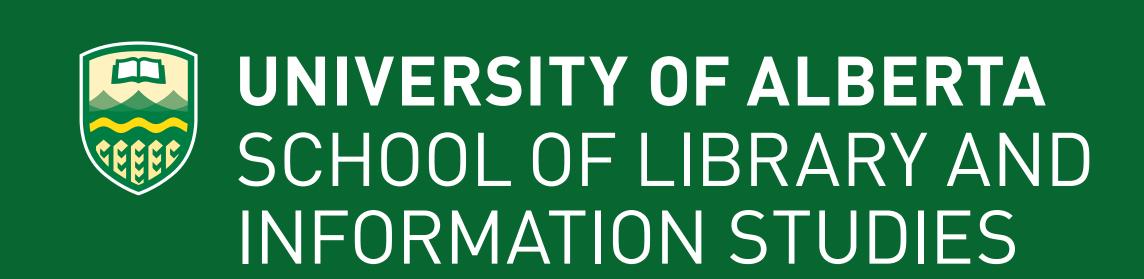
# Energizing Engagement and Motivation in Information-Centric Online Communities: LibraryThing, Goodreads, and the Importance of Boundary Spanning



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The design, development, leadership, and administration of information-centric online communities should highlight and facilitate the creation and sharing of translation processes and resources; make clear expressions of and continually negotiate community norms, values, and normative behaviours; and support and facilitate—but not force—social tie formation and everyday life information behaviour.

## Purpose

- An important element of users' information behaviour is engaging with and being motivated to participate in information sharing
- Information-centric online communities are popular sources for seeking, sharing information
- Further consideration of key implications for engagement and motivation in such online communities is necessary

State clear purpose

Explain membership and rules

Develop help pages, FAQ lists

Provide direct help when needed

Facilitate information seeking

Stimulate continued interaction

(Preece & Maloney-Krichmar, 2003)

## Background and Framing

#### **Online Communities**

Computer-mediated, social aggregations on the Internet True, socially-constructed human communities

### User Engagement

Requires structure supporting translation of meanings, negotiation of understandings

#### **Information Worlds**

(Jaeger & Burnett, 2010)

Social norms, social types, info value, info behaviour

## Findings

Qualitative **content analysis** of 519 messages

Semi-structured **interviews** with 11 users

"People can stop by this thread to chat ... but no spoilers until discussion opens please."

"... check out this **information thread** [link] ... It will give you an idea of who all the players are."

"Thanks; I **forgot** all about it."

## Information Sharing

Frequent, significant
Boundary spanners important
Requires users' engagement

### **Boundary Objects**

(Star & Griesemer, 1989)

Negotiation, translation between users, communities; coherence

"a readers'

site [or] an

authors'

site?"

your life ...
creep[s] in"

"the **rest of** 

"Good show!
We're a very
forgiving group."

"... [members] would **not slag you off** at all; not

even if you ... said you

loved *Twilight* ..."

## Implications

sociotechnical infrastructure

Leaders, admins should engage in resource construction

Engage in continual translation and negotiation with users

Make visible, highlight translation processes, resources

> invisible work

Maintain resource coherence as community changes

boundary spanners

> Clearly express sitewide norms, values, normative behaviour

social ties

User profiles, "get to know" threads, off-topic discussion spaces

Social networking optional, but encouraged

context collapse

## Further Research

- Other information-centric communities
- Individual, social, emotional motivations for continued engagement, information sharing, boundary spanning



