Medical Librarians’ Uses and Perceptions of Social Tagging (poster)

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Medical Librarians’ Uses and Perceptions of Social Tagging
Cecile Bianco, MLS, Pharm D

WHAT IS SOCIAL TAGGING?
A phenomenon where people make up their own keywords to describe websites for discovery and retrieval. The resulting list of tags provides information and objects is often termed a "folksonomy," a classification done by untrained individuals (folks). This is in contrast to the work done by subject specialists using authorized terms (determined by professionals) to create a taxonomy.

Examples of Uses in Libraries

flickr
The University of Maryland is using flickr to organize the photos of the library. They are organized into collections and within each collection has one or more tags. Each picture has been given one or more tags by the user that help categorize them.

Getting Users to Answer the Survey
According to Dillman, there are ways to reduce non-response:
1. Multiple contacts: e.g. “in a few days you will receive my survey, please fill it out…”
2. Small monetary token given with the survey (a chance to win some token prize was considered instead)
3. Interesting and compelling reasons given in the blurb above survey link
4. Methods such as pin numbers to control who answers the survey and that they do it only once. SurveyMonkey technology does this for you.
5. Use mixed mode survey (so those who don’t respond to email get a paper one).

1. The Simple Request
   - Subject: You tagging survey FFL members.
   - Body: "Hi, as part of a project, we are doing a study on library tagging. If you would be so kind as to take a moment to tag a book from our collection, we would be very grateful! The survey can be found here: [...]

2. Interesting / Compelling Reasons
   - Subject: 'You tagging survey FFL members.'
   - Body: "I have a new project going on at the Library School that I thought you might be interested in participating in. The surveys will be conducted via SurveyMonkey, which is a user-friendly tool. Could you please take some time to tag a book from the collection and then answer a few short questions about your experience? Thank you for your time and effort!"

3. Prize Offer
   - Subject: 'Interesting/compelling reasons survey.'
   - Body: "Hello, I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to follow up on our recent survey request. Our team is excited about the responses and wanted to extend an invitation to participate in a follow-up survey. The survey is designed to gain insights into how you use our services and resources, and to help us improve our offerings. The survey takes approximately 5 minutes to complete, and you could be one of the lucky few to win a prize for your participation! We appreciate your time and support and look forward to hearing from you. Best, [Name]"

The Lamar Soutter Library
http://library.umassmed.edu

METHODOLOGY

Online Survey
- Working with MLA headquarters, a random sample of 348 out of 3,440 members was selected.
- The survey consisted of 16 questions and was administered through the SurveyMonkey website.
- The sample included members who had email addresses and were not on the opt out list.

RESULTS

- 54% have used tagging
- 47% have not used tagging
- 5% have used tagging

For the number of respondents who use tagging based in years in the profession, the Pearson chi-square statistic was found to be 6.895 (d.f. = 4). The significance level was 0.025, which is greater than alpha (0.05). Therefore, we cannot reject the null hypothesis: years of experience and use of tagging are independent.

CONCLUSIONS
Roughly half (47%) of the medical librarians have used social tagging. The sites that were most commonly used were the most well-known: Del.icio.us and Flickr. Interestingly, sites developed or promoted for the academic setting (CBM@e and Connotea) were not made use of. A greater percentage of those respondents with more recent MLS degrees use tagging. However, this trend was not statistically significant. With so many social tagging sites to choose from, the collective intelligence features of tagging will not be realized until a consensus emerges as to which site(s) will be used.

Number of Respondents Using Popular Tagging Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Del.icio.us</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Respondents Who Use Tagging Based on Years in the Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Profession</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>59 responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>29 responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>79 responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

167 Responses
11 Incomplete
156 Usable Surveys