

Social Objects for HydroShare

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What is a Social Object?

- Coined by Jyri Engeström in 2005
 - Sociologist and entrepreneur
 - “Object-centered sociality”
 - Based on Activity Theory and Actor-Network Theory
 - Vygotsky, Bourdieu, Knorr-Cetina, Latour, Engeström

“The fallacy is to think that social networks are just made up of people. They’re not; social networks consist of people who are connected by a shared object.”

What is a Social Object?

- Nina Simon, author, exhibit designer, museum consultant
 - “Social objects are the engines of socially networked experiences, the content around which conversation happens.”
- Hugh MacLeod, cartoonist, author
 - “The interesting thing about the Social Object is not the object itself, but the conversations that happen around them.”
 - “The Social Object, in a nutshell, is the reason two people are talking to each other, as opposed to talking to somebody else. Human beings are social animals. We like to socialize. But if you think about it, there needs to be a reason for it to happen in the first place. That reason, that 'node' in the social network, is what we call the Social Object.”

Examples

Social Object	Website
Photos	Flickr.com, ~Facebook.com
Videos	YouTube.com, Vimeo.com
Status Updates	Twitter.com, Jaiku.com
Books	LibraryThing.com
Travel Plans	Dopplr.com, TripIt.com
Bookmarks	Del.icio.us, Pinterest.com
Recipes	Foodily.com, Recipefy.com
Music / Songs	Last.fm, Soundcloud.com
Résumés / CVs	LinkedIn.com
Research Objects / Workflows	MyExperiment.org
Yarns and Patterns	Ravelry.com
Code / Programs	GitHub.com
Slide Decks	Slideshare.com
Questions and Answers	StackOverflow.com, Quora.com

Key Principles for HydroShare

- Define the object(s)
- Define the verbs
- Make the objects shareable

Read More

- Jyri Engeström (2005), "Why some social network services work and others don't — Or: the case for object-centered sociality"
<http://www.zengstrom.com/blog/2005/04/why-some-social-network-services-work-and-others-dont-or-the-case-for-object-centered-sociality.html>
- Hugh MacLeod (2007), "Social Objects for Beginners"
<http://gapingvoid.com/2007/12/31/social-objects-for-beginners/>
- Jyri Engeström (2009), "Building Sites around Social Objects, Web 2.0 Expo SF 2009"
 - slides <http://www.slideshare.net/jyri/building-sites-around-social-objects-web-20-expo-sf-2009>
 - video <http://vimeo.com/4071624>
- Nina Simon (2010), "The Participatory Museum, Chapter 4: Social Objects"
<http://www.participatorymuseum.org/chapter4/>