catalogues to modern OPACs – organise large-scale collections of material.

Among the first social cataloguing platforms, LibraryThing was launched on 29 August 2005 offering users a space on the Web where they could catalogue books by drawing data from a range of bibliographic data sources. It was followed in 2006 by similar platforms: Goodreads, Shelfari, aNobii, BookArmy, douban, and others whose names are written in the Book of Forgotten Web Enterprises.

Goodreads and LibraryThing

Goodreads, despite being younger, is the site with more users and more books in its database. It is bigger and more successful than LibraryThing on most levels which is presumably why it was acquired by Amazon.com. Among social cataloguing sites, LibraryThing is the older, plucky outsider fighting valiantly against the larger, slicker, and younger Goodreads.

Of the two, Goodreads has the larger focus on the 'social network' aspect of the site. The landing page devotes a lot of screen real estate to friends' updates in a familiar Facebook-like style. The design encourages the user to rate the books he/she has read and to write mini-reviews in the style of Amazon.com. Even when looking at a book's record, friends' ratings and reviews appear near the head of the page. Through these design elements, the user is encouraged to think of him/herself as part of a community of readers comprised of his/her friends and of people across the world reading the same kind of books.

LibraryThing has the greater focus on metadata. Rather than a page of reviews, LibraryThing's book pages have long sections of metadata fields laid out in MARC-style (4) which users can edit in order to add to the global corpus of metadata surrounding each book. The fields include such varied information as awards, characters, locations, first words, last words, 'blurbers', series, publication dates, etc.

LibraryThing pages also make good use of tags to show the categorisation of a book. This kind of classification system is indicative of the digital cataloguing mechanisms employed by both sites: mechanisms that emphasise the difference between physical and digital cataloguing systems. In the physical world, a book has a single place on a single shelf and cannot occupy multiple places at the same time. In a digital realm, items can be in several categories at once: as many as are necessary to show the various facets of the text. Both sites offer users means of organising books into categories and, crucially, means of putting books into multiple categories at the same time. Goodreads provides 'shelves' for organising books: the default shelves are 'Read', 'Currently Reading', and 'Want to Read'. LibraryThing provides 'collections': defaults are 'Your library', 'Read but un-owned', and 'Favorites'. Using either shelves or collections, a user can organise books in whatever categories he/she chooses: by genre, by author's country of origin, by how the books made him/her feel, by prevalence of favourite words in the texts, by which room he/she keeps them in, by colour of the covers, etc. No matter how arbitrary or subjective or contradictory the categories are, digital items can be classified with them. This is indicative of the kind of subjective cataloguing that the modern world – and social cataloguing sites – is introducing and is a point to which the author will return.

The use of the word 'shelves' by Goodreads highlights another interesting distinction between the two sites. In an implicit way, Goodreads tends more towards the use of terminology related to cataloguing print materials and to old paradigms of organisation: 'shelves', 'friends', 'community' are familiar and comforting words associated with cosy, physical libraries and lovely, welcoming bookshops. LibraryThing, by contrast, uses words that actually apply to digital materials and which, while more technically accurate, are less welcoming: 'collections', 'members', 'contacts', etc. In this way, Goodreads tends towards the kind of currently fashionable skeuomorphic design that is the stock and trade of Apple's iOS software: Apple's own ebook management software, iBooks, for example, deliberately mimics the look of a bookcase and physical books with paper pages. It is the author's contention that this clever design philosophy subconsciously affects the user's perception of the two sites such that Goodreads appears comforting and familiar with the homeliness of a wood-panelled personal library in a country house and LibraryThing appears more distant, more clinical, and less friendly due to its decision not to apply physical paradigms to digital material (5). This may be a significant contributing factor in Goodread's relative success: do not underestimate the consumer's desire for comforting familiarity.

Given Amazon.com's famed recommendation engine, it is odd that LibraryThing, rather than Goodreads, produces the better recommendations. LibraryThing generates recommendations for books to read based on the books that a user puts into his/her collection; Goodreads generates recommendations based on the ratings that a user gives to various books. Goodreads therefore requires more data to begin the recommendation process and, as someone who doesn't like the reductionist rating system used by popular online booksellers (6) and therefore is reluctant to use Goodreads' rating system, the author doesn't care for this method of generating recommendations. LibraryThing manages to generate intelligent recommendations for books to read without manipulating the user into engaging with the 'social network' aspect of it.

To compare the two big social cataloguing sites, Goodreads is slicker, easier to use, and has a nice app for Android and iOS smartphones/tablets (7). With far more people using it, Goodreads has a distinct emphasis on the 'social' in 'social cataloguing' whereas, with its emphasis on metadata and intelligent recommendations, LibraryThing focuses on the 'cataloguing'. Unsurprisingly, considering the demographic of those who are asked to write for this publication, the author of this article prefers the 'cataloguing' social cataloguing site to the 'social' social cataloguing site.

The cataloguing of chaos

The modern world is more chaotic, more disorganised, and more miscellaneous than ever before. For all our modern technology, information is more disparate and less cohesive than it was in the days before the telegraph. This is partly due to its abundance: in an information society, exabytes of digital information are produced every single day by every single technologically-connected individual. It's also partly due to the failure of traditional classification and organisation schemes and the increasing 'miscellaneousness' of information.

Perhaps it is as a response to this mess of information that social cataloguing sites like LibraryThing and Goodreads have become such popular means for organising personal collections. In a world that has become so varied and complicated, it is not only professional cataloguers who feel the compulsive need to classify, categorise, and reorder the universe. In a messy world, info-civilians want to catalogue for themselves.

If one views LibraryThing, Goodreads, and the overall phenomenon of social cataloguing as a new cataloguing paradigm, then there are two implications for traditional cataloguing. The first is that traditional cataloguers lose their authority (8). The user no longer views cataloguers as gatekeepers of knowledge who have privileged information and insight on how books should be arranged. Anyone can catalogue to whatever system they choose with whatever metadata they choose and whatever standards they wish to adopt. The user can classify using their own bespoke systems: there is no Melvil Dewey or S. R. Ranganathan to dictate how books should be arranged and even if there were, why should they be listened to? As community-driven movements, folksonomies, and crowdsourcing have become more popular, traditional knowledge authorities such as universities, scholarly publications, corporations, and libraries are losing their perceived authority. With the technology to allow users to organise books quickly and easily, the public no longer rely on trained cataloguers or complicated OPACs to tell them what books are about or how they should be arranged on a shelf. In a world of custom categories, tags, datasets, and user-driven metadata, MARC, Dewey, LCSH, etc. are less required than ever (9).

The second implication is that cataloguing is more subjective than ever before. *"We have given up on the idea that there is a single, knowable organization of the universe, a Book of Nature that we'll ever be able to read together or that will settle bar fights like the Guinness Book of Records."*

No, you organize your data one way, I'll organize it another..." (10) In the age of the network, as knowledge has become more democratised, the view that there is one classification system for the universe has fallen out of fashion. The epistemological philosophies of the Enlightenment are in decline. We are not one: we are multitude. We are not a body: we are legion. The democracy of the network and the democratisation of cataloguing mean that one system of order is both impossible and undesirable.

In a postmodern world, every opinion is valid, every person has a voice, and cataloguing is a subjective rather than an objective phenomenon. Following the death of the author, who can say if a given book is optimistic or pessimistic, about life or about death, abominable or transcendent? And why do we have to decide? Technology allows multiple categories, classifications, and catalogues to exist simultaneously no matter how arbitrary, subjective, or contradictory they may be. All opinions can inform the cataloguing of a book. At the start of the 21st century, truth is varied and miscellaneous and cataloguing is, for better or worse, social.

Endnotes:

(1) All opinions expressed are the personal opinions of the author and do not represent those of CILIP, CILIP Cataloguing & Indexing Group, the author's employers, etc. etc. Let's move on.

(2) All facts presented are actual 'facts' as of May 2013 and, to be honest, a lot of them come from Wikipedia. Also, while we're being honest, they're presented in this lazy list format to reduce word count.

(3) This phrase is a useful shorthand because the author realises that the term 'people' on its own would include vast swathes of the population to whom the sentence is inapplicable i.e. people who are either not located in developed countries or lack a certain level of affluence and/or educational level. Official figures published in May 2013 suggest that 7 million people in the UK have never used the Internet.

(4) But more accessibly presented than MARC data generally is. This says more about MARC than LibraryThing.

(5) Since the author regards technical accuracy as more important than almost any other design consideration, the author views LibraryThing's decision as correct and, he realises upon writing, this probably subconsciously contributes to why he prefers LibraryThing to Goodreads.

(6) And indeed most other websites that include ratings systems.

(7) The Goodreads app allows a user to use a smartphone/tablet camera as a barcode scanner to automatically add books to a collection. Which is quite cool.

(8) Authority in the sense of expertise rather than the sense of power.

(9) Note that this does not imply that MARC, Dewey, et al. are not required at all. The author makes no judgement on this matter.

(10) Weinberger, D., 2011. *Too big to know: rethinking knowledge now that the facts aren't the facts, experts are everywhere, and the smartest person in the room is the room*. New York: Basic Books.

Social media resource list

Originally compiled by Nicola Osborne and Esther Arens [updated by Esther Arens May 2013]

Social media tools

In 2012 CIG held an e-forum on social media in the cataloguing community during which the following links and resources were mentioned. For an annotated compilation of social media tools and trends for the broader library world you can do much worse than look at Phil Bradley's website esp. <http://www.philb.com/iwantto.htm>.

Social media guidelines

Although the following social media guidelines and policies are not brand new, they are still valid:

- http://edina.ac.uk/about/social_media/social_media_guidelines.html
- <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/29/twitter-guide/>
- <http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/communicating-and-disseminating-research/use-and-relevance-web-20-researchers>
- <http://www.rin.ac.uk/tags/tags/web-20>

Bookmarking services

Choosing a bookmarking tool is

- <http://packrati.us/>

Packrati.us follows your tweets and retweets and whenever a status contains URLs, it adds them to your favorite bookmarking service: Delicious, Pinboard, Diigo, historical, Instapaper, Pocket (Read It Later), or your own Scuttle server. Optionally, bookmark URLs in @replies to you and in tweets you mark as Favorites.

- <http://ifttt.com/>

"If this then that" enables you to connect your profile on a variety of channels (e.g. Facebook, Evernote, Four-square, Dropbox, Twitter, your phone etc. - 61 in total!). Example: "If I am tagged in a photo on Facebook then send me a text message".

Twitter

These cataloguers' Twitter lists are maintained by their creators, so have changed over time (and will continue to do so) - you can subscribe to a list and visit that timeline whenever you want to or use it as a starting point to find people you would like to follow.

- <https://twitter.com/#!/HVCats/lists>
- https://twitter.com/#!/yo_bj/magical-metadata-fairies-8
- <https://twitter.com/#!/suchprettyeyes/cigseforum-socialmedia/members>

For training/events information, there are various CILIP and ALA accounts:
@CILIPinfo, @CILIPRareBooks, @ALA_TechSource, @ALCTS_ARC

Social media and catalogues

There are now many library catalogues out there which are enhanced through social media/crowdsourcing (e.g. comments, ratings, reviews); these are the ones that were mentioned in last year's CIG e-forum:

- Huddersfield Uni [http://webcat.hud.ac.uk/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile="cls](http://webcat.hud.ac.uk/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=)
- Victoria & Albert Museum's <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/crowdsourcing/>
- Westminster public libraries <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/libraries/247/reviews/>
- "What's the score at the Bodleian?" <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/?a=78541>

Capturing and saving tweets:

Twitter has added the option to download your own tweets and retweets in your profile's settings.

If you'd like to capture a certain event across different channels this is a popular tool:

Storify <http://storify.com/>

Blogs

Long time going but still a very comprehensive aggregator of cataloguers' blogs:

<http://planetcataloging.org/>

Social tagging in academic libraries:

- Presentation by Charlotte Smith from the CIG 2008 conference:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/cataloguing-indexing/Pages/presentations.aspx#2008>

- Video from the Cambridge Librarian TeachMeet about Jo Harcus work at Anglia Ruskin Uni: <http://youtu.be/d9LjRe3inLM>

Other sites, services, tools etc.:

<http://academia.edu/>

<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home>

<http://www.authorstream.com/>

<http://bit.ly>

<http://www.coveritlive.com/>

<http://creativecommons.org/>

<http://www.flickr.com/commons/>

<http://docs.google.com/>

<https://plus.google.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/>

<http://mashable.com/>

<http://prezi.com/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/>

http://edina.ac.uk/about/social_media/social_media_guidelines.html

<http://stori.fy>

<http://www.tweetdeck.com/>

<http://www.twitter.com>

[http://webcat.hud.ac.uk/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile="cls](http://webcat.hud.ac.uk/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=)

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/crowdsourcing/>

<http://visibletweets.com/>

<http://wordle.net>



Catalogue & Index is electronically published by the Cataloguing and Indexing Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) (Charity No. 313014)

Subscription rates: free to members of CIG; GBP 15.00 for non-members & institutions

Advertising rates: GBP 70.00 full-page; GBP 40.00 half-page. Prices quoted without VAT.

Submissions: In the first instance, please contact the Editor:

For book reviews, please contact the Book Reviews Editor: Neil T. Nicholson, Cataloguing & Metadata Services Team Leader, National Library of Scotland, e: n.nicholson@nls.uk

ISSN 0008-7629

CIG website: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/cataloguingindexing>

CIG blog: <http://communities.cilip.org.uk/blogs/catalogueandindex/default.aspx>

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[Dewey](#) [digitised material](#) [Dublin Core](#) [events](#) [folksonomies](#) [linkblog](#) [MARC](#)
[metadata](#) [news](#) [RDA](#) [Semantic Web](#) [social software](#)
[standards](#) [taxonomies](#) [UDC](#)