Social Networking Literacy Competencies
for Librarians
Exploring Considerations and Engaging Participation

Joseph Murphy
joseph.murphy@yale.edu
Yale University Science Libraries

Heather L. Moulaison
Ecole des Sciences de l’Information, Rabat
and Rutgers University
The social networking literate librarian possesses the skills for providing services in and with online social networking sites.
Social Networking Sites are

• Online communities uniting users with common interests, activities, expertises, etc.
  – College students use social networking sites frequently
  – Users consume and create content shared on social networking sites
  – Libraries are already in the business of getting information to people, so it’s a natural match
The Centrality of Social Networking

• Social networking sites are central forums for accessing and sharing information.

• Their expanding role in the creation, use, and sharing of information.

• Libraries are engaging online social networks as a central medium for interacting with library patrons and meeting their information needs.

• Librarians need new skill sets for
  – Utilizing and leveraging social networking sites in the provision of quality services
  – Maintaining our role as information experts in a Web2.0 world
Outline

• The need for competencies
• Competencies
• Training
• Roles
• Future
The Competencies

- Suggested skill sets for implementing library services and utilizing information within social networking sites
- Applicable across social networking sites
- Flexible enough to remain relevant in the changing and evolving information landscape
- Based on ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education
Social Networking Literacy Competencies

• Understanding & articulating the nature & roles of social networking sites
• Creating presences and content
• Evaluating information
• Applying information ethically and legally
• Searching and navigating social networking sites efficiently & effectively
• Interacting with patrons
• Assisting patrons with gaining and applying these skills
• Applying their expertise to services with & within social networking sites
Understanding and Articulating Social Networking Sites and Their Roles

• Articulate to peers, administrators, and patrons -
  – their nature and roles
  – their importance in research, communication, and the info cycle
  – their importance to libraries

• Familiar with diverse social networking sites and social media
  – the major sites relevant to our patrons
Creating Content

• Creating, contributing, and revising content
  – in various formats
  – within and beyond the presence of the library
  – in a variety of social networking sites with various tools

• Creating a library presence
  – pages, groups, profiles, and applications
Evaluating Information

• Critically evaluating information encountered in social networking sites
  – Evaluate info based on authority, currency, bias etc

• Assist patrons in evaluating content, and gaining and applying these skills to evaluate information they encounter in online social networks.
Applying Information Ethically and Legally

• Respects copyright and intellectual property of information **encountered** and **applied** in social networking sites.

• Aware of the unique cultural norms of and the need for privacy.

• Applies info found in social networking sites to other media and applying information to projects within social networking sites.
Searching and Navigating

• Effectively search and browse
  – for information in a variety of formats
  – for known and unknown contacts
• Understand & use search tools available within
• Using search engines to search
• Understand what fields are searchable
• Understand the structure of relationships and content within
Interacting

• Familiar with the diverse methods of communicating w/ & w/in social networking sites
• Able to connect with and provide synchronous & asynchronous services to patrons using these communication tools
• Aware of & able to apply the unique cultural norms and expectations of each communication method
• Skills for interacting over the various mobile communication channels
  – Mobile applications for smart phones, mobile webpages, email (if interactive), software and third party clients, and text message.
Teaching

• Assist patrons and peers with developing and applying social networking literacy skills.
Providing Services

- Utilize a variety of sites to provide quality library services
- Evaluate sites for which are most appropriate for a library presence.
- Building and managing the library’s presence
  - developing work flows for services
  - weeding spam
  - working with privacy levels
  - assessing the library’s presence and services
  - understanding and engaging vendor and other third party applications,
  - familiar with the process and etiquette of initiating and responding to friend requests in building networks.
Flexibility

*Flexibility is the Defining Competency*

- Librarians who are social networking-literate must be able to apply their current skills and curiosity to emerging and evolving resources.
Flexibility

• Look ahead
• Visualize
• Create and manage services in consideration of and within social networking sites.
• Skills
  – Vision
  – Creativity
  – Keep a constant thumb on the pulse of the social web, its users, and their behaviors.
Training

• Learning outcomes can be derived from the competencies as listed

• Instruction in SNL competencies should:
  – Encourage active, hands-on learning
  – Cultivate personal engagement and confidence
  – Highlight concrete & possible uses in libraries
  – Emphasis that these competencies are a necessary part of continuing education for modern librarians
Roles

• Professional associations and library schools can:
  – Support librarians with CE initiatives
  – Help LIS students in gaining skills (guest speakers from the profession, etc.)
  – Include these competencies in curriculum requirements
Roles

• Academic libraries should:
  – Support librarians in the acquisition of SNL competencies
  – Require new hires to possess SNL skills
  – Cultivate an environment where experimentation with SN sites is appreciated and rewarded
Future

• Librarians Should:
  – Include SNL skills in library instruction activities
  – Become knowledgeable about this topic (attending this conference is a good start!)
    • Stay abreast of the literature, listservs, biblioblogs, podcasts etc from our field and beyond
    • Organize workshops for sharing best practices
  – Assess the need for Social Networking-based services in their libraries
    • Consider feasibility, upkeep, cost-benefit ratio, etc.
Future

• Highly Engaged SN-literate Librarians Should:
  – Find new and creative ways to offer extensive services within the SN framework
  – Plan to share their experiences with others in the profession
  – Consider
    • how will libraries fully host library resources and services on this now central realm for interacting with information
    • how librarians can be supported in gaining the skills required for doing this
On the Horizon

Full integration of library services with popular social networking sites, especially Facebook.

• Applications for Facebook and multiple online platforms
  – Skills for librarians
    • Designing and developing
    • Providing services through
Mobile Applications

• For smart phones - iPhone and mobile devices that run on Google’s Android software.
• To serve as a library presence and means of access to resources and services.
• Should fully embrace social and mobile features.
  – Library2.0 is mobile, virtual, and social
Social Networking

• Can’t replace “being there”
  – Traditional library services are still needed.
  – It’s about enhancing and expanding services.

• Can add a new and exciting dimension to library services!

[Heather and students (also “Facebook Friends”) send greetings from Morocco]
Thank you!

Questions?

Friend us on Facebook!

Joseph Murphy
joseph.murphy@yale.edu

Heather L. Moulaison