



Social Networking for Indexers – Panel Discussion – with responses added

Glenda Browne

Jan Wright

Tracy Harwood

Overview

- ◆ This panel session will discuss the electronic systems through which indexers communicate 'en masse'.
- ◆ Most indexers are on at least one mailing list, but many haven't tried the more social sites, or have tried them, and found them wanting.
- ◆ Here we will look at the information and social needs indexers have, and ask the audience for thoughts on which resources serve those needs.

Social networking participation

- ◆ Forrester research:

<http://blogs.forrester.com/.a/6a00d8341c50bf53ef0120a5175967970b-popup>

In praise of social networking

Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinions in good men is but knowledge in the making.

John Milton (1608 - 1674)

- ◆ The numbers in the following slides are the number of people in the audience (total 22 people) who used the lists, sites, etc that we were asking about. The conference social networking survey received responses from 30 indexers and will be presented as a separate document.

Survey – Which mailing lists are you on?

◆ Mailing lists

- Index-L 8
- General indexing (eg, IndexCafe) 3
- Specialised indexing (eg, web indexing) 4
- Indexing software 10
- Other professionals (editors, tech writers, librarians) 13

◆ Numbers

Survey – Which social networking tools do you use?

- ◆ Mailing list/Social site
 - Ning
- ◆ Numbers
 - ◆ 6
- ◆ General social networking sites
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn
- ◆ 4
- ◆ 14
- ◆ 3

Survey – Which social networking tools do you use?

- ◆ Social bookmarking
 - Delicious
 - ◆ Book-related
 - LibraryThing
 - Shelfari
 - ◆ Traditional websites
 - Society websites
- ◆ Numbers
 - ◆ 2
 - ◆ 6
 - ◆ 1
 - ◆ Not asked

Survey – Which social networking tools do you use?

◆ Blogs

- reading
- writing

Numbers

9

1

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Where do we all go, online, to meet our professional, business and social needs?
- ◆ Get advice from other indexers about indexing?
 - Dealing with clients (eg, late payment)
 - Technical advice on specific problems
 - Indexing choices (eg, term selection)
 - Research publishers and editors
- ◆ Hear news from fellow indexers
 - Software updates
 - Websites of interest
 - New publications

Feedback

- ◆ We thought of: The mailing lists, Ning and LinkedIn. Society websites for long-term stuff, eg online newsletters.
- ◆ The audience suggested Index-L, indexing software mailing lists, society newsletters and websites, but most preferred personal contact via phone calls, emails, committee meetings and Skype. The suggestion 'Ring Max' was well-received, but not considered scalable.
- ◆ There were comments that we cannot know who is on the mailing lists, so have to write messages appropriate to the context.
- ◆ When a news feed on a website was suggested there was some discussion about the purpose of society websites – whether the aim is to provide news to members, or to promote members to the wider world.

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Get opinions and information about topics related to indexing (eg, editing, taxonomies)?

Feedback

- ◆ We thought: Editors', tech writers', and taxonomists' mailing lists.
- ◆ The audience also thought about library lists, Google searches and bibliographic databases. And, of course, books.

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Share information with followers



Feedback

- ◆ We thought: Twitter for URLs and brief announcements and as a pointer to other places. Websites. Ning and Twitter perhaps for topics less directly associated to indexing. Viral spread from one site to another. Acknowledgement of sources documents the pathway
- ◆ The audience commented on company control that would not allow use of sites such as Twitter, and mentioned a recent lawsuit that involved discussion of lawsuits on Twitter.

More on Twitter

- [Twitter](#) - #ANZSI2009, #dailyentry (these are two of the hashtags used by indexers to enhance retrieval. If everyone tweeting about our conference uses the same tag in their messages, we can easily gather content by searching for '#ANZSI2009').
- [Twellow](#) (categories of tweeters)

Where do you go to...?

- Share information with the world
 - ◆ [Delicious](#)

Feedback

- ◆ We thought: Delicious, book sharing sites, official society websites. Your own blogs.

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Promote/advertise your services
- ◆ Display your credentials
- ◆ Make sure that your colleagues know your specialties
- ◆ Build a network of colleagues to refer and get referrals from
- ◆ Decide which colleagues you want to refer work to

Feedback

- ◆ We thought: Twitter, Facebook. LinkedIn. Mailing lists in a subtle way. Book cataloguing sites in a subtle way (including tag 'indexed by me').
- ◆ The audience mentioned Linked-In as being useful for contacts with permanent staff, and as a way of looking for editors.

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Get announcements of upcoming events

Feedback

- ◆ We thought websites, Ning and Twitter.
- ◆ The audience thought of websites. A discussion started about jobs being promoted through society websites, which the Canberra editors do. (And the NSW editors do by email.)

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ See pictures of indexers you have never met
- ◆ Learn more about other indexers personally and their hobbies and interests
- ◆ Chat
- ◆ [Ning](#)

Feedback

- ◆ We thought: Ning, Facebook, Twitter
- ◆ Jan talked about her plans for Ning, and her hopes for the development of an interactive, multi-purpose website for indexers.

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Find out about book-related matters and book lists and metadata

Feedback

- ◆ We thought: LibraryThing, Shelfari, Amazon (reviews and comments)
- ◆ We didn't get this far in the panel discussion, so there are no more audience comments.

Where do you go to...?

- ◆ Keep in touch with friends, family and friendly indexes
- ◆ Get back in touch with colleagues

Feedback

- ◆ We thought Facebook



Statistics from conference survey (30 responses)

- ◆ See Survey Responses sheet and Summary

Searching and 'Indexing'

- ◆ Archives
- ◆ Threads
- ◆ #tags on Twitter
- ◆ Tags in inverted commas on Ning
- ◆ Delicious – no controlled vocabulary, but site offers suggestions that aid consistency
- ◆ Not so easy though, so most people just ask the question afresh

Duplication of content

- ◆ Choosing between sites, eg, aliaINDEXERS mailing list, and Australian indexers on Ning
- ◆ Duplication of effort to cross-post
- ◆ Duplication of effort to delete duplicates
- ◆ Perhaps there will be future consolidation, and more cross-linking

Where to start...

- ◆ Difficult to choose one place to go, as they offer overlapping services. Suggestions:
- ◆ For info on all aspects of indexing (references, events, etc) undiluted with waffle, go to society websites.
- ◆ To ask questions, and to keep up-to-date with new technical and business developments
 - Index-L (or Indexers Discussion Group or Ning) for general contact and discussion
 - Mailing list for your indexing software
 - Twitter for URLs of interest.
- ◆ To keep in touch with indexers as people
 - Twitter, Ning, Facebook (unless you keep it personal), blogs
- ◆ To keep in touch with indexers professionally and to expand your professional network (eg, find out what jobs they are working on, and connect to their connections) - LinkedIn
- ◆ To record and share information – Delicious for tagging websites; LibraryThing and Shelfari for cataloguing book collections

Netiquette

- ◆ How to avoid flame wars (bitter, personal, ongoing arguments)
- ◆ When to take it off list (when discussions drag on, and only two people are posting, it is usually time to stop mailing the whole list).
- ◆ Change the subject line when you change the topic
- ◆ Promotion vs. Infomercials (this is a problem on sites such as Linked-In, when many questions are simply disguised self-promotion)
- ◆ Befriending and defriending (you need to make judgements about who to connect to on these sites, and at times you may wish to disconnect from someone).

Bewares

- ◆ Remember, replies go to the whole list
- ◆ Remember, answers are one person's opinion. Answers may be wrong. Look for consensus. Evaluate.
- ◆ Cultural and language differences. Eg, '12/5/09' is clearly December to an American...

Conclusions

- ◆ Despite all of the options now available, appreciation goes to Index-L, the Grand Old Dame of social networking, which made a significant difference when it came into our lives about two decades ago.