

Chapter 41

Web 2.0 From Evolution to Revolutionary Impact in Library and Information Centers

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ABSTRACT

A key element of the technology is that it allows people to create, share, collaborate, and communicate. The Web 2.0 differs from ordinary websites as it does not require any web design or publishing skills to participate, making it easy for people to create and publish or communicate their work to the world. The nature of this technology makes it an easy and popular way to communicate information to either a select group of people or to a much wider audience. The Web 2.0 paradigm has gained substantial momentum in the last decade. The influence of Web 2.0 principles and technologies has fueled an explosion of information and media content on the web, and individual and corporate adoption of the technologies continues to rise. In this milieu, it is imperative to understand and learn about the present and evolving Web 2.0 tools and their application in different walks of life. The proposed study made an endeavor to dig deep into the genesis, development, and application of various Web 2.0 tools in library and information science.

INTRODUCTION

Technological revolution is affecting different facets of social life, although there is some disagreement in the research regarding the positive and negative influences. The Internet allows greater flexibility in working hours and location, especially with the spread of unmetered high-speed connections. The World Wide Web is most significant technology after the advent of printing press. It is a global set of

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large number of resources interrelated by hyperlinks. Social Networks, RSS Feeds, Wikis are a part of Web 2.0 which is most advanced form of the web. It can be well articulated as the shift from simply being a website and a search engine to a shared networking space that drives work, research, education, entertainment and social activities, which essentially all people do. Web 2.0 applications are socially rich and community building is the core of these applications. A key element of the technology is that it lets people to create, share, collaborate & communicate. The Web 2.0 differs from ordinary websites as it does not require any web design or publishing skills to participate, making it easy for people to create and publish or communicate their work to the world. The nature of this technology makes it an easy and popular way to communicate information to either a select group of people or to a much wider audience. The Web 2.0 paradigm has gained substantial momentum in the last decade. The influence of Web 2.0 principles and technologies has fuelled an explosion of information and media content on the Web, and individual and corporate adoption of the technologies continues to rise. In this milieu it is imperative to understand and learn about the present and evolving web 2.0 tools and their application in different walks of life. The proposed study made an endeavour to dig deep into the genesis, development and application of various Web 2.0 tools in library and information science.

The Internet allows greater flexibility in work, especially with the spread of high-speed connections. Internet-based technologies nowadays are playing a significant role in the way that societies communicate with each other. It's a fact that the technologies allow information to be readily exchanged without geographic and time barriers. Many people use the terms Internet and World Wide Web synonymously. The World Wide Web is a global set of large number of resources interrelated by hyperlinks. It provides a mesh of services including email, social networking and Web 2.0. The Web 2.0 is not mere a website and a search engine but it furnishes a platform for research, education, entertainment and social activities, which essentially all people do. It also provides the services like blogs, wikis, and multimedia sharing services, content syndication, podcasting and content tagging services. Applications of Web technology have been in use for years now, although new features and capabilities are being added on a regular basis. It is remarkable to see that many of these recent technologies are concatenations, i.e. they make use of existing services. World Wide Web (WWW) provided the base for Web 2.0 applications to create a new communication environment (Linh, 2008). It is a second wave that covers web tools and services. Davis (2005) describes Web 2.0 as an attitude not a technology and Birdsall (2007) believes that Web 2.0 is a social movement. So the Web 2.0 applications differ from Web 1.0 applications by their frequency of usage too. As the Web 2.0 applications are socially rich and community building is the core of these applications, so their usage increases many times than Web 1.0 static websites/applications. In 2004, Tim O'Reilly, the founder of O'Reilly Media (www.oreilly.com), used the term web 2.0 to describe the significant shift in how software developers and users were using the web. One of the characteristics of Web 2.0 web sites is that people go there to do something – as contrasted with Web 1.0 “brochure ware” sites that people came to primarily for information. Unlike in the past when it took months or years to implement new software, today we can download, set up and use powerful applications without the intervention of a technology expert. We can create our own website, manage huge databases, and stream rich media, the credit for all of this goes to the evolution of web. The users get attracted by these kind of experiences while they are added to the library environment. As per Dye (2007) libraries often impressed and get encouraged to use Web 2.0 technologies. These libraries that have adopted, implemented and embraced Web 2.0 technology are referred to have “Library 2.0” competences. As per Maness (2006) Library 2.0 offers various services like virtual reference services, databases, catalogue tagging, and downloadable media for home users. As Houghton-John (2005) defines it, Library 2.0 “simply means

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