Adding bookmarks to del.icio.us:
Final Report
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Introduction

For my individual instruction session, I designed a presentation that would teach fellow librarians how to use the online bookmarking tool, del.icio.us. The presentation consisted of a short lecture, a demonstration, practice time for the staff (adding and tagging web resources), and a little time for questions and clarification.

If there had been an issue with the multiple users on the same account or with the mobile lab, the class exercise will be modified so that people work in small groups or the class works together while the instructor follows their direction on the computer at the head of the class.

Scenario and assumptions

A small public library has decided to use the popular online bookmarking tool del.icio.us to create a list of web resources for their patrons. The library manager has asked me to give the staff a brief overview of how to bookmark using the tool.

Assumptions made in the creation of this instructional session:

• The staff have access to a computer.
• The staff has already been instructed in what is to be added, web-site evaluation, etc.
• The staff understands basic tagging (what is it, etc.)
• None of the staff have disabilities that would otherwise alter how this needed to be taught (ex, a sight impairment)
• The staff attending the instructional session are not very familiar with del.icio.us (i.e., most have not used it, many may not have heard of it before the library decided to use it, etc.)
• The session is making use of a training account that will not be published to patrons
• The staff attending the session will not be solely responsible for the account and the library will have at least one staff member who will be in charge of ensuring that the account is maintained properly and that the tags meet the library’s chosen standards

Goals and Objectives

My goals and objectives were as follows:

Goal:
• The library staff will be able to add and tag bookmarks to the libraries del.icio.us account

Terminal objective:
• Staff understand how to add bookmarks

Enabling objective:
• Staff can add bookmarks using the del.icio.us account
• Staff know how to add a description, note, and tags to the bookmarks

After taking time to consider what I wanted the staff to be able to do after my instructional session, my main goal and objectives became more clear. However, I struggled with whether I should add a second terminal objective (understanding how to use and formulate tags). I wasn’t convinced that I had enough time to be able to solidify
the content well enough. I was sure that I could convey the basics, but not sure that I
could convey enough information to justify adding it as a second terminal objective and
adding it to the objective-based exercise. If I was able to create a slightly longer
session, I would include:

Terminal objective:
• The library staff understand how to use and formulate tags

Enabling objective:
• Staff understand that tags are not hierarchical
• Staff know that they have to join multi-word tags with punctuation

The latter enabling objective was covered and the evaluators remembered this when
they completed their take-home exercise. However, I would have had to take more time
to discuss the tags and what I meant by “not hierarchical” to be able to answer to these
objectives.

Planning the session

There were many things to consider when trying to plan the instructional session. After
determining what I wanted to teach, I looked at what my outcome goals were. In order
to prepare an appropriate instruction session, I needed to understand what skill and
knowledge level I wanted the staff to achieve. Based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of
Education Objectives¹, I determined that based on my audience, the time I had
available, and the skill or knowledge level needed to successfully contribute to the
libraries del.icio.us account, the level of expertise goal could be fairly low (preferably
Comprehension, but Knowledge would suffice). In other words, the staff only needed to

¹ Julien, H. (2007, Fall). Bloom’s Taxonomy - Identify examples relevant to the classes you teach. LIS
526: University of Alberta.
be able to recognize terms and procedures. Being able to extrapolate the information I gave them would serve them better as they would find the task easier and, perhaps, less daunting, but the tool is simple enough for most people to use with little help. Also, in this situation, the librarians could go back and look at other added bookmarks to remind themselves of what they needed to do or how tags were formulated, and the library has someone in charge of the account (see assumptions) that the staff could consult if they needed help.

The level of expertise goal needed to be Guided Response. In other words, needed to know the steps required to complete the task. In time, the staff would reach a skill level of Mechanism or higher (where they could perform the task with confidence and habitually). But, it would not be realistic to assume that the staff would be at this level after a 20 minute instruction session. The important thing for me to do was to get them to the skill level that would allow them to use the tool on their own well enough to eventually develop their skills further.

In order to reach these goals I had to design an effective I needed to consider a number of things: needs assessment, motivation, active learning, learning styles, effective use of teaching tools, and evaluation. I will discuss each of these briefly:

Needs assessment:
This was difficult to determine. Because this was based on a make-believe scenario, I struggled with trying to look at the scenario objectively and wanting to just add assumptions that would suit what I wanted to do or that would negate things that I needed to consider (for example, it would have been easy for me to pretend that all the staff had advanced computing skills and would therefore be very comfortable with the subject). I tried to make a realistic scenario and kept that in mind when considering the groups needs. Based on this and based on the goals I had already set, I knew that I needed to assume that they needed to learn the basics.
Despite being able to start with the basics, I still tried to consider what else could I do to assess their needs. Admittedly, I was stumped. But, I realized that I already knew more about the group and their needs then many instructors know when they are asked to teach (for example) a large group of students whose needs would vary greatly. In order to incorporate some basics needs assessment into the project, I decided that it would be appropriate to ask the group if any of them had prior experience with the tool. If they had, I could have adjusted my session slightly by focusing more on the extra features or asking them what they wanted to learn. In this case, very few people in the class (who were pretending to be the staff) had prior experience, so I knew that I was working with novices and would need to keep that in mind when explaining things (for example, during the practice portion or when answering questions).

Motivation:
This was also difficult to work out. These were (presumably) mature people who were at the session because they wanted to learn what I had to teach. Also, this was something that they all had to learn as part of their job. Presumably, I wouldn’t have to worry about motivating them too much. But, I wanted to give them a reason to care enough to try to do well. I had to find a fine balance between using my short amount of time effectively and showing them that this is a neat tool to use.

Because of the time constraints, I decided to depend on two things: my friendly and enthusiastic nature and the fact that other libraries were using this very useful tool. I surmised that librarians would at least take interest in the tool based on the fact that it was easy to use and useful for the patrons. It seemed like a bit of a gamble at the time, but the response I received after the presentation suggested that many were actually very interested and glad that I had taught them a novel tool that they had not been aware of before (which suggests that the novelty of the tool also added to their motivation to learn).

Active Learning:
Because I was teaching a very basic task, I couldn’t really see how I could incorporate active learning into the session. Had I been able to further discuss tags, I could have had the students break into small groups and discuss appropriate use of tags and then come back and share their thoughts with the class. But, I needed to focus on making sure they knew how to use the tool (which was task based, not theory based, so there was little room for discussion). I hoped that they would discuss their experience with each other as they completed the class exercise (added and tagging a bookmark). Had I remembered to start my timer, I could have looked at adding a class discussion at the end if there was time, but I wasn’t sure that I had that time. But, again, this would have focused more on the use of the tags (ex, I could have asked for a volunteer to share their bookmark and chosen tags and we could have discussed the appropriateness of the tags, alternate tags, etc.).

In the end, I did not incorporate a specific active learning task, but I was open to active learning happening on its own.

Diverse Learning Styles:
This was very important to me because I understand how important it is to find other ways to help people learn. I wanted to try and incorporate three things: explaining, showing and doing. This way I could expose the group to auditory, visual, and kinetic learning.

I started by having a short lecture where I explained what we were doing and why, I started incorporating visuals right away to show them what I was talking about (through the slide presentation where I showed them what I was talking about, and the demonstration). And, then I had them add a bookmark so that they could further integrate the information be seeing for themselves what needed to be done.

As I was adding the portion of my session where I showed examples form other libraries, I realized that this would also help some students because it showed them what the anticipated end product was. This would help people who weren’t clear on...
what exactly we were doing because it would give them an end product to strive for - it’s akin to not just giving directions to a location, but also showing what the target location is.

The Point-of-Use guides (which in a real instructional situation I would have given to everyone, and which I should have given to everyone anyway) would have also assisted anyone who who needed further visual guides or whose preferred learning style is to listen in class and then use teacher provided tools to remind them of what they learned.

**Teaching tools:**
The teaching tools I used answered directly to what I needed to be able to do at that point in the presentation and helped me to cater to my fellow visual learners. I was worried about jumping back and forth between being actively on the web and being in a Power Point presentation, but I felt that I needed to focus more on an organized presentation and what I needed to show the group. I would just have to make it work and hope that jumping back and forth wouldn’t cause too many problems.

Being actively in the web helped me answer to my plan to demonstrate the tool I was teaching. The Power Point helped me to highlight parts of the page without talking to the screen, trying to use the mouse pointer to show things, or using a pointer. My hands are already fairly unsteady, so if I were to try and use a laser pointer while nervous, it would have been just as useless to the group as trying to make them see the tiny mouse pointer. So, I considered this to be an essential tool, both for me and the students.

In taking all of this things into consideration, I planned a lesson that involved a short lecture, a demonstration, a class exercise, and time for questions (see Appendix A).
Presentation effectiveness

Despite skipping an important part of my presentation, I think that my presentation was fairly effective. In looking at the exercises completed by the evaluators (see Appendix B), I can see that they understood how to add the bookmarks and tag them. They were also able to use multi-word tags properly (despite the fact that I skipped that part of the presentation).

Furthermore, I have since heard of at least two classmates who have set up their own accounts and I have been asked by another for my slides and information for her to use as reference. Even if a few left the session still not feeling comfortable with the tool, they are at least aware of its existence and what it can be used for, which is a minor success, but a success nonetheless.

Certainly, I think that there is a lot of room for improvement. I think that for a first attempt, it was quite successful for both the people I needed to teach and for me - I learned a lot and can see where I can make improvements and what other things I need to consider (for example, I need to make “start timer” my first bullet on my cue sheet).

Evaluations

To be honest, I’m almost disappointed at the good evaluations. I was hoping to see more comments on where I could have improved. One of the evaluators commented that more grounding on what social tagging was would have been useful. While I agree, this was not part of my objective and I am not sure that I could have effectively included this in the short time frame. But, certainly, I need to consider the value of adding something about social tagging. Also, the suggestion will serve as a useful tip for if I ever teach this again, but have more time.
The only other issue is that one of my evaluators put a lot more thought into finding web-sites to tag than I had anticipated, so the take-home exercise took her a much longer time then anticipated. I think that the most reasonable way to rectify this issue would be to request fewer bookmarks (two instead of three) and be really clear that it did not have to be a special or good web-site, that anything would do (ex, I could suggest that they do a quick Google search and pick which ever sites look the most fun).

On the bright side, my point-of-use guide was helpful, so I feel confident in sharing it with others if they want to learn how to use del.icio.us.

What I learned

I learned everything. This was the scariest and most draining project of the term (possibly of all my time in the program so far). But, I learned a lot about both teaching and planning. For me, this was the kinetic learning I needed to really ground what we have learned so far about needs assessment, learning styles, teaching, and so forth.

It also helped me to see that any presentation I do is essentially an instructional session and that I need to plan and prepare my presentations as such. I may not be in a traditional teacher’s role during presentations, but I am still teaching my audience about what I have learned. Because of this, I need to consider things like how others learn, how I can motivate them to care and to pay attention to me, and how I can make sure that they don’t forget what I have taught them.

Most importantly, I learned that I can teach and that it’s scary, but that I don’t need to panic because I can do do this successfully (as long as I put a little effort into planning what I am going to do).
APPENDIX A
Lesson Plan

Topic: Adding bookmarks to del.icio.us
Instructor: Anne Gregory
Participants: Staff at a small public library
Duration: 20 minutes
Assumptions, goals, and objectives: please refer to Final Report

Materials and equipment needed for the instruction session:
• del.icio.us account
• Mobile lab preferred, but can be done when only the instructor has computer access
• access to the internet (wireless, if laptops are being used)

Lesson Plan:
I. Introduction
A. Our library has decided to use del.icio.us to create an online resource for our patrons, and I’m here to show you how to do add links. Before I get started, is there anyone here who’s used del.icio.us before?
B. Let’s start from the very beginning - what is del.icio.us? It’s an online tool that lets you bookmark, tag and describe links.
C. (http://epl.ca/EPLMasterScience.cfm) This subject page is an example of how many libraries direct patrons to good web resources. They’re generally created and maintained by the libraries technical staff
   1. PRO: which is great because the non-technical staff don’t have to think about it, but ...
   2. CON: it also causes some issues like lag time between when you request the addition of a link and when it actually gets posted. It also means that you have to have tech-savvy staff.
D. (http://del.icio.us/lis526) del.icio.us, on the other hand is simple enough that pretty much anyone can use it. It also has the added advantages of being accessible from anywhere, work/home/wherever.
E. I’m going to show some examples from other library, but first I want to give you a brief tour of del.icio.us so that you know what we’re working with

II. (PowerPoint)
A. (main page) This is the main page of our training account.
B. (highlight bookmarks) These are the links we already have.
C. (highlight a link description/title) Each link we add has a “description”, which would generally be the title of the web resource.
D. (highlight a link note) There also a note about its contents ...
E. (highlight edit/delete) ...when you are logged in to the account, as we are here, you can see the option to edit or delete. (**not patrons**)  
F. (highlight tags) Over on the side we have all the tags we have added so far.  
G. (highlight tag #) The number before the tag tells us how many of our links use that tag. (**cloud might be an issue**)  
H. Now, if I were to click on one of those tags, for example “General.Reference”, you are taken to a page that lists all of the links that have been tagged with that tag and ...  
I. (highlight “related” tags) it shows a list of other tags that are attached to the links with the tag you selected. For example, one of the links with the tag Gen.Ref also has the tag Glossary.  
J. FYI, “related” does not mean related  
K. If we click on the “related” tag Apples, we won’t be taken to a smaller list of links that are tagged with Gen.Ref AND Apples, we’ll be taken to the list of ALL of the links with the tag Apples  
L. (highlight tag description) Back to Gen.Ref, it has a description of the tag that “we” create. Not all tags have a descriptions. For example, ...  
M. (Glossary) Glossary is not defined.  
N. (highlight “create a description”), but there is the option to add a description and I’m not going to be teaching you this, but it’s really straight forward.  

III. Other accounts  
A. Here are some examples from other libraries  
   1. http://del.icio.us/TBPL  
      a) This is from the Thunder Bay Public Library. It’s nice and simple.  
   2. http://del.icio.us/lansingpubliclibrary  
      a) This is from the Lansing Public Library in Illinois. I wanted to show you this one because it has some good examples of inconsistencies in their tagging - they alternate back between using capitalization and not using it. They also have some tags that should be merged, like airline and airlines.  
      a) And, lastly, the San Mateo Library in California. They are super hardcore about organizing their tags. They even use classification numbers, which we’re not going to do because it will just scare and confuse patrons.  
      b) They use an option called tag bundling. Each of those groupings is a bundle. You don’t have to learn how to do this, because someone else will be taking care of it, but should be familiar that it’s an option that exists.  

IV. Adding links  
A. OK. Now that you know a little bit more about del.icio.us is, let’s learn how to add links. There are two ways to bookmark links.  
   1. (Buttons)  
      a) (back to PowerPoint) One of them involves a shortcut button that you can have added to your internet browser  
      b) The checkered button takes you to your account.  
      c) The one that says tag adds the site you are currently looking at.
d) (pop-up) So, if I was at the Internet Movie Database site and wanted to add it, I would just click the tag button, and this is the window that would pop-up. (**standard form ; fill in and click save**)  

2. (goto account) The second way is to do it from with-in the account.  
   a) (close slide show and open browser) To make life a whole lot easier, you want to keep the account open in a separate window or tab so that you can keep coming back to it...  
   b) (top of page) And, at the top of the page there are a bunch of links related to the account.  
   c) ("post") We want to select "post", which is del.icio.us’s fancy way of saying “add a link”. When we do this we are taken to this page, where we can type or paste the URL.  
   d) (http://imdb.com)...  
   e) (click on “save”) Once we click save we are taken to this page. It has the same form as we just saw in the pop-up window  
   f) The form includes the URL, a description (or “title”), notes, and tags.  
      (1) description: Internet Movie Database  
      (2) notes: A database of information on movies, actors, directors, etc.  
   g) (with-in : our tags) When you are doing this from within the account, we are given a list of our current tags at the bottom. Remember the Airlines vs Airline issue in the Lansing Public Library account? You can avoid that by checking our current tags. You won’t see our tags when you use the other method to add links (show pop-up?)  
   h) You may also see popular and recommended tags. These only show up if the link you are adding is one that has been added by other account holders.  
   i) Here we see useful links like movies and database. You can just click on them to add them. But, make sure you edit them to match the libraries set standards - for us that means capitalizing the words, using the plural form where possible, etc.  
   j) You may also notice that you get automatic suggestions, which del.icio.us takes from *our* tags, not other peoples tags. So, if you start typing G-e-n.. and you are given the suggestion Gen.Ref. Which, again, you can just click on.  
   k) Incase you haven’t noticed, Gen.Ref is two words linked by punctuation. We have to do this for multi-word tags because del.icio.us reads each separate word as a separate tag. So, you have to connect the words. Using the punctuation makes each separate word easier to read.  
   l) So, we have our tags, description, notes. All we have to do now is click save. And, there is is right on top.  

V. Are there any questions so far?  

VI. (Second example if there’s time)  
   A. Ok, I'm going to show you one more quick example, and then you guys get to play for a few minutes'
1. Let's add the UofA main page.  
   a) So we copy, paste, add a description (School of Library and Information Science homepage), add a note (The School of Library and Information Science masters program at the University of Alberta)  
   b) Then we can add a few tags (Masters.Programs, University.of.Alberta, Library.Science) - note my copious multi-word tag examples.  
   c) Hit save, and voila. It's like magic.

VII. Class exercise  
   A. Now I want everyone to take a minute and try adding a link of their own. The website, username, and password are here on the board. Pick any web-site at all.  
      1. For each bookmark, make sure that you add a description/title, notes (brief), and at least one tag

VIII. Was everyone able to add a link?
IX. Were there any problems?
X. Are there any last question?
XI. OK, then. If you have problems or want to learn more, let me know.
APPENDIX B
Take-home exercise screenshots

Both evaluators successfully completed the take-home exercise and the bonus question.

Evaluator #1:
Adding and tagging three bookmarks

Evaluator #2:
Adding and tagging three bookmarks

Bonus question:

Evaluator #1

**Carrot**
An orange root vegetable (hide)

Evaluator #2

**vegetarian.shoes**
non-leather shoes (hide)