



Web 2.0 – What's It All About?

by Kas Kunz | Multimedia | Digital Communications | Presentations | Web
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One question you probably have is what does Web 2.0 mean anyway? The term was first used in 2004 in a conference brainstorming session between O'Reilly and MediaLive International. What's interesting according to Tim O'Reilly, founder of O'Reilly Media, is the huge disagreement over what it means, with some people decrying it as a meaningless marketing buzzword, and others accepting it as conventional wisdom. In a general sense it reflects the way people were starting to use the Internet after the 2001 dot-com collapse - not necessarily to reflect new technology, because a lot of the technology that has been widely adopted in the last two to three years has been around for a long time. It represents a shift or change in how World Wide Web applications, tools, and services are evolving and being used on the Internet. One of the shifts is the Web itself is looked at as a platform with the technology aimed at being centered around the user to enhance creativity, improve communication, and help people work together online.

A few well known companies and services considered Web 2.0 platforms are eBay, Craigslist, Wikipedia, del.icio.us, iTunes, and Skype. Web 2.0 can work both offline and on the Internet via the World Wide Web. The interactivity between the user and the provider is the main area of focus, which includes the freedom of users to generate, share, and in some cases re-use the content.

Some well known technologies that are considered Web 2.0 are blogs (Web site structure to write based on an editorial page in a newspaper for personal or business subjects), social networking (online communities of people who share interests and activities), search engine optimization (improving the quality and volume of traffic to a Web site), and tagging (user defined key words for search). All of these have features which give the end-user the ability to work with others online based on interactivity.

From a business perspective according to Wikipedia, "Web 2.0 encourages lightweight business models enabled by syndication of content and of service and by ease of picking up early adopters." A great source to see this first hand is www.go2web20.net which is a directory set-up by index of logos with the latest Web 2.0 sites, applications, and services. When you put your cursor over the logo you get a brief description of what it does or provides. Who's doing this? There are well known international companies to small never before heard of start-ups listed in this directory.

With the high use and high adoption rate of these services and other tools fundamental changes are taking place in the way we communicate in our social and business lives, with the Internet squarely at the center. What it comes down to is Web 2.0 is a concept of how the Web is now perceived and used. The impact of this perception is the main focus and power of the Internet has shifted to the individual.

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