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Engineering Division

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News from the Engineering Division

SLA Engineering Division
$1200 Inspec Travel Stipend Application:
Using LinkedIn to Connect Your Library Users to Vital Information
Submitted by Andrea N. Davis

Since the emergence of Web 2.0 technology, libraries have new exciting toolkits to connect users to information using innovative methods.[1] As special librarians, we can not only push important content to our patrons, but we can also seek out new library users and embed ourselves within the organization using Web 2.0 tools to promote our engineering libraries.

While many exciting applications are available, this paper will discuss the advantages of using of LinkedIn in special libraries to connect our users with important information. In brief:

"LinkedIn is an interconnected network of experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries and 200 countries. When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional expertise and accomplishments. You can then form enduring connections by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you. Your network consists of your connections, your connections' connections, and the people they know, linking you to a vast number of qualified professionals and experts."[2]

This rich group of networks can include members of the organization's executive team down to its independent contractors. The service is free to use, does not require a software download, and is generally allowed behind company firewalls, unlike Facebook and other popular web-based social media applications.[3] The partnership with Capital IQ provides basic company information while LinkedIn users provide their own professional information, resulting in a robust tool for library user management. Another advantage of using LinkedIn instead of Facebook to reach your users is that the professional implications don't impede on users' personal identity, which is generally reserved for Facebook usage.

Among the useful benefits of LinkedIn for libraries is the easy method to provide valuable tailored information to a diverse set of users, partitioned into network Groups[4] you can set up and invite departments/locations/projects to

join. For example, the marketing team in your engineering company needs to know about new product releases from the competition ASAP, which you can easily send out via a news alert including links to the press release and the competitive company's LinkedIn profile.[5] In the same vein, you can send out a news alert to selected users about new library acquisitions such as books, articles, studies, and database subscriptions. The alerts utilize the micro-blogging status update technology of Twitter.[6] These news alerts will be placed prominently on each user's LinkedIn homepage and will trigger an email if the users' preferences are set to do so.

You can also create an Event and invite users to the library for brownbag lunch workshops, webinars, and other library-hosted events.

LinkedIn event announcement

Increasing library patronage and visibility is an important goal in today's ROI budget environment. By keeping up with the New Hires section of your Company Page,[7] you can easily perform tailored outreach services based on their interests, professional connections, and previous experience. If your workplace is using Microsoft Office 2010, LinkedIn profiles are supported in the Outlook Social Calendar[8] which could be very helpful if your company LinkedIn accounts do not include contact information. If you have the ability to edit the library webpage, you can add a LinkedIn Widget[9] that will display the various public profiles you have set up for your library user groups.
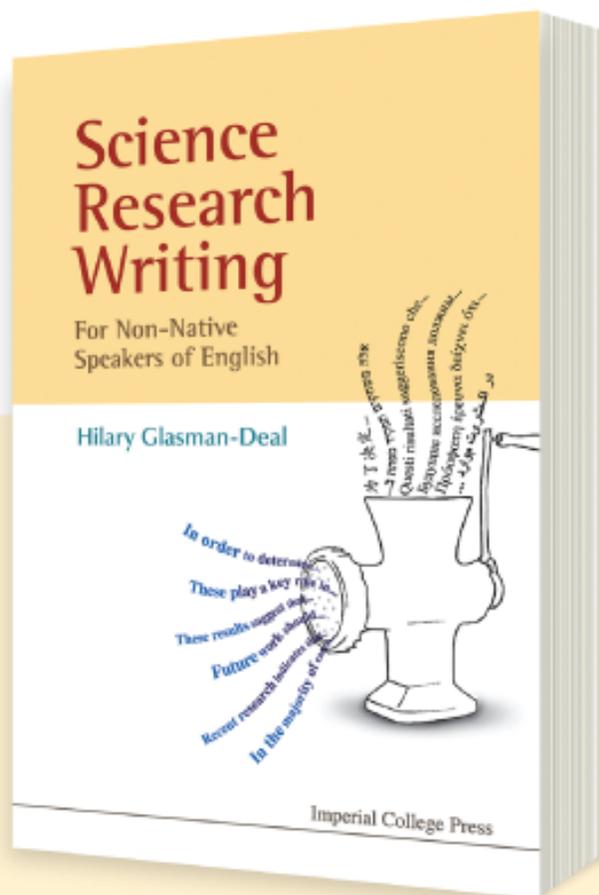
A relatively new service to LinkedIn lets our librarian research skills soar in the Answers section,[10] where LinkedIn users can post questions

World Scientific
Connecting Great Minds

Science Research Writing
For Non-Native Speakers of English

Hilary Glasman-Deal *(Imperial College London, UK)*

This book is designed to enable non-native English speakers to write science research for publication in English. It can also be used by English speakers and is a practical, user-friendly book intended as a fast, do-it-yourself guide for those whose English language proficiency is above intermediate.

Science writing is much easier than it looks because the structure and language are conventional. The aim of this book is to help the reader discover a template or model for science research writing and then to provide the grammar and vocabulary tools needed to operate that model. There are five units: Introduction, Methodology, Results, Discussion/Conclusion and Abstract. The reader develops a model for each section of the research article through sample texts and exercises; this is followed by a Grammar and Writing Skills section designed to respond to frequently-asked questions as well as a Vocabulary list including examples of how the words and phrases are to be used.

AD/WW01/07/23/HC

to their group/interest area/network and receive multiple answers. Your qualified answers will quickly make you a go-to resource for your organization's LinkedIn users who are not familiar with the engineering library, thus leveraging your librarian know-how across the social network in a manner with which the traditional one-on-one reference exchange cannot compete. This increased visibility will be noticeable throughout your organization's connections, including upper management.

The LinkedIn support for mobile devices is strong, including applications for the iPhone, BlackBerry, and Palm. This allows your users more flexible access to your LinkedIn announcements in or out of the workplace. As a librarian, you can also update the Group news alerts you monitor at any time day or night, without special access to your work computer.

In conclusion, engineering libraries can connect to a broad range of users to promote the library, push important information, and increase visibility using the free services of LinkedIn as an innovative Web 2.0 technology. Enjoy exploring! ❖

LinkedIn Answers

References

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