Library 2.0 as a New Participatory Context

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INTRODUCTION

The Library 2.0 is a continuation of the development of digital libraries and user oriented digital information services such as MyLibrary. The 2.0 is used to distinguish the present initiatives from the traditional library and information services denoted as Library 1.0 (Maness, 2006). Because of the technological development of electronic resources, the means of collecting, storing, managing, and using widely distributed knowledge resources stored in a variety of electronic forms has changed (Griffin, 1998). Digital libraries have been seen as libraries without walls being logical extensions to libraries (Fox & Urs, 2002) and they have shortened the distance between author and reader by giving a more direct involvement in the dissemination of information. The fundamental mission to facilitate and provide access to information and knowledge has remained, but the processes, tools, and techniques have undergone major development. The initiatives describing personalized Web services like MyLibrary (Cohen, Fereira, et al., 2000) are a further development of digital libraries, which define personalized library services to users who are Web users. This group of users expects customization and interactivity. After the initial MyLibrary initiative there have been several dozen implementations of similar projects worldwide. However, during the initial years, the adoption rates of these services reached only about 10% of the potential user community (Gibbons, 2003). It is important to look at the barriers to personalized service because this seems to be the future of the digital world and the next big challenge at hand; what challenge will the Web 2.0 services pose to the libraries where libraries share the technological and social space with the Web? New trends like personalization, self service, mobility, and technology have created a Web environment that is transforming how users are interacting with information (Bearman, 2007; Benson & Favini, 2006; Coombs, 2007).

BACKGROUND

Defining Library 2.0

Library 2.0 refers to a growing area of interactive and social tools on the Web with which to create and share dynamic contents (Connor, 2007). In general it is a about the second generation of Web services and information technology allowing people to cooperate and share information online, shaping virtual communities. Library 2.0 is naturally based on the principles of Web 2.0 defined by O'Reilly (2005) as the network and platform delivering applications to the users to consume and remix data from multiple sources resulting in new content and structures. Web 2.0 is participative, modular, and permits the building of *virtual applications*, sharing information, and facilitates communication and the creation of new information (Miller, 2006). Using these tools people take part in the actual information production through *blogging*, posting Web-pages, *instant messaging*, engaging in e-commerce, *chatting* online, and so forth. It is a separate activity and at the same time something integrated into our daily lives (Haythornthwaite & Hagar, 2005).

Characteristics of Library 2.0

The discussion about Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005) has highlighted the user-centered, interactive, and easy-to-use technologies of the Web (Miller, 2005; Notess, 2006). Library 2.0 technologies are characterized by the fact that they permit the building of virtual applications;

Figure 1. Characteristics of Library 2.0
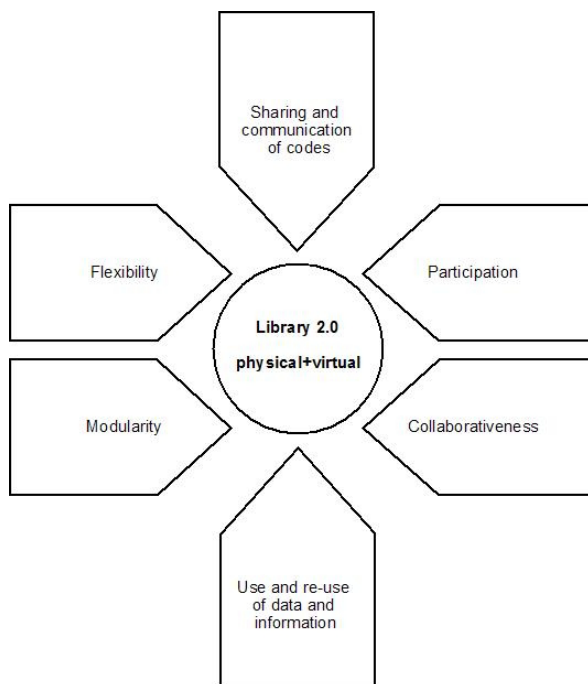
they are participative, flexible, and modular. They are collaborative in nature where the Internet users may, for example, categorize content such as Web pages, photos and links, edit the content of open-Web-pages, build new services based on existing sources, or design individual social structures. They are about sharing and communicating codes, content, and ideas, which are built upon trust in the uses and reuses of data and information. Library 2.0 is a hybrid, both in the sense of combining the strengths of virtual and physical library spaces, and in the sense of hybridizing the traditional roles of users and information professionals. As illustrated in Figure 1, the present Library 2.0 is rather a synthesis of ideas, objectives, and principles than a uniform framework.

Examples of Web 2.0 technologies that are used in Library 2.0 settings are the *blogs*, the *instant messaging* systems, *chats*, *folksonomies*, *wikis*, *mashups*, and *RSS feeds* (Maness, 2006; Miller, 2005). Different authors have begun to consider the 2.0 phenomenon in different library contexts such as school libraries, academic libraries, and university libraries. How Library 2.0 actually works is highly context specific and it is important to consider the different kinds of Library 2.0 initiatives to gain a broader view of the phenomenon (Biancu, 2006; Brevik, 2005; Crawford, 2006).

MAIN FOCUS

Library 2.0 Initiatives

Sites such as MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia, Orkut, and many more strongly rely on user-created content that in fact creates the value of the sites. These sites all also have a community-building element, allowing users to create groups and networks with other users with similar interests. Library 2.0 is meant to invite participation and user-creation of information connected to library services, but most of the initiatives still appear in the visions, blogs, and other writings of enthusiastic library staff and researchers. Some applications and mashups are rapidly gaining popularity and even library systems providers like SirsiDynix and Talis have taken steps towards Library 2.0 in their services.

In LibraryThing (http://www.librarything) registered users can create their own book catalogs on the Web. The metadata used in LibraryThing can be automatically downloaded from various sources, that is, the Library of Congress, Amazon, and so forth. These metadata are then enriched by the users' own reviews, ratings, keywords, tags, and comments. The system also enables the users to have a dialog and to discuss the books with other users, creating interest groups or networks around certain books or authors. LibraryThing has currently over 150,000 registered members and over 10 million books cataloged of which almost 150,000 are reviewed by the users. LibraryThing collects the users' experiences of the books they have and that they have read. It is an example of what could happen if the Web-based OPACs were opened to the library users and the users were allowed to attach their own reviews and tags to the books. Such data could be used to create user recommendations and evaluations of the books.

Another example is the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) system (http://www.aadl.org/) in which we can see several applications familiar from successful Web 2.0 services. Users can add their reviews, tags, and keywords to the online book catalog. Familiar from the online bookstore Amazon.com is the list of items that other users have searched for.

In Sweden incorporating Web 2.0 in the libraries' online services has been taken a bit further, by integrating even more Web 2.0 applications. Besides the above mentioned applications in AADL, the Biblioteket service in Sweden (http://www.biblioteket.se/) provides

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