

**LINKING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE  
ONLINE:**

*A Comparative Study of French and Anglo  
Biblio-blogs*

Heather Lea Moulaison

Emma Tonkin

Edward M. Corrado

# Professional librarianship

- Libraries
  - Linked to communities or organizations they support
- Librarians
  - Brokers of information
    - Monographic
    - Digital, etc.

Librarians must keep abreast of new technologies and trends to serve patrons

# Traditional knowledge sharing

- Librarians and researchers create new library knowledge
- Traditionally, diffused
  - Conferences
  - Publications
  - Continuing education
- Effective, but hierarchical, one-sided, & limited



Association  
des Bibliothécaires  
de France



Chartered Institute of  
Library and Information  
Professionals



The world's libraries.  
Connected.

# Communities of Practice

- *Community of practice*: communicates on a topic, learns together, & shares and generates knowledge
  - Many different definitions (Hindreth & Kimble, 2004)
- ICTs enhance traditional methods for professional communication
  - Commenting on blogs can foster community (Stephens & Collins, 2007)

# Agenda

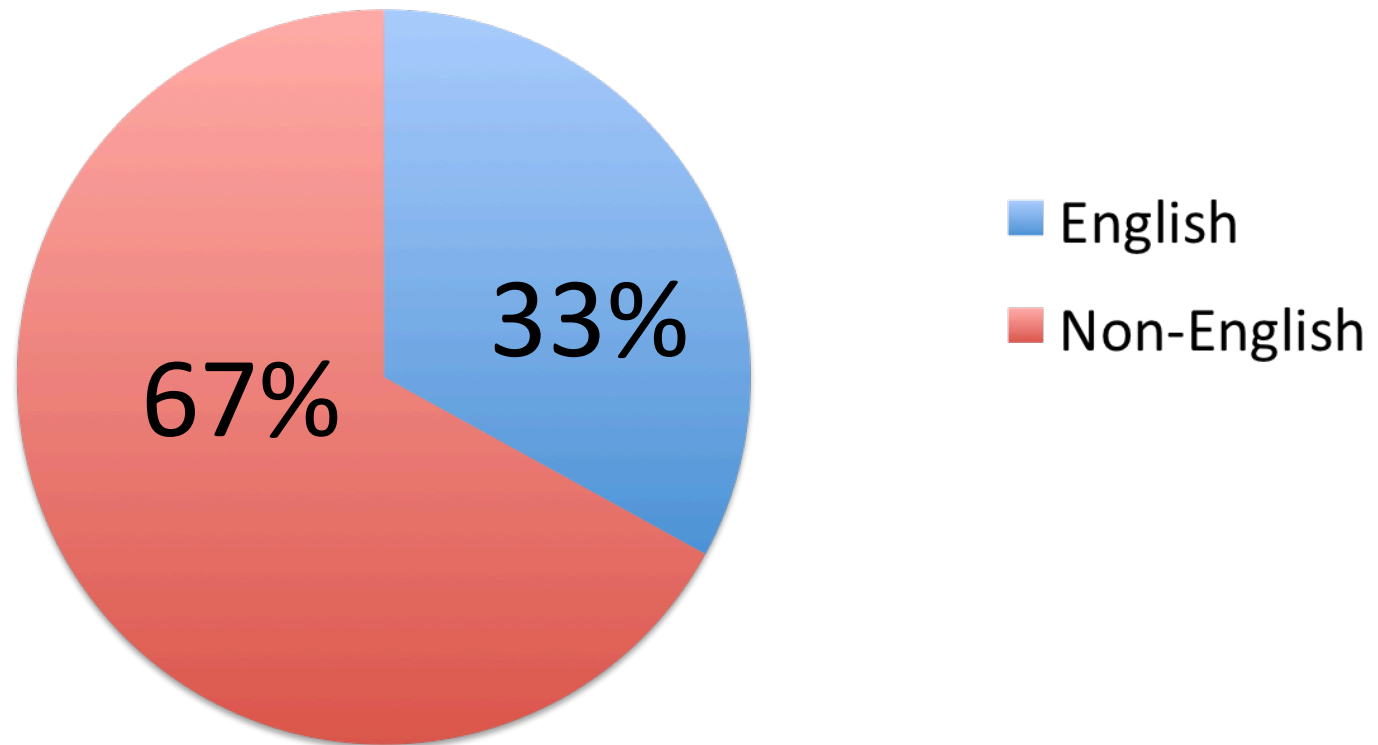
- Introduction
- Biblio-blogs
  - in English- and French-speaking worlds
- Study: Anglo and French biblio-blogs
  - Methodology
  - Results
- Discussion
- Further Study/Conclusion

# *Biblio-blogs* as professional tool

## *Blogs* for librarian-to-librarian communication online

- Technical features
  - “Tags” allow blogger to label content
  - “Comments” allow for community involvement
  - Blogosphere links blogs to each other
  - Independent of time/place
  - Uniting members of a *Community of Practice*

# Percentage of Blogs by Language (March 2007)



(Green, 2007)

# The French and new technologies

- Adopting new technologies rapidly since 2000 (Moulaison, 2007)

## *French and blogging*

- Relatively long tradition ([www.skyrock.com/blog/](http://www.skyrock.com/blog/))

# French biblio-blogs?

Biblio-blogs hidden from a non-French researcher (Natarajan, 2007)

- Biblio-blogs mostly evident through online lists (Delhaye & Morin, 2007)

# Research Questions

- RQ1 Is there a French biblio-blogging community?
- RQ2 How influential are biblio-blogs in both languages?
- RQ3 Are there patterns of connectivity within each community?
- RQ4 Is there evidence of French influence on Anglo biblio-blogs? Or vice-versa?

# Biblio-blog study: Methodology

- Identify a sub-section of biblio-blogs
  - *library 2.0*
  - *bibliothèque 2.0*
- 25 Anglo and 25 French biblio-blogs
  - Similarities and differences

# Biblio-blog discovery

- Technorati tag search to identify biblio-blogs
  - Used for Anglo “*library 2.0*” blogs
  - Not effective for discovering French “*bibliothèque 2.0*” blogs



Technorati Search	English	French
<i>“library 2.0” / “bibliothèque 2.0”</i>	350	0
<i>library+2.0 / bibliothèque+2.0</i>	622	2

## Biblio-blog discovery (2)

- French biblio-blogs selected using “site-ation” pearl growing (Ramer, 2005)
- All 50 blogs manually reviewed for authority, relevancy, and quality
- Anglo biblio-blogs were U.S.-centric (22 of 25)
- French blogs were from France (24 of 25)



# Popularity of blogs



- Alexa.com rankings
  - Majority of Anglo blogs ranked
  - Only 20% of French blogs ranked
  - Limitation: Alexa.com ranks by hostname (not particular pages/sub-sections)

# Popularity of sites

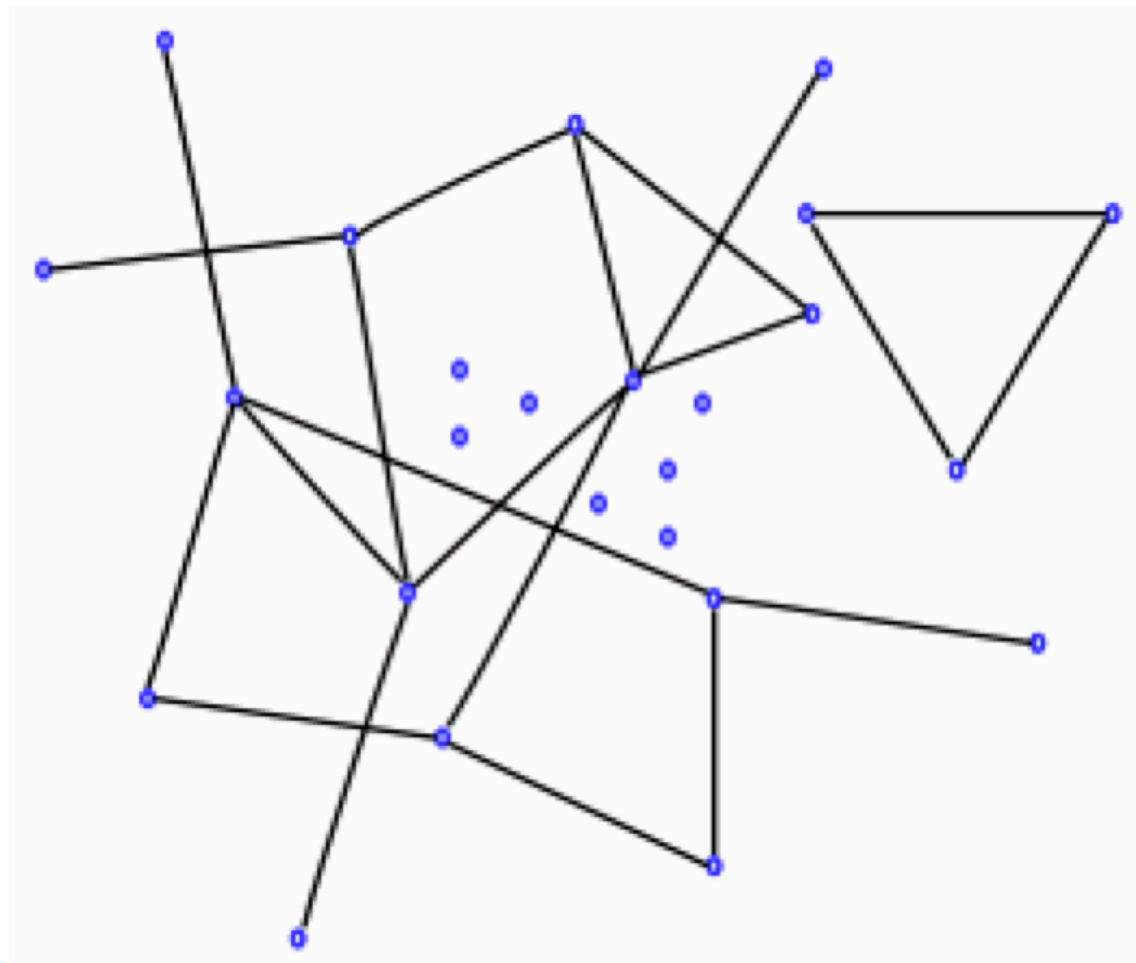
- Google rankings
  - Used the *link:uri* function of the Google Data API to count the number of links
  - Data shows Anglo biblio-blogs more popular
- Informal observation: Biblio-blogs attributed to an individual (vs. anonymous) were more popular



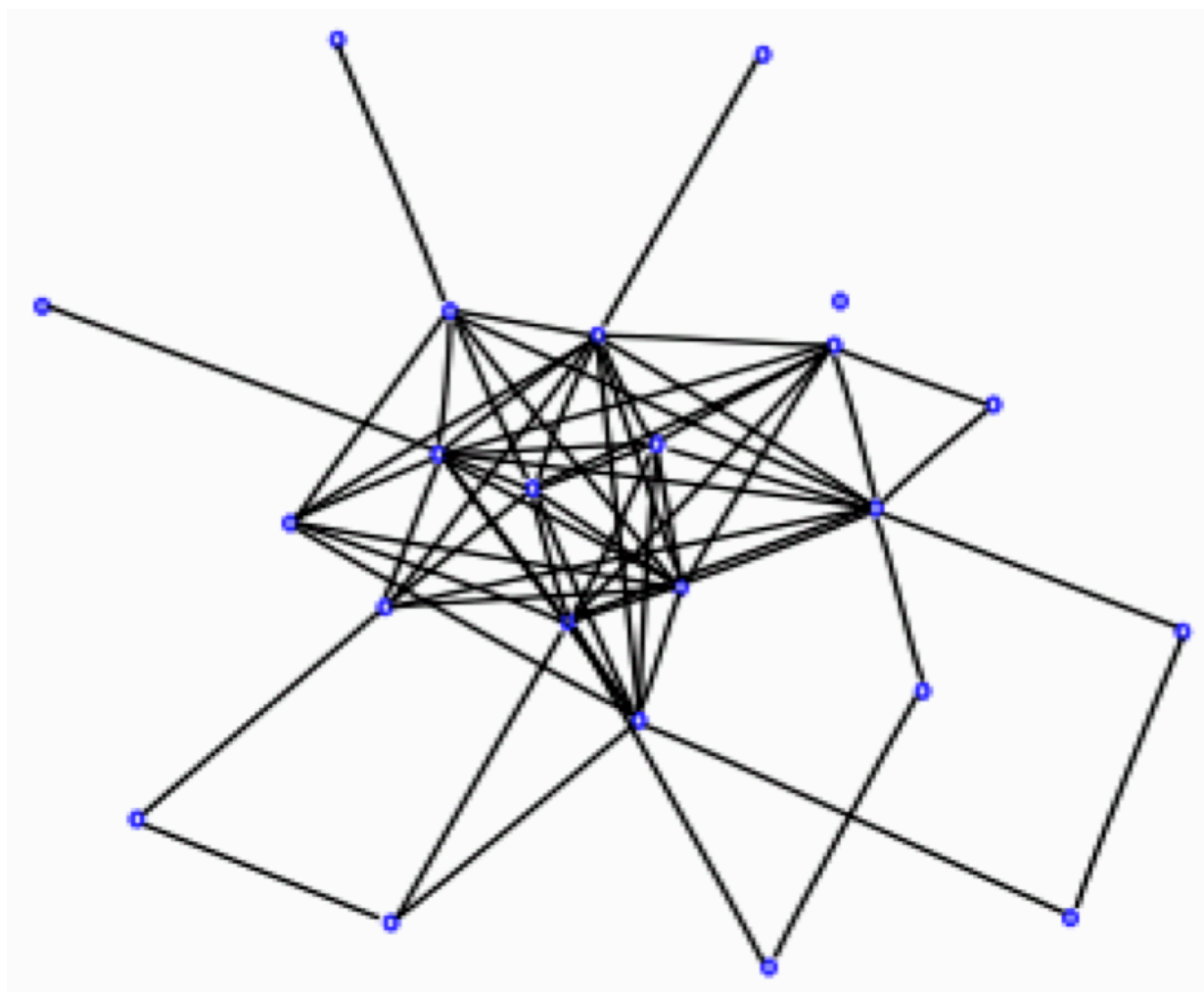
# Blogs as network

- Similar number of links of French (~240) and Anglo (~230) biblio-blogs
- French biblio-blogs closely knit
- Anglo biblio-blogs display a wider, sparser, more extensive network
- This is partially an artifact of the selection process

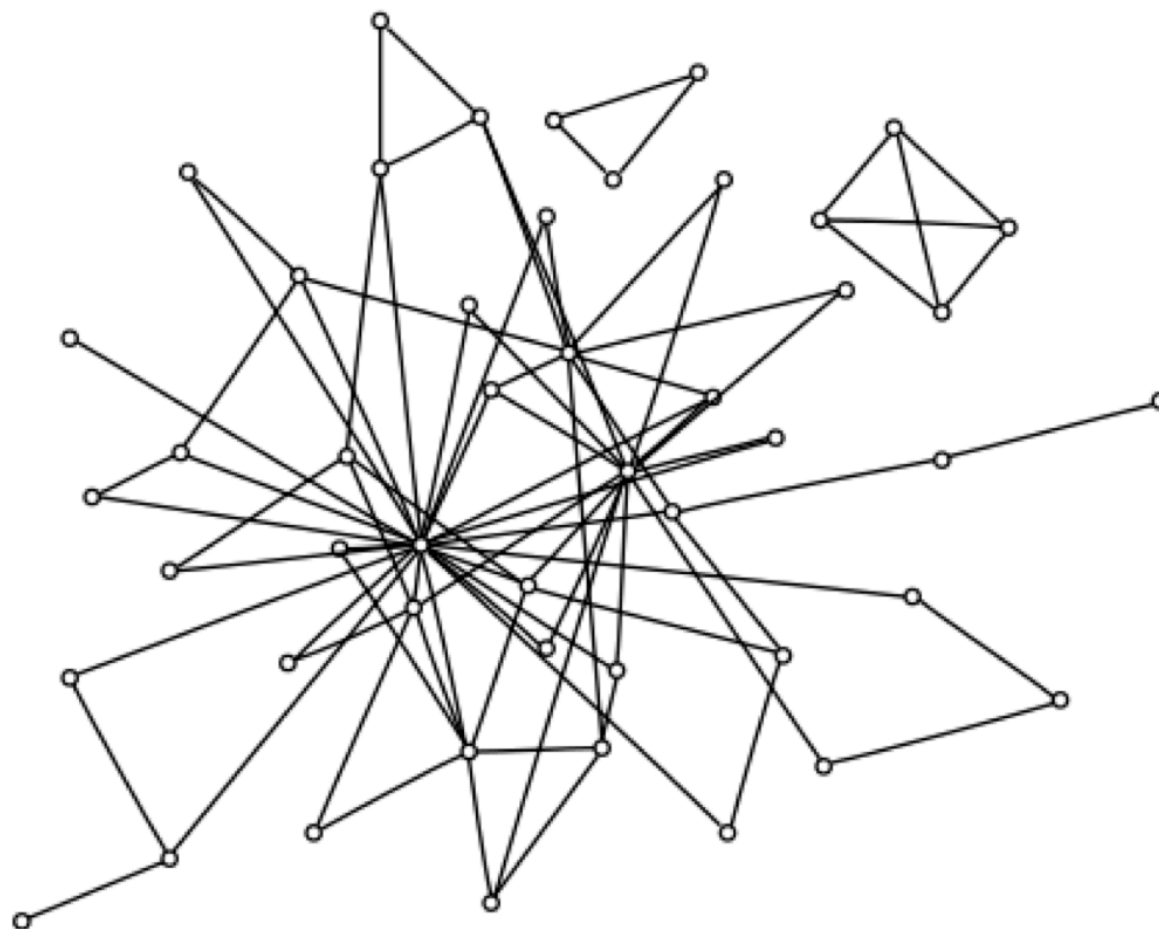
# Connectivity between Anglo biblio-blogs



# Connectivity between French biblio-blogs

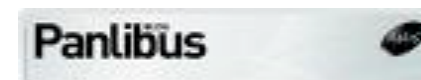


# Interconnectivity between top 300 Technorati blogs for query "Library 2.0", with outliers omitted



# Shared resources of interest

- 63 jointly linked resources
  - English-language Wikipedia articles
  - Well-known U.S. biblio-bloggers
  - Library vendor blogs
  - Web 2.0 services
  - Even when other languages are available, jointly linked resources only pointed to the English version



# Findings

- One way flow of information from Anglo to French biblio-blog communities
  - 16% of all French *bibliothèque 2.0* blog posts were summaries of English language resources
- Anglo biblio-blogs more popular
- Discussions not bilingual
- Anglo biblio-bloggers ignore French resources
- Difficulty in finding French biblio-blogs
  - Supports Natarajan's experience

# Discussion

- Very little French influence found in Anglo biblio-blogs
  - U.S. language skills?
  - French “marketing” issues?
- Anonymous v. signed blogs
  - “Reputation economy” (Anderson, 2006)
- Type of librarianship, by country
  - Relative importance of library 2.0?

# Discussion (2)

Traditional communication models fit a variety of librarian communities.

	U.S.	French
Public libraries	City government	Education system
Traditional focus	Use and users	Collections
Librarian's status	Professional employee	Civil servant

# Future study

- Knowledge diffusion in librarianship: What, when, how, and why?
  - Biblio-blog content analysis: Postings, comments, and trackbacks
- Authorship in the blogosphere: What is the role of attribution, by culture?
- International attitudes toward the role of the librarian/librarianship

**Thank you!**  
**Merci!**

**Heather Lea Moulaison**

heather.moulaison@rutgers.edu

**Emma Tonkin**

e.tonkin@ukoln.ac.uk

**Edward M. Corrado**

ecorrado@ecorrado.us

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# Comments and trackback frequency

12 biblio-blogs of each language were investigated further

- Comments:
  - French blogs had fewer comments (1.38 vs. 1.83)
  - French blogs had less variation in the number of comments (2.20 vs. 3.61)
- Trackbacks
  - Neither Anglo or French blogs made much use of trackbacks
  - Trackback “spam” (?)
  - French blogs had more trackbacks (1 trackback per 5 posts vs. 1 trackback per 12 posts)