

State of the Library and Information Science Blogosphere after Social Networks Boom: a Metric Approach

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Abstract: *A metric analysis of blogs on library and information science (LIS) between November 2006 and June 2009 indexed on the Libworm search engine is presented with a view to characterizing the community's behavior quantitatively. An analysis of 1,108 personal and corporate blogs with a total of 275,103 posts is performed, calculating the blogs' survival rate, production – number of posts published-, and visibility via such indicators as links received, Technorati Authority and Google's PageRank. Over the study period, from 2006 to 2009, there was a 52% decrease in the number of active blogs. Despite the drop in production over this period, the average number of posts per blog remained constant, with an average of 14 posts per month. Finally, the most representative blogs in the discipline are identified. The effect of the emergence of such platforms as Facebook and Twitter on LIS blogs is discussed. The differences between personal and corporate blogs are also described in terms of their productive behavior and their repercussions on the blogosphere. Finally, it is concluded that blogs as a phenomenon have lost a great deal of their prominence.*

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1. Introduction

Weblogs also referred to as blogs, are a phenomenon on the Internet that surged in the first decade of the century (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004). They belong to the so called web 2.0 or social web and have been consolidated as one of its pillars. The social web consists of a number of online tools and platforms where people share their perspectives, opinions, thoughts and experiences (Wikipedia, 2011). Blogs, as one of the more significant tools in web 2.0, are characterized by their constant update and the reverse chronological order in which entries or posts are presented. They also allow readers to subscribe to their content via RSS feeds and ensure posts' stability by the use of permanent links. Blogs are characterized by their social and interactive aspects, as most of them allow reader comments, which, regardless of whether the theme is personal or professional, favors the growth of social communities (Kolbitsch & Maurer, 2006). The popularization and massive use of blogs has occurred thanks to free platforms such as Blogger and Wordpress, which are easy to manage and allow publishing of mainly textual content (Lackie & LeMasney, 2008). The importance of blogs, however, has come under threat with the arrival of new actors in the Web 2.0 scenario, particularly social networks, which now rival blogs as primary communications media tools on the Internet. Once blogs were at the core of social networks (Rodzvilla, 2002), but now the Web 2.0 conversation has fragmented, with general interest shifting away from blogs in favor of other platforms (Boutin, 2008). Indeed, the bloggers themselves are the ones who, as early adopters, have popularized newer applications such as Facebook and Twitter (Technorati, 2009).

Blogs, defined by Castells (2010) as mass self-communication media, have manifested themselves during the last decade as useful tools capable of introducing relevant structural changes on information intake and diffusion on different professional domains. Thus novelties and opportunities derived from blogs have been richly reviewed in different contexts, including education (Kim, 2008), medicine (Boulos, Maramba, & Wheeler, 2006), journalism (Johnson & Kaye, 2004) and even scientific communication (Bonetta, 2007). Faced with the Web 2.0 phenomenon in general and the phenomenon of blogging in particular, the library and information science community, which is known to have a proactive attitude toward technology, has not ignored this development. This attitude first became apparent in 1998 with ResearchBuzz, considered to be the first blog in LIS (Crawford, 2005). Libraries and information centers have been especially active in the creation and management of blogs as part of a communication strategy for offering new services for their patrons (Clyde, 2004). As a result of this movement, the term Library 2.0, a concept that has long been discussed (Casey, 2005), has come to be

used in reference to the library-related part of Web 2.0. All of these events show the importance of blogs in LIS and their key role in structuring online professional communities.

2. Problem Statement

The phenomenon of blogs and their role in the LIS community has not been unnoticed; many studies have analyzed its characteristics and identified the main actors. No study has been sufficiently wide-ranging to assess production patterns in the LIS blogosphere, however, as the methodology of these studies is usually characterized by the small range of their samples and are usually too focused on the library domain. This type of research uses small samples because of the many problems this type of information raises, including the great effort needed in order to gather the data, the scarcity of updated and extended information sources, and the evolving nature of the blogosphere. For these reasons it is difficult to characterize globally the blog community. Above all, none of published research has analyzed trends on production or active blogs in a sufficiently broad time span. Bar-Ilan (2007) has done the deepest portrait of the LIS blogosphere, with a sample of 470 blogs. This study stops in 2005, however, and no studies have shown the recent evolution of the LIS blogosphere.

Furthermore, Web 2.0 is a fast-moving environment subjected to continual change, such as the appearance and massive popularization of social networks (e.g., Facebook). So it is relevant to study these new issues that impact the LIS blogosphere. Considering the importance of blogs on the last few years, it is necessary to study quantitatively the evolution of the international LIS blogosphere and characterize its current status, using a broad sample to describe the different trends and the main blogs. It is also interesting to distinguish between blog communities in accordance with who manages them, in this case, libraries or information professionals in a private capacity. Such study will also enable us to ascertain whether the blogosphere is a phenomenon that is still increasing or is rather declining as a communication medium.

3. Literature Review

Broadly speaking, research on LIS blogs has traditionally been approached from two different points of view. The main purpose of one kind of study is to report and explore the possibilities that blogs, as communication tools, can provide for different types of libraries and information agencies (Wood, 2009; McIntyre & Nicolle, 2008; Clyde, 2004; Schrecker, 2008). These studies emphasize the importance of blogs as a forum for gathering and exchanging information, as a

means to promote the engagement and participation of patrons, or as a tool for information literacy. Usually, services supplied by blogs are taken to be part of the broader context of Library 2.0, along with wikis, podcasts or tagging services (Maness, 2006; Svensson, 2007; Sodt & Summey, 2009). Another type of LIS blogs-related research characterizes and analyzes the main attributes of the LIS blogosphere using quantitative methodologies and metric indicators applied to collections of blogs. The current study is framed in this second type of research.

Not many contributions to this second type of research can be found. Bar-Ilan (2005) began by studying the information sources that LIS blogs link to, as well as calculating a series of metric indicators for 15 blogs over a two-month period. Continuing with this approach, the same author (Bar-Ilan, 2007) analyzed 470 blogs written in English to see how information professionals used them, ranking them by authority according to the Technorati search engine. Crawford (2005) studied 50 personal blogs, including the calculation of post production indicators, post length, and the number of comments received. Another study (Online Education Database, 2007) ranked the top 25 librarian bloggers by such parameters as Technorati authority, Alexa ranking, Google PageRank and subscribers on the Bloglines aggregator. There is also literature related to communities within countries. For instance, Torres-Salinas, Cabezas-Clavijo, and Delgado-López-Cózar (2008) studied the posting and participation of the 12 leading Spanish LIS blogs over 16 months, and noted a general decline in production. Lee and Bates (2007) combined qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze how Irish libraries use blogs. Toth (2010) analyzed a small sample of Hungarian library blogs, focusing particularly on the number of comments received per posts, and concluded that in most cases library users were not building virtual communities around blogs. Recent research has focused on specific questions such as bloggers' interests based on the contents of their posts (Aharony, 2009a; Aharony, 2009b). The scientific literature overall provides just a partial portrait of the LIS blogosphere; only a small number of blogs are studied and there is no chronological analysis of the evolution of the different indicators.

Other works have applied blogging metrics in non-LIS scenarios. For instance, the political blogosphere has been studied in various geographical contexts: In the U.S., Adamic and Glance (2005) analyzed the structure of the political blogosphere over the almost 25,000 posts published on the 40 most representative blogs during the two months prior to the 2004 election. They use quantitative indicators such as links, which are measured by BlogPulse, or web traffic, using SiteMeter to establish rankings of importance, and note the high degree of overlap between the most relevant blogs. The political blogosphere in Malaysia was analyzed because of the

important role that bloggers played in the 2008 general election (Ulicny, Matheus, & Kokar, 2010). The authors studied four dimensions of 1,272 blogs—credibility, relevance, timeliness, and specificity—using various metric indicators such as Technorati authority, the number of comments per post, or Google PageRank. All these indicators were standardized by their percentile ranks. In this work, the mapping of communities that were formed around these topics from the perspective of social network analysis plays an important role. Literature that uses these techniques to draw the structure of communities or reflect the way that information spreads through them, is abundant (eg. Bruns, 2007; Park & Thelwall, 2008, Adar & Adamic, 2005), although these analyses exceed the goals set out here.

4. Research questions

The aim of this study is to answer the following research questions, which can be structured on three thematic axes:

- 1). *Characteristics and trends of the blogosphere*: What were the chronological trends on the blogosphere during the four-year period of 2006 to 2009? How many blogs ceased activity? How many entries were published and what was the productivity - average number of posts published per active blog?
- 2). *Blogs communities; personal versus library blogs*: Are there differences between personal and institutional blogs? Do these communities have different characteristics regarding their posting and visibility?
- 3). *Leading and influential blogs*: What were the main LIS blogs according to different indicators of productivity and visibility? Have there been many changes in blogs listed since Bar-Ilan's study (2005)?

5. Material and methods

5.1. Selected information source for the identification of LIS blogs

A sufficiently broad set of blogs had to be collected, so it was necessary to select a directory or information resource to identify a significant sample, as it would be next to impossible to compile all the active LIS blogs available on the Web. All blogs indexed in the search engine Libworm: Librarianship RSS Search and Current Awareness (Libworm, 2006) were selected. Launched in November 2006, Libworm was selected for two reasons. First, because it contains LIS-related content exclusively, and second, because it has exhaustive data on LIS feeds, listing 1,500 sources. Not all sources indexed by Libworm are blogs however; some RSS channels

are dedicated to podcasts, news, journal articles, or job offers. Therefore, in this study, the sample was restricted to blogs ($n = 1,108$). Libworm creators included all feeds of the blogs listed on the main directories on LIS blogs, including LisWiki (Hubbard, 2005) and The Blogging Libraries Wiki (Etches-Johnson, 2006). Also, included are further contributions from the Libworm administrators and the bloggers themselves. Most blogs indexed in Libworm are from the year 2006; Libworm has not added more blogs to its lists since early 2007. Correspondence with previous studies was also explored by examining whether the 26 blogs recorded by Bar-Ilan (2007) as the leading ones in the discipline over the period from 2004 to 2005 were included by Libworm; they matched in 70% of cases.

5.2. Information Processing

Once the information source was selected, a compilation process of the 1,108 blogs was designed, including all posts published with their publication date. The time frame of this study was from November 2006 until June 2009, the date when data was collected. In order to obtain each blog's information, it was decided to work with all feeds generated by Libworm through its different RSS channels. There were a total of eight RSS channels corresponding with the following categories: *academic libraries*, *government libraries*, *law libraries*, *medical libraries*, *personal*, *professional associations*, *public libraries* and *school libraries*. This methodology, based on using RSS feeds to gather large amounts of information, has been successfully used in previous studies (Thelwall, Prabowo, & Fairclough, 2006; Prabowo, Thelwall, & Alexandrov, 2007). A macro was designed in Visual Basic to extract daily post production and data was processed individually for each category using Excel 2007. Every post was linked to its blog and every blog linked to a category. Finally, it was all exported to a relational database. With the goal of studying differences between personal and library blogs, the eight categories were assembled into two broader types: *personal* blogs, and those that are associated with a library or professional association, referred to as *corporate* blogs. The sum of all blogs analyzed (personal plus corporate) is mentioned in the text as the group *general*. Detailed sampling of blogs used for the current study is summarized in Table 1. Of the total sample analyzed, 92% of the blogs have existed since 2006, so this longitudinal study is based on a fixed sample.

Table 1. Number of blogs analyzed and extracted by Libworm per category, 2006–2009

Type of blog	LibWorm category	Nr blogs indexed	% blogs indexed
Corporate	Academic libraries	178	15.9%
Corporate	Government libraries	13	1.2%
Corporate	Law libraries	18	1.6%
Corporate	Medical libraries	9	0.8%
Personal	Personal	656	58.6%
Corporate	Professional associations	64	5.7%
Corporate	Public libraries	161	14.4%
Corporate	School libraries	21	1.9%
<i>Total</i>		1120	
<i>Total without duplicates</i>		1108	

5.3. Blogosphere's general and specific indicators

After processing the data and answering research questions one and two, four indicators were calculated for each category on different chronological periods:

1. Number of blogs publishing at least one post. This indicator computes active blogs in terms of publication and is calculated for different chronological periods: In the monthly trend analysis, it calculates the number of blogs that published at least one post per month. In the annual trend analysis, it calculates the number of blogs that published at least one post per year.
2. Number of posts or production: total of posts or entries published.
3. Number of blogs closed: total of ceased blogs during the study period as defined by blogs that had not published at least one post during a year.
4. Average of posts published; total of posts per active blogs.

In response to research question three, another group of visibility indicators was compiled in October 2009. The first of these was *Authority*, an indicator created and provided by the Technorati search engine and understood as the number of different blogs that link to others over the six months immediately prior to the data collection period (Carroll, 2007). This measurement had certain limitations, for instance, it didn't distinguish between links sent from the blogroll and links sent from an entry; it also ignored links received from non-blog websites. The second indicator was the number of incoming links compiled via Google. Thirdly, the blogs' PageRank generated by Google was used. The PageRank is a given score between 0 and 10 as calculated from the number of links received by a site and the importance

of the site issuing the link. For each indicator, the top 20 blogs were selected and unified into one single table. Finally, blogs were described according to their language and category, and the results were compared with those obtained by Bar-Ilan (2007).

6. Results

6.1. Production indicators

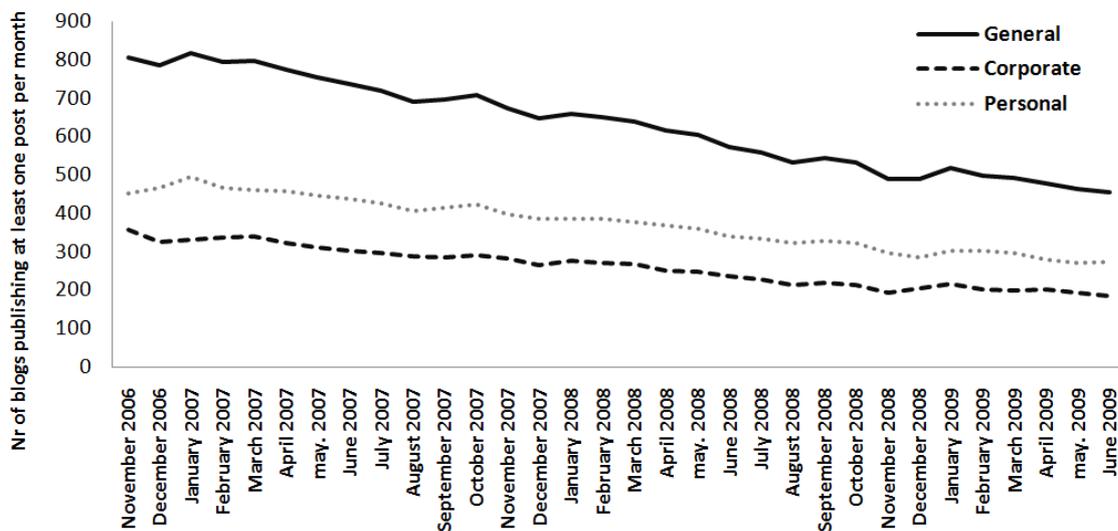
Table 2 presents the number of active blogs, defined as those that published at least one post over the 2006 to 2009 period. A total of 1,108 were identified, and were particularly concentrated in the personal, academic libraries and public libraries categories. In 2006 there were 1,030 blogs covering 92% of the sample analyzed, while over the subsequent years the number of blogs steadily fell, with only 622 remaining in 2009, a drop of 43% from the beginning of the period. Moreover, only 572 blogs were active over the course of the entire study period and 52% became inactive, a percentage that was evenly distributed over the different categories.

Table 2. Number of LIS blogs publishing at least one post per year, and category, 2006–2009

Type of blog	Libworm categories	Nr of blogs active 2006*	Nr of blogs active 2007*	Nr of blogs active 2008*	Nr of blogs active 2009*	Nr of blogs active 2006-2009*	Nr of blogs active all the years	% of blogs closed from 2006-
Corporate	Academic libraries	168	162	126	99	176	98	55.7%
Corporate	Government libraries	11	12	10	7	13	5	38.5%
Corporate	Law libraries	15	16	13	12	17	11	64.7%
Corporate	Medical libraries	6	8	7	4	9	3	33.3%
Corporate	Professional Associations	58	56	46	34	63	31	49.2%
Corporate	Public libraries	156	141	115	81	161	80	49.7%
Corporate	School libraries	20	19	15	12	20	12	60.0%
Personal	Personal	596	583	474	373	649	343	52.9%
	Total general	1030	997	806	622	1108	572	51.6%

The drop in the number of active blogs can clearly be seen to have been a trend that began in January 2007 and continued without interruption until June 2009 (Figure 1). Thus, whereas at the beginning of the study period in November 2006 there were 804 active blogs, by at the end, in June 2009, there were only 454; blogs had been disappearing at a rate of 11 per month, with a drop-out rate of four blogs per month for corporate blogs and six per month for personal blogs.

Figure 1. Number of LIS blogs publishing at least one post per month between November 2006 and June 2009

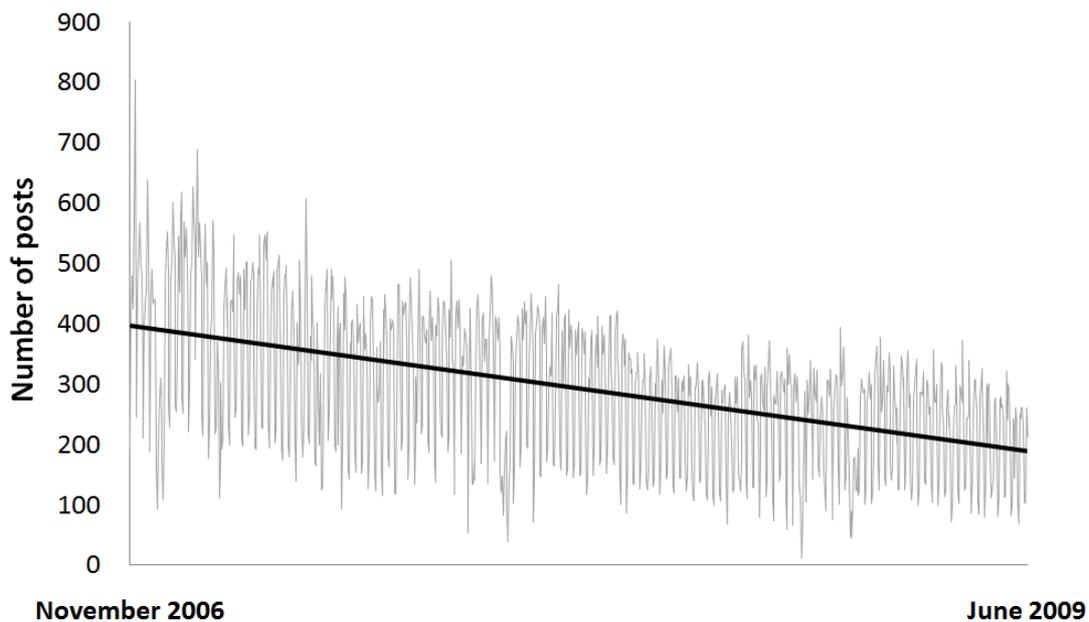


A total of 275,103 posts were published over the study period, 90% of which fell into three categories: personal, in which 195,605 posts were published (71%), academic libraries, with 25,957 (9.4%), and public libraries, with 23,656 (8.6%) (Table 3). Production data per category and the average number of posts published per blog per year were also obtained: 301 posts per year for personal blogs and 147 for those corresponding to academic libraries and public libraries. With regard to the monthly average production rate, the total average was 11,250 posts in 2006, an indicator that fell steadily to only 6,872 posts per month in 2009. In other words, there were 44% fewer posts among the set of blogs analyzed, a significant drop that was particularly acute in 2007 and 2008, although not all areas were affected equally. For example, academic libraries and public libraries were the most affected, with declines approaching 50%, while the personal category fell by 38% between 2006 and 2009. The fall can clearly be seen in Figure 2, which shows the daily post production.

Table 3. Average posts published per month and number of posts published by LIS blogs, 2006-2009

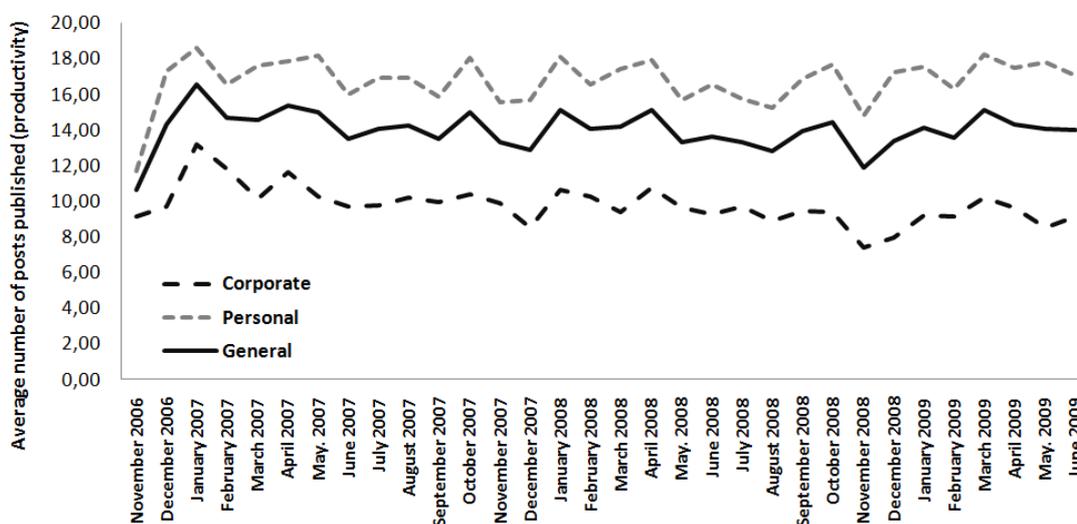
Type of blog	Libworm categories	Total of posts published during	% posts published During 2006-	Avg posts published per blog and year	Avg posts per month			
Corporate	Academic	25957	9.4%	147	1132	1096	687	572
Corporate	Government	3661	1.3%	282	157	116	128	98
Corporate	Law Libraries	11512	4.2%	677	216	401	402	277
Corporate	Medical	553	0.2%	61	30	25	13	11
Corporate	Professional	12247	4.5%	194	442	531	302	303
Corporate	Public Libraries	23656	8.6%	147	1097	941	653	572
Corporate	School Libraries	1912	0.7%	96	88	95	44	27
Personal	Personal	195605	71.1%	301	8088	7410	5710	5013
	Total general	275103	100.0%	248	11250	10613	7939	6872

Figure 2. Number of LIS blogs posts published per day between November 2006 and June 2009



Since the closing of blogs will obviously result in lower production volume, it is worthwhile to determine not only the production rate but also the monthly productivity (Figure 3). Clearly, although the number of active blogs and number of posts had steadily fallen, the productivity remained fairly regular over the course of the study period. In general, the productivity of an LIS blog was 14 posts per month—nine for corporate blogs and 16 (an average of a post every two days) for personal blogs.

Figure 3. Average number of posts published per month per category between November 2006 and June 2009 by LIS blogs.



6.2. Main LIS blogs

Finally, a set of web-visibility indicators were calculated for each of the 1,108 blogs, including PageRank, number of Google links, and Technorati Authority, the overall results of which are shown in Table 4 for the 30 leading blogs in the discipline. The criteria used for this ranking were the number of links from Google and Technorati Authority. This list is characterized by all the blogs belonging to the category established by Libworm as personal, except for one case corresponding to law libraries. The predominant language of the blogs with the highest visibility is English, except in a few cases, such as netbib Blog (in German) and Blogpocket, El Blog del Futuro del Libro, and La Brujula Verde (in Spanish). With regard to the visibility of the most frequently linked blogs in the ranking (Blog of a Bookslut, John Battelle's Searchblog and Official Google Blog), they had more than 11,000 links each— twice as many as the succeeding blogs on the list.

Table 4. Ranking of LIS blogs according to various web-visibility indicators over the 2006–2009 period and comparison with Bar-Ilan's ranking (2007).

Blog	lang	cat	Nr posts	Links Google	Rank links Google	Authority Technorati	Rank Authority Technorati	Page Rank	Ranked by Bar-Ilan *	Position Bar-Ilan ranking 2004*	Position Bar-Ilan ranking 2005*
Blog of a Bookslut	Eng	Per	3204	11600	1	404	2	7	Yes	2	2
John Battelle's Searchblog	Eng	Per	1049	11200	2	291	5	7	No	---	---
Official Google Blog	Eng	Per	267	11000	3	5940	1	8	No	---	---
The Reading Experience	Eng	Per	394	5540	4	50	29	6	No	---	---
Conversational Reading	Eng	Per	1796	5280	5	85	18	4	No	---	---
Booksquare	Eng	Per	321	5250	6	116	10	4	No	---	---
The Shifted Librarian	Eng	Per	384	4900	7	43	32	7	Yes	1	1
Open Access News	Eng	Per	3879	4690	8	16	87	7	Yes	10	12
librarian.net	Eng	Per	567	4010	9	373	3	7	Yes	3	3
beSpecific	Eng	Per	3146	3880	10	27	50	6	Yes	13	8
Boxes and Arrows	Eng	Per	70	3750	11	168	6	7	No	---	---
LISNews.org	Eng	Per	5369	3270	12	no data	no data	6	Yes	7	9
ResearchBuzz	Eng	Per	616	3070	13	42	33	6	Yes	4	7
Electronic Discovery Law	Eng	Law	365	3000	14	22	67	6	No	---	---
netbib weblog	Ger	Per	5399	2910	15	27	50	6	No	---	---
Tame The Web: Libraries & Technology	Eng	Per	1826	2870	16	76	21	6	No	---	---
blogpocket 6.0	Spa	Per	1597	2810	17	88	17	3	No	---	---
TeleRead: Bring the E-Books Home	Eng	Per	4493	2600	18	331	4	7	Yes	17-19	18
Library Stuff	Eng	Per	2793	2430	19	28	47	4	Yes	5	4
El blog del futuro del libro	Spa	Per	811	2420	20	168	7	6	No	---	---
Information Wants To Be Free	Eng	Per	272	2020	27	110	11	6	No	---	---
Lorcan Dempsey	Eng	Per	449	1950	29	104	12	7	No	---	---
Docuticker	Eng	Per	14354	1690	34	99	13	6	No	---	---
La brujula verde	Spa	Per	1607	1660	35	92	14	5	No	---	---
Traffick	Eng	Per	543	1620	38	77	20	5	No	---	---
Caveat Lector	Eng	Per	512	1530	41	77	19	6	Yes	No listed	16
Stephen	Eng	Per	1249	1330	45	157	8	8	No	---	---
Phil Bradley	Eng	Per	598	1170	54	90	15	4	No	---	---
blyberg.net	Eng	Per	98	854	84	129	9	6	No	---	---
OUseful Info	Eng	Per	830	123	16	89	644	5	No	---	---

* Bar-Ilan, J. (2007). The use of weblogs (blogs) by librarians and libraries to disseminate information. *Information Research*, 12(4).

In this group of 30 blogs the most common PageRank value was six, with the highest score achieved by Official Google Blog and Stephen, with a PageRank of eight each. As to the production of leading blogs, an average of 63 posts published per month was found, although the range was from two posts per month on Boxes and Arrows to 449 posts on Docuticker, a blog on information resources. Also, six blogs presented an unusually high number of posts, with averages of more than 100 per month. Compared to results from Bar-Ilan's study (2007), which used a similar methodology, 38% of the blogs remained among the most reputable in the discipline over the last few years.

7. Discussion

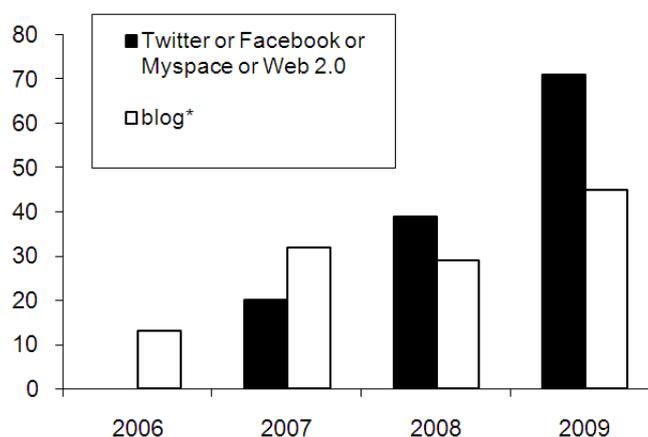
First, it is necessary to clarify some possible limitations of this study. Regarding the source of information, Libworm, was the only source that allowed the identification and massive collection of information about blogs that were active four years ago. Libworm also allowed the study of what had happened during the period of the 2006. So it is important to note that the results are focused on a fixed sample and do not cover new LIS blogs that have been created. Additionally, the sample was largely U.S. and U.K. blogs, which account for 91.4% of the sample, since Libworm's coverage for other languages and countries was very poor. It is also necessary to add two more clarifications about the indicators used. First, the definition of active blog (defined as one post per month or one post per year) is questionable, but, as stated Kramer and Rodden (2007), this concept in most studies about blogs is subjective. The definition of an active blog depends on the period of study and the study's objectives. Second, despite Google's links being used in several analyses, some studies have shown its limitations (Barjak & Thewal, 2008; Bar-Ilan, 2004); for this reason, other metric indicators were also included (Authority, PageRank, and number of posts).

The results obtained show a clear loss of significance for blogs as a communications medium for the LIS community, as indicated by the closure of blogs and the reduction in gross number of posts being published. These losses have been constant and steady and have affected all the blog types studied, personal and corporate. The data indicate a major shift in trends, per Bar-Ilan's (2007) report of a substantial increase in the number of active blogs prior to 2005; these results are similar to those obtained by Johnson (2008), although there were notable differences in how these studies referred to the percentage of ceased blogs. While Johnson registered a drop of almost 20% of blogs included in his study during a 13 months period, a fall of 52% over a 32 months period was noticed in the present study. However, Johnson's sample was only of 82 blogs.

That being said, the data obtained should not automatically lead to the assumption that the professional and scientific community is less engaged with the social web. These figures could merely be showing that bloggers have been migrating to other services and applications that are increasing in usage, specifically Twitter and Facebook. In this study, the sample of blogs analyzed had its most acute fall from 2007 to 2008, which is precisely when users began to join the new social networks en masse. Thus for example, Twitter had an average of 500,000 single visitors in December 2007; by February 2009 this figure had shot up to eight million (Ostrow, 2009). Facebook is a similar case; with 50 million users in 2007, 100 million in 2008, and 500 million as of July 2010 (Facebook, 2010). Finally, the time spent on Twitter and Facebook by users in December 2009 was 5.5 hours per month, an increase of 82% over the previous year when it was only three hours (Nielsen Company, 2010). It seems therefore that these new preferences noted for Internet users in general (Boutin, 2008) may well have also affected the LIS blogosphere. Research over the last few years reflects this trend. Since 2008, the Web of Science database has indexed more articles about social networks and Web 2.0 topics in general rather than articles just focused in blogs (Figure 4), demonstrating the turning point analyzed in this study. This gap widened in the *Information Science and Library Science* category¹ in 2009. Among the beneficiaries of this social web are libraries, which have found new ways to publicize their events (Hendrix, Chiarella, Hasman, Murphy, & Zafron, 2009) or offer alternative channels for reference services (Mack, Behler, Roberts, & Rimland, 2007), and it makes sense for this to have been to the detriment of other websites, in this case, blogs. By the same token, it seems that those librarians with higher computer expertise who were earlier adopters of blogs, would also be very familiar with Web 2.0, and motivated by it (Aharony, 2009c).

¹ The search strategies used in WOS were 1)Topic=(twitter or facebook or myspace or "web 2.0") AND Year Published=(2006-2009); Refined by: Subject Areas=(INFORMATION SCIENCE & LIBRARY SCIENCE) AND Document Type=(ARTICLE OR REVIEW); 2) Topic=(blog*) AND Year Published=(2006-2009); Refined by: Subject Areas=(INFORMATION SCIENCE & LIBRARY SCIENCE) AND Document Type=(ARTICLE OR REVIEW).

Figure 4. Number of articles and reviews about Web 2.0 and blogs indexed by ISI Web of Science published between 2006 and 2009



Another issue revealed by this study was the existence of two blogging communities with different characteristics and profiles: corporate blogs and personal blogs. The latter type had a greater presence: 58% belonged to this category, and they were the ones that published the most, accounting for 79% of the posts and producing an average of 301 posts per year. They are also the ones with the greatest impact. Some of them have also managed to become a reference model in the discipline, having held leading positions in the visibility rankings since 2004. In summary, in all cases the corporate blogs presented values that were significantly lower than personal blogs and only blogs of academic or public libraries had figures of any significance, demonstrating that success and visibility in the blogosphere is closely linked to personal initiative. Libraries and other bodies studying blogs as a communication tool should take into account the low visibility of corporate blogs before launching them.

8. Conclusion

This study shows that the blogosphere is an important source for the creation of LIS-related content, with 275,103 entries produced during the study period. In 2005 the number of active blogs and entries published was still increasing, but by 2006 those numbers began to decline significantly. Some explanatory factors were explored and the drop in blogging was related to the exponential and massive growth of social networks such as Twitter or Facebook, which happened concurrently. Therefore, it is assumed that the LIS community is part of a greater migration from one platform to another, which affects the formerly key role of blogs. This loss of significance is clear when the categories of corporate and personal blogs are analyzed; the decline in personal blogs is less pronounced. Productivity and visibility patterns in both categories have also shown significant differences between blog typologies, and

demonstrate that personal blogs are more active and have greater impact than corporate blogs. A small core collection of blogs has also been identified as a reference group for the LIS profession, a reputation it has maintained for more than five years despite the general trend toward ceasing blogging activity.

In conclusion, the general decrease in the number of active blogs and the amount of content being generated show that information professionals are turning to other channels of communication. It would be interesting to verify if these trends gain a firm foothold in the near future as a means for professional and corporate communication. The rise of social networks also makes it necessary to study this phenomenon in depth in order to determine the extent to which the conversation that was established on blogs in the first part of this decade has been transferred without interruption to these new communication platforms.

9. References

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