

Cloud 9: new services and engagements

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Abstract:

This paper follows the experiences of Frankston City Libraries in its use of Web 2.0 tools, including blogging, a browser toolbar, Facebook, Flickr, Meebo, online football tipping, Twitter, RSS and email feeds. The overall philosophy has been to place the Library where its customers are online. Web 2.0 services have enabled the Library to make its exclusive resources, like local history photographs, more accessible and been used as a tool to engage with customers in conversation. Some of these experiments have been successful and others more problematic. There are lessons to be learnt and successes to be shared.

Frankston City Libraries' background

The Frankston City Libraries is a two-branch library serving the City of Frankston, in Melbourne's southeastern suburbs. Due to the small number of branches, the Library offers outreach in another three points across the municipality. We have a library membership of around 72,000. Currently, Frankston Library Service offers many of the programs and activities found at most libraries, however it has a reputation for trialling innovative online projects in an effort to engage the community. While physical visits to the branches are gradually declining, online visits to the Library's web presence is growing.

Fearing obsolescence

In 2006, Frankston City Libraries was searching for new ways to be relevant in the 21st Century. Frankston City Council management saw that the Library was falling behind and had given the Library's new manager the brief to update the Library's services, presentation and image.

It was obvious to Library staff our online presence needed an overhaul. The Library's website was outdated and not integrated with the catalogue, but it was a medium-term goal to design and publish a new website. To act fast, free alternatives were required.

The first act in redesigning the Library's online presence was the establishment of a blog. With approval from senior management to work around the Council's usual marketing and public relations procedures and policies, the Library's pioneering use of social media has been monitored by other parts of Council with a view to applications in other departments, which has now happened.

One of the limitations faced by the Library in establishing and maintaining its web presence has been the availability of staff time. It is the role of the Library's Emerging Technologies Librarian to maintain and develop an online presence. Although a fulltime position, half of the position's working week is performing public duty, working with customers face-to-face at the information desk. Other back room duties include answering customer enquiries via email and assisting with other projects. This has led to a specific approach to populating the Library's online presence that whilst useful also has its limitations. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach will be discussed in this paper. Only in late 2011 has an additional staff member started posting to the Library's Facebook page.

The nine key tools

This paper focuses on nine online services currently in use by Frankston City Libraries.

- Blogger
Frankston City Library operates 13 blogs, including the Blogalogue and 12

automatically published blogs promoting new additions to the Library's collections.

- **Feedburner**
Feedburner's RSS and email subscription service provides a means to distribute blog posts.
- **Footytips**
This free online footy tipping competition site hosts the Library's AFL staff vs. all-comers tipping competition.
- **Scribd**
The Scribd cloud-based document storage and sharing site is used to enable access to a selection of Library PDFs via the Blogalogue, including customer feedback posters.
- **Twitter**
The Library's Twitter account is largely a robot account, automatically publishing links from the Library's blogs and feeding them into Facebook.
- **Conduit Toolbar**
This browser toolbar app features links to the Library's website and social media content, plus a search box for the Library's catalogue and online databases.
- **Facebook**
The Library's Facebook presence has gone through three phases, with varying degrees of success. A combination of content and allocation of staff time has been critical to realising the engagement potential of Facebook.
- **Meebo**
This free chat widget on the Library's website enables online communication between staff and customers. Its use and implementation has been the most problematic of all the online tools tried by the Library
- **Flickr**
The Library has placed around 300 local history photographs on Flickr, generating over 1,000 views a month at a cost cheaper than a hardcover.

Cloud 1: Blogger.com

Frankston City Library's adventure into the world of Web 2.0 started with a blog. Blogging offered an immediate response to the Library's outdated web presence and a means of experimenting with the new social media world of Web 2.0.

Staff evaluated several blogging platforms, including WordPress, before settling on Blogger. We planned a team approach to blogging; to accommodate a variety of experience and knowledge levels a basic but evolving platform was required.

Blogger's interface offered a good combination of features whilst making the fundamental task of posting straightforward.

When the Library updated its website, we evaluated transitioning of our blogs to the Objectify content management system. We retained Blogger because it is free, easy and flexible to use and regularly updated with new features. Blogging in a content management system would have cost us more and any new features would have to be ordered.

The Blogalogue

The Blogalogue is the Library's general corporate blog, launched in August 2006. It features posts on library news, services and events, information on prize winning books with links to the catalogue and items of interest related to reading culture.

In an attempt to maintain blogging best practice, the following rules are applied:

- to maintain regular updates, with at least two or three blog posts a week
- to feature a variety of content to keep the blog interesting and to sustain the rate of posting
- to be visually engaging through the appropriate use of images and video embeds
- to have a voice that is brief, conversational and fun

It is perhaps that last point, fun, that best typifies the Blogalogue. Its name is a playful contraction of the old and the new, of blog and catalogue, and it suits the paradigm-shifting ambition that we have for it. A central part of the Blogalogue's role is to do more than inform, but to entertain and promote the image of the Library as a fun-loving place. This is in line with the FISH! customer service strategy adopted by the Library. The essentials of the FISH! philosophy are to Be There, Play, Make Their Day and Choose Your Attitude™ <<http://www.charthouse.com>>.

Examples of this approach in the Blogalogue include:

- The adoption of the Middleton Interactive learning Centre from the ABC television satire The Librarians as our own branch <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2007/11/librarians.html>>
- The use of a Where's Wally cardboard cut out to fill the empty seat of the Collections Management Librarian, when posting about the position being advertised <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2011/11/wanted-new.html>>
- The running of an annual staff vs. all-comers AFL tipping competition with weekly commentary posted by teddy bears in club colours <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/search/label/Footy%20Tipping>>

One of the aims of the Blogalogue is to promote a sense of community between team members and customers. We anticipated achieving this through conversations via the blog's comments facility. For the Blogalogue's first 900 posts, there are only 277 comments, including staff replies to reader comments. This averages out to about 15% of posts having comments, which is about right. Considering that a blogosphere comments analysis found that only 15% of blog posts have comments (Mishne & Glance 2006). Nardi et al in *Why We Blog* (2006, p. 46) conclude that blogs "can be characterized as having limited interactivity," also noting, "blogs in themselves are not sufficient for building a community".

A rare example of a community conversation happening on the Blogalogue comes from one of its most serious posts. The Library used the blog to announce the introduction of a debt collection service and fee

<<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2010/02/do-you-have-library-loans-you-havent.html>>.

Several customers took the opportunity to comment negatively about the Library in general, the debt collection service and the Library's (then current) lack of near-due email reminders, while some supported the move and one customer asked others to "stop your whinging!!!!" Library staff only commented on correct errors of fact. This post generated 16 comments.

This is in line with the observation made in *Leave a Reply: An Analysis of Weblog Comments* (Mishne & Glance, 2006) that blog posts that are the most controversial get the most comments. Other posts with several comments are also somewhat controversial, including one on ALIA's position on filtering <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2010/02/librarians-courting-controversy.html>> and another on the introduction of a self-serve RFID loans system <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2009/12/diy-loans-now-here.html>>, both posts generating 9 comments. The only other kind of post that regularly recruits comments is the weekly AFL tipping round-up.

More important, perhaps, is the use of the Blogalogue as a one-way communications platform. In 2007, Google Analytics recorded 5,029 visits and 6,361 visits in 2010. A small increase, but growth nonetheless.

What's new for loan?

The Library launched a second blog in January 2008. *Read Alert Live* <<http://readalert.blogspot.com>> compiled new additions to the Library's catalogue, including books, talking books, music CDs and DVDs. Posts were created from emails generated by the Library's Spydus catalogue's alert profile facility. The contents of these emails were copied into Blogger and the blog linked from Library's website. Customers could also access new posts via an RSS feed or email updates.

In October 2008, *Read Alert Live* faltered. A Spydus upgrade partially disabled the email alert service, with few emails generated over the next two months. In November, we pulled stumps on *Read Alert Live*.

After this false start, we reviewed the service so that when the email alert service resumed we could offer an enhanced service. Streamlining the publication of the

alert emails was critical to the decision to resume. We discovered that Blogger publishes posts automatically from emails, so all we had to do was set up blogs for each major collection, establish a matching Spydus alert and have the email addressed to the relevant blog. We added an RSS feed and email subscription option to each of the 12 new blogs and automatically sent it to the Library's Twitter account. This syndication now stretches to the Library's Facebook page. We launched these new blogs in March 2009.

The growth in popularity of this service is steady. Our first link to Read Alert Live simply stated What's New For Loan and garnered up to 90 visits a month. Not happy with that, we changed the wording to New Books, CDs and DVDs, this achieving up to 150 visits a month. From January 2010, the new Library website has additional navigation to a New Books, CDs and DVDs page <http://library.frankston.vic.gov.au/Library_Services/New_Books_CDs_and_DVDs/index.aspx>, which includes links to both the blogs and canned catalogue searches. This page receives up to 1,100 visits a month in 2011. In 2011, the new for loan blogs achieve up to 350 visits a month.

Cloud 2: Feedburner.com

Feedburner <<http://feedburner.google.com>> provides significant support in distributing the Library's blog content. The Blogalogue has always featured RSS and email subscription options furnished by Feedburner, but its biggest application is in distributing the content of the new for loan blogs.

The RSS feed and email subscription options enable customers to access the content of these blogs without repeatedly visiting them. By the end of November 2011, the new item blogs had 352 RSS and email subscriptions. In the same month, Google Analytics <<http://www.google.com/analytics>> recorded that 64% of the traffic sources to the Library's OPAC were either the new item blogs, email accounts or RSS aggregators (but together they accounted for only 2.6 % of all OPAC traffic). From January 2011 to the end of October 2011, five of the OPAC's top ten traffic sources came via a combination of new for loan blogs and email providers. The OPAC's fourth biggest traffic source was the email provider Live, with the new films on DVD blog fifth and other email sources filling places six through eight <Google Analytics .

The provision of new for loan updates through canned search, blogs, RSS and email subscriptions provides a suite of boutique, customised options to customers. Together they help to establish the Library as a modern institution aware of customers' online preferences and help to place the Library where our customers are online. Highly automated, they take up little staff time to maintain once established.

Cloud 3: Footytips.com.au

The Blogalogue holds an annual AFL football tipping competition as part of the Library's community engagement and FISH! strategies. Footytips.com.au <<http://www.footytips.com.au>> hosts the Blogalogue footy competition that pits Library team members against all-comers.

Footytips.com.au is a free online tipping competition and social networking site. Participants place their tips in the site, can message each other and see the progress of themselves and other tipsters via ladders and charts. We embed a ladder widget in a Blogalogue page and link to in a weekly round-up post.

The competition started in 2009 with 15 tipsters and in 2011 had 41 competitors. A Library team member, one of our customers and a tipster from interstate has won it. We promote it only through the Library's web presence and Footytips.com.au. The prizes are small, with first prize being a \$50 Rebel Sport gift voucher, although in 2011 a perfect round of winning tips entitled tipsters to a free Whopper from Hungry Jacks via a Footytips.com.au promotion.

Applying the principles of FISH!, the weekly round ups in the Blogalogue are a highlight of the competition. These sum up round and ladder leaders, but also make note of current issues in the AFL. Since 2010, most competition posts are written in the form of brief editorials by a selection of plush mascots, such as the Collingwood bear Eddie, Essendon bear Donna Watson and Briso, a plush Brisbane lion. Unlike most other posts, they regularly attract interaction through comments. There is also occasional interaction through the host site's competition message board.

The use of Footytips.com.au adds a dynamic and fun dimension to the Library's web presence, promoting engagement between staff and customers.

Cloud 4: Scribd.com

Scribd <<http://www.scribd.com>> is a free online document storage and sharing site. The Library uses Scribd to host ephemeral PDFs in support of the Blogalogue and the Library Facebook page.

The biggest use of Scribd is to host customer feedback posters. Many libraries have a facility to enable patrons to express their thoughts in writing about the library and the service they receive. Library management then respond to these comments and published them to branch notice boards.

Since July 2007, Frankston City Libraries has been publishing these feedback posters as PDFs to the web via the Blogalogue <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/search/label/Monthly%20feedback>>. At first, we used a now defunct site called Omnidrive.com, then Frankston City Council's content management system, but when there was a long publication freeze, due to an upgrade, another cloud host was sought. Scribd has been the host of choice since

August 2009, going on to host other documents such as short stories from a Library competition <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2011/10/short-story-winners.html>>.

As we maintain our presence on Blogger, due its features and regular enhancements, so Scribd has the welcome advantages of a suite of features and constant evolution. Scribd turns the PDFs that we upload into iPaper documents that feature numerous viewing options. Unlike PDFs posted to the Council's content management, Scribd features links to related documents. Embed and share options are also available and kept up to date. The only Frankston City Libraries web publications to be repeatedly recorded in social network timelines by FriendFeed are Scribd hosted customer feedback posters <<http://friendfeed.com/search?q=frankston+library>>.

Cloud 5: Twitter.com

Frankston City Libraries began twittering in March 2008, using the branding @blogalogue. Until recently, Library's Twitter <<http://twitter.com/blogalogue>> has served purely as an automated platform for distributing blog posts. Only in 2010-11 has Twitter become a means of conversation with Library customers.

Twitterfeed <<http://twitterfeed.com>> is vital to the Library's use of Twitter. The @blogalogue branding is the result of the Library's original use of Twitter, as a platform to share Blogalogue posts. We achieve this via Twitterfeed, an RSS aggregator that publishes all the Library's Blogalogue and what's new for loan blog posts to Twitter. These and other tweets are picked up from @blogalogue's RSS feed and fed to other locations, including the Library's Facebook page and Conduit toolbar, thereby syndicating all blog posts and tweets through a network of platforms.

Promotion of the Library's Twitter account is online only. There are links on the Library's website, but not on the homepage. When the Library launched its new website in January 2010, @blogalogue did not have the empirical significance to make it prominent in the website, other than for a link in the new books, CDs and DVDs page. Most Twitter promotion is via the blogs, with an updating widget promoting the Library's Twitter stream in all of its blogs.

We find potential followers by regular use of Twitter's advanced search page <<https://twitter.com/#!/search-advanced>>. With this, we seek active twitterers within a 15-kilometre radius of Frankston, which covers all of Frankston City. We also use Twellow <<http://www.twellow.com>> and Filter Tweeps <<http://www.filtertweeps.com>> to find active Twitter accounts by suburb. Once found, we follow them, be they individuals or organisations, including businesses. Searches in the Library's twitter account for "frankston library" and "carrum library" (sic) find people tweeting about us, to whom we reply and follow. Twitter's "frankston library" search is finding people mentioning their visits to the Library on the location-based social networking website FourSquare <<https://foursquare.com>>, which has Frankston Library as a venue <<https://foursquare.com/v/frankston-library/4be64d402457a593c0c4ac15>>.

Either Twitter is either adding to the Library's international presence or many of our followers are merely following us in order to promote their own following; perhaps both are true. On 8 December 2011, the website Twocation <<http://www.twocation.com>> locates 56.6% of @blogalogue's following as being from Australia, with 26.4% from America. According to the Twitter follower-mapping site TweepMap<<http://tweepmap.com/Map>>, accessed on the same day, only 49.1% of the Library's Twitter followers are from Australia. 24.1 % are from America. 26.4% in total are from the Library's home state of Victoria (although there is significant room for error here, as 11.6% come from "Somewhere, Australia"), with 21% from Melbourne. Curiously, 3.7% of followers come from Texas; the home state of the world's only other Frankston. Although the figures from Twocation and TweepMap differ, it is likely that a minority of our Twitter followers are from the Library's geographic community, let alone membership base.

The success of the Library's Twitter campaign is elusive (the number of followers means very little), but value is becoming apparent. During 2011, occasional conversations with customers are taking place and @blogalogue tweets are being retweeted. The Twitter searches are finding mentions of the Library in customer tweets and a few customers are tweeting us @blogalogue with (not always positive) comments about the Library. There is also a marked growth in visits to the Library's blogs from Twitter (see Table 1). Although the numbers are small, in November 2011, Google Analytics ranked Twitter as the fourth-ranked referring site to the Library's blogs.

Table 1: Traffic to Library blogs from Twitter as logged by Google Analytics

Year	Traffic to blogs from Twitter
2008	5 (all staff tests)
2009	67
2010	87
November 2011	152

The Library's Twitter presence is part of its strategy to be where our customers are online. It appears that we may have been there ahead of them, but gradually they are finding us and we are finding them. Twitter provides a growing source of visits to the Library's blogs and a new opportunity to engage with customers online. While Twitter's potential for activities such as real-time reference enquiries is currently beyond the scope of the Library's staffing and technical abilities (Council policy restricts twitter access to only one staff computer in the Library), we are keeping a watchful eye on such developments. In the meantime, Twitter's utility for engagements and driving traffic to the Library's blogs (and by extension to our services, events, collections and branding) is growing.

Cloud 6: Conduit browser toolbar

In July 2009, Frankston City Libraries launched another boutique access point, with the Blogalogue linking to a browser toolbar

<<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2009/07/get-library-toolbar.html>>. We provide this through Conduit <<http://www.conduit.com>>, a site that enables the creation of free browser toolbars and apps.

The Conduit community toolbar

<<http://frankstonlibraryservice.communitytoolbars.com>> features a search box, a prominent link to the Library's homepage, a Blogalogue RSS feed and an @blogalogue Twitter feed. The search box app searches Google, plus the Library's Spydus OPAC and online databases. Additional features include Facebook, digital radio and current weather apps. These are "sticky" features, intended to add utility to the toolbar and give users extra reasons to retain it. Users can customise the toolbar by deleting features and can add additional apps from Conduit's app marketplace. Toolbar versions are available for the Firefox, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome and Safari web browsers.

Conduit's analytics reveal that by November 2011, 83 users have downloaded the toolbar. In 2011, the toolbar averages 11 users a day. The most clicked features are the Library home link (30%) and the search box (28%). The radio, weather and Facebook apps are next, followed by the Library's Twitter and Blogalogue feeds.

The Conduit browser toolbar is part of the Library's strategy to provide customers with online access options and of meeting customers where they are online. Its use is small, but the service is free and requires minimal time to set up and maintain.

Cloud 7: Facebook

In October 2008, Frankston City Libraries launched a Facebook page, <<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Frankston-Library-Service/35390412145>>, with a Blogalogue post <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2008/10/now-on-facebook.html>>. As with Twitter and the Conduit browser toolbar, the Facebook page is part of the Library's strategy of engaging with our customers where they are online. Already, the page has gone through three stages of development. In the process, the Library has transformed its Facebook page from a place of communication to a venue for engagement.

The explosion in online social networking during the first decade of the 21st century saw Frankston City Libraries experimenting with ways of publishing to several platforms at once. With one person responsible for establishing, maintaining and developing the Library's web presence (Library website, events posts, blogs, Twitter, Conduit toolbar and Facebook), and this person having other duties including desk shifts and answering email enquiries, short cuts were developed. The Library saw the Blogalogue as its core social publishing site, populating both Twitter and Facebook with syndicated blog content.

Whereas the @blogalogue Twitter stream was always a destination for RSS feeds from the blogs, we launched our Facebook page by re-writing Blogalogue posts into

the Facebook format. This stage lasted between October 2008 and May 2010, resulting in 110 friends but little interaction.

Phase two began in May 2010, as promoted via a Blogalogue post <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2010/05/facebook-update.html>>. Faced with little activity and little time to devote to re-writing content for Facebook, the Library integrated the Facebook page into the Library's RSS network. Using the free Social RSS application <<http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=23798139265>>, the @blogalogue Twitter RSS feed became the chief source of the Library's Facebook wall posts. We established an RSS-based news page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Frankston-Library-Service/35390412145?sk=app_23798139265>) to enable people to subscribe directly to the feed, these posts then appearing in subscriber's walls. With no consideration to the conventions of Facebook, it was far from perfect and again resulted in little interaction.

However, by the end of this phase in July 2011, the Facebook page had 204 Likes. The growth in the number of Facebook friends may have more to do with goodwill towards the Library than any intention for engagement or use. By June 2011, Facebook's weekly figures were low, with between 30 and 60 visits to the page each week and between around 120 monthly users and usually zero comments, post likes or customer posts to the Facebook wall.

In mid-2011, the Library reviewed its Facebook campaign strategy and made several changes. The Library's Marketing Team now shares the responsibility of populating the Facebook page with the Emerging Technology Librarian. Applying the FISH! philosophy to Facebook, the content is a mix of Library news and fun stuff. Images play a large part of the new content. We now post funny pictures, local history photographs and other images of happenings around the Library. We link to blog posts and websites from other sources, accompanied by commentary or text that asks for responses, plus selected Blogalogue posts. Linked posts include library, book and reading, music and lifestyle subjects. We post Library events and share posts from other Facebook pages to our Facebook page. Leveraging a synergy from the Library's social media network, we discover some of the linked websites via the Library's Twitter account and a RSS feed located on the Blogalogue's sidebar. Between the two Library team members now posting to Facebook, we publish at least one post a day on weekdays.

To accompany these changes, the Library ran a competition in August and September 2011. People were invited to Like our Facebook page and go into the draw to win books signed by their authors <<http://flsblog.blogspot.com/2011/08/like-us-on-facebook.html>>. The number of people who Liked our Facebook page rose from 204 at the start of the competition in August to 235 at the end of September.

The results of these measures in terms of engagement activity are spectacular. In the second week of November 2011, the Facebook page recorded 228 monthly active users, 43 wall posts or comments by users and 654 visits. Most posts now receive at least one Like, and customers post reports of their visits to the Library and also ask reference enquiries. In terms of traffic to the Library's blogs, in November

2011 Google Analytics recorded that Facebook had risen from the seventh highest referring site in 2010 to the fifth highest referring site in 2011.

We have experimented with Facebook. The pressures of limited staff time and meagre initial response saw us adapt our approach, perhaps to the detriment of expanding interaction. The new approach and extra allocation of staff time adopted in mid-2011 has resulted in rises of usage and engagement that were unexpected but welcome by the Library and customers alike. Compared to blogging and Twitter, Facebook is the place where most online engagements now happen between the Frankston Library Service and our customers.

Cloud 8: Meebo.com

The Library's website features an instant messaging facility, courtesy of a Meebo Me widget via Meebo.com <<http://www.meebo.com>>. Meebo is a free instant messaging service that enables library customers to converse over the web with Library team members during opening hours. It is part of the Library's online engagement strategy, locating a two-way and real-time means of communications on the website. Despite its promise, the implementation of Meebo has proven to be a technical and cultural challenge.

Establishing the Library's presence on Meebo with the aide of a Yahoo Messenger account <<http://au.messenger.yahoo.com>> and integrating it into the homepage of the Library's new website from January 2010 was easy. The Meebo Me widget was initially located on only on the Library website's homepage <<http://library.frankston.vic.gov.au>>, but since mid-2011 it is also on the null results screen of the Spydus OPAC <http://catalogue.frankston.vic.gov.au/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/ENQ/OPAC/BIBENQ?ENTRY_NAME=BS&ENTRY_TYPE=K&NREC=S=30&SORTS=HBT.SOVR&CF=GEN&ENTRY=qdqwrew&x=36&y=8>.

Gaining team buy-in to Meebo proved to be difficult. The Library's information team of librarians and library technicians is responsible for accessing Meebo during public duty shifts. Their initial response to this was frosty, with comments like "Why can't they just pick up the phone?" heard. Meebo was seen as another distraction, another interruption and a scary technical one too. If you can type you can use Meebo, but training sessions on how to instant message in Meebo were greeted with a mix of technophobia, distrust and disinterest. Only gradually have these attitudes waned, but some staff still decline to log Meebo on or continue to sign off during their shifts.

Added to staff scepticism are ongoing technical issues. To support Meebo, it is best to install Meebo Notifier <<http://www.meebo.com/notifier>> on any computers that team members are going to be using with Meebo. Meebo Notifier is a free download from Meebo that generates a brief pop-up when a remote user initiates an instant messaging session; it also produces an audio alert.

The Library has Meebo Notifier installed on a test computer in the staff area and it works well, generating both visual and audio alerts at the start of a session. The program is installed on only one of the public duty computers at Frankston Library and the Library's and Council's IT departments have been unable to make the audio

alert work. This effectively means that busy front-line customer service staff need to be looking at their computer screen at the right time to respond to messages. Changes to the Council network have also caused Meebo Notifier to fail and have to be re-installed.

Since experience shows that message writers tend to move on if there is no response in less than a minute, this results in many missed messages. Remote users also frequently leaves messages when Meebo is logged out, such as after hours. These users rarely leave any form of identification or contact (such as their name, a phone number or a library membership number), which means that staff are unable to reply or follow up their queries.

Imagine that the telephone at your library's information desk makes no sound, but only generates a brief, small flash of light when there is an incoming call. To answer a call, you need to be looking directly at the phone, whilst at the same time helping other customers at and away from the desk. A missed call results in a voice mail, but you can only hear the question and are left with no reliable means of returning contact. This is what it is like to operate Meebo without a fully functioning Meebo Notifier.

In the nine months between April and December 2010, staff engaged in 74 Meebo enquiries. In the next nine months, from January to October 2011, staff engaged in only 43 Meebo enquiries, indicating a downward trend in use or enquiries successfully intercepted, despite more time logged in.

As this paper is written, Library staff and management are reviewing the Meebo experiment. Questions are being raised about the amount of real estate that Meebo is taking up on the Library's homepage in comparison to its effectiveness and the opportunity cost to what else could be promoted there.

Cloud 9: Flickr.com

In May 2010, Frankston City Libraries publicly launched its collection of local history photographs on the photo-sharing site Flickr <<http://www.flickr.com>>. For less than the cost of a hardcover book, the Flickr hosting of less than 300 local history images is generating over 1,000 image views a month. From a rarely accessed physical collection to a continually access online collection, the Flickr experiment is a spectacular success.

Flickr hosts up to 200 images free. To host the 288 photos currently published, the Library invests \$50 for a two-year pro membership. We group these images into the Picture Frankston group pool <<http://www.flickr.com/groups/picturefrankston>>, which is open to other Flickr members to add additional images, although so far none has. Images are tagged with metadata, such as people, location (including geotagging) and dates where known. A library volunteer digitises the prints and the Emerging Technologies Librarian uploads them to Flickr.

In addition to image hosting, Flickr is a social media site. Flickr members can follow each other as contacts and favourite other member's photographs. During the

course of 2011, 19 Picture Frankston images were actioned as favourites. Four local photographers have added the Library's account as a contact and become members of the Picture Frankston group pool. Although we have enabled comments on the photographs, this is yet to happen in Picture Frankston.

The Library promotes Picture Frankston via a link on the Library website and a photo widget on the Blogalogue, plus occasional Blogalogue and Facebook posts. Library team members also refer customers to Picture Frankston when handling local history inquiries. A big part of Picture Frankston's success is its ease of discovery. Images from Picture Frankston appear in search engine results, referring sites including Google Image and Yahoo.

The net result is a small collection that out performs all others in terms of value for money. Flickr's statistics package records over 1,000 Picture Frankston image views a month. The highest monthly figure is 2,733 views in November 2011, an average of just over 9 views per image over the month. At \$25 a year, it is the most cost effective collection the Library manages.

There are plans to extend Picture Frankston. The Library will be uploading more digitised images in 2012. Once our own local history image collection is completely on Flickr, we will invite other local interest groups including the Frankston Historical Society to add their collections. Picture Frankston has a bright future.

On cloud 9

Frankston City Libraries uses social media and cloud computing sites as a branding exercise, to distribute library news and information and to engage with customers online. Some of the Library's experiments are more successful than others, ranging from the troubled Meebo instant messaging service to the highly cost-effective Picture Frankston Flickr hosting. Despite the limited staff resources available to explore potential innovations and to implement, develop and maintain multiple platforms, the Library's web presence is expanding to reach out to existing and new users through a variety of services. Although the numbers are often small, the Library is demonstrating its commitment to customers by providing them with a range of options to suit their preferences.

It is important to note that the Library has not set targets for success or failure for each of the endeavours described here. The slow Twitter uptake is an example of perseverance in the face of low initial use. The Facebook page is an example of experimentation until a review saw additional resources enable best practice. During 2011, both the Library's Twitter and Facebook pages at last became venues for engagement. Plans to review the Library's website may see the Twitter and Facebook pages linked from the homepage, as is common practice elsewhere. However, the Meebo instant messaging service is due for review in the face of declining engagement.

Social media enables the Library's FISH! philosophy to be practised online. Using Blogger, Facebook and Twitter, we are having fun with our customers and community in ways that we cannot on the Library website. The Blogalogue AFL

tipping competition will continue in 2012, along with the use of the footy bears as commentators.

In 2012, the Library is taking the next step and launching its own LibraryAnywhere mobile app, enabling customers to have easy Android and iPhone access to the catalogue and other library information.

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