

Do we still need the 'L' word? A future vision for libraries

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Library & information functions

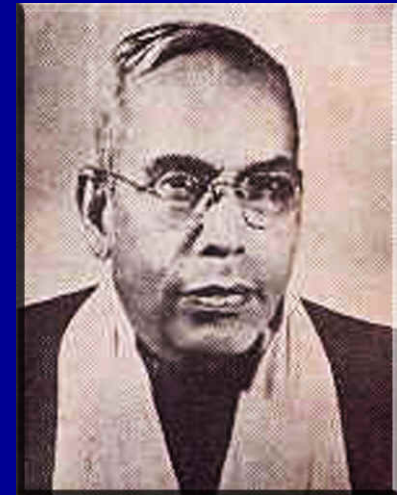
- Content acquisition & storage
- Content organisation & management
- Space provision & management
- Help on demand
- Dissemination: 'push' and 'pull'
- Personalisation
- Training
- Analysis
- Making connections
- Consulting and marketing



Added
value

S.R. Ranganathan's Five laws of library science (1931)

- Books are for use
- Every reader his or her book
- Every book its reader
- Save the time of the reader
- The Library is a growing organism



Lennart Björneborn's Five laws of the web

- **Links are for use** – the very essence of hypertext
- **Every surfer his or her link** – the rich diversity of links across topics and genres
- **Every link its surfer** – ditto
- **Save the time of the surfer** – visualizing web clusters and small-world shortcuts
- **The Web is a growing organism**

© Björneborn 2004 see: <http://www.db.dk/lb/>

There's so much change ... including scholarly communications

- Academics (and research funders) want more control over their IP (institutional & personal) yet still seek scientific status & recognition through high impact journal publishing
- Data management: more link ups between scholarly publication and original data; greater professionalism in data curation
- Richer & more varied business/publishing models, embracing high quality publishers

Scholarly communications (cont.)

- New, powerful entrants to scholarly content access & distribution making their mark
- Open access here to stay but with turbulence
- Rapid, uneven growth for OA journals & repositories (incl. links to scientific datasets) – and interoperable standards
- Social technologies are complementary to quality peer reviewed sources

Knowledge myopia: what business are we in?

- Too narrow corporate vision
- Customer rather than product led
- Libraries part of IM, KM or learning domains?
- Need good predictive instinct and tools
- But can go wrong – 'stick to the knitting'? (Peters & Waterman. In search of excellence)

SCONUL vision 2010

- Personalisation of systems and services, through better customer relationship management (CRM), 'profiling' and IT systems; linked more intimately to communities of interest
- Collaboration: across sectors/domains and with global communities, incl shared facilities and infrastructures, data management, the 'learning journey' etc

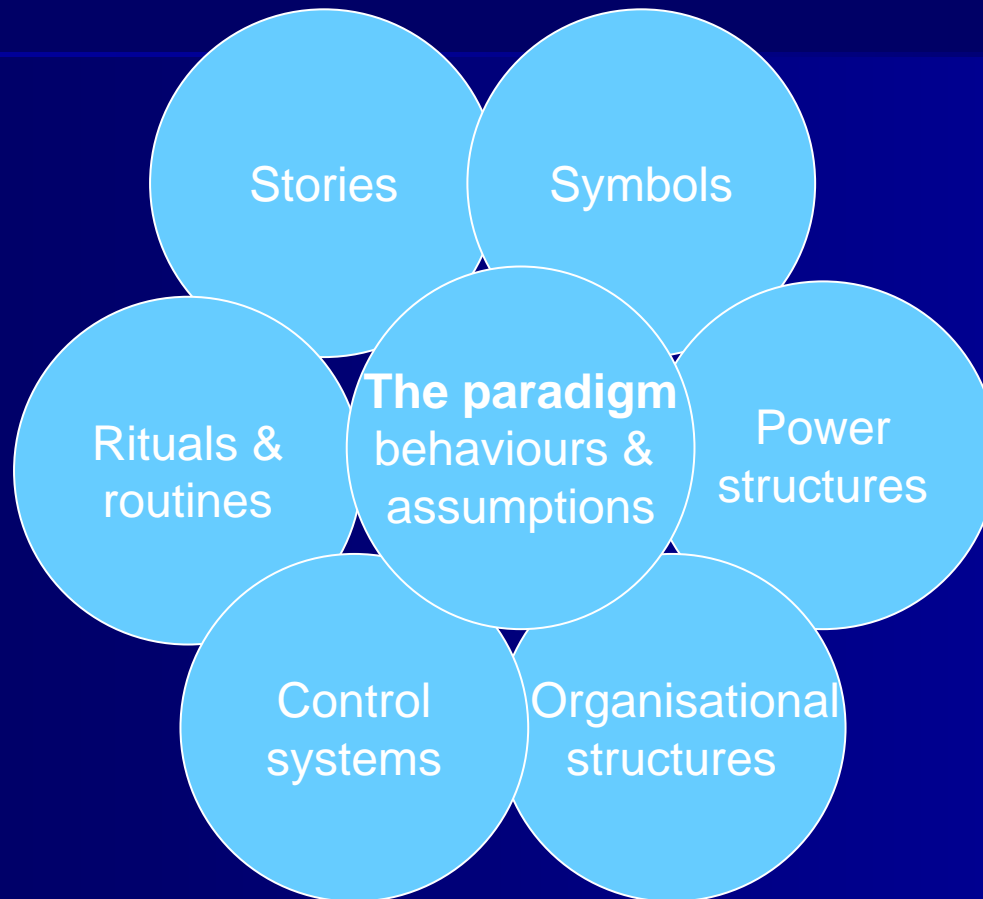
SCONUL vision 2010 (cont.)

- Space: blending of physical & virtual space; non-traditional uses in our buildings eg student support, social learning spaces, cafés; more off-site storage
- Management & skills: full economic costing, ROI; shift of staff time; need for finance & marketing skills; learning backgrounds; fund raising

Are we embedded in our organisation's culture?



The Cultural Web



Source: Johnson, Scholes & Whittington. Exploring corporate strategy. Prentice Hall, 2005. 7th ed.

The importance of 'brand' in LIS

- collection of images and ideas representing an activity or service
- brand recognition created by the accumulation of experiences with the specific service
- through the influence of advertising, design and media commentary
- symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to a organisation, company or service
- serves to create associations & expectations of service supplier
- often includes an explicit logo, fonts, colour schemes, symbols, sound etc which may be developed to represent implicit values, ideas and even personality

'Library' as a brand

- Culturally powerful: serious, studious, authoritative, historically vital, longevity
- Negative connotations - staid, stuffy, unglamorous, print-based
- Use will depend on
 - customer environment
 - fashion
 - function

Comment from a leading corporate strategist about the 'library' brand

"I ran a culture session with a group of DIY store managers, largely about improving customer care in store. When asked to characterise their culture they described it as a LIBRARY! i.e. obsessed with getting stuff properly on the shelves and annoyed with customers who mess up the store.

Of course, this is very unfair on libraries but take it or leave it as a public perception of libraries!"

Source: Kevan Scholes, personal communication, November 2006.

Evolution of different service models ... or just alternatives to the 'L' word?

Some examples ...

- Library & Information Services (1950s-)
- Library & Learning Resources (1970s-)
- Information Services (1990s-)
- Knowledge Centres (late 1990s-)
- Idea Stores (2004-)

The convergence of academic library and other learning support services

Over 60% of UK universities, some in US ...

- Libraries
- IT: academic computing
- Administrative computing/MIS
- Telephony
- Media/AV services
- Teaching/learning/staff development
- Reprographic services

Different managerial structures

- Professional information manager with direct line & budget responsibilities for an operationally merged service
- Overall manager but separately delivered services
- Senior academic leader with individual heads of services reporting in
- Heads of services reporting in to different senior academics

Pros

- Pedagogy
- Customer orientation
- Strategic and managerial
- Vehicle for change and service improvement
- Resource imperatives
- Technological convergence

Cons

- Loss of focus
- No real synergy between librarians & IT personnel
- Professional careers
- Resource budgets are 'too visible' and therefore can be targeted
- Role confusion
- Physical separation makes it difficult
- Hard to manage

Examples of operational convergence

- User liaison across these services
- Merged enquiry & help desk services
- Integrated information skills training
- Development projects through mixed teams

Knowledge centres, KM & km

- Underpinned by a KM strategy
- Mixed take-up
- LIS sometimes only marginally involved with KM initiative
- In practice, most respondents contribute to explicit and tacit knowledge sharing
- Most have internally developed km technical systems for tacit knowledge capture and dissemination

Outsourcing & 'offshoring' LIS operations

- Part of corporate culture
- Most going to India
- Back office & some front office tasks
- Works best if staff are employed by company, not 3rd party
- Very significant cost savings – up to 80% in staff costs
- Quality issues to be managed

Profiling

User support & training

Sharing knowledge

Map & class. knowledge

KM/LIS Team

HR issues (& organ. change)

Circles of KM collaboration

Systems & networks

Intranet/KM system mgt.

External data sources

Idea Store, Tower Hamlets



The Idea Stores: services

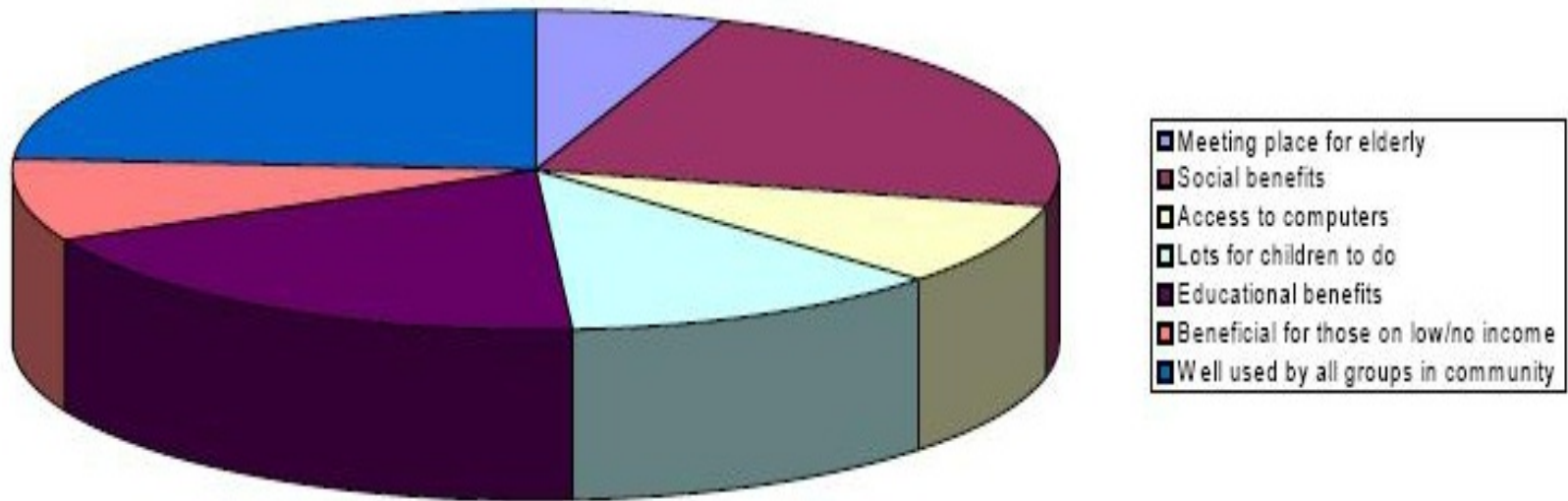
- Library - a wide range of stock including best-selling books, CDs and DVDs
- Information - access to extensive reference and information sources including online resources and a local studies and archives collection.
- Learning - day, evening and weekend courses for a range of interests and abilities
- Our objectives are to bring the community together and to empower individuals to help themselves, whether it is learning to read, pursuing hobbies, expanding their knowledge or seeking a job.
- An Idea Store is an ideal place to browse and borrow books, read a newspaper or magazine, learn new skills, surf the net or to relax and meet friends over a coffee in a fun and stimulating environment.

Source: Tower Hamlets Idea Stores website

Critical review of Idea Stores

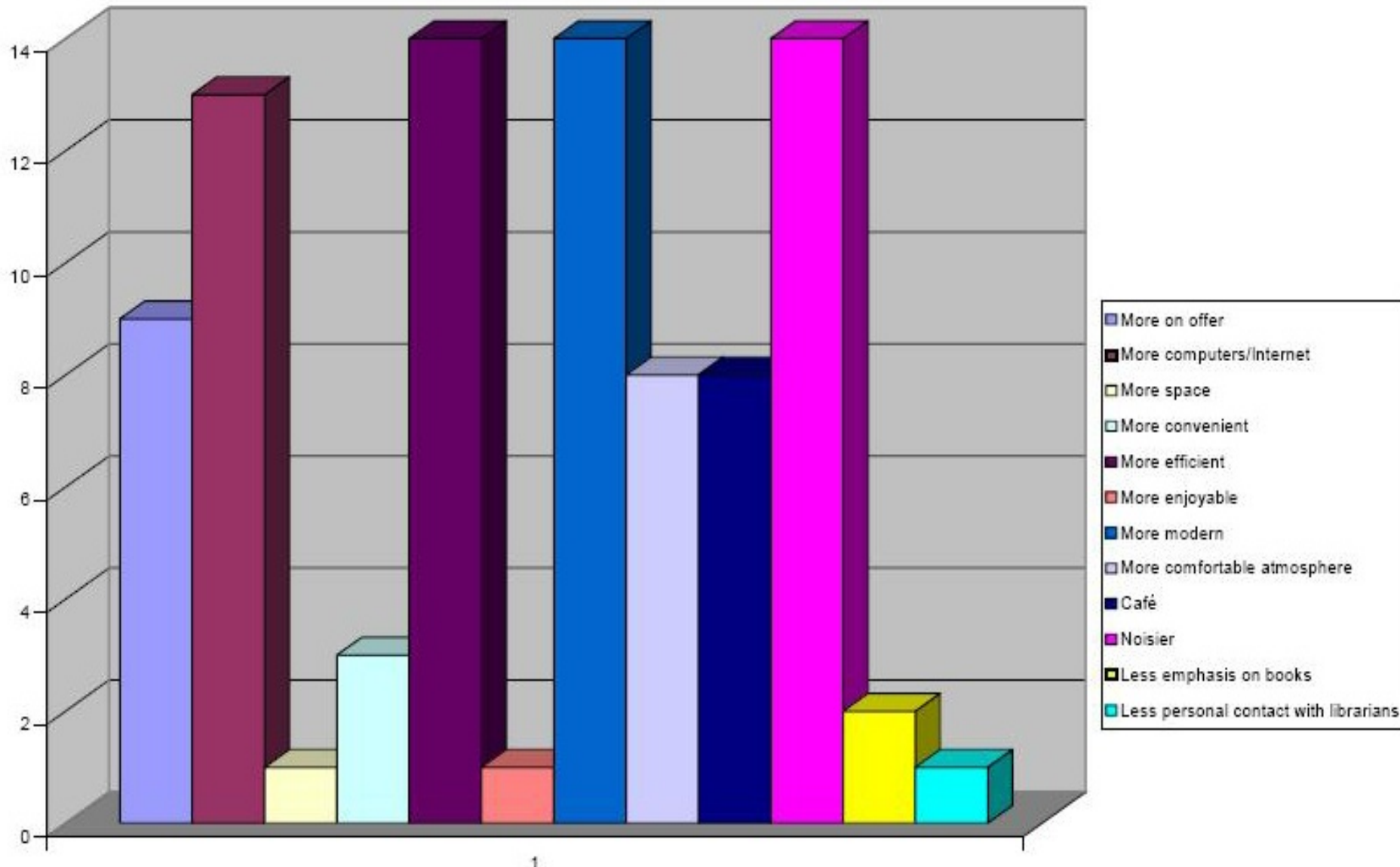
- "It is concluded that the Idea Stores have been successful in providing a modern library and lifelong learning service, and in increasing visitor and book loan figures. They are found to have a strong community presence, and to be carrying out a lot of work within the community."

Why Idea Stores are important to the community?



Source: Hartley, Jo. Tower Hamlet's Idea Stores: are they working? MA dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2005. [on Sheffield's website]

Differences between Idea Stores and conventional libraries

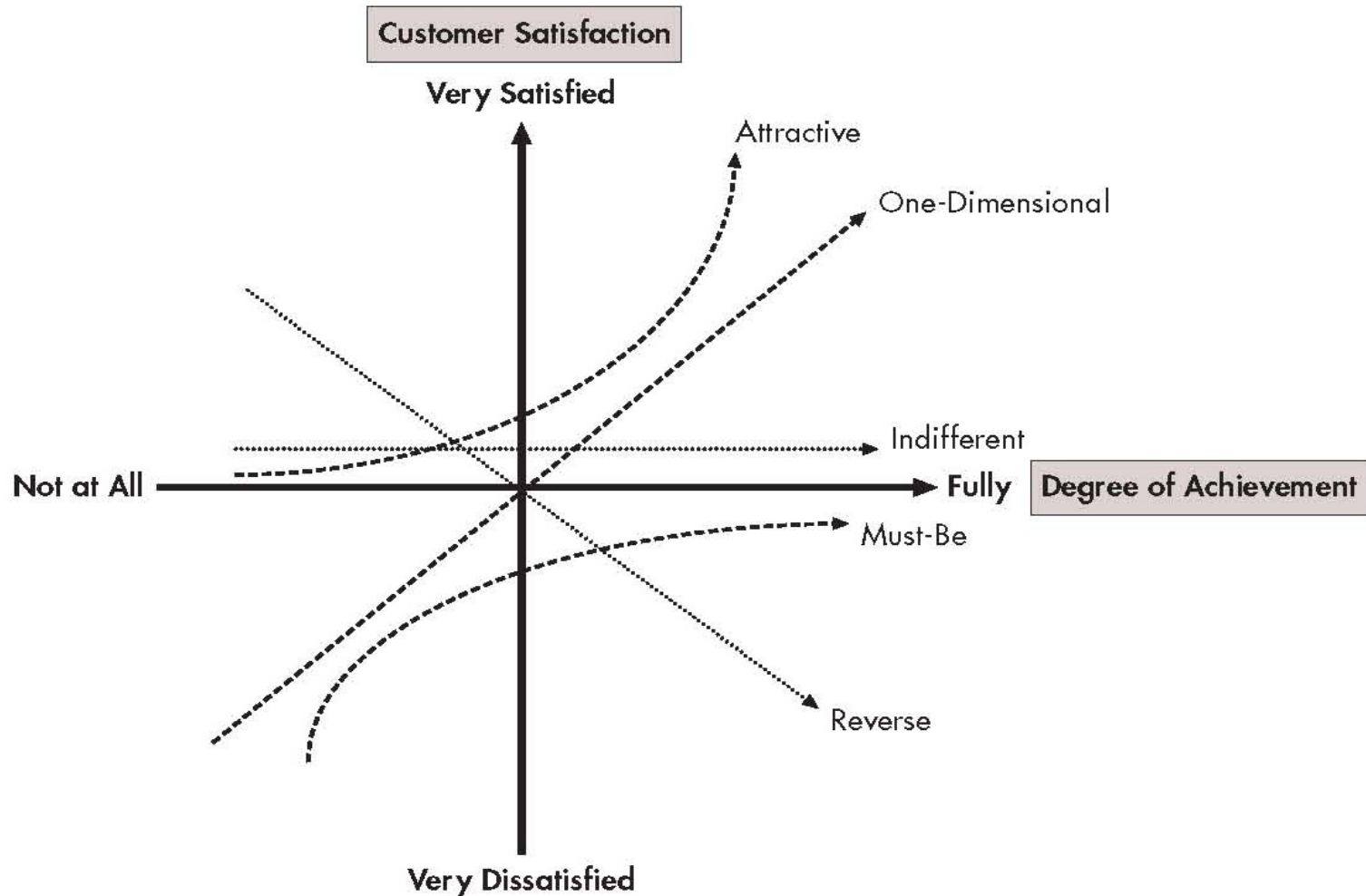


Source: Hartley, Jo. Tower Hamlet's Idea Stores: are they working? MA dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2005. [on Sheffield's website]

But there are consequences

- Public libraries in England & Wales spend 9% of their total library budget on books
- Hard strategic choices have to be made – and, like it or not, are being made

Customers: do we offer services that 'delight'???



Kano model of perceptions of customer satisfaction

Noriaki Kano et al. Attractive quality & must be quality. *Quality*, 14, 1984, p.39-48

Social technologies (& Web 2.0)

- Weblogs
- Tagging
- Wikis – public & private
- RSS & syndication

Weblogs & the blogosphere

- as a marketplace of ideas
- as scholarship
- as democracy
- as a challenge to traditional authority
- for news (major publishers now involved)
- as a corporate communications tool
- for understanding corporate reputation

Are LIS professionals exploiting social technologies for organisational benefit?

- 'Programmed reservations' based on belief in conventional information quality control procedures
- 'Healthy cynicism' of fashionable trends
- Personal basis of use rather than 'managed'
- Internal not external?
- Use blogs when incorporated into formal info products (eg Factiva)
- Some internal Wikis used
- Younger professionals more likely users
- Uncertainty over how to incorporate into mainstream library/information services

Are information professionals taking blogs sufficiently seriously?

“Rethinking what is a ‘local collection’ is very necessary in an age in which less and less content starts out in book and journal format and more in raw forms such as weblogs.

In the meantime a growing army of bloggers are performing this function to some degree already themselves, cataloguing the Web from very personal and oftentimes local perspectives.

These people are creating their own ‘sweet science’ of content organization that's influencing more and more readers and writers worldwide.”

John Blossom in Content Blogger <http://shore.com/commentary/weblogs>

Peer review v social collaboration

- Are collaborative technologies antithetical to peer review? Can they co-exist when blogs challenge traditional notions of authority?
- Connotea from Nature Publishing: designed for scientists <http://www.connotea.org>

So what should LIS professionals do?

- Extend LIS vision, moving up value chain
- Learn to cope with greater instability & ambiguity
- Continually innovate with customer services
- Form organisational alliances – inside & out
- “Embed, embed, embed”
- Become inherent part of organisation’s knowledge sharing infrastructure
- Embrace social technologies as part of knowledge mix
- Watch technologies, adopt but don’t let them determine
- Become better managers
- Take risks!