

# Collection Development Using Social Bookmarking

Saskatchewan School Library Association

**THE MEDIUM – FALL 2008**

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Over the past few years I have delved into the social software world exploring and experimenting with many different tools. There have been some that have been immediately tossed out, others that have become a part of my daily work and a few that I could not live without.

Social bookmarking is one of those tools that I use every day and without it could not do my job. It allows me to record, organize and access the many sites that I want to refer to later or pass on to teachers that I know would find them useful.

Social bookmarking is defined by *Wikipedia* as “a method for Internet users to store, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of web pages on the Internet with the help of metadata.” My social bookmarking tool of choice is *Delicious*.

There are several features of *Delicious* that I like and use. The first is the ability to bookmark websites and return to them wherever I am in the world. I am not limited to the sites that I bookmark on my desktop computer. The second is the use of *tagging*, or the ability to give as many keywords I want to describe an item. This allows me to very quickly find the sites that I have bookmarked by being able to search according to the tags I have assigned items. The third thing I like is the ability to add notes. I use this field to describe the item in greater detail, to note how I might use the site or to note where I learned about the site.

When I first started using social bookmarking these were the features that I used and I thought they were pretty awesome. However, I have since discovered the real strength of a social bookmarking tool, which is the ability to share and network with others.

*Delicious* creates URLs from the tags that are used. This is extremely useful for quickly creating a collection of links that can be emailed to a teacher or even better, linked on a library web page. For example: I have given several sites the tag, *informationliteracy*. *Delicious* gives my collection of sites about information literacy the URL, <http://delicious.com/ddesroches/informationliteracy>. I can place this link on my web page and when students or teachers click on the link they are taken to my collection of sites on information literacy. Whenever I add another site it is naturally included in my list and available to the user. I do not have to go to a web page and add another link.

*Delicious* takes the sharing concept even further and allows me to create a network of individuals who have the same interests I do. I can see what they bookmark and if they are applicable add them to my own collection with my own tags. I find people to network with in two ways: I can do a people search and find individuals and then add them to my network or when I save a bookmark I can click on the number at the right hand side of the bookmark to see who else has bookmarked it, view their bookmarks and if I wish I add them to my network. When I click on the *network* button I am taken to a page that lists all the sites my network has bookmarked.

I can easily share bookmarks with others who are a part of my network by adding *for: username* in the tag field. The link is sent to the user's inbox in *Delicious* eliminating the need for me to email links that I think others might find useful.

Viewing the sites that my network bookmarks is even more simplified when one begins to use the *RSS* capabilities of *Delicious*. I subscribe to the *RSS* feed for my network and every day in my *Bloglines* reader, I can see how many bookmarks my network has added and pursue them at my leisure. Even better I can subscribe to a tag used by specific user and have it arrive in my reader – for example if I want to receive notice of the links that Kathy Cassidy tags 'primary' I use the *RSS* button to subscribe to <http://delicious.com/kathycassidy/primary>. Each time she tags a site 'primary' I see it in my *RSS* reader, *Bloglines*.

I can also use *Delicious* subscription feature and subscribe to specific tags. *Delicious's* help describes subscriptions this way, "After you add a tag to your subscriptions, *Delicious* watches for everyone's bookmarks saved with that tag and delivers them to your subscriptions page." For example, I subscribed to the tag *hzo7* when I was following Viki Davis and Julie Lindsay's Horizon Project in 2007. Any time the tag *hzo7* was used it appeared on my subscription page.

There are other features of *Delicious* that allow you to organize, categorize, and group your bookmarks, your network, and your subscriptions. However, the most important thing is to know that *Delicious* facilitates finding, collecting, sharing, and distributing web sites to students, teachers, administrators, and other teacher-librarians. Its amazing features and intuitive, easy to use interface makes it an essential tool in any teacher-librarian's toolkit.

If you are not already using *Delicious* now is the time to begin! Go to *Delicious* and sign up for an account. Make sure you add the buttons to your toolbar (if allowed by your school division's computer system) as these two buttons, one for quickly and easily adding bookmarks and the other for accessing your bookmarks, make using *Delicious* very simple. You can also import bookmarks from your computer if you wish. Add me, *d-desroches*, to your network.

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## References

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