Book Review

Teens, librarians, and social networking: What librarians need to know? Edited by Denise E. Agosto and June Abbas. Santa Barbara, California; Denver, Colorado; Oxford, England: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2011. 184 p. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-59884-575-4; EISBN: 978-1-59884-576-1; $ 40.00.

This book is a collection of wide-ranging, informative and provocative chapters discussing the use of social networks to serve teens, both online and in the library. Comprehensive surveys on this topic are being discussed in this series. The application of social networks is a new era for library services to young adults. Social networking tools are the doorway into their worlds, and the library can use these tools to become a wide-open portal for greater educational opportunities. The aim of this book is to support the belief that teens should be served by libraries in the best ways possible, and social networks may be useful tools to deliver these services to teens. The editors and contributors explain the reasons why so many teens use social networking tools and offer suggestions as to how best to use them to serve teens. They also examine issues of critical concerns to librarians and parents, such as safety and privacy issues, and study the social and educational benefits of online social networking. The book is organized into 12 chapters with a series forward and introduction, a comprehensive table of contents, references, a list of useful websites at the end of each chapter, an index and finally a section on the editors and contributors.

The Introduction defines social networking and differentiates between social networks and social media. It notes that the main difference is bidirectional information sharing and interaction (social networks) versus unidirectional information broadcasting (social media).The first chapter, "*What Do Public Librarians Really Do with Social Networking? Profiles of Five Public Libraries*", outlines two previous studies on the prevalence of social networking use among public libraries. Five public libraries that use social networks to serve teens are introduced and compared in this chapter. The second chapter, "*Looking Closely at Teens' Use of Social Networks: What Do High School Seniors Do On-line*?", describes how teens use ICT technologies for personal communication purposes in both school and home environments using a series of focus group interviews. It was reported that teens' selection of the social networks and ICTs was based on their simplicity of use, speed of communication, ability to maintain constant contacts as well as multitasking capabilities. The implications of these findings regarding the design of library services for teens are also discussed. The third chapter, "*How Social Networking Sites Aid in Teen Development*", deals with concerns over social network activities among

teens as being not valuable or healthy. However the author advocates that social networking sites can be socially and educationally fruitful to teens' development. He further provides some suggestions on how libraries can take advantage of the power of social networks to promote healthy teen development. The fourth chapter is entitled "*The Role of Media Literacy Education within Social Networking and the Library*." This chapter explores how social network aligns well with media literacy education. A definition of media literacy is offered, emphasizing that libraries have a crucial role in the web 2.0 era in making young adults media literate, and empowering their critical thinking to promote ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate information in a variety of forms and formats via social networks.

Different social network tools such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Drupal and Nings are introduced and their functionalities are evaluated in chapter 5, "*If You Build It, Will They Come? A Comparison of Social Networking Utilities*". Librarians should consider which options are best for serving teens according to their needs. It is suggested that the integration of social network platforms will provide easier access, useful to increase the likelihood that users will interact with the library in an online environment. It is highlighted by the author that the privacy settings of the social networking tools being considered for use with teens, is one of the most important challenges. "*Teens, Social Networking, and Safety and Privacy Issues*", is the title for chapter 6. It outlines that cyberbullying (emotionally and physically) is a major issue in teens' online safety and privacy. The most important types of cyberbullying include flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion and cyberstalking are discussed in this chapter. Librarians need to be mindful that privacy and security are important issues to consider in designing and delivering online library services for young adults. The authors of this chapter provide some methods to teach teens to become smarter and safer users of social network tools. They also offer some suggestions on how librarians can help teens protect their online safety.

Chapter 7 is entitled "*Social Networking: Teen Rights, Responsibilities, and Legal Issues*." This chapter explains that in the last few years, legislation has focused increasingly on the use of social technology by minors. Today's teens face both ethical dilemmas and legal concerns when using social networks. This section also summarizes the major federal laws, and outlines what librarians need to know about the legal aspects of using social networks with teens. It emphasizes that teens must be aware, learn to follow legal regulations, and demonstrate ethical behavior associated with social networks. Finally, some solutions for school and public libraries are offered. In chapter 8, "*Using Social Networking Sites to Connect Teens with Young Adult Literature*", the author is of the view that creative librarians are the intermediaries between teens and literature. According to her, if librarians were to attract young adults to their collections and services, they must become integral members of the online community. Various web 2.0 tools which can be used to connect teens to young adult literature are introduced in this chapter. The important roles that these tools play to promote reading of young adults

are explained, with examples and suggestions on how librarians can be aware of the usage and impact of these technologies on their users and services. This chapter emphasizes that it is necessary to combine traditional services with online features in order to connect teens with young adult literature. The following chapter is "*Fandom as a Form of Social Networking*." "Fandoms" is defined as online communities built around a book, movie, song, or other creative work. Chapter 9 highlights that these online sites provide opportunities for fans to interact with each other and with the authors through posts and chats. This chapter contains a wealth of examples of fandoms which are built around fantasy series for young adults like Harry Potter and Twilight. It provides some suggestions for library programming related to fandoms like fan writing resources and workshops, re-creation event about books and fan craft programs. The author concludes that libraries can take advantage of teen fans' enthusiasm for books by advertising fandoms via social networking to promote the love of reading.

Chapter 10, "*Hanging Out on the Grid: Virtual Worlds for Teens and Preteens*", describes life in the virtual worlds for teens. Many teens and tweens log in to virtual worlds, where they interact with other participants via their avatars or 3D digital characters to augment their online experiences. This chapter explains the features of several popular virtual spaces and how these interactive worlds engage the social and developmental needs of youth. Advantages, concerns, opportunities, challenges and key differences between virtual worlds and social networks are also discussed in this chapter. Finally, virtual world is introduced as a new literacy where interactions among users are common and encouraged and thus, create increased literacy among teens. The chapter concludes with suggestions for librarians, educators, and information providers who wish to extend their services to teens into the virtual realm. Chapter 11, "*Pages, Profiles, and Podcasts: How Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library Engages Teens through Social Networking*" describes how the award-winning Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is embracing a variety of social networking technologies in an effort to stay connected with teens. This library has received the highest possible rating of five stars from the Library Journal's Index of Public Library Services in 2009 and 2010. This chapter addresses various trends and practices for other public libraries in planning, implementing and evaluating social networking with teens in a way that will be suitable to their library's needs. Finally in the last chapter, "*Bringing It All Together: What Does It Mean for Librarians Who Serve Teens?*" the main concepts of the whole book are summarized and some not-successful ventures are also presented. Moreover, some best practices and advices for library services with emphasis on the design of social networking tools for library services to teens are expressed.

The book includes a useful and comprehensive list of references and websites at the end of each chapter, as well as a reasonably exclusive index at the end of the book. The writing style of this book is casual and easy to understand. Simple and plain language is used to explain topics adequately. There is a significant association and semantic relationship between chapters. The reader is well informed but not overwhelmed. The

cover photo is suitable and indicates a connection of network of people in a library. It is highly recommended to all librarians of public and school libraries and information centers, teens' parents and even their teachers as an invaluable educational resource, as it creates awareness and promotes knowledgeable use of social networking tools. This book also presents many innovative and creative ideas for engaging teens and providing library services using social networking technologies which can be utilized by other librarians.

The reviewers would like to suggest that the editors extend the concepts mentioned in this book to an international arena by giving examples from other countries as well. They could survey and evaluate various factors affecting the usage of social networks worldwide in their next editions or new books that will be published on this topic. It would give the readers enhanced viewpoints about the impact of social networks on teens all over the world.

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