Social Bookmarking Roles

Successful social bookmarking groups require participants to fill a range of roles. While planning the work of your group, decide who is going to complete each of the following tasks. You may assign more than one student to each role if necessary:

Social Bookmarking Roles	
Role	**Tasks**
The Original Thinker	Any group of students working together with social bookmarking applications depends on having a healthy collection of web links worth exploring. The ***Original Thinker's*** role in a social bookmarking group is to bring content to the collective table by searching for websites connected to the current topic of study. While volume matters---***Original Thinkers*** should plan to bookmark upwards of 20 sites for each research thread in order to ensure a measure of reliability in the information stream that a group studies---quality of content counts, too. ***Original Thinkers*** are essentially information filters for their partners. Careful selections now can help groups to make quick work of shared assignments later.
The Connector	During the course of any research project, new strands of thought are going to naturally arise. The group studying Woodstock is going to want to learn more about acoustics. The group studying the Vietnam War is going to want to learn more about Cambodia. The group studying prime numbers is going to want to learn more about Euclid and Ancient Greece. The ***Connector's*** role in a social bookmarking group is to be on the constant lookout for links related to these kinds of secondary themes. Without ***Connectors***, social bookmarking groups will struggle to build the kinds of background knowledge necessary for understanding their primary topics.
The Reliability Cop	While online resources have definitely made researching easier for student groups, they have also made researching riskier. That's because anyone can write anything that they want online, whether it is true or not. Bogus websites filled with information that you just can't trust can be found in any set of search results. That's where the ***Reliability Cop*** comes in. The ***Reliability Cop*** must know everything that there is to know about sniffing out websites that just can't be trusted and they must be willing to review every website that your social bookmarking group spotlights as worthy of continued study. When they find sites that are "fishy," it is your ***Reliability Cop's*** job to delete them from your shared collection.
Johnny Opposite	Collections of web links built with social bookmarking tools are inherently inclined to bias. After all, individual users make personal choices about the overall value of a site before adding it to a group's growing resources. When tackling controversial topics, this can result in one-sided studies. The deeply religious student will select different information to spotlight about natural selection and adaptation than the student whose parents are university biology professors. The conservative student will select different information to spotlight about the 2009 presidential election than the student who recently joined the High School Democrats. ***Johnny Opposite's*** role in a social bookmarking group is to make sure that personal biases don't taint a set of links by *intentionally* searching for sites that represent alternative viewpoints on any hot-button issue that a group is trying to explore.

Role	Tasks
The Mind Reader	One of the most valuable sources for finding new articles in social bookmarking applications are the libraries of links automatically generated by popular services like *Diigo* and *Delicious*. Generally organized by tag, these libraries (which *Diigo* calls Bookmark Lists and which *Delicious* calls Popular Tags) sort every tag used by every user, creating a catalog of websites that groups can use when studying nearly any topic. The *Mind Reader's* role in a social bookmarking group is to poke through these tag libraries looking for sites that may be valuable. Researching global warming? The *Mind Reader* should check out the sites tagged by other Delicious users. Learning about the Civil War? The *Mind Reader* should sift through the sites tagged by other Diigo users. Essentially, the *Mind Reader* is looking into the collective brain of other users of social bookmarking services to tap into materials that their group may have missed.
The Cleaning Crew	Social bookmarking efforts often collapse for one reason: Group members get lazy and fail to add short descriptions of the content found in bookmarked links or to follow any kind of shared tagging language. The result: Haphazard collections of hundreds of seemingly random web links that are no easier to explore than simple Google searches. That's where members of the *Cleaning Crew* come in. Understanding the important role that accurate titles, clean descriptions and common tags play in efficient learning, the *Cleaning Crew* is constantly polishing the bookmarks added to a shared collection.

Record your social bookmarking group assignments in the table below. Make sure that each group member has a copy of this handout and is aware of the role that they are playing in your upcoming research project.

Member Name:	Role Assigned:	Explanation: (Why does this job fit this particular person?)
	❑ Original Thinker ❑ Connector ❑ Reliability Cop ❑ Johnny Opposite ❑ Mind Reader ❑ Cleaning Crew	
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