

Understanding the relationship of Social Software and Knowledge Sharing; An Auspicious state of affairs for Academic Libraries

Abstract:

Purpose: This paper's aim is to give a short overview of the present developments and ideas concerning knowledge sharing in social software and the prospects as well as the opportunities it entails for academic libraries. Hence in general, this paper also, as one of many information studies, attempt to provide information for students or researchers who are studying implementation of social software in libraries.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This paper presents a review based on literatures findings including definitions of social software and knowledge sharing also instances of implementation of social software in academic libraries.

Findings: Self-efficacy, as ability, together with ties and capabilities in human network can be seen as factors that motivate people to sharing their knowledge. Social software is a web technology which mediated people to share their knowledge hence building online identities. Thus relation between social software and knowledge sharing is clear. By having motivation factors people are more eager to enhance their knowledge by sharing each other through social software nevertheless social software create desire for people to be more motivate in terms of knowledge sharing. Academic libraries are one of many institutions which can take advantages from this process.

Originality/value: The study reveals relationship between social software and what motivated people to share their knowledge through this advance of web technology. Its highlights some efforts from academic libraries to implement social software thus being more connect to their users.

Keyword: Social software, Knowledge sharing, Academic library

Paper Type: Literature review

Introduction

Farkas (2007) noted that librarians today are becoming aware that most users in library spend most of their time on social networking sites. The implications of this should be understood. Social networking sites are gathering more and more attention from the general public, showing the growing prominence of social software behind these webpages. This paper's aim is to give a short overview of the present developments and ideas concerning knowledge sharing in social software and the prospects as well as the opportunities it entails for academic libraries.

To do this we firstly look at the different types of social software. We will learn about social software and its importance for Web 2.0 as well as, its usage in reaching the goal of sharing knowledge. The aim of knowledge sharing, we will see, is best achieved within communities of practice. The level of self-efficacy also plays an important role in the aim to boost knowledge sharing and codetermines the level of knowledge sharing.

Secondly, to understand the factors which influence knowledge sharing, we look at the business and social ties, explore the organizational relationship between organizational knowledge

capabilities and knowledge sharing, find out about the importance of self efficacy for knowledge sharing and learn about the importance of motivation to be active when using social software.

Thirdly, after a short introductory case study we go through best practices in social software when knowledge sharing occurs. We show a social software implementation model, the Semantic Social Network Portal (SSNP) and point out the privacy aspect in using social software.

Finally, we will take a look at the role of participatory culture in libraries and real world applications of social software like facebook and secondlife.

This article mainly focuses on social software, knowledge sharing and self-efficacy with case study examples from library and other fields. In addition to some books, we used Emerald, EBSCOhost and ESTER catalogue as our databases. The following keywords were used: social networks, social networking sites, library, library 2.0, social software, knowledge sharing, second life, facebook.

From Web 2.0 to Social Networking Site (SNS); Some Definitions

1. Web 2.0

Starting from emergence of Web 2.0, Dotsika and Patrick (2007; also Curran *et al.*, 2007) describe it as a new web concept allowing for the creation of web sites that improve the sharing of knowledge and service hence more collaborative, interactive and dynamic nature than plain pages. They seen this web development as a combination of technology and user independence, a model where individuals and groups use common tools to create and share information and knowledge. When people design a knowledge management system they should take social focuses approach, not only technological. In their words, technology should work for people, not the other way around. Nevertheless, they also saw social software as one of the main parts in Web 2.0.

2. Social software

There are many conceptions about social software. Farkas (2007, p. 1) points out that social software plays a role in the way people interact online, people use social software to communicate, collaborate, and build community online. There are many tools that fall under the term. Farkas, quoting Tom Coates, a blogger and Yahoo! employee, define social software as a software which supports, extends, or derives added value from human social behaviour – message boards, music taste-sharing, photo-sharing, instant messaging, mailing lists, social networking. Dotsika and Patrick (2006) tried to map different social software according to their nature (see Figure 1).

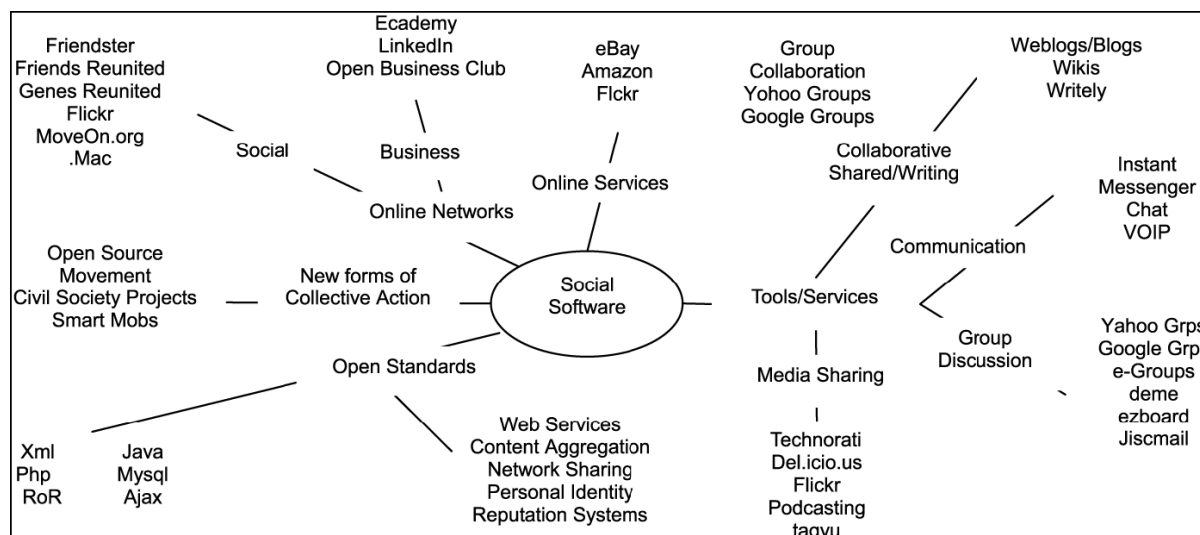


Figure 1. Social software map (source: Dotsika and Patrick, 2006)

3. Knowledge Sharing

One way social software can be used is to share knowledge. Endress *et al.* (2007) is seeing knowledge sharing as a set of behaviours about knowledge exchange which involve the actors, knowledge content, organizational context, appropriate media, and societal environment. They agree with Polanyi (1969 in Endress *et al.*, 2007) that complex knowledge sharing can be defined as transferring information that is specific to the organization (or group) and that involves subjective insights, intuitions, hunches and know-how. Related to knowledge sharing is the model of self-efficacy among practices. Bandura (2003) proposed self-efficacy as one's belief in the ability to perform a specific tasks, it is the central cognitive mediator of the motivational process. Self-efficacy perceptions are formed through a judgment process that people engage in when deciding whether they can execute an action based on the influence of contextual and personal factors. When people develop self-efficacy perceptions about performance in a specific area, these perceptions are incorporated into their belief systems.

4. Communities of Practice

Cox (2006) posits that one area where people share knowledge is in communities of practice, a place where groups of people share a common concern, work on common issues etc. Empirical studies have proven that these communities of practice are a good tool in getting the process of innovation to work and keep it going. Wenger (2004) accords a community of practice seems to mean a small, intensely interacting face to face group. Networks of practice however more like networks forming at the boundaries between local communities of practices.

Dubé (*et al.*, 2006) discussed about communities of practice using virtual media or so-called virtual communities of practice (VCoP). They explained that VCoP differ a lot from "normal" communities of practice. First VCoP rely on technical devices which allow people to interact; additionally they are usually characterized by a lesser number of face-to-face contacts between the participants which should make the building of trust between members more difficult than in "normal" CoPs. There are further differences (different geographic, diversification etc.) which shall not be discussed in further detail. Nevertheless, every single VCoP has its specific characteristics. Dubé

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proposed 21 characteristics for VCoP and it is possible to get a better picture of every single case of VCoP. This should help scientists as well as people working in companies to discover the important challenges and find possible strategies for answering these challenges depending on their findings about a company's characteristics, its weaknesses and strengths.

Thus building the trust is the main issue, high solidity and consistency as well as a high level of engagement is important requirements for allowing and fostering fruitful knowledge sharing within the communities of practice. Only if one knows the particular case and where the VCoP is positioned right now it is possible to intervene, change or strengthen things to get good results out of the installed VCoP. Therefore, it is needless to say, that there are no "best practices" for VCoPs rather every VCoP should be treated differently, depending on the above mentioned characteristics. Not till then VCoPs can provide a basis to their task of enabling the sharing of tacit knowledge within themselves and hence pushing innovation.

5. Social Networking Sites

One of the advances for communities of practice to communicate with each other is by using Social Networking Sites (SNS). Ofcom (2008), a communication research company based in London, England, conducted a recent research concerning impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) among British teenagers, they defined SNS as sites which allow users to set up online profiles or personal homepages, and develop an online social network. Downes (2005) also attempt to defines social networks as a collection of individuals linked together by a set of relations. According to Downes, social networking web sites fostering the development of explicit ties between individuals as "friends" began to appear in 2002.

Boyd (2007) brought a clear conception by constituted characteristics of SNS such as (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. However, Ofcom's (2008) qualitative research indicates that SNS users tend to fall into five distinct groups based on their behaviours and attitudes. These are as follows:

- *Alpha Socialisers*; people who used sites in intense short bursts to flirt, meet new people, and be entertained.
- *Attention Seekers*; people who craved attention and comments from others, often by posting photos and customising their profiles.
- *Followers*; people who joined sites to keep up with what their peers were doing.
- *Faithfuls*; people who typically used social networking sites to rekindle old friendships, often from school or university.
- *Functionals*; people who tended to be single-minded in using sites for a particular purpose.

Ties and Capabilities in Knowledge Sharing

The substance and type of ties in a network can have important implications for action. Marouf (2007) looked at business ties and social ties to find how they affect knowledge

sharing. The definitions given were as follows. Business ties are defined as the linkages between units that are based on common business tasks, mutual interests, and shared goals that benefit all the involved parties, whether they personally like each other or not. Social ties, in contrast, are defined as the linkages between units that are based on emotional, non-instrumental relations, in which individuals engaged in these interactions regard one another as friends.

Marouf (2007), pointed Granovetter (1973, in Marouf, 2007 p. 112), stated that weak ties are efficient for knowledge sharing because they provide access to novel information and people that would otherwise be disconnected from the group seeking knowledge. Strong ties or relationships she thought hindered new information and new enterprise knowledge because such relationships are comprised of small groups of actors who already know what everyone knows. It was established that the strength of business relationships, in comparison with the strength of social relationships, contributes measurably more to the sharing of both public and private knowledge. This is in contrast to the study of the open source community which says that such voluntary organizations allows for knowledge sharing due to other factors like status.

Marouf (2007, p. 123) proposed four types of knowledge in terms of how people in business and social context codified it, which are *public codified knowledge*, *public non-codified knowledge*, *private codified knowledge*, and *private non-codified knowledge*. She arrived at the conclusion that knowledge-sharing networks do not exist in some isolated bubble by themselves. Elements such as basic organizational structure and existing conditions of uncertainty play a crucial role in understanding knowledge sharing patterns between units. She addressed that focusing on the formal hierarchical structure as a coordinating mechanism, while ignoring the informal lateral relations seems to inhibit the sharing of private non-codified knowledge.

Yang and Chen (2005) tried to accomplish discussions, what would be the most important consideration, about how effective knowledge management should be especially when it involved knowledge sharing. For them knowledge sharing is depicted as a set of behaviours about knowledge exchange which involve the actors, knowledge content, organizational context, appropriate media, and societal environment. They also investigated the relationship between organizational knowledge capabilities and knowledge sharing. They split the organizational knowledge capabilities into technical, structural, human and cultural knowledge capabilities. They compare firms implementing knowledge management versus firms non-implementing.

Yang and Chen (2005) found that technical knowledge capability is a fundamental necessary skill in a knowledge organization but when firms implement knowledge management it does not improve. The structural knowledge capability and the cultural knowledge capability improved the most (when a firm implemented knowledge sharing). But also human knowledge capabilities have a significant influence on knowledge sharing activities. They conclude that firm's not-implementing KM focuses on technical knowledge capabilities while firms implementing KM target technical, structural, and human knowledge capabilities.

One study looked at the knowledge sharing in open source community where knowledge sharing is prevalent and traditional organizations. Software coding practices and methods would be considered complex, tacit knowledge which is difficult to express and codify (Walz, *et al.*, 1993; in

Endres *et al.*, 2007, p. 96). Although members of open source software development projects are unpaid, a person may acquire some degree of status in the software community as a result of “free” knowledge sharing activities. It can be concluded that knowledge sharing is enhanced by the same external factors used to raise self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy

Endres (*et al.*, 2007 p. 94) applied a self-efficacy model to knowledge sharing to find the motivation for it. They discovered that important facets of knowledge have been defined by theorists as tacitness, dependence and complexity. Complex knowledge is tacit in that it is highly personal and hard to express in codes such as words, numbers, programming languages, etc; as compared to explicit knowledge that is easy to express and quantify. The most difficult type of knowledge to transfer is highly complex, non-technical (from cognition), and dependent knowledge. Self-efficacy provides a theoretically sound context in which tacit, cognition-based knowledge can be analyzed. Endres also explains that self-efficacy in the ability to share complex, tacit knowledge would predict actual knowledge-sharing activity.

Taking the conception from Gist and Mitchell (1992), Endres (*et al.*, 2007) showed that there are four primary ways to alter self-efficacy which are enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and psychological arousal. Self-efficacy to share complex, tacit knowledge should increase under certain conditions: viewing others like oneself successfully sharing knowledge (vicarious experience); actually having the opportunity to successfully share knowledge (enactive mastery) and or receiving praise or encouragement from others to share knowledge (persuasion). Volunteer organizations with strong social networks and no formal extrinsic reward structure may result in the most effective tacit knowledge sharing activity.

People need some kind of motivation to be active on SNS or communities of practice. If we want people to share knowledge, we also need to look at why people share knowledge, as to what is their motivation for knowledge sharing. Cox (*et al.*, 2003) carried out a study to find the process which takes place when forming an online community for librarians. Certain factors were seen as affecting the formation of online communities. These factors are highlighted. A community needed time to have its own identity which was done by building up its own life and momentum. A critical mass needs to be attained for more interactive discussions to take place. When the membership is too diverse its results in the community being out of focus for discussion and in such cases members also feel that they have no common understanding. The members of the community who have more knowledge and experience can take leadership initiative.

Thus, Cox (*et al.*, 2003) emphasized importance of planting the knowledge sharing especially in library project as follows:

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is seen as appealing as it allows for the community building process to be reusable. Yet librarians were reluctant to post items on the Internet as they are concerned about their credibility to do so. The issue of confidentiality also arises. Face to face contact is seen as the most successful in forming the community and its importance cannot be undermined.

- If incentives are provided it results in greater participation as well. They suggest getting an organizations formal commitment to take part in online communities.
- Users of the community also need subject based information rather than starting discussion. Some members will see themselves as part of the group with just signing up and this result in passive participation. This could be due to the concept of membership. The technology used should be user friendly as otherwise it creates technology blocks.
- Leadership development also takes time in online communities. Too much leadership can result in too long a time for shared interests to emerge. Role differentiation was very important so that different functions can be carried out. Surveillance is the last factor. Members feeling that they were being monitored might not have contributed. Anonymous contributions can make up for this.

Farkas (2007) posits that people use online social networking sites to display their identity and social network publicly and make new connections. This indicates a change in the way people build identity online and get to know each other. People use their identity for many purposes. Farkas explains that people may be motivated to make new friends or meet new people to date; others use it as a tool to increase business contacts, both to make themselves look good and to capitalize later on the network they build. Self efficacy as defined above explains why people are motivated to do a task. On social networking sites we know some of the reasons why they are motivated to join and we also need to know when people are motivated to share their knowledge on different matters apart from making friends and networking.

Implementing Social Software

It is difficult to ask whether current statues of social software development since the array of such technologies have always moved progressively. Studying the recent development of social software also means studying the history of social software itself; nevertheless learning from other fields that already implement social software can be taken as an effort to gain more understanding about the impact of this advance in best practices. Mridula (*et al.*, 2007) studied about the impact of social software in hotel industry shows new possibilities but also endangers that derive from such new social software applications as consumer review sites, message boards or blogs on the basis of the hotel industry. In the process, the authors examined two five star category hotels, one European and one in India. In the "classical" mass media era it was easier to control or follow what was published or made publics' about "your" company than it is with the new media of the Internet. With the increasing number of review sites, blogs or message boards companies more and more loose control over their "public image" and therewith what is written and said about them. In fact the huge amount of different reviews and writings makes it almost impossible to "control" what gets written about one's company.

Therefore, these new Internet based kind of "information-sharing" between people can be a threat for hotels, if they do not react properly to criticism or bad reviews, but can also be used on the other hand as inspirations for changes or reactions to customer wishes. Anyway, therefore important to bear that it is not enough just to act as if you were listening to consumers, for example by installing official blogs where people can make suggestions or complaints but rather use consumer reactions

for real change or enhancements in the company. Specialized social networks could be used by the companies to address these "hot topics" by enabling more effective communication or even by allowing senior executives to use blogs to keep a company's "relevant public" –as there are customers, employees but also suppliers– informed and get feedback. Mridula findings are interesting especially when it showed the fact that instead just being controlled and informed, actually user derives how information, more over on knowledge, being distributed is by using social software.

Best Practices

Dotsika and Patrick (2007; also Dotsika and Patrick, 2006) have suggested best practice of development from within when it comes to knowledge sharing and usage of social software in institution. Dotsika and Patrick have pins that social software effectively, is a convergence of the thinking of the domains of social networks, human-computer interaction (HCI) and web services. In relation to the question of the technology-to-user fit, social software adapts to its environment, as opposed to the environment being required to adapt to the software. Successful software can be seen to be intuitive so that it enables the user to adapt and continue to use it.

Dotsika and Patrick (2007, p. 398) also mentioned that when it comes to development approach of social software the tendentious derives from informal, more bottom-up, lightweight, and flexible many-to-many information. They argued that bottom-up approach is not costly and its ownership lies with either creators or users of the software. This is opposed to the traditional approaches whose top-down command and control nature are typically impersonal, one-to-many, formal, bloated, inflexible, reflecting a corporate voice, and whose development is slow and expensive with a large product that is owned by the vendors or IT department.

Regarding to the classification that mingled implementations of web 2.0, on the other side, are folksonomies and tags as an informal classification system, there can be more meanings for the same word or synonyms for things with the same meaning. Taxonomies are formal but they are also restrictive and not flexible enough. There is a problem about how to connect different sources of information to each other, one way would be to standardize. The reason for standardizing is to have a real integration of services, interoperability and cross-platform knowledge retrieval so that information can be shared by different organizations. A way to do that could be to combine the bottom-up development with formal modelling and more to user empowerments. Although there is still a lot of doubt about standardizing information, privileges, maintenance, and scalability in social software nevertheless Dotsika and Patrick (2007) emphasis emergence of semantic usage in social software is inevitable.

Taking more steps further in social software technology discussion was Neuman (*et al.*, 2005) studied about Semantic Social Network Portal (SSNP). The aim of the study was to develop a SSNP that should, for example, help enterprise training units in their task to elevate employees' skills and force the creation or the reuse of knowledge in networks. Social networking sites generally get more importance, because people continue to be interested in more specific information. These sites can connect the users depending on their profiles. This is by the way also the most important factor in distinguishing the sites – the amount of information they hold and are able to use for different

operations. Neuman distinguished four different types of portals/social networks, such as; enterprise portals; community portals; semantic community portals (semantic web technologies enrich the portals with metadata); and social networking portals. They also emphasized that social networking sites can be further differentiated or evaluated depending on their registration based versus connection based; their user profiles; business model and profitability; and also searching and browsing capabilities; also communication and collaboration features such as weblogs, messages, wikis, etc.

Privacy

One important issue pinning usage of social software is the privacy aspect of networking sites. First, there are different ways to evaluate other users and Neuman (*et al.*, 2005) works showed the advantages of “good reputation” within these networks and vice versa the disadvantages of a “bad reputation”. Hence talking of the privacy aspect, are also possible threats of giving personal information as identity stealing, for instance. Anyway, if there is a collaborative environment among users such social networks can further motivate learning within networks. Here semantic web technologies can be very helpful, because they can make it possible for networks to produce and apply intuitive coming into being contents and knowledge structures. This could give a boost to collaboration of a company’s employees via networks.

Participatory culture in libraries

In complementary, Jenkins (2007) emphasized the role of participatory culture as part of users’ tendency to make such advances of SNS more sophisticated. In this case roles of librarian to share their knowledge either among them or more in hierarchical terms through social software play important part. Usage of Web 2.0 features such as weblog, wikis, social bookmarking and RSS feed in library website, or what has been known as Library 2.0 (Curran, 2007; Lee, 2007; Saw, 2008), also have showed that this technology whatsoever can reinforce the roles of the librarian in order to enhance interactivity between library and its user, especially when its involved information of library service and programs thus make the knowledge sharing more align among them.

Curran (*et al.*, 2007, p. 289) studied about Library 2.0 have found that:

"leveraging the approaches typified by Web 2.0 principles allows libraries opportunities to better serve existing audiences and to reach out to potential beneficiaries where they happen to be, and in association with the task that they happen to be undertaking. This new approach makes it possible for searchers to be presented with choices to view online, borrow locally, request from afar, buy or sell as appropriate to their needs and circumstance. Library 2.0 reinforces the role libraries play in the community by building on today's best and continually improving the service. Library 2.0 can be summarized as being user-driven and aiming to save the each library user time in retrieving information".

Saw *et al.* (2008) showed an instance of how the academic library can create programs and policy which adjusting to implementation of library 2.0. She has described University of Queensland Academic Library efforts to overcome the challenge of ICT advances by creating programs such as international course of *Creating the Library of the Future Program, The Library Multimedia Services,*

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and “*First Year BA Community Web Page*” in February 2007. Hence, they found that such strategies, in the terms of international education, also generate more competencies for University of Queensland Academic Library to become more reliable and competitive for their users among other traditional library in Australia.

Lee and Bates (2007, p. 660) studied about Irish librarian weblogs underpins advantageous and disadvantageous for librarians who are using weblog for improving their performances:

“blogging was associated with both personal and professional benefits – the blogger can have a feeling of satisfaction and autonomy at self-publishing as well as a sense of pride in the creation of the weblog. The creativity involved in maintaining a weblog was also mentioned. Professionally, the simplicity of maintaining a weblog was seen as an advantage and the potential of weblogs for increasing the professional profile of a library was recognized. However, the feeling of pressure to produce new material for the weblog, the problem of reaching the target audience of the weblog (especially when e-mail is so commonly used), and the limitations of the linear structure of the weblog were considered as negative aspects of blogging.”

Particularly for usage of social networking site (SNS), Farkas (2007) explains that social networking is more about creating identity within a community than about collaboration toward a specific end. For libraries which have an identity in the society, an online presence of this identity is thus a must. Following school communities’ participation, which already being a member of SNS likes MySpace and Facebook, Farkas pointed some university academic libraries in US such the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Undergraduate Library, the Kresge Library at the University of Michigan, and the Perkins Library at Duke University. These libraries not only presenting their profile, Farkas argued that academic libraries can create added value by providing news and information, or by providing a portal to library services. Nonetheless, they also can create groups, where students could ask questions or offer comments about the library.

However, there are some concerns about usage of library internet to allow students accessing SNS from library. Topper (2007) addressed that phenomena by took opinions from several librarian in US concerning their decision whether library should positively support this web technology. She concluded that library should setting aside the majority of the computers for homework and business related tasks assuring patrons do not have to wait for a computer and limiting the number of computers with social network access. Later, she quoted Ellen Keith, Reference Services coordinator and librarian for Sociology at Johns Hopkins University to comment on social networking at the university. She stated that:

“[...] academic libraries are recognizing that we need to meet our “millennial” students where they are, rather than waiting for them to come to us. I’ve read of libraries using gaming and Second Life and also creating MySpace pages for the library itself. We haven’t done that yet here at the Eisenhower Library but we are reaching out in ways that are non-traditional for us (but are proving to be very exciting) – podcasts and blogs. Our thinking behind this is to reach users in their preferred methods of communication, and in fact, the site statistics on our podcasts are high. With blogging, our primary motivation was giving our students a place to Social networking in libraries reply to us as their comments are important. I think that social networking can encompass anything that reaches out to our patrons in ways that acknowledges them as partners in search for information – we don’t want to dictate what we think they need but respect them and

their information-seeking behavior by making an attempt to meet them where they are, be that podcasts, blogs, gaming, MySpace pages, presence in Facebook, etc.” (Topper, 2007, p. 379)

Librarians in Facebook

Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) have conducted a survey to 126 academic librarians concerning their perspectives on facebook.com, an online social network. At the time of the survey facebook.com was available only to university networks. Facebook is defined as a social utility that connects you with the people around you. The study looked at the impact the site had on libraries. Information was sought about the practical effort Facebook had on libraries, librarians perspective, perceived roles associated with it and awareness of social trends and their place in library. One librarian used the facebook as an outreach tool to promote library services to 1.700 students. He reported that his experience helped him to expand the goal of promoting the library. Libraries have considered using similar methods to communicate with students or promote library services.

The survey found that librarians are overwhelmingly aware of and moderately knowledgeable about Facebook. Some librarians were interested in and fascinated with Facebook, but preferred to study it as outsiders. Others have adopted the technology to better understand today's student and why Facebook appeals to them. From this study it was apparent that there is fine line between academic and recreational activity, but sites like Facebook seem to blur this line further and librarians do not seem to be interested to distinguish between them unless pressed. Librarians seem unconcerned about Internet and the privacy issues. Librarians are interested in Facebooks role as a space where students in the same institution can connect and share a common collegiate bond.

Second Life for Academics

Other generally instance of usage popular social software is how academic institutions used Second Life to promote their institutions. Kirriemuir (2007) showed several universities in UK efforts, such as Anglia Ruskin, Edinburgh, Hertfordshire, Oxford and Sunderland to build their land in 'in-world' hence enhancing their relation either with student or public. Some problems also occur such as budget, time, appearance, and support from within institution. Nevertheless, Kirriemuir emphasized that this cyber trend will become popular in years to come since growth of academic institutions using Second Life.



Figure 2. An in-world discussion on "How should librarians present themselves"
(source: Kiriemuir, 2007)

Conclusion

From the study we see that knowledge sharing is enhanced by the same external factors used to raise self-efficacy. Self-efficacy and ties in social network explains reason why people doing collaborative act especially in virtual condition hence building virtual community of practice as a medium for sharing knowledge. We have discussed about current development of social software and bear consecutively relation with knowledge sharing through applications such as blogs and social networking sites. In the development, despite implementation, social software should be developing from within since it has characteristic like lightweight and flexible many-to-many information.

Social networking sites, like others Web 2.0 features such as blogs and Second Life, are the buzz word of the current web generation. Academic institutions, especially libraries can make use of these features to focus on their most important asset, the user. Users are motivated by having higher status and their act is more about creating an online identity, their space in the online world. Librarians needs to become a partner in building users status and this will lead to better creation and utilization of such communities to share knowledge by libraries. Librarians also need to be presentable and accepted into this user's space. Having a presence by itself is not enough. Libraries need to market their image to the user's offline, the specific user community to create awareness of what is available and capitalize on this opportunity by building a presence and providing services through social software.

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