

NOVEMBER LEARNING

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Social Bookmarking with Del.icio.us

If you are using the same computer on a daily basis, chances are you have a list of favorites or bookmarks that you've saved and compiled within your browser over time. Your favorites or bookmarks are a quick list of websites that you visit on a regular basis – or great resources that you found at one point and want to revisit. The problem is that if you switch computers throughout the day, your list of bookmarks doesn't come with you.

Enter Del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>). This social bookmarking tool allows you to keep a list of your bookmarks online which means you can access them from anywhere you have an Internet connection. It also allows others to access your bookmarks; unless it's a bookmark you want to keep private. So instead of adding bookmarks right onto your computer, you enter them into a Del.icio.us account. That way, no matter where you are in the world or whose computer you're on, you can still access all of your own resources. And others can use them too.

Registering for Your Del.icio.us Account

There are four steps to getting started.

- **Step 1** - Go to Del.icio.us and you will see an area to register on the right side of the screen. You will need to create a username, password and enter your e-mail address. Use your e-mail account to validate your registration. (No need to give your first or last name.) **TIP:** Your username will be viewed by others when sharing resources. Choose one that colleagues and students will remember.
- **Step 2** - Now, you will be taken to a page where you are given the option to install Del.icio.us browser buttons into your browser toolbar. It is recommended that you install these buttons, as doing so will make accessing your bookmarks and adding new ones a much easier task.
- **Step 3** - Once the buttons have been installed, you will be prompted to quit and restart your browser. After doing so, you will be taken to an installation confirmation page where you will click on the link view your saved pages now.
- **Step 4** - Now you'll have to check your email for a message from Del.icio.us. This message will contain a verification link that you will need to click on for final activation of your account. Clicking this link will bring you to a webpage confirming successful registration of your account. Now click on the link that says your bookmarks. Doing so, you will be taken to your Del.icio.us homepage where your bookmarks will be stored as you save them.

Bookmarking with Del.icio.us

When you find a site you wish to bookmark, take your mouse and highlight some key text on the Web page. This key text might be an important quote or passage, or it might be a description of some sort. (optional)

Now click the Tag button in your browser toolbar. A window from Del.icio.us will pop up. This window contains several boxes. You will see that the URL box and the description fields are filled in. Feel free to change what is in the Description box, but don't change what is in the URL area, or your bookmark won't work. Also, you will see that the notes section contains the text you highlighted. You can add more to this box, such as your own ideas and/or other things about the site you want to remember. You'll also see a field called tags. A tag is a keyword that describes the site you are bookmarking. Enter as many tags as you would like separated by spaces. You can choose your own tags, and you can choose from suggested tags that will be provided.

Finally, click the save button, and your new bookmark will be saved into your Del.icio.us account.

Del.icio.us Features

After you have saved a few bookmarks, login to your Del.icio.us account. (Login is in the upper right hand corner). You should be taken to your bookmarks page, and you should see the bookmarks you have already saved. This is the main administrative page.

1. Look in the top left corner. This first section contains several links you will want to use to navigate around your account.
 - **your bookmarks** - Clicking on this link will take you to your own set of saved links.
 - **your network** - Clicking on this link will allow you to add people to your network and keep track of their latest bookmarks. This is a great tool to use to keep track of what all of your students are bookmarking. Simply add their Del.icio.us account name in the provided box and add them to your network. Also, subscribing to a user will now allow you to save bookmarks for them. More on this later.
 - **inbox** - The inbox is similar to your network. Instead of subscribing to a user, you can subscribe to a tag (keyword). Anytime a new bookmark is saved by anyone on Del.icio.us and uses your subscribed tag, you will get it here.
 - **links for you** - This area contains links that people on your network have saved for you.
 - **post** - You can use a form on this page to post a link to del.icio.us instead of posting from the browser button that you installed. However if you are ever using someone else's computer who does not have this button, this may be the only way to bookmark a new link.
2. Moving on, we have a few more links here that you will want to be aware of in the top right corner. **Settings** allow you to configure Del.icio.us to your liking. There, you will find links to the following.
 - **profile** - allows you to change your email address, your password or what information others see about you. You can also delete your account from this page.
 - **subscriptions** - shows you all of the tags you have subscribed to. It is basically the same area you get to when you go to your inbox described above.
 - **tags** - allows you to rename a tag or delete one entirely.
 - **antisocial** - shows any users or tags that you have chosen to ignore.
 - **import** - allows you to bring your bookmarks from your browser into Del.icio.us.
 - **export** - allows you to save a copy of your Del.icio.us bookmarks in format that can be accessed by most web browsers.
 - **experimental** - contains features that the people at Del.icio.us are experimenting with as possible future enhancements.

Still in the upper right section, you will find **logout**, which will log you out of the del.icio.us service. Also, you'll find **help**. Help 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. Finally, you will see **popular** and **recent**. These take you to a page listing what are currently the most popular and most recent links and tags on del.icio.us.

3. Below all of those links, you will see a search box. The search box is... well, it's a search box.

Looking at Your Bookmarks

Look at the first bookmark that you saved. You will see the name of the link you bookmarked. If you click on this link, you will go straight to the site. Also, you will see the notes that we highlighted when we were saving the bookmark. Then, you see all of the tags that you have associated with this bookmark. Finally, you see that this bookmark was saved by many other people. Click on this link, and you can see who else bookmarked this page, what notes they have saved, and can explore their bookmarks. This is all part of social bookmarking! We can look at what others, who have similar interests as us, see as being important.

Private vs. Public Bookmarks

This relatively new feature must be turned on within the settings area. It is located in the experimental section and is labeled private saving. To activate private saving, click on settings. Look on the right side of the screen, under experimental, and you will see private saving. Click the box that says "allow private saving of bookmarks." Now, whenever you save a new bookmark, you will see a "do not share" check box. Clicking this box will make your new bookmark private.

Questions? Contact brian@novemberlearning.com