

**Tools in Personal Environments: A Taste of New Technologies**  
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**NEASIST May 3, 2005 Syndicate, Aggregate, Communicate:**  
**New Web Tools in Real Applications for Libraries, Companies and Regular Folk**

Definitions adapted from <http://en.wikipedia.org> and <http://www.webopedia.com> For brevity's sake, I am including the most commonly accepted definitions of each technology - not every possible variation of each term - and where available, common library applications and an example of a Best Practice implementation.

### **Handheld**

A portable computer small enough to fit in your hand. Also may be called PDA (personal digital assistant), pocket PC, palm. Increasingly the term also encompasses smart phones, tablets, ultrapersonal computers, ipods and any other hybrid tool that delivers sophisticated computing capabilities in a small handheld package. Typical functions include personal information management (PIM) such as calendar and address book, document storage, mp3 player, digital camera, Web browser, voice communications. Library applications include web pages, common handouts, reference materials, ebooks, the catalog, and subscription databases all specially formatted for handhelds.

*The Handheld Librarian: (Lori Bell et al)* <http://www.handheldlib.blogspot.com>

*Best Practice: Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, University of Virginia Health System*  
<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/library/services/computing/pda>

### **Mobile**

A broader and more encompassing term than wireless, wifi, 802.11 a/b/g, or Bluetooth. Still may need power cords, but takes advantage of various kinds of telecommunications technologies to enable information storage, access, and thus productivity while on the go, without being tied to a physical desktop. May include accessing a word file downloaded to your palm, or accessing a definition in the moment on your treo 650 wireless internet connection, or accessing your latest RSS feeds on your watch. Library applications include searching the catalog or texting a librarian from a smartphone, mobile and local search.

*Gizmodo: The Gadgets Weblog (Joel Johnson)* <http://www.gizmodo.com>

*Best Practice: Minneapolis Public Library: online catalog optimized for small screen mobile devices*  
<http://mplwebcat.mplib.org/airpac/jsp/airpacIndex.jsp>

### **Blogs**

Short for Web log, a blog is a web page driven by an easy to use content management system (CMS) that automatically time stamps each entry, orders them in reverse chronological order, provides static permalinks to each entry, and auto-archives all entries. Blog content can run from individual diaries to arms of political campaigns. Many weblogs enable visitors to leave public comments, which can lead to a community of information; others are non-interactive. Many blogs include blogrolls, i.e., links to other blogs which the owner reads, and/or have trackback, which allows one blog to link to a related entry in another blog, creating an inter-blog conversation. In their best iterations, blogs engage readers and build a virtual community around a particular topic or interest. Library applications include promoting new resources, events, services, displays, FAQs; interactive book clubs discussions; as well as internal project management and communications, such as reference desk happenings.

*BlogBib - An Annotated Bibliography on Weblogs and Blogging, with a Focus on Library/Librarian Blogs*  
<http://blog-bib.blogspot.com>

*Lists of Library Blogs* <http://www.libdex.com/weblogs.html>

*Prof Anne Clyde's "Weblogs"* <http://www.hi.is/~anne/weblogs.html>

*Best Practice: The Saint Joseph County Public Library "SJCPL Lifeline blog"* <http://lishost.org/~sjcpl/>

## RSS

Short for Really Simple Syndication, Rich Site Summary or RDF Site Summary, RSS is an XML format for syndicating Web content. Syndicated content may include events listings, news stories, headlines, project updates, excerpts from discussion forums or even corporate information. RSS is most often used to provide snippets of information, which contain short descriptions of web content with a link to the full version of the content. This snippet is delivered as an XML file called an RSS feed, RSS stream, or RSS channel. An orange rectangle with the letters XML (**XML**) is often used on a blog or web site as a link to a site's RSS feed. RSS feeds need to be read in a reader or aggregator, which can be a standalone program or a free web-based program such as Bloglines. RSS pushes content to a user's reader, configured with the user's preferences, saves users from having to repeatedly visit favorite websites to check for new content or be notified of updates via email. Library applications include current news on events, displays, services, new resources, books out/overdue, subject guides.

*LISFeeds "The one place to read library news headlines from 223 Library Blogs."*  
<http://www.lisfeeds.com>

*Best Practice: Marin County Free Library (feed for happenings at the library, best-selling books, book clubs, web-sites, and author appearances)* <http://www.marincountyfreelibrary.blogspot.com>

*Best Practice: Hennepin County Library (feeds for each subject guide, and library news)*  
<http://www.hclib.org/pub/search/RSS.cfm>

*Best Practice: Library Elf* <http://www.libraryelf.com>

## Podcasting

Podcasting is similar in nature to RSS, in that it allows users to subscribe to a set of audio feeds from syndicated Web site content, that get pushed to the user. Feeds are intended to be listened to on demand using an iPod or other mp3 player. The format used for podcasting is RSS 2.0 with enclosures. The podcasting enclosures refer to all binary (non-text) downloads. Library applications include lectures, tours, how-to guides, book and movie reviews.

*Podcast* <http://www.podcast.net>

*iPodder: media aggregator* <http://ipodder.sourceforge.net/index.php>

*Best Practice: Schoolhouse Rock: weekly radio show on WSCB 89.9 FM, Springfield College, Springfield, MA, hosted by reference librarian Emily Alling* <http://librarydjs.blogspot.com>

## Wikis

*Wiki wiki* means "quick" in Hawaiian, and a wiki is a fast and easy way to publish collaborative web content. A wiki is a Web site comprised of the perpetual collective work of many authors. Similar to a blog in structure and logic, most wikis allow anyone to edit, delete or modify content that has been placed on the Web site using a browser interface. In contrast, a blog does not allow visitors to change the original posted material, only add comments to the original content. The term wiki can refer to either the Web site or the software used to create the site.

*WikiBibliography by Gerry McKiernan*  
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~CYBERSTACKS/WikiBib.htm>

*Anne Clyde's Wiki Page* <http://www.hi.is/~anne/wikis.html>

*No Best Practice Yet – how is your library using them?*

## Instant Messaging/Chat

Abbreviated IM, a type of communications service that enables you to have real time text-based conversations with another individual in order to communicate live over the Internet. Generally, both parties in the conversation see each line of text right after it is typed (line-by-line), thus making it more like a live telephone conversation than exchanging letters (as email is). Most IM services offer a "presence awareness" feature, indicating whether people on one's list of contacts are currently online and available to chat. Instant messaging applications may also include the ability to post an away message, the equivalent of the message on a telephone answering machine. Popular instant messaging services include AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, and MSN. Library applications include internal communications - especially between service desks, tech support, and digital reference.

- Instant Messaging/Chat – computer to computer
- Text Messaging – handheld (phone etc) to handheld
- SMS – short message service – between handheld (phone etc) and computer

*IM Me, Aaron Schmidt & Michael Stephens, Library Journal, 4/1/2005 Includes IM Best Practices and list of libraries doing IM* <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA512192>

*Training staff on IM, Michael Stephens*  
<http://www.tametheweb.com/ttwblog/archives/001253.html>

*First hand accounts from Aaron Schmidt's Blog Walking Paper*  
<http://www.walkingpaper.org/?c=instant+messaging>

## Toolbars/Deskbars

A row, column, or block of onscreen buttons, icons or search boxes that, when clicked, activate certain functions of the program. Generally free to download and install, these toolbars become embedded in the browser or the Windows taskbar and offer quick access to a search box, along with other helpful features such as a dictionary lookup, pop-up blocker, and highlighting search terms. Most toolbars work are designed for IE in Windows, but development for Macs and for browsers such as Firefox have been appearing. Prominent web browser toolbar add-ons include Google, MSN and Yahoo. A WikiSearch Toolbar allows direct Wikipedia searches from Internet Explorer. Library applications include a ubiquitous Google search box, search within this site, and a WorldCat search box (in the Yahoo toolbar).

- *Google Toolbar* <http://toolbar.google.com>
- *Google Deskbar* <http://deskbar.google.com>

## Desktop Search

Search not just google, or yahoo, but the contents of your hard drive or network. Desktop search is a program that uses idle time on your computer to index virtually all content on your computer, enabling much more powerful search than the built in Windows or other search. Can include web pages viewed, word, powerpoint and excel document, pdf, email, IM, and more. Applications tend to be for individuals or internally for organizations, less for library patrons.

- *Google Desktop Search* <http://desktop.google.com>
- *Copernic Desktop Search* <http://www.copernic.com>

## Bookmarklet

A bookmarklet is a small JavaScript program that can be stored as a URL within a bookmark in most popular web browsers, or within hyperlinks on a web page. Because Internet Explorer uses the term favorites instead of bookmarks, bookmarklets are also less commonly called favlets or favelets. Bookmarklets are saved and used like normal web page bookmarks. Therefore, they are simple "one-click" tools that can add substantial functionality to the browser. For example, they can jump directly to a search engine, with the search term(s) input either from a new dialog box, or from a selection already made on a web page.

*Best Practice: build your own library catalog lookup bookmarklet*

<http://weblog.infoworld.com/udell/stories/2002/12/11/librarylookupGenerator.html>

*Best Practice: Bloglines add an RSS feed* <http://www.bloglines.com/help/easysub?tip=6>

## Social Bookmarking

Takes the old concept of bookmarks management (stored on a server not a local desktop, allowing for access to your bookmarks from any computer anywhere), and incorporates advanced capabilities to add keywords and metadata, and to share this information with others. Social bookmarking allows users to save and categorize a personal collection of bookmarks. Anyone may see the bookmarks that have been saved by others and add them to their own collection. It allows you to easily add sites you like to your personal collection of links, to categorize those sites with keywords, and to share your collection not only between your own browsers and machines, but also with others.

*Excellent comparison of features of major players*

<http://www.irox.de/stat-pdf/socialbookmarks.pdf>

*Furl*

<http://www.furl.net/index.jsp>

*Delicious*

<http://del.icio.us>

## Folksonomy / Tagging

Taxonomy is from "taxis" and "nomos" (from Greek). *Taxis* means classification. *Nomos* (or *nomia*) means management. *Folk* is ordinary people. So folksonomy means ordinary people's classification management. Folksonomy is a term for the practice of collaborative categorization using freely chosen keywords. More colloquially, this refers to a group of people cooperating spontaneously to organize information into categories, noteworthy because it is almost completely unlike traditional formal methods of faceted classification (e.g. Library of Congress). Since the organizers of the information are usually its primary users, folksonomy produces results that more accurately reflect the population's conceptual model of the information. Examples of online folksonomies include social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us; photo-sharing site Flickr; academic article sharing sites CiteULike and Connotea. Also called "tagging" – applying tags, or keywords, or metadata to any set of information.

*Flickr*

<http://www.flickr.com>

*You're It! A blog on tagging*

<http://tagsonomy.com/>

*IA Summit Folksonomies Panel presentations*

[http://atomiq.org/archives/2005/03/ia\\_summit\\_folksonomies\\_panel.html](http://atomiq.org/archives/2005/03/ia_summit_folksonomies_panel.html)