

The *LibraryThing* website is a tremendous resource for those who read for pure enjoyment, the more serious collector, and even the professional librarian. As much as we enjoy reading in this family and considering all the book clubs in which I've participated, I'm surprised to have never heard of this website before now. I found the website to be an invaluable resource in many ways.

As a tool to catalogue one's own library, *LibraryThing* is genius. My husband and I have an extensive book collection that started in childhood and has just exploded in recent years as we have both taught multiple subjects. We have been trying to figure out the best way to document our collection for insurance purposes. I'm sure this was not the intent of this assignment, but cataloging for insurance purposes was honestly the first thing that came to my mind when entering my ten books. The site is very user friendly and, I believe, even technophobes can navigate the tool bars with ease.

I always thought our family's taste in reading was unique, but it turns out that every book I tried to enter was already in the website. The closest I came to entering a book from scratch was with my copy of *His Holiness, The Dalai Lama: In My Own Words*. There was only one other copy listed in the library website. I found it was much easier to add to my library using the ISBN numbers located on the back of my books. *LibraryThing* found the exact publication of each of my books using that method. When I just searched by title, I found it distracting and time consuming to search for the right publication out of the myriad listed – especially with my copy of *Pride and Prejudice*. If I am not mistaken this is a definite advantage that *LibraryThing* has over The Library of

Congress and Amazon's search tools. I was not able to find the tool at either of their websites that allowed me to search by the ISBN. My husband and I plan to enroll for a lifetime membership at the incredibly economical price of \$25 so that we can catalog our personal library without limitations.

I know in the macro sense of what it means to be a librarian that I am not completely ignorant, but in the micro sense I am an absolute novice. This is my first semester and I have much to learn. I realized that I wasn't completely comfortable tagging my books. That surprised me. I've taught genres to my students before and shouldn't have felt limited in this capacity. I dealt with it by keeping it simple. After looking at tags elsewhere on the website, I realize that I need to add much more information than I have to date. I'm going to wait until I have more of this class under my belt before I elaborate my tags for cataloging purposes.

LibraryThing has incorporated features into their website to appeal to the *MySpace* and/or *FaceBook* fans. It seems this site is about much more than keeping a personal library, but a place for lovers of reading/bibliophiles to connect with one another. I have never joined an online chat, posted a biography of myself for others to view, or even spent much time looking at the groups within the online social networking sites, but I believe that I may consider spending some time connecting with a few of the groups on *LibraryThing*. I haven't had much luck keeping a book club going strong in my smallish town. People keep moving away and it is such a struggle to begin anew. *LibraryThing* may be a good place to join or start an online book club. The social networking features of *LibraryThing* seem, at first glance, interesting and useful. I look

forward to trying them out in the near future or, if I'm so inclined, to keeping my profile completely private. Having both options is very user friendly.

Besides social networking opportunities, one can simply access comprehensive and useful information about books already owned or books one may be interested in reading and/or purchasing. Not only does the website offer complete information about books, members are able to write and post reviews of books. I like this aspect and it seems to make more sense than the user reviews available on Amazon or other sites that are in the market of selling books. As *LibraryThing* states on its user tour, "LibraryThing cares about books, not about SELLING books."

Learning about cataloging and classification in this 7300 class, I believe, will only aid me in my ability to better use a website such as *LibraryThing*. Right now, I am a total amateur and am only able to access the features of the site from an amateur's point-of-view. As I gain information, insight, and experience throughout the MLIS program, I imagine that I will be able to comment further on *LibraryThing* as a cultural phenomenon and as a tool for the professional librarian.