
Del.icio.us Delightful De-lovely!

Online Social Bookmarking, or: Tagging for Teaching

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Adapted from *Furl, Furred, Furling* by Jim Wenzloff
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Ten Reasons You Should Use Del.icio.us

1. Save site found using multiple computers (home and school) to one resource.
2. Access your bookmarks anywhere you have web access.
3. Continue to access your bookmarks even when your computer crashes or you get a new computer.
4. Share web sites with your students or peers.
5. Search your bookmarks by keywords and tags.
6. Use related tags to narrow or extend your searches.
7. Display your saved web site links by category.
8. Learn about new sites from your other del.icio.us users.
9. Subscribe to other users' del.icio.us bookmarks.
10. Check out recently posted and popular sites.

Del.icio.us?

At one level del.icio.us is a site for saving your favourites/bookmarks online but it is more than that. It is your personal web site where you can store and categorise your bookmarks. On a personal level, you can use it for recipes, gift lists, travel sites and more. You can also learn what web sites others find interesting. Del.icio.us allows you to save a link to anything you view on the web. You can also use it to share what you read on the web with other teachers or with your students. It has many educational possibilities:

1. Web sites for student research or projects
2. Books recommendations
3. Professional research
4. List of books you would like to read
5. Placing web links on your school web page
6. Students can find resources at home and access them at school and vice versa
7. Share what you are reading or view what your peers are reading on the web
8. Web site collections tagged by school topic

I'm sure you will think of more ways you can use del.icio.us.

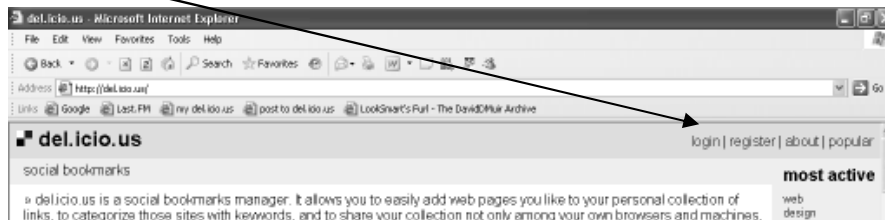
Most importantly, del.icio.us will help you organize and find the web sites that you think are important and may wish to visit again.

Getting Started

Del.icio.us is fairly easy to use, but unfortunately it is very poorly documented. If you get stuck, there may not be much to help you. However, it is difficult to get stuck, because the interface is so plain (positively minimalist) which means there is very little to get wrong!

There are two steps to getting started with del.icio.us:

First you have to register. Go to: <http://del.icio.us/> (Yes, it is a bizarre web address!) Click on the **register** link.



You should see the registration screen as below. Registration is **very** simple. You do not even have to provide an email address; just choose a unique username and a password. The username I use for my bookmarks is DavidDMuir, but I also registered as pgdescomp0405 where I save bookmarks for the 2004/05 cohort of PGDE(S) computing students. You can have as many identities as you want to use to help you organise your links.

The second part is slightly more difficult. When you register, you should see a page that invites you to add links to your link bar



The Links bar usually sits under the address bar in Internet Explorer and is a handy place to store frequently accessed links. Right click the *remember this* link and choose to *Add to favourites...* When the Add Favorites dialog box appears, choose to save the link in the *Links* folder. This assumes that you are using Internet Explorer on a Windows machine. If you are using a Macintosh, use a control-click on the link. If you are using a browser other than Internet Explorer, the folder/toolbar may not be called links; it could be something like Personal Toolbar folder or Bookmarks Toolbar. Even if you are using Internet Explorer, the links toolbar may not be obvious. There are instructions available on the del.icio.us page for most browsers, but unfortunately, there are so many possibilities, you may have to experiment or seek help to get an entry on the Links bar. Once it is there though, you will be able to use it at any time to add bookmarks to your del.icio.us web page (see next section).



Using del.icio.us

Whenever you find something you want to save while you're browsing the Internet just click on your *remember this* link on the Links toolbar. For this example, you are going to start by adding two links to fun sites.

First browse to the site you want to bookmark. For example, go to the Badger, badger, badger site:

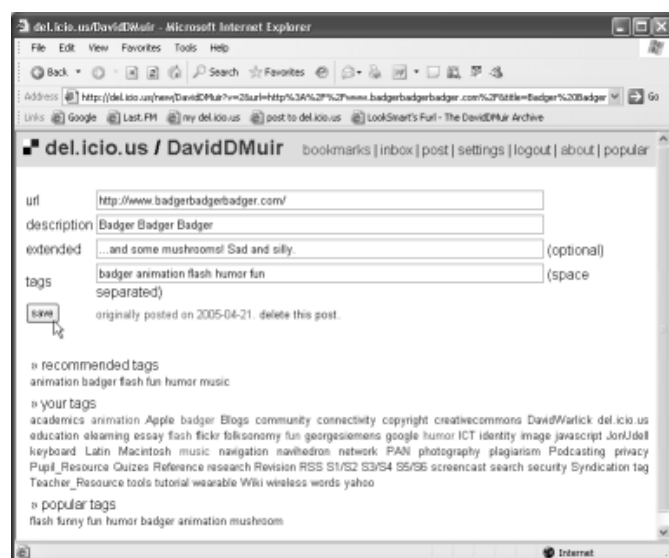
<http://www.badgerbadgerbadger.com/>

Once you are sufficiently bored watching the badgers (it shouldn't take long) click on the *remember this* link on the Links toolbar.

A window similar to the one shown below should appear. Let's examine this screen.

Name of your bookmarks - My bookmarks can be found at <http://del.icio.us/DavidDMuir> so this appears at the top of the screen. You should see your user name at the top of your screen.

URL and description - These were added automatically. You can edit these if you want. Editing the *url* doesn't make much sense, but sometimes the *description* is not very helpful. It is more likely however that you will add something to the extended field (see below).



Extended – In this field, you can add a brief description to remind yourself what the site is about. When posting sites to del.icio.us in the future, you may want to copy some text from the web page to paste into the *extended* field before clicking on the *remember this* link.

Tags - Tags are the key to searching your del.icio.us entries. Always take the time to add tags. The screen shot above shows three sets of possible tags but since this is the first link you have added, you will only see one set. The first set in the screenshot above is **recommended tags** which list del.icio.us' best guess as to what the page is about based on tags you have already used. Then there are **your tags**. Since I have been using del.icio.us for sometime, I have a fairly extended list of tags in this list. The third group are **popular tags** used by other people who have bookmarked this page – this is the only set you will see the first time you use the *remember this* tool. To use an existing tag, just click on it and it will be entered for you. You can also simply type your own tags in directly, but you can only use single words. If you want a multi-word tag, use an underscore, or simply omit the spaces (e.g. David_Muir or DavidMuir). The system makes no distinction between upper and lower case letters, but you can use capitals if you want. Enter the tags as shown in the above example. (Note the American spelling of humour. Also I have tagged it “flash” since that is the name of the software used to create and display the animation.) Click on the **Save** button to save and return to the badgers.

Add another entry

Go to the BBC comedy page: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/>

Create a del.icio.us bookmark. This time you should see the three sets of suggested tags as in the screen shot above. Decide for yourself which tags you want to use, but make sure that one of them is “humor”.

Viewing and Editing your del.icio.us Entries

To see your bookmarks, go to the address shown below, but replace <yourname> with the user name you created when you registered with del.icio.us:

<http://del.icio.us/<yourname>>

Anyone can access your bookmarks just by going to this address.

You should see the two bookmarks you have just created on the left of the screen and the tags you have used so far on the right of the screen. Click on the title of the bookmark to go to web page, or click on the word **edit** to make changes. That is it. You have created and used an online bookmark list!

Add at least two more sites that you use regularly and choose suitable tags for them before continuing to the next section.

Tags and searching in del.icio.us (the power of del.icio.us)

I love del.icio.us because of the tagging feature. When I used traditional bookmarks or favorites, the sites I bookmarked sometimes had names that didn't necessarily reflect the content that was important to me. For example, say I added a link called “Kids Count” to my favorites. When I look at my favorites some time later I might not remember why I saved it. Is it a math site, a survey, or a site promoting kids? I may have no idea what the site is about unless I visit it again. Below is a description of the site:

“KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.”

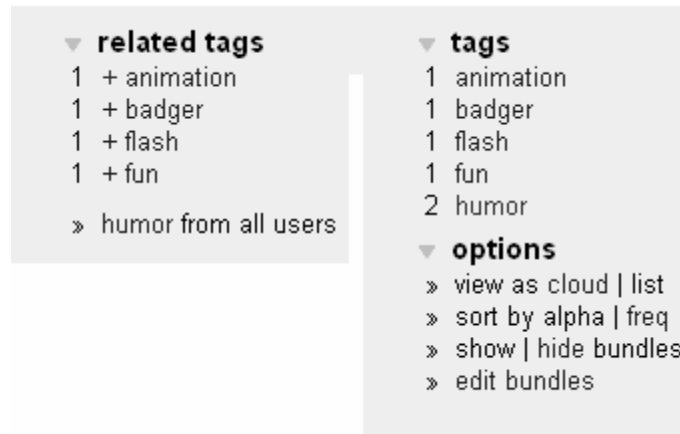
<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/>

When you “bookmark” a site with del.icio.us, you can add your own description and tags to help you remember what it is and to help you find it again in the future. You can search for sites using words from the description field, words you used in the extended description field or in the tags you used when the site was saved. This is a very powerful and useful tool. The search form is simple and easy to use. The basic search form is shown below. You can just type in the word(s) you are looking for and click Search. Enter search keywords (e.g. badger) in the search box at the top of the screen and see what you find.



The search function works, but the tags are even better! First, make sure you are back at your bookmark page by going to <http://del.icio.us/<yourname>> again – replacing <yourname> with whatever your username is.

Click on the “humor” tag at the right hand side of the screen, and you’ll see at least two links – the two you added earlier. On the very right side are your tags, but a new column beside that and to the left are your related tags. You can move between tags very easily with this, but you can also add tags. In other words, if you were in your humor tag and wanted to see everything that was tagged both humor and with animation, you would click on the “+” sign beside animation. You can do this for as deep as the matching tags go.



Also beneath those you’ll see “humor from all users.” This is where the social in social bookmarking comes from. There are no tags (at least that I’m aware of) on delicious that are private. This means you can see everyone else that has saved a site with a tag as humor.

Notice the web address of this page. You can go directly to a page of links tagged with Scotland just be going to

<http://del.icio.us/tag/scotland>

Other tags can be added by joining tags together with + signs. For example to see if anyone has saved a page about Scotland and our “other national drink” you could try going to:

<http://del.icio.us/tag/scotland+irnbru>

If you don't have an account, open an account. It will only take a few minutes. Once your account is opened and you have logged in, you will see a side bar where you can add RSS feeds.



Click on the Add link.

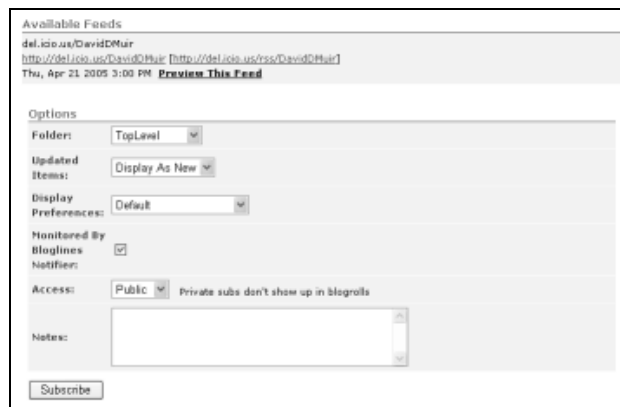
The right hand panel of the page will refresh and you will see the subscribe box shown below. Paste the URL you copied from del.icio.us into the subscribe box.

Blog or Feed URL:

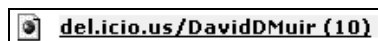
Click on Subscribe.

Another options box will appear. It is shown on below

If it is a new account you won't need to do anything except click on the Subscribe button at the bottom of the blue area.



Now on the left hand side you will see the link shown below. Notice the (10) in the screen shot shown below – you may see a different number as this shows there were ten new entries when I took the screenshot. To view the entries just click on the hyperlink. The next time you visit Bloglines you will only see the **new** entries in my del.icio.us. bookmarks.



You can now add RSS URLs for other del.icio.us, blogs or news sources. Students or teachers can also use RSS to subscribe to tags within your del.icio.us. This, for example, is the RSS feed for the topic education within my del.icio.us list:

<http://del.icio.us/rss/DavidDMuir/education>

del.icio.us Features

This section will go through the del.icio.us menu and explain the features that are listed under each one. You may or may not want to use any of these features immediately. However, you should be aware of them for later reference or use.

When you are logged in, the links at the top of the page are shown below:

bookmarks | inbox | post | settings | logout | about | popular

bookmarks

Clicking on this link will take you to your own set of saved links.

inbox

This takes you to an area where you can view subscriptions to tags or users within del.icio.us. If you use a tool such as Bloglines, you probably do not need to use this feature.

post

You can use a form on this page to post a link to del.icio.us, but it is probably easier to use the *remember this* link instead. However if you are ever using someone else's computer who does not have a *remember this* link, this may be the only way to remember a link.

settings

This link brings up a number of sub-headings at the right-hand side of the screen:

The screen you see when you first click on **settings** is probably the **profile** page. From this page you can change your email address, your password or what information others see about you. You can also delete your account from this page.



The **antisocial** link shows any users or tags that you have chosen to ignore. Although all tags are public, you may not wish to see every person's bookmarks or tags. When you are on a user's page or a tags page, you will see an **ignore** link near the top of the page. Clicking on this link will add that person or tag to your ignore list.

The **tags** link is extremely useful. Once you have added a few links you may decide to reorganise your tags. For example, you may start by tagging some items as "digitalidentity" but decide later that the more general term "identity" may be more appropriate. You can change all your items tagged as "digitalidentity" to "identity" in one step from this page. You can also delete tags that you no longer use from this page.

The **export** link allows you to save a copy of your del.icio.us bookmarks in format that can be accessed by most web browsers.

logout

Not surprisingly, this will log you out of the del.icio.us service.

about

This will take you to the online documentation for del.icio.us. The online help may be brief and not entirely helpful, but it covers all of the functions of del.icio.us and should answer most of the questions that arise when using the service.

popular

This takes you to a page listing what are currently the most popular links and tags on del.icio.us.

...And finally

This document gives a very brief introduction to del.icio.us. Other web based description and discussion of its value and how to use it can be found at the following locations.

A blog entry with a basic tutorial on del.icio.us can be found at:

<http://www.beelerspace.com/index.php?p=890>

Another blog entry on “What is del.icio.us” and whether it is a useful tool can be found at:

http://www.secretlair.com/index.php?/clickableculture/entry/what_is_delicious/

Finally, a screencast (i.e. an animated screen capture with spoken commentary) showing how del.icio.us can be used can be found at:

<http://weblog.infoworld.com/udell/2005/03/14.html>

I hope you have found this introduction to del.icio.us useful. Send an email to d.d.muir@strath.ac.uk to let me know if you come across any errors in this document, or to tell me about any other useful del.icio.us resources.