

MLA Members' Social Software Use and Beliefs

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Background

The Medical Library Association's (MLA) Task Force on Social Networking Software was created in May 2007 at the national meeting by President Mark Funk, FMLA, AHIP. The Task Force was charged to investigate issues relating to MLA's implementation of blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, and other social networking tools in order to accomplish President Funk's top presidential priority, upgrading the Association's use of technology. The immediate goal was improving communication and facilitating networking; the long-term goal was to evaluate individual social networking tools and make recommendations that could be used by Association members, sections, committees and task forces.

Objectives

To assess MLA members' use of Web 2.0 technologies and their belief in the importance of these technologies to the association. To assess whether demographic factors influenced use of these technologies or the belief in their importance to the association.



Methods

All MLA members were invited to participate in an initial survey of Web 2.0 technology use and beliefs in summer 2007. The survey utilized 5-point Likert scales to measure members' personal and professional use frequency of individual Web 2.0 tools, including blogs, wikis, social networking software, web office tools, RSS, media sharing, and instant messaging. A 5-point Likert scale was also used to gauge belief in importance of each technology to the association. The survey captured demographic data, including library type, library size, and years of library experience. Use frequency and beliefs were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Trends in demographic influences on Web 2.0 technology use and beliefs were demonstrated using a chi square test. All MLA members were invited to participate in a repeat survey in summer 2008; this survey was designed to evaluate use and belief changes following a year of association-sponsored educational opportunities designed to improve Web 2.0 knowledge and skills.

Results

Four hundred ninety-five MLA members completed the summer 2007 survey, including 150 respondents from hospital libraries and 243 from academic libraries. The largest percentage (n=193, 39%) of respondents were members who had worked in libraries 21 years or more. Respondents' libraries' staff sizes varied, ranging from 1 person (n=91, 19%) to more than 60 staff (n=46, 10%). Respondents felt that blogs, RSS feeds, and wikis were the most important social software tools for the association. Blogs and RSS feeds were the most commonly daily or weekly used tools for both personal and professional use. Library type, library size, and years of experience related to frequency of professional and personal social software tool use, as well as to the belief in importance of each tool to the association. One hundred thirty-two members completed the summer 2008 follow-up survey.

Conclusions

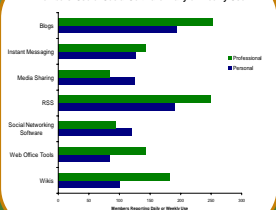
Data from both surveys were used to develop web materials and courses for MLA members.

Web 2.0 Resources

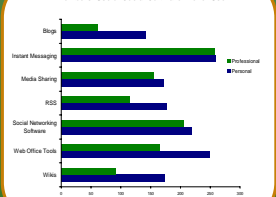
Medical Library Association



Members' Use of Social Software: Daily or Weekly Use



Members' Use of Social Software: Never Use



Task Force members: Chair Bart Ragon; Marie Kennedy, Maureen "Molly" Knapp, Michelle Kraft, Rikke Ogawa, Melissa Rethlefsen, Gabe Rios; Liaisons Jim Shedlock, Mary Piorun, Sue Ben-Dor, Melissa DeSantis, Tina M. Kussey, Kate Corcoran, Mark Funk

46 survey respondents completed Web 2.0 101

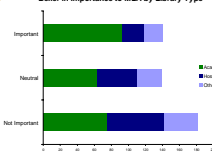


60 survey respondents saw the MLA 2008 Plenary IV on Web 2.0

53 survey respondents participated in Web 2.0 Webcast CE

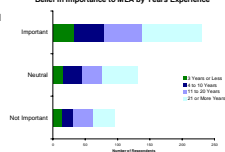
59 (61%) of participants implemented an idea from one of these events at their library

Instant Messaging: Belief in Importance to MLA by Library Type



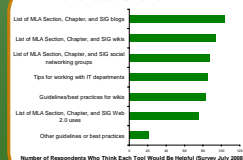
There was a significant difference between respondents from different library types in belief in importance to MLA of the following tools: instant messaging (p<.0004), wikis (p<.015), RSS (p<.0043). There was a moderate difference for blogs and media sharing. There was no difference for web office tools or social networking.

Social Networking: Belief in Importance to MLA by Years Experience



Years of experience did not significantly effect belief in importance of social software to MLA except for media sharing (p<.0165) and to a lesser extent blogs (p<.0955) and wikis (p<.09)

Member Votes for Content for MLANET



Number of Respondents Who Think Each Tool Would Be Helpful (Survey July 2008)

Task Force Blog

<http://sns.mlanet.org/blog/>



Web 2.0 Resources

http://www.mlanet.org/resources/web20_resources.html



Dig Deeper with Social Media

http://sns.mlanet.org/snscs_advanced/

