# Online Social

## Virtual

# Networks,

## Communities, Enterprises, *and* Information Professionals
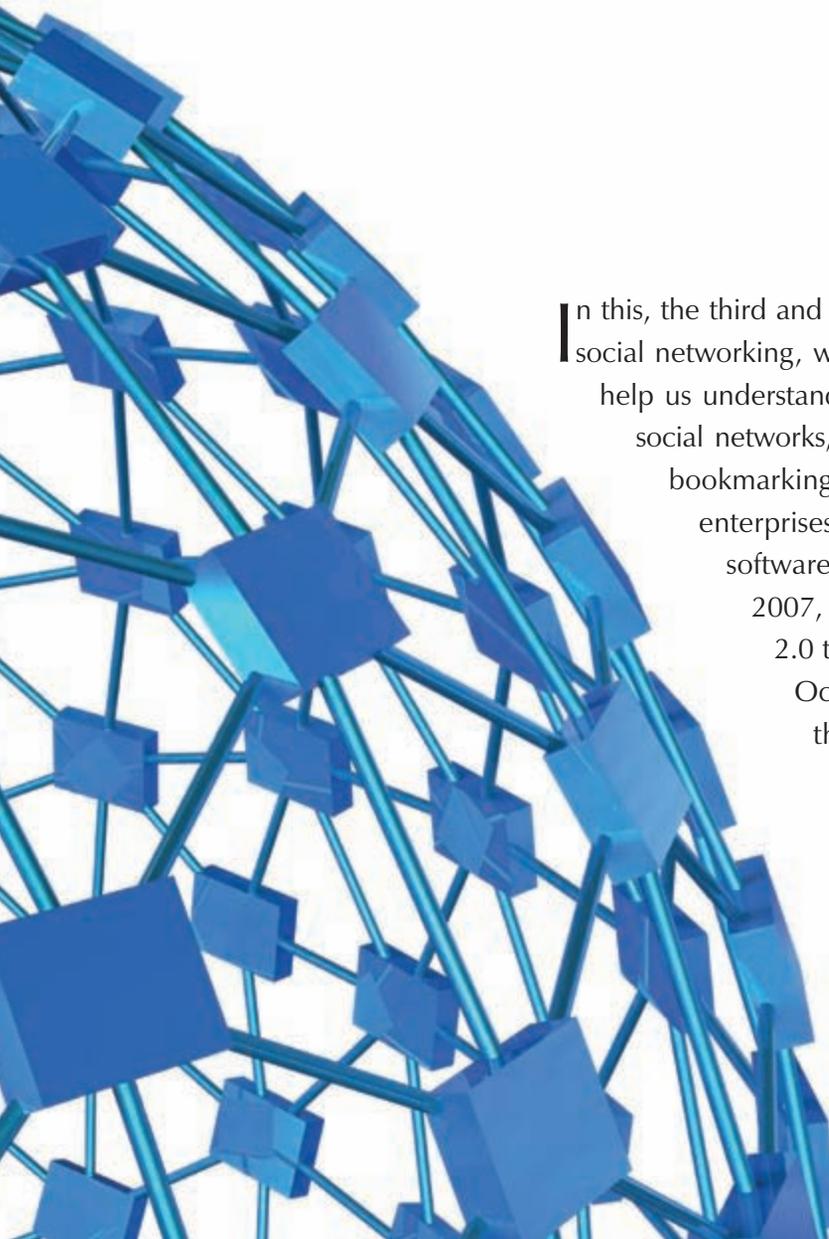
by
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In this, the third and last article in our series on enterprise applications of social networking, we focus on the results of a survey we conducted to help us understand how Web 2.0 tools (i.e., wikis, blogs, RSS, online social networks, virtual communities, social network analysis, social bookmarking, social tagging, and podcasting) are being used in enterprises. We call the collection of tools enterprise social software, or ESS. The first article, published in July/August 2007, focused on the history, science, and scope of Web 2.0 tools for enterprises. The second article, published in October 2007, carried 16 stories about how people use the new technologies in enterprises. For this final article, we interviewed and studied industry analysts (e.g., Forrester and Gartner) and surveyed more than 600 people who work in corporate, academic, and government enterprises. Over the last few months, our topic has changed a bit, but the focus has remained the same:

*Web 2.0 tools for the enterprise*.

## The Analysts

> "Enterprise social software is forecast to have compound annual revenue growth of 41.7% through 2011. Investments are expanding beyond blogs and wikis to include social software platforms, bookmarking, communities of practice, discussion forums, expertise location and information feeds."
>
> *– Gartner analysts*

McKinsey, Forrester, Group 451, Gartner, AIIM, OCLC, and others have studied the space, each with a different twist. Since we continue to believe information professionals can champion these tools in enterprises, our study focused on the information professionals who are members of the Special Libraries Association (SLA). We complemented the focus with recipients of Information Today, Inc.'s NewsLink subscribers. (See the Study Group chart below.)

## Many Definitions

When we started this project, we focused on technology definitions which have changed over the last year. What has not changed is our focus on learning about Web 2.0 or Enterprise 2.0 tools for enterprises.

On March 26, 2007, we searched Dialog's Magazines Fulltext database with the phrase "social network." We found 277 article titles. In preparation for this final article, we conducted the same exact search 1 year and 2 days later on March 29, 2008. This time we found 1,952 titles. We've expanded our scope beyond "social networks" to Enterprise Social Software or ESS. To see how others define the same space, see the Definitions chart below. Although all three definitions are good, user definitions count most.

## ESS Study Write-Up

Fielding the current survey, we wanted to discover as much as possible about the state of ESS from the perspective of information professionals within a wide range of organizations. To reach this community, we had the help of two organizations: On March 3, 2008. the Special Libraries Association (SLA) emailed its 9,000 members an invitation to take part in the survey, which was hosted online; on March 6, 2008, InfoToday.com's NewsLink, with a readership base of approximately 15,000, posted a News

## *Study Group Chart*

| | Company | Timing | Study Group | Location |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | McKinsey[1] | January 2007 | 2,847 executives | Global |
| 2 | Forrester[2] | June 2007 | 1,017 software IT decision makers | North America and Europe |
| 3 | Group 451[3] | 2007 | 2,081 IT and business professionals | NA |
| 4 | OCLC[4] | February 2007 | 6,545 general public users of consumer-based services, 382 U.S. library directors | Global/U.S. |
| 5 | AIIM[5] | January 2008 | 441 IT professionals, execs | Global |
| 6 | Reid & Gray | March 2008 | 609 mostly information professionals | U.S. |

[1] "How businesses are using Web 2.0": A McKinsey Global Survey [http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/article_page.aspx?ar=1913&pagenum=1]

[2] Forrester's Q3 2007 Enterprise and SMB Software Survey, North America and Europe, and Forrester's June 2007 U.S. Web 2.0 Online Survey

[3] "The New Social Order" by Kathleen Reidy and The 451 Group http://www.the451group.com

[4] "Sharing Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World," ©2007, OCLC

[5] AIIM Market IQ — Enterprise 2.0: Agile, Emergent, and Integrated – A January 2008 study of 441 end users

## *Definitions Chart*

| Author | Definition |
|---|---|
| Gartner | Enterprise Social Software (ESS). Fosters informal collaborative activities that fall outside the scope of transactional applications, formal workflows, or engineered teams. It is software that encourages, captures, filters, and organizes informal user interactions. It is "socializing" technology that helps to create and nurture connections between people and to make more explicit the collective knowledge of the people in an organization. It is also sometimes referred to as Enterprise 2.0. |
| Forrester | Enterprise Web 2.0. A set of technologies and applications that enable efficient interaction among people, content, and data in support of collectively fostering new businesses, technology offerings, and social structures |
| AIIM | Enterprise 2.0. "A system of web-based technologies that provide rapid and agile collaboration, information sharing, emergence and integration capabilities." |
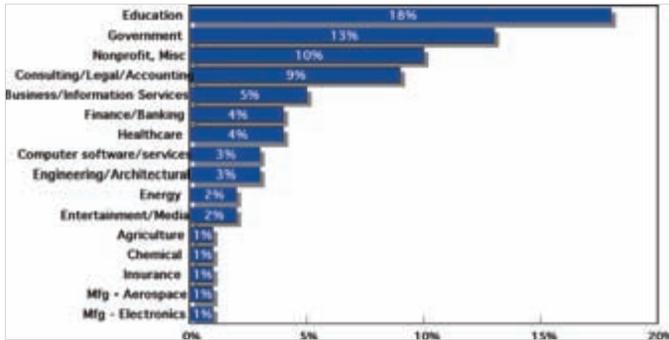
**Table 1: Which of the following best describes your industry? (n=606)**

Digest item pointing InfoToday.com visitors to the online survey questionnaire.

To screen respondents, we first asked them if their organizations used at least one of the following social software tools, for which we provided links to detailed definitions:

- Wiki software
- Blog software
- RSS service
- Social network analysis
- Online social networks
- Online virtual worlds
- Social tagging software
- Social bookmarking software
- Podcasts

Six hundred and six individuals from the info pro community completed the online questionnaire between March 3 and March 21, 2008. Of the 606 who participated, 379 (63%) reported that their organizations used at least one of the nine social software tools we listed; 227 (37%) indicated that their organizations do not use any of the tools listed. The 379 who reported their organizations used at least one of the tools were used as cases for analysis, while the 227 who indicated their organizations did not use the tools were asked about their organization's age, size, and industry category, then screened out of the questionnaire. The final sample of information professionals used for analysis represented organizations from more than 16 industry categories. Two-thirds of the organizations represented by respondents have more than 100 employees while 46% have more than 500 employees. Table 1 above displays the distribution of respondents across industry categories.

## Gartner's Suggested Approach to Implementation

We respect the quality and approach taken by Anthony Bradley at Gartner. He is the analyst in this area and has defined a clear approach. He says: "The single most important aspect of Enterprise Web 2.0 success lies in effective community identification, cultivation and business value extraction." Bradley adds, "Achieving the Web 2.0 system's purpose must demand/need/want community participation." His framework, defined with the acronym **PLANT SEEDS**, is clear and easy to understand:

| P L A N T S E E D S | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Purpose** | Have a clear business purpose with measurable value. |
| **Liberty** | IT should keep rules to a minimum and err on the side of too much liberty. |
| **Authorship** | If there is no need for community authorship, the application is not Web 2.0. |
| **Nurture** | Leaders must care and participate. |
| **Tipping Point** | To self-sustain, identify thought leaders to get you to the tipping point. |
| **Structure** | Authoring, tagging, and content templates should facilitate, not restrict, flexibility. |
| **Ease of Use** | Less is more. |
| **Ecosystem** | Integrate with legacy systems and established work flows. |
| **Discoverable** | Easy content discovery is key. |
| **Seed** | Seed the system with compelling base content and participants |

## QUESTION

**"Briefly describe any tangible results your organization has experienced from the following (9) ESS services:**

# *Verbatim Results*

## Wiki

"New employee ramp-up time."

"Project visibility and transparency and ready availability of knowledge."

"Identified market problems posed by several new investment products and took steps to mitigate these issues."

"Developed a team of engaged professionals cooperatively working on an issue…"

"Improved staff communication and improved project organization and management."

"Much better capture of tribal knowledge than the usual mailing list archive method amongst the developers."

"Adds context to archived information and insights. Allows company to make hyperlinked connections between projects and initiatives documents."

"Standards compliance, knowledge management, support tools, online reference."

"Compile lessons learned/problem reports required for ISO 9000."

"This software has increased the ability for information conveyance from one part of the organization to another."

"Folks from many other departments have told us they want to mirror our wiki. They are also participating in much active discussions on our wiki pages regarding a diverse group of topics."

"Able to collaborate in a group workspace that is password protected but not behind a firewall so can be accessed off hours."

"Easier to share tasks/ideas among team members."

"Better awareness, better client management."

"Our procedures are much easier to update and are, therefore, more often updated."

"Able to organize and run a conference using wiki software. Allowed multiple people to provide input."

"Documentation is easier to organize and find."

"It has helped us to access the information we need faster and keep that information accurate."

"Better way to access and update departmental procedures previously in word doc w/track changes…"

"Major improvements in internal communications and better information sharing."

"Centralized, easily and quickly updated info source available to those who need it."

## Blog

"Improved communication, less e-mails clutter."

"Improved communication with clients and staff."

"Better broadcast mechanism that can lead to conversations, but leans toward announce."

"The Information Center blog has proved to be an effective method to communicate with students."

"Provide subscribable, easily updated, classified ads for our library tech students+ADs."

"Useful marketing and bus development tool."

"Have used to increase organization's global reputation. Is also a repository of knowledge."

"The history of a discussion is documented."

"Gotten national press, great visibility, clients."

"More participation from our communities (internal and external). Improved SEO results (more keywords)."

# *From ESS Survey*

## RSS

"Corporate messages are distributed quickly to stockholders, the investment community and customers."

"Developed this as a way for instructors to easily embed content into campus learning management…"

"We distribute our material more widely, allowing the companies we regulate to monitor changes…"

"We use RSS for easy distribution of press releases and blog postings."

"Transformed how a small team can track and make available large volume of information…"

"Push web information and resources in their coverage areas to reporters and editors."

"Technology allows easy promotion of our resources and services as well as news items of interest."

"Time saver for scanning industry developments and news."

"Used to help us stay on top of key topics. Information flows automatically to us."

"Easier data integration from knowledge portal with corporate intranet."

"RSS has shown the best results. Catalog searches have risen sharply as a direct result."

"Increased our visibility to management. Increased our visibility outside of our division."

"More people subscribing to our information and news."

## Online Social Networks

"Lead generation, partnership opportunities, collaboration, project management."

"Maintain connections with colleagues."

"Identification of talent not otherwise known prior to utilization."

"Increase awareness of social networking in libraries at conferences and workshops."

"Useful for finding contacts at prospect companies. Good for identifying speakers. Keeping up with past colleagues."

"Connections with people I would not have known otherwise."

"Have increased visibility as well as connections to other information professionals."

## Social Tagging

"Over 500 photographs in a searchable, online database for use in annual reports, etc."

"Useful way to track interesting articles and see who else was interested. Can lead to serendipitous finding of new information (e.g., someone who tagged the same article and has similar interests may know of other sources of interest to you)."

"Increased searching and browsing capabilities of the library's electronic resources."

"Has helped us find information more quickly that we have published as well as others."

"I use Furl, and I suppose it is more for bookmarking than tagging. It is harder for me to see how much use I get from my community. I can see my page views, which are larger than I expected, but I do not know where they come from."

## Podcasting

"More interest in our services and collections — i.e., more people coming in the door."

"We use these internally and externally. It's very easy and that's what we like."

"Initial foray is publishing weekly podcasts from the governor. Initial interest/use fairly high, but tapered off quickly."

"Increased number of visits to site and downloads."

"Customers are downloading podcasts, reducing staff time for live training sessions."

"Useful way to allow an alternative medium for customers and interested parties to get information from our company, esp. conference sessions."

"Upper management has provided additional dollars for more equipment."

"Conferences and events can be viewed by members of the organization that are unable to attend said events."

"The voice of the organization is shared, literally."
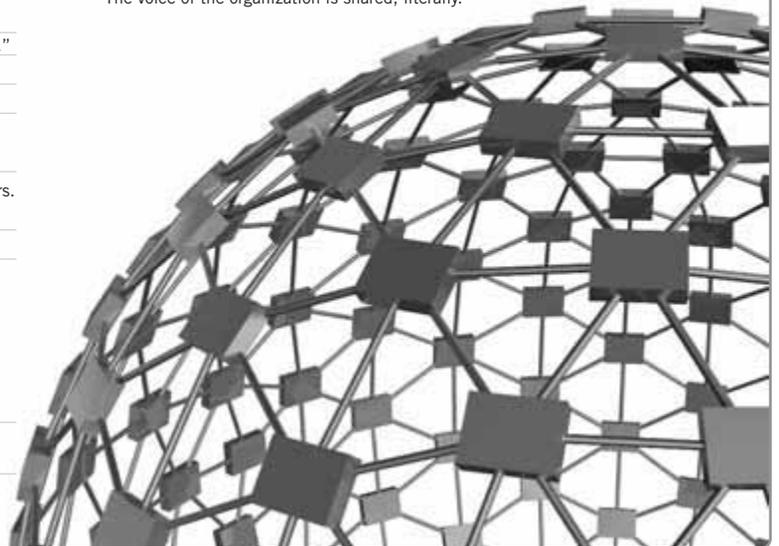
# Highlights of Preliminary Results

## *The Goals and Uses of ESS*

Our preliminary analysis of survey results suggests that information professionals currently perceive improved communication and collaboration as the key benefits of enterprise social software. When asked what issues their organizations had in mind when deciding to implement social software in the enterprise, 71% of respondents said "improving internal employee communication" and 47% indicated" improving collaboration/communication with suppliers and customers." These are the main issues organizations sought to address in acquiring ESS tools. Conversely, only 18% and 19% of respondents, respectively, reported that "discovering latent talent" and "latent efficient relationships and processes" among employees as a key goal for the organization. When asked to describe how ESS tools were used in various departments, as well as the types of "tangible successes" they've experienced, respondents provided vignettes of information sharing and collaborative interactions among employees.

Table 2 (top left) suggests the hierarchy of issues that organizations may drive the use of ESS in many organizations:

If improving communication and collaboration is a key promise ESS holds for the organization, what tools do enterprises use to pursue these ends? Table 3 (bottm left) presents the types of ESS tools respondents indicated were being put to use in their organizations, as well as the ones their organizations "plan to" or "don't plan to" pursue.

The results displayed in Table 3 suggest that RSS, blog, and wiki software may be the most prevalent forms of ESS now in use in the organizations represented by our sample of information professionals. Social network analysis tools, used primarily to help the organization understand how information networks function within the organizational structure, are clearly perceived to be the least used and least anticipated tools in the ESS arsenal we presented to respondents.

Another factor driving the prevalence of tools currently used in the enterprise seems to be the relative ease of acquisition involved in deployment. Results presented in Table 4 on page 35 suggests that the two ESS tools requiring the greatest percentage of organizations to purchase them are the same two that respondents cited as the least prevalent in their organizations' ESS arsenal. While more than half of the respondents who use the tool report that their organizations had to purchase social network analysis software in some manner and nearly half of those using online virtual world software had to purchase it, with only 23% of respondents reporting the same for RSS software, 30% for wiki software, and 36% for blog software, respectively. RSS, blogs, and wikis top the list of those tools reported in use by our respondents (see Table 3 ).
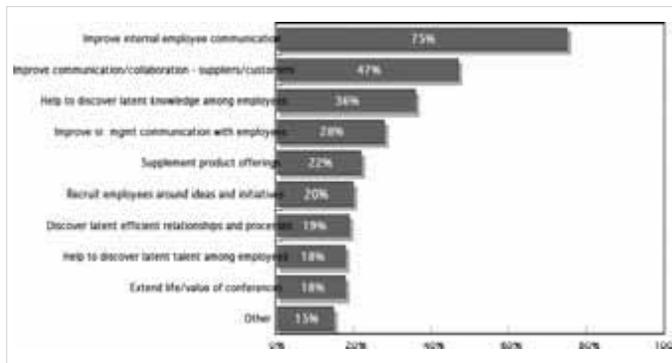


**Table 2: In deciding to purchase and/or acquire ESS services, which of the following, if any, best describes the business issue(s) the organization intended to address?**
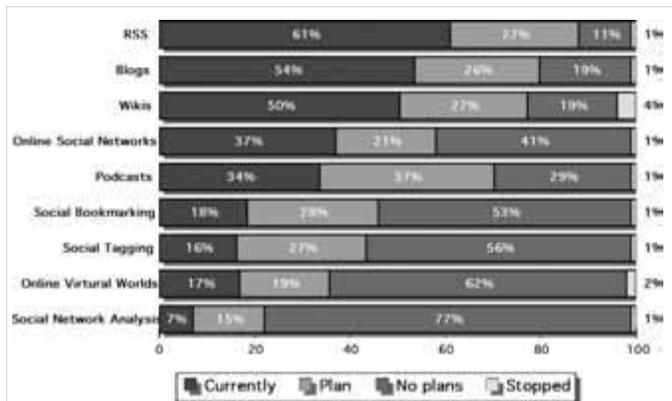


**Table 3: Below is a list of different forms of Enterprise Social Software (ESS). Indicate which, if any, your organization: has used but does not currently use; currently uses; never have used but plan to use; have no plans to use. (n=379)**

# Who's Using the Tools?

Table 5 on page 35 displays the percentage of respondents who indicated the active use of ESS tools in the various departments presented on the survey questionnaire. Note that the current study focused on reaching information professionals, most of whom have responsibility for libraries within their organizations. "Libraries" as departments have not been separated out

in other ESS studies with which we are familiar.[1] The indication then that 71% of respondents see ESS at work in libraries may have significant interest to the information professional community. The remaining pattern in results reported in Table 5 tracks that of other recent studies[2] and therefore, increases our confidence that the pattern reported by the current study's respondents accurately reflects what is taking place in various types of today's enterprises.

To understand the dynamics of ESS in the enterprise, readers should view the pattern presented in Table 5 in the context of the "issues" our respondent's organizations sought to address in procuring ESS (see Table 2) as well as the types of tools used to address those issues (see Table 3). As the ESS use evolves, it will be interesting to observe how its use is distributed across enterprises and how that distribution facilitates or inhibits the tools from reaching their full potential for addressing organizational goals.

## How Far Along Is Implementation of ESS Across the Enterprise?

A key factor in shaping the experience respondents may have with ESS to date is the extent to which various ESS tools are implemented within, across, and outside the organization. We asked respondents to tell us the breadth of implementation for each tool currently in use. In reviewing Table 6 (below bottom), we note that some tools may suit the organization best as departmentwide implementations, while others might naturally prove most useful organizationwide, depending on the entity. One should distinguish between tools in the pilot stage and those "deployed" either department- or organization-wide. Table 6 shows that ESS tools are fully deployed (department- and/or organization-wide) in two-thirds to three-fourths of the organizations using the tools. This suggests that ESS tools, when acquired, involve large proportions of an organization's employees and/or customers/suppliers.

The wide deployment of ESS tools across enterprises at once suggests that the communication/collaboration facets of the software's offerings have a strong chance of being realized and that the organization has taken a degree of risk in aggressively rolling out software that may still be in an embryonic stage of development. Those within the enterprise responsible for managing the deployed tools should be in a position to collect a significant amount of feedback in a short period of time due to the
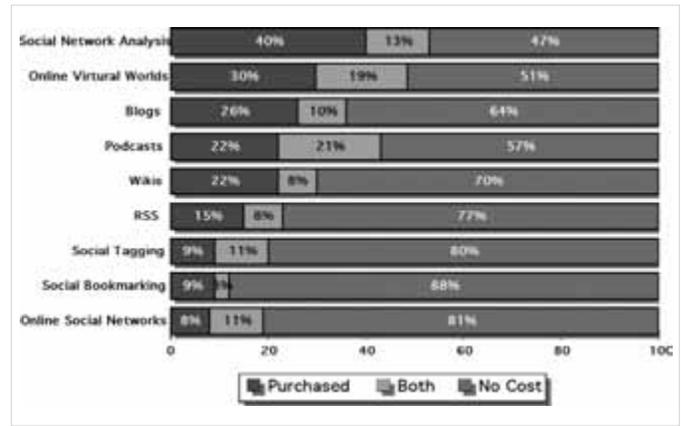
Table 4: Of the following services you indicated you are using, which, if any, did the organization purchase and which did it acquire at no cost? (n=379)
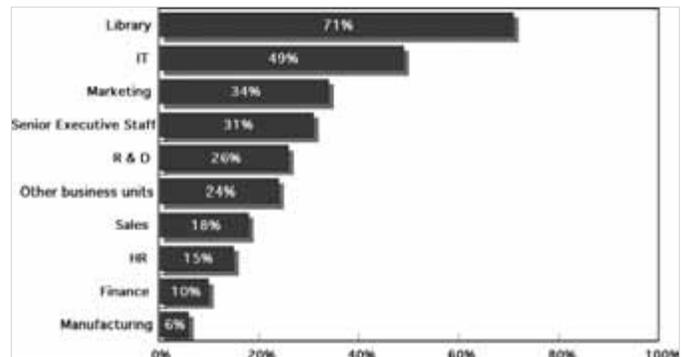


Table 5: Which departments in your organization are currently using ESS? (n=379)
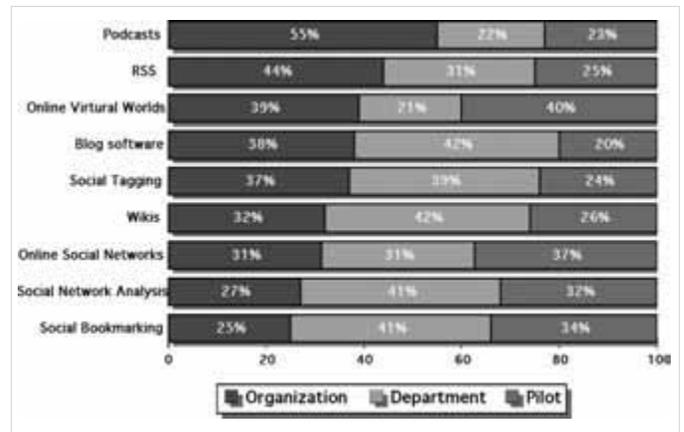


Table 6: Which of the following best describes the current stage of deployment for each ESS service at your organization, overall? Small Pilot, Dept-wide deployment or Organization-wide deployment. (n=379)

# How to Become 'ESS-Literate' in 30 Days

We hope through our series of articles and the huge wave of Web 2.0 news and activity, your interest in enterprise social software has increased. As information professionals, you are expert learners and adapters. Your job is to find, evaluate, organize, and apply information tools to meet your organization's needs. ESS is all about information. We think you are the "ideal champions" to guide the ESS effort. As with anything new, you will need allies in IT and other business units. You will need to learn more. To become ESS-literate quickly, we suggest you take the following five steps:

1  EXPERIMENT

2  READ

3  LISTEN

4  TALK

5  EXPERIMENT MORE

## 1  EXPERIMENT

***Don't delay!*** Jump in head first, no research, no reviews, no best practices. *Take action now!* What does that mean? You will have time to research and read later, but today or in the next few days do one of the following:

■  Join LinkedIn [http://www.linkedin.com] and read Kim Dority's notes explaining how to make it work for an information professional at http://www.liscareer.com/dority_linkedin.htm.

■  Join Ning [http://www.ning.com] and join more than 2,800 Library 2.0 members at http://library20.ning.com.

■  Subscribe to Twitter [http://www.twitter.com] and start microblogging today to stay connected in real time.

■  Choose one of the following services and start your own blog: Blogger [http://www.blogger.com], Movable Type [http://www.movabletype.com], or WordPress [http://www.wordpress.com].

■  Register with Library Thing [http://www.librarything.com]. It is a very safe place to get a few people for participating in a web-based social network.

■  Join the Knowledge Management (KM) division of the Special Libraries Association (SLA). It has an active KM wiki [http://wiki.sla.org/display/SLAKM/Welcome%21].

You might already be familiar with Web 2.0, but until you really start using it, you won't know from experience what works and what doesn't. Using it will allow you to tell your own stories!

## 2  READ

### Books

We recommend all these great books and have listed them in the order of what you should read:

*The Virtual Handshake: Opening Doors and Closing Deals Online* by David Teten and Scott Allen. Amacom, 2005, ISBN: 0814472869.

*Net Work: A Practical Guide to Creating and Sustaining Networks at Work and in the World* by Patti Anklam. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007, ISBN: 0750682973.

*The Hidden Power of Social Networks: Understand How Work Really Gets Done in Organizations* by Robert L. Cross. Harvard Business School Press, 2004, ISBN: 1591392705.

*Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams. Portfolio Hardcover, 2008, ISBN: 1591841933.

*Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* by Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom. Portfolio Hardcover, 2006, ISBN: 1591841437.

*Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software* by Steven Johnson. Scribner, 2002, ISBN: 0684868768.

*Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means* by Albert-Laszlo Barabasi. Plume, 2003, ISBN: 0452284392.

*Naked Conversations: How Blogs Are Changing the Way Businesses Talk with Customers* by Robert Scoble and Shel Israel. Wiley, 2006, ISBN: 047174719X.

*The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business as Usual* by Christopher Locke et al. ISBN-10: 0738202444

### Articles

"Online Social Networks, Virtual Communities, Enterprises, and Information Professionals: Part 1, Past and Present," *Searcher*, vol. 15, no. 7, July/August 2007, pp. 32+ [http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/jul07/Reid_Grey.shtml]; "Part 2, Stories," vol. 15, no. 9, October 2007, pp. 23+ [http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/infotoday/access/1360127351.html?dids=1360127351:1360127351:1360127351:1360127351&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT:TG:PAGE&type=current&date=Oct+2007&author=Mike+Reid&pub=Searcher&edition=&startpage=23&desc=Online+Social+Networks%2C+Virtual+Communities%2C+Enterprises%2C+and+Information+Professionals; FEE].
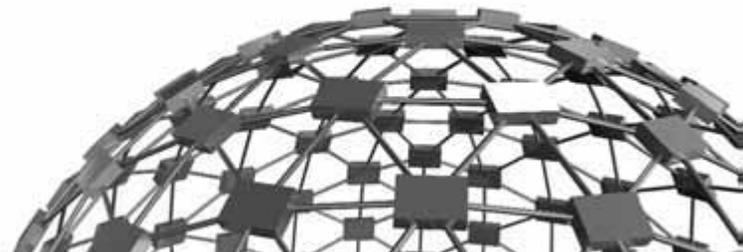
## *Market Research Studies*

At least two of the following 14 studies combine the advantages of comprehensiveness, relevance, and no charge: "Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World," published by OCLC [http://www.oclc.org/reports/sharing/default.htm], and "Enterprise 2.0: Agile, Emergent and Integrated," published by AIIM [http://www.aiim.org/article-industrywatch.asp?ID=34464]. For more extensive information about each report, including a summary, contributors, and cost, go to http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/jun08 and look for the Market Research Studies link.

**Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World**
September 2007, OCLC
http://www.oclc.org/reports/sharing/default.htm

**The New Social Order**
The 451 Group
http://www.the451group.com

**Enterprise 2.0 – What is the real story?**
April 2008, AIIM
http://www.aiim.org

**Wikis at Work**
August 2007, Yankee Group
http://www.yankeegroup.com

**Corporate Use of Web 2.0 Technologies**
January 2008, ChangeWave
http://www.changewave.com

**The Future of Social Networks**
February 2008, Datamonitor
http://www.datamonitor.com

**Does Your Enterprise Need Web 2.0?**
September 2007, Ovum Plc
http://www.ovum.com

**Enterprise 2.0: How Web 2.0 Technologies Will Transform Applications in the Enterprise Workplace**
September 2006, IDC
http://www.idc.com

**Who's Who in Enterprise Social Software**
July 2007, Gartner
http://www.gartner.com

**The Emerging Enterprise Social Software Marketplace**
July 2007, Gartner
http://www.gartner.com

**Five Major Challenges Organizations Face Regarding Social Software**
February 2008, Gartner http://www.gartner.com

**Walking The Fine Line Between Chaos And Control In The World Of Enterprise Web 2.0**
February 2008, Forrester
http://www.forrester.com

**Top Enterprise Web 2.0 Predictions For 2008**
February 2008, Forrester
http://www.forrester.com

**Social Media Best Practices: Profiles and Recommendations**
April 2007, Shore Communications
http://www.shore.com

## *Blogs*

From the overwhelming number of blogs in the area, we recommend you try these for a start:

**http://econtent.typepad.com**
Rich Hoag, Honeywell Engineering Division, Corp E-Learning

**http://battellemedia.com**
John Battelle, founder and chairman of Federated Media Publishing, as well as the one of the founders of *Wired* and *The Industry Standard* magazines.

**http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/index.php**
Meredith Farkas, Distance Learning Librarian, Norwich University

**http://www.bloglines.com/blog/BillDrew**
Bill Drew, Associate Librarian, Systems and Reference, Morrisville State College Library

## *White Papers*

While buyers should always beware when using vendor-published literature before making a business case or buying decision, you could still find some useful nuggets of information in white papers from the following list of vendors [http://www.enterprisesocialsoftware.info]. Click on the Vendors tab at the top of the page.

**How to Become 'ESS-Literate' in 30 Days** (continued)

## 3 LISTEN

This could mean a number of things, and we recommend you do a little of all of them. First, you should *listen to us*!! Our podcasts will be available at http://itc.conversationsnetwork.org/shows/detail3612.html. You can listen on the way to work, download a podcast, or stream a presentation right to your desktop computer. Try these sites for other useful podcasts in the field:

**http://itc.conversationsnetwork.org/index.html**
Good resource for all things tech with a number of interviews on Web 2.0.

**http://www.nfais.org/events/event_details.cfm?id=42**
NFAIS: User-Generated Content and Social Media

**http://www.infotoday.com/il2006/presentations/index.shtml and**
**http://www.infotoday.com/il2007/presentations/index.shtml**
Internet Librarian presentations

**http://www.slideshare.net/jderagon/social-networking-presentation**
The Value of Social Networking by Jay Deragon, June 19, 2007, Slideshare has a number of Web 2.0 presentations that are worth a look.

### Conferences, Both Large and Small.

You can find a growing list of Web 2.0 conferences. If you cannot afford the time or money for a big one, check those at the local university or a smaller information or technology association. Or try these:

**Graphing Social Patterns East 2008**
June 9–11, 2008
Washington, D.C.
http://conferences.oreillynet.com

**Enterprise 2.0 Conference**
June 9–12, 2008
Boston
http://www.enterprise2conf.com

**Social Networking Conference**
July 10–11, 2008
San Francisco
http://www.socialnetworkingconference.com/

**The International Symposium on Wikis (WikiSym 2008)**
Sept. 8–10
Porto, Portugal
http://www.wikisym.org/ws2008/index.php/Main_Page

**Web 2.0 Expo**
Sept. 16–19
New York City
http://en.oreilly.com/webexny2008/public/content/home

**Social Networking Conference**
Sep. 22–23, 2008
London
http://www.socialnetworkingconference.com/

### Education and Training

Check local resources, graduate schools of library and information science, and association CPE programs such as these:

**SLA**
http://sla.learn.com

**AIIM**
http://www.aiim.org/education/certificate.asp

**Five Weeks to a Social Library is the first free, grassroots, completely online course devoted to teaching librarians about social software and how to use it in their libraries.**
http://www.sociallibraries.com/course/week4

## 4 TALK

Having conversations with a purpose is different than just chatting at a conference. Build a list of key questions then find the answers. You can then relate these answers to those interested (or those who should be interested) in ESS within your organization along with your own experiences using social software. When you talk with others (experts, user-buyers, novices), you can stimulate intelligent conversations, gain some insight as to their needs and reactions, and share some knowledge of your own! You might even consider moderating a panel on ESS or contributing to a live Web 2.0 event.

## 5 EXPERIMENT MORE

Once you have personal experience with social software and can define a purpose for it in your organization, you may be ready to deploy ESS at a pilot level. These sources can help:

**SLA Innovation Laboratory**
[http://www.sla.org/innovate]
A great program that will allow you to learn by experience working with technology! Kudos to Stephen Abram!

**http://www.enterprisesocialsoftware.info/vendors**
As mentioned before, we track the growing and confusing list of ESS vendors. Many have online networks you can join; some offer free open source software. You can review applications and determine if you want a specific solution (e.g. just a Blog application) or an entire platform of ESS features (e.g., blog, wiki, expert finder, RSS feeder, and more all in one platform). If you are just getting started, a wiki or a blog could be a good starting point. You might even find your organization already has a number of ESS projects underway. Find the people running these programs and take the leadership role for your department. Or work with a team of associates and design a department pilot of your own.

*Launch now and iterate later!*

# Excerpted Results From the ESS Survey

## *Details About Who Is Using the Tools and How*

### Senior Executive Staff

Use a wiki for **building horizontal communities of practice.**

"We blog for customers. We blog for staff."

Our senior staff uses blogs and wikis to **discuss proprietary issues.**

Our CEO blogs on behalf of our organization, as do most of the EVPs.

Our CEO blogs and uses RSS feeds to **share corporate news** and initiatives.

Several of the senior staff are using a wiki to **collaborate on writing a book**.

"All senior staff are expected to and indeed do blog."

Our **Second Life island is used by Execs in demos** and talks about our firm.

ESS is used throughout the company **to plan and manage projects.**

Senior execs **podcast company performance.**

The **CIO blogs about non-IT related stuff, like work/life balance issues**, team building, change, trust.

The **VP of R&D and CTO blog about internal R&D news**, initiatives, and product developments.

### Sales

Sales reps **use LinkedIn for lead generation.**

**Write proposals** and respond to Requests For Proposals (RFP) on a wiki.

Our client relations team **uses RSS to keep track of client activity** and current industry trends. They use wikis to understand how team projects are developing.

**Our sales people blog**, use the internal wiki, get RSS feeds, uses social networking tools, to help with sales, communicate with customers, find potential clients, and keep in touch with us.

They use an **internal blog for competitive intelligence gathering.**

Sales uses a wiki to share info about customers.

Sales uses ESS to share the **best sales methods.**

Sales use podcasts to **distribute information on sales performance.**

### Marketing

"Marketing **places attorney podcasts on the website to highlight accomplishments** and knowledge of our attorneys."

"**RSS will be a primary tool used to inform users of new updates/capabilities to our product. This may include an email newsletter.**"

Marketing **created a corporate presence in Second Life.**

Marketing **built a wiki to hold flyers, PR, style guide, articles**, etc.

The VP of Marketing blogs about customers, competitors, marketing.

Publishing agency news, new resources, new training opportunities, and industry news through blogs and forums. Using RSS to integrate content and blogs with the main web site.

Wiki — reporting internal developments, customer responses, examples for product demos, all internal to the business unit.

**RSS feeds are used to advertise upcoming events.**

### IT

IT has a blog to reach out to its constituents.

IT uses a wiki to maintain internal information.

Our IT newsletter has an RSS Feed. Our Library newsletter has an RSS feed.

Our IT group is experimenting with wikis, blogs, and online collaborative communities.

**Wikis for changes and IT documentation, knowledge-sharing.**

**IT has a bug wiki** where people can report bugs.

Various IT departments **use blogs to keep track of outages, upgrades**, etc., have set up wikis and CMSs for departmental use. We all use IM to communicate

IT uses blogs to keep the company abreast of the latest IT implementations.

Virtual community will include forums and projects **communities where clients can swap tools. Implicitly becomes a tool for IT to track user habits.**

Tracking software updates and maintenance.

Developers use wiki: **document processes, standards, requirements for code.**

IT **uses wikis to provide procedures, help desk info**, etc., both internally and with the company at large.

People in IT department are members of Social networks to share knowledge.

### R&D

R&D purchased some low-cost blogging software to experiment with how researchers might use blogs to share their knowledge with others.

Use ESS to solve problems.

**Use wiki for research.**

Most research groups have wiki(s) for project collaboration.

**R&D uses wikis heavily to document research and collaboratively develop design hypotheses**. R&D also reads blogs written by the library group.

Blog will be used as a developer blog to inform users of deeper issues in our products.

**R&D Tags and adds metadata** to photographs using iTag. Will eventually use SharePoint site to discuss current research, projects, etc.

Content to get new staff up to speed.

Support technical reading groups.

**Collaborative document editing.**

The VP of R&D and CTO blog about internal R&D news, initiatives, and product developments.

ESS is used to **track disruptive technologies.**

ESS is used for New Product Development.

Blogs for some of our R&D ambassadors to communicate with their constituents.

### Library

Library uses wikis for **creating online research guides.**

Use blog for **new book lists.**

Uses wiki for training information.

**Wiki used for committee work.**

Participates in wikis and blogs in collaboration with other departments. Uses RSS to push information to the organization.

Library uses **RSS to aggregate subject alerts to subscribers.**

The librarian is in charge of the web sites, and has implemented Drupal (a free open source Content Management System or CMS). Instant messaging **(IM) is used extensively across sites to provide research and technical support.**

**librarian blogs to customers about news and research** related to the company.

librarian uses **social bookmarking to mark sites of interest** for the company.

librarian uses **RSS feeds to track news and research** of interest to the firm.

**The reference staff uses a wiki to update and revise policies, procedures**

**Our science librarians contribute to a blog**.

Uses del.icio.us to share bookmarks among library staff. Will eventually share bookmarks with organization. Writes a blog about new resources, etc. in the library using WordPress. Uses RSS (Bloglines) to keep track of news.

Library uses SharePoint to make ILS, electronic portions of the collection and software training **PowerPoint presentations available** to the company.

**RSS is used to track articles, governmental releases,** etc. on various topics. Social Bookmarking is used to categorize research resources by topic.

We use blogs and wikis to supplement our research. We also use online social networks to **identify key vendors**.

One (and only one) librarian told us: **"They are going to use ESS to eliminate all the positions in the library. They say social networking is better than a real person answering the questions."** We think the reverse is true. We see on the above list a representative sample showing information professionals can embrace and lead ESS change efforts inside the library or across the company.

### Finance

Uses the wiki to **track key metrics.**

VP Finance blogs about internal items of interest.

Finance uses SharePoint to collect data.

We use **RSS for stock quotes and other financial information.**

Finance uses wikis for internal team communication.

Finance uses the Wiki for the FAQ.

Finance uses the Wiki for research.

### HR

**News and job openings** are published on the public wiki.

HR uses **online social networks for recruiting.**

HR uses online social networks for **background reference checks.**

HR implemented **online timekeeping** with an ESS tool.

HR uses blogs to communicate with the entire company.

VP of HR blogs about important firm-wide information.

extended implementations and the inherent "communicative" nature of the tools themselves.

## Do ESS Tools Fulfill Their Promise?

We began our discussion of the survey results by highlighting the issues contemplated by the organizations that have chosen to implement ESS (and implement them aggressively as indicated in Table 6). The deployment of these tools in the context of issues that face organizations prompted us to ask if the issues are indeed being addressed by the tools in play. Table 7 below displays how respondents rate their satisfaction with the degree to which the overall ESS deployment at their organizations meets the expectations they had for tool performance. The Table suggests that satisfaction is moderate; in the case of most tools, we find that two-thirds to three-fourths of respondents feel the tools have at least "met" their expectations, less than 20% feel the tools have exceeded their expectations and, 25% to 40% express a level of disappointment in the tools' performance.

≈A conservative read on the data would suggest that it may be too early to assess whether enterprise experience with ESS will fuel rapid acceleration of the industry. It appears from our current data that most enterprises represented by our respondents may have yet to experience a "wow" effect from their ESS implementations, but the patterns of use are promising. See the Excerpted Results from the ESS Survey sidebarg on page 39, for respondent vignettes of successful implementations.
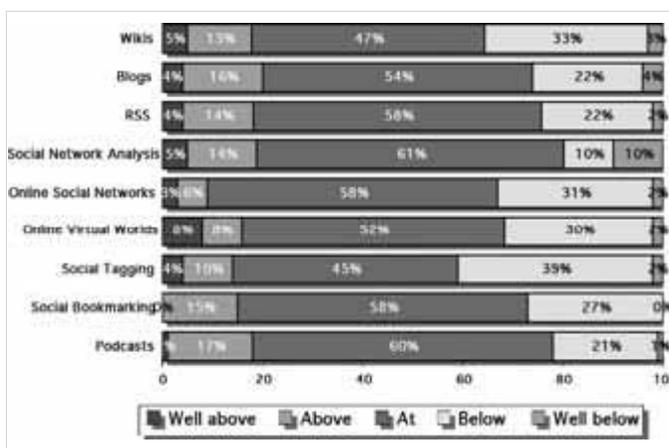


**Table 7: Below, please indicate if each of the services currently in use at your organization is performing below, at, or above your expectations.**

## Implications for Future Research

This study attempted to capture how information professionals perceive and experience ESS in their organizations. Future research might focus on how information professionals respond to what they see and if they perceive that the events unfolding hold significant impact for the future of their value and/or influence within their organizations.

Data we have collected may support an assertion we proposed in an earlier article: The advent of ESS may represent a moment of truth for information professionals. The nature of these tools may enable information professionals to become the champions and gatekeepers for the technology in the enterprise or regular participants. Or the tools may leave the information professionals marginalized by the momentum.

## How Many Vendors Does It Take to Light the World?

We think the guide we've created, The Never Complete Guide to ESS, is the first of its kind. We compiled it based on content gathered from the web, Web 2.0 conferences, Dialog searches, and talks with CEOs, analysts, and others in the space. It seems to keep expanding. To view it, go to http://www.infotoday.com/search/jun08 and look for The Never Complete Guide to ESS link. We intend to make it available on our website for free. Just like a wiki, we need you to help us keep it up-to-date!

## Where Are You on the ESS Experience and Participation Curve?

No amount of research or second-hand learning can replace the power of your own personal experience. Start participating in some B2C or B2B social software, it is a very safe place to make some mistakes and find out what works as a user of a social network. Once you have defined a possible deployment path for internal use of ESS consider a proof of concept with clear goals and objectives. If you can identify these and present a business case to management, you can move forward with a pilot that could lead to a more global deployment.

A "moment of truth" has arrived for info pros. Will they seize it? Or let it pass? ■

### Endnotes

1   Nikos Drakos, Tom Eid, "The Emerging Enterprise Social Software Marketplace," July 2007, Gartner.

2   See AIIM and Forrester studies.

3   See AIIM studies.