Abstract: We surveyed a subset of participants in the LC Flickr Project to determine their motivations for contributing to LC's Flickr photosets. We discovered that many participants were motivated by a desire to share their knowledge of local history based on their affective reactions to the images and information provided.

Résumé: Nous avons sondé un échantillon de participants du projet LC sur Flickr pour déterminer leurs motivations lorsqu'ils contribuent aux ensembles de photo de la collection. Nous avons découvert que de nombreux participants étaient motivés par le désir de partager leurs connaissances de l'histoire locale selon leurs réactions affectives par rapport aux images et à l'information fournie.

1. Introduction
Web 2.0 has become a part of the common vernacular as people around the world participate in social networking, blogging, social tagging and sharing of information over the Internet. The hallmark of Web 2.0 is an easy to use system which generates simple metadata from basic information provided by a user sharing their life, personal organisational systems, pictures, recipes, etc. Image sharing sites such as Flickr and Instagram are extremely popular and expand at a tremendous rate as users upload thousands of photos a day.

In 2008, the Library of Congress (LC) first uploaded pictures to Flickr, then one of the most popular photo sharing sites (http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/). Their intent was to share the library's image collections with the world and hopefully entice the world into contributing useful information to the images. Later in the year, LC issued a report which touted the project as a success and indicated that LC would be continuing to contribute to Flickr (Springer et al., 2008, 36; Natanson 2012). This paper reports on the results of a survey of a subset of Flickr users to determine what information users were sharing with the LC and each other and their motivations for this sharing.

2. Literature review
Early tagging research examined tagging as a community based subject access system demonstrating the power of the network effect (Sen et al., 2006). Power laws evident in the aggregate tagging data from sites that allowed users to form a broad folksonomy showed evidence of user agreement on the broad subjects of a site thus strengthening the possibility that tagging could provide usable subjects for indexing and search (Kipp and Campbell, 2006). As tagging became a major research stream in LIS, many studies began to examine tagging of specific kinds of documents, especially images since they contain no text which would allow for full text searching in the absence of indexing.

As a potential new discovery tool for image collections, some studies examined the value of tagging to image collections, mostly compared to the existing controlled vocabulary systems (Clayton et al., 2008; Neal, 2010; Jorgensen, 2011). Tags may serve many
functions (e.g. personal information management, communication, collaboration) but a majority of image tagging studies so far have concentrated on their effectiveness as a discovery tool in image collections.

A majority of studies of Flickr examined the use of tags for indexing or retrieval of images (Angus, Thelwall and Stuart, 2008; Stvilia and Jörgensen, 2009; Rorissa, 2010) and did not focus on comments or notes on the pictures themselves. A few studies have examined LC's Flickr collections specifically (Springer et al., 2008; Stvilia and Jorgensen, 2009; Dalton, 2010).

Kipp et al. (2012) examined tags, comments and notes on images and discovered that many users were contributing local knowledge to the data set. The term "local knowledge" was first introduced by Geertz (1983) who defined local knowledge as being strongly rooted in particular places and reflecting personal and emotional awareness of an area. For the purposes of this paper, we adopt Rao (2006)'s definition that defines local knowledge as unique to a given culture or society and forms basis for local-level decision making. Buchel (2012) determined that local knowledge could be used to enhance geographic information in the catalogue.

3. Methodology

For this survey, we chose a subset of images from the Library of Congress' Flickr photosets which contained LCSH subject terms. We analysed this data and used the results to help us create a survey to send to the approximately 7500 individual Flickr users who had contributed to this subset of the LC's images in order to determine how they felt about their participation in the LC Flickr Project.

Our survey consisted of 20 short questions and was designed to take from 2-5 minutes in order to encourage high participation. We asked users to discuss their overall frequency of participation in Flickr and the LC Flickr project. We also asked basic demographic questions such as age, gender, nationality and language, location, and profession. In addition, we asked users to explain their motivations for participating on Flickr and whether or not they felt they were experts in local knowledge related to the images they were annotating. We distributed the survey over Flickr Mail using the Flickr IDs linked to each contribution in our pilot study. We completed sending the survey on December 14, 2012.

4. Results and Preliminary Analysis

Over 1600 participants completed our survey, a response rate of 21% which is an excellent response rate for a survey. We have begun a preliminary analysis of some of the questions on our survey including the question on local history and the question on motivations for contributing to the Library of Congress' Flickr photo collection.

In order to determine motivations and interest leading to people's contributions of local history information, we asked the following question: "Question 17: How do you know so much local history?"

We found many of the responses fell into 5 broad categories, 4 roles (amateur, professional, situational and outsider) and 1 set of tools for acquiring or distributing local history information.
Many users indicated that they had formal training, were active amateurs in local history, or had resided in the given location at some point for a long enough time that they felt competent in providing local history information. Others commented that they loved to travel and educated themselves about a location before travelling by reading.

- As a resident, I'm an expert compared[sic] to the tourists.
- Self education through reading books, material online, visits to museums.
- Majored in history as an undergrad, did some research work in CA; I continue to take interest in local history and geography.

Each role represents a different relationship to the local history information with the situational role representing participants who had lived in the area and acquired the information as residents where other roles might have studied this information.

In addition to motivations for contribution local history information, we were also interested in motivations for contributions in general with the following question: "Question: 18. What causes you to tag, markup, comment, or 'favorite' the Library of Congress' Flickr images?"

| Affective (emotional) Reactions | interest/unusual |
| Error Correction | errors/ mis-tagged/ need for the info |
| Searching and Browsing | searching for myself (reference, reminder, tracking) for other people's search, raising findability and searchability |
| Social Networking | crowdsourcing (informing, educating, knowledge sharing) being member of flicker (more participation, duty, for public) appreciation/thanks for shared works |
| Private Use | personal use |
Table 2: Categories of responses to survey question on motivations for participation in the LC Flickr Commons

Participants often expressed an appreciation for the images themselves indicating that they contributed because the images were beautiful or interesting.

- a desire to increase the "findability" of significant images
- Differing motivations, depending on the moment -- aesthetics, historical interest, trying to add information when I see mistakes, etc.

Many participants suggested that they tagged or commented on an image to help them search for themselves and made notes or listed an image as a favourite to help other people search. Interestingly, participants were less likely to say they use the tags to help other users search preferring to provide curated lists of favourites.

5. Discussion and Conclusions
Participants in our study reported being motivated to contribute to the LC Flickr project by their interest in the images themselves whether it be the beauty of the image or a desire to share their own local knowledge of the locations, events or people in the images. Recent publications in LIS have raised an awareness about local knowledge and demonstrated how it deeply affects various aspects of library services. Many special collections (especially area studies collections) have been built with the purpose of capturing local knowledge from different parts of the world (Kesselman and Weintraub, 2004). A large portion of reference questions in consortia reference services constitute local questions, which cannot be answered by non-local librarians (Bishop, 2011). Cataloguing resources about local history requires expertise in local history (Rygiel, 2012). However, with the recent trend to outsource cataloguing and reference services as well as collection development in libraries, creation and maintenance of local knowledge has been negatively affected (Bishop, 2011). With local cataloguing departments being virtually eliminated, a decreased local control of databases and reference services, and local collection development delegated to vendors, curating, cataloguing, and providing access to local area collections becomes increasingly difficult. This study demonstrates that users are eager to share local knowledge and that libraries can harness the power of social networking and web 2.0 to enhance their ability to provide local information for their collections.

6. References


Jorgensen, Corinne. 2011. "Image access, the semantic gap, and social tagging as a paradigm shift." *Advances in Classification Research Online* 18, no. 1.


