

# Quality through improved service: the implementation of social networking tools in an academic library

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# Social networking & scholarship

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- Web 2.0 & social networking tools and practices impact on scholarly communication
- The idea of “social scholarship” common practice
  - scholars discuss research findings on blogs and invite comments,
  - write articles on restricted wikis,
  - use social bookmarking sites as vehicles for “soft peer review”
  - personal copyright ownership of publications and open access

# Libraries & social networking

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- Functions and future of academic library depend on & influenced by transformation of scholarship and research
- Library has to adapt in order to provide more effective research and teaching support
- The University of Pretoria Library Services:  
e-Information Strategy with the aim of making optimum use of the new Web 2.0 technologies to support its basic client-centred approach to service delivery

University of Pretoria Library's  
e-Information Strategy 2008-2010

# e-Environment for Scholarship



# Web 2.0/Library 2.0 & Reference Services

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- Meaningful reference work and research support front line of academic library services
- Web 2.0 strategy and products in place in library, but social computing tools not used by subject reference librarians.
- Project undertaken to encourage implementation of social networking tools in the library – focus on reference (subject) librarians

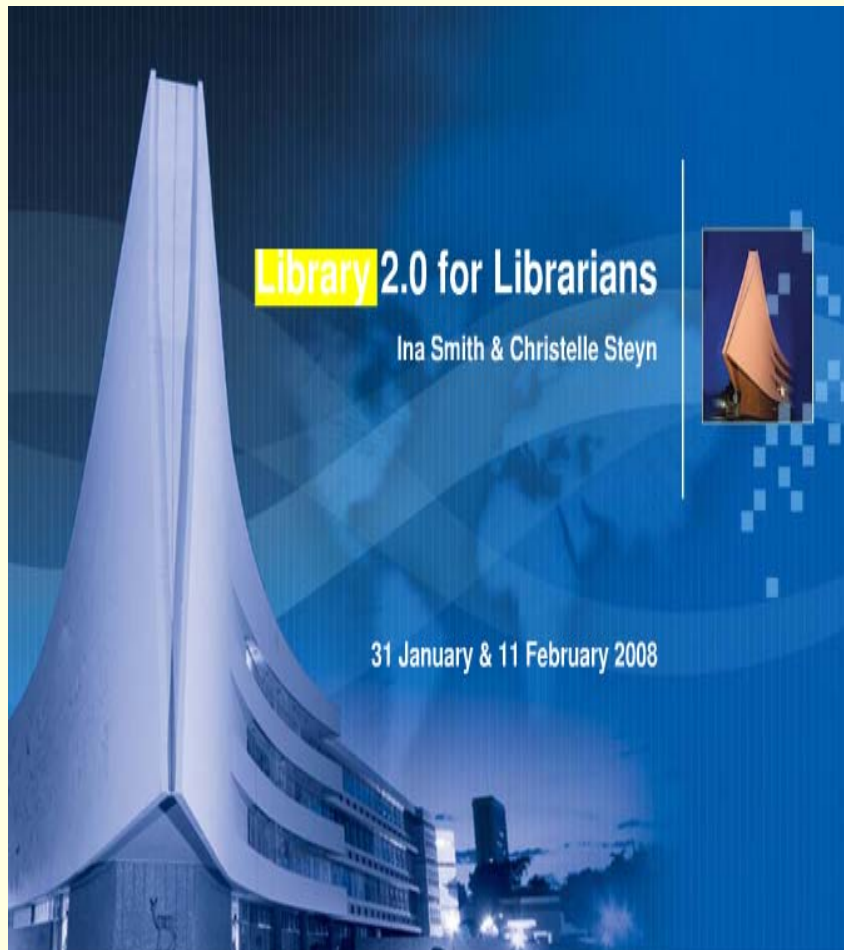
# Monitoring project

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- First phase
  - Training
  - Feedback
    - Library staff
    - Academic personnel
  - Observation implementation of services
- Second phase
  - Feedback – library staff, academics, students
- Further phases?

# Project implementation

Successful transition to Library 2.0 – skilled staff needed



## Step 1

Practical training in  
FaceBook, Flickr,  
YouTube, Blogger

# Training sessions

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- Lead by experienced staff from e-Strategy team.
  - Demonstrations of the products
  - Trainees working with the tools themselves e.g. creating their own FaceBook profiles, placing photos on a Flickr account etc.
  - Comprehensive workbooks provided valuable for later reference.
- Not compulsory
  - Assumed that staff who attended voluntarily more “open” to new innovations and ideas



# Step 2: Follow-up

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- With library staff:
  - Demands on time to acquire new skills and knowledge will impact on attitudes of staff
  - Needed to find out feelings and opinions of library staff
- With academics:
  - The needs and interests of clients also have to be taken into account when introducing new services
  - Perceptions and experiences will have effect on making use of products & willingness to do further business with service provider.

# Interviews with library staff

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- Semi-structured face-to-face interviews four months after the training session
  - Questions concerning the interviewees' personal feelings and opinions on the workshops and tools demonstrated
  - Use of social networking tools – personal & professional
  - Asked about their clients' use of tools

# Interviews with academics

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- Semi-structured interviews conducted with selected academic staff.
  - How familiar with Web 2.0 products in general
  - Whether they used any social networking tools for personal use
  - Whether and which tools were used professionally i.e. for research and teaching purposes.
  - Awareness of Web 2.0/Library 2.0 products and services offered by the library

# Results of interviews with library staff

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- Training sessions – positive responses
- Opinions on products
  - FaceBook – not professional, social tool for younger people; many created profiles at workshops
  - Flickr – marketing and general information
  - YouTube – unsure; for training?
  - Blogger – positive; already active

## ■ Personal use of products

- Very few

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## ■ Professional use of products

- Blogs and wikis predominantly

## ■ Problems/barriers

- Lack of time, shortage of staff
- Technology – especially libraries not on main campus

## ■ Future

- Development of blogs
- Creation of folksonomies by users e.g. for new books
- Definite future use of wikis

# Results of interviews with academics

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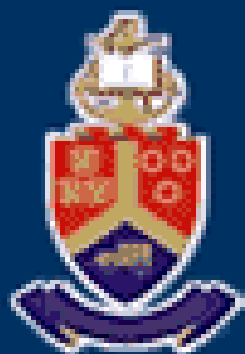
- Majority active in social networking; exceptions one or two of “older” people
- Potential for research sharing and cooperation
  - Possibilities and advantages acknowledged, but personal hesitancy
- Already introduced in curriculum
- Contact with library
  - Unsure how library could assist them on this level



# Step 3: Keeping track of further developments

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- More and more people in library venture into Web 2.0 / Library 2.0 world
- Also social software strategy map to facilitate operational implementation of Library 2.0 strategy
- Library 2.0 road shows for library staff during November 2008.
  - To demonstrate best practice for the use and implementation of Web 2.0 / Library 2.0 tools & show that social tools can easily and successfully be applied for a variety of purposes
  - To encourage reference staff to actively implement these tools for their specific clients with their individual scholarly requirements.



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*"Courage, independence and self-confidence,  
self-criticism and a readiness to listen, an  
awareness of the boundaries of our knowledge,  
reverence for the Creator, an appreciation  
for the wonder thereof, and the willingness  
to ask about the meaning of our lives."*

**The Merensky Story - Part 4**

## Department Library Services University of Pretoria



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# EDUCATION LIBRARY BLOG @ UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

## EPMDP

Executive public Management Development Programme is a course tailor made for the managers of the South Africa Police service. Offered at CE@up. it is a research course that aim at introducing the candidates to Research Methodology as a prerequisite for Public Administration Masters Degree

[refilwe matatiele](#)



friday, october 17, 2008

● ● ● **Proceedings of the 26th Southern African Transport Conference (SATC 2007) 9 - 12 July 2007**

Posted by M and DPHIL ENTREPRENEURSHIP at [12:20 AM](#) ● [0 comments](#)

tuesday, october 7, 2008

● ● ● **Merensky library circulation desk and faculty libraries**

# Computer Workstations, Level 1, Education Library

ALL SIZES



# Games for Information Literacy



# Looking towards the future

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- Reference staff cannot implement all social networking tools.
  - Clients' needs differ
  - Individual librarians unique approaches to their work.
  - Differences in various subject areas/disciplines.
- Critical success factor is ***collaboration***
  - Make clients aware of important role that the library reference staff can play
  - Research & teaching needs of academics
  - For improved services - use right tools for the job

# Some suggestions

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## ■ Social networks

### ■ FaceBook

- Students and academic staff may be unaware that there is a subject specialist in their discipline.
- A large number of reference staff have created personal profiles on FaceBook. Those who have not yet done this should do so.

### ■ LinkedIn – professional level



## ■ Blogging

- Valuable tool for getting clients to engage with reference staff
  - Already many general blogs in library
  - Reference librarians could set up subject-specific blogs advocating their use for scholarly discussions and commenting on research findings

## ■ Wikis

- Powerful tool for scholarly communication in the academic environment.
  - Staff very positive about wikis in library
  - Reference librarians can approach their knowledge base in a Wikipedia-like manner where the reference questions, for example, serve as starting point for a collaboratively developed knowledge base (Lankes, 2008).

## ■ Skype

### ■ Skype in general reference area in library

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- Facilities could be expanded for use in subject reference work.
- Free multifaceted seamless user experience [Booth, 2008]. Investigate its use as a virtual reference service

## ■ Podcasts

- Podcasts on how to download previous years' exam papers set up by circulation desk.
- Podcasting also been used in a current awareness service for the biological sciences in the library
- Reference librarians can learn from colleagues and experiment with these alternative ways of service provision.

## ■ Second Life

- Increasingly being explored as a library education space e.g. Second Life Library (SLL2)
- Info Island includes a wide range of different types of libraries and services including reference.
- Examples of Second Life for general information literacy training already the UP library
  - Subject specialists could use these programmes or become involved on a subject specific basis.
  - Their personal experiences with this tool can also serve as encouragement and support for clients who may want to implement the tool in their teaching.

## ■ Google groups

- Many available products that scholars and academics are increasingly using
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- Staff group formed for general discussions and exchange of information regarding Library 2.0.
- For reference purposes Google groups offers the feature of being able to upload documents which cannot be currently cannot be done with FaceBook.
- Various Google facilities should be exploited by the subject specialists to their own advantage

## ■ Mobile technologies.

- Many academic libraries are designing services around mobile technologies and mobile users.
- Reference librarians should investigate the wide range of possibilities for research and other scholarly support that this offers.

# In conclusion

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- UP Library offers general Web 2.0/Library 2.0 services on par with academic libraries worldwide.
- The outcomes of the project show that by advocating the use of social networking tools, the library is in a favourable position for providing ongoing quality service in support of research and teaching at the university
- Reference librarians to focus on increased efficiency and value-added services by fully exploiting the social networking environment.

We believe that the potential for using social networking tools to provide quality services

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*“is limited only by academic librarians’ imagination”* [Bell, 2007].

Thank you