

Web 2.0 tools for promoting the library collection

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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Prezi intro: To see an introduction to this topic done as a prezi visit: <http://prezi.com/i0q-e09u0gcw/promoting-books-on-web-20/>

One of the major challenges at my school is communication. In the past, I used to share the new acquisitions to my collection in staff meetings or book talk my collection with English classes. With fewer opportunities for our staff to meet as a whole and increasing demands placed on classroom time, I needed to create a forum available to my staff and students to share new books in the library. To this end, I began by looking for tools that would help me communicate on my web site, readily accessible at the user's convenience. I wanted a tool that could easily log my books, provide a widget for my web site, and update automatically.

My first stop was [LibraryThing](http://www.librarything.com) (www.librarything.com). LibraryThing is a robust Web 2.0 site that allows for easy input of books, by manual input of ISBN or by the handy \$15 CueCat USB scanner. I add tags for categorization, rate using a star system, and can add a review. Helpful information such as all of the tags and member reviews of that book are listed below its entry, as well as the ratings given by various members. Here is an example of a [LibraryThing page](#) for *An abundance of Katherines* by John Green.

What caused me to abandon LibraryThing was the unpredictable nature of its widget. I found that on our school library's Drupal-based web site that the widget did not always load in properly. Due to this questionable reliability, I migrated to [GoodReads](http://www.goodreads.com) (www.goodreads.com). Again, I found that inputting books into its database was quite easy. I requested and was given librarian status within the service, which allowed me to change and add data into the site. This was necessary, as some of my entries, particularly of academic books, lacked cover images. GoodReads pages for each book are not as informative as those of LibraryThing, but one benefit is that GoodReads sends my recommendations to my friends via e-mail. Here is an example of a [GoodReads page](#) for *An abundance of Katherines* by John Green.

Overall, from my experiences with both services, these book club Web 2.0 services are both valuable tools. Because LibraryThing is ad-free, it is a paid service after the first 200 books, but a lifetime membership is available for \$25 or a yearlong subscription for \$10. On the other hand, advertising supports GoodReads, but it is otherwise free to use. Both sites serve teacher librarians well to share information with students and staff, and would aggregate and disseminate book reviews that we create for our collections.

My decision to choose GoodReads was largely due to the stability of its widget for use on my web site; however, I intend to retry LibraryThing shortly, as its widgets, richness of data, and ad-free environment are more appropriate for use in school libraries. Felicity Shoulders posted a very thorough comparison, analysis and subsequent discussion of the two services on her blog at faerye.net. For a view of how I use GoodReads, visit my library web page at <http://campbellcollegiate.rbe.sk.ca/library>.

Reference

Shoulders, F. (2008, August 12). Goodreads vs. LibraryThing. Retrieved from <http://faerye.net/post/cage-match-goodreads-vs-librarything> (January 11, 2011).