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**Library 2.0: Not Your Grandma’s Library**

Sheau-Hwang Chang

**THE BIRTH OF WEB 2.0**

The bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2001 endangered the Internet business world, but it certainly did not stop the growth of the Web. On the contrary, it engendered new ways for people to participate on the Web in the form of new social tools. More and more people began to use the Web not only to find information, but also to chat, share photos, participate in forums, contribute ideas and build communities. Social networking websites like Flickr, YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook have all redefined social interactions on the Web. Today, the Web has become an integral part of the average person’s social life. It has changed our way of thinking and communicating with one another, deepening our reliance on the Web. According to Pew Internet Online Activities Trend Data, about 75% of American adults age 18 and older are Internet users as of December, 2009—approximately a 25% increase from 2001.

A decade ago, internet innovator Tim O’Reilly saw in the economic upheavals an opportunity for the internet to change to what has come to be termed “Web 2.0.” In 2004 O’Reilly produced the first Web 2.0 Conference. Attended by only heavyweight dot-com leaders, visionaries and thinkers, the conference presented the many new possibilities resulting from on-going revolutions and innovations in Internet technology and the burgeoning Internet economy. Subsequent 2.0 conferences have become the most watched events in the business and technology sectors.

As defined by O’Reilly, Web 2.0 is the use of the Web as a platform to build software tools that support user interaction, participation and collaboration. It is based on a set of social tools including blogs, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), instant messaging, wiki, podcasting, social networking, photo sharing, social bookmarking, tagging and mashups. The goal is to create a “Read/Write Web”; that is, a Web in which users can both read and freely contribute content. The central idea of Web 2.0 is to move away from the traditional unidirectional model, toward a new user-centric bidirectional model. By using social tools, for example, dot-com companies can reach out to expand their customer base, build communities, receive feedback and, in turn use, feedback to improve and build products. Users can interconnect, participate and contribute by using these same tools. Though its original application was in the world of business, Web 2.0 has had a significant impact on every aspect of life, including library life. Business 2.0, Chemistry 2.0, Psychology 2.0, Education 2.0 and Library 2.0 are just a few of its spinoffs.

In order to stay relevant, libraries cannot ignore this phenomenal change. Like many other professional fields, library science undoubtedly needs to jump on the Web 2.0 bandwagon as quickly as possible so that library users can continue to be adequately served. In 2005, the

![Figure 1: Library of Congress on Flickr.](image-url)
term Library 2.0 first appeared in the LibraryCrunch blog authored by Michael Casey, Division Director of Technology Services at Georgia’s Gwinnett County Public Library. It quickly became the hottest topic of discussion almost everywhere in the library profession.

THE WORLD OF LIBRARY 2.0

In the same spirit as Web 2.0, the goal of Library 2.0 is to build a bidirectional user-centered library using Web 2.0 social tools as its foundation. When Web 2.0 first evolved, many enthusiastic librarians quickly began to explore the potential of Web 2.0 social tools. Blogs such as The Shifted Librarian, Library Thing, and LibraryCrunch were pioneers in stimulating discussions on Web 2.0 in library land. When YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook debuted, many libraries and library organizations did not wait to use these sites to promote library services, connect with their users and offer help to their users. The Library of Congress even worked with Flickr to make the precious national historic photographs collection accessible worldwide (Figure 1).

Wiki is a tool designed to allow a team to collaborate on projects, writing documents and creating instructions without geographical and time constraints. Any member of the team can edit and contribute content from anywhere at any time. It is very easy to use and HTML (web page construction language) knowledge is not required. One of the most successful examples in library land is The Biz Wiki, a Business & Economics research guide. It was created in 2005 and is maintained by Chad Boeninger, Reference & Instruction Librarian at Ohio University Libraries (Figure 2). This research guide has been highly praised and widely used and is an important research tool not only for Ohio University users but also for users worldwide.

Instant Messaging (IM) is another tool that has changed the landscape of library services. A chat URL link is now an indispensable part of library home pages (Figure 3). Users do not need to walk up to the reference desk in person to get their questions answered; they can simply go to their library home pages and follow the chat link. They can immediately ask questions and receive instant answers. In addition, many instant messaging tools can now be embedded in any web page on a library web site (see Talk to Chad in Figure 2). Because users can receive instant feedback and there is no limitation on physical location, instant messaging adds significant value to the traditional walk-in reference service and has become a very popular and effective tool for library users.

Social bookmarking along with tagging and tag clouds have also gained momentum and have spurred innova-
PennTags is one such innovation, created by Michael Winkler, then Library Web Manager, and Laurie Allen, then Research and Instruction Services Librarian at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries in 2006 (Figure 4). PennTags allows users to bookmark articles, books and other materials of interest with a single click while conducting searches in library databases and catalogs. Users can then further organize their bookmarks, generate citations and share them with classmates and friends. Professors can share their bookmarks with students and create recommended reading lists for their courses. The best part of this tool is that users can assign their own terms, called folksonomies, rather than library-established terms to tag their bookmark entries. In addition, this tool can generate a list of most-searched terms from the entire system at any moment and display them on the main page, functioning as a dynamic index list. The list can be displayed in different font sizes, with the largest font representing the most-used terms. Because the different font sizes make the list look like a cloud, these dynamic lists have been named tag clouds. Unfortunately, PennTags is currently only available for the University of Pennsylvania students and faculty.

BEYOND LIBRARY 2.0

Although Web 2.0 social tools provide many advantages, each has its own weaknesses when applied in library land. One major weakness is lack of compatibility stemming from the fact that they have generally been developed independently. Libraries need a more integrated system equipped with Web 2.0 social tools so that their users can use them in an integrated manner. With this in mind, Libguides and Web 2.0 library online catalogs emerged two years ago. Libguides is a subscription-based hosted service that provides built-in Web 2.0 tools. Librarians can use this service to create subject specific research guides with interactive features, multimedia, communities and sharing capabilities (Figure 5). It gives librarians an edge in organizing library resources, reaching out to users and encouraging interactive learning. URL links and database search boxes can be presented on the same web page, providing convenient access to library resources. The Libguides service has been very
The Web 2.0 online library catalog or next generation publicly accessible catalog is another noteworthy innovation (Figure 6). It draws upon ideas from Web 2.0, as well as from Amazon.com and Google’s single box search services. This new online catalog is underpinned by a one-stop search engine with the capability to retrieve results from all library resources at once, including books, ebooks, journal articles, videos, databases and other media. With this new catalog, users do not need to switch from one resource to another to find materials that they need. Users can narrow their results to a small subset by using limiters such as subject, format and genre. When a record is selected, an additional link provides recommended resources based on other selections from users who selected the same record. Of course, Web 2.0 social tools are also built into this online catalog so that users can chat with librarians, write comments, rate resources and write reviews. Librarians can publish blog posts to promote library resources, provide instructions and invite users to participate in discussions directly from the online catalog. Because of its high cost, however, few libraries have implemented it so far.

LIBRARY 2.0 AT BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE

A recent article published by Chen Xu et al. in the Journal of Academic Librarianship in July 2009 surveyed 81 academic libraries in New York State to find out how Web 2.0 social tools have been used. The results reveal that only 40% of libraries are using some of these tools, while 47% are not using any. The most used tool is instant messaging, followed by blogs, RSS and tagging. Although the results cannot be generalized, the article does suggest that Web 2.0 is starting to be embraced by academic libraries, but there is still a long way to go.

The evolution of Library 2.0 has also been seen in the Clement C. Maxwell Library. Maxwell Library has implemented a wiki home page on the college’s wiki server, a MaxChat instant messaging service (Figure 4), and a blog with RSS capability. In addition, the library has recently purchased the Libguides service and is planning to roll it out to the campus community in September, 2010, when the new academic year starts. In the meantime, the library is also looking for opportunities to implement a Web 2.0 online catalog. We hope that our users can take full advantage of these new tools in order to enhance their learning experiences and enrich their campus lives.

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