Delicious: the Power of Folksonomies

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Folksonomy - A Definition

- Folksonomy: folk + taxonomy (Thomas Vander Wal, 2004)

- Wikipedia (20 October 2008):

  “Folksonomy (also known as collaborative tagging, social classification, social indexing, and social tagging) is the practice and method of collaboratively creating and managing tags to annotate and categorize content. Folksonomy describes the bottom-up classification systems that emerge from social tagging. In contrast to traditional subject indexing, metadata is generated not only by experts but also by creators and consumers of the content. Usually, freely chosen keywords are used instead of a controlled vocabulary. Folksonomy (from folk + taxonomy) is a user-generated taxonomy.”

Delicious
What Elements Define Delicious?

- A bookmarking service with two significant differences:
  - A flexible approach to bookmark organization
  - A social software component

Flexibility in Organization

Traditional bookmarks > tree model

Delicious tags > more general graph model
Delicious as Social Software

• Three interconnected components:
  
  • links to tagged websites
  
  • tags attached by users to websites
  
  • users doing the tagging

Delicious: the Tag Page
Delicious: the User Page

Delicious: the Bookmark Entry Page
A Sample Visualization - The Individual Network

This is an individual user’s tag network surrounding AI:

A Sample Visualization - The Individual Network

This is the cross-user tag network surrounding AI:
Collecting Resources From a Team of Users

- Use a common tag, defined by a “fake word”
  - e.g., “horizoneducause2008”
- Use consistency in other tags
  - Take a look at what the community has already used!
  - One possibility: assign someone to become a "tag editor" - not necessarily the best approach, because:
    - The tag editor has to assume a (not inconsiderable) burden;
    - The knowledge present in the group that went into the original tag creation is replaced by the subset of that knowledge present in the tag editor.
  - An alternative: set up a periodic voting process to cull and refine tags:
    - The burden is fairly shared by all;
    - The knowledge present in the group is not lost;
    - The process of voting on the tags in and of itself can enhance the knowledge present in the group and in each one of its members.

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