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LASSIE: Libraries and Social Software in Education

Case Study 5: Libraries and Facebook

Jane Secker

**London School of Economics and Political
Science**

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This case study explores the use of the social networking site Facebook (www.facebook.com) as a tool for libraries and librarians. The case study was launched some way into the project following the growth and popularity of this social networking site. Many librarians have now joined Facebook for purely social reasons, however it can overlap into the professional world as it is being used by several professional library groups and for promoting library related events. Facebook also has a number of library related tools which the project team felt were worthy of further exploration.

This case study is slightly different to the four other case studies, because we did not set up a specific library-related initiative in Facebook for use with librarians or distance learners. The case study is largely based on the literature and our own experiences of using Facebook. The reasons for this approach were twofold: partly because the use of Facebook accelerated phenomenally during the period when we were undertaking our research (March 2007 – January 2008). Early on in the project and at the time of planning the case studies we could not have anticipated the level of interest that developed in this social networking site. This was specifically a UK-based phenomena and largely driven by the extensive coverage that the site received in the mainstream media during the summer of 2007. It also did not seem appropriate to set up a project-related initiative in Facebook for real distance learners as we felt this should ideally be undertaken and maintained by a Library. We therefore have tried to document the experiences of libraries and librarians who have used Facebook and drawn on our own personal experiences of using the site.

1. Background

Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the UK. As well as being used for social networking, there are now many library related groups on Facebook, including groups such as Librarians and Facebook. Several groups have been set up by CILIP groups, such as the Career Development Group and UC&R group. In addition tools have been added to Facebook which may be of relevance to libraries, for example tools which allow you to search COPAC or JSTOR in Facebook are available, as well as various tools that allow virtual bookshelves or resource lists to be shared with others. It was therefore considered appropriate to explore how this tool was being used by librarians based on experiences throughout the project and provide recommendations for best practice.

The idea to explore Facebook in more detail came about when members of the project team attended the Libraries Without Walls conference in September 2007. Many conference delegates were interested in exploring web 2.0 developments and asked the principle researcher to create a Facebook group for those who attended the conference. Initially the idea was to share photographs from the conference using the group and ideally to continue discussions after the event. The creation of the Libraries Without Walls group was subsequently discussed at a Steering Group meeting in late September 2007. The team felt that Facebook was worthy of a case study to document how it has been used in the project and how it is being used currently by the library community. It was recognised from the outset that it was not appropriate to launch a specific Facebook group related to the project or develop an application specifically for distance learners. Therefore the case study was largely based on existing literature. Considerable literature was obtained from a US-based mailing list, where there was a lively discussion of the role of social networking sites more generally.

2. Aims and Objectives

This case study aims:

- To investigate the value of Facebook as a professional networking tool for librarians based on our experiences and the literature to date
- To explore the availability and potential value of library related applications in Facebook
- To make tentative recommendations about how libraries could use Facebook based on the experiences of the project team

3. Overall Approach

This case study is based on observations and experiences of using Facebook gathered throughout the course of the LASSIE project. It will also draw on discussions on Facebook or on various e-mail lists about the appropriateness or otherwise of using a social networking tool in this way.

4. Project Outputs

- A brief summary of the literature on Facebook and libraries
- A report documenting observations and experiences of the project team
- Recommendations on how libraries and librarians might use Facebook professionally

5. Benefits

This case study will be of interest to the wider community as the recommendations will be aimed at all librarians and libraries on the value and issues associated with using social networking sites.

6. Results

6.1 Background to Facebook

At the outset of the LASSIE project in March 2007, Facebook, the social networking site was considerably less well known than it is now (January 2008). Largely due to extensive media coverage in the UK, Facebook became extremely popular during the summer of 2007. The history of Facebook is well documented on Wikipedia (Wikipedia: Facebook: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>) which tells how the site was launched in 2004 by a Harvard graduate. Initially membership was restricted to Harvard, however it was quickly extended to several other US universities. By 2005 anyone with a university e-mail address was able to join and in September 2006 the site was opened up to anyone over the age of 13. By the end of 2007 the site was reported to have over 60 million users, being most popular in the UK, US and Canada. The largest network on Facebook is the London network which has over 2 million users.

The LASSIE Steering Group agreed at the outset of the project to investigate Facebook as a potentially useful tool for learning and teaching, giving members of the team an excuse for playing with it throughout the year. However in March 2007 the social networking site was less well known and none of the project team had used it up until this point. There were some key areas where Facebook proved useful to us, and some of the Steering Group used it to get to know each other informally during the nine months that we worked together. It would have been possible to create a Facebook group for the LASSIE team, however at the first Steering Group meeting it was agreed that we would use Moodle for sharing project documents. This provided us with a secure space to store documents, but also provided us with a closed discussion group which became a place to record and discuss what we were learning. Our unfamiliarity with Facebook early on in the project means that the possibility of using the social networking site to share project information was not recognised until later.

6.2 The literature

There has been a considerable amount written in the past few months about social networking and libraries. Much of what has been written has been on blogs and discussion lists rather than in scholarly communications. The LASSIE literature review provides a more general overview of social software and libraries, however this short section aims to highlight the key literature relating to Facebook (and social networking more generally) and libraries. The author was also given access to the archives of an American Library Association list on information literacy which during the Autumn of 2007 had quite a lively debate over the role of libraries and librarians in social networking sites. The section tries to summarise the key issues highlighted by this discussion and from the literature more generally. Some of the key issues for librarians using Facebook seem to be:

- Facebook is fun and topical, which may be slightly at odds with using it professionally
- Concerns over the appropriateness of using social spaces for professional activities because this may not be welcomed by users
- Concerns over privacy and security issues
- Concerns over the commercial nature of the site
- Staff development issues - a need to spend time learning how to use social networking properly to recognise their potential

The OCLC report, 'Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World' (OCLC, 2007) is probably the most extensive published insight into libraries and social networking. The report looked at social networking more generally, not exclusively Facebook, and examined four key areas including:

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- User practices and preferences on their favourite social spaces
- User attitudes about sharing and receiving information on social spaces, commercial sites and library sites
- Information privacy; what matters and what doesn't
- Librarian social networking practices and preferences; their views on privacy, policy and the potential of social networks for libraries

The overwhelming message the library community seem to have taken from this report is that social networking is 'not for libraries'. (Buckley-Owen, 2008; 3) Nevertheless it should be noted that the OCLC survey of librarians was limited to US Library Directors, although the survey of users was more extensive and included individuals in Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the UK and US. Some interesting findings from the report include:

- Web users like to share. Sharing is no longer just a library thing.
- In the last 18 months - since the last OCLC report - there has been a drop in the use of library websites.
- The idea that we are all "digital natives" now; the majority of people who responded to the OCLC survey have been using the web for at least 4 years.
- People don't trust libraries as much as we might expect.
- Overwhelmingly, neither the general public nor librarians see a role for libraries as providers of social sites.

The report concluded that libraries need to be brave, to relax their rules and to encourage mass participation in the social library, which inevitably will be messy. By looking at Library 2.0 pioneers the report argued:

The social Web is not being built by augmenting traditional Web sites with new tools. And a social library will not be created by implementing a list of social software features on our current sites. The social Web is being created by opening the doors to the production of the Web, dismantling the current structures and inviting users in to create their content and establish new rules. (OCLC, 2007; 8-8)

Another recent publication of relevance by Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) reported on a survey of over 100 academic libraries to gather their opinions about Facebook. The article concluded that while some librarians are excited by the possibilities of Facebook, many considered it fell outside the remit of librarianship. The survey looked at librarians' awareness of Facebook, how they might have used it, any policies relating to how it can be used in their organisation and possible services they might be offering through Facebook. Libraries that have decided to use Facebook to offer services want to appeal to users in their space. Several examples of how libraries have used Facebook are described including initiatives at Georgia Institute of Technology, where Mathews (Mathews, 2006) decided to experiment using Facebook. He used it as an outreach tool to promote library services to students in the School of Mechanical Engineering after he discovered that 1,300 of these students were registered on the site. In terms of attitudes towards social networking, clearly some librarians have reservations over whether Facebook has any academic purpose, however very few dismissed its use outright. There was also a feeling that librarians should keep an open mind about Facebook as it has real possibilities as a way of communicating with students. Some librarians were keen to launch services using Facebook or had already done so, however others felt this was not appropriate.

While not specifically related to libraries, a useful blog post from Web Worker in July 2007 (<http://webworkerdaily.com/2007/07/24/12-ways-to-use-facebook-professionally/>) lists 12 ways to use Facebook professionally. This includes some useful tips, such as thinking of your profile as a public space rather like your desk at work where you would only display appropriate material about yourself. It also suggests making contact with former and current work colleagues, being selective about adding friends and applications to your profile. Other suggestions include changing the default settings of Facebook to make it work better for you – so for example editing the News Feeds so you find out when someone adds a new connection, but perhaps not when they change their picture profile. The post also recommends editing your profile and your security settings. Tips such as incorporating tools you are already using into your profile (for example Flickr for photo sharing, or del.icio.us for social bookmarking), joining groups that relate to your professional interests and limiting

the amount of time you spend on Facebook are all valuable. With some tweaking, this posting could form the basis of good practice guidelines for librarians who are keen to use Facebook.

Finally it is worth considering the wider literature that considers the role of social software and social networking in education. The recent JISC information sheet (JISC, 2007a) 'In their own words' looked at students perceptions of social software. It highlights the benefits of using social software to learners and the issues for managers, networks and practitioners. Social software could support learning and make it more creative and interactive, however there are skills development issues. JISC have also produced briefing papers more generally on web 2.0 and social software in education (JISC 2007b) and a report which explored web 2.0 content for Learning and Teaching (JISC 2007c). They concluded:

Web 2.0 is, in our view, a technology with profound potentiality for inducing change in the HE sector. In this, the possible realms of learning to be opened up by the catalytic effects of Web 2.0 technologies are attractive, allowing greater student independence and autonomy, greater collaboration, and increased pedagogic efficiency. (JISC 2007c)

Sparkes meanwhile in a recent article in *Information World Review* (2008; 15) recognises that 'the academic opportunities for Facebook are huge' due to the site having its roots in academia. He highlights features such as 'Courses' which lets people in the same class share information and communicate and also the Virtual Bookshelf application as a way of opening up discussions about readings across courses.

6.3 Our use of Facebook

Several members of the project team joined Facebook following the launch of the LASSIE project as this social networking tool was gaining considerable media attention. It is worth noting that of the project team, five of the nine Steering Group members joined Facebook and quickly became 'friends'. Another member of the team joined Facebook purely for social reasons so did not disclose this to the rest of the team. Three further members of the team either did not join or did not declare their membership to the rest of the group for the duration of the project. It was useful to explore the reasons some Steering Group members did not join Facebook (or not declare their membership). Where relevant quotes are included from the Steering Group who had an online discussion in Moodle about the value of Facebook. As you will see, many of the same issues discussed in the literature were raised by the Steering Group. The reasons for not using Facebook were varied but some members of the team were concerned with privacy issues associated with social networking sites. Others cited a lack of time, and for some Facebook was purely a social activity and they hadn't considered it to be useful for a work context.

The concern over privacy issues and social networking is not unfounded, for example in June 2007 Facebook announced that they would make members profiles available via Google, unless individuals requested otherwise. The media has also run numerous stories about concerns over privacy issues and future employers or universities 'checking out' applicants using Facebook (See for example The Guardian, 27th November 2007 and The Guardian, 11th January 2008). News stories have also included former (and current) employees of some companies have also been castigated for inappropriate or derogatory comments they might have made on Facebook about the employer (The Guardian, 7th August 2007). One Oxford college also reprimanded a group of students for unruly behaviour after details had been posted on Facebook (The Guardian, 17th July 2007). Clearly Facebook is a semi-public space where individuals should be careful about the type of information they share. As one member of the LASSIE Steering Group said:

The main reason that I haven't joined is that I know that it can be quite absorbing and use up a lot of time; so I'd rather not get into it in the first place. I've had a few invitations from people and thought about it which then also led me to think about privacy issues and whether I want people to know my every movement. A session at the conference we attended in York also reinforced my concerns about privacy as companies can scrape lots of data from such sites.

There are numerous privacy options which allow a user to ensure their profile is not visible except to people they consider as 'friends'. It is now also possible to develop a 'limited profile' which you can allow certain friends to have access to, if you don't wish them to see your full profile. Facebook is certainly responding to the concerns about privacy, but our sense was that many people who have

joined Facebook have not considered these issues in detail and are not aware of how to limit the information they are sharing.

Another member of the Steering Group felt that she already had ways of communicating with people that were effective and lack of time was a reason for not exploring Facebook in more detail. She said:

The main thing for me is really time. The majority of people in the Archives profession use other means to communicate eg listserv – so this is what I pay attention to and I don't have time to spend on Facebook as well. If a critical mass of people started using Facebook for work networking or exchanging information, then I would start using it too instead of other means. Information overload is also a problem – there are so many people/groups on there it's hard to pin down things that might be useful to you – or maybe that's just because I haven't spent enough time on there to get proficient at it.

Facebook was viewed by some members of the Steering Group as a purely social activity:

I am a member, because I have a few friends on there who are very active and they invited me to join and I was curious, but I rarely log on and never post anything. Actually most of my (very few) Facebook friends are people I know through work, but they don't seem to use it for work, it's definitely a social thing. I am a member of the LSE Group, so when I log in there are little messages about activities or news from this Group, so potentially it might have a work application, but I haven't really explored this at all.

One member of the Steering Group who joined Facebook reported:

I joined to support the group for the Iraqi Library & Archives and was then surprised that two people found me! I only check it if someone sends me something (although enjoyed the virtual garden and bookshelf!) and feel I don't have the time to devote to using it effectively - also I don't feel I want to as I have other means to communicate with friends. I am aware of the personal/professional overlap and think this affects anything that I do add. I think it's safe to say I'm not a convert.

Another member of the LASSIE team was far more positive and had found Facebook was helpful in building relationships with academic colleagues. She felt it seemed that people were all more likely to show their human, and often more playful, side within the virtual world of Facebook and said:

I find FB a terrific time waster but I also find it quite helpful in breaking the ice with academics (& I know some of them are quite surprised to find librarians there), but we are all still struggling to find any real use for it in our work. Perhaps this is because we aren't keen to reveal too much about ourselves other than the fun side of our personalities.

She had joined a number of groups within Facebook but didn't find that we learnt much from them. She was also very aware that students might not like to be "friends" with tutors or librarians, although some clearly did. This member of the team felt:

Facebook is still an unknown quantity and I will be interested to see how it develops further.

The lead researcher involved in LASSIE found Facebook useful for professional and social networking and below is a record of her activities in the last 10 months of using Facebook:

- Joining in March 2007, she managed to collect 81 'friends' by January 2008. Of these, 30 contacts were other librarians who were considered part of a professional network, the remainder included old school and university friends, current friends, family members and work colleagues.
- She joined 20 groups of which 11 would be considered professional interest and 9 were purely social. Two of the professional groups were created by the researcher and both were groups for conferences she had either attended or was involved in organising.
- She joined two networks: the LSE network and the London network

- She created 8 photo albums and added over 100 photographs to Facebook. All the photos were unrelated to work apart from a few which were added to the Libraries Without Walls Conference Facebook group.
- She used the Facebook message function as a supplement to e-mail and as a quick way to contact certain friends. The messaging function was not used for professional activities generally.
- Work related tools and applications added to the researchers profile include: del.icio.us to share bookmarks from the LASSIE project, the Bookshare and Books iRead application which allow book information to be shared with other Facebook users, the COPAC search, the Flickr tool to allow photos from Flickr to be viewed in Facebook, the Librarian application which means Facebook recognises you as a librarian and can direct people to you for help (further details about Facebook applications are included in Section 6.5).
- A variety of non work related tools were added to the profile including: My Garden (<http://apps.facebook.com/mygarden/>) , My Aquarium (<http://apps.facebook.com/myaquarium/>) and Catbook (<http://apps.facebook.com/catbook/>) .

She logged into Facebook most days during the week and occasionally at the weekends and found 'updating your status' which allows you to add a short note about what you are currently doing, quite compelling. She was often prompted to login following an e-mail to say someone had sent her a message on Facebook.

She was anxious to ensure Facebook did not compromise her privacy and so amended her privacy settings to ensure: only 'friends' could see the profile. Details such as full date of birth was not available and any photos uploaded were only visible to friends. The default setting allows anyone on your network to view these and given the size of the London network this setting was not desirable.

Along with a colleague in the Centre for Learning Technology, she created a Facebook page for their department with some basic details about the Centre and the staff. This currently has just one 'fan' and is purely experimental as there is no clear consensus on how this should be used to publicise services. Further details about Facebook pages are discussed in more detail in Section 6.4.

Overall she concluded Facebook was a valuable supplement to more traditional ways of communicating with friends and colleagues and could make you feel more 'connected' to people you saw less frequently. The researcher didn't have a problem with mixing personal and professional interests, although she was selective about who she accepted friend requests from and declined requests from people she didn't actually know.

6.4 Facebook Groups for Librarians and Libraries and Facebook pages

Groups on Facebook are hugely prolific and extremely easy to set up by any Facebook member, for pretty much any purpose. During the course of LASSIE, the team were involved in creating two groups for related professional activities. These included the LILAC (Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference) group (<http://lse.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2526231156>) and the Libraries Without Walls 2007 conference group (<http://lse.facebook.com/group.php?gid=5044368186>). Groups have various functions and tools available, for example there is a discussion board, where messages can be posted and the facility to share resources such as photos, web links and video within the group.

Members of the Steering Group joined numerous groups many of which had professional associations. For example the University College and Research (UC&R) group of CILIP have a Facebook group which now has over 120 members. There is also a group for Library Applications in Facebook which has over 2000 members and a Librarians and Facebook group which has over 4000 members! Discussions in these groups are fairly lively, although dominated by US librarians. The main drawback with groups in Facebook however, seems to be the need to visit a group site to find out if there is anything new, rather than getting notifications when there is new content. It means it is easy to forget to check a group for long periods of time and miss relevant discussions. Groups were found to be of minimal value during our research, although occasionally new contacts were found through their membership of a professional group.

Facebook Pages were launched late in 2007 and although these have not been thoroughly investigated they seem to offer more potential for libraries or other organisations who might want to

market their services in Facebook. Pages allow you to create a Profile for a department or for a project. Instead of being a friend of the page, Facebook members can become a fan, which means they are automatically updated when changes are made to the page. Information, resources such as photos and video and Facebook applications can be added to the page. Our research found that The University of Warwick Library have created a Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Coventry-United-Kingdom/University-Of-Warwick-Library/6168162503>) and this has several library related applications available such as the COPAC and World Cat application and the JSTOR search. As of January 2008 it has just over 30 fans and it is described as being 'experimental'. A search in Facebook in January 2008 for the terms 'university and library' revealed over 60 Facebook pages have currently been created. Three examples of library pages with the highest number of fans include:

- Aurora University Charles B. Phillips Library: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Aurora-IL/Aurora-University-Charles-B-Phillips-Library/8769270978?ref=s>
- University of Winnipeg Library: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Winnipeg-MB/University-of-Winnipeg-Library/6195503546?ref=s>
- Duke University Law Library: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Durham-NC/Duke-University-Law-Library/7739830819?ref=s>

Contact information, opening hours, links to useful library resources, catalogue searches and an instant messaging service are just some of the features of these pages. However, they are clearly a fairly recently phenomena and it is unclear how popular this might become at this stage.

6.5 Facebook Applications (Apps) for Libraries

Facebook applications or apps can be developed by third parties and are plug-in extensions to the site that can interact with users and access the information in their profile. Example Facebook apps include the ability to include your del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>) bookmarks on your profile. There are a huge number of Facebook apps available and one of the main ways of discovering these new tools comes from the automatic feeds you receive when one of your friends adds an application to their profile. This was particularly useful for identifying library-related applications but also highlighted non-work related apps, such as the virtual aquarium or garden application.

There are several library-related Facebook applications that have been developed recently. Below is a list of some of these, but further details can also be found in the Facebook Group about Library Applications: <http://lse.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2469777131> Many thanks also to iLibrarian Blog for a useful posting on the Top 10 Facebook Applications for Libraries:

<http://oedb.org/blogs/ilibrarian/2007/top-ten-facebook-apps-for-librarians-part-one/>

JSTOR Search: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2412474777&b>

The ability to search JSTOR from within Facebook. A link to JSTOR is included in your profile.

LibGuides Librarian: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2409492434&b>

If your library uses Springshare's LibGuides subject guides maker for libraries (<http://demo.libguides.com/>), this application allows you to display your guides in your Facebook profile and also provides a search of your library's catalogue.

Facebook Librarian: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=3135795462&b>

This application is essentially a virtual librarian service which provides links to books and other resources. There is also an "Ask a Librarian" service which means you can list yourself as a librarian and be available to answer queries.

Books iRead: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2406120893&b>

This application is supposedly the most popular book application on Facebook and it lets you share a virtual bookshelf of titles you are currently reading, those you want to read, those you have read in the past, and books you won't read. You can also rate titles and list books you own as well as highlight your favourite books. You can also check out your friends' reads, and view new books added to the quickly-growing collection of 2.8 million books.

Bookshare: <http://apps.facebook.com/bookshare/>

This is a similar book sharing application that allows you to list books that you own, like or love. You can rate books, add reviews and mark books are being available to borrow by others.

Various Library Catalogues are available for searching from within Facebook including:

COPAC Search: <http://apps.facebook.com/copacsearch/>

The ability to search the union catalogue COPAC from within Facebook. A link to COPAC is included on your profile.

European Library Search:

http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?api_key=44e3d0cf89227e5412535f22127f0625

World Cat Search: <http://apps.facebook.com/worldcat/>

UIUC Library catalog <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2414276217&b>

This application allows you to search the library catalogue of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign or request live assistance from a librarian.

Other catalogue searches available include:

University of Michigan library: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2538811407&b>

Ryerson University Library: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2354484787&b>

Hennepin County Library: <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2353074921&b>

6.6 Other social networking sites

Facebook is not the only social networking site, in fact the team explored a number of other sites at the outset of the project, which seemed initially to offer potential for networking between librarians. Two sites that were explored were: Ning (<http://www.ning.com>) which allows you to create your own social network and LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/>) which is geared at professionally networking. In our experience neither of these social networking sites were as easy to use as Facebook. They are also less well used, so unlikely to be of value for marketing library services. We did not explore MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com>) as part of this project due to time constraints, so cannot make a comparison with Facebook.

7 Recommendations for best practice

Students are concerned that their 'social spaces' are being infiltrated by academic and support staff. However, providing services through a social networking site could have enormous benefits in terms of raising the profile of a library or a specific service. Librarians need to spend some time understanding how social networks work and why they have become so popular with students. In order to do this properly they really need to join Facebook and explore some of the features and tools.

We have tried to put together a short list of best practice guidelines for librarians who wish to use Facebook in both a personal and professional context. In the space of this short case study we have not had the experience or time to include recommendations for libraries which wish to market their services through Facebook, although Facebook pages, a very recent development, are certainly worth considering.

Using Facebook as a Librarian

- If you decide to take the plunge and sign up for a Facebook account do spend some time reading up on the security and privacy settings relating to your account. The default option is to have your profile open which means anyone (including non-Facebook users) can view it.
- Make sure you are happy (and understand) the security settings you have saved. We would recommend you only have your profile available to your friends and not to everyone on your network.
- Be careful about adding too much personal information to your profile, such as your full date of birth or home address for obvious security reasons and also keep in your mind the idea of your profile as a public space, as this will help you to decide what is appropriate and not appropriate to add to it. Only share information on Facebook you are really comfortable with work colleagues knowing, as inevitably they will become your 'friends'.

- Add some applications, (including some of the above listed library related apps) to your profile, but be selective about what you add or your profile can soon become overwhelming. Also consider that each app has separate terms and conditions that must be agreed to.
- Spend time building up your friends network on Facebook. It's possible to search for people in various ways and you can import e-mail contact lists to see who might be already on Facebook.
- Be selective about who you accept as a friend, so don't accept requests from people you really don't know, but also do remember that the more friends you have on Facebook the more useful it can become.
- Join your local network and join some groups of interest. It's worthwhile searching for groups that already exist and relate to libraries or professional interests you might have.
- Consider setting up a group or a page to experiment with how these features works – they can provide additional publicity for any professional groups you are involved in and may prove to be useful in promoting library services in the future.
- Limit the amount of time you spend on Facebook so it doesn't become an addiction!

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