

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF

SOCIAL

DESIGN

UXWEEK 2007

POST

May 2nd, 2006

The Del.icio.us Lesson

The amazing popularity of the bookmarking site [Del.icio.us](#) is one of the hallmarks of the current social software renaissance happening on the Web. Along with [Flickr](#), Del.icio.us is a poster child of tagging, a simple feature whereby people attach words or phrases to an item. In the case of Del.icio.us, those items are bookmarks.

While Del.icio.us rose to prominence, much was made of the ability to aggregate the tags that the service's user population created. The resulting framework, called a [folksonomy](#), promised to redefine web navigation. If users could tag their own bookmarks and navigate to them through a direct tag-based interface, then there was really no need for an overarching, expert-developed taxonomy. In addition, if Del.icio.us could aggregate the bookmarks over all users, they could come up with a folksonomy for everybody, based on how the total population actually valued and referred to the content.

One of the hardest problems in web design is to speak the user's language. With folksonomies and tagging, the web site could be designed with, and evolved by, the user's own words. Unfortunately, somewhere along the line the vast majority of excited technologists (including me) forgot the original reason why people use and enjoy [Del.icio.us](#). I call this reason the *Del.icio.us Lesson*, and I first posted about it last December in [Learning more about Structured Blogging](#). Since then, that post has become the most referenced post on Bokardo. This post is an attempt to further illustrate the Del.icio.us Lesson.

Personal Value Precedes Network Value

The one major idea behind the Del.icio.us Lesson is that **personal value precedes network value**. What this means is that if we are to build networks of value, then each person on the network needs to find value for themselves before they can contribute value to the network. In the case of Del.icio.us,

ABOUT

BOKARDO is the blog of [Joshua Porter](#), a web designer/developer, researcher, and writer. I live in Newburyport, MA, USA.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DESIGN?

SOCIAL DESIGN is design that focuses on the social lives of users. It deals with the activities, behaviors, and motivations of people who work and play together through software interfaces. It is built on the observation that many of the decisions we make are greatly affected by those we surround ourselves with in our social lives: our family, friends, and colleagues. Exploring our motivations and how to design interfaces to support them is what the Bokardo blog is all about.

bokardo design

Interface design &
strategy for social web
applications

GREATEST HITS

- [Five Principles to Design By](#)
- [The Del.icio.us Lesson](#)
- [Diqq's Design Dilemma](#)
- [7 Reasons Why Web Apps Fail](#)
- [7 More Reasons Why Web Apps Fail](#)
- [Which Movie to Watch? An Overview of Recommendation Systems](#)
- [A Social Revolution by Modeling](#)




bokardo.com
SOCIAL WEB DESIGN

Written by [Joshua Porter](#)

RSS FEED

If you want to know when I add more content to Bokardo, grab my RSS feed:

 [RSS Feed](#)

 [OPML Reading List](#)

[Don't know what RSS is?](#)



bokardo *design*

Interface design and strategy
for social web applications







Kurt Lewin

German Psychologist
KURT LEWIN

“founder of social
psychology”

LEWIN'S EQUATION

$$B = f(P, E)$$

Behavior is a function of the
Person & his or her Environment

THE VALUE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH

1. Standing on the shoulders of others (millions of hours of research)
2. More design & less politics, as research immediately changes roll to one of inquiry
3. Shortcut to the right questions: what are people's motivations & how do they make decisions?
4. Frameworks provide a good foundation upon which to build a social design strategy
5. Provides insight into the Opaque Value Problem

THE OPAQUE VALUE PROBLEM

“I cannot understand why anyone would want to do this, or why anyone would want to read these posts.

In the past, I would just go off on the subject, as I did with blogging and podcasting when they first appeared. Since then, I’ve become a blogger and a podcaster and have been rebuked for my earlier opinions. On the Internet, they never forget.

So I’m thinking that I should be more analytical in a positive way. I say this even though this is one fad I cannot imagine wasting my time on.”

John Dvorak, PCMag, in reference to Twitter

HOLD ON A SEC...are social features economically viable?

1. Direct contact with people who make you successful
2. Amplify customer opinion
3. Data, data, and more data
4. Reduce support costs
5. Engender Trust to form lasting relationships

Product Ratings

Share your own Product Images

People who viewed this...buy this

Amazon sales rank (social proof)

Add to Wish/Registry Lists
Tell a friend

Submit a Product Manual

Customers who bought this also bought...

Tag this item

Rate this item

Help others find this item

Customer Reviews

Customer Discussions

Listmania

Offsite Reviews

So you'd like to...



AMAZON

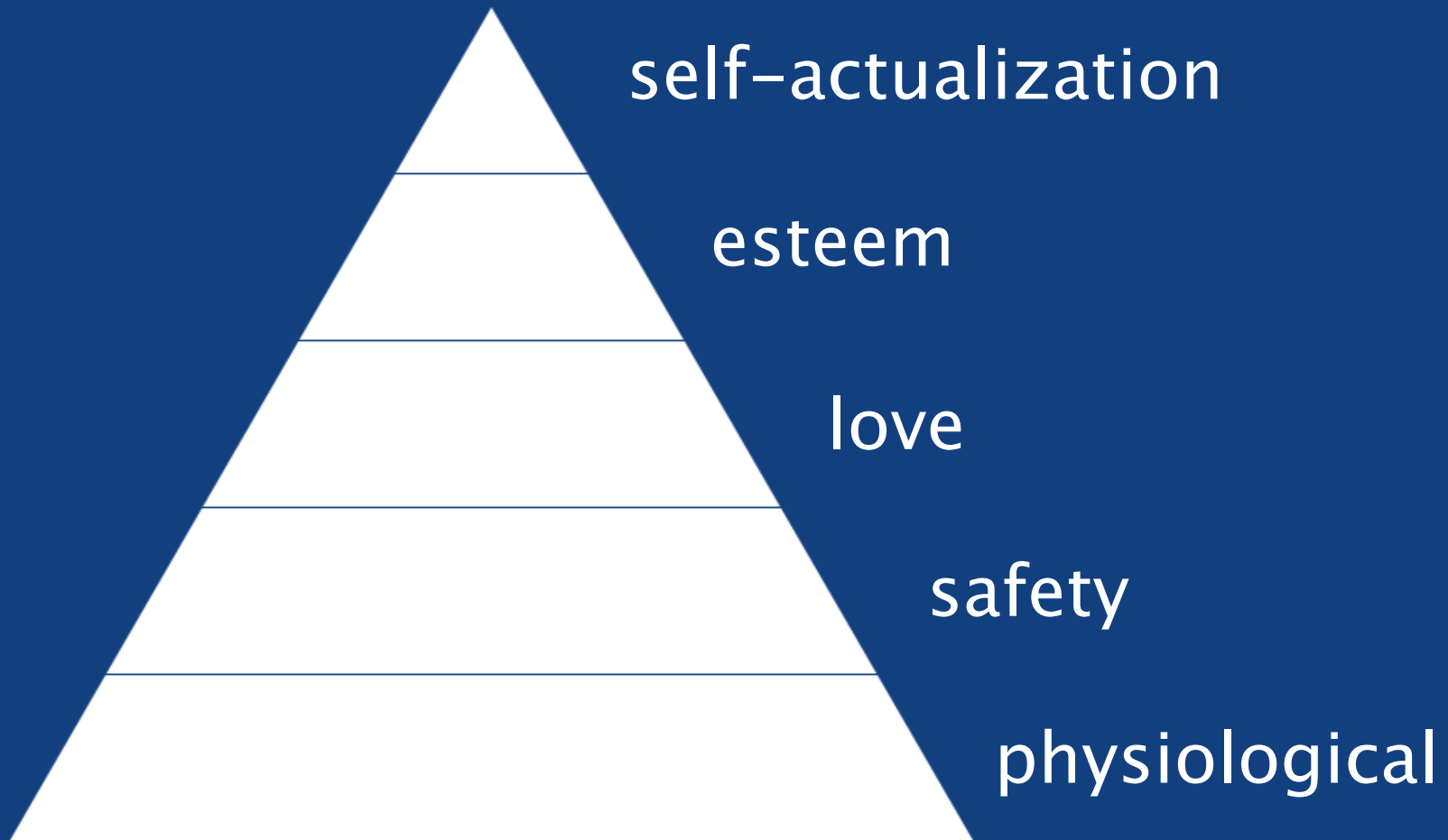
Product Page
Social Features



American Psychologist
ABRAHAM MASLOW

Famous for his
hierarchy of needs

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Personal Value Precedes Network (Social) Value!

Most people are not selfish, but self-interested...always searching first for an answer to “what’s in it for me?”

- » **all your bookmarks in one place**
- » bookmark things for yourself and friends
- » **check out what other people are bookmarking**

[learn more...](#)

[» get started «](#)

Tags




A tag is simply a word you use to describe a bookmark. Unlike folders, you make up tags when you need them and you can use as many as you like. The result is a better way to organize your bookmarks and a great way to discover interesting things on the Web.

[learn more...](#)

hotlist what's hot right now on del.icio.us

HOT NOW

see also: [popular](#) | [recent](#)

-  **Color + Design Blog / Wine Color Guide for Quality and Age by COLOURlovers** [save this](#) **146** people
first posted by DariusM wine color food guide reference tags
-  **Library Jobs, Librarian & IT Job Listings - ALA JobLIST - American Library Association** [save this](#) **262** people
first posted by nocandyforyou jobs library ala employment libraries tags
-  **Bounty Fishing Blog » 27 Aquatic lifeforms you never caught while fishing** [save this](#) **152** people
first posted by tfukuda fish animals photos weird science tags

tags to watch [more ...](#)

apple

- [HOWTO: Install and Boot OS X On a Flash Drive](#)
- [Mac Geekery - Hiding Applications From The Dock](#)
- [Daring Fireball: Translation From PR-Speak to English of Selected Portions of Macrovision CEO Fred Amoroso's Response to...](#)

game

- [Ellipsis](#)
- [Frenzic : Index](#)
- [NANACA†CRASH!!](#)

soccer



http://ma.gnolia.com/

Google

del.icio.us Ma.gnolia.com - Find We...

Sign In | Learn More



Discover, share and discuss the best of the web. Join Us or Learn More.



The Freelance Blog - Freelance Switch

Marked in Ma.gnolia by zenbubbha
Find more about freelance, design or blog

Download "Ma.gnolia Blossom," Damien Tanner's Dashboard Widget

Discover sites about

How do you Encourage Participation?

- ▶ Focus on personal value first, then social value
- ▶ Good question to ask: “Is your service valuable to someone even if nobody else uses it?”
- ▶ Once people are getting value at a personal level, ask “How can we use the collective action of individuals to provide more value?”



American Psychologist
PETER KOLLOCK

Early research in online
motivation

Kollock's 4 Motivations for Contributing

Why do people do what they do online?











1. Reciprocity
2. Reputation
3. Increased sense of efficacy
4. Attachment to and need of a group

Top Diggers

Recently Active Users

All Users

Search for user:

	Username	? Popular ▼	? Submitted	? Popular Ratio	? Dugg	? Comments	? Profile Views
1	 digitalgopher	730	1756	42 %	9386	601	54,799
2	 p9s50W5k4GUD2c6	724	1439	50 %	14104	1123	43,107
3	 gwjc	576	1833	31 %	21530	1278	29,271
4	 BloodJunkie	524	1719	30 %	15744	2411	32,420
5	 dirtyfratboy	487	1233	39 %	13368	1037	49,679
6	 supernova17	451	1126	40 %	27951	1280	39,291
7	 CLIFFosakaJAPAN	376	4408	9 %	5519	708	36,955
8	 bonlebon	365	3853	9 %	14636	1956	47,241
9	 DarkHack	358	587	61 %	20944	162	52,495
10	 aaaz	343	1369	25 %	9194	58	10,651

Axelrod's 3 Necessary Conditions to Cooperate

Why do people behave at all ?

1. Likelihood of meeting in future
2. Ability to identify each other
3. Record of past behavior



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Listed in category: [Cell Phones & PDAs](#) > [Cell Phones](#) > [Phones w/o Service Contracts](#)
Also listed in: [Cell Phones & PDAs](#) > [PDAs & Pocket PCs](#)

Apple iPhone 8GB New in Box. Unopened. NO RESERVE!

Item number: 170132856538

Worldwide shipping!!!! (receipt / code will be sent)

Bidder or seller of this item? [Sign in](#) for your status

[Watch this item](#) in My eBay



[View larger picture](#)

Current bid: **US \$685.00** [Place Bid >](#)

[PayPal account required](#)

Make No Payments Until 2008 [Apply](#)

End time: **25 mins 32 secs** (Jul-27-07 04:25:47 PDT)

Shipping costs: **FREE**
Standard Flat Rate Shipping Service
Service to [United States](#)

Ships to: United States

Item location: manassas, VA, United States

History: [29 bids](#)

High bidder: [Bidder 16](#) ★

You can also: [Watch This Item](#)

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or [Cell phone](#)
[Email to a friend](#)

Listing and payment details: [Show](#)

Meet the seller

Seller: [bassn42](#) ([47](#) ★)

Feedback: **98.0% Positive**

Member: since Oct-20-03 in United States

- [Read feedback comments](#)
- [Ask seller a question](#)
- [Add to Favorite Sellers](#)
- [View seller's other items](#)

Buy safely

1. Check the seller's reputation

Score: 47 | 98.0% Positive
[Read feedback comments](#)

2. Check how you're protected

PayPal Up to \$200 in buyer protection. [See eligibility.](#)



Australian Sociologist
DUNCAN WATTS

**Six Degrees: The Science of
a Connected Age**

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LISTEN



RATE



DOWNLOAD



MUSIC LAB ★ MUSIC LAB ★ MUSIC LAB ★ MUSIC LAB ★ MUSIC LAB

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HARTSFIELD: "enough is enough"	GO MOREDCAI: "it does what its told"	UNDO: "while the world passes"
DEEP ENOUGH TO DIE: "for the sky"	PARKER THEORY: "she said"	UP FOR NOTHING: "in sight of"
THE THRIFT SYNDICATE: "2003 a tragedy"	MISS OCTOBER: "pink agression"	SILVERFOX: "gnaw"
THE BROKEN PROMISE: "the end in friend"	POST BREAK TRAGEDY: "florence"	STRANGER: "one drop"
THIS NEW DAWN: "the belief above the answer"	FORTHFADING: "fear"	FAR FROM KNOWN: "route 9"
NOONER AT NINE: "walk away"	THE CALEFACTION: "trapped in an orange peel"	STUNT MONKEY: "inside out"
MORAL HAZARD: "waste of my life"	52METRO: "lockdown"	DANTE: "lifes mystery"
NOT FOR SCHOLARS: "as seasons change"	SIMPLY WAITING: "went with the count"	FADING THROUGH: "wish me luck"
SECRETARY: "keep your eyes on the ballistics"	STAR CLIMBER: "tell me"	UNKNOWN CITIZENS: "falling over"
ART OF KANLY: "seductive intro, mebdic breakdown"	THE FASTLANE: "til death do us part (i dont)"	BY NOVEMBER: "if i could take you"
HYDRAULIC SANDWICH: "separation anxiety"	A BLINDING SILENCE: "miseris and miracles"	DRAWN IN THE SKY: "tap the ride"
EMBER SKY: "this upcoming winter"	SUM RANA: "the bolshevik boogie"	SELSIUS: "stars of the city"
SALUTE THE DAWN: "i am error"	CAPE RENEWAL: "baseball warlock v1"	SIBRIAN: "eye patch"
RYAN ESSMAKER: "detour_be still"	UP FALLS DOWN: "a brighter burning star"	EVAN GOLD: "robert downey jr"
BEERBONG: "father to son"	SUMMERSWASTED: "a plan behind destruction"	BENEFIT OF A DOUBT: "run away"
HALL OF FAME: "best mistakes"	SILENT FILM: "all i have to say"	SHIPWRECK UNION: "out of the woods"

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NOONER AT NINE: "walk away"	6	THE CALEFACTION: "trapped in an orange peel"	20	STUNT MONKEY: "inside out"	46
MORAL HAZARD: "waste of my life"	8	52METRO: "lockdown"	17	DANTE: "lifes mystery"	14
NOT FOR SCHOLARS: "as seasons change"	27	SIMPLY WAITING: "went with the count"	16	FADING THROUGH: "wish me luck"	10
SECRETARY: "keep your eyes on the ballistics"	5	STAR CLIMBER: "tell me"	38	UNKNOWN CITIZENS: "falling over"	34
ART OF KANLY: "seductive intro, melodic breakdown"	10	THE FASTLANE: "til death do us part (i dont)"	31	BY NOVEMBER: "if i could take you"	20
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In addition to providing evidence of the social influence of users, Watt's study also suggests that because of social influence it becomes more difficult to predict outcomes, not easier.

Uh Oh

ON BLOCKBUSTERS & SOCIAL INFLUENCE

What should entertainment companies do to improve their odds of success? The key is to understand that the outsize performance of hits is not driven solely, or perhaps even primarily, by intrinsic attributes such as sound, plot, style, or even star power. Rather, (our) new research shows, much of the success of entertainment products derives from social influence—the effect that consumers have on one another’s decisions. So in addition to anticipating which features individual consumers might find desirable, executives should adopt strategies that take social influence into account.

Duncan Watts & Steve Hasker
Harvard Business Review, September 2006

Easy Framework: 3 Life Stages

IDENTITY FORMATION

Creation of social identity, including finding oneself, defining preferences, choosing friends and social groups, what values and ideals are important, how to rebel against and deal with authority.



PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Participation as a member in society and formation of a professional life. Creation of community groups and professional networks. Evaluation is based on contribution to society and professional life.



REFLECTION & STORYTELLING

Transition to reflecting back on previous stages, retiring and getting out of professional life. Active roles in family and society to preserve way of life, remember important historical issues to learn from.



SUMMARY

- ▶ Rich history of social psychology that we can learn a lot from
- ▶ Psychology research provides insight into designing social web applications
- ▶ Does not substitute for a full research agenda but provides valuable frameworks for your design effort
- ▶ Pick frameworks that work for you and use them to galvanize your team and provide strategic direction over time

QUESTIONS?

For more information on the design &
strategy of social web applications:



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