

Chapter 5

Building Digital Libraries: Role of Social (Open Source) Software

Kshema Prakash

Dayalbagh Educational Institute, India

Jason A. Pannone

Harvard University, USA

K. Santi Swarup

Dayalbagh Educational Institute, India

ABSTRACT

Blogging is a relatively recent phenomenon, and its use in academic libraries is in nascent stage. The authors of this chapter use blogs as part of their outreach to patrons, though in slightly different contexts and for slightly different purposes. Blogging can be an important component of digital libraries, one that allows for timely two-way communication of news, information, bibliographic instruction, and the like. While challenges have been raised to the worth and value of academic library blogs (e.g., Gorman, 2005), the authors believe, based on the research and their experience, that blogging is a useful tool for academic librarians and digital libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The use of blogging by academic librarians is a relatively recent development (Bar-Ilan, 2007; Zhuo, 2006). Unsurprisingly, there is debate over the use and value of blogging by academic librarians, and of blogging in general. Some see blogging as passé, a fad whose time has come and gone, e.g., Boutin, 2008, and now largely superseded by social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. There have been sharp criticisms of blogging, such as Gorman's editorial (Gorman, 2005).

Others counter that blogging can be a useful and effective means of interacting with patrons (Coulter & Draper, 2006), and that librarians should work to promote an environment where traditional and emerging forms of communication like blogging can coexist peacefully (Gordon, 2005).

The authors of this chapter embrace the view that blogging can be a useful and effective means to communicate with patrons, but academic librarians have not fully exploited that potential to date. Blogging is one valuable way among many to reach distance education students, provide reference services, notify patrons of new materials, offer bibliographic instruction, and so forth.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61520-767-1.ch005

The authors have several objectives in this chapter. First, we will provide a short history of and potential applications for blogging in academic libraries based on our literature review. Next, we will examine two case studies from our experiences as bloggers; the first will look at the use of blogging as part of daily interactions with patrons, while the second will look at blogging as part of distance library services. Then, we will investigate the challenges, limitations, and objections to blogging, followed by a section in which we respond to these issues. After that, we will offer several proposals for would-be bloggers, and, finally, give our conclusions.

Let us turn now to a history of blogging, to show how blogging in academic libraries has grown in a relatively short period.

HISTORY OF BLOGGING IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Any history of blogging in academic libraries must take into account the development of two related concepts: Web 2.0, or Social Software, and Library 2.0. We will outline these concepts in the next two sections.

Web 2.0 or Social Software

The concept of Web 2.0 originated as a list of characteristics of successful web properties. Among these are the Read/Write web, the web as platform, the Long Tail¹, harnessing of collective intelligence, network effects, core datasets from user contributions, and lightweight programming models. Web users of the web engage many of these properties on a daily basis.

The benefits of the principles of Web 2.0 and its technology are that they offer libraries many opportunities to serve their patrons better and reach out beyond the walls and websites of the institution to reach potential beneficiaries where they are, and in association with the task they happen to

be undertaking. It is worth appreciating the level of integration and interoperability of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0 that are designed into the interface of a library portal or intranet.

Taking a cue from the Libraries and Social Software in Education (LASSIE) Project Report (Secker, 2008), we will use the term ‘social software’ for Web 2.0 tools and technologies, as these terms are broadly synonymous. As is evident from its overall characteristics, social software is more about user-created content than content created by an organization. Social software also includes development of user profiles and the use of ‘folksonomies,’ or tagging, to attach keywords users create to items to help them retrieve information. Examples of key technologies that underpin the concept of social software are RSS feeds; blogs; wikis; social bookmarking and resource sharing, sites such as CiteULike, Del.icio.us; social networking sites, including MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn; media sharing sites such as YouTube, PhotoBucket, Flickr; and virtual worlds. The majority of these technologies are non-proprietary and accessible to all.

Library 2.0

The emergence of the Library 2.0 paradigm follows upon the emergence of Web 2.0. Because of the widespread use of Web 2.0 services, there are cultural changes affecting library users’ information-seeking behaviors, communication styles, and expectations. As a result, the term ‘Library 2.0’ has been introduced into the professional language of librarianship as a way to discuss these changes, though what Library 2.0 is and what it means are still under discussion in the world of librarian blogging, the so-called ‘biblioblogosphere.’ Library 2.0 is a concept wherein users are not only information consumers, but also content creators. It is a library without any boundaries and with the fullest participation of users as architects.

In terms of the history of the use of the term ‘Library 2.0,’ Michael Casey first introduced it

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/building-digital-libraries/42738

Related Content

Analysis of Success Factors of Introducing SAP System for ERP Implementation in Small and Midsize Enterprises in Taiwan

Hsin-Ju Weiland Chia-Liang Wei (2011). *International Journal of Digital Library Systems* (pp. 1-37).

www.irma-international.org/article/analysis-success-factors-introducing-sap/51650

Library Statistics and Outcomes Assessment

Rose L. Blandand Allison M. Howard (2003). *Building a Virtual Library* (pp. 194-211).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/library-statistics-outcomes-assessment/5961

Content Analysis of Library Associations' Privacy Policies in Some Countries

Ying Wangand Hao Zhou (2012). *International Journal of Digital Library Systems* (pp. 1-12).

www.irma-international.org/article/content-analysis-library-associations-privacy/73644

Comparing Repository Types: Challenges and Barriers for Subject-Based Repositories, Research Repositories, National Repository Systems and Institutional Repositories in Serving Scholarly Communication

Chris Armbrusterand Laurent Romary (2010). *International Journal of Digital Library Systems* (pp. 61-73).

www.irma-international.org/article/comparing-repository-types/48203

The Issue of 'Orphan' Works in Digital Libraries

Maria-Daphne Papadopoulou (2011). *E-Publishing and Digital Libraries: Legal and Organizational Issues* (pp. 198-231).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/issue-orphan-works-digital-libraries/47477