Local Community in the Era of Social Media Technologies: A Global Approach
Hui-Lan H. Titangos
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Libraries have adopted technology tools in order to facilitate access to their rich contents, and social media tools have provided libraries with new ways of communicating and sharing information. These tools give libraries the opportunity to expand their content to new communities. In the book, Local Community in the Era of Social Media Technologies Hui-Lan H. Titangos discusses the concept of community, libraries and social media and the how new technology tools have empowered libraries to expand their community.

Titangos is a Collection Management Services Librarian at Santa Cruz Public Libraries (SCPL), California. In her book, she focuses on many of the projects at SCPL that have adopted social media tools. She uses SCPL as the primary example to illustrate the digital transformation of libraries. Titangos explains that libraries have progressed from using 1.0 technology to adopting 2.0 tools. She challenges librarians to think about the future and developing Library 3.0. Within this discussion of technology and tools, Titangos underscores the purpose for librarians to utilize these resources is to expand their user community and facilitate people’s ability to access local content.

She frames the discussion of community and social media technology within the context of Josiah Royce’s view of provincialism. Royce contends that in the pursuit of provincialism, people need to aware of three obstacles: “refusal to be assimilated into a new community, a leveling tendency to crush individuality, and a mob mentality that appeals to the emotions”. Titangos contends that libraries can overcome these obstacles by using social media technologies. She discusses how various social media tools such as blogs, image/video publishing, social networking and online collective projects help libraries reach a global community while fostering the individuality of those people who use these tools.

Titangos does an excellent job of guiding her readers through the evolution of a library from 1.0 to 2.0 and the importance of thinking of Library 3.0. Most of the text focuses on SCPL but she does include examples from other U.S. and international libraries. In her discussion of library 3.0, she identifies library projects that have capitalized on crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing – think Wikipedia – gives users the power to contribute content. The Bentham Project at University College London gave volunteers the opportunity to transcribe the papers of Enlightenment philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Library staff edits the transcriptions that are then made accessible online. In this example, librarians saw the opportunity for users to become vested in a project using technology, which in turn creates a community that is working together to make local library content accessible worldwide.

Titangos book provides pertinent examples for libraries of all sizes on how to use social media tools to expand their user community. Librarians interested in learning practical ways of incorporating social media into their work as well as the concept of Library 3.0 would benefit from this text.

Susan E. Montgomery
Rollins College
smontgomery@rollins.edu