Tag your way to del.icio.us domination

by Alexandra Samuel
CEO, Social Signal

More and more people are using del.icio.us to keep track of their favourite web links. Make this terrific tool even more effective with a tagging strategy that maximizes your links' value to you, your colleagues, and the great big world. Here are some tips:

Be a lemming. Check how other people are tagging the kinds of sites you want to remember.

Follow the herd. When in doubt, pick the tag that seems to have the most links.(The online version of this article tells you how to figure that out.)

Avoid camels. Camel case (you know, CamelCase) doesn't work -- it just comes out as all lower case letters, with the words mushed together.

Like nature, del.icio.us abhors a vacuum. Blank spaces don't work either. So if you tag something "camel case" it will show up on the tag page for "camel" and the tag page for "case".

Punctuate with care. Before you create a tag with an underscore or a dash, ask yourself: does this tag exist in a non-underscored form? Whatever you do, stay away from commas: comma-separating a del.icio.us tag will add a comma to your tag's name.

What is del.icio.us?

del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us) is a free service for managing your collection of favourite web links. Unlike your browser's bookmarks folder, you can access your del.icio.us links from any Internet-connected computer. Even better, it lets you share your links with like-minded friends and colleagues -- and easily discover new and valuable resources.

For more on using del.icio.us, visit http://www.socialsignal.com/delicious

Independence is a virtue. Before joining two separate words, see if they'd be more useful as independent tags. Rather than using the tag "canadianpolitics", try using "Canada" and "politics".

Hang out at crossroads. Find the resources you're interested in by using intersecting tags. For example, find del.icio.us links on Canadian politics by visiting http://del.icio.us/tag/Canada+politics.

Co-ordinate your efforts. If you're part of a professional community or community of practice, consider establishing a common set of standards for how to tag resources you want to share among yourselves. A wiki can help do the job.

Tags are written in pencil. Unlike a Tiffany engraving, a del.icio.us tag is not a permanent commitment. If you realize that you've used the wrong tag for a particular link, you can always re-edit that link. Even more useful, del.icio.us will let you rename any of your existing tags.

On del.icio.us, everyone knows you're a dog. You're tagging in public, so think twice before adopting the tag "enemies" for your business competitors, or "prospects" for all the folks you're pitching.

Shh! This one's for:you. If you know a friend or colleague's del.icio.us username, you can send him or her a private, recommended link by tagging it "for:username".

Spread the word. The very best way to refine your del.icio.us tagging practice is to embed yourself in a community of del.icio.us users. Start building that community today by encouraging everyone you know to leave browser favorites behind, and get del.icio.us.

For the original, full version of this article, visit http://www.socialsignal.com/delicious-tags

social signal

Online conversations that connect.

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*with an online presence
where your users generate the content.*

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with a public whose interests and values are reflected on your site.

Social Signal has a proven ability to create online communities that foster a trusted relationship between your organization and your site's users. Through user-created content, a successful online community brings you closer to your audience – because it ties your identity directly to an online presence that intimately reflects your audience's interests and values.

Deepen relationships

*with a community that cares
about your mission as much as you do.*

We understand that your online community efforts are tied to real-world goals, and keep all our online efforts focused on your real-world success. An online community isn't an end in itself. Online community matters because it connects real-world people and organizations... helps us to be more effective and satisfied in our real-world work and lives... and, at its most powerful, triggers positive change in the real world.

Our principals

Alexandra Samuel, CEO

Alexandra is an online strategist whose recent projects include CompuMentor's NetSquared, The Elders' web strategy and a Facebook application and social media strategy for BC Hydro. The social network she conceived for the PLAN Institute recently received a major grant from the Robert Wood Johnston Foundation to fund a 15-month pilot.

Alexandra holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University, where she researched new frontiers in online political engagement.
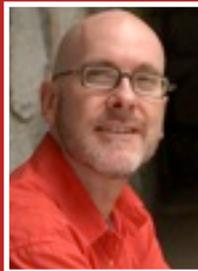
Rob Cottingham, President

Rob is a seasoned communications strategist and veteran speechwriter whose projects have ranged from the Confeederation.ca election blog aggregator to Vancity's Webby-nominated ChangeEverything.ca. He is a frequent speaker and workshop leader on social media, for audiences that range from the Canadian Marketing Association to NetSquared.

Rob maintains a long-running blog at robcottingham.ca and draws the popular Noise to Signal cartoon at socialsignal.com/n2s.

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