Social Bookmarking Tools

Abstract

This paper provides a short discussion on the technological approaches that pervade current pedagogy leading to the intervention of Web 2.0 tools. It goes on to identify a number of social network tools used particularly in the area of bookmarking and referencing and offers links to a selection of tools and brief explanatory notes as to their purpose.

Technology and Pedagogy

There have been many different approaches applied to e-learning and a variety of models and methods are being developed on a regular basis that aim to enhance and adapt to the presence of technology in education; Palloff & Pratt’s Online Communities (Palloff & Pratt, 1999.), Salmon’s 5 Stage Framework (Salmon, 2000), Collis & Moonen’s Flexible Learning Approach (Collis & Moonen, 2001), Laurillard’s Conversational Framework (Laurillard, 2002), the IMS Learning Design (IMS, 2003) and Britain & Liber’s Framework (Britain & Liber, 2004). All of which now make reference to the increasing presence of e-learning tools (wikis, blogs, SMS, etc.) as a new addition to our teaching practice.

The Next Step...

With the advent of the concept of Personalised Learning Environments (PLEs) it is now a way to enable learners and academics the means by which to begin to integrate tools and resources in a form of knowledge construction. Add to this the ability to co-create that knowledge and collaborate in its subsequent dissemination and one begins to see a clear theoretical framework akin to Socio-Constructivism. Its advocacy for the mastery of new approaches to learning (by interaction with others) (Doise & Mugny, 1984) is clearly supported and replicated by the current use of Web 2.0 technologies and their emphasis on social activities.

The term Web 2.0 refers to a set of tools that have a “gravitational core” (O’Reilly, 2005) rather then any set of defined parameters, this second version of the web focuses on the ability to enable and facilitate sharing, innovation and collaboration. With its arrival a fundamental change has taken hold on the way we gather information from the Internet. The material and content has changed in the manner of its creation. It is now primarily derived from ‘ourselves’ via social software such as blogs and the now ubiquitous social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. It has also changed in appearance; part of the success of Web 2.0 is its inbuilt concept

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1 http://www.cetis.ac.uk/members/ple
of sharing and providing opensource\(^2\) solutions leading to multiple aggregations, creations and re-imaginings of both tools and resources.

Web 2.0 information often takes the form of micro-content through the amalgamation of both ideas and data. The clearest example of this is the \textit{folksonomy}\(^3\). A way of categorising data on the web using tags generated by individual users e.g. I take a picture of the Trinity Library Long Room, and provide a series of keywords (the ‘tags’) with regard to the Book of Kells. An architect who has similar images posts keywords within their discipline e.g. Deane and Woodward (the architects of 1860).

Yet another individual provides keywords relating to the \textit{Star Wars} Jedi library whose design was based upon the Long Room. This may appear rather puzzling to the reader as to how any of this will be of use. The creation of personnel metadata is primarily a social phenomena, herein lies its core strength. Each tagset inevitably feeds into one another and quickly creates a mass of interrelated links and resources. Harvesting these via a social book marking tool such as \textit{Bibsonomy}\(^4\) and displaying them as either ‘tagclouds’ (see Figure 1) or lists one can quickly discern either likeminded individuals or co-researchers. So rather than get lost in a tangent of the Star Wars universe I can quickly discover what other links scholars of illuminated manuscripts (such as the Book of Kells) have identified.

![Figure 1: An example of a TagCloud based on the key term Web 2.0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Web_2.0_Map.svg)

\(^2\) A development method that harnesses multiple streams and processes to enable cheaper, quicker, more advantageous and a transparent means of creating and answering software needs http://www.opensource.org/
\(^3\) http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/projects/Technologies.html#F
\(^4\) http://www.bibsonomy.org/help/about/
Etienne Wenger’s work has become paramount in our understanding and application of online interactions. His concept of *Communities of Practice* (1998) has a great deal of resonance in the current interactions of e-learning and Web 2.0. Based around three key elements: the domain, the community and the practice; the key to each being the interactions between individuals, their joint purpose and their actual endeavours. Wenger sees this as a means by which to promote collaboration online, more often than not it is mistakenly perceived that a community of practice is a mere website, network or shared concern. All of these may indeed form the constituent parts of a community of practice but they require activities to bring them to fruition e.g. problem solving, requests for information, reusing assets, discussing developments, mapping knowledge and identifying gaps. The preceding list can be easily mirrored in a number of activities using Web 2.0 tools e.g. collecting information via [Google News](http://www.google.com/news) then creating a comparative analysis via the blogosphere using [Memeorandum](http://www.memeorandum.com/), marking up the information in [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) (another example of social book marking software), and then using [Tagcloud](http://www.tagcloud.com/) to discern gaps in the areas covered. In addition you may wish to map your online endeavours by using a tool like [Trailfire](http://trailfire.com/pages/about/idea.php) that enables you to navigate your searches by providing additional user information from the online community – who may have gone before you on a similar enquiry.

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6 The term used to refer to the collection of blogs online.
7 http://www.memeorandum.com/
8 http://del.icio.us
9 http://www.tagcloud.com/
10 http://trailfire.com/pages/about/idea.php
Social Network Tools

Tools particularly used for citation:

- BibSonomy is a system for sharing bookmarks and lists of literature
  http://www.bibsonomy.org/

- citeulike for managing and discovering scholarly references
  http://www.citeulike.org

- Delicious
  http://delicious.com

- Connotea - for all researchers, clinicians and scientists
  http://www.connotea.org/

General Social Bookmarking and News

- Digg - a place for people to discover and share content from anywhere on the web
  http://digg.com/about/

- Reddit is a social news website
  http://www.reddit.com/

- Diigo (formerly Furl)
  http://www.diigo.com/

A further list may be found at the Social Bookmarker site – a tool to integrate the use of social bookmarking for speeding up tagging.

http://www.socialmarker.com/

And if you need to pause and reflect, and review the whole issue of social bookmarking here is a short explanatory video from Common Craft

http://tinyurl.com/c9kxcw