

# Web2.0

## An Emerging Learning Technology

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## Web 2.0

The concept of "Web 2.0" began with a conference brainstorming session between Tim O'Reilly and MediaLive International. The session started with defining Web 2.0 by example.

Here are the examples that were raised:

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
DoubleClick	Google AdSense
Ofoto	Flickr
Akamai	BitTorrent
mp3.com	Napster
Britannica Online	Wikipedia
personal websites	blogging
evite	upcoming.org & EVDB
domain name speculation	search engine optimization
page views	pay per click
screen scraping	web services
publishing	participation
content management systems	wikis
directories (taxonomy)	tagging ("folksonomy")
stickiness	syndication

Looking at these examples, a simple conclusion can be made that Web 1.0 concentrated on web sites, their content and "passive" browsing to discover and read desired knowledge or information. In a way it was a "one way street" for information flowing from the authors to the knowledge seekers. Web 2.0 opens "knowledge traffic" in all directions. In this environment, everyone is a knowledge contributor and knowledge consumer. Wikipedia emerged as equal, if not more frequently used, than Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Skeptics doubted its accuracy since virtually everyone contributes to Wikipedia's content. However, its accuracy was soon validated as equal to Britannica's. Social Blogging networks bubbled up everywhere, as did expert networks and many other types of networks. Bloggers are considered today to be the top market influencers. Finally, file sharing (photos, movies, documents) is omnipresent on the web today. Many of us see frequent opportunities to use these technologies to enhance learning.

Let's examine what those opportunities are.

### ***Knowledge Libraries***

In today's business environment, we continue to struggle with the ever changing business reality. New products emerge every day; operating procedures and policies change with continuous improvement in business operations. Still, today the job of writing updated documents rests on the shoulders of the few who gather the information from multiple sources and compile updated documents. Wikis serve this application well since everyone who possesses relevant information can contribute. The publishing can still be controlled by some central unit to ensure quality and consistency.

### ***Expert & Topic Networks***

One could say that access to an expert is a luxury that very few could afford on an everyday basis. Blogs opened a new way to access these groups. Experts, thought leaders and even just people with an opinion are empowered to share their knowledge, thoughts and opinions using this technology. Furthermore, this experience is enriched by the ability to conduct a dialog on the topic which provides greater depth and breadth. What is most important here is the direct access to the expert. No need to wait until formal documents are available; if you need to, you can ask and get an answer. This way of learning has proven very useful in the technology space where technologies become outdated before they even get a chance to mature and the documentation cannot keep up with changes.

### ***Virtual Worlds***

Are you familiar with Second Life or similar virtual environments? If not, perhaps you should take a look. Of course, there are many aspects of virtual environments that are purely social; perhaps even most of them today. However, organizations are already exploring the opportunities that such environments offer. There is an organization that simulates negotiation scenarios in such environments and another one that uses them to observe their sales people in a variety of sales situation. In addition to providing lifelike environments, these are often platforms that have gaming capabilities which means scores are generated. One can set up a sales goal, for example, and see how their people will fare. People participating in such simulations can also be provided with learning material right there so they can improve their performance.

## *Intelligent Agents*

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds and Podcasts have opened an avenue of delivering relevant content to consumers as soon as it is released. Users no longer have to search to find out if something new is available; if there is new information that they should be aware of, it finds them. Content sources that offer this capability deliver updates to subscribers automatically. The technologies described above (blogs, wikis, file sharing platforms) usually include RSS capabilities.

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Every new technology comes with new challenges. The challenges mostly stem from the fact that they are simply new; therefore, there are few best practices on how to use them efficiently. The above technologies often raise security concerns such as how to manage access without the risk of misuse of information. Also, initial use of these capabilities comes from a social environment which doesn't necessarily fit everyone's view of the business world. Is the technology appropriate? The thought of everyone sharing and contributing their knowledge raises the question: will members of the organizations actually do it? There are also cultural challenges, and it is up to senior managers to support and sponsor new behaviors which make the adoption of these technologies more acceptable for the rank and file. An appropriate level of planning is necessary as well as recognizing that best practices will be developed while utilizing the new capabilities. Selection of high impact and low risk areas will be critical if the technology is to be leveraged successfully.

CERTPOINT, in its newest version of the CERTPOINTVLS™6.0, has expanded the integration with SharePoint. It added the capabilities to create and maintain wikis, blogs and file libraries. All of these features include RSS capabilities, so users can subscribe to feeds and receive new and relevant knowledge as it becomes available.

As with everything within the CERTPOINTVLS Suite, these new capabilities are tightly integrated with the original components. By launching this version, CERTPOINT enables the blending of formal and informal learning. As opposed to other platforms that offer one or the other, here you have it all in one package. At CERTPOINT, we maintain a belief that one is not better than the other. In order to deliver knowledge efficiently one needs to explore and utilize all avenues available. We are doing just that; we make all of it available to our clients.