Social tagging and communities of practice: Two case studies

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Overview

• Communities of Practice (CofP)
• Code4lib social tagging study
• Tecktonic Killer social tagging study
  – Exo- and Endo-tagging
• Conclusions and further thoughts
Communities of Practice

• A CofP communicates on a topic, learns together, & shares and generates knowledge

• “Groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger n.d.)

• Many different definitions (Hindreth & Kimble 2004)
Three Dimensions of Communities of Practice

• What it is about
  – a joint enterprise; an identifiable domain of interest

• How it functions
  – the relationship of mutual engagement that binds members together (a community)

• What capability is produced
  – A shared repertoire of communal resources (practitioners, not merely observers)

(Wenger 1998)
Code4lib as CofP

- **Domain of Interest:** Library software (mostly Open Source)
- **Community:** Systems librarians and computer programmers who develop library software and interact physically (conferences, ad hoc) and virtually (IRC, e-mail, blog aggregator, journal, etc.)
- **Practitioners:** Real world ideas are discussed, problems solved, and things learned
Social Tagging Within Code4lib

• Items tagged with ‘code4lib’ on del.icio.us are automatically shared:
  – On a Web page for the tag created by del.icio.us
  – On the Planet Code4Lib blog aggregator
  – On the Code4Lib IRC channel
Earlier Code4Lib Tagging Study

• Investigated tags made by 15 Code4Lib members
• Bookmarks tagged with `code4lib` (community) were compared with items bookmarked that did not include the `code4lib` tag (personal)
• Analyzed according to Golder and Huberman’s (2006) 7 mutually exclusive semantic categories
• Only statistical difference found was the inclusion of the community tag

Golder and Huberman’s seven semantic categories

1. Identifying what, or who, it is about (mathematics)
2. Identifying what it is (article, blog, book)
3. Identifying who owns it (via.edsu, from:code4lib)
4. Refining categories (red, 25, 100)
5. Identifying qualities or characteristics (stupid, funny)
6. Self reference (mystuff, mycomments)
7. Task organization (toread, jobsearch)
Methodology

• Selection: 10 sets of user tags assigned to Web sites tagged with ‘code4lib’ community tag

• Tag sets that included community tag and tag sets that did not include the community tag were analyzed
Results

• Only statistical difference was the number of tags
• This may be explained by the inclusion of the community tag
• Supports results found in the earlier study of tagging in the Code4Lib CofP
Discussion

“Experts” tagging for “experts”?

• “Opensource,” “Open_Source,” and similar not used as much by Code4Lib community
• Open Source is a given for community members

Ownership

• Being a member of a CofP does not necessarily imply ownership
• Can small communities reach critical mass to develop interesting trends or folksonomies?
Tecktonik killer phenomenon: Analog and Digital aspects

**Offline:** In the high schools and on the streets

**Online:** Video-sharing
- Homemade
- Materials shared on video sharing sites
- Advertisement of own skill
- Connecting with others in movement

mind-ambition.blogspot.com
Tecktonik killer on YouTube

Uploader contribution
• Video (dance and music)
• Textual explanation
• Tags

Visitor contribution
• Number of views
• Comments
• Favorites/Ratings

Jey-je as “dieu”
Tecktonik killer as CofP

• **Domain of Interest:** Techno music, dance, & competition

• **Community:** French counter-culture teenagers comfortable with technology

• **Practitioners:** Competitive and active members wishing to improve skills, receive and provide feedback

http://www.webrevenus.fr/2008/01/05/idee-de-business-sur-internet-les-cours-de-tecktonik-en-ligne/
The Tecktonik killer community as “normal” taggers

Study from October, 2007
(one month after the Techno Parade)

Examined
• Twelve videos posted on video-sharing sites

Results
• Similar to “standard” online tagging/sharing behavior
• The French community in question has adapted to Web 2.0 in ways similar to other online communities.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/7791714@N08/1393315619
Tagging as indexing?

**Indexing**
- Terms reflect (relative) *aboutness*
- Rules or guidelines for terms
- Supplied by author, intermediary, or machine

**Social tagging**
- Terms reflect *aboutness* and/or affective status
- Folksonomies in the vernacular
- Supplied by interested party: author, intermediary, user (human-supplied)
Endo-tagging in social networking sites

• Endo-tags (author tagging)
  – Social tags of one’s own material
    • More tags make non-text resource more findable
    • Small investment to accompany larger work
  – Online advertisements
    • To other members of the community
    • To in-the-know outsiders
    • Tags resemble those of other uploaders/taggers
Exo-tagging in social networking sites

• Exo-tags (user tags)
  – Are social tags created by users of posted content
  – Succeed if they guide back to a previously-discovered online resource
  – Flag content of others for personal use
    • For self
    • For friends

*Signposts instead of advertisements*
Research Questions

• How is the indexing task approached differently by authors/uploaders (endo-taggers) and end-users or intermediaries (exo-taggers)?

• What new observations can we make five months after the 2007 TechnoParade?
Methodology

• Two primary alternate spellings (tecktonik, tecktonic) searched manually in del.icio.us
  – Exo-tags for 53 del.icio.us users

• Links followed to corresponding video
  – Endo-tags for 15 YouTube videos

• **Other data**
  – Number of times the video was viewed
  – Date video posted (for purposes of disambiguation)

• Limitations
Results

Average Number of Tags per video

- Endo-taggers: 12
- Exo-taggers: 2
Discussion (1)

• Endo-taggers are advertising their work
  – Include copious amounts of metadata
  – “Reputation economy” (Anderson 2006)

• Exo-taggers are less invested
  – Perceived tagging for an individual (self or other) instead of a community
  – More likely to be casual or mocking
  – More likely to use English, other language

http://www.flyawaycafe.com/
Discussion (2)

• Language presents relevant cultural and community-based questions
  – Differences in the use of English and French
    • English as “internet language”

• Importance of the community
  – Core members ≠ casual observers
  – Advertising opens the work to positive and negative reactions
Conclusions and Future Studies

• Community taggers could be interviewed to understand
  – Personal status in the community
  – Politic for sharing
    • (Un)intentionally hiding from non-community members
    • French biblio-bloggers ‘hiding’ their activity

• Studies on larger data sets?
  – With small or emerging communities, it is not always possible to get a larger data sets

• Role of ownership in tagging
Thank you!
Merci!

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Citations


