Gamifying library orientation at the University of California, San Diego

By Marlo Young, Virtual Education Coordinator, UC San Diego Library, San Diego, CA, USA

What do you get when you cross an undergraduate student population, an innovative academic library, and a mobile gaming app? A digital library orientation for the 21st century.

The UC San Diego Library applied SCVNGR, a mobile app that uses geolocation technology, to deliver interactive gamified content to orient undergraduate students to the library and its core services.

Why gamify library orientation?

According to Marc Prensky in “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,” today’s average college student has spent fewer than 5,000 hours reading, yet more than 10,000 hours playing video games. The influence of information and communication technologies in students’ blended virtual and physical everyday realities has a significant impact on the way students learn and the expectations they have of meaningful interactions.

Additionally, the New Media Consortium’s (NMC) Horizon Report identifies game-based learning as having significant impact and potential within higher education. It notes that the most recent National Education Technology Plan identifies gaming as “an ideal method of assessing student knowledge comprehension” as games provide immediate performance feedback to the players. The NMC report goes on to state that “students are engaged because they are motivated to do better, get to the next level, and succeed.”

Gamification enabled us to scale library orientation across UCSD’s six undergraduate colleges and more than 5,000 incoming students. We increased the level of active learning and student engagement with our orientation content, while significantly reducing the time required to deliver orientation compared with our traditional in-person format.

Marlo Young

In this issue

Did the social library begin with using social media to promote library content, or was it about networking with peers in different locations? Regardless, the channels increased, the tools proliferated, and social began to take on a whole new form.

Social as a means to communicate, create and connect. Though we can only scratch the surface of social here, I’d like to explore interesting trends and share useful tips. Altmetrics is a burgeoning field trying to take the measure of social in terms of impact, while my interview with Mendeley’s William Gunn examines social in relation to research networks and discovery.

Librarians are also under pressure to manage and deliver social content. Librarians from University of Surrey, Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, and De La Salle University offer practical advice.

With this issue, let’s get content under control and venture into other realms of the social library.

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Free poster inside!

Pull out and display the I AM A (SOCIAL) LIBRARIAN infographic on pages 8-9.
Piloting the gaming event

To get started, we established a small project team consisting of three librarians to build gaming “challenges” and reformat our orientation content. We decided to pilot the gaming event during Welcome Week when UC San Diego hosts a wide assortment of social events and activities designed to help acclimate students and orient them to campus services. We established a small budget of $600 to purchase iPod Shuffles as prizes, driving competition and interest. Our budget also allowed us to print marketing materials.

During Phase 1 of our pilot in 2011, we transitioned our orientation format from face to face to a blended format. We obtained student and librarian input on the content of our game and learned a lot about how best to utilize SCVNGR to achieve our goals, which were to:

- Introduce students to core library services and research assistance
- Familiarize students with two library locations, their physical footprints, and key features and collections
- Establish interactive, social learning experiences with the library physically and virtually

Students, or players, had to conduct specific “challenges” at various locations throughout our main Geisel Library and our Biomedical Library. The challenges required them to interact with library staff, library spaces, technology, and our social media, as well as the collections and our online research tools. We used the app’s scoreboard and ranking feature to enable students to monitor their progress and the competition.

Based on Phase 1, we decided to pilot Phase 2 during the same period in 2012 to refine our gaming event and increase participation.

Results

Some might consider Phase 1 participation discouraging: 42 individual players who completed 139 activity challenges and 91 social activities within the library. Though we did not reach even one percent of new students entering UC San Diego, we did experience firsthand the tremendous potential that the technology has in supporting online learning. Phase 1 taught us, more than anything, how to improve, and how important the design element is when bringing educational content into a gaming framework.

In 2012, participation increased significantly with 63 teams (with up to 4 players per team) completing 861 activity challenges and 370 social activities. Reach and usage of the library’s Facebook page increased 100 percent. Phase 2 taught us how to design meaningful learning content within this mobile app platform, and ultimately, how to scale this gaming orientation across campus: by having our undergraduate colleges integrate SCVNGR into their orientation and educational programs (rather than as a free-standing, optional gaming event).

Tips for using technology for gamification

- Determine what you would like to achieve before deciding the right app or platform for your library.
- Be flexible when working with technology: experiment, learn as you go, and assess.
- Learn from others who have implemented the technology.
- Align your efforts with campus initiatives and priorities, as well as with information literacy standards and goals.
- Create a feedback loop by assessing performance after each session, including student input, and sharing outcomes with colleagues from within and outside of the library.
- Don’t go it alone; inform your organization and colleagues to gain interest, support and participation.

References


Interested in gamification for your library?

See the May 2013 ACRL brief, Keeping up with Gamification: www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping_up_with/gamification

It describes the use of gamification:

- To add a virtual layer to a physical world
- To act as a motivational tool in higher education
- For instructional and promotional activities

And author Bohyun Kim provides a nice list of recommended reading and resources on the topic.
E-informing the public: Libraries and e-government

By Luanne Freund, Assistant Professor, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Academic and public libraries have long played an important role in society by managing, disseminating and preserving government information, making it available to researchers, policy makers and the public. With the shift to “digital government,” in which the government delivers information and services to the public directly through online channels, the role of libraries is changing, leading to new challenges and opportunities. The E-informing the Public research project, carried out at the University of British Columbia in Canada, investigates the shift to digital government and its impact on public access to government information.

Potential and pitfalls of e-government

As part of the project, we surveyed librarians across Canada. Many believe that digital government has enormous potential for improved access to government information, and are working locally to facilitate this. Most are adding links to government documents and websites directly into their online catalogs, and many are creating subject guides, promoting government content on their websites, and offering instructional opportunities to their user communities.

At the same time, they expressed grave concerns that information, in some senses, is less accessible as a result of the shift to digital government. In particular, librarians pointed to the uneven distribution of Internet access and digital media skills among the public; the poor findability of online government information, given the scale and complexity of government websites and the lack of effective search tools; and the lack of clear policies and practices to preserve vulnerable digital content over the long term. As governments continue to close physical service points, librarians find themselves dealing with an increasing number of patrons who need Internet access and assistance in finding and using government content. Ensuring that this information and associated services are available, possibly in collaboration with government agencies, is an opportunity for libraries to demonstrate social value.

What do people want from e-government?

Another aspect of the E-informing the Public project focuses on why and how people use online government information. The most common reasons are prosaic: to find information about government programs and services, carry out service transactions, download forms or apply for jobs. The number of people in direct communication with the government through online channels remains low, although the concepts of participatory democracy and an engaged citizenry are important underlying rationales for the move to digital government.

As use of social media by government agencies becomes commonplace, we may see an increase in direct citizen engagement in the future. In the meantime, we still need to ensure that members of the public are able to meet their own basic information needs.

The majority of searchers used Google rather than government portals, and more than a quarter of all searches did not result in useful information.

Google is not the answer

In one of our studies we went to local public libraries with laptop computers and asked people to search for Canadian government information on a number of common search topics, such as benefit programs for seniors, the process of importing a vehicle, and alternate sources of energy. The majority of searchers used Google rather than government portals, and more than a quarter of all searches did not result in useful information. Even more disturbing is that the majority (68 percent) of documents selected were from sources other than the Canadian government!

On the other end of the spectrum, some searchers were extremely savvy and found creative ways to access content. For example, to find information on how to file a tax return, one person surprised us by going directly to YouTube. Within seconds he found the perfect solution: an instructional video produced by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Opportunities to contribute

The last example hints at the great potential for digital government to support citizens’ needs. However, the assumption that simply putting content online makes it accessible to all is highly problematic, as information professionals know well.

Libraries have an important role in supporting members of the public who lack the skills, motivation or infrastructure to participate fully in digital government; in providing input and expertise in matters of information management and preservation; and in contributing to the design of more effective information systems.

Contributions of this kind require resources and, as many of the librarians in our study noted, more training and educational opportunities for information professionals. In the United States, there is a trend toward greater involvement of libraries in e-government, based on important initiatives from the University of Maryland’s iSchool, but internationally, there is much more work to be done.

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http://diigubc.ca/research/egovernment/
How to find and create social media content for your library

By Ginna Gauntner Witte, Coordinator of Circulation Services, Johnnie Mae Berry Library, Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, Cincinnati, OH, US

More and more libraries are using social media to connect with patrons. From Facebook and Twitter to Pinterest and YouTube, libraries are opening a wide range of accounts to engage users and market local resources. While library staff must learn the technology and the format behind each social media tool, one of the largest challenges in social media management is generating content.

To keep profiles active, libraries must post updates regularly, an easier task when there is a menu of ideas to choose from. Even once social media accounts are up and running, libraries may experiment with changing the tone or types of posts if patrons aren’t responding as hoped. Again, it’s easier to do so if a collection of possible post types are already prepared and waiting to be deployed. Here are some suggestions for creating a pool of social media content possibilities and for finding new ideas.

Locate peers

One of the simplest ways to gather ideas is to review other examples. To begin, search a specific social media platform for pages and feeds from institutions similar to yours with regard to location or type. For instance, a search for “Cincinnati library” on Facebook will return sites for public libraries, college libraries, professional associations, and library-related organizations in that area. Whether or not these institutions are similar to yours, they might provide examples of local content that would interest your audience. In the same manner, a search for “community college library” in the “Browse categories” section of Twitter will show feeds from libraries, news organizations, professional associations, and individual employees. Although their specific posts may not interest your users, you can view the types of posts they use.

Next, see how users have reacted. How many “likes” or “followers” does the page have? Is anyone commenting or sharing? Is the site owner acknowledging user comments? Once you have found a few sites with posts you like, backtrack (as with citations during research) and find out which organizations or people that site follows for additional ideas.

Identify posts that match your social media goals

Once you’ve located successful peers, scan their social media feeds to generate a list of post types that are applicable to your setting. Consider how your users might interact with these posts. If you are using social media to connect with distance learners, they probably won’t respond to information about new books located physically in the library.

What to Share

- local collections
- outages & closings
- daily events
- answers for FAQs
- new book list
- student work
- library stats
- ads for student positions
- your professors’ publications
- lost & found items
- mini book reviews
- word of the day
- photos of the library and neighborhood
- keep track of
- a list of post types that are applicable to
- your social media accounts. Consider how your users might interact with these posts. If you are using social media to connect with distance learners, they probably won’t respond to information about new books located physically in the library.

If you are trying to expand your user base, posting staff or event pictures might encourage the photo subjects to share the photos on their own feeds and attract other users to your site. Of course, you may have several goals for your social media accounts and may find that different peer sites provide useful ideas for particular goals.

Create an idea bank and build streams of shareable content

Generating a collection of post types can be an invaluable time saver. After you’ve located peers and identified posts that reflect your goals, consider saving your list as a Google document or adding it to your library’s staff wiki. This way, everyone who posts content can review the list and add suggestions when they encounter new ideas.

While you will most likely post many things that are not included on the list, the list can be helpful when you need to generate content quickly or when new staff cover the social media feeds. Instead of wasting time deciding what to post, you can refer to the list for a quick idea that matches your goals and has been successful in other settings.

Finally, remember that you don’t need to create all of the content you post. A unique aspect of the social media environment is how easily content can be shared. When looking for peer organizations, you may come across posts that would interest your users. Subscribe to these pages (“like” them on Facebook, “follow” them on Twitter, etc.) to create a stream of content in each social media interface that will provide ideas for new post types and give you access to shareable content.

Although libraries are still experimenting with using it effectively, social media is here to stay. Specific tools may change, but the need to generate content in time-efficient ways will continue to challenge time-strapped library staff. Creating an idea bank based on a review of peer feeds is one solution to this challenge.
Helping scholars tell their stories using altmetrics

Academic research and publishing have transitioned from paper to online platforms, and that migration has continued to evolve from closed platforms to connected networks. With this evolution, there is growing interest in the academic community in how we might measure scholarly activity online beyond formal citation.

The collection, analysis and presentation of data about how people share and discuss academic papers are known as altmetrics. Over the last year altmetrics has received increasing attention in journals, conferences and social media. (A good starting point for learning about altmetrics is http://altmetrics.org/manifesto.)

Data collected by altmetric platforms come from many sources, ranging from PDF downloads on scholarly platforms to mentions on everyday social websites. Various altmetrics websites and tools have different sources and specialties: ImpactStory is strong on data, code and components, whereas Altmetric excels in mass media references. Plum Analytics claims to include data on interlibrary loans, and other book-related and library-specific data.

Altmetric usage figures may include whole article data, source data and component data.

- **Scholarly usage data**: Web page views, PDF downloads
- **Scholarly reference**: Bookmarking, shares and recommendations from CiteULike, Zotero, Mendeley
- **Mass media mentions**: NYTimes, BBC, The Washington Post
- **Social media mentions**: Twitter, Facebook, Delicious
- **Data and code usage**: Dryad, GitHub
- **Component mentions**: SlideShare, Figshare

![ImpactStory](image)

Although its reports are less colorful than the Altmetric donut, ImpactStory classifies data from different types of sources to identify various activities. For example, it separates public discussions from scholarly ones, and attempts to identify influential tweeters.

The number of use cases for altmetrics is expanding as ideas are shared, but it is clear that many are relevant for librarians and others who curate and appraise published material.

- **Measuring collection performance**
  Both ImpactStory and Altmetric allow users to create collections of documents using digital object identifiers (DOIs) or other IDs. ImpactStory also lets users collect data for specific web pages and download data as spreadsheet files. Both platforms have a computer interface (API) for ingesting data directly into a database.

- **Measuring institutional repositories’ performance**
  Because ImpactStory allows users to collect data for web pages, it is possible to automatically build a collection of documents from an institutional repository. This potentially allows a librarian to monitor the institution’s relative performance. Altmetric is keen to explore this area too, and has worked with institutions to develop solutions.

- **Comparing relative performance of institutions and researchers**
  You can use altmetrics to compare the social usage of the output of both institutions and individual researchers. ImpactStory may make the latter easier by allowing for comparison of registered articles by ORCID (the Open Researcher and Contributor ID repository).

- **Creating social impact statements**
  A recent initiative considers whether the social impact of research can be meaningfully assessed with altmetrics. Changes to funding infrastructure in the UK have led to mandatory social impact assessments for Research Council funding, and this trend will likely spread. There are not yet methods for computing social impact — either relative to other research or in absolute terms — but a wider vision of altmetrics could provide a good picture of the extent to which research is communicated to society.

It is important to stress the current limitations of altmetrics. Although it is tempting to use altmetrics for direct comparisons, they actually do not permit anything but cautious evaluation of
Quick wins for mobile technologies at the University of Surrey Library

By Claire Gill, Virtual Support & eServices Developer, and Claire Gravely, Information Resources Advisor for Cataloguing and Metadata, University of Surrey Library, Surrey, UK

At the University of Surrey Library we have been investigating ways to improve support for the increased use of smartphones and tablets by our users. Statistics have shown a 113 percent increase in mobile traffic to our website, and we have started receiving queries about mobile devices and library resources.

We conducted a poll and two focus groups with students to determine their requirements regarding mobile technologies. They indicated that they want easy access to relevant information and that they do not distinguish between library information and other university information. The focus groups favored an app, while the poll showed equal support for an app or mobile-friendly web pages.

Because we do not have the resources to create an app, we have concentrated on goals we can achieve quickly and with little outlay of time or resources. One of the first things we did was begin using QR codes. Creating QR codes is very easy, thanks to numerous free sites. We investigated several sites before deciding to use Bitly to create QR codes linking to web pages, as this gives us statistics as well as a useful short URL. For other QR codes, we use the QR Code Generator from the ZXing Project.

We currently use QR codes on posters, electronic displays, and help sheets. The codes link to more information or contact information for our academic liaison librarians. Though statistics show that QR code usage is not high, the codes require only minimal effort to set up.

We have also set up a mobile version of our library catalog, which involved changing a setting in our administration console — another quick and easy change for something identified as important in our focus groups.

We have created mobile-friendly versions of our web pages that show hours of operation and how to book rooms. Any future developments will start from a mobile-friendly base.

We have also been investigating what is already available to students in the form of apps from resources we subscribe to, and will create a web page to promote the most useful ones to students.

Our approach has been to tackle what we can achieve with the resources at hand. If the day comes when we can improve upon these efforts, we will have already made strides in the right direction. LC

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Additional resources:


Stacy Konkiel http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A-14VFwL


Pull out and display the I AM A {SOCIAL} LIBRARIAN infographic poster on pages 8-9
I AM A {SOCIAL} LIBRARIAN

--- I AM A ---
CURATOR, CREATOR, AND PROMOTER
- from my desktop or mobile device to my patrons' platform of choice
- entering the library into the social content ecosystem
- with web articles, social streams, videos, and subscription content
- a tsunami of information produced by the growing Internet of Things
- of interconnected smart objects

--- I AM A ---
EDUCATOR
- using social tools to empower library users
- with information skills for the social age
- underpinned by a knowledge of effective and ethical use
- populating our library's social web with information and resources
- and meaningful conversations throughout the ecosystem

--- I AM A ---
FILTER AND CONNECTOR
- isolating and posting streams for specific users
- enabling their discovery of timely subject-specific information
- connecting with apps, tools and services
- in person, at hangouts, over video
- I AM A FACILITATOR AND EXPERIMENTER
  - my avatar and @profile extend the library’s value
  - in real time to the social screens of library patrons
  - while back at the library, I create and facilitate
  - with makerspaces, digital media labs, hackerspaces, or creation spaces
  - embracing the DIY culture and its collaborative tools

- I AM A BEACON
  - attracting library users to our physical location
  - with social mapping, traffic and reviews
  - inspiring and engaging our library’s supporters
  - tapping into the financial and friend resources of the crowd
  - continuously shining a light on new social media directions

I AM {READY} NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE {SOCIAL} LIBRARIAN

Subscribe for free to the Library Connect Newsletter: http://libraryconnect.elsevier.com/subscribe

Join the conversation @library_connect libraryconnect Content by Joe Murphy @libraryfuture
Liking, sharing and tweeting with LORA: De La Salle University Library’s savvy avatar

By Perseus Rex M. Molina, Laurence Anthony G. Narvaez, and Marian Ramos-Eclevia, Associate Librarians, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Reaching out to library users

In 2009, the De La Salle University (DLSU) Library recognized that our library users were increasingly using social media. In an effort to better reach and communicate with these users, the library created its official Facebook page (www.facebook.com/DLSULibrary). Four years later, the page has almost 4,000 “likes,” and is one of the library’s primary marketing and reference tools.

The page’s personality comes from a “virtual librarian” named LORA (for Library Online Reference Assistant), who posts comments, shares news and events, responds to online queries, and chats with library patrons. LORA is a smart, trendy and techno-savvy librarian who encourages relaxed, convenient interactions and provides prompt, efficient service.

In 2010, the library set up a Twitter account (@lora_dlsulib) to respond to reference queries and promote its services to the DLSU community and beyond. Tweets related to the library can be found through hashtags and geocode searches, making interaction with users easier.

In 2012, the library started a blog (http://librarynewsette.lasalle.ph) to replace its quarterly print newsletter, allowing speedy posting of news and announcements.

Tracking our usage

A quantitative analysis of the posts and interactions for the library’s social media accounts from the time of their respective inceptions until April 2013 found that 616 people had created stories about the library on its Facebook page, while 4,254 people had seen content related to the page. Seventy percent of the library posts were about the library’s collections or resources.

The most popular post was an invitation to the launch of the DLSU Learning Commons (Facebook statistics indicated 1,503 users were “reached,” 243 “engaged,” and 15 “talking”). A post on QR codes had the highest number of engaged users (484).

The Twitter account included 665 tweets from the library and 149 replies to user tweets, while users retweeted library tweets 266 times and replied 145 times. Most of the tweets and interactions were about users’ personal experiences at the DLSU Learning Commons, the new library building. There were 132 tweets asking for help or support, and the majority of the reference questions were quick reference or technical questions. Each reference question included about four interactions.

Usage of the Library Newsette blog has climbed steadily, with more than 1,500 unique visitors in April 2013, compared to 168 in its first month (see graph).

The most popular post was a promotional one about the library’s new location and name, DLSU Learning Commons, with information on the facilities. Other popular posts included information about library events and online contests.

Addressing social media maintenance

One challenge in using social media is the lack of staff dedicated to its maintenance. Currently, reference librarians respond to queries, and the public programs librarian posts promotional information. To assist in maintaining these accounts, the library is integrating its Twitter account into LibAnswers’ Ask-a-Librarian service, which allows libraries to monitor Twitter messages side by side with other online reference services. It has also introduced mobile applications featuring QR codes and augmented reality, making interaction more interactive and fun for patrons. Other challenges include the issues that need to be considered when crafting a social media policy, including copyright of online materials, internet security, and users’ privacy.

The library is considering creating a New Media Committee to manage social media. And to attract followers and expand the reach of these social media tools, we are looking at holding online contests and inviting guest bloggers to write articles.

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Mendeley and librarians building bridges to make academic researchers more social and more productive

In this interview, William Gunn, Mendeley’s Head of Academic Outreach, discusses Mendeley as an academic social network. He also talks about the librarian’s role in teaching researchers to use Mendeley, and how librarians themselves are using Mendeley to connect with colleagues with similar professional interests.

Library Connect: Before Elsevier’s acquisition of Mendeley, the two companies collaborated on a number of fronts. Can you tell us about why there is a good fit between the two companies?

William Gunn: If we were on Facebook, we’d have to describe the historical Mendeley–Elsevier relationship as “It’s complicated.” There was a lot of good collaboration with some groups, and then other groups would be telling us, “You can’t put up PDF previews” or things like that. For my part, I was a ringleader in some of the online movements of last year, such as the Cost of Knowledge boycott and the whitehouse.gov public access petition. So we’ve had this history, but we’ve also had a very good history of productive collaboration. For example, when Elsevier shut down 2collab, its scientific social network, the product manager involved, Michael Habib, recommended that everyone move over to Mendeley, and we made it easy for them to do that. I also attended the first Beyond the PDF conference, where I met Bradley Allen and Anita de Waard, both of whom were at Elsevier Labs at the time.

I realized over the course of interactions like these that Elsevier was interested in exploring some of the same issues around scholarly communication that we were pursuing at Mendeley.

So when you combine a research network of our scale and the world’s largest science publisher, great things are probably going to happen.

Most librarians are familiar with Mendeley as a tool for organizing PDFs and references; I’d like to hear your thoughts on Mendeley in the research workflow and as an academic social network.

The social networking thing is perhaps what I’m most excited about. Social networks get better as the scale of them grows. So when you combine a research network of our scale and the world’s largest science publisher, great things are probably going to happen. Just four years ago, there were doubters about the concept, but it turns out that scientists are people too, and they do use social networks like everyone else.

So not only has Mendeley proven to be really useful in terms of individual benefits for organizing PDFs and managing references and making it easier to write papers, but it’s turned into a really important discovery tool for the researchers as well. A lot of interesting discussion happens in the groups. We’ve even found that activity on Mendeley, such as the number of people who have a given document in their Mendeley library, is correlated with how many citations that paper is going to get. And it’s even broader than that, because you can actually see the impact that a given bit of work has not only on the people who are writing papers and citing it, but on a wider audience — the practitioners: nurses, small businesses, the general public, lay scientists. This picture of Mendeley readership in the broader social space has a really important effect on allowing us to build better discovery tools. We can leverage that data and use the collective wisdom of all the world’s scientists to make research more efficient.

What kind of interaction do researchers and their contacts have on Mendeley that they wouldn’t have on other social networks like LinkedIn or Facebook?

Social networks are a really interesting space because you can pick up data about what’s going on in research. I use Twitter quite a lot because it asks so little of you to read or write to the network. I use Twitter to see what someone is thinking about at the moment, and I use it as the scaffolding on which all of my other interactions hang. When I add papers to my profile, for example, it gets tweeted, and many scientists use it to discuss talks they’re attending. For my first year on Twitter, that’s almost all I used it for.

I keep a profile on LinkedIn because if I want to know what someone has done or where they’re working, I’ll go look them up, and so I figure they might do the same for me. I don’t really use Facebook too much, as it’s really to more keep up with your college friends or people from your hometown, and so I don’t see too much research activity going on there.

So as I mentioned, I use Twitter as the scaffolding on which other interactions hang, but then when I have those more substantial interactions, they tend to happen somewhere like Mendeley. That is where we can get into detailed discussions about a piece of work, or where you might invite someone to a conference.

It’s interesting how our different activities segregate themselves out into the different networks.

Mendeley

AT A GLANCE

Mendeley is a free PDF organizer, reference manager and academic social network comprising:

- 2.4M researchers
- 234K public and private groups
- 1,000+ Mendeley advisors (power users around the world)

To sign up for your own free Mendeley account, visit www.mendeley.com.
Your “destinations” seem to be taking you to a wide range of library conferences. Why are librarians such a key audience for Mendeley?

I’m really excited that you saw the list of where I’m going on my Mendeley profile! Not enough people use that feature. If more people used it, then we would have more data and we could recommend not only papers or colleagues, but also conferences you might want to attend or places you might want to send your paper.

I first became aware that librarians were a key audience for Mendeley at a Coalition for Networked Information meeting around 2009. I was giving my basic presentation about what Mendeley is and someone afterward asked me, “So what sort of metadata schema are you using to store your data?” I thought for a minute and then said that I don’t think we have one. What I have since learned is that the tech community has a metadata schema that’s optimized for high availability and scalability, while the librarian community has a metadata schema that’s optimized for preservation and access and interoperability. So it’s really been neat to take librarians on as advisors and bridge the varying needs. We get a lot of important feedback from the Mendeley for Librarians group, and they have been very crucial in helping to spread the word about Mendeley.

One of the most common bits of feedback that we would get from researchers early on is that they found out about Mendeley later than they would have liked. They would be frustrated that they hadn’t been able to use such a great tool while working on their dissertation, and would literally ask, “Why didn’t anyone tell me about this?” I felt like we were failing librarians because they were the ones getting the blame for us not having done our outreach properly.

Has that changed?

Yes, the outreach has definitely worked. There are now hundreds of LibGuides on Mendeley and librarians have given thousands of presentations on the tool. They are also using Mendeley for their own professional interests. For example, a bibliometrician, Judit Bar-Ilan, found that we had about 98 percent coverage of the bibliometrics literature in 2012. Biological sciences and medicine has been our biggest demographic, but in terms of the percent coverage of the field, library and information science has been very, very high up there.

Mendeley library guides

Many libraries have developed library or subject guides to introduce students and researchers to Mendeley. This example by Rachel Borchardt of American University contains how-tos, useful links and an embedded chat feature.

http://subjectguides.library.american.edu/mendeley

Other Mendeley library guides have interesting features such as embedded Mendeley video and Twitter feeds:

http://libguides.wustl.edu/mendeley
http://uiuc.libguides.com/mendeley
http://pitt.libguides.com/mendeley
Consolidating Mexican researchers’ profiles in Scopus®
An accurate citation count emerges with a unified profile

By Claudio Fernández Ortega, Reference Librarian, Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Nucleares, Mexico City, Mexico

Databases and citations
“The goal of bibliographic databases is the collection of scientific literature as a means of disseminating knowledge…” 1

I was recently part of a three-person team undertaking a project with Elsevier Mexico to unify Scopus profiles, especially those belonging to members of the National System of Researchers (SNI). This includes about 12,000 researchers. (I should also note that a similar number of researchers in Mexico, an estimated 12,000, are not SNI members, which involves meeting requirements to obtain certain benefits including financial aid. Therefore, work remains to be done to reconcile non-SNI profiles as well.)

As the team member with responsibility for the final stage of the project, I was in charge of collecting all the information and resolving issues pertaining to clarity of records. By unifying profiles, we are supporting an important process for researchers and research centers — analyzing citations for purposes of determining and assessing the impact of research.

The importance of uniform names and research profiles

Our goal was to ensure each author who was part of the SNI during 2012 only had one author profile. Although programs do have algorithms to identify matching profiles with similar names, themes, co-authors, or institutions, they cannot identify all discrepancies. And although it is a manual process, there is often uncertainty about some of the multiple profiles.

Scopus profile of Dr. Guillermo Torre Amione, a 2012 Scopus Elsevier-CONACYT Award winner.

This may be due to:

a) Authors who have used variations of their names or changed their names because of marriage or other reasons

b) Editors who mistake first names for surnames or vice versa

c) Mistakes by journals or databases when capturing the names

d) Differences in transliteration of names, which may occur when researchers’ native languages use a different alphabet or naming structure than the language of publication

In Mexico, the most common issue was researchers having two surnames, while they publish under a single surname. As you can imagine with common surnames like Gomez, Sanchez, Garcia, Lopez, etc. this may be tricky.

All of these factors can affect citations, which may be missed or incomplete and take a much longer time to determine. In turn, calculations such as h-index, Impact Factor, citation counts, or some other bibliometric measure will be inaccurate. These measures may be a factor in tenure, funding or like decisions. For example, in conjunction with Mexico’s National Council of Science and Technology (CONACyT), Elsevier presents Scopus Elsevier-CONACYT Awards2 to researchers in seven subject areas. Selection criteria include number of citations (eliminating auto citations), the number of documents published, h-index and the individual research discipline.

The analysis and unification process

To start the unification process, we made a list of SNI members, reaching a total of 11,751 authors to analyze. Out of 11,751 SNI researchers, 73 percent had a single profile (all papers for an individual were under a single name). The rest, 3,208 researchers, had papers under two or more names or profiles.

Authors with multiple profiles were assigned an identifying number to facilitate search and citation analysis. Previous work by librarians to assign h-indices to SNI researchers was extremely helpful. Authors with the same name, at the same institution and within the same research area were then consolidated under one profile. In some instances, I had to contact the authors to make sure that it was the correct researcher. Once the project was completed, Elsevier contacted different institutions to get feedback about researchers’ data.

Conclusions

1. Authors of scientific papers should aim for uniformity in the attribution of their academic works.

2. Uniformity and/or unification of authors’ names is crucial for citation analysis.

3. Collaboration among librarians can be useful in shaping commercial databases.

4. While Elsevier Mexico took the initiative for this project, we now hope to achieve similar results with researchers outside SNI.

References

1  www.gsic.uva.es/..MIN_Trabajo_individual_FERRACUTTI.pdf

2  www.elseviermexico.com/Premios_Scopus/2012/index.html
Tech takeaways from the SLA Annual Conference

By Colleen DeLory, Editor, Library Connect Newsletter, Elsevier, San Diego, CA, USA

This year, I was fortunate to be able to attend my first Special Libraries Association (SLA) Annual Conference here in my hometown of San Diego, California. In her Not Dead Yet column for Library Journal, Cheryl LaGuardia invited readers to share how they “bring it back home” from conferences. Sadly, the most common response was that people were too busy to report back. With this in mind, I’d like to encourage librarians to share their conference experience with their colleagues and with Library Connect by doing a little sharing myself. So grab a sandwich and brown-bag with me.

Four tech trends and ideas to implement at your library

The conference kicked off with an opening address by Mike Walsh (@mikewalsh), author of Futuretainment and CEO of the research lab Tomorrow. As the mother of a seven-year-old, I apparently have a main line into the future sitting at my dinner table. Walsh posits that children under 10 are the ones we really need to watch when we think about engaging with the next generation of information users. For parents of teens with vehicles, consider this: Would they rather give up their car or their smartphone? The answer tells you this: Would they rather give up their car or their smartphone? The answer tells you this: Would they rather give up their car or their smartphone?

Walsh’s presentation and future updates are available by signing up at www.mike-walsh.com/go.

Social media

I attended a few sessions focused on social media and also sat down with some individuals at the IT Division Speed Geek session. I spoke with Michele James, a graduating LIS student who had helped the UCLA library measure its social network reach using the free tool Twitonomy. Michele also showed me UCLA’s site for creating branded shortened URLs — what a great idea!

Caryl Yanek, a senior associate librarian at Catalyst, shared some really useful tips for using social media:

- Don’t control or censor. Instead, contribute, listen, follow, share, friend, like and ask questions.
- Disagreement is interaction, and interaction is at the heart of social media.
- Don’t overshare or say the same things over and over.
- Work with your marketing department, but don’t cede control.

Lastly, Linda Galloway (@lmg13066) of Syracuse University shared information on social media and citation metrics. She looked at the field of altmetrics, which measures research impact from articles, datasets, blog posts, slideshows and other online mentions via tools and networks such as CiteULike, Delicious, Faculty of 1000, GitHub, Mendeley, SlideShare, Twitter and Zotero. If you are interested in the topic of altmetrics, I encourage you to read the article on page 6.

New technologies

In a morning session, Amy Buckland (@jambina) of McGill University and Kendra K. Levine (@tranlib) of UC Berkeley’s Institute of Transportation Studies gave an excellent rundown of new technologies that librarians might want to explore. These included hardware such as Raspberry Pi and Arduino, project management software like Asana and Basecamp, and data analysis and visualization software like R + D3 and Many Eyes.

But amid all the talk of cool tech, they cautioned against using technology to solve nonexistent problems — and to understand that the technology may be free, but your time to learn, implement and maintain it is not (i.e., it’s free like kittens that grow up to be cats rather than free like beer). They also encouraged librarians not to forsake face-to-face encounters with each other and with people across the university and from other walks of life.

Slides at: http://libraryattack.com/?p=469

Hope to see you next year

Next year’s SLA Conference will be in my former hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia. Upon hearing I was from Vancouver, a neighbor here in San Diego exclaimed, “I love Vancouver!” When I asked her where she had stayed, she replied that she’d never actually been there. That’s how great Vancouver is! So I hope to see you there, or at another library conference sometime soon. LC

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**Scopus** export limits increase to 20,000 records

With the June release, Scopus — the world’s largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature — increased its exports limits from 2,000 to 20,000 records! The good news was hailed from Iowa City, US, to Pretoria, South Africa, on Twitter.

Keep up to date with the latest Scopus news on Twitter by following: @Scopus

The release also made it easier for researchers to import their research papers to ORCID (the Open Researcher and Contributor ID repository) through a direct link on the author detail page.

Learn more about this new function and Scopus’ smart tools to track, analyze and visualize research at: www.info.sciverse.com/scopus