How to meet user needs in a changing world

Tips for marketing services and products the Library 2.0 way

Pavlinka Kovatcheva

Background

As a Sciences Librarian at the University of Johannesburg I offer information services to under-graduates, postgraduates and faculty members. I started experimenting with the Web 2.0 technologies in October 2007, as a way of keeping up with the latest trends in the profession. It was a new and exciting experience. Two years later I maintain a number of blogs, a Twitter, a wiki platform for my Sciences subject portals, instant messaging, Facebook, RSS feeds, and a social bookmarking site for selective dissemination of information, inter alia.

Web 2.0 applications and libraries

LIBRARY 2.0

Web 2.0 emerged as a way to stimulate people's participation, contributions and collaboration in the creation of new content on the web. Librarians were not far behind in taking initiative to implement the Web 2.0 applications in libraries. A new concept emerged, Library 2.0. This article provides tips on how librarians can implement the Web 2.0 tools (blogs, Twitter and social bookmarking) to promote library resources and services and keep users current.

The questions of which Web 2.0 applications will work better for your library and what kind of purpose they may serve, can best be answered by yourself. You don't need to use them all. Choose those that can best support your library. I started by investigating what overseas libraries were using, read through available literature and then just experimented. These applications can be used in any type of library. Ensure that you have a plan and the support of your colleagues and management. If you have an IT department, they should be consulted if help is required.

Library Rocks — ▷ WELCOME
www.uj.ac.za/library
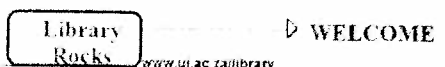
Marketing in libraries

A good marketing strategy can help your library to improve awareness of resources and increase usage. By using the social software applications, your library will become part of the global exchange of information, not just an institution that serves users locally.

Why market library resources?

- Marketing brings users up to date with the latest developments in the library.
- It encourages users to participate in library initiatives.
- By marketing library resources you increase awareness and usage statistics (databases, institutional repositories, etc).
- It promotes library services and staff to the community, etc.

Marketing the traditional way

These are some, but not all of the methods you can use to promote the library and its resources:

- Publish a library newsletter (frequency according to need).
- Announcements via e-mail or a circular (news notifications).
- Visual displays at strategic locations and in the library.
- Brochures.
- The library website.
- Training courses to promote the library.
- Special library events and exhibitions.
- Market specific databases and library services.

Marketing the Library 2.0 way

The new social tools can help libraries to be more proactive in promoting their services in an innovative manner, not only to their current users, but also to any potential users. Starting locally you can now promote yourself worldwide.

- Blogs
- Social networking tools (Facebook; Twitter, etc)
- Social bookmarking tools (Delicious)
- RSS feeds (news, articles, journals, etc)
- Wiki for collaboration
- Instant messaging or chat (Meebo, Skype)
- Mind maps (mapping your library resources)
- Podcasts and videos

- Embed widgets into the library website for visual images, etc.

UJ SCIENCES LIBRARIAN VIRTUAL & WEB 2.0 WORLD
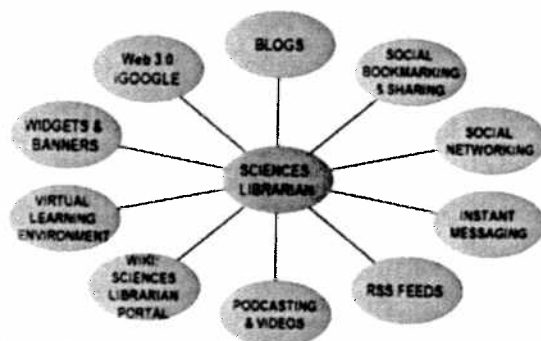
BLOGS

According to Wikipedia "a **blog** (a contraction of the term "weblog") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order".

You can create blogs for:

- Marketing and raising awareness of the library, its resources, services and staff
- Library newsletter
- User education
- Special library events and initiatives
- Subject librarians portals
- New books, publisher announce-ments, etc.
- Librarian's blog (sharing of useful information), etc.

WORDPRESS.COM

Advantages

- Librarians can easily create, update and maintain blogs.
- Blogs empower librarians to be proactive in their service to clients.
- Replace the static news on the library website with a more dynamic tool.
- It is easy to find posted information (tags, archive).
- Keep users up-to-date with the latest library news.
- A blog serves as a reminder of past events and trials.
- Ideal for receiving feedback from users (comments).
- A blog encourages initiative,

participation, etc.

Blogger

Disadvantages
- It can be time-consuming. Plan how long your posts will be and try to fit them into your workday schedule.

For new bloggers
- Be clear about who your intended audience is. Decide on the purpose of your blog.
- Decide on a blog platform. I had a better experience with WordPress (wordpress.org/) than with Blogger (www.blogger.com/). It provides good statistics; allows the creation of additional web pages, etc.
- When creating an account for a blog, make use of the generalised e-mail of your institution.
- Learn about new technological developments by following useful blogs such as **iLibrarian** (oedb.org/blogs/ilibrarian) and **Mashable** (mashable.com/).

UJ library blog examples
- UJ Sciences Librarian News blog (ujscienceslibrarynews.wordpress.com/)
- UJ Sciences Librarian Research blog (ujsciencelibrarianblog.blogspot.com/)
- UJ Librarians News (ujlibrariansnews.blogspot.com/)
- UJ Health Sciences Librarian blog (ujhealthscienceslibrarian.wordpress.com/)

TWITTER

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page. They are delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications.

Twitter: twitter.com.
Twitter Help: Get started: help.twitter.com/portal

Why use Twitter?
- It is a good tool for quick announcements (up to 140 characters).
- To raise awareness of library services and resources.

- To keep your library users up-to-date concerning useful websites, articles, news, etc.
- You can follow other Twitters relevant to your library needs (publishers; journals; book announcements, etc).

twitter

For new Twitters
- Create a Twitter account.
- Once registered, you can start posting tweets with information.
- You can search for relevant tweeters.
- You can use mobile technologies to send a message to your tweeter.
- Embed a Twitter widget in the library website.

Useful links
- A guide to Twitter in libraries: oedb.org/blogs/ilibrarian/2007/a-guide-to-twitter-in-libraries/
- Twitter for libraries: www.infotoday.com/cilmag/may09/milstein.shtml
- UJLibScience on Twitter: twitter.com/ujlibscience (example)

SOCIAL BOOKMARKING AND SHARING

Implications for librarians, researchers and learners
Social bookmarking is the practice of saving bookmarks to a public website and "tagging" them with keywords. Tagging information resources with keywords has changed the way we store and find information. It can be used for current awareness, marketing and the selective dissemination of information (articles, news, ToCs, websites, blog posts, etc).

Use social bookmarking and sharing websites to
- Simplify the distribution of reference lists, bibliographies, articles, news and other resources among peers and students.
- Use for current awareness and the selective dissemination of information (articles, news, ToCs, websites, blog posts, etc).
- Databases with social book-marking: ACS, RSC, EbscoHost, IoP, etc.
- Some social bookmarking web-sites: Delicious (delicious.com/), Digg, Google Bookmarks, Face-book, etc.

Bookmark & Share — Add This

Select a Service
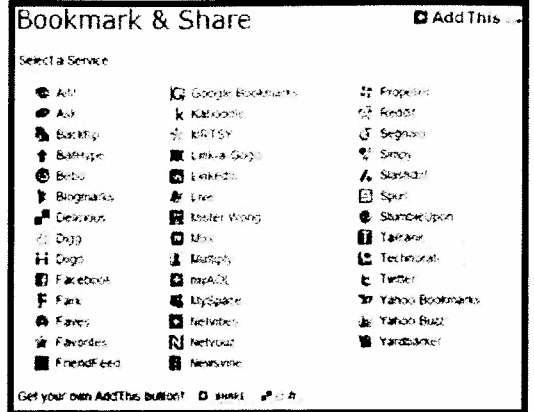
Advantages
- Easy to find new and older information (tags).
- You can keep users informed on the latest in the Sciences, library and IT fields, etc.
- Subject search per tag.
- Enables you to advertise your own links (blogs, websites, etc).
- Easy and quick to tag articles, news, websites, etc.
- Helps prevent e-mail overload.
- A good marketing tool.

delicious
social bookmarking

Suggestions
- Delicious is the choice of many libraries.
- When creating an account for a bookmarking site, make use of the generalised e-mail of your institution.
- Create a more subject-specific service and do not cover too many topics.

Example
- Sciencelibrarian on Delicious: delicious.com/tags/sciencelibrarian (Find tagged articles on Web and Library 2.0 applications and other relevant information.)

Additional Web 2.0 applications

- Wiki (UJ Sciences Librarian Portal: ujsciencelibrarian.pbworks.com)
- RSS feeds
- Instant messaging
- Facebook
- Podcasting
- Videos
- Mobile technologies
- Library Thing
- LinkedIn

The colourful world of the Web 2.0 librarian

Is it worth using Web 2.0 tools in libraries?

- Yes. They bring change, sharing and excitement into the librarian's life.

- Statistics show that the 2.0 applications are indeed powerful tools for marketing locally and worldwide.
- You are "out there", not only "in here". You actively participate in creating and sharing the world's knowledge and information. You are a *Cutting-edge Librarian*.
- Implementation is easy. You do not need IT skills or a degree in Marketing and Communication. You only need initiative and a love for what you do.

Enjoy exploring all these technological applications. They add a spark of excitement to a librarian's life and make it easier to provide a current and reliable service. Once again librarians can take a stand and prove that the library is more than just a physical wall filled with books. We can now do things differently – adapting and learning new ways of managing information, in order to keep pace with a changing world, and at all times render the best possible library service to our users.

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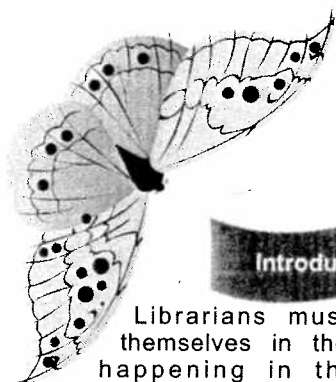
"Librarians, how serious are you about transforming yourselves and your libraries?"

Julia Paris

Introduction

Librarians must engage themselves in the changes happening in their work environment and focus their thinking on these issues. Transformation starts in our consciousness and influences what we think about and how we behave. If librarians can grasp this and make it a constructive reality in their own lives, this could eventually have a magnificent societal impact: the transformation of our libraries would be supported in a proactive way by our funding organisations, by society, and also by the State as a major stakeholder.

This article focuses very strongly on the librarian as a human being; changes in the LIS environment, and the need for librarians to "Be the Change" they are called to facilitate in the LIS sector. Transformation is a natural process yet very complex and for some, difficult to accept. Those who felt comfortable in their old environment and feel anxious about the future tend to resist it instinctively. My message is directed at librarians working in all types of libraries, who in the wake of the many changes they have experienced, and in the face of the many challenges still confronting them (e g basic resource and infrastructural needs),

are looking for purpose and meaning in an LIS world defined by both the Digital and Information Ages simultaneously.

This is an inspirational article that aims to create space for librarians to think about embracing change and transformation as natural processes. This is a call to embrace a process that facilitates the transformation of oneself, of paradigms and behaviour, leading to heightened self-awareness, positive interventions in the LIS environment of every librarian, and a resultant transformation of services. Self-aware people are in a state in which they can make sense of things that happen to them and function optimally in the relationship network they find themselves in.

Theoretical context

The article draws on the theoretical perspective of Positive Psychology and Appreciative Enquiry in particular. Positive Psychology as a theory is fairly new. It lends itself very well to reflection and to effecting personal paradigm changes in a non-threatening way. It encourages perception which focuses on the "good", but does not ignore the "bad" in human behaviour. Appreciative Enquiry is an organisational

change methodology developed to improve and enhance team development and team group dynamics. It is aimed at finding and developing the best in people, their organisations, and the world around them. This approach creates an ideal climate for right-brain thinking and the identification of creative solutions for the many, sometimes complex challenges which librarians face, providing very useful tools for them to utilise in their personal change efforts.

I also wrote this article to encourage librarians to embrace personal development opportunities, to stop talking about the role changes required, to flow with the transformation we are called to effect, to accept what IS, and just do what we have to do to introduce transformational changes into our respective LIS environments and watch miracles abound. This article is not based on blinkered Pollyanna thinking, but on real-life experiences in the field of life coaching.

The basic issues addressed in this article are the current, in many instances outdated paradigm of librarians, the exaggerated emphasis on technology as the be-all-and-end-all of service in libraries today, the need for new paradigms in a changing world, focused reflection for personal transfor-