

Social Media Tools: Goodreads

Greg Reeve

SJSU MLIS

LIBR210

Spring 2014

Discussion Prompt

Social media is transforming the way libraries interact with their patrons in general and the way reference librarians help patrons in particular. There is an increasing emphasis on using mobile devices, particularly smart phones and tablet technologies such as the iPad. This week I would like you to locate some kind of social media application that is being used in a library. Identify the library, discuss what works and does not work, and include at least one screen shot to illustrate your points. You can use applications like Facebook, blogs, Tweeting, etc., or you can identify a useful mobile app. One place you can look for useful apps is SJSU's 23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni: Essentials for Success.

When you are writing your post, keep in mind that this is your second opportunity in LIBR 210 to use class work as an artifact for your e-portfolio in support of Core Competency H (Demonstrate proficiency in identifying, using, and evaluating current and emerging information and communication technologies.) If you plan to use this posting as an artifact, be sure to provide a substantive posting that reflects your understanding of the potentials and limitations of the application selected specifically when used in a library setting. Using screenshots to illustrate your points adds substantively to your post, but also be substantive in your reflections about the pros and cons.

Discussion Response: Goodreads

What is this assignment?

This assignment involves identifying a social media application that is being used by a library and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of this application's use in a library setting. For this assignment I chose to look at the use of the social media application [Goodreads](#) by libraries that are part of the [Salt Lake County Library system](#).

What is Goodreads?

Goodreads is a website and social media application to help people find and share books they enjoy to read (About Goodreads, 2014). Goodreads is used to help users track the books they have read, are currently reading, and plan to read. Users can rate and review books they have read. Users can get recommendations for books they may like based on the list of books they have read. Users can also share their reading information with friends and others on the site. Goodreads also includes community features like setting up groups that provide a discussion forum for group members to meet and discuss books they liked, books they are reading, or books they want to read. Groups can be used like an online book club where goals are set to read certain books over a specified period of time.

How Salt Lake County Library System is using Goodreads

The Salt Lake County Library System is using Goodreads to help promote their libraries and services while helping to create an engaged library community who love books. They have a group on Goodreads named ["Salt Lake County Library Services"](#) that is open to anyone in the public to join and discuss their favorite books and authors. They also use the Goodreads group as

a communication channel to post information about library events, author visits, book clubs, or other library-specific activities that may interest the local library community.

The library system is also using their Goodreads group page to have a book of the month that they challenge the community to read during the given month. The group page also provides genres of books related to something that is happening for the current month that can use to challenge the group members to read. The Goodreads group page also includes a discussion forum where members of the group can discuss various topics. The discussion forums are also used by the library system to promote reading challenges, reader's choice lists, and new materials at the county's libraries.

The Salt Lake County Library System also has a Goodreads account showcasing the library staffs' favorite books. This account called "Staff Favorites" is visible on the group page under moderators.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The Salt Lake County Library System uses Goodreads in an effective way to promote library reading programs and monthly reading challenges to patrons using Goodreads. Their use of Goodreads gives patrons an online commons where patrons can interact with other patrons to discuss books they have read, are reading, or want to read in a non-threatening way. The county library system's use of Goodreads to share information about upcoming events, new library materials, as well as setup polls to encourage member involvement is a useful resource for the library community.

One limitation of the site is that it isn't integrated with the Salt Lake County Library System circulation services. Users can find books in Goodreads that may not be available in the

Library. The only way to know if a book is available is by leaving the Goodreads application and check the county's library catalog. Another limitation of the use of Goodreads is that there isn't a way for the county libraries to know which members actually represent patrons to their libraries. The county libraries also can't be sure that the Goodreads users represent a majority of library patrons. Despite these limitations Goodreads is a great way for libraries to help encourage and promote a love of the library as well as build a devoted community of patrons that are engaged in finding and sharing books they love to read.

References

About Goodreads. (2014). *Goodreads* [website]. Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/about/us>

Appendix A

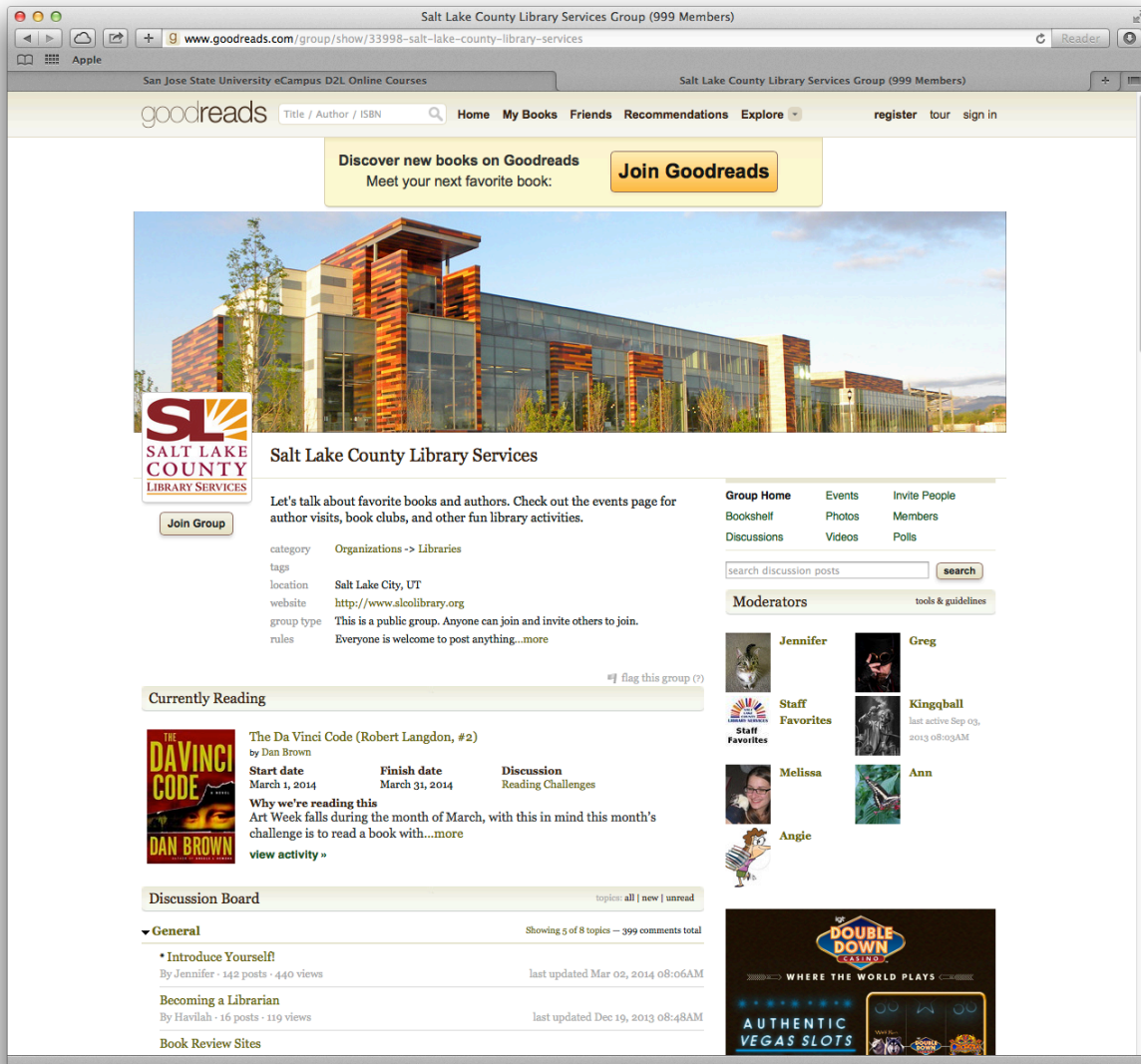


Figure 1. Salt Lake County Library System Goodreads Group

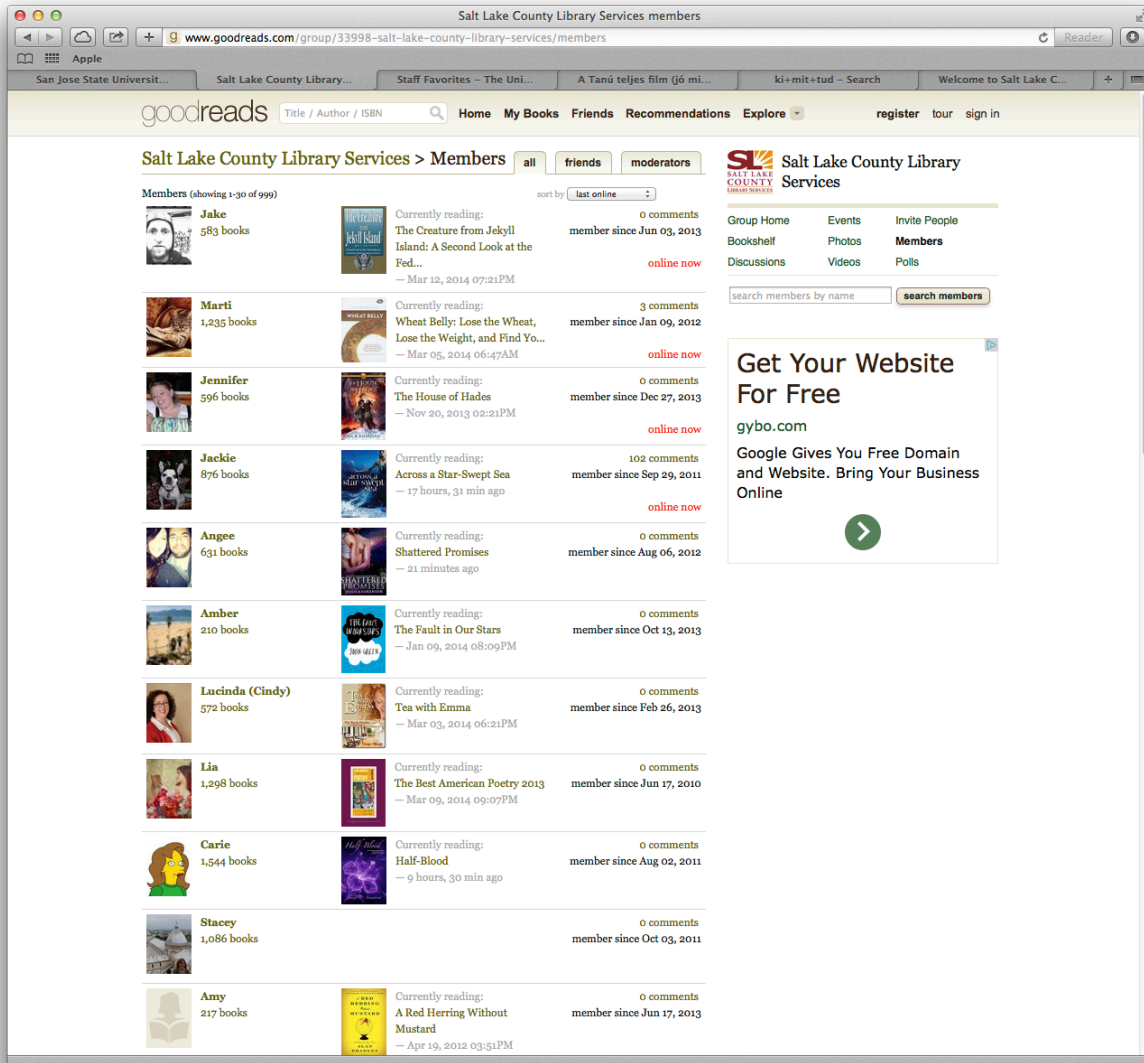


Figure 2. Salt Lake County Library System Goodreads group members.

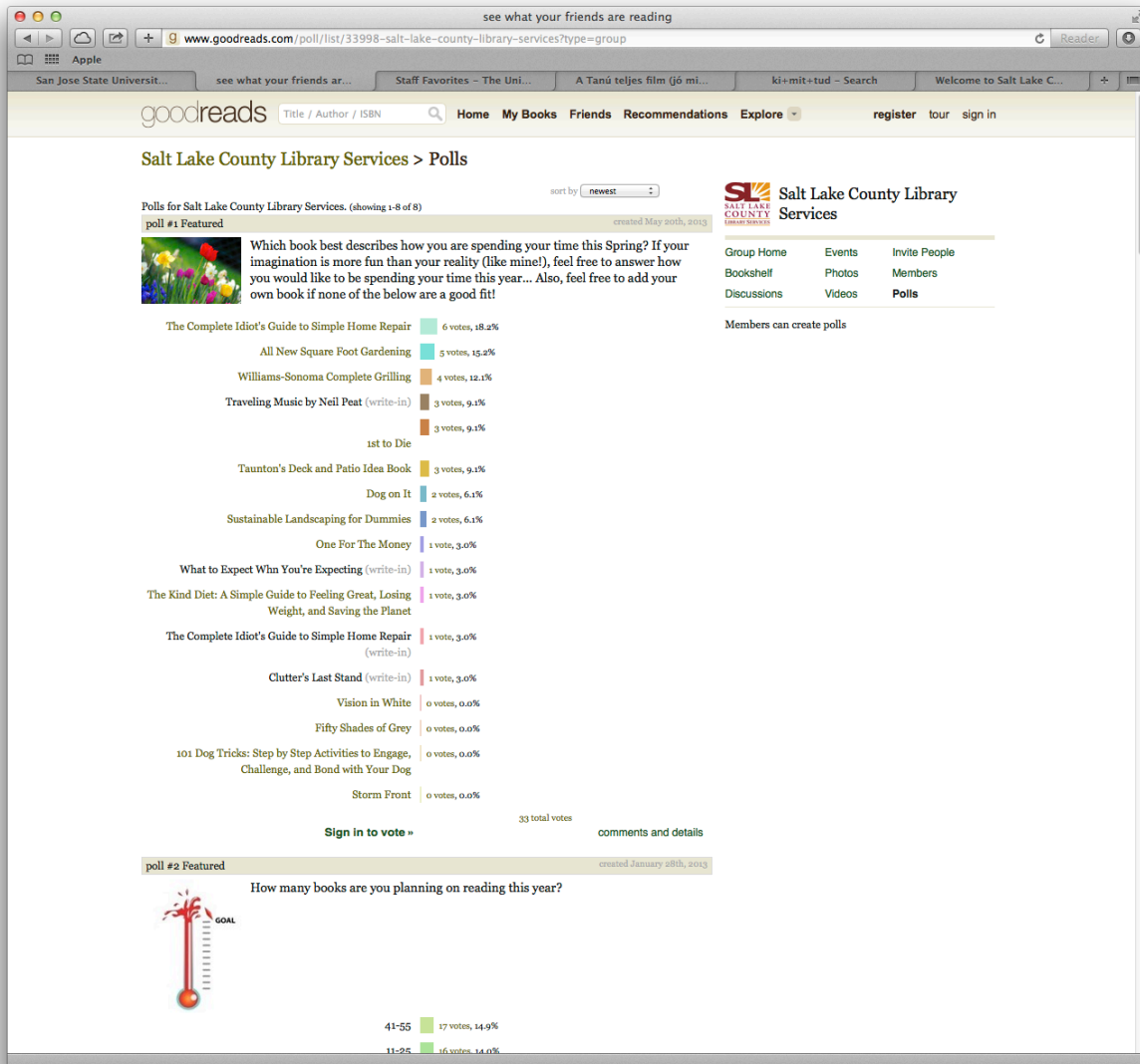


Figure 3. Salt Lake County Library System Goodreads group polls.

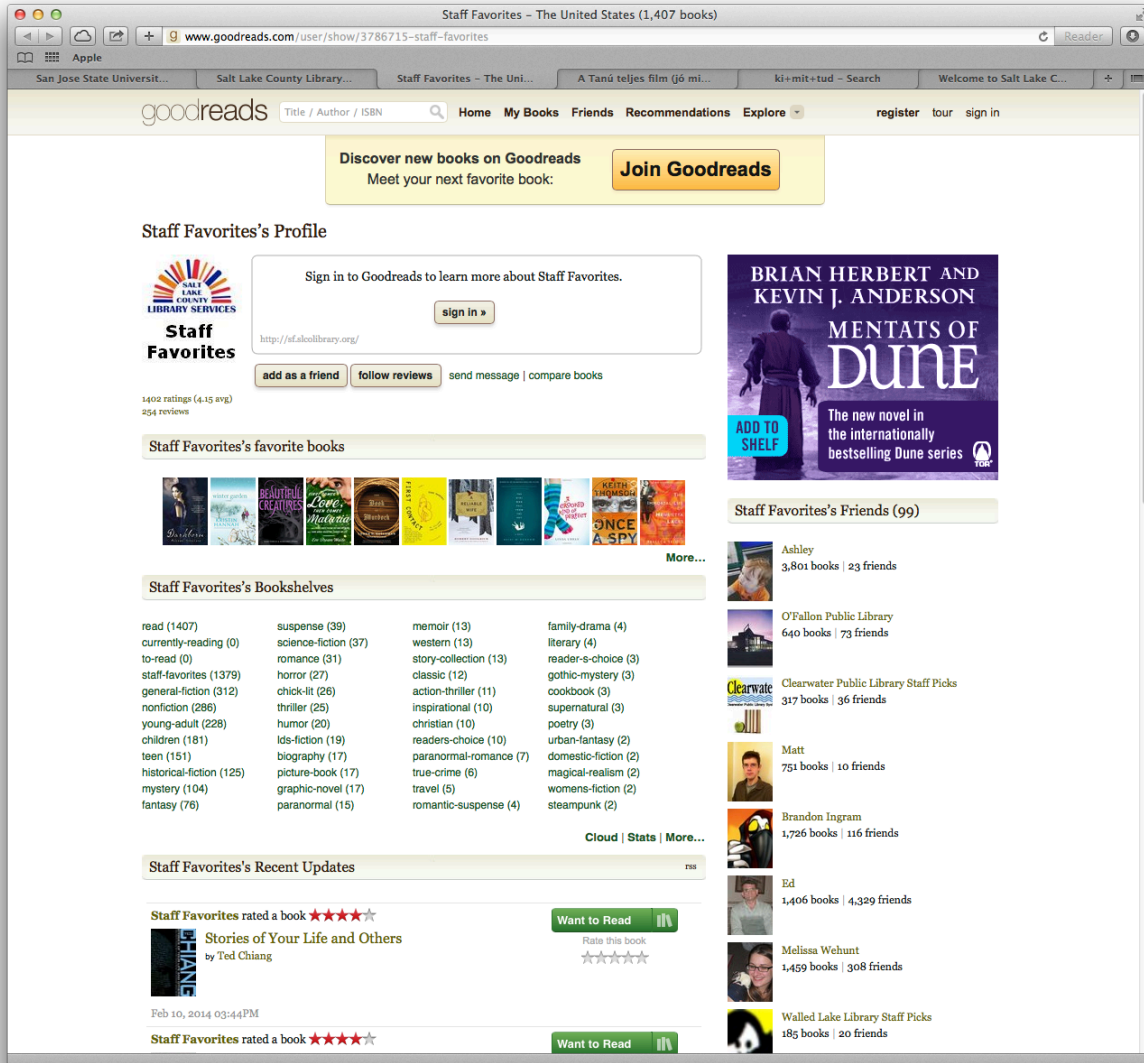


Figure 4. Salt Lake County Library System Goodreads Staff Favorites profile.

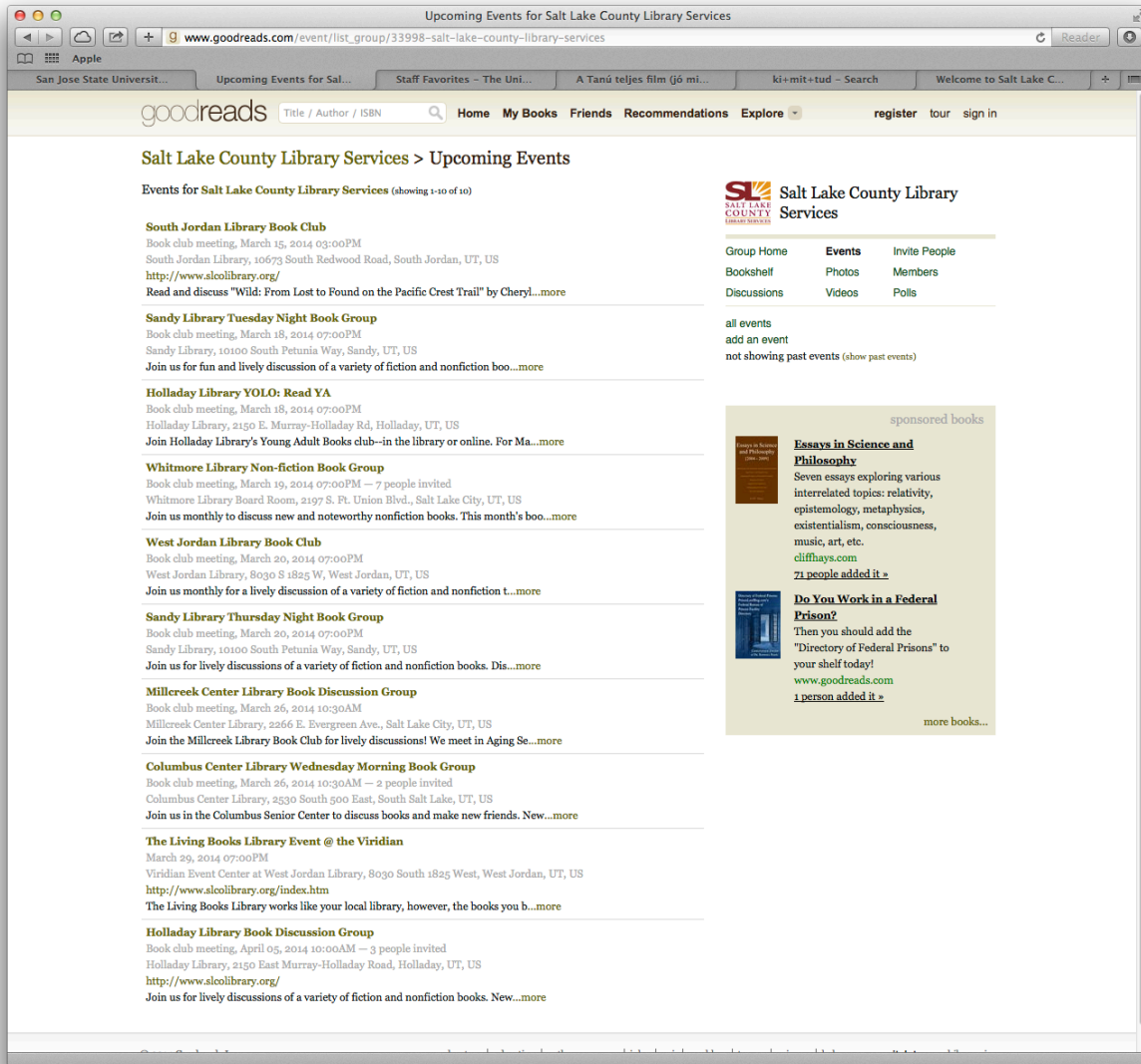


Figure 5. Salt Lake County Library System Goodreads upcoming events.