Considering Facebook in the Library

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Outline

- Facebook
  - Why do people use it?
- Libraries in Facebook
  - What have libraries done so far?
  - How well is it working?
- Case Study: NCSU Libraries Activity Wall
  - Project Overview and History
  - Student Feedback

Facebook?

- Online social network with more than 175 million users

- Average Facebook user is connected with 120 other Facebook users ("friends").

- 850 million photos added to Facebook each month.

- 28 million links posted each month.

- 25 million active user groups.

Facebook?

- Currently available in 35 languages (60 additional in development)
- 70% of users outside of the United States
- **Users spend 3 billion minutes of time on Facebook every day.**

http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

Facebook Use Cases: Adults

- Common:
  - Professional networking
  - Reconnect with former classmates
  - Dating
- Less Common:
  - Comment on friends' activity
  - Regular profile edits
  - Add photographs

Facebook Use Cases: Teens

- Common:
  - Socializing with friends
  - Regular profile edits
  - Comment on friends' activity
- Less Common:
  - Professional networking

Library Facebook Apps

- As of March 2009, approximately 60 public and academic libraries offer Facebook applications
- Typical Features
  - Catalog Search
  - Article Database Search
  - Metasearch
  - Library News
  - Library Information (hours, contact information)

Some Unique Applications

- **Swem Tools** (College of William and Mary)

    Clickable map to notify friends of your physical location in the library

- **Booth Library Ask?Away** (Eastern Illinois University)

    Live Reference Chat

But how popular are they?

- Facebook measures application popularity using a metric called **Monthly Active Users** - a monthly average of the number of people who are *using* the application.

- **Loughborough University Library** most popular library app: **139** MAU.

- **Causes** most popular overall: **25.7 million** MAU.

- Average library app: **15** MAU.
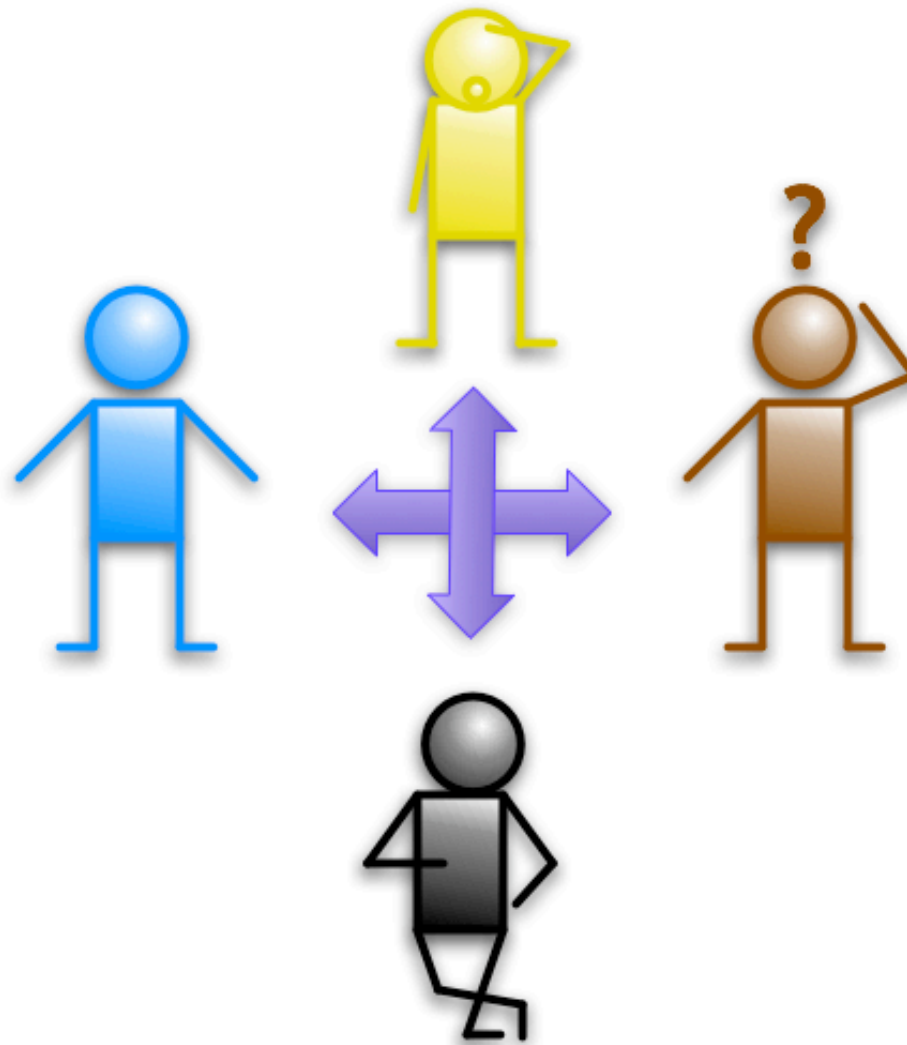
Why is use so low?

User motivations for Facebook use, regardless of demographic group, do **not** overlap with the functionality provided by existing library Facebook apps.

Traditional library web use case
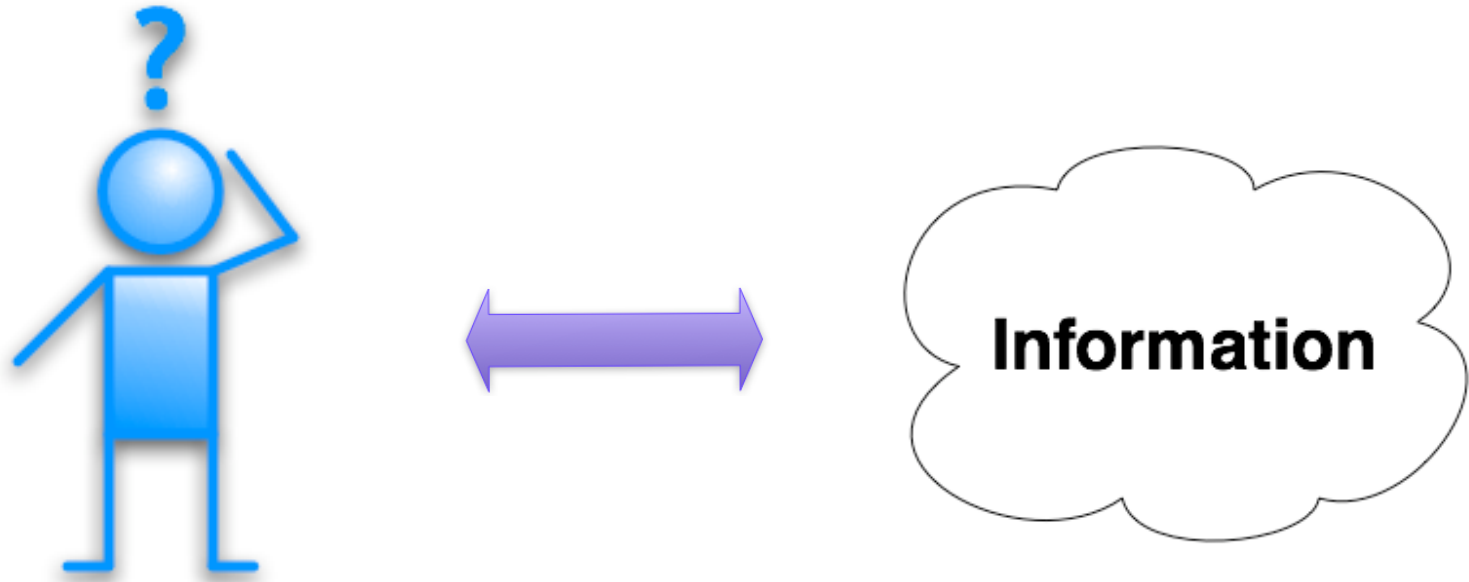
Facebook use case

Thesis

Focusing on helping people connect with each other, rather than on providing another entry point to library resources, may be a more successful outreach strategy for libraries in Facebook.

NCSU Libraries Activity Wall

- **Goal:** help students who are the library or planning to come to the library meet up in an informal way.

- **Secondarily**, provide relevant information in temporal context.

NCSU Libraries Activity Wall

Connect with other NCSU students at the library.

What are you working on right now?

I am...

| working on... | somewhere in the library ▾ |

☑ Allow people to join me

Submit

D.H. Hill is open until Friday at 11:00 PM.
Show Branch Library Hours

Recent activity by everyone

Jane Doe FINALLY beat Castle Crashers in the Learning Commons.

5 minutes ago
Report

John Doe, **Jane Smith**, and **4 others** are working on that ECE problem set on the 9th floor.

35 minutes ago
Report

James Doe and **Janelle Smitherton** are hunkered down, well fed, and completely prepared to study all day long and all night long for that CHE 101 exam on the 7th floor.

About an hour ago

Join Us   Report

See All

Recent activity by your friends

Jane Doe FINALLY beat Castle Crashers in the Learning Commons.

5 minutes ago
Report

Jim Doe, **Jill Johnson**, and **2 others** are studying for the ENG 101 exam on the 3rd floor.

Two hours ago
Join Us   Report

Joe Johnson is gonna get some shut-eye in the West Wing.

Four hours ago
Report

See All

Need a Study Room?

11:30AM - 9:00PM	Tower 3rd Floor Group Study
2:30PM - 8:00PM	Tower 5th Floor Group Study
7:00PM - 9:00PM	Tower 8th Floor Group Study

Visit Room Reservation System

March 2009 Focus Group

Likes

- Loved idea of tool to form study groups in a low-barrier way.

- "A lot of people are begging for study groups at the end of the semester" -- especially in large lecture courses

- "It definitely has a lot of potential."

March 2009 Focus Group

Dislikes

- **Does it have to be a Facebook app?**

- All participants disliked Facebook apps

- Facebook app a "barrier" to system use

- Facebook too "noisy" already

- Strong interest in organizing activities around **courses**, not physical location

Not an isolated phenomenon

	Group:	**Against Application Invites**	Join Group
	Size:	46 members	
	Type:	Internet & Technology – General	
	Matches:	Name and Description	

	Group:	**SCREW APPLICATION INVITES**	Join Group
	Size:	21 members	
	Type:	Common Interest – Activities	
	Matches:	Name and Description	

	Group:	**Ban Application Invites!!!**	Join Group
	Size:	15 members	
	Type:	Common Interest – Wine	

	Group:	**Block Incoming Application Invites**	Join Group
	Size:	650 members	
	Type:	Common Interest – Beliefs & Causes	
	Matches:	Name and Description	

Requests
- 5 you're hot requests
- 1 hottest friend request
- 9 werewolves invitations
- 6 zombies invitations
- 2 burning hot invitations
- 2 oktoberfest invitations
- 2 oktoberfest invitations
- 1 likeness unrated request
- 9 growing gift invitations
- 15 vampires invitations
- 4 hatching gift invitations
- 2 game invitations
- 4 super wall post requests
- 3 wall post requests
- 3 send sms invitations

April 2009 Focus Groups

- First focus group: facilitating group study is the killer feature

- Procedure
  - Where do students do group study?
  - How do they set up group study sessions?
  - What problems exist with current practices?
  - Reactions to concept pictures

April 2009 Focus Group Results

- **Where?**
  - Primarily the library
- **How?**
  - Exchange contact information in class
  - Phone (text and voice), Facebook, email
- **Problems?**
  - Late arrivals
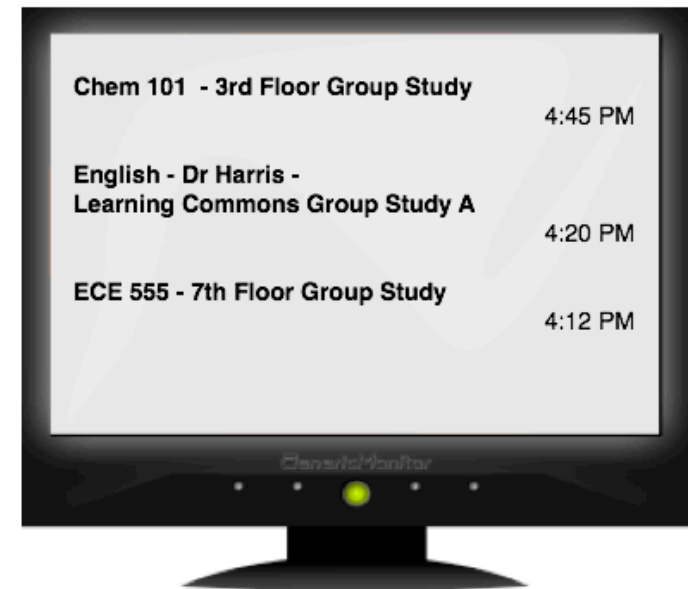 - Location
  - Cell phone reception in library

Whiteboard

- Potential for abuse
- Forcible relocation
- Repurposing
- Obscenity
- Removal of others' events.

Chem 101 – 3rd floor group study

English – Dr Harris – Learning Commons Group Study A
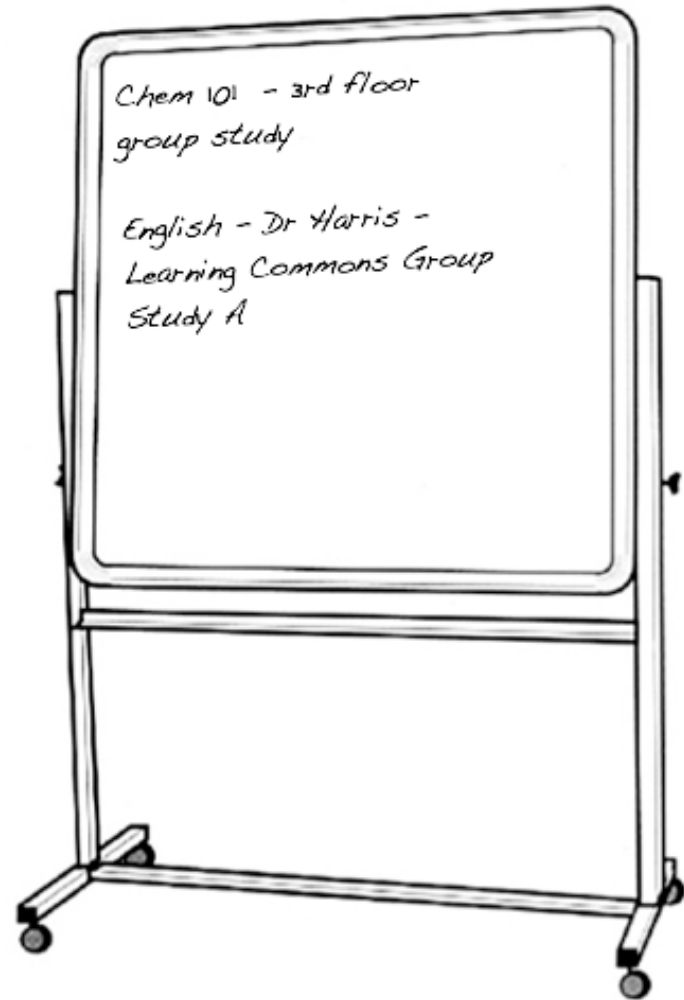
Kiosk System

- Wanted to be able to read/write system data from anywhere

- Did not want to wait in line to use

- Wanted a touch screen interface

Chem 101 - 3rd Floor Group Study
4:45 PM

English - Dr Harris -
Learning Commons Group Study A
4:20 PM

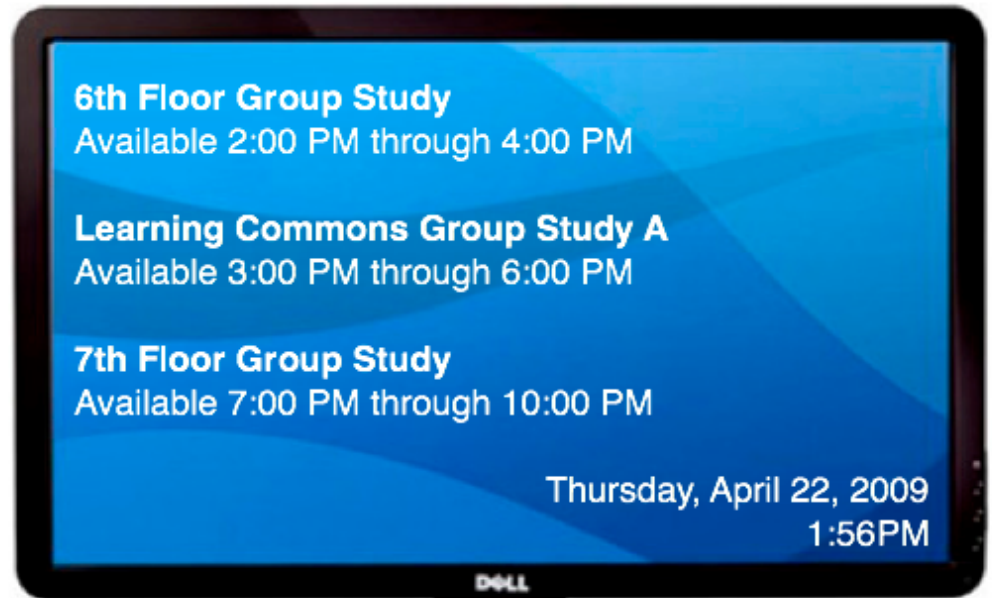ECE 555 - 7th Floor Group Study
4:12 PM

Eboard Version A

- Wanted to be able to read/write system data from anywhere

- Update activities if location changes?

- Can other people edit my activity?
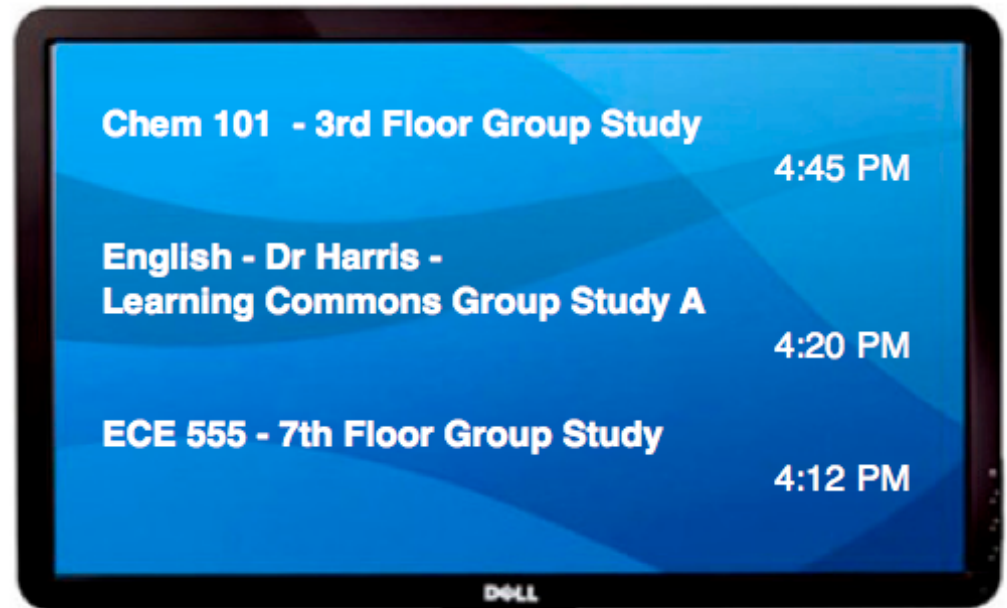
Eboard Version B

- Concerned about whether or not it will display ANY available rooms as they are highly used

Summary

- Look before you leap!

- Facebook is popular...

- Libraries have outstanding information resources...

- ... but mixing them together can be challenging. Connect with your patrons to see how they use Facebook now and whether or not your library can fit in.

Thank you!

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References

- boyd, danah. (2008). Taken Out of Context: American Teen Sociality in Networked Publics. http://www.danah.org/papers/TakenOutOfContext.pdf

- Facebook application use statistics retrieved on March 27, 2009