

10-19-2008

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

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Repository Citation

Bianco, Cecile, "Medical Librarians' Uses and Perceptions of Social Tagging (poster)" (2008). University of Massachusetts Medical School. *Library Publications and Presentations*. Paper 97.
http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/lib_articles/97

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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 of 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 sets. Each picture has been given one or more tags by the user that help categorize them.

According to the Flickr website, "You can give your uploads a "tag", which is like a keyword. Tags help you find things which have something in common. You can assign up to 75 tags to each photo or video". Clicking on any tag on the tag cloud (right) will show you all the pictures with that tag.



LibraryThing

The FamilyResource Center at Akron Children's Hospital has cataloged their 1,102 volume book collection in LibraryThing. It is available freely on the web at <http://www.librarything.com/profile/FamilyResourceCenter>. Under the heading, "tags", are all the subjects for books in the collection. Clicking on the tag Children's Material will bring the user to a list of books with this descriptor. For each book in the list they give the comments, and a Shared link. The Shared link includes tags from other members in LibraryThing, members' comments and the book description in Amazon as well as a link to the book in Amazon.



<http://www.librarything.com/profile/FamilyResourceCenter>.
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METHODOLOGY

Online Survey

- Working with MLA headquarters, a random sample of 348 out of 3,400 members was selected.
- The survey consisted of 16 questions and was administered with the Survey Monkey website.
- The sample included members who had email addresses and were not on the opt out list.

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



Getting Users to Answer the Survey

According to Dillman, there are ways to reduce nonresponse:

- Multiple contacts: e.g. "in a few days you will receive my survey, please fill it out..."
- Small monetary token given with the survey (A chance to win some token prize was considered instead).

- Interesting and compelling reasons given in the blurb above survey link.
- Methods such as pin numbers to control who answers the survey and that they do it only once. SurveyMonkey technology does this for you.
- Use mixed mode survey (so those who don't respond to email get a paper one).

1. The Simple Request

Subject: User tagging survey MLA members

Hello, For a research project I am doing a survey on the attitudes of librarians on social tagging software such as Del.icio.us, Flickr, and CiteULike. Some people have strong opinions for and against using these tools, while for others they are not on the radar. Get in on the conversation and find out what other people are thinking! The survey is easy to complete and will take about 10 minutes. The responses are anonymous and final results will be made available to MLA and also published in a scholarly journal. This survey will remain open for 3 weeks through 4/21/08.

Thank you!
To do the survey, please click on this link

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address, please do not forward this message.

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

59 Responses +

2. Interesting / Compelling Reasons

Subject: User tagging survey MLA members—2nd try

I am a new researcher here at UMass Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts, and a provisional member of AHIP. I sent out a survey earlier this month and would like to remind you there is only one week left before it closes.

Thanks to all who've completed the survey to date. I value everyone's thoughts and opinions on this topic. Please take a few moments -- if you haven't already -- to share them with your colleagues. The results will be made available to survey participants and submitted to JMLA for publication.

Thank you!
To do the survey, please click on this link

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

29 Responses +

3. Prize Offer

Subject: AHIP provisional new librarian needs your help with research--5 minute survey--LAST CHANCE!

Greeting from UMass. I am writing to tell you that the deadline for filling out my online-survey is TODAY at 5pm.

So far I have 88 responded and 268 did not respond. Please help me get to 100!

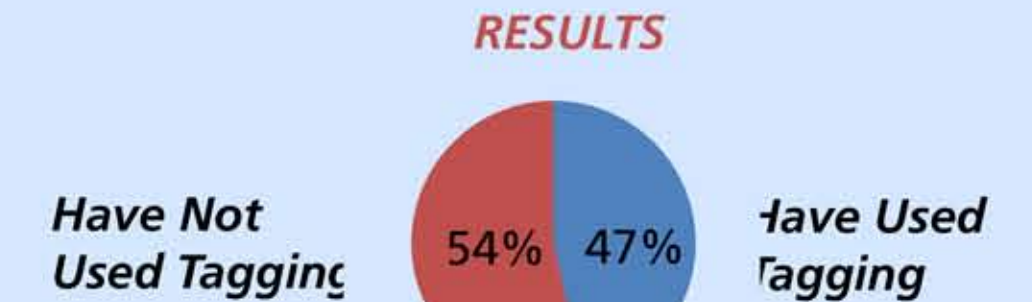
Survey takes 5 minutes to complete.

If you are the 100th person I will give you a small prize (\$10 gift certificate to a retailer)

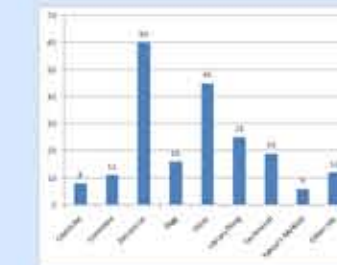
Thank you!
To do the survey, please click on this link

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

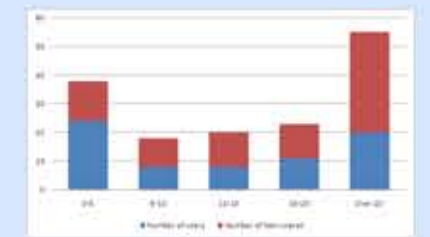
167 Responses
-11 Incomplete
156 Usable Surveys



Percent of the 156 Respondents that used Tagging



Number of Respondents Using Popular Tagging Sites



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

For the number of respondents who use tagging based on years in the profession, the Pearson chi-square statistic was found to be 6.895 Df = 4. The significance was 0.142 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 sites, Del.icio.us and Flickr. Interestingly, sites developed or promoted for the academic setting (CiteULike and Connotea) were not more popular. 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.