Beyond the Numbers

"... I followed about 50 student blogs for a year and set up alerts on terms such as 'assignment,' 'paper,' 'library' and 'class.'... Throughout the day I would check in and see if any of the students posted something matching my criteria.... Students would frequently post, 'I have to read this book or article,' 'I need to get going on this assignment or paper' and essentially chronicle their lives.... I saw this as a natural extension of library outreach and an open invitation for interaction.

"The benefit that I saw was in the opportunity to help students before they hit a point of frustration.... The objective was to be able to initiate contact early on, instead of waiting for them to approach the reference desk the day before an assignment was due. This is a chance to be preemptive."

—Brian Mathews, Information Services Librarian,
Georgia Institute of Technology, 2007

In the early adopter stages of technology and media, it is difficult to envision long-term possibilities from current statistics. It was not easy for most to forecast, for example, that computer-based instant messaging (IM) would become a communication method used by over half the population when the first "tiny little messages" began moving back-and-forth between a handful of users. Even after the invention of wikis, very few would have predicted the phenomenon that is now Wikipedia.

In this section, we explore the perspectives of thought leaders and industry experts, the early forecasters of what the future might hold for social networking and the implications for privacy and library policies and practice. These experts represent a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds. Some have used networked communities for many years, and a few are new to social spaces. Many of their observations and opinions support the findings from the survey results and provide perspective to the numbers.

We spoke with 14 professionals in the information technology landscape. The goal was to delve more deeply into the personalities, realities and possibilities of these social spaces. What follows are excerpts from these in-depth individual interviews.

Libraries in the Culture—Early Involvement

We asked the interviewees about their personal involvement with social networking tools and with new media. In most cases, their reasons for getting into social networking were largely personal. Most of the early experiences involved instant messaging and gaming, and a few experts started personal blogs in their spare time before getting involved professionally.

Houghton-Jan: In terms of what I have experience with in social networking, I've been using IM since 1995, so that's probably my biggest area of personal knowledge. I've been focusing on social networking as something to use in libraries for about the last two years and working with the big names in the field to get the word out about what these tools are, that they're free for the most part, and how libraries can use them to reach out to patrons in an online environment. Usually these patrons are those that we will not see in the brick and mortar library, so getting to them online is usually the only way to get to them.

Morin: In many ways, these online social networks have always been there for me, starting with e-mails and listservs, but they grow with the tools. And as the tools have grown a lot lately, the importance of these social networks has been growing fast, too. I think it is part of the appeal of these social networks that they do not represent a revolution but mesh with people's habits. It certainly was part of the appeal for me: I didn't feel I was stepping into something radically new; I felt, rather, like I was using a new cool tool, adding it to the range of stuff I was using already, and then another, and another.

Mathews: For me, the social Web started back in 1995 with America Online. Not only did AOL provide Internet access, but also chat rooms, message board forums, games, events, classes and instant messaging. In this sense, the Web has always been social and interactive for me. However, in the more contemporary 2.0 mindset, it began with LiveJournal in 2001. Many of my friends from college had taken jobs all across the country. Using LiveJournal, a personal blogging Web site, we could all stay connected. It was a way to know what was going on in people's lives and an outlet for self-expression.

Henry Bankhead is currently a principal librarian with the Los Gatos Public Library in California where he is developing a library blog and IM reference services. He recently left Santa Clara County Library Administration where he helped use the library blog to market library programs and electronic resources. There he was part of a committee developing a Learning 2.0 initiative for Santa Clara County Library. He was also responsible for developing, maintaining and troubleshooting the library's electronic resources. Bankhead has an MLS from San Jose State University, an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute and a BA from Stanford.

❝ Our users know that we are good at doing books. But I think that they would be surprised to know about the other various electronic resources that we have available.... My conjecture would be that we would only improve by raising awareness of what we can do for people by making ourselves more visible on the Web, in general. ❞

Krajewski: Let's say I've been using the online environment for about two years, but the question is tricky.

Wikipedia is quite old now. Web 2.0 tools were created during the 1990s, so that some cynical people can claim that there is no novelty left in it.

As for social networking tools, strictly speaking, I would say I've used it for the past six months, because I don't really like those tools where you lose a lot of time.

In libraries, I've participated in social networking via blogs, and through the community created on "ning.com." I've also joined forums on Second Life's Info Island.

Kelly: If e-mail is a social networking tool, then I've been using e-mail for about 25 years. I've been using social networking tools such as Facebook for about two years. I've participated in Facebook, Flickr, Ning, MySpace, etc., during the last year.

Hoffman Gola: Personally I do use quite of bit of social tools; I am actually a younger librarian. I have only had my MLS for about two years now. So I was well-involved with MySpace and IM chat tools with my own friends personally for the last five years. College was all about using IM, instant messaging. My friends and I don't e-mail each other as much as I do with work. I like the statement: "E-mail is for old people."

Other than using the IM, using text messaging, being a social Internet browser, responding to other people's blogs online, I love using social tools like Flickr and del.icio.us. I love looking at what other people are tagging.

Bankhead: I think one of the foundations of social networking is kind of the IM piece, so I've been familiar with that and using instant messaging probably since 1999. But as far as the more diverse Web services that are available, like Flickr and del.icio.us and other innovative tools, I have been only using them for the past couple of years.

46%
2007

16%
2005

blog growth
in the last 18 months

Source: Compares data from the U.S., Canada and the U.K. from the OCLC 2005 report, *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* and the 2007 report, *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World.*

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... it could be that libraries provide the only mechanism whereby large populations of people would even have the opportunity to interact with social networks—which would otherwise be entirely closed to them.

Fox: I dabbled a bit in the early days of MOOs [MOO = MUD Object Oriented; MUD = Multi-User Dungeon], when it was primarily text-based online worlds. My friends and I really saw them as an extension of our video games. But generally you were playing or interacting just with the computer, not other individuals. It's been the more recent Web-based applications that I've used more because of the advantages of connecting with other people and benefiting from their knowledge, advice and resources.

I must confess my last two close friends who got married met their significant others on Match.com—an early rendition of social networking—and my college-aged brothers don't send e-mail to the family much any more but do update their Facebook and MySpace profiles, so I have to go there if I want to know what they are up to. But besides the pure networking sites, I also got into other social software tools such as del.icio.us for shared bookmarks, Connotea for more academic bookmarking and Flickr for photos.

del.icio.us started purely as a personal need—I was working two jobs, at each of which I had my desktop computer and worked on a Reference Desk computer, plus teaching courses and library instruction across campus, plus using my computer at home. Finding a way to store my bookmarks remotely and access them from anywhere was a huge timesaver. And then I began to notice what other people had bookmarked, and see the possibilities for sharing lists, and it took off from there.

Enright: I've been involved with MySpace … probably since its inception, out of intellectual curiosity. I've interacted with MySpace in two capacities: One, just out of curiosity to see who, in my age range [uses it]. I'm 32 years old and I think I'm on the outside edge of early adopters. They're [MySpace users are] typically much younger. So I was curious how many people that I went to high school with would actually be there and there were a handful of them. Periodically I log into that account, once a month or once every two months to see if anything interesting has happened there.

Wittmann: I have had access to the Internet since 1994. A few years prior to that, since around 1992, I used Deutsche Telekom's online service, interactive videotext (BTX), and at that time I was already participating in discussion forums as well. The

10% of the general public have used online dating sites.

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 530.

Meredith Farkas is the Distance Learning Librarian at Norwich University in Vermont. In this position, she frequently has the opportunity to develop social software applications to connect with her library's users. She is the author of the monthly "Technology in Practice" column in *American Libraries* and of the blog *Information Wants To Be Free.* She is the creator and administrator of *Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki.* In March 2006, Farkas was named a Mover and Shaker by *Library Journal* for her innovative use of social software to serve the profession. In 2007, her book, *Social Software in Libraries: Building Collaboration, Communication and Community Online,* was published by Information Today.

❝ *I also see us having an important role in going where our patrons are; providing services inside of the tools that our patrons are already using like instant messaging, MySpace and Facebook.* ❞

reason for starting with BTX was online banking, but very quickly I began using it for other purposes, and even used it for discussion forums, too. As soon as I had access to the Internet, I used it amongst others for Usenet news, an early form of social networking.

I have played around with social networking in the newer sense (blogs, wikis, etc.) in more recent years, at least since 2002.

Powell: I'm defining social networking tools as including wikis, blogs, Flickr, Slideshare, community tools such as Facebook, and 3-D virtual worlds such as Second Life. I'm excluding e-mail mailing lists and Google groups.

I've used the online environment since about 1984 (such as it was then). More importantly, I've used it since the start of the Web. This includes significant use of e-mail mailing lists.

I've used social networking tools (wikis, blogs, Flickr, Slideshare, community tools such as Facebook, and 3-D virtual worlds such as Second Life) for about two years (possibly a little longer).

Vaidhyanathan: My expertise is in copyright and the ways that it affects digital communication and the way that digital communication affects copyright. So, about 15 years ago, I got very interested in the potential for electronic distribution, and copyright was an intimate part of that. So I started engaging in quite a few conversations and monitoring a lot of what was going on in terms of the almost idealistic perceptions of what might emerge from digital communication. And I've been fairly involved with all of the permutations since.

I have used social networking sites—primarily Facebook. I have used peer-to-peer file sharing. I have used e-mail. I have used the Web. I blog. I have contributed to Wikipedia. I have contributed to other wikis. I'm fostering a wiki in a class I'm teaching in the spring. I use Skype—online telephony and voice-over Internet protocol—I use instant messaging. I use online repository as a scholarship. I've done just about everything you can think of. I've posted videos on YouTube. I've watched thousands of videos on YouTube and on Google Video.

Megan Fox is the Web & Electronic Resources Librarian for the Simmons College Library. She manages the Library's Web site, negotiates contracts and subscriptions for online research databases, and assists the Public Services department with instruction, faculty outreach and marketing library services. Fox completed a BA in History and Literature from Trinity College in 1992. She received her MA in Literature from Boston College in 1994 and her MLS in Library and Information Science from Simmons in 1998. At Simmons, Fox also teaches graduate and continuing education courses for the Graduate School of Library & Information Science. Her specialties include online resources, business information and mobile technologies.

> *... our average patron doesn't care that much about how libraries technically might be able to push privacy boundaries, such as tracking circulation records. They are willing to let the library keep a list of all the books they ever checked out, because the trade-off of letting go of a bit of privacy is worth it to be able to look back at a comprehensive list....*

Personal to Professional ...
the Lines Begin to Blur

After spending time in social networking spaces out of personal interest and need, most of our interviewees began to identify how these social technologies might overlap with their professional lives. Several of the experts have expanded their personal experience with social networking and created applications to collaborate and reach students and library users.

Mathews: While I was using LiveJournal to talk with my friends, I noticed several group blogs dedicated to colleges and universities. Current students and alumni used these forums to discuss sports, classes, homework, social events and other school-related topics. As I dug a little deeper, I found conversations about libraries. It was fascinating to read the problems, frustrations and misunderstandings they encountered not only with libraries, but the college experience in general.

This was an awakening because it allowed me to see beyond traditional assessment tools, such as focus groups and surveys, with their built-in limitations. Social networking Web sites allowed to me enter unobtrusively into the patron consciousness—to discover how they felt about the library, what services they actually used and their unfilled needs. Social networks also opened the door for a less formal method of interaction. At first I created a second account, designed to be my "professional" librarian identity, which I would use to communicate directly with students. However, I found that students responded better to my personal account because it was more authentic. They preferred a genuine member of the community, rather than a fabricated manifestation—rather than someone trying to fit in. The lesson learned was "be yourself" instead that who you think patrons want you to be.

Houghton-Jan: Using something like Skype to provide reference via voice online would be one example of a technology from my personal life that also has applications in my professional life. There are a couple of academic libraries—I think they're in Australia—who are doing that. Also providing services like text messaging, (SMS) and there are about a dozen libraries that are doing that right now in the U.S.

Christina Hoffman Gola is currently the Coordinator for Undergraduate Instruction and Outreach at Texas A&M University in College Station. She received her MSLS from the University of North Texas, School of Library and Information Sciences in December 2004. She provides outreach, instruction and specialized reference services to undergraduates across campus using a variety of social tools including an undergraduate blog, chat services and a Facebook account, and is currently working on additional virtual spaces to interact with students. Hoffman Gola is also interested in studying technology in the classroom and effectively teaching information literacy through the use of technology.

> *I think, as librarians, we have a choice to make; we can ... continue to exist as we do today or we can choose to play a major role in social software and really learn a lot more about our users than [we've] ever been able to figure out before.*

Instant Messaging

INSTANT MESSAGE
File Edit Image
from: survey
51% of the general public have sent or received instant messages (IM).

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 530.

and elsewhere. The user sends a text message and it turns into an e-mail. The librarian answers via e-mail and it turns back into a text message. That's pretty exciting.

A few libraries have used blogs to present information that isn't like the traditional blog that you would think of. Libraries have used blogs to create book lists, to create recommended DVD lists and to create local history databases that are searchable.

Bankhead: I have been lobbying our administration to go to a more localized IM service, kind of based on the example of Marin County's Free Library.

I was using the Meebo Me widget, which allows you to put up a page with an IM box where the user doesn't even have to have an account; they just type into the box and say, "Hello, I have a question."

I am also really excited about del.icio.us as a way for libraries to organize their Web links. We spend a lot of time collecting free Web sites and putting them up on static home pages. It's pretty simple to use del.icio.us as an online Web service tool to add and subtract links instantly. San Mateo Library organizes their library-approved Web links on del.icio.us, and they organize them by Dewey right now. So if you go to del.icio.us/sanmateolibrary, you'll see tag bundles where they identify Web sites that are useful, like a tax Web site for IRS, and then tag it as "Taxes" and put it in the right Dewey classification.

Our library is also doing a MySpace. [Our] librarians are kind of excited about creating MySpace profiles for each library. [And] ... we are looking at mashups. One project we wanted to do is to try to build—using Google maps—[a mashup] to allow people to enter their ZIP code or street address to find the closest bookmobile stop.

Hoffman Gola: About nine months ago, we started using a blog in order to interact more with the students. We basically have an undergraduate blog where we make announcements and have helpful resources for them and when they're working on their assignments. It is a completely open commenting blog that students can comment back anonymously without having [to] log in to accounts or anything. The

Sarah Houghton-Jan has worked in libraries for a decade. She is currently the Information and Web Services Manager for the San Mateo County Library in Northern California. She also works as a consultant technology instructor for the Infopeople Project and serves on LITA's Top Technology Trends Committee. Houghton-Jan is the author of the blog *LibrarianInBlack.net,* the book *Technology Competencies and Training for Libraries* and a number of articles in library and technology publications. She also presents in-person and virtually at library conferences, workshops and events locally, nationally and internationally on libraries and technology topics.

" *... In an environment where Amazon tracks everything you buy and suggests things to you based on that, or even just based on the items that you've viewed recently, I think that people are more willing to give up a certain level of privacy if it means that they will get some kind of service in return.* **"**

other thing we have done is a couple of librarians [are] on Facebook. We are now [considering] … whether we want to open a MySpace account for social software.

Powell: I have contributed [to wikis] on a fairly regular basis, particularly to the UKOLN wiki, the DCMI wiki, the Second Life Education wiki, Wikipedia (minimal contribution). I have contributed regularly to the eFoundations and ArtsPlace SL (Second Life) blogs. I have also read and commented on blogs in the area of Second Life, Identity Management, Libraries, the Semantic Web and Web 2.0…. I have been an active member [of Second Life] for about seven months, for personal and professional purposes. I have used it to host one national conference (for approximately 200 participants) and some smaller meetings (30 people), as well as for nonwork use.

> ## We started using a blog …
> ## to interact more with students.

Fox: The Reference staff at Simmons really saw the possibilities for how del.icio.us could be a great tool to allow the librarians and graduate assistants to work collaboratively and share our resources. We were all bookmarking sites for different areas, and this tool allowed us to put them all together and make our work much more effective. And then from there we started showing it in classes and coaching the students to use a del.icio.us folder to share their information for each of their projects—collaboratively identifying the best sources/best resources.

… Two years ago I was presenting at a conference where the planners came up with tags for the conference that we could use in del.icio.us, on a wiki, in Flickr. It was a great way to capture and share the collective wisdom and reaction of conference presenters and participants, again showing a strong professional application of social networking tools.

Usage of Social Media Sites

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 710. Base: Respondents who have used a social media site.

Brian Kelly is a national Web advisor to the U.K. higher and further education communities, and to the cultural heritage sector in England. Kelly works at UKOLN, a national centre of expertise in digital information management, located at the University of Bath. As a national advisor and Policy and Advice Team Leader, Kelly has an extensive list of publications and presentations (see www.ukoln.ac.uk/ukoln/staff/b.kelly/). He also maintains a blog at UK Web Focus (http://ukwebfocus.wordpress.com/).

We will all have acceptable use policies [in the future] which address issues such as privacy, acceptable language and behaviour, etc. We will do this in order to clarify our policies and manage risks.

Enright: I interact almost several times a week with things like LinkedIn and with several other blogs and other kinds of interactive communities that I think in the broadest sense are also social networks, but probably not what's typically captured in marketing statistics and research statistics, since we're talking about social networking, blog-like spaces.

Morin: I wrote an article for a peer-reviewed journal with a co-author using a wiki; I also used a wiki to design a Web site project with a group of people I didn't personally know. I tried out a few things like Ning and Facebook. I blogged and commented on other people's blogs. I got involved with a group of people I didn't know before: Americans living in France who blog. I put my personal library up on librarything.com and got into contact with a few people that way, too.

What I found striking is that these networks work best when you fit in well, i.e., they are not that good yet at taking care of people who are in the "long tail" of users. For instance, I grew up and live in France, and I'm 36; my high school (collège), my university, my former work, etc., do not exist in Facebook yet. My "regional" network in Facebook is just "France." Despite the buzz about the long tail, it seems to me there still exists a lot of subjects/people/regions, etc., about which you have trouble finding a way to hook up to other people through online social networks.

Wittmann: I use wikis for professional purposes. I run four wikis for different users, all in the field of libraries. I also use blogs, mostly blogs with library themes; I read and sometimes comment on them, but I don't run my own blog.

Trust and Privacy

We asked our interview subjects for their thoughts on trust and privacy issues in online, networked communities. Some of the perspectives revealed differences in levels of tolerances between generations, willingness to share information and even the definition of privacy.

Houghton-Jan: I think in an environment where Amazon tracks everything you buy and suggests things to you based on that, or even just based on the items that you've

Pascal Krajewski is Manager of Information Technology at his library. He is responsible for the ILS department at the Public Library of Toulouse (France), a position he has held since January 2007. Krajewski has a doctorate in Art Sciences, and an interest in library applications of social networking software.

*" People have built their social networking without us, and we are knocking at their doors, begging to play with them ..." *

viewed recently, I think that people are more willing to give up a certain level of privacy if it means that they will get some kind of service in return. Our catalog has something called "My Reading History" that will track what people read and keep a list of that in their accounts. Not only can they access that, but if the FBI wanted to, they could access it, too, I'm sure. And they love it; they want it. There are very few people who don't want it. Even when you explain, "This is now going to be kept online forever unless you get rid of it, so if law enforcement asks for it, we have to give it over," they say, "Why would I care? I don't do anything wrong. It doesn't matter to me." I don't think there's much thought about individual privacy anymore. It's like privacy's gone out the window for most library users. The staff still cares about it, but nobody else does.

I think the only exception to that would be the use of our public computers. It seems to me that people do care, for whatever reason, and they want to make sure that what they're viewing hasn't been tracked in any way and is being deleted. That one area, perhaps because it's more tangible and has been better publicized, is something people do care about.

> **The staff still cares about [privacy related to reading], but nobody else does.**

Mathews: We're in a highly digitized society now and people have to assume that every e-mail they write, every Web site they visit, and every phone conversation they have is being tracked and stored somewhere by someone. So as far as privacy goes—there is none anymore. That said, social networking Web sites have done a great job of building in privacy features, so that if this is important to you, you have a lot of control. You can limit who views your information and dictate the level of interaction and openness you desire. But speaking generally, the current political administration

Privacy of Everyday Activities

By Total General Public

Note: *Extremely private* and *very private* responses.

Banking/investment sites: 63%
E-mail at home: 46%
Home phone: 43%
Cell phones: 41%
Search engines: 15%
Social networking Web sites: 15%
Social media Web sites: 12%
Cable TV: 12%
Online bookstore: 12%
Library Web site: 11%
Library's print collection: 9%
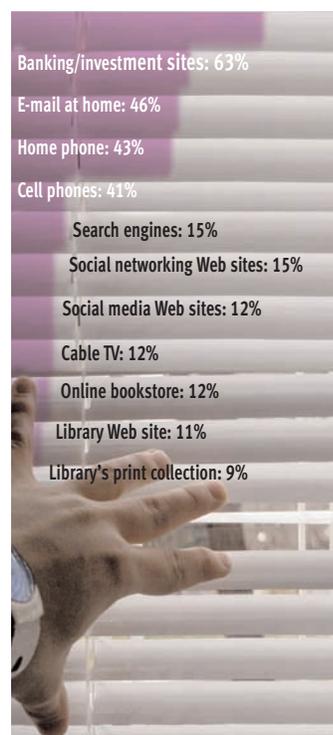
Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 926, "For each of the following, please rate how private, if at all, your activity is while using …."

Brian Mathews is an information services librarian at the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is the subject liaison for mechanical engineering and computer science, and is the Coordinator for Distance Learning Library Support. Mathews is very involved with service assessment, social marketing and empathetic design. He frequently presents and publishes on social software, advertising and the culture of academic libraries. His blog is *The Ubiquitous Librarian* (http://theubiquitouslibrarian.typepad.com).

" *Social networking Web sites allowed me to enter unobtrusively into the patron consciousness. To discover how they felt about the library, what services they actually used, and their unfilled needs. It also opened the door for a less formal method of interaction.* "

has routinely demonstrated that privacy is not a priority, and since there has not been a large-scale outcry or protest, it seems that people just accept and assume that privacy is extinct.

In terms of libraries nationally, it seems that a lot of energy is spent discussing and protecting privacy, and ensuring that patrons follow our policies or learn the proper way to use the library, rather than concentrating on better licensing agreements, better access to information and more intuitive search tools. Perhaps this will balance out over the next decade or so? The rising generation seems more interested in access to information, rather than control of it.

Enright: I will point to a quote that I always found was really interesting on the subject. Bruce Schneier … wrote a book called *Secrets and Lies*, about security. In his book he says, "People talk as if they don't want megadatabases tracking their every spending move, but they are willing to get a frequent-flyer affinity card and give all that data away for one thousandth of a free flight to Hawaii. If McDonald's offered three free Big Macs for a DNA sample, there would be lines around the block."

With something like libraries, I think that … the same kind of model exists. If you ask 100 people with respect to the library, "Do you care that we are tracking X, Y and Z about your behavior when you make use of the library?" I would guess that at least 99% of those people would probably give you a very strong and impassioned "Yes, I do care. It's something that I take very seriously." But if you say, "Okay, if you wait in this line five people deep to the left, you can use the anonymous terminal where we won't be tracking what you're doing. Or if you want to sit down right now, we have 15 terminals over here on the right, but your records will be tracked and it will be associated with your name and it will be subject to subpoena by law enforcement," most people then, they're going to say, "Well, I'm not doing anything wrong anyway. I really don't want to wait in that line. I'm going to go ahead and do the thing on the right."

Fox: Our patrons tend to be very savvy about security. They don't give out access to their bank account or credit card information. They know about copyright and music

Useful Rewards from Affinity Cards

Note: *Extremely private* and *very private* responses.

74%

of the total general public feel that **affinity cards** *provide rewards that are* **useful.**

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 1126, "Considering the reward/loyalty cards you use, please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree they provide rewards that are useful to you." Base: Respondents who have reward/loyalty cards.

Nicolas Morin studied history at Bordeaux (France) and Bristol (U.K.), then Philosophy at the Sorbonne (Paris, France). He became a librarian in 2000. He was a systems librarian for Angers University Libraries until July 2007 and, in September 2007, he began teaching automation systems and Web site management at the French National LIS school (www.enssib.fr). Morin was among the very first French libloggers in early 2003. He currently blogs at www.nicolasmorin.com/blog/.

"… expectations have been lowered in recent years as far as privacy is concerned;… in a trade-off for better services. I think libraries should take that evolution into account and, while continuing to adhere to strong privacy policies, be less shy in asking for and using personal information from patrons to be able to provide better online services to them."

pirating. But that's all very different from privacy. Our students seem less concerned about privacy—they are willing to sacrifice an element of personal privacy and control in return for the benefits they get or think they get by creating a login or otherwise revealing some of themselves.

I would say that our average patron doesn't care that much about how libraries technically might be able to push privacy boundaries, such as tracking circulation records. They are willing to let the library keep a list of all the books they have ever checked out, because the trade-off of letting go of a bit of privacy is worth it to be able to look back at a comprehensive list of what you checked out when you're trying to remember the author of that book you read two years ago. Our library science students are particularly attentive to this as a potentially controversial issue. The library science students are very well-versed in things like the USA Patriot Act and much more concerned about privacy and personal rights than your average students.

Sauers: [There is] a need for balance. Many say "I don't talk about my personal life on my blog," but then say "Here, go see pictures." I tend to be a very open person. I started my blog so my parents would stop asking me where I am this week. I did actually have the ten-second thought of "do I want to." It is that equation of what are you doing, and in what I do, social networking, at some level I am aware of what I'm giving up to do it. I enjoy it. I'm open on my blog.

Some [young people] don't realize what they're giving up, but should be made aware. Some of them don't realize what they're doing on MySpace. I'm not saying they shouldn't do it, but beware of what you're doing. When you go to look for a job, somebody's going to Google your name and find the pictures of the drunken party you had last Saturday night that you just put up on your MySpace account. Because all of this is archived somewhere. All of this is copied somewhere. And I think there needs to be an education at that level to at least make them aware of the privacy issues.

Vaidhyanathan: I don't sense that there is widespread concern [that certain information about them is being kept] among most users, and I anticipate that there

Internet Privacy
By Total General Public

29% 27% 23% 21%

Kept more private No change in privacy Kept less private Not sure

PRIVACY

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 930, by total general public, "Generally, do you think that your personal information on the Internet is kept more private than, less private than, or the same as it was two years ago?"

Andy Powell is Head of Development at the Eduserv Foundation where he is responsible for specifying and delivering the Foundation's programme of internal research and standards-making activities and helping to oversee external grants. His primary areas of interest include: metadata, repositories and resource discovery; access and identity management; service architectures and Web 2.0; e-learning, e-portfolios and the use of 3-D virtual worlds such as Second Life in education. Powell was the principal technical architect of the JISC Information Environment. He has been active in the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative for a number of years. He is a member of the DC Advisory Board and was previously a member of the DC Usage Board and chair of the DC Architecture Working Group. Powell jointly authored the DCMI Abstract Model and several other Dublin Core technical specifications. More recently he jointly authored the DC Eprints Application Profile for the JISC. He was also a member of the Open Archives Initiative technical committee. Powell was previously an Assistant Director at UKOLN, University of Bath and before that he worked for the University of Bath Computing Services (BUCS).

" ... libraries remain as highly trusted public bodies. I think that some patrons care (in the sense of being aware) that libraries keep records of personal information (others probably do not), but that almost all patrons currently trust libraries not to abuse that information. "

won't be widespread concern among users about data retention … until there is some high-profile event in which such personal information is used against somebody to harm somebody.

I do know that there has been a very helpful conversation over the past year, since MySpace really broke onto the news, about having conversations between parents and children about what is appropriate information to post in social networking spaces. I've participated in radio shows in which concerned parents were talking about what they see as the deep danger of social networking, and I kept trying to emphasize that every time a new communicative technology comes up, we have to have this conversation all over again. You have to tell people … you have to generate norms. And some of the basic norms, especially when you're dealing with children here, involve limiting access, limiting personal information.

I think that privacy and data retention is the number one issue right now. User confidentiality. I think that that's an issue that's sort of focused by the acquisition of MySpace by News Corporation and focused by the data retention behavior of search engine companies like Google and Yahoo!. It's also a big concern as Microsoft shifts more of its applications to an online environment to mimic Google's position and movement.

Powell: I've had a significant number of spam e-mail sent in my name—as has everyone I should think. This was worrying when it first happened, but is now generally considered to be the "norm." I don't trust e-mail any less because of it—I'm just more wary about what I receive and check a little harder.

Wittmann: No, users do not care if the library keeps their records, as it [the library] does it now already anyway. Furthermore, it is presumably no longer an issue for the majority of users because of the practices of Google, Amazon, eBay and so on.

Farkas: To have a successful blog, you have to walk a fine line between self-disclosure and thinking about privacy and the image you are projecting. I have seen bloggers write things that I think are a little too personal and maybe something that

Michael Sauers is the Technology Innovation Librarian for the Nebraska Library Commission in Lincoln. For nine years prior to moving to Nebraska, he was the Internet Trainer for the Bibliographical Center for Research. He has been a public library trustee and a bookstore manager for a library friends group, and has worked for both the New York State Library and the New York State Assembly. He is also the webmaster for the Greece, New York Historical Society and for the science fiction/fantasy author L. E. Modesitt, Jr. Sauers is the author of eight books on technology for librarians and has written dozens of articles for various journals and magazines. In his spare time he reads about 130 books per year.

I … think when people go out on MySpace … the library is probably one of the last things they're thinking of when they're sending messages back and forth or playing on the computer or whatever. But if the library can get into that space, we can change that perception. Yes, we are here.

they'll regret having told thousands of people later on. But it is a personal decision that everyone makes. I know there are some people who won't even mention their spouse or personal life in any way online. I really like my blog to be somewhat personal and human, and really reflective of who I am. At the same time, I don't want it to be so personal that I'm saying things that could get me in trouble or might embarrass me later in life.

Morin: I think [users] care once they understand that we do keep records [on their personal information use]. But I also think there's a high level of trust in the library as an institution. They know, I think, that we won't sell their e-mails to spammers.

At the same time, I'm not quite sure they understand why we keep those records, since we don't seem to be using them (to provide personal recommendations, tailored interfaces, etc.).

> ### *I think that privacy and data retention is the number one issue right now.*

Kelly: Many [library users] won't care [that the library keeps records of their personal information and reading behaviors]—although back in 1980 I came across one example which illustrated possible dangers. Back then in the U.K., the Yorkshire Ripper was believed to have a Sunderland accent. I worked at Sunderland Borough Council at the time, and the IT and Library staff were worried that police would request information on people who had borrowed books about Jack the Ripper. To avoid this happening, it was decided not to store the identities of people who had borrowed particular books.

Siva Vaidhyanathan, a cultural historian and media scholar, is the author of *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity* (New York University Press, 2001) and *The Anarchist in the Library: How the Clash between Freedom and Control is Hacking the Real World and Crashing the System* (Basic Books, 2004). Vaidhyanathan has written for many periodicals, including *American Scholar, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The New York Times Magazine, MSNBC.COM, Salon.com, openDemocracy.net* and *The Nation.* After five years as a professional journalist, Vaidhyanathan earned a PhD in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. He has taught at Wesleyan University, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Columbia University and New York University, and was a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities. Vaidhyanathan is currently Associate Professor, Media Studies Program, at the University of Virginia Charlottesville.

> *They really want to make sure that people find this stuff really easy to use. We're at the point where 8-year-olds can post on MySpace without a problem, and 88-year-olds can, too. So that's kind of a nice thing.*

Speaking of Policies ...

Some participants provided thoughts on privacy policies, both now and in the future, and the role that librarians and library organizations should and should not play. Different opinions emerged among experts from different countries.

40% Rarely/Never

33% Sometimes

12% Always/Often

Decided not to purchase item online after reviewing privacy policy.

PRIVACY AGREEMENT

ACCEPT DECLINE

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 1051, "In general, when you browse/ purchase on Web sites, how often do you: decide not to purchase an item online after reviewing a company's privacy policy?" Base: Respondents who have used a commercial site.

Enright: I think [privacy policies are] necessary right now but not sufficient to protect anyone's real interests in privacy. I think many people recognize that, in many cases, they're no more than cosmetic. When you go back in a brief history of the Internet, you had a long period of time where attorneys were telling their clients, "Don't post a privacy policy, because you're not required to by law and if you do post one, you're creating legal commitments that can then be enforced against you." So that was really the standard legal advice for Web sites. Then the Federal Trade Commission started really saying quite strongly that any entity that was collecting individually identifiable information online should post a privacy policy. So then you had a mass exodus of merchants, and anyone who was collecting PII (personally identifiable information) reputably recognized they needed to post some kind of statement on the Web explaining to visitors what they could and couldn't do with this information.

There's research out there to suggest the consumers actually changed their behaviors based on the language within the privacy policy. The emblems, sometimes called trustmarks, that appear on Web sites like Truste, etc. ... I'm skeptical about all of that data. I'm sure that there is a brand of consumers who are affected by those kinds of things, but I just find it hard to believe that there's a statistically significant number of people that when they're doing their holiday shopping, they're taking the time to read a two- or three-page privacy policy and that's going to influence whether they bother to consummate that transaction or not. I'm not convinced of that.

Mathews: I guess that I would fall in with the anti-policy crowd, however I am not an administrator, so I don't have a global perspective. I definitely think it would be a mistake for libraries or the government to censor social Web sites. These tools are valuable for social development and social learning. If you're going to block

Alfons Wittmann is a librarian in the computer systems department at University Library, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. Responsible for system/server administration, Wittmann has been engaged in computer technology since 1991 and online services since 1992. He is one who started to think early on about social consequences of the development of computer technologies, especially Internet technology. Wittmann uses the opportunities of Internet-based social networks to practice professional and personal pursuits: photography, music, literature.

❝ It's not currently present in the consciousness of the majority of users that libraries should participate in social networking. Only very few users can see a connection between libraries and future or actual social networks at the moment. ❞

MySpace, you might as well go all in and block Google Mail, Yahoo! and AOL Instant Messenger too.

I really hope that ALA, ACRL or even OCLC do not produce "best practices, guidelines, standards or recommended policies" for online social networks; that would kill creativity and originality. Mediocrity is a big problem for libraries in terms of inventiveness. Most people want to just stay even with the pack and not make waves. Most people just want to copy-and-paste whatever everyone else is doing and call it innovation. It is very unfortunate.

Morin: I'm often amazed to see how willingly people give out private information on the Internet. There's no question that expectations have been lowered in recent years as far as privacy is concerned; not so much through pressure from the big corporations such as Google, but by the people themselves, in a trade-off for better services. I think libraries should take that evolution into account and, while continuing to adhere to strong privacy policies, be less shy in asking for and using personal information from patrons to be able to provide better online services to them.

On the other hand, people should (and will hopefully) better learn how to manage their online identities. One will learn how to keep some things for oneself while being online, how to have several online identities with a wall between some of them so as to prevent some information from being pulled together. I think libraries and librarians have an educational role to play here.

Farkas: I think there are a lot of things that have come with the portability and fluidity of content that fall into a murky area that isn't clearly governed by policy. I would predict that we're going to see a lot more copyright infringement lawsuits where an individual has syndicated someone else's content onto their own Web site. It is so easy now to take other people's text and images and put them on your site. Content that has an RSS feed can easily be placed on another Web site where people can ostensibly make money off of someone else's blog content or even articles from a major newspaper. It's interesting to me that newspapers make other newspapers pay to syndicate their stories, but anyone can take the RSS feed from the *New York Times* and syndicate their stories right onto their Web site for free. I don't know if there's going to be more legislation, but I think people are going to be more explicit whenever they are posting content online about how their content is licensed and how it can be used. The Creative Commons licenses are great tools for explicitly stating this is what you can and cannot do with my content.

Vaidhyanathan: Interestingly, one of the big challenges I face is that university policy ... is often shortsighted. We're seeing a proliferation of universities restricting the use of Skype, for instance. Skype is not only a fascinating phenomenon worth researching and worth writing about, it's also an essential tool in information gathering. If you're having a conversation with someone in another part of the world, Skype is often essential. It's an essential way to converse with people so they don't have to use landlines, which are notoriously undependable in much of the world.

University policy on copyright, university policy on network technologies, on bandwidth, all of these things, have been deeply frustrating. It troubles me when a university bans a particular kind of technology. It seems to me to strike at the very heart of academic freedom.

11% of the general public have experienced a personal information breach online.
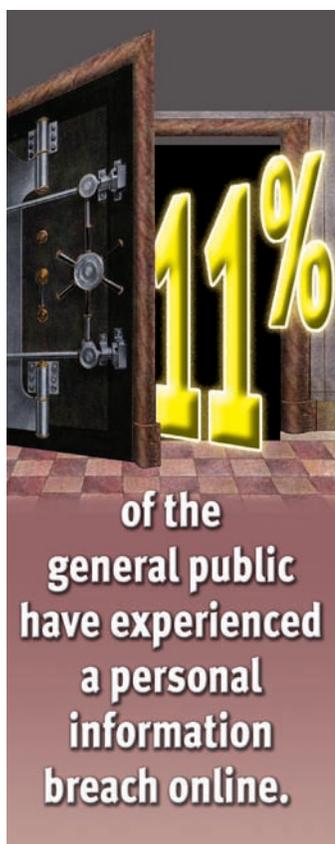
Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 1135, "Have you or has anyone you know ever had personal information used online without consent?'"

Krajewski: In France, the CNIL (Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés) is the official institution who looks after that. They have decided that a library couldn't keep any personal behaviors longer than three months, I think. I mean personal information such as names. We have some statistics and can do lots of things, but I cannot say to a patron standing in front of me what he borrowed four months ago. On the other hand, it can be useful [to say] "Those who borrowed this, borrowed that."

So we just have to prove how we use fairly their data, and, at the same time, assure them that we do all that is necessary to protect them and their privacy rights (no sharing with anyone, anonymity when it's possible, etc.).

I have no idea [what policies would look like in three years]. Right now, I cannot figure out why it could change.

Hoffman Gola: I think we need to push the wall more and more to try to get the revisions of our copyright laws. And I think we have to look globally when we think about our copyright laws. Right now, while we have a lot of issues in our state about copyright restrictions, it's not like that in other countries; they don't have the same laws. And so they are accessing some of our copyrighted information and photographs and music and things for free.

How do we control that? I think that's going to be a big question for [the] libraries, music world, entertainment world and government of how do we bring a balance to our copyright laws when other countries don't have the same ideas of about what it means to hold copyright.

Wittmann: I don't think much will change. Not many Internet users have expressed their awareness about the problems related with privacy rights/violations, etc. However, it has been changing slowly as successful efforts are being made to raise awareness among the people about this issue. Therefore, I think there will soon be better and more trustworthy ways of encoding and dealing with personal data. But I don't think this will happen in the next three years.

Powell: I think libraries remain as highly trusted public bodies. I think that some patrons care (in the sense of being aware) that libraries keep records of personal information (others probably do not), but that almost all patrons currently trust libraries not to abuse that information.

I suspect that any loss of this trust would be a significant step towards us losing libraries as we currently know them.

I'm reasonably confident that libraries will retain their position of trust into the future.

I think libraries have to be careful as they grow relationships with commercial services. Public trust in some commercial services is diminishing. One wouldn't want this to 'rub off' on libraries. Ditto other Web 2.0 services such as Facebook.

Similarly, delivering services through 3-D virtual worlds such as Second Life requires foresight and a bit of caution. The trust issues are compounded by the end user needing to trust both the library and the provider of the virtual world (e.g., Linden Lab).

Bankhead: [With respect to policies, we should] allow more personal tailoring of information points, items. Tagging is the biggest thing about social software. Do you allow tagging for your catalog? Policy kind of takes another look. [Related to privacy policies we should] kind of look at what we can do to protect privacy, but allow people to participate in social software, in tagging. Allow tagging in catalogs.

I think [tagging] will benefit us. Even though [they are] not library … subject headings, tags are the same thing—metadata. People are adding metadata to the catalog. That should be a good thing. Because even though it is not official metadata, metadata is metadata. People call a palm tree a palm tree. They don't call it by its Latin name. Things are common language that we communicate. It can't be a bad thing for [there] to be another access for information.

Kelly: We will all have acceptable use policies [in the future] which address issues such as privacy, acceptable language and behavior, etc. We will do this in order to clarify our policies and manage risks.

Sauers: I actually did an article [on policies in WebJunction called "Don't Doesn't Work"]. [Libraries] make all these rules about what you can't do and what you can do. I took an extreme position, to a certain level I had to. You create these policies about what you can and can't do on the computer. You create these policies that you can't use your cell phone in the library. You can't do this. You can't do that. In response to the technology, we already have policies in most cases that say you have to behave in the library.

[Social networking users] talk to each other, and it brings them together. And it may not be how your parents learned how to do that, definitely not how your grandparents learned how to do that.

Violations of Privacy and Identity

Interviewees' shared their thoughts on and experiences with online deception, identity theft or other problems associated with trust, privacy and personal information.

Mathews: I've had my credit card number stolen. I bought golf shoes from a discount vendor online and they had their customer database compromised. My bank contacted me when they noticed irregularity in purchasing and cleared everything up. This was probably three or four years ago, and afterwards I became more cautious. Now I only purchase from larger companies, like Amazon.

[Concerning online deception.] MySpace really has some problems. It's a spammers' paradise. There is a constant flood of fake profiles, password phishing, identity and endorsement theft, and server downtime. It's like the Wild West. As a result, many people have started to lock down their profiles, limiting who can view their information or who can send them messages or friend requests. This is very unfortunate because the appeal and success of MySpace is the openness, the serendipitous discoveries.

61% of the total general public agree that they have the **same personalities** online as they do in person when using social networking sites.

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, question 971, "Thinking about the social networking Web sites you use, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement, 'I have the same personality online as I do in person.'" Base: Respondents who have used a social networking site.

Enright: There are other ways, I think, that personal information can be compromised [over] the Web. [It] would be very, very easy to track people via Googling or even free Web-based search tools. You can learn an awful lot about people, probably more than many of them would like you to know, and I do have acquaintances who are directly impacted by that. The people that they thought they had left behind in their lives were able to figure out where they lived, even if their phone number was unlisted. That used to be enough—to take yourself … off the grid and prevent most people from finding you—but now having your phone number unlisted really doesn't mean you won't be found. The Web definitely has created a much larger spotlight for people who want to locate people that might not want to be located.

I don't even know that people consider [creating different online identities] overtly deceptive. It's interesting. I think one of the direct definitions requires that one have the intention of deceiving. But for a female to create an avatar that's male, I think it's just sort of caveat of social networking and [if] people are assuming that's an accurate representation of who the person [is] behind that avatar, then they're probably taking an overly simplistic view of what community is all about.

Hoffman Gola: I think [deception] is well in the back of our minds. I think in any kind of environment there's always going to be that person or that group of people who tries to mislead you. I think [people are] going to be concerned about it, but not let it … rule them. They're not going to not get involved and do things, because of those people out there that are deceptive.

Deception is just part of the world. It's part of being human …

Number of aliases, avatars or pseudonyms created for the Web

2-4: 50%
5-9: 8%
10+: 4%
1: 36%
None: 3%
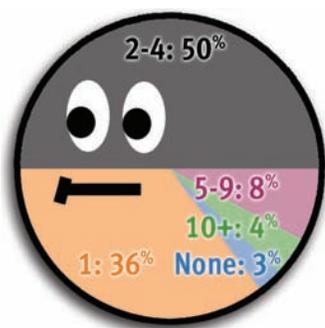
Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 830, by total general public, "How many aliases, avatars or pseudonyms have you created for the Web?"

Fox: I think people automatically assume that there's a lot of identity masking and misrepresentation online. And while some are doing it for nefarious reasons, much of it is acceptable and expected. In something like Second Life, a total immersion social networking experience, you're encouraged to be something other than what you are in the real world. If you want, you can be a different gender or age or race. Or someone who is wheelchair-bound in real life can choose to be the same in SecondLife or choose to walk or even fly. In Second Life, you can have a bubble over your head identifying the group you belong to—and of course you can belong to many, many groups, and have different identities for each. One of the first times I was in SecondLife, I saw a couple where one had a bubble [that said] "Rachel's Dad," and the other "Rachel's Mom." When I approached, they stopped their conversation, and the label above the man's head changed to "Reference Librarian," and he asked if I had any questions. I loved seeing the instant transformation, and it did establish a level of trust to see this facet of his identity change to fit the situation. I don't think users think most online manifestations are deception so much as it is creativity and interactive exploration of alternatives other than what we might normally have or be on a daily basis.

Houghton-Jan: Someone used my identity to post to a couple of message boards that didn't have a whole lot to do with the types of things I write about (libraries and technologies), but they were definitely posing as me. I got really angry and I wrote to the site owners and said, "This person is posing as me. This is not me who wrote that. Could you please take it down?" And they did so and also, of their own volition, blocked the person who had done that from posting any future items on their message board.

Vaidhyanathan: Deception is just part of the world. It's part of being human. I met my wife through an online dating service. That's a social networking phenomenon that involves a tremendous amount of deception. I think people expect to be deceived to a certain degree and I think that's a healthy expectation. We have been using this stuff long enough that we understand that we are being lied to in many cases by people and by institutions.

Libraries and Social Networking

We asked our panel about the role libraries play—and could play—in online communities and social media. Both the tactics and the strategies of how to use these new social networking tools within the context of libraries varied among the group. A single vision for online social spaces and libraries has not yet been formed.

Powell: I think libraries have two key roles.

Firstly, they have a role to raise understanding of the information literacy aspects of social networking tools—helping users to understand issues like quality, trust, provenance as they relate to social tools.

Secondly, they have a role in the long-term management, preservation and curation of social networking tools. This includes both actively carrying out the preservation and management and advising others about doing it. It also includes supporting aspects of resource discovery across the content of social tools.

There may also be a role for libraries in using social tools to deliver their existing online services—but it is not totally clear to me how library services fit into the typical usage scenario of social tools.

At a slightly more mundane level, it is clear that social tools such as Facebook have a role in disclosing people's personal tastes in books—also in supporting activities such as reading groups. There is a clear potential role for libraries in this space.

It is also possible to see social tools like Facebook supporting the activities of learners and researchers (both of which are essentially social activities). Again, one could expect this to be an area where libraries have a role to play.

"Books, books, books, rows and rows of books, stacks of books, tables filled with books, people holding books, people checking out books. Libraries are all about books. That is what I think and that is what I will always think."
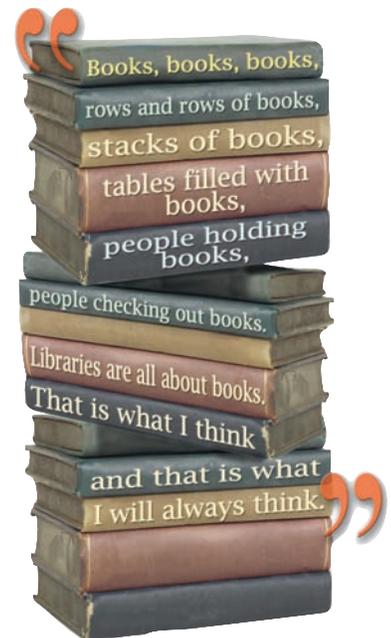
41-year-old from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, "What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?"

Kelly: There are three ways that libraries may participate in social networking. By:

1) Using them to engage with their user communities.

2) Educating users on best practices, as part of an information literacy strategy.

3) Providing library information in forms which can be integrated into social networks e.g., providing RSS feeds, blogs, etc., which can be syndicated elsewhere.

Some [of the library's users] will welcome [social networking] involvement in the libraries; others won't care.

Hoffman Gola: I kind of wonder right now whether our users see libraries as a major role in their lives.... It is really funny, a lot of my friends, who are my age, they have absolutely no idea what I do as a librarian.... Because they still see it as a place for books and that place for studying ... I think we have to sort of change the landscape of what we traditionally do as librarians.... So I think if we're going to be using social software tools, we have to learn how to incorporate them into the way students are using our library.

I think, as librarians, we have a choice to make; we can ... continue to exist as we do today or we can choose to play a major role in social software and really learn a lot more about our users than [we've] ever been able to figure out before. I think the biggest things that librarians need to recognize with using these social tools is that the new generations can't necessarily be generalized. But rather each individual is looking for services that are specific to them ... And one of the things we can do [is] find out what ... each one of our users wants or needs. And I think we have the option to start making libraries definitely more individualized with these tools.

> ### *... each individual is looking for services that are specific to them ...*

Houghton-Jan: Most users I don't think understand that libraries even have DVDs, or public access computers, or Internet classes, or give photography classes. I just don't think they have an idea that we're even technically proficient, much less out and about in these spaces. I think most people, if you ask them, would say, "Libraries have a role [in social networking]? Do they even know what it is?"

The phrase the "third place" has been tossed around quite a bit, libraries being one of the possible destinations for people, other than work/school or home, and libraries could, if we put some effort into it, fill this space within our communities.... I think that's where libraries can succeed in social networking. We can provide spaces online in which people can connect one-on-one or in a group environment. We can provide discussion boards on certain topics, things like a local history discussion

board, a user group for people who are interested in a certain type of book for your book club, or a space for teens participating in game nights to talk—really just providing a space in which your users, based on their interests and their abilities, can interact.

It also provides an opportunity for us to be present in the space that our users already are present in. [If] users are already using it to communicate with friends and family, and we put ourselves in that space, we can be a resource that they can tap when they need us. I think other examples of that would be a place like Flickr. We could be present there. People could do searches for our local community and find out that, "Wow, the library took photos of all the historical buildings in the area. Isn't that neat?" This is one more reminder that the library has a presence within the community.

> ### *... we would only improve by raising awareness of what we can do for people by making ourselves more visible on the Web ...*

Bankhead: In a way,... the librarian is still kind of the gatekeeper. We have our online catalog. We have all our stuff on our server,... our Web page and we point to a bunch of different resources that we pay for. Our databases, our e-books and our catalog. And we kind of maintain this little empire within our own network environment, and we let people in based on their library card number authentication or whether they are inside the library.

But more and more, especially database providers like Access My Library, Gale, OCLC [are] also doing this—trying to get information out on ... WorldCat, out on the Web—to point people back to these resources. Analogous to that kind of process, I think what we need to do is try to distribute ourselves more ubiquitously out on the wider Web rather than trying to horde everything within our own server environment. And I see that the whole social software paradigm as kind of being a model for that kind of behavior. So instead of saying, "You guys have to come to the library Web site and do this and that and then look at our catalog." We have to kind of put ourselves and our information out in different places like MySpace or del.icio.us.

My general feeling is that our users know that we are good at doing books. But I think that they would be surprised to know about the other various electronic resources that we have available. So from the user perspective, my anticipation, my conjecture would be that we would only improve by raising awareness of what we can do for people by making ourselves more visible on the Web, in general.

Mathews: I really want to teach a semester-long course on social networks, blending the cultural context with application development, artistic design and problem solving. In academia we aim to teach "information literacy" and using MySpace as a platform to gather, evaluate and shape information is far more interesting than current methods.

9% of users have provided information on a library's Web site about books they have read.

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 875, "Which of the following types of information have you ever supplied about yourself when using an online library service on a library's Web site?" Base: Respondents who have used an online library.

I think that librarians should avoid playing the parental role, warning patrons about the dangers of online predators or identity theft, or worst devaluing the significance of these Web sites, and instead we should emphasize productivity, self-expression and the communication channels that these tools provide.

As for our role, I think that libraries should strive to embed themselves within their user community—online and in real life. Social networking allows us to form a better connection with our patrons. It can be a great publicity tool, a chance to tell our story and to craft a meaningful, shareable message. Web 2.0 tools enable us to have genuine conversations with patrons, rather than us just babbling on about what we feel is important, what they need to know. Aside from that, social networks are excellent assessment and usability tools, but are we really ready to know what they think? Are we really ready to listen?

> *... libraries should strive to embed themselves within their user community—online and in real life.*

Krajewski: Library 2.0 may be the last attempt to enter the game for grumpy librarians who have been kicked out of the playground by their former users. Library 2.0 may be the last lightning [bolt] of a profession doomed to die, and trying to survive a little bit longer. Do we propose Library 2.0 tools because our patrons need them or because WE need them (to prove that we are alive and useful)?

I think that is quite like The Enlightenment.

During The Enlightenment of the XVIIIth century, European people had been given new powers, new status, new consideration, new missions, new roles, new responsibilities. At that time, thinkers judged that to face this tremendous change, people should be educated. They did need libraries, schools and also mediators (teachers, representatives, etc). Do our patrons really need "Enlightenment 2.0"? Maybe, yes. So far, I haven't seen them in that light, but I could be wrong, or it may come later. People have built their social networking without us, and we are knocking at their doors, begging to play with them ("Please, be my friend ..."). Maybe they do need us. It's a question of faith. It's a gamble.

We can also have a much more pragmatical state of mind. We invade their social network spaces just to make figures (charts) and to put up some signs to bring them back where we are supposed to be good—our core business—maybe knowledge, education, entertainment, public open access, etc. I mean the very missions of libraries. I think that just as there are some signs in the city to show where the library is, we should put some virtual signs on the different social networking Web sites. In that respect, the personal space of a library on a social network is just a sign, with a mere semiotic function.

Wittmann: It's not currently present in the consciousness of the majority of users that libraries should participate in social networking. Only very few users can see a connection between libraries and future or actual social networks at the moment.

I recommend libraries look at the following ways of participating in social networking:

- Make platforms available

- Actively offer and maintain content

- Have a presence in social networks

- Utilize capabilities from social networks (tagging, folksonomies, etc.) for the enhancement/enrichment of certain services (catalogs, etc.)

- Actively support library users in using social networks; but this is also important and true: actively support library users through the use of social networks

> *... it could be that libraries provide the only mechanism whereby large populations of people ... have the opportunity to interact with social networks ...*

Morin: We should provide data in the user's environment. We should provide applications (widgets, etc.) usable in the user's environment. We should help foster online social networks which, while not library-centered, are useful to our patrons and where we might fit in well as a data and service provider. The network might be about a place, it might also have to do with a subject matter about which you have truly useful collections. I don't think libraries should try to have a presence in every social network, but we should definitely make every effort to have a presence where that presence is obviously useful to the public.

I'm not sure [users] give much thought to [the role libraries should play in social networking spaces]. I'm not sure they should. I have a feeling that online social networks are a world of opportunity; as I use them myself, you roam the online space, find stuff, use it or not. But in truth I don't know the answer to this question, and I feel it's too early to tell without proper studies and focus groups, etc.

Enright: I don't have firsthand knowledge of this, but I know that libraries in schools are one mechanism whereby people are trying to address the digital divide. In giving high-speed access to underprivileged communities that otherwise wouldn't have access. So it could be that libraries provide the only mechanism whereby large populations of people would even have the opportunity to interact with social networks—which would otherwise be entirely closed to them.

When you're specializing in privacy and information access, where I do think that gets interesting … when you're dealing with legislation or policies that would … mandate any kind of filtering, then I think you have some tricky considerations in terms of determining whether or not those filters might limit people's access to social networks that they would otherwise want to or need to be involved with. I think how those filters are constructed is a very, very real risk that heavy-handed filtering could prevent social networks from being … [and] accessible in public spaces like libraries.

I think [users] don't know that there's a role for [libraries in social networking] …

Fox: Social networking is becoming a prime way for college-age students and high-school-age students to communicate. It's how they're talking to their friends and interacting with their peers, how they're talking to complete strangers and making real connections. If they're not doing things like e-mail or restricting e-mail for work purposes only, as so many studies have reported recently, then we need to figure out how else to communicate with them. If they don't use the college e-mail system regularly, how can we integrate the Facebook 'Share' functionality? If librarians want to continue engaging our patrons and helping them to see the possibilities of what's available in the library, then this is another road to do that, another means of making our services open, and keeping patrons aware and involved.

We also have, of course, obligations for information literacy and teaching people how to find the best, most valuable information. And therefore making sure that they understand the limits of the kind of content information they can find in MySpace—knowing that anybody can put anything up, it doesn't necessarily need to be true. Just as we have to teach our users to evaluate a Web page and how to use information responsibly, this applies to content in social networking sites as well.

Unfortunately, I think most users don't naturally think that there is a role for libraries at all here. They are doing personal interactions on these sites, and the appearance of a librarian is still somewhat akin to the telemarketer who calls during dinner or an annoying Web pop-up advertisement—it's out of place and even resented. Even if we are offering a service or product they want, it's at the wrong time and/or through the wrong vehicle. It will take time to change users' perspective so that they do realize librarians can add value in an appropriate way in this environment.

Farkas: I think that libraries play a really important role on two levels. The first is education. A lot of times young people really don't think about the ramifications of the online identity that they are building and how that might affect them in the future when they're looking for a job or even if someone they're dating is looking them up. I think libraries have an important role in making people aware of these issues and

28%

56%

56% of college students and 28% of the total general public use social networking.

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World,* OCLC, 2007, question 530.

how they could come back and haunt them—years and years later—because it is really hard to completely get rid of online content with caching and the Internet Archive. But I also see us having an important role in going where our patrons are, providing services inside of the tools that our patrons are already using like instant messaging, MySpace and Facebook. I know there are a lot of libraries basically creating portals to their library services inside of MySpace, and I think that's a great way to make the library and its services more visible.

Sauers: At a minimum, I think [libraries] should be participating in the social networking environment. That's the starting point. I don't think you can do anything beyond that, unless you're participating in the first place. The standards of just blogs, Flickr accounts, that sort of thing. I see what some libraries are doing and even just basic items are getting a big response. And when I see what other libraries just aren't doing, I want to say, "Hello," give them a little shake.

I've read OCLC's [*Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*] report. I think in most cases, my impression is that [users] don't look at the library in that way [social networking]. Yes, they like the library. Yes, the library is comfortable. Yes, they know they can get books there. But I … think when people go out on MySpace … the library is probably one of the last things they're thinking of when they're sending messages back and forth or playing on the computer or whatever. But if the library can get into that space, we can change that perception. Yes, we are here. We are where you are. We're here to help.

Vaidhyanathan: Social networking is a catchall for a variety of communicative forums. If you think about the sites that we classically consider social networking sites—like MySpace, like Facebook—they are essentially simple content management systems. They are easy to use. They are easy to modify. They are user-friendly. Now, as content management systems, you can actually imagine them playing a role not too far away from course management systems, which are, after all, another form of content management system.… I see great potential for using the model of social networking interfaces in community-based conversations in which people are linking to good references. I see the potential for using social networking to generate bibliographies— both within classes and outside of classes. I could see if there is a group of people involved in an environmental activism project in their local community.… They could use social networking to maintain a list of scientific journal articles or journalism articles that they have culled from a library, and update the bibliography as a group, essentially, maintain it as a group.

Prognostication

We asked the experts to predict where they see the social networking scene going in the next few years.

Farkas: I think there are going to be a lot more libraries making better decisions about what social software they implement to provide services to their patrons. I think right now we're still largely in the "me too" stage; the idea that having a MySpace page or a blog makes a library "cool" is quite prevalent. I think that libraries are going to get much smarter about planning these services. Yes, these tools are free to set up, but it takes a real commitment to maintain them on a day-to-day basis. The content has to be updated, the software needs to be maintained and they have to be made appealing to the patron. I think there's often little planning that goes into these online library storefronts. I think there is going to be more of that in the library world in the future—real planning and thinking about the sustainability of the project and how it is meeting the needs of our patrons.

... we're going into all these spaces and building services, yet we're not thinking about what their future is.

Mathews: I think that the battle between MySpace and Facebook will continue to escalate. They are the Coke and Pepsi of the social networking scene. Eventually things will probably break off into niche networks, into segments ... social networks for cat lovers, for book lovers, for marathon runners, for coffee fanatics, for out-of-work actors in Los Angeles. People want to connect with others who share their interests, that's the core benefit and attraction of these Web sites. I think that university portals as well as course management systems, like WebCT, will eventually incorporate social features and profiles. Facebook started as a tool for Harvard students to meet each other.

A current challenge is designing a network that grows with users; MySpace is popular with high school students, Facebook dominates the college market, but what about when they enter the workforce. LinkedIn is a more professional-oriented network, but it's fee-based and sterile. Regardless, current students are going to be so interconnected with their friends and peers that it will result in better career opportunities and social engagement in the long run.

What's interesting is how elements of social networking have started to appear throughout the Web: newspapers allow readers to share opinions and interact with each other, Netflix has built a culture around renting DVDs, fantasy sports bring fans together, and corporate intranets connect employees more efficiently. The Web will

increasingly become more social, and networking functionality will help enhance that experience. Before long, I don't think people will use the term "social network." It will just become ubiquitous. People will expect it wherever they go online.

Bankhead: I think that basically now it is kind of a field of innovation.… So the fact that YouTube was bought by Google kind of makes it more of a volatile space, and that gives more incentive for people to create new applications and potentially become millionaires.

Krajewski: I don't know, and in fact, I don't care.

Libraries don't create trends and tendencies, they follow. We are not able to compete with the big actors whose core business is [to create and publicize trends]. We have no choice than to follow and be grafted like plants.

Hoffman Gola: I see more things happening with tools like Second Life … where we have virtual environments and our real selves. Where in the virtual environment, we know you as five foot six, beautiful supermodel and then in our real life where we have our real friends and where we network in different ways … I think that the whole concept of Second Life is very interesting. I'm not sure if it will last, but it will be interesting to see what other things come out that are similar in nature to Second Life.

> ### I think that the whole concept of Second Life is very interesting.

Enright: Online generally, I think its current course is fairly apparent. We are kind of limping towards Web 2.0.… The fact of that Google/YouTube acquisition—they clearly fired a shot across the bow letting everybody know that the Web is changing, vis-à-vis the content, and the [Web] traffic … at least in Google's estimation, is incredibly valuable. That is going to influence the behaviors of other online interests, so you're going to have every future online player, I think, trying to empower their consumers— their visitors, interacting with them in a more dynamic way.

Another interesting observation about social networking sites is that they grew up in scale so quickly that they clearly have infrastructure problems. Some social networking sites are not very reliable—they go down a lot, slow down a lot and have server trouble. I think we're going to see a lot of that stuff mature that hasn't matured. Interfaces are going to get slicker and they're going to continue adding new functionality. One social network's recent privacy fumble where they had introduced some functionality thinking they were adding a feature and it created an unanticipated active backlash across a large portion of their user community to the extent that they ultimately very, very vocally said, "We made a mistake. We are apologizing for what went on here." I think that is a very interesting impact but social networking up to that point hadn't really suffered that kind of slap on the hand for manipulating the data of their membership.

Fox: I think there will be more merging of the different services. So as opposed to having a separate Flickr site and a MySpace site and a YouTube site, more and more of these will be merged, so that you won't have to have multiple identities, multiple URLs, multiple logins or multiple links. Also, I hope we continue to see libraries collaborating more with some of the big social networking sites—for example, recently a couple of libraries have gotten permission from Facebook to make a "search the library catalog" plug-in feature available in Facebook. Reports talk about how much a link in Facebook or MySpace drives traffic to a regular Web site; it would be great to have more prominent library presence.

I've been really impressed with the LibGuides product from SpringShare, which both shows the convergence of several of the social networking tools. It works like a wiki and a blog; can embed IM, video, shared bookmarks; and it also can be integrated right into Facebook. And this is a library-specific, designed-for-libraries tool. We need more innovations like this.

Sauers: I think libraries have to participate in social networking and it will evolve over the years. More people are on MySpace. Which, to me, implies that all the kids are going to go, "We're going to go find something else," because all these adults are here. The moment you tell them, they're going to bail, really quick, and they're going to find something else.

Vaidhyanathan: Social networking sites are merely another level of user-friendly design. I would imagine that those goals will still consume the people who engineer this stuff. We've seen a remarkable level of … creative democracy as a result of the creation of these sites, and I see no reason for that not to be the goal of these people who design this.… They really want to make sure that people find this stuff really easy to use. We're at the point where eight-year-olds can post on MySpace without a problem, and 88-year-olds can, too. So that's kind of a nice thing.

> *The hype [about social networking] is over. People will now move on to examine other things that are more realistic, to their advantage.*

Powell: Hmmm, difficult. I'll make some predictions on a tool-by-tool basis.

Facebook: I think usage will continue to grow generally for a while, though I suspect that lots of its more mature users will become bored by its functionality and somewhat frustrated by its limitations. I think that it will expand to better capture the 'researcher' market (as opposed to students) by offering applications that help researchers do their work. In a year's time I think we could easily all be using something similar, but different (and hopefully better).

68%

of those who use a library Web site say it is easy to use,

compared to

75%

for social networking sites.

Source: *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*, OCLC, 2007, questions 956 and 1066. Base: Respondents who have used a library in person or online and/or a social networking site.

Twitter: I think usage will grow, as will functionality—particularly in terms of functionality to have 'conversations' with subsets of people.

Flickr and Slideshare: I foresee no major change in the service profiles and I think usage and functionality will continue to grow.

Blogging: I predict there will be continued growth, particularly as researchers use it to share research outcomes. I see a good chance that blogs and social tools like Facebook (e.g., Nature Network) will grow in use by researchers.

Second Life: I'm not sure. I suspect there will be some kind of backlash against Second Life in some way, but that there will be continued growth of usage by educational institutions over the next year. Not sure beyond that. Performance and reliability will improve. We'll also see growth in open-source variants such as Croquet.

LinkedIn: There will be a general demise I think. It does not have enough functionality to grab attention.

Wikis: I can think of no major change in the service profile, but I suspect slow growth in use—certainly within the education sector.

Wittmann: The hype [about social networking] is over. People will now move on to examine things that are more realistic, to their advantage. Many of the sites will disappear, but it will also give way to many services which can be applied to completely normal everyday work and recreational activities. Libraries must take an active role in this process and help shape it.

Summary

The viewpoints expressed from the early pioneers in the field highlight the many ways in which the social Web is still the "Wild West" and much is left to be discovered.

The experts had many unique perspectives and ideas about the roles of social networks and libraries. Yet most also see a frontier that is quickly and, likely permanently, changing the landscape of the Web. There is not a unified vision of the future. What is coming into focus is that librarians are just beginning to experiment with networked communities to reach their users. All agree that we have learning to do and we should get started and get active. It is where our users are living.

A special thanks to all of our participants for their willingness to contribute.