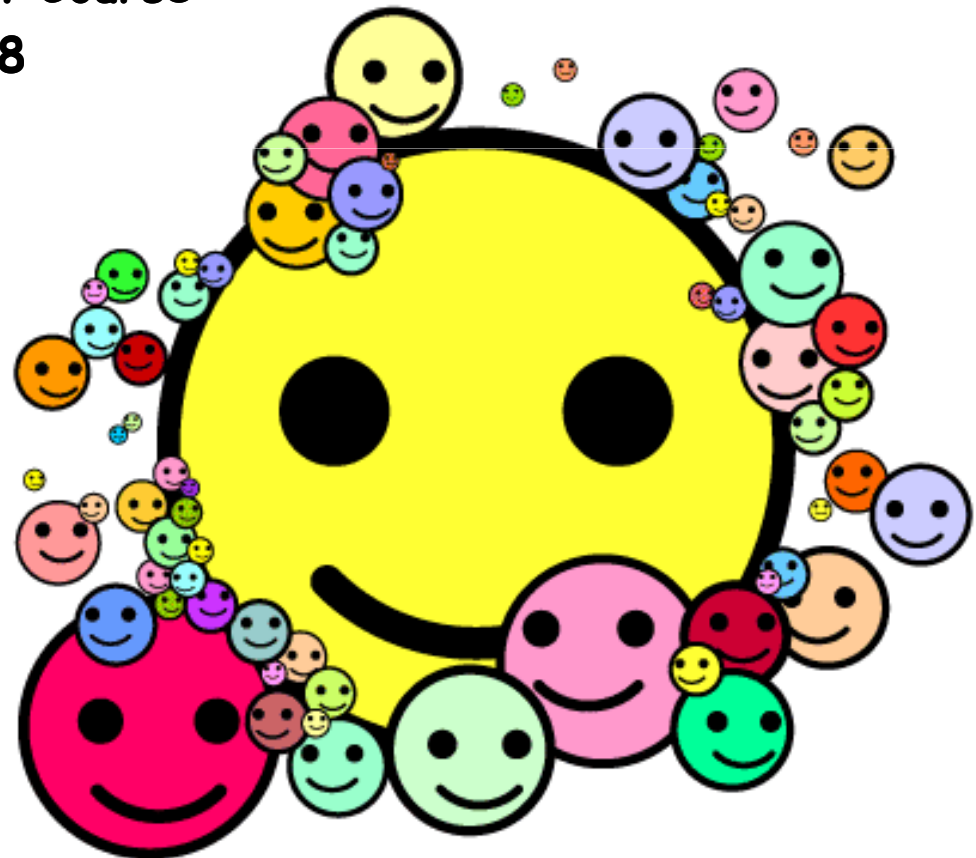


Understanding the relationship of Social Software and Knowledge Sharing; An Auspicious state of affairs for Academic Libraries

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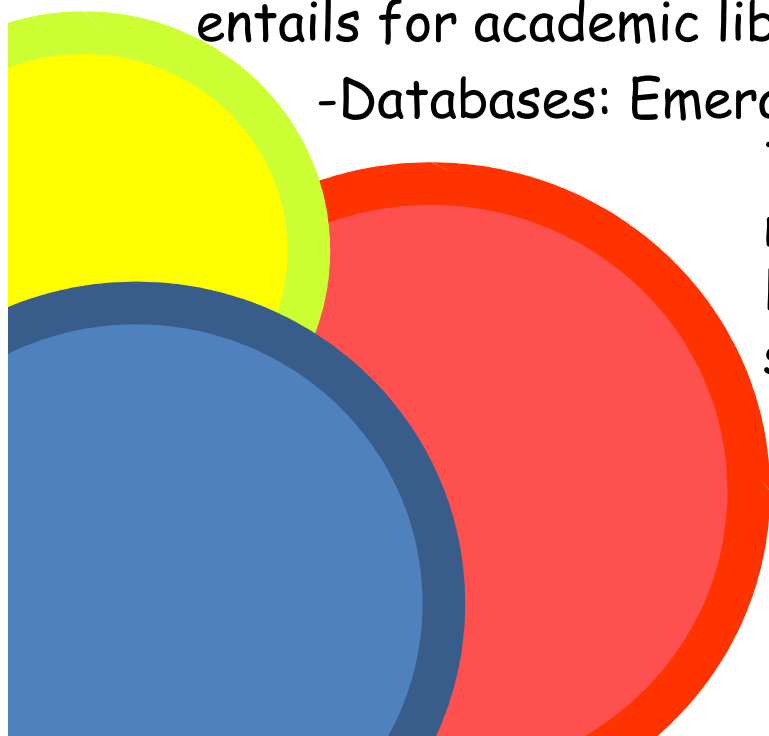


Introduction

- Farkas (2007) noted that librarians today are becoming aware that most users in library spend most of their time on social networking sites.
- 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.

-Databases: Emerald, EBSCOhost and ESTER catalogue.

The following keywords were used: social networks, social networking sites, library, library 2.0, social software, knowledge sharing, second life, facebook.



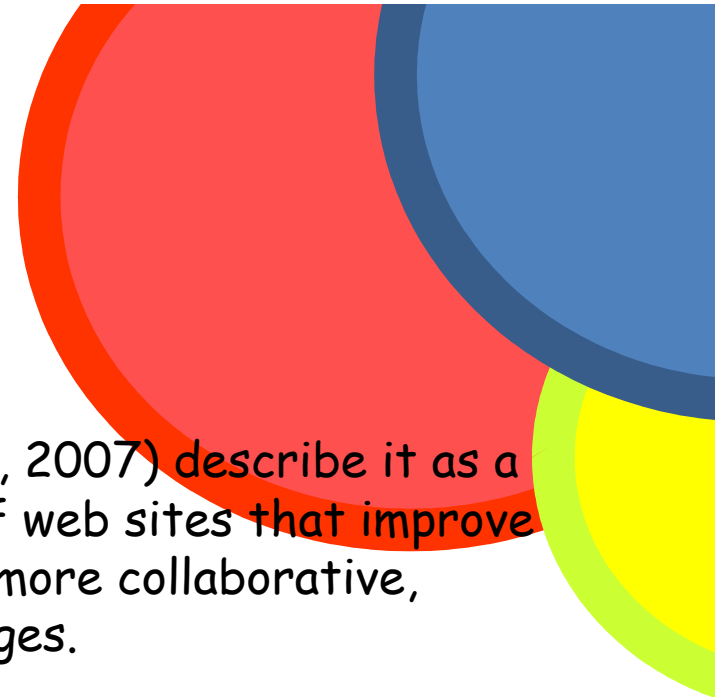
Some Definitions

1. 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.

2. Social Software

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).



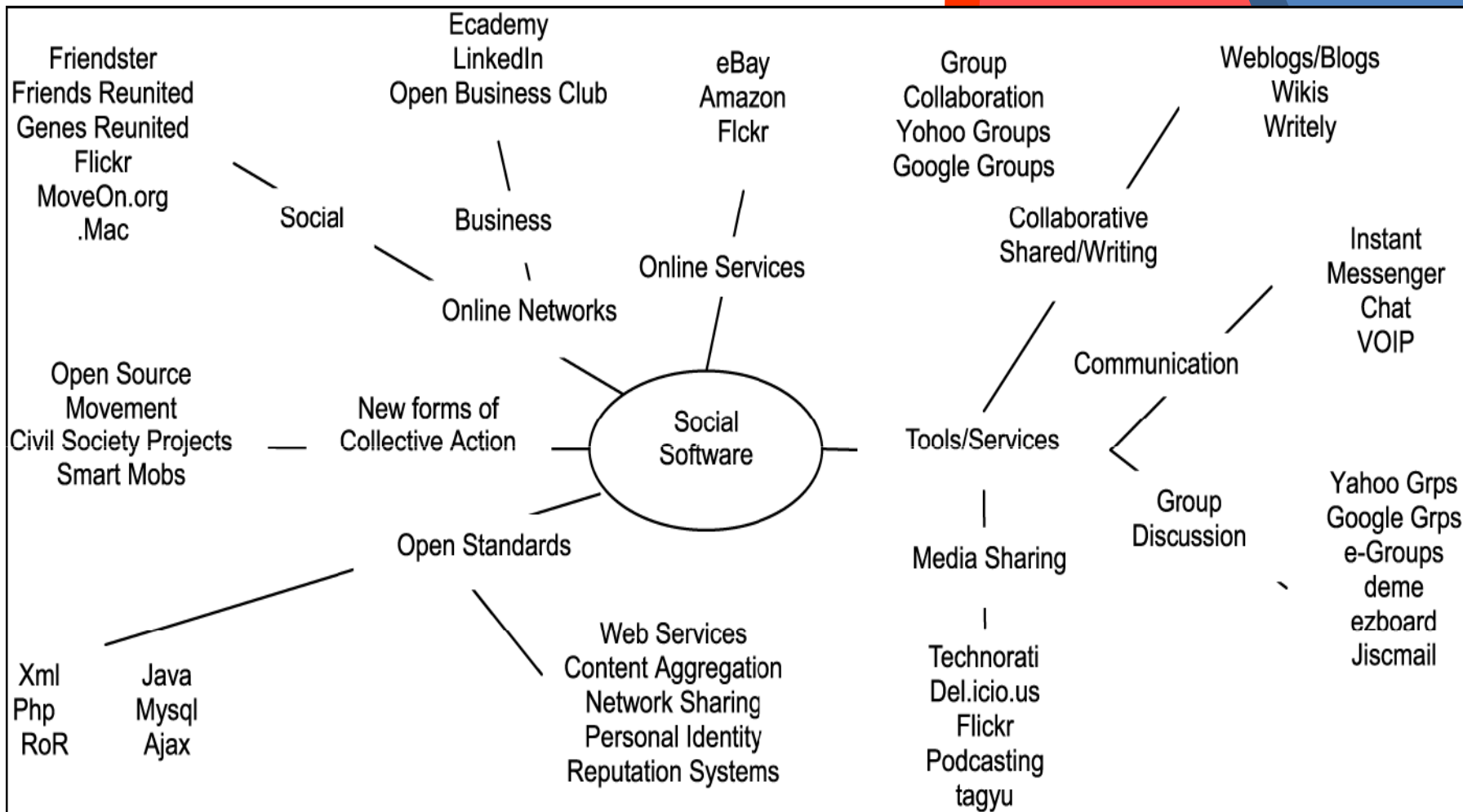


Figure 1. Social software map (source: Dotsika and Patrick, 2006)

Some Definitions

3. Knowledge Sharing

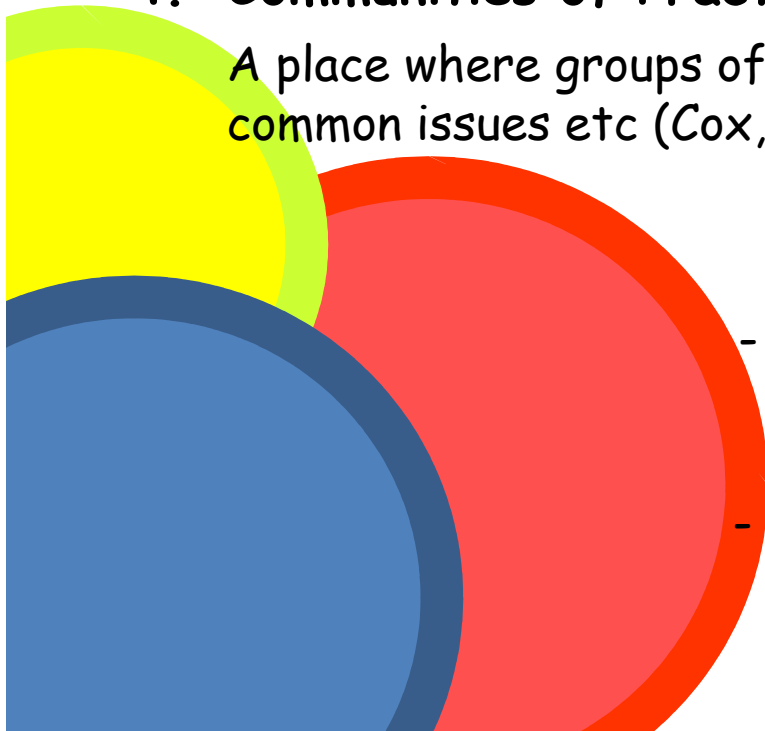
A set of behaviours about knowledge exchange which involve the actors, knowledge content, organizational context, appropriate media, and societal environment (Endress *et al.*, 2007). Bandura (2003) proposed self-efficacy as one's belief in the ability to perform a specific tasks, it is the central cognitive mediator of the motivational process.

4. Communities of Practice (CoP)

A place where groups of people share a common concern, work on common issues etc (Cox, 2006).

5. Social Networking Sites (SNS)

- Sites which allow users to set up online profiles or personal homepages, and develop an online social network (Ofcom, 2008).
- A collection of individuals linked together by a set of relations. (Downes, 2005)



Ties and Capabilities in Knowledge Sharing

- 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.
- Yang and Chen (2005) investigations about the relationship between organizational knowledge capabilities and knowledge sharing found that 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.



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.
- 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), and psychological arousal.
- Farkas (2007) 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.



Implementing 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.

- Privacy

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.

Participatory Culture In Libraries



Participatory Culture In Libraries

- 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 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.

Participatory Culture In Libraries

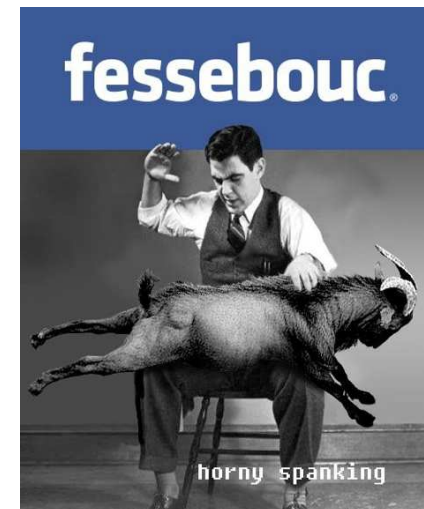
- Saw *et al.* (2008); University of Queensland Academic Library programs such *Creating the Library of the Future Program*, *The Library Multimedia Services*, and "First Year BA Community Web Page" in February 2007.
- Lee and Bates (2007, p. 660) studied about Irish librarian weblogs underpins advantageous and disadvantageous for librarians who are using weblog for improving their performances.
- Following school communities' participation, which already being a member of SNS likes MySpace and Facebook, Farkas (2007) 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.

Participatory Culture In Libraries

- Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) have conducted a survey to 126 academic librarians concerning their perspectives on facebook.com, an online social network. 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.
- 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.

Conclusion

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.



- **Thank You!**
- **Discussion, comments, questions.**

