

## What the world thinks is interesting about you! - Social Bookmarking explained

At the bottom of every article on the [BBC](#) website is a little box entitled "Bookmark with:". In that box are some icons labelled "delicious", "digg", "reddit", "facebook" and "stumble upon". I suspect most readers have heard of Facebook by now, but perhaps not the other four. In fact Facebook is actually the odd one out as it is a social networking site rather than a bookmarking one. The others allow users to tag, comment, vote for or in some other way save and recommend online content for both their own future use but also for all other members of that community.

A "tag" is where a reader uses a word or phrase to categorise what a piece of content is relevant to for future use. The power of the social element of these virtual bookmarks is the potential for online word of mouth that this creates. Having tagged an article in delicious as being of relevance to a particular topic another reader with a delicious account who is interested in finding out more about that topic can see articles that have been tagged with the particular term. But better than that these tools also show the popularity of this tagging by counting the number of people who have tagged a particular piece of online content and displaying that number to you the user.

For example take this article from the BBC's website published just before New Year in 2005  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4566526.stm>

This URL has been saved 642 times (at time of writing) and the list of those 642 people can be found here:

<http://delicious.com/url/3ffb4f576a0b99b7979fe3a449618a8e>

You can see from this page that the most common tag was "news", but that a high number of people also found it relevant to "culture" and "humour". You can also see by clicking on the names of the people listed what other articles they have bookmarked and therefore what other interests they have. For instance "kappuchino" who bookmarked the article on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008 has bookmarked 391 pages and based on their top tags would appear to be interested in web design.

You will also notice the durability of the Internet. Over a third of the bookmarks were created after the end of January 2006 – over a month after its publication and over 90 of the bookmarks were created in December **2006** the year after publication. Finally there is the ability to subscribe to updates via RSS that allows you to monitor when new people decide to bookmark this page in the future.

So how does this apply to my business you might ask? Well apart from being a great way to bookmark content yourself and find articles for research it is also a reputation management tool. I am sure many of you have thought to put the name of your organisation into Google to see what comes up, but how many of you have done the same with social bookmarking sites? Remember this is real people's responses to online content – virtual word of mouth. What are they saying about you and your organisation?

Try visiting [delicious.com](http://delicious.com) and doing a search for your organisation's name or products – you might be surprised to learn what people think is interesting about you!

A great overview of how social bookmarking works can be found in this video by Commoncraft  
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=x66IV7GOcNU>