

## SOCIAL NETWORKING AND DOPA

### Positive Use of Social Networking #1 - del.icio.us

Over the next 30 days a small group of YALSA bloggers will post ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #1.

del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>) is a great tool for collecting and publishing resource lists. In a public and school library teens can use del.icio.us to collect reviews of materials that should be purchased for the library, bookmark and annotate resources that support classroom projects, and collaborate on collecting resources on topics of interest from music to web design and from favorite authors to craft how-to tips.

If teens are interested in using del.icio.us as an information/resource gathering tool they could setup a joint account. (This would allow the teens to collect resources together in one del.icio.us area.) Then, wherever the teens are, if they find a resource that fits their del.icio.us focus they can quickly and easily login to their joint account, add the link, annotate the link, and off they go. del.icio.us even has RSS feeds so that others who are collecting resources on the same topic in the same del.icio.us space will know something new has been added.

The TWIT (This Week in Tech) (<http://www.twit.tv/>) podcast uses del.icio.us to collect news stories during the week. Each person who will be on TWIT has access to the del.icio.us account and can add and read the stories that might be discussed on the week's episode. Just like these podcasters, teens can collaborate on information gathering and sharing with this social networking tool.

If DOPA is passed many teens will no longer have the opportunity to use del.icio.us in a library or school setting - where they could learn how to use the tool safely and effectively.

### Positive Use of Social Networking #2 - Library Thing

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers will post ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #2.

Library Thing (<http://www.librarything.com/>) is all about building community around reading. Readers "catalog" books and tag them using terms and phrases that relate to themes as well as to the thoughts and feelings that a particular title brings to a reader. Teens can catalog the books in their own libraries or they could create personal Library Thing entries of anything that they read. (Books they borrow from friends, the library, etc.) By cataloging their reading in Library Thing teens get to articulate their thoughts and feelings. It's a great opportunity to for teens to express themselves simply through single words and short phrases.

Cataloging content is only one of the amazing parts of Library Thing. Anyone who visits the site can learn about titles in a particular genre, with a particular theme, with a certain type of character, and so on. It's a

great tool to use when creating "more like this" lists and to connect with readers with similar interests. A teen in one library might discover someone in another community who has similar reading interests. The two could exchange interesting titles through the Library Thing catalog.

The tag clouds on Library Thing provide interesting visuals of popular authors and themes. Librarians might challenge teens to have an impact on the tag clouds by adding titles by authors or on themes they like. Teen Advisory Groups could work together on adding titles and challenge each other to expand and change the Library Thing tag clouds.

If DOPA passes sites like Library Thing won't be available to teens in school and public libraries. That means librarians won't be able to work with teens as effectively to help them describe their thoughts and feelings related to reading. And a great opportunity to build reader community will be lost.

### **Positive Use of Social Networking #3 - Digg**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers will post ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #3.

OK, I've blogged about Digg (<http://www.digg.com/>) before but I wanted to change the focus a little bit from my previous post. Digg is a web site on which users can link to content they think is interesting and then other site users "digg" the content. The more "diggs" someone else's add gets, the better chance that information has of being listed on the Digg main page. The most popular content appears on the main page of the site.

Digg started out as a site devoted to technology. However, recently the site expanded its focus and now includes world news, science, business, and entertainment. Imagine a group of teens reading the science stories on Digg and talking with each other about those they think should rise to the top. The teens might come up with a set of criteria in order to make front-page decisions. They might debate the value of one story over another. They might find out something new about science, world news, or of course entertainment.

If DOPA is passed sites like Digg won't be available in schools and public libraries. That means opportunities to evaluate content and articulate ideas will be minimized.

### **Positive Use of Social Networking #4 - Flicktion**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers will post ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #4.

Many of you might have heard the term 'Flicktion' before and might even have used it in your school or library as a story starter. If so, please share! If not, do a search on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>) for the tag 'flicktion' (or a Google search if you don't have a Flickr account). The descriptions underneath the pictures tell a story from the viewer of the photo. They can then share this with other viewers, which will allow for more comments and read/write activity.

If you are already using Flickr at your library to post photos of programs, consider creating a set of Flicktion photos with teens, and see how they respond. If teens have a writing club, online newsletter or participate in a book club at a jail, consider using this tool to engage them.

Pictures of their avatar, completed quest, or any high action scene in their favorite video game often have photo enabled tools within the online environment, they can quickly take a snapshot of and post to Flickr and let the stories begin.

If you're still not sold on using this photo-sharing site for story starters, check out ALA's TechSource (<http://www.techsource.ala.org/blog/2006/07/flickr-libraries-scary-scary-scary-to-some-folks.html>) post by Michael Stephens. He has a lot to say about the positive uses of Flickr.

Once again, if DOPA is passed sites like Flickr won't be available in schools and public libraries. That also means that librarians won't have the opportunity to help teens navigate responsibly through such sites as Flickr.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #5 - Blogging**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #5.

As we know, teens have been a major force behind the success of blogging software. Blogs give teens an audience, a way to keep up with friends, opportunities for feedback, and a means to connect to others. For the same reasons, teachers and librarians have also found merit in blogging. For example, check out Mr. Ahlness' third grade class blog ([http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger\\_id=5655](http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger_id=5655)). Or Mrs. Glatt's brand new Charger Guys Read blog (<http://guysread.edublogs.org/>) Or, check the growing list of Library Blogs for Teen Patrons ([http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Blogs\\_for\\_Teens](http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Blogs_for_Teens)) that are posted on Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki ([http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Main_Page)).

My school's student newspaper, The Gargoyle (<http://www.uni.uiuc.edu/gargoyle/index.htm>), has been published online using WordPress (<http://wordpress.com/>) software since last December. Though the students still produce a monthly print edition of the paper, the Online Gargoyle has room for all kinds of extra features and isn't bound by the monthly deadline. Sports scores and stories are published right after games are played. The online extras include a photo gallery and an art gallery, which are both in brilliant color. Mistakes can (and are!) corrected. The OG has an RSS feed, which allows me to subscribe to the updates in my news aggregator. The front "page" also links to the Principal's blog and to my library blog, Gargoyles Loose in the Library (<http://www.uni.uiuc.edu/library/blog/>).

Again, if DOPA is passed, public library teen blogs and blogs supported by schools like mine, Mrs. Glatt's, and Mr. Ahlness' may no longer be used by teens and librarians to publish and share information. That also means a lost opportunity to teach teens safe and effective uses of blogs while improving their skills as readers and writers.

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #6 - It can be done in a library**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #6.

The fact that social networking can be done in a library, might be stating the obvious. However, if DOPA passes, the library as a relevant place for teens will be significantly effected.

The Library as a place where social networking can occur is also important for another reason. As Beth Gallaway's MySpace? YourSpace? WhoseSpace? post indicated, "Banning isn't the answer. Educating

is." How effective are libraries going to be to empower teens in making good online choices if the tools to do so can't be used, accessed, or played with in a library?

In a May 2006 interview (<http://www.danah.org/papers/MySpaceDOPA.html>) about DOPA, Henry Jenkins stated, "These sites play a key role in youth culture because they give youth a space to hang out amongst friends and peers, share cultural artifacts (like links to funny websites, comments about TV shows) and work out an image of how they see themselves."

Giving youth a space to hang out, to share, to work out their identity-is this not already part of what we do to serve their needs with our programs and services? It only makes sense then that libraries continue to be a place where not only can social networking tools be accessed, but helped to be used creatively and responsibly.

DOPA is pretty good at pointing to 'that predator' which might conjure up images of an adult preying on children that need to be protected. But what about teens that are using social networking tools to be hurtful to one another? Sending threatening text messages to one another, sharing email passwords and then changing them in order to force control over another, or teens using cell phones to monitor each others' whereabouts every minute of the day. In the context of dating violence among teens, use of these technologies in this way is prevalent. Again, the Library as place to give teens the tools to use social networking positively, know when the tools are being used inappropriately and what they can do about it is important.

Banning their use in a school or public library is not going to empower teens and make issues of power and control with social networking go away.

If DOPA is passed, many teens will not find the library to be a relevant space for their needs nor a place that can help them through this increasingly interactive digital world.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## **MySpace? YourSpace? WhoseSpace?**

Teen: It's not spicy

Librarian: It's the library, it's not supposed to be spicy!

Teen: More people will come to the library if you have a spicy profile

Yesterday afternoon I attended a continuing education program that consisted of a panel of three fifteen-year-old MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/>) users, and three librarians who have created MySpace profiles for their libraries as a marketing tool.

The first teen said his page is private "because when you are under a certain age they make it private. "My site is pretty much me - It's my personality." This theme was reflected by the other two teens, the concept that my site is ME. His tour of his page included: music he listens to, an About Me (short but it descriptive: age, school, grade) that tells "what type of person I am," his heroes, his status (what I'm here for), and a long list of friends, with a hierarchy to it--those in top row are the people he knows in RL. Sounds like identity defining behaviors to me!

When asked WHY he had a page, he explained he can use it to talk to his friends if they are on, and can find old friends. He visits friends page for updates, and to search to find people he knows. He used codes to make it look a certain way, citing Photobucket (<http://photobucket.com/>), a website that allows you to plug in slideshows.

All three teens are caught up in the friend collection competition. "Some people add me and I don't talk to them I just add them."

The next teen said her page is private, and that her parents said she couldn't show her face on any photos. "My mom has a MySpace and she checks it because my dad is a cop so I have a bunch of people checking my page all the time."

Her tour included the intro, "basically this is me." She was proud of making her layout. Her My Heroes has slideshow of friends. She has 664 friends. "My first, like, 12 people are the most important people to me... [the rest are] friends that I'm not superclose with." When asked, "Are you the only one you know who can't put your picture on your page?" She responded, "YES!"

The third teen stated that she used her page different than the other two panelists. One difference is her page is public. She offered more limited info, has a friends only hidden blog and got rid of contact box. She admitted to lying about her age in her profile (adding two years) to take part in features like trains (like a webring) and said "I add 1760-something friends, most of them I don't know I only add them if there are attractive." She mumbled something about hot emo boys...

Librarians Alissa, Theresa and Melissa demonstrated their library MySpace pages. Alissa caught wind of the popularity of MySpace a year ago, but couldn't get approval from the director. She created a proposal that defined social networking and stated that it is not going to go away, and that problems stemming from MySpace are happening outside of MySpace too. The goal of the Haverhill Library's MySpace page ([http://www.myspace.com/haverhill\\_public\\_library](http://www.myspace.com/haverhill_public_library)) is to connect teens and authors, promote library programs with bulletins, and a blog, because the blog is a medium teens check. She told teens about the page and it spread through word of mouth; the library's MySpace page is linked from Teen Cyber Center website. A teen designed the MySpace page and created the profile from the point of view of the library. They are up to 123 friends, and the friending policy is to add local teens who friend the library, teen authors, and other libraries. Alissa stressed "I don't put pictures of kids on my website" as she explained to those present that the friend photos on the library page are photos posted to the teens own pages.

Theresa's library was going to ban MySpace. Her successful argument for not doing so was that if they banned MySpace, you'd have to ban ALL social networking, as only banning the sites the teens use is ageism. Her recommendation is to "Give an ounce of education rather than say no you can't have it."

She set up the Stoneham Library MySpace page (<http://www.myspace.com/stonehamlibrary>) as though it were from the library point of view, not the librarian. They only have 98 friends, and their policy is to only friend local teens and children and teen authors. She noted that bulletins are a good way to send out notices to other people, and it's a way that she herself finds out about author visits. The page is linked to an outside blog hosted by a Blogger. IM contact info is posted; library offerings go under Interests. She developed a pamphlet for teens that covers the basics of MySpace account set up with a focus on privacy. She added that you don't need to know HTML to use MySpace, and really, "It's an excise in futility to make a library's website look cool... it's a library!"

The MySpace page is part of the library's first foray into teen programming. They also are doing DDR programs, and "it's been drawing them in like fruit flies to bananas!" She concluded that "although kids do not look at our website, they DO look at our MySpace. They kind of look at the blog, and I'm trying to get them to write for it."

Melissa explained that the Peabody library has had a YA dept mascot for a couple of years, designed to promote the summer reading program. Wally the YA Wizard (<http://www.myspace.com/wallytheyawizard>) wears a tie-dye shirt stands on a DDR mat, holding a book and a yak, a symbol of the Young Adult Council (YAC). Perspective of Wally YAC helped to develop page. She reported, "I put it up and then the kids were like... "This is lame, you need help."

Other places in the city are starting to create MySpace profiles. The George Peabody House is on library friend list.

Fliers around the library promote comes up as the homepage on our library computers. Melissa said that when she tells kids about it they are "like oh, ok and then they don't friend me," but noted they were getting more through word of mouth.

Melissa is the only librarian with a personal MySpace account that I use with my friends, and she is a friend of Wally's as well.

Librarians in attendance voiced concerns such as what about bulletins that are inappropriate? (They are viewable only when logged in - they are not part of your profile viewable for the public, so it's not an issue).

When the teens were asked, "How can I get teens to look at the MySpace once it's up?" the teens recommended that you put something on there that is interesting to them, and ask them to help you do it. Alissa said that every six months, they create a new profile. "It's a great way to get teens involved...they do all the work, and you just say, this is pretty!"

Someone asked about the ads on the pages. Most people know the ad is not associated with your profile and the same ads are on their page so most people tune out the ads.

Another librarian asked about questionable content on the teen's page. Alissa pointed out that the library isn't responsible for what the teens post on their pages. "It's their page their right to express themselves; I only censor based on WHY they are friending not their content."

Concerns over Internet safety were addressed. Theresa said, "It's easy to say well, teens don't do what their parents say but a lot of kids actually do." Some parents are unaware, but the teens themselves said they don't talk to people they don't know, and they could tell which people were creeps. They might get accepted, but get unfriended almost right away. Some of them are really gross, some of them are really nice. When asked, "Do you think they are who they say they are?" the teens said not always. They aren't worried because if someone says things they don't like, you tell them, and then delete them. One of the girls said, of the dangers of youth meeting strangers and being assaulted or abducted, "If they get abducted it's their fault... they cause their own demise." Another said, "If you have an ounce of common sense you won't be trying to meet up with people."

My own concern is that there are not just safety issues involved here, but ethical ones as well. Teens (and some libraries) are technically violating Terms of Service agreements, and few sources or credits are given for items posted that are not user created.

One school librarian from an all boys Catholic school said MySpace is banned because of 2 incidents that happened over a year ago, and that very day there had been an incident involving (<http://www.facebook.com/>) at lunch. He asked the group, "How do we work with this in the school of boys with families from 70 different towns in a tuition driven environment?" There is lot of potential for good use...

I recommended tailoring school assignments to incorporate new technologies. Instead of a traditional 5 paragraph biography report, have middle or high school students create a MySpace style page for an artist, writer, scientist, etc. What would Honest Abe's page look like? Who would be in his friends list? What kind of music was popular in his era? What were his interests? What would his blog of daily life look like? And, of course, sources for all info would have to be cited, and music and photos and quotes would have to be used in accordance with fair use... such an assignment would meet our teens where they are and create an opportunity to discuss "what does it mean to have someone on your friends list?" and "how does one obtain permission to add a song or photo?" and "what measures could Abe take if he didn't want to be found in this directory?"

The teens pointed out that when they ban websites they forget that you can find workarounds and you can hide the workaround by deleting the history. Several of these workaround sites were posted on YA-

YAAC at the end of last month. Nancy Kunz reported "some kids at my library found that by logging into AIM (AOL Instant Messenger) and then searching for MySpace using that AOL search engine, they can then get to the site via the search link."

Do No Good: (<http://www.donogood.com/>)

HOWTO bypass Internet Censorship (<http://www.zensur.freerk.com/>)

Sites like this certainly demonstrate that the kids are always going to be one step ahead of us. Banning it isn't the answer; educating is.

-from MySpace? YourSpace? WhoseSpace? program, Northeast MA Regional Library System Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill MA (<http://www.nmrls.org/>)

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #7 - MySpace Bulletins**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #7.

The Bulletin feature in MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/>) and other social networking tools, is a powerful tool that enables librarians to connect with teens in the community. A librarian can use bulletins to get the word out about library programs and services to all of her friends on My Space. Instead of putting up posters around town and handing out flyers in the library and local businesses, the bulletin feature in My Space gives librarians the chance to spread the word in a much more instantaneous and powerful way. Even more powerful is when a librarian works with the teens, bands, schools, businesses, etc. in the community to advertise each other's news.

For example:

- A popular local band library promotes library programs with MySpace bulletins
- Authors who are popular with local teens announce their library visits via MySpace bulletins.
- Local coffee shops that have a MySpace presence announce library programs as a bulletin.
- Teens announce in a MySpace bulletin what's happening at the library.

Why is publicity of this kind, that the library can do on its own, perhaps more successful when it comes from outside of the library? Because, by getting the community, and people and groups that teens are interested in involved, the library becomes a part of a larger community. Teens that might not be a friend on the library's MySpace page, but are friends on the band or local coffee house page will see information about the library's events. (Instead of the 100 or so friends the library has that will see the bulletin, the 500 friends of the local coffee house will see the bulletin.) Perhaps, coming from an entity outside of the library, the announcement might hold more sway and interest with/for teens. (We might not like it but that's very possibly true.)

The other side of this is, of course, that the library should start using bulletins on MySpace to announce the goings on of organizations, schools, bands, etc. in the local community. That way these organizations will reach a larger audience AND the library will serve teens with information that goes beyond its four walls.

Bulletins in MySpace are an amazing tool for getting the word out and connecting users to information of all kinds. Libraries need to learn new ways to market their programs and services and this is an opportunity not to be missed. DOPA limits not only what teens have access to in schools and public libraries, but it also limits what librarians can do to improve their programs and services. Librarians need

to get to where teens are, and social networking helps make that happen. If DOPA is passed we'll move many steps back just when we are moving forward in this area.

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #8-Empowerment**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #8.

Robbie Trencheny is 14 years old. He is the president and CEO of the Teen Podcasters Network (TPN) (<http://teenpodcasters.com/>).

Check out his video interview here (<http://videos.webpronews.com/index.php/2006/10/04/ceo-and-president-at-14-years-old/>). Since Robbie's interview which took place at the Podcast and Portable Media Expo (<http://www.newmediaexpo.com/>) during the end of September, in Ontario, TPN reached its highest ever peak of visits in one day-349.

Self-assured Robbie might be the youngest CEO in history according to the news interviewer. Social networking has tremendous power to build developmental assets (<http://www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.html>) for teens.

Robbie has Family Support since his mother drives him to conferences such as the Podcast and Portable Media Expo. He is Empowered to provide a service for a large community of teens and they Value his contributions by viewing the site and contributing their own podcasts. He seems to have positive Adult role models because of his mother's support and the way he conducts his company. He has Responsibilities and a Sense of Purpose in maintaining the network.

As libraries, we have great opportunities to help teens build assets through social networking. Podcasting does not have to take a lot of expensive equipment. Let teens promote programs and what is going on in the local community through podcasts. The Cheshire Public Library in CT (<http://www.cheshirelib.org/teens/cplpodcast.htm>) does a great job of encouraging teen leadership through podcasting by having their own cultural magazine. If DOPA is passed, the opportunity for libraries to build developmental assets for teens through social networking, will be diminished and we won't be giving them the best services that the teens deserve.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #9 - Planning**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #9.

In their new book, My Space Unraveled: A Parents Guide to Teen Social Networking ([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/032148018X/ref=pd\\_rvi\\_gw\\_1/102-0190263-8965762?ie=UTF8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/032148018X/ref=pd_rvi_gw_1/102-0190263-8965762?ie=UTF8)) authors Larry Magid and Anne Collier explain how the calendar feature in My Space works and then highlight for parents the importance of making sure that teens disable public viewing of their calendar. That makes sense, public viewing of where a teen will be when via MySpace could definitely put a teen in a dangerous situation.

But, there are some positive ways that teens can use social networking calendars with friends, teachers, families, and libraries. By giving teens the chance to use web-based calendars beyond simply being a tool for letting others know where they will be when, we give them the chance to make choices about when it is safe to use these calendars and with whom they share their calendar data.

For example, Google Calendar

(<https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=cl&passive=true&nui=1&continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fcalendar%2Frender>) gives users the ability to manage who gets to see a person's calendar on a very case-by-case basis. A user can setup different calendars and only those who are invited to see or share data on a specific calendar have access. For example, as a part of this YALSA 30 days of positive social networking project, the bloggers who are involved setup a calendar on which each blogger selected days that she would blog and listed the topics she plans to blog about. No one else except the bloggers has access to that calendar. No one else except the bloggers can add content to the calendar. It's a private calendar space for a small group of users.

A librarian and teens working on an advisory group project might setup a Google calendar as a way to put together a schedule and plan the project. The calendar would be accessible to anyone involved in the project. Since it's web-based it's accessible anytime an Internet connection with web access is available. As teens work on plans they can add to the calendar, change plans on the calendar, and add notes about the process and project.

In a school a teacher might setup a web-based calendar for students to use when working on class projects. The calendar might have daily tips and lists of what to work on when. Students could add content on each date about what they are working on and create a schedule for themselves. The teacher could add notes about steps the teen might want to consider as he works on a particular project.

Librarians often talk about teen planning skills and what seems to be lacking in those skills. Web-based calendars that are a part of social networking tools can be a great way to help teens gain some of the planning skills librarians (and other educators) see as lacking. If DOPA passes this will be another missed opportunity for helping teens make choices and gain skills that will help them throughout their adult lives.

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #10 - Reading and Writing**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #10.

Can one have an online social network without reading and writing?

The answer, "NO." It's impossible to participate in blogs, wikis, Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/>) MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/>), Digg (<http://www.digg.com/>), Technorati (<http://www.technorati.com/>), Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>), 43 Things (<http://www.43things.com/>), Library Thing (<http://www.librarything.com/>), del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>), and so on without reading and writing.

Of course some of the social networking technologies require more or less in terms of reading and writing. But all of them require these forms of literacy to at least some degree. For example:

- Go to Digg and access content without reading. Or go to Digg and add content without writing. Impossible!
- Go to Technorati and find a blog without reading. For that matter be involved in blogging in any way without reading and writing. Impossible!

- Go to your MySpace account and participate in the space without reading. Impossible! Participate in the space without writing notes and comments to friends. Impossible.
- Go to Flickr and find a photo without reading and writing. Impossible! Add photos to Flickr without reading and writing. Impossible!
- Go to 43Things and find out what others are interested in doing with their lives without reading. Impossible! Tell others what your life goals are without writing. Impossible!
- Visit Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>) and find information without reading. Impossible! Visit Wikipedia and update an article without writing. Impossible!

A few months ago Jason Fried of 37 Signals (<http://www.37signals.com/>) talked in an interview about what the company looks for when they hire project developers, software developers, and so on. One of the things he said was that they want people who can write. Not just people who can write code but people who can articulate their ideas in writing in order to sell those ideas, make a point, etc. Social networking technologies give teens the chance to practice reading and writing literacy skills in real and meaningful ways. When teens use social networking they aren't just writing and reading for out-of-context classroom experiences, they are writing and reading in in-context experiences that have something to do with their real lives. Is there a better way to learn how to get ideas out there and find out what others are saying about the world in which we all live? If DOPA passes these real-life meaningful opportunities to read and write will be severely limited for teens.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #11-Building a Community around Gaming

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #11.

Many libraries are offering gaming programs for teens on a regular basis and have been for a while. This year's 'Get Active @ Your Library' theme for Teen Read Week provides a perfect fit for DDR, which many libraries are participating in during this week.

Librarians have also worked to build community around gaming programs through social networking tools.

- The sheer number of comments from teens on the Ann Arbor District Library gaming blog (<http://www.aadl.org/aadlgt>) is amazing.
- Another site to check out is the Gamefest site ([http://www.bngamefest.org/index.php?q=November\\_3rd\\_Registration](http://www.bngamefest.org/index.php?q=November_3rd_Registration)) from the Bloomington Public Library in Illinois which again builds community around gaming by using social networking tools such as Flickr and linking to local gaming conventions which use discussion boards and blogs to communicate their events.
- Last year, during a DDR event at the Thomas Ford Memorial Library in Illinois (<http://fordlibrary.org/>) Aaron Schmidt wrote about 'harvesting content while they were there.' (<http://walkingpaper.org/267>) By making Audacity available, teens recorded materials reviews during the gaming event, including books, to later be posted to the library web site.
- Many libraries are using MySpace pages or blogs to host videos, photos, and announcements for their gaming events. One teen created his own MySpace page, boasting how he would be the winner of my library's summer gaming tournament.

Consider connecting with the social networking resources that are already in your community to let them know about your gaming events. Local gaming conventions, Teen Clubs that offer video gaming nights, DDR Freak (<http://www.ddrfreak.com/>) allows people to post about their gaming events—and teens do check this board, and websites for specific games often have a place to post about upcoming tournaments and events through a discussion board.

If DOPA passes, opportunities to connect with millennials who are gamers with the library, will be very difficult.

Join the MacArthur Foundation discussion on gaming (<http://community.macfound.org/openforum>) from October 16-November 3; Everywhere Now: Three Dialogues on Kids, Games, and Learning.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #12 - Photo sharing**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #12.

Photo sharing sites have come a long way since the early days of consumer-oriented digital photography. At first these sites were just a means for uploading photos to processing labs and ordering prints for friends and family. Now people can keep entire albums online and share them with far-flung friends, family, and even the world-at-large. Furthermore, photos can be subject-tagged, which makes them searchable and links them to related photos uploaded by others.

Teens can use photo-sharing sites like Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>) and SmugMug (<http://www.smugmug.com/>) in a grand variety of ways. They can create shared galleries that allow a group of friends (or a team or a club or a class or...you name it) to upload photos, tag them, and comment on them. Galleries can be made private or public, and teens can keep up with changes in galleries by subscribing to RSS feeds. And, yes, teens can still order glossy prints.

This semester at my school we have a small group of students working on a photo gallery project that will consist of school sports photos taken during the past several years. The students' primary task is to select the best photos, tag them, use image editing software to correct lighting problems and other technical imperfections, and upload their selections to a photo sharing site. We've advised the students to use SmugMug because it does not post advertising on its pages. The school will pay the \$40 annual membership. Why would the school make such an offer? Once these photos are available and searchable, parents, relatives, athletes, and friends can order high quality prints for reasonable fees. Of course, the school can (and will) define the community that can view the photos. As a bonus, the school, as the content provider, will actually get a small percentage of the fees!

By doing this project, our students will learn valuable skills as well as provide a real service to the school community. If DOPA, in its current form, had passed, students like ours would no longer have had these learning opportunities and their schools would have lost out on the resulting benefits. Let's hope that a DOPA reincarnation does not occur in future sessions of Congress.

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #13 - Second Life**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #13.

Second Life(SL) (<http://secondlife.com/>) is a 3D virtual world for adults age 18 and over where one can create an avatar, interact with others, and design the world they want to live in. Over 100 universities and colleges are involved in SL to offer their students a learning experience through this world.

Teen Second Life (<http://www.teen.secondlife.com/>) is for teens, 13-17 and is separate from adults because of safety reasons. Teens can own land, run their own business, design clothes, create

machinima, bring their favorite story scene to life through build and design skills, and learn about social issues such as child pornography and sex trafficking which was what GlobalKids (<http://www.holymeatballs.org/>) did through their camp in Second Life this summer with teens. Schools such as Suffern Middle School in New York (<http://rampoislands.blogspot.com/>) is aligning curriculum standards for their 8th graders with Teen Second Life, and will have a presence to serve their students hopefully by next month.

The Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in NC (<http://www.plcmc.org/>) and the Alliance Library System in IL (<http://www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/>) have announced a partnership last week to collaborate on library services for teens through Teen Second Life. The project will involve a collaboration with libraries and other youth serving organizations to reach teens where they are at and keep the library relevant to their needs. To find out what libraries are already doing on Second Life with adults, check out: [www.infoisland.org](http://www.infoisland.org) (<http://www.holymeatballs.org/>) Many YALSA members are already involved in Second Life with incredible and tremendous talent and are involved with the teen library project as well. The Alternative Teen Services blog (<http://yalibrarian.com/>) links to Second Life under their 'connect' list.

While background checks are required for any adult working with teens on Second Life, if DOPA in its current form, had passed, teens at public and school libraries that are offering Second Life as a program, might be unable to access it or at least the rich world of communication tools that surround the virtual world such as blogs and wikis that foster collaboration and information for projects.

Developmental needs such as community support, motivation to learn, and cultural competence are perfect combinations to build upon through Second Life.

For more information on the library project, or to get involved, check out [www.infoisland.org](http://www.infoisland.org). To find out what other educators are doing in Second Life, go to the SimTeach wiki at: <http://www.simteach.com/>

It's not too late to participate in Info Island's open house going on this weekend in Second Life. Create an avatar and join the fun! Audio presentations will be archived on OPAL

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #14 – YouTube**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #14.

Have you ever searched for library on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/>)? If not you should give it a try. Two things to notice when you do:

- Libraries show up on YouTube as active fun places where teens hang out comfortably. (What a great thing.)
- Teens (and librarians) can create useful library instruction videos.

YouTube ends up being for libraries:

- A great place for libraries to advertise programs and services
- Where teens can feel empowered by publishing work they've done and seeing what their peers can do.
- A resource that highlights constructive use of time through video creation.
- An outlet for creative expression. There are library mystery, horror, music, and more videos on YouTube.

- A place to learn, in entertaining and creative ways, how libraries work.

Of course, video on the web is nothing new. However, the fact that teens and librarians can create video and upload it easily to a central website (and the library doesn't have to pay for the hosting of the video or the bandwidth) is fairly new.

Of course, teens creating videos as a means of self-expression is nothing new. However, the ability to publish that video for the world to see as a way to show the active and positive things teens can do is fairly new.

A library that works with teens on creating videos for YouTube provides teens with opportunities for engaging in both visual and text-based literacies. Teens and librarians that work together on YouTube videos get the chance to plan, manage, and implement a project that uses time management and organization skills. And, teens and librarians that work together on YouTube videos support the community by showing what a great place the library is as a positive support for and advocate for teens.

If DOPA were passed teens could of course continue to create videos. Librarians could of course continue to create videos. But, the library and teens working together on projects would no longer be possible. Librarians would lose the opportunity to help teens understand how to use a site like YouTube in ways that support positive teen development. That would be unfortunate.

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #15 - Collaboration**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #15.

I think most readers of this blog would agree, collaboration is a good thing. Collaboration gives teens the chance to learn to work as a part of a team and to share responsibility. Social networking is all about collaboration and the possibilities created by technology for collaboration are really pretty amazing. Two social networking tools that can be used by teens, teachers, and librarians in project collaboration are: Google Docs and Spreadsheets (<http://www.google.com/google-d-s/tour1.html>) (Formerly Writely and Google Spreadsheets) - It's afterschool and a group of teens need to work on a school project. One of the teens doesn't have computer access at home so he goes to the library to use their computers. The teen at the library signs into Google Docs and Spreadsheets. He sets up a new document and then emails his team members/classmates an invitation to join him and collaborate on the document. Soon the three or four teens are all working on the document they need to create for class together. Each teen can write and revise while the others are online looking at the same document. A history of revisions are saved so the teens and the teacher have a record of the document creation process.

Gliffy (<http://www.gliffy.com/>) Similar to Google Docs and Spreadsheets except this is a tool for creating mind maps, flowcharts, floor plans, and more. Users sign-up for Gliffy, start a new document, and invite others to join in the creation. Imagine a group of teens working on developing an architecture for the library web site. They could meet on Gliffy and plan it out together, yet each be in a separate location - school, home, the library - while collaborating with classmates.

Tools like these are great for collaboration and they also give teens access to software products that they might not have access to outside of school. Teens who don't have computer access aren't left in the dust when it comes to collaborating with classmates on school and library projects.

In a world where DOPA was passed a teen who didn't have access to technology in the home would not be able to collaborate with classmates because she wouldn't be able to access the tools in the places that are most often used for that kind of access - the school and the public library. DOPA doesn't help teens become better users of the technology and it certainly doesn't help provide access to technology to those who don't have it inside their houses.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #16 - SingShot

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #16.

Karaoke is probably one of the most popular games that teens play in libraries. Male, female, cool, and not cool bond over the possibilities karaoke provides. Well, imagine taking the game one step further by having teens record songs online and add photos and slideshows. That's all possible with SingShot (<http://www.singshot.com/takeatour.html>)

Here's what it takes. (Make sure you have a computer microphone and speakers.) Create a library account at SingShot. Have teens browse through the site, check out how it works, find out what music is available, select songs to record, etc. Teens might work in groups to work on songs of a particular genre. Once recordings are made the teens can select images on the site or on their own computers to add to the recording. This is a great opportunity to talk with the teens about the mood that the song elicits and what images would help to set that mood.

It's also a great opportunity to talk about copyright issues as they relate to digital materials. You could steer teens to sites that provide access to Creative Commons (<http://creativecommons.org/>) licensed images to use in their SingShot recordings. One site you might use for these is Wikipedia Commons ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)).

There is lots of collaboration, group discussion, and evaluation that goes into creating a SingShot recording. While teens will have a good time creating their own online karaoke recordings, that creation provides great opportunities for critical thinking and planning.

Once teens upload their recordings and images you can host contests on the library web site or blog to vote for the favorite SingShot recordings made by local teens. You can link to the recordings on your web site, blog, or MySpace. The opportunities for integrating this web site into library programs and services are pretty broad. But, those broad opportunities would be lost in a world in which DOPA had passed. Teens wouldn't be able to participate in the community of SingShot. That would mean there would be one less opportunity to plan, collaborate, think, discuss, evaluate, and enjoy.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #17 - Networking with authors

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #17.

YA author Brent Hartinger (<http://www.brenthartinger.com/>) generously donated his time to talk about social networking issues and DOPA. If DOPA had passed, many teens would be unable to engage in opportunities to connect with authors such as Brent. Schools and public libraries miss out on being able to connect authors in places teens are at and comfortable in communicating.

1. When did you decide to start using social networking tools such as blogs and MySpace? Did you have an online presence and belong to any fanfiction communities, participate on forums, etc. long before you started publishing books?

Hmmm, interestingly, this whole online community thing sort of coincided with my emergence as a writer. I sold my first novel in 2001, and I immediately started putting together my website (. I was definitely connected before that, but not nearly in the way I am now. It's interesting to think about how connected I'd be if I wasn't an author. Trying to sell books, and making myself available to readers, that's definitely a motivation, partly because it's so darn much fun, but also because, hey, this is how I make my living, and I need to eat!

2. How has having an online presence through these social networking tools allowed you to connect with teens and other authors or fans in ways that you wouldn't have been able to?

Oh, it's amazing! I respond to dozens of emails, and chat with at least another dozen people via IM every single week. And then there's blog postings, and responses to my postings, which I always respond to. I swear, every single day, some new opportunity comes to me via the internet. Which is great, even if I'm chronically way over-extended.

I happen to be an author who does a lot of "live" events--I tour for every book, and speak at a lot of conferences and schools, something like 60 events a year. But even with all that, I don't have nearly the "live" contact with readers that I have online, which is definitely in the thousands of people every year.

3. What are your criteria for 'friending' people on your MySpace page?

Well, I'm pretty liberal. But if I sense that it's spam, someone trying to sell me something, I say no. Frankly, that really annoys me. I love to sell books too, but only if readers come to me! I'm an opt-in kinda guy.

4. There has been criticism of the scene(s) in Geography Club ([http://www.amazon.com/Geography-Club-Brent-Hartinger/dp/0060012218/sr=1-1/qid=1161128260/ref=pd\\_bbs\\_1/002-6051935-3656017?ie=UTF8&s=books](http://www.amazon.com/Geography-Club-Brent-Hartinger/dp/0060012218/sr=1-1/qid=1161128260/ref=pd_bbs_1/002-6051935-3656017?ie=UTF8&s=books)) where Kevin and Russell, online friends first, meet in person. If teens do want to meet their online friend in person, what would you recommend?

Keep in mind that, in the book, Russel discovers that he and Kevin definitely go to the same school. So they "know" each other, and they know they're both teenagers--they just don't know each other's names. That scene was also written in 1999, long before we became hyper-aware of these things.

In real life, I would always absolutely recommend meeting in a public place, like a mall, and definitely going with friends. Don't EVER go anywhere with anyone alone on that first meeting. Believe me, there are lot of sickos out there--and most of them don't necessarily look like sickos!

5. If the Deleting Online Predators Act (DOPA) had passed in its current form, and teens possibly would be unable to access your MySpace site from the school or public library, what does that mean for you?

That would be unfortunate, because I do hear from a lot of folks from school. Mostly, I'd think it would just be sad, because I'd like to see individual schools pass their own policies on these things, based on the needs of their own students. If they must mandate anything, how about some kind of reasonable, non-hysterical online education? (With the funding to pay for it, of course!)

6. Do you have any idea how many young adult authors have MySpace pages?

More and more. Obviously everyone has limits as to what they can do in a day, but I happen to think it's almost required. In fact, I often say that if you're uncomfortable dealing with people, and don't want to have anything to do with anything online, you might consider another profession than that writer of teen books. These days, it's almost a requirement that you be accessible to fans, at least if you want to sell books. But honestly, it's the best part of my job, and I didn't think it would be. I mean, fan email? How could that EVER get old?

7. Anything else you want to add?

Well, I'm pretty proud of my website, which I think is pretty unique and is hopefully an entertainment experience in itself.

Here's my MySpace profile

And my Live Journal blog

And I also contribute to another blog, <http://asifnews.blogspot.com/>, one about issues of censorship and intellectual freedom, for a group I helped found called Authors Supporting Intellectual Freedom (or AS IF!)

Much thanks to Brent for his time!

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## Positive Use of Social Networking #18 - Youth Participation

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #18.

Social networking is all about participation and integrating social networking technologies in libraries provides librarians with great opportunities for creating and developing youth participation projects. For example:

- Teens can setup and maintain the library's MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/>) space. As a part of the process teens would have to figure out who is responsible for what aspects of the space, what to include on the space, and how to add and respond to friends and comments. See Donnell Teens (<http://www.myspace.com/donnelltag>) for an example of a library MySpace space managed by teens
- Teens create a library Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>) account and upload photos of library programs and events to the space. As a part of the process teens would have to determine what photos to upload, how to tag them, how to describe them, and how to organize them on the space.
- Teens maintain a library blog of reviews, news, etc. Teens who work on the project would have to figure out what to write about on the blog, how often to post, setup a schedule of posts, and make sure the blog was updated on a regular basis.

These are all ideas that have been mentioned in some way already as a part of YALSA's 30 days of social networking on this blog. However, it's important to focus on the fact that each of these is a youth participatory activity that can support teen development. Teens can take part in these project-based activities from the library, from home, from school, wherever they can access the Internet. They can be involved in activities that have meaningful results and make a difference to the community.

Social networking is a perfect opportunity for youth participation in libraries. DOPA would limit the ability of libraries to offer teens the chance to do things that make a difference and that are actually of personal interest.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #19 – Collaborating at school

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #19.

Social networking software that promotes collaboration has special significance in the school setting. Students who learn collaboration skills at school are likely to be more valuable contributors to today's workplace, which generally values collaboration and teamwork.

Linda has written about some of Google's newer collaborative tools, such as [Google Docs and Spreadsheets](http://www.google.com/google-d-s/tour1.html) (<http://www.google.com/google-d-s/tour1.html>) and [Google Calendar](https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=cl&passive=true&nui=1&continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fcalendar%2Frender) (<https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=cl&passive=true&nui=1&continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fcalendar%2Frender>). Wikis and blogs are naturals for classroom collaboration. [Joyce Valenza tells us](http://joycevalenza.edublogs.org/2006/10/05/whats-going-on-weve-gotta-fix-the-inequities/) (<http://joycevalenza.edublogs.org/2006/10/05/whats-going-on-weve-gotta-fix-the-inequities/>) about some of the classroom wiki collaborations going on at her school. English classes are [using a wiki](http://wtchfm.wikispaces.com/) (<http://wtchfm.wikispaces.com/>) to create podcasting scripts which they will use to report "on the spot" breaking events in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. And AP U.S. History [is using a wiki](http://apushistory.wikispaces.com/) (<http://apushistory.wikispaces.com/>) to build collaborative answers to critical study questions. Helpful [design patterns for education-focused wikis](http://edwiki.org/mw/index.php/Design_Patterns_for_EduWikis) ([http://edwiki.org/mw/index.php/Design\\_Patterns\\_for\\_EduWikis](http://edwiki.org/mw/index.php/Design_Patterns_for_EduWikis)) have been developed by Bernie Dodge and Karl Richter at San Diego State University.

For our [computer literacy semester projects](http://www.uni.uiuc.edu/library/computerlit/description2.html), (<http://www.uni.uiuc.edu/library/computerlit/description2.html>) we are using [phpBB bulletin board software](http://www.phpbb.com/) (<http://www.phpbb.com/>) for student groups to post their weekly progress reports. Teachers and other students in the class then post feedback on the reports. These interactions are not visible to the world at large, but teachers and students in the class have full read/write access. This semi-public forum encourages sharing among students and creates a sense of accountability that goes beyond the typical closed teacher-student interaction.

Other tools that, on the surface just look like lots of fun, can be adapted for classroom use. A [Ta Da list](http://www.tadalist.com/) (<http://www.tadalist.com/>) is a simple way for groups to keep track of tasks. As each task is finished, it can be checked off the list. Students can use [Flagrant Disregard's Flickr toys](http://bighugelabs.com/flickr/) (<http://bighugelabs.com/flickr/>) to create movie posters, magazine covers, photo mosaics, motivational posters, trading cards, and photos with comic book captions.

Social networking software clearly has much to offer to the classroom learning experience. Legislation like DOPA would stymie the potential positive contribution it could make in this area.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #20-Educating Parents in the Library

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #20.

[My colleague](http://youthtech.wordpress.com/), (<http://youthtech.wordpress.com/>) who teaches MySpace classes for parents around the library system, has had a lot of positive results. Teens show up for these presentations as well, give their input, and a lot of great conversation results.

Some of the parents that have attended these workshops at the library include the following:

One couple's daughter was raped several years ago by a man that will soon get out of prison. They attended the class to learn how they could keep their daughter safe online so that she could not be found via MySpace.

One father attended a workshop because he wanted to be in the same ballpark as his teens with technology; to have a way to communicate with them, by finding out what it is they are doing online.

Parents who want to allow their daughter freedom and flexibility but also honesty and safety in communicating online.

Here is the [handout \(http://teentechweek.wikispaces.com/space/showimage/myspaceforparents\\_booklet.pdf+\)](http://teentechweek.wikispaces.com/space/showimage/myspaceforparents_booklet.pdf+) my colleague uses for his workshops which is also on the [YALSA Teen Tech Week wiki \(http://teentechweek.wikispaces.com/space/showimage/myspaceforparents\\_booklet.pdf+\)](http://teentechweek.wikispaces.com/space/showimage/myspaceforparents_booklet.pdf+).

If DOPA had passed in its current form, parents would probably not consider the library a resource to help guide them through the social networking sites that their teens are using at home. Teens would be less likely to participate in a dialogue at school and public libraries on using these sites in a responsible manner. Education within the school and public library setting can deter predators-not ignorance and not forcing these sites to only be accessed at home.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #21 - Personalization**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #21.

One of the developmental assets outlined by the Search Institute in their [40 Developmental Assets \(http://www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.html\)](http://www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.html) is positive identity. In order for teens to grow up successfully they need to have opportunities to figure out who they are.

Personalization in social networking is seen in everything from creating a MySpace page to setting up an account at [PageFlakes \(http://pageflakes.com/\)](http://pageflakes.com/) and creating a personalized home page. Using a tool like PageFlakes gives teens a chance to decide what content is most important to them. In PageFlakes teens can add RSS feeds, import their email, add YouTube videos, integrate their bookmarks, move content around, include Flickr photos, and give the page it's own look and feel. Ultimately, PageFlakes becomes the web-based desktop for teens when they open up the browser.

One day a teen might walk into the library dressed one way and the next day the teen might walk into the library dressed another. That's a way that teen tests out different identities. PageFlakes allows for that testing out by giving teens opportunities to change browser-based home pages and opportunities for deciding if their PageFlakes pages are available for others to see. Librarians and teens can talk about what types of content on PageFlakes might be shared with others and what might not. Teens can think about if they want just anyone to be able to see their interests as displayed on PageFlakes. The opportunities for thinking about what teens want others to know about them is a part of determining identity and PageFlakes allows for that.

Gaining a positive identity is important in order that teens grow up successfully. If DOPA were passed it would mean that teens would lose an opportunity to figure out who they are.

## **Positive Use of Social Networking #22 - Copyright**

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #22.

Several of the positive uses of social networking posts have hinted, or discussed straight out, the copyright implications of social networking for teens. Lots of what teens do as a part of their online social networking lives is to exchange content with each other. They might exchange content they produce themselves or content someone else created.

Because social networking is so intrinsically connected to content creation, giving teens opportunities to use social networking tools as an entree into discussions of copyright makes a lot of sense. Real-life situations in which teens exchange content makes the discussion of copyright more meaningful than when talking about the concept within an abstract context.

Talk to teens about:

- Who owns [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/) (<http://www.youtube.com/>) videos? Anyone can embed a YouTube video into other pages, but does that mean the video is free for the taking and using whenever one wants and with whomever? Does the creator of the video own it? Does YouTube own it? Who is the owner?
- Who owns [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/) (<http://www.flickr.com/>) photos? Are they available for anyone to use in their own documents? How does one tell? (BTW, there are [Creative Commons](http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/) (<http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/>) licensed photos at Flickr and it's possible to search for photos that are licensed this way.)
- What about fanfiction? Is it legal to take characters developed by others and make changes to them in one's own story? Can teens post their fanfiction on social networking sites and get advice on how to improve the writing?

The copyright landscape is going through big changes (and has to change in order to make sense in the 21st century.) The model we've used for many years is not going to be the model that teens use throughout their whole lives. Social networking sites give teens the chance to think about why copyright exists, what makes sense in terms of the technology of the early 21st century as a way to promote content and to support one's ownership of that content, and how they need to abide by copyright laws as they currently exist. The passing of DOPA would make these kinds of discussions, which are meaningful to teens in real-life ways, impossible.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #23 - Innovation

Social networking breeds ideas and ideas breed innovation. Just look at the web tools that we now can use as a part of the social networking environment promoted on the web:

- [Newsvine](http://www.newsvine.com/) (<http://www.newsvine.com/>) is a place for people to post news stories they think are interesting and they can write their own articles on topics in the news.
- [PopURLs](http://popurls.com/) (<http://popurls.com/>) and [Original Signal](http://www.originalsignal.com/) (<http://www.originalsignal.com/>) are sites that help users keep track of what's new and interesting in the world of web 2.0.
- [Squidoo](http://www.squidoo.com/) (<http://www.squidoo.com/>) is a place where anyone can be an expert on a topic of interest.

These are all sites that promote social networking and I hazard to guess that they wouldn't exist without the world of social networking to help promote the exchange of ideas and the ability to connect to people with similar interests

Teaching children and teens to be innovative thinkers is something that we as a society should want to promote. The passing of DOPA would make it more difficult to provide teens with some of the tools they could use to become innovative thinkers.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #24 - Learning by Themselves

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #24.

Social networking technologies support young people's active ability to learn on their own without having an education system imposed on them. Many mission statements of school and public libraries involve, empowering individuals. Helene Blowers, Public Services Technology Director for the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, has an excellent discussion on [control and empowerment](http://libtechbytes.blogspot.com/2006/09/on-control-empowerment.html) (<http://libtechbytes.blogspot.com/2006/09/on-control-empowerment.html>) in this blog post from last month.

If DOPA had passed in its current form, control would overwhelmingly outweigh the innate ability for teens to learn and create on their own through social networking.

Recent Library Student graduate Jami Schwarzwald's podcast on: [Meet the Millennial: Risk Takers and Rule Makers](http://www.opal-online.org/Millennials20061006.mp3) (<http://www.opal-online.org/Millennials20061006.mp3>) is an engaging listen as to how social networking tools influenced her life as a millennial and how they empowered her to actively learn on her own, and bring that knowledge to libraries.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## Positive Use of Social Networking #25 - Freedom to Choose

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #25.

Social networking technologies often allow for people to express their own opinions. A teen can set up their own blog in less than five minutes, post a comment on a forums board, or share what materials they are reading through LibraryThing. Check out SLJ's recent article and podcast on LibraryThing [here](http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6376092.html). (<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6376092.html>)

People who read and contribute to blogs, forums boards, wikis, etc. are being given the choice to be exposed to information that they might not otherwise come across as readily. Is it not slightly ironic, that DOPA targets school and public libraries, which are places that historically protect the freedom to access information?

It is my opinion that there are many parallels between [Banned Books](http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm>) and freedom in the digital world. Making connections between the two, as well as being familiar with sites such as the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](http://www.eff.org/) (<http://www.eff.org/>) might help us understand why DOPA is not the beginning and is not going to be the end of legislation affecting the digital world. It might help us to want to inform the teens we work with who use these technologies of what the bigger picture is and not just be reactive or hope it will go away.

I wonder if [Teen Tech Week](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teentechweek/ttw.htm) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teentechweek/ttw.htm>) might be one of many places to continue the dialogue of freedoms in the digital world and why/how it is just as important as protecting our freedom to read books.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## Positive Use of Social Networking #26 - ResultR

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #26.

[ResultR \(http://www.resultr.com/index.php\)](http://www.resultr.com/index.php) gives users the chance to create their own personalized search engine.

Visitors to the site select which search tools they want to use, save the search engine, and either use it right away, add it to Firefox, or get the code for a search box to add to a web page. It was developed by two teens as a way to complete a homework assignment.

This mashup of search tools demonstrates many of the things discussed as a part of the positive uses of social networking blogs over the past 26 days. ResultR demonstrates how teens are using social networking technologies in order to learn, innovate, and complete school homework. It shows teens using social networking technologies as a way to develop ideas and to find people who can work on projects together. It shows teens using social networking technologies as a form of entrepreneurship.

ResultR is just one example of teenagers using social networking as a start in the business world. For example, at 15, Mariana Butler of the [EmoGirl \(http://www.emogirl.com/\)](http://www.emogirl.com/) podcast was the first teenager to receive commercial sponsorship for a podcast. Other teens have developed competitors for sites like Flickr and YouTube.

Social networking doesn't just connect teens to others; it also gives teens the chance to become a part of the real world through business opportunities and ventures. What would happen if DOPA were passed and teens didn't have these entrepreneurial possibilities?

## Positive Use of Social Networking #27 — Communicating with parents and other stakeholders

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #27.

Blogs aren't just for kids anymore. They can be an excellent way to share information with parents. One of my favorite examples of social networking software in action in a school environment is the use of blogging at [Mabry Middle School \(http://mabryonline.org/blogs/\)](http://mabryonline.org/blogs/) in Marietta, Georgia. *Every single teacher* at the school has a blog. That includes the principal (who is the school webmaster!), the school nurse, the PTSA, the counselors, the media center, PE and intramurals, as well as all the language arts, math, social studies, music, art, science, and foreign language teachers. Sure, some of the blogs are more extensive than others, but every teacher posts at least once a week and categorizes his or her postings. So a parent can go to a teacher's blog and either read the latest entries and/or select a category of interest, including topics like homework, announcements, quiz help, All State (Chorus) Info, and "Gettin' down to earth science."

Wikis can also be used to keep parents and community informed. When track season rolls around again, I'm betting that Deer Valley High School coaches will go back to updating their [track wiki \(http://mabryonline.org/blogs/\)](http://mabryonline.org/blogs/). Here's what they have to say about why a wiki works for them: "Making our website a wiki makes it easier for us to keep it up-to-date. And a wiki is perfect for a track team since we have so many coaches working in the many track & field events. We can all up date when we feel like it." The [photo spreads \(http://dvtrack.pbwiki.com/Photos\)](http://dvtrack.pbwiki.com/Photos) are made up of images stored on [Flickr.com \(http://flickr.com\)](http://flickr.com). All around, a great use of social networking software!

If legislation like DOPA is passed, school staffs will lose a valuable method for keeping parents and other stakeholders informed and involved.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #28 - Raising awareness

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #28.

Teen dating violence is one of the issues explored through stage performance by the [Children's Theatre of Charlotte](http://www.ctcharlotte.org/Education_Intro.htm). ([http://www.ctcharlotte.org/Education\\_Intro.htm](http://www.ctcharlotte.org/Education_Intro.htm)) The actors visit a battered women's shelter before beginning rehearsals as part of their research to understand some of the issues that surround dating violence.

I had the opportunity to interview the actors and the Director of Domestic Violence Services at United Family Services. The actors talked about their experiences with performing, and the domestic violence director talked about teen dating violence in general. I will post the podcasts on the YALSA podcast page ASAP to share with you the conversation.

Podcasts are social networking tools that can be used to open up dialogues and comments for the purposes of informing and learning from one another. While teens would still be able to listen to podcasts even if DOPA is passed, they might miss out on the opportunity of playing a role in the dialogue at the public or school library. When it comes to raising awareness of issues, that's not a tool we should have to lose.

Posted by Kelly Czarnecki

## Positive Use of Social Networking #29 - College Search

During October a small group of YALSA bloggers are posting ideas and information about positive uses of social networking tools in schools and libraries. Here's positive use #29.

For many teens making decisions about college is a big part of their later high school years. [eNotes College Search](http://college.enotes.com/) (<http://college.enotes.com/>) brings social networking to the college selection, research, and planning process. The idea is to search the [eNotes](http://www.enotes.com/) (<http://www.enotes.com/>) database of colleges, save those that are of interest for one reason or another, give tags to the colleges saved, and add the tags and list to a [MySpace](http://www.myspace.com/) (<http://www.myspace.com/>) or other social networking site. Other teens searching for colleges can see the list, make connections, and think about their own decisions.

The tagging feature of College Search is especially important within the social networking framework. Giving teens the chance to articulate what is appealing (or not appealing) about a particular college or university with single words or short phrases helps focus their checklist of what they are looking for in a college. Similarly, giving other teens the chance to search through tags in order to gain ideas for selection criteria and to find others with similar criteria that they already have is a powerful tool in decision-making and planning.

College Search is a social networking tool that librarians should promote to their teens in order to help them with the sometimes pressure-filled and overwhelming experience of selecting and getting into college. If DOPA were passed librarians wouldn't be able to make that connection.

## Positive Use of Social Networking #30 - Flock

[Flock](http://www.flock.com/) (<http://www.flock.com/>) is a social networking browser. That means that users of Flock can easily access their [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/) (<http://www.flickr.com/>), [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us/) (<http://del.icio.us/>), blog, and newsfeed accounts from the browser drop-down menus and toolbars. Users don't have to go to each website, log in, navigate to (or through) their account, etc. Instead, with a very quick Flock setup process social networking sites are easily viewed and accessed with only one click in the browser window. For example, once the login for a Flickr account is added to the Flock browser, photos in that account are available at the top of the browser window. The user can upload new photos with the click of one button and can manage the photos that already exist within the account.

Think about the teen who keeps a blog and is surfing the web and her RSS feeds for fun or information. While surfing, the teen finds some great content that she would like to blog about. No need for her to open a new tab or window, go to her blog URL, login, and start typing. She can simply click on the blog link in Flock and open the new blog post window. When she's done she publishes. It's a much more seamless approach to writing about web content than most people use.

How is this a positive use of social networking? Well, it takes many of the tools YALSA bloggers have been talking about for the past 30 days and makes them easily accessible in one interface. Teens can setup their Flock browser to directly provide access to the social networking tools they use the most. They will save time when they use the tools and they will be much more organized users of the tools.

In a DOPA world, a browser like Flock would not be available in school and public libraries. That would mean that teens wouldn't have the opportunity to easily manage their social networking lives. Even in real-life, people want to find opportunities to manage their social lives effectively. The same is true in online life. Flock is definitely a way to do that.

## Positive Use of Social Networking Wrap-up

For the past 30 days YALSA bloggers have posted ideas about how social networking can be used by teens in positive ways. The postings connected specific tools with youth development and learning. The postings included real ways that libraries and schools are integrating social networking technologies into their programs and services. The postings were a way to help librarians, their colleagues, and their communities understand that social networking isn't automatically bad.

Some of the highlights of the posts were ways that social networking can be used to:

- Empower teens
- Give teens the chance to meaningfully serve the community
- Support teen reading and writing/text-based literacy needs and skills
- Give teens opportunities to create and collaborate
- Make sure teens are able to plan and manage projects
- Communicate with community members
- Provide teens with opportunities to choose how to be smart and safe when using technology.

The 30 days of positive social networking was one way librarians responded to the possibility of the Deleting Online Predators Act (DOPA) being passed in the Senate. (After being passed by the House in July of this year.) While it now looks like DOPA will not be voted on this year, and will die by the end of 2006, it remains important for librarians and others working and advocating for (and with) teens to continue to educate members of their communities about the real aspects of technology in teen lives. It's important not to automatically buy into the hype. It's also important to learn about and try the technologies in order to understand exactly what they do and do not do.