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What is Web 2.0?

Although coined only 3 years ago by O'Reilly Media, Web 2.0 is quickly becoming vernacular in our culture, but many people do not know what it really means. Its name suggests that it's an upgrade from the original world wide web. As such, web 2.0 would signal the next generation of the internet, truly an enormous thing. But what is the real essence of web 2.0? This section is meant to provide a broad overview of web 2.0, what it is, how it came about, and how you can recognize it.

Web 2.0 is changing the entire focus of internet surfing. With web 2.0, you are no longer passively reading through pages and clicking to other pages. Instead, you are contributing with each click, modifying search engines with your own vocabulary, helping to improve your own future online experience, and communicating with, sharing with, and teaching others throughout the world. Web 2.0 is still quite new, but it promises to be the next big generation in internet communications.

The phrase "web 2.0" itself is a catch phrase with questionable inherent meaning. O'Reilly Media, working with MediaLive International, initially coined the phrase when naming a series of internet conferences in 2004. Since then, the phrase web 2.0 has been adopted by developers and marketers alike, but some people question whether each use of the word adheres to the original definition, or whether a rigid definition even exists. The expert Tim O'Reilly has said, in effect, that web 2.0 includes all applications, using the internet as a platform, that improve in quality and content as more people use them. To put it more glibly, web 2.0 is "the intelligent web," where the internet and the collective intelligence combine.

The Core Requirements of Web 2.0

Experts Tim O'Reilly and John Battelle outlined the core requirements of Web 2.0 in their first conference on the subject. These are (1) the web as a platform which can be used to add, annotate, remove, or modify data, and where (2) data is the driving force. In Web 2.0, the participation of readers in the content contribute to a network, known as the “architecture of participation.” Web 2.0 is also slated to have (3) an “open source development” such that features and information are compiled from diverse sources and independent developers. Next is a (4) lightweight business model where content is syndicated and the content is “perpetually beta,” or always part of a working model. In other words, no matter what the content, it can continually be changed or improved, and any reader may be qualified to change or improve it. Finally, (5) software is not constrained to a single device, also called The Long Tail, and (6) each application can easily be understood and learned by early adopters of web 2.0.

It's Web 2.0, but How Much? The Levels of Web 2.0 Extent

Internet applications can have different degrees of being web 2.0. These degrees are as follows:

Level 3 applications can only be used with an internet connecting, and they are nothing without the human-driven network. These applications require human participation to improve in content and quality. Level 3 applications include the ubiquitous eBay, which would of course be useless without people offering goods and other people to bid on those goods; craigslist for much the same reason as eBay; Wikipedia, since readers are responsible for editing content if they know it to be incorrect or outdated. Also a member of Level 3 is the application del.icio.us, where bloggers can increase traffic by submitting their blogs for other readers to comment on and tag based on their own vocabulary. del.icio.us is especially promising as a new way for searches to work, where readers use their own methods for determining searches. This is expected to help the internet community in general search more effectively and productively.

Level 2 applications, are different from level 3 because they are operable without an internet connection, but their greatest advantages are realized online. These include Flickr, a photo sharing database which is improved by the photos that are uploaded by the internet community. Without the internet, Flickr can still be used, but it quickly stagnates when no new photos are uploaded.

Level 1 applications, are similar to level 2, but gain less in quality by going online. Such sites include Apple iTunes, where you can listen to music offline, but can only purchase new songs by going online. Again, like with level 2 application, the means of updating is dependent on an internet connection.

Finally, Level 0 applications work as well offline as online. These applications are the “least web 2.0 of all.” Some of these applications include MapQuest, which readers do not contribute to, but rather use only for passive reference. Similarly, Yahoo! Local and Google Maps are also level 0.

Finally on the spectrum, are non-web applications, including email, instant-messaging clients and the telephone.

In general, Web 1.0 is now thought of as “web as information source,” whereas web 2.0 is thought of as “web as networking platform.”

Some types of web 2.0 include...

Wikis

Web 2.0 is the next generation of web based services in which the new slant is the involvement of online users in the betterment of the entire online experience. Web 2.0 includes, for instance, wikis, such as Wikipedia.org. In this case, an online lexicon is available that the public can not only use for their own reference, but that they can also annotate, correct, and add to themselves. In other words, the readers are the writers, and anyone can contribute their knowledge to the greater online community. You might think this would be dangerous, because then anyone can add their own advice, which might be

blatantly incorrect. The benefit of harnessing the collective intelligence, however, is that there is always going to be another reader who knows more than the previous writer did. So, with this give and take, the ultimate result is an averaging of all the intelligence of the public, so the results are generally correct.

In other words, O'Reilly cleverly described the collective intelligence much like synapse establishment among neurons in the brain. These synapses are established rapidly, but they then must be strengthened through repetition and redundancy. Very similar is the collective intelligence, where you might get one wildly incorrect submission, but it will quickly be replaced or corrected by a deluge of correct submissions that will be maintained because of their greater relative strength.

Social Networking Sites

Web 2.0 also encompasses social networking sites such as MySpace, GreatestJournal, and all of Blogging (short of web logs, or online journals) in general.

It seems everyone these days has a myspace page, but the main problem with myspace is the immense number of teens who have grown up with the internet already ubiquitous and who do not know about discretion. The backlash has been a huge media windfall of warnings to parents about their children's potential myspace pages, but the difficulty here is that most kids are already more internet-literate than their parents will ever be.

When used responsibly, MySpace is a great social networking site where friends can keep in touch and people can meet new people. Comments are added by readers that can be read by everyone, but ultimately the writer has the final say because he or she can modify the settings to select which people can read and which people are blocked. This feature of MySpace is especially important to young writers who may be preyed upon by pedophiles.

File Sharing Sites

A well known web 2.0 site that initially was harmful to the music industry was Napster. With this site, people were able to share their mp3 music files, but the problem became that free file sharing replaced CD purchases and the music industry went way down. Now Napster is less common, and it has instead instituted a method of paying a monthly fee for unlimited music, but this music is not saved on the listener's hard drive, so it cannot be shared. Since Napster, other similar web 2.0 file sharing applications, such as Kazaa and Limewire have surfaced, and file sharing is still a common trend.

If listening to music is what you like, then Pandora is a web 2.0 feature that you need to check out. With Pandora, run by the Music Genome Project, you have the ability to first choose a song or artist that you like, and then guide Pandora as it goes on to choose other songs that it "thinks" you would like based on your past choices. This is an awesome application that may uncover songs or even bands that you never knew about, but that you come to really love.

An Interesting Observation about Web 2.0

One particularly interesting commonality of web 2.0 sites was mentioned on opengardens.blog, written by Ajit (the exact site to check out can be found in the list of related resources below):

"Another way to look at it is that the successful companies all give up something expensive but considered critical to get something valuable for free that was once expensive. For example, Wikipedia gives up central editorial control in return for speed and breadth. Napster gave up on the idea of "the catalog" (all the songs the vendor was selling) and got breadth. Amazon gave up on the idea of having a physical storefront but got to serve the entire world. Google gave up on the big customers (initially) and got the 80% whose needs weren't being met."

What an interesting observation with so much to say about web 2.0.

All in all, web 2.0 is still only predicted to be the next generation of the internet, and many experts question how it will fare in the future, but it seems as though the people who are really instrumental in web 2.0—the users—are also the most passionate about keeping it going. In fact, some people are so entrenched in web 2.0 that they wouldn't consider going a day without it. I think that's a good sign that web 2.0 is here to stay.

Related Resources

All books listed below can be purchased on Amazon.com; websites are current as of late February 2007

<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html?page=1>

****What is Web 2.0 by Tim O'Reilly**

Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) has a great overview of web 2.0, as well as additional references you can consult to learn more

Web ReDesign 2.0: Workflow that Works by Kelly Goto and Emily Cotler

The New Language of Business: SOA & Web 2.0 by Sandy Carter

Web 2.0; The second generation of the Internet has arrived. It's worse than you think. :
An article from: The Weekly Standard by Andrew Keen

Information Architecture for the World Wide Web by Peter Morville and Louis Rosenfeld

Digital Web 2.0 by Roger Gaudreau, S. John Ross, Jen Clodius, and Jaymi Wiley

How Can I Sculpt My Own Web 2.0 Site?

Most web 2.0 sites have the following facets in common, and you will want to consider each when sculpting your own site.

A Web 2.0 website may typically feature a number of the following techniques, as described on wikipedia: Rich internet applications (which may be Ajax-based), CSS, semantically valid HTML markup and the use of Microformats, Syndication and aggregation of data in RSS/Atom, Clean and meaningful URLs (which usually means that you have to purchase your own domain, rather than going from a free, common, domain), extensive use of folksonomies, which is also known as tags, put on by readers of web 2.0 sites, use of wiki software either completely or partially, where wiki software includes the addition of content by readers, weblog publishing, or blogging, mashups, and finally REST or XML Webservice APIs.

Ajax, Adobe Flash, Flex and OpenLaszlo are all called Rich Internet Applications. They are useful to enhance the online experience with animation, video, and the like. They also signal to the reader when an update is necessary, either with the entire page or just a section of that page (so constant reloading is not always required).

None of the Above Made Sense, Now What?!

If you read the above and were completely overwhelmed, take heart. There are ways to participate in web 2.0 even if you don't know computer-speak. You just need to create a blog and go from there. Weblogs, or blogs, are the web 2.0 version of personal websites. Now, instead of readers just looking at your site and then moving on, they have the ability to comment, ask questions, and in general communicate with you, whether they know you or not. And no email addresses are required for communication via blogs.

You can quickly get a blog by going on a domain hosting site like blogger.com. There you can create your own blog, which will have a www.NAME.blogspot.com domain. From there, you can write about whatever you want and get a great fan base. And it's all completely free. One of the best things about blogging in my opinion, is the wonderful

community of bloggers. They are very supportive with new bloggers, or even people who are new to the internet altogether, and they are not all tech-y teenagers. In fact, there is a large blogger base of middle aged people who either have children that are grown or are looking to make some extra money for their children's college fund! (For ways to make money with your blog, see the third section, "How Can I Use Web 2.0 to Make Money?").

Once you have your own blog, you can change your template, settings, etc so that your blog reflects your personal style. You can make the blog about whatever you want, be it a personal account of your day to day life, or a specialist's discussion of influenza viruses. Whatever you choose, don't be surprised to quickly find that people are actually reading it, and if you're good and you work to keep your blog updated, you might quickly meet interesting people that have commonalities with you. And then they'll tell you about their blog...and that's how the network is potentiated.

However you decide to do it, blogs are the best way to get hooked into web 2.0 without needing to know any computer languages at all. Plus, you just might pick up some computer language skills along the way. Blogger.com's blogspot blogs have a great way to learn a little HTML code and then immediately check it to be sure that it looks how you want it to.

A budding writer? Blogs are also an awesome way to promote your writing skills. In fact, blogs are truly self-publishing at its best, because you can instantly broadcast your work to millions of people around the world that you may never have reached via a print publication! And blogs have no page or format requirements, so you can really write about whatever you want, however you want, and if you're lucky and truly good, you might be paid for your work by a recruiter—although this is less likely. If anything, you can use the work you did on your blog as "writing experience" for an actual, paid writing position.

Besides the Almighty Blogs

Keep in mind that you can still get into the web 2.0 craze without creating a blog. Although blogs are veritably the most common avenue for less computer-savvy techies alike to go 2.0, there are also other sites, such as ning.com, where you can create social networking sites of your own. And of course, there is always myspace.com, the most common social networking site for the 15-23 crowd. With myspace you can quickly register and set up your own site for all to see, with links to your blog or other web 2.0 sites.

And for even more exposure on your web 2.0 site, you can upload videos to YouTube.com from your camera or camcorder and then transfer the videos to your blog or myspace page, plus you can link to your website from YouTube.

With so many ways to make a web 2.0 web site, you have tons of options, and a great community to meet. Prepare to be floored by the sheer number of people who use web 2.0 regularly and who will be reading your blog or myspace page, even if you don't think it's that impressive!

Related Resources

All books can be purchased on Amazon.com, all websites are current as of late February 2007

<http://www.blogger.com/>

****Use this website to create your own blog for free**

<http://www.greatestjournal.com>

<http://www.myspace.com>

<http://www.ning.com/>

****Use these websites to create your own social networking site**

Web 2.0: The Future of the Internet and Technology Economy and How Entrepreneurs, Investors, Executives & Consumers Can Take Ad by Dermot A. McCormack

Professional Web 2.0 Programming by Eric van der Vlist, Danny Ayers, Erik Bruchez, Joe Fawcett, and Alessandro Vernet

Pragmatic Ajax: A Web 2.0 Primer by Justin Gethland, Dion Almaer, Ben Galbraith

Professional Ajax, 2nd Edition by Nicholas C. Zakas, Jeremy McPeak, and Joe Fawcett

Mobile Web 2.0: The Innovator's Guide to Developing and Marketing Next Generation Wireless/Mobile Applications by Ajit Jaokar and Tony Fish

Professor Teaches How to Create Web Pages 2.0 by Individual Software

How Can I Use Web 2.0 to Make Money?

These days, it seems like with every new application that is introduced, there is a way for the internet-savvy community to make money from it. Well, web 2.0 is no exception. In fact, experts say that the greatest money making schemes on the web are in web 2.0. Since its inception in 2004, venture capitalists have been putting billions of dollars into web 2.0, and you can cash in!

The Extreme Importance of Page Rank

One great way to make money on web 2.0 is to create a great blog and then use it for advertisements. In many cases, Google page rank (PR) is king to making money using web 2.0, and when it comes to advertising, the page rank on your blog is very important. The Page Rank is a number from 0 to 10 that basically ranks the content and connectivity of your blog. Page Rank is a service of Google.

When you make the decision to make money with your blog, the first and foremost thing you need to do is work to improve your page rank. Otherwise, your attempts to make money quickly may be futile. In order to get a higher page rank, you need to link to other, significant (read: high traffic) websites, and request that they link back to you. And of course, they will only want to link back to you if it suits their own interests, so you need to make sure that the content on your blog is useful and that you consistently update it. The best websites aren't interested in linking to random blogs that are not much more than a rant or a diary. But if you can speak intelligently about a topic, create a blog about it and go for it! But here's a hint with choosing a topic for your blog: go with something that will attract a broad audience and has a defined objective. You need to get a large fan base with a broad demographical scope. Once you do, advertisers will want to market their products on your blog because they know that everyone will be seeing it. Alternatively, you can write about a more esoteric topic, then target advertisers related to that topic—this is a more risky way to make money, but it can still work. If you have the time and you're relatively proficient at typing, I would suggest that you try both!

A little more on Page Rank is important here. Like your ebay rating or a companies Amazon ranking, your PR is extremely important to your credibility in the blogosphere. Specifically, if you don't have a high PR, readers may never even see your site, much less stop to read it. You need to realize that there are millions of blogs out there—lots of people have more than one blog these days—and as the blogosphere gets bigger and bigger, it may become more and more difficult to gain exposure for your site. That's why it's important to start working on your page rank, by racking up the “meaningful” or high traffic links as soon as you can. And continue to do this throughout the lifetime of your blog, because if other sites to which you are linked go dead, it will be reflected as a lower page rank for you.

Ultimately, by integrating you own blog into the enormous network that is the world wide web, you can increase your page rank and therefore the leverage of your blog. To put it simply, higher page rank blogs will make you more money, because advertisers want their ads to be on blogs that get noticed.

PayPerPost

One way to make sure that you are plugged into the advertising circuit is to sign onto a company like PayPerPost or ReviewMe where you can work with advertisers to make YOU money. For instance, on PayPerPost (payperpost.com) you get plugged into a list of possibly “opportunities” for money, and if you qualify for them you just post a short ad on your blog, in between two other non-advertising posts, and if you follow the advertiser's guidelines, you'll make money. PayPerPost is only a few months old, but it's already creating a big splash in the blogging world and making quite a few people money. Something like PayPerPost may not make you enough money to quit your day job, but it's nice to have some extra money in the bank just in case, and PayPerPost can do that for you with relatively little work on your part.

As mentioned above, Page Rank is extremely important to making money on your blog, and this is very true with PayPerPost. This company has recently begun the process of “segmentation” in which advertisers have a way to limit the types of blogs that can

feature their ads. Although there is nothing a blogger can do about their demographics or age range, most advertisers are less interested in that and more interested in page rank. Specifically, with PayPerPost, a PR of 7 will net you hundreds or even thousands of dollars relatively quickly, whereas a PR of 0 or 1 will only make you money in increments of 4 and 5. Getting your PR higher takes months or more, but it's an investment in your blog that will presumably have a great return.

Auction Sites for Web 2.0

Of course, if you want to do even less start up work, you can always make money on a web 2.0 site like ebay or craigslist. On these sites, you simply need something to sell, a service to offer, etc, and you can easily reach a huge number of readers instantly. On Ebay, a typical auction may take 7-10 days and is very stereotyped with a commission removed by Ebay with each auction.

In contrast, craigslist.com does not cost anything for the seller or the buyer, and the code of conduct is basically open. Sellers can post content about the goods or services they have to offer, and even upload images, for free. Craigs list has sub-sites all over the nation, so you know that when you're looking at an item, the seller is in your area. In contrast, ebay has no delineations based on geography, so if you're purchasing a large item, be prepared to pay a lot of shipping costs.

And Craig's list is not all about items. For instance, you can also rent apartments through this site, post your resume, or even find a love interest. In terms of making money, you can post basically anything, list a price, and then buyers can send emails to craigslist which will then be anonymously forwarded to you about whether they're interested in purchasing that item and if they'd like to negotiate the item. With Craigslist, the seller has the upper hand in deciding the price, because they can deny the buyer at a certain price, or even take the item off the list at any time. In contrast, with Ebay, the buyers are competing with each other, but in effect, they have the upper hand, because as long as they win the bid, the seller is in a binding contract to give them the item (of course, there

are add-ons like threshold amounts that the buyer can set, if they pay ebay an additional fee).

In either craigslist or ebay, the true power of the site is the fact that so many people visit the site so frequently. If people were not so eager to bid, sell, etc on these sites, it would quickly fizzle out.

In addition to the obvious need for people to enrich their sites, craigslist and ebay also rely on readers to help prosecute scammers and spammers, which abound on these sites, particularly on craigslist, since it's completely free and easy to register on.

All in all, there are plenty of ways to cash in on web 2.0. If you have a business, you can always post your wares on ebay or craigslist, but you can even make money with no start up funds by creating a great blog and marketing it to advertisers. However you do it, there is a lot of money in web 2.0, and it's up to you to go after it.

Related Resources

All books can be purchased on Amazon.com; websites are current as of late February 2007

Web 2.0: The Future of the Internet and Technology Economy and How Entrepreneurs, Investors, Executives & Consumers Can Take Ad by Dermot A. McCormack

http://opengardensblog.futuretext.com/archives/2006/07/web_20_show_me.html

**This site is being made into a book about how to make revenue using web 2.0

http://money.cnn.com/2006/07/13/technology/web_2.0/index.htm

**An very informative online article by Grace Wong on CNN Money called “Follow the Web 2.0 Money.”

<http://blogs.zdnet.com/Hinchcliffe/index.php?p=14>

**A helpful article by Dion Hinchcliffe called “Creating real business value with web 2.0” This article gives a list of “case studies” in which people made real money using web 2.0 businesses. These businesses include Naver, a 2.0 search engine that is Korea, is much bigger than Google, although you’d never know in America. Naver uses the common 2.0 characteristics of “gathering collective intelligence” and “social collaboration.”

<http://www.ebay.com>

<http://www.craigslist.com>

<http://www.payperpost.com>

<http://www.reviewme.com>