

Tips for trainers

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Web 2.0 tools: a series of short introductions

There are vast numbers of Web 2.0 tools, applications, platforms, and services available. Many of them are free or low-cost and easy-to-use. In this issue, we present a series of short introductory guides to a selection of commonly-used Web 2.0 tools:

- Blogging
- Micro-blogging and Twitter
- Wikis
- Online social networking
- RSS feeds
- Tagging
- Social bookmarking
- Glossary of Web 2.0 terms

Each introductory guide provides a brief description of the tool and how it can be used for development purposes, along with links to further information and where applications can be downloaded online.¹ We hope that you find these short introductions useful and welcome feedback from our readers.

¹ For more information about the examples of development websites listed in the guides, see e-participation, p. 130 (this issue).

Bloggging

Tips on how to create and maintain a dynamic and popular development blog

What are blogs?

- A blog (short for 'web' and 'log') is a website like an online journal. It is an easy way to publish content, administered via a simple web-based interface.
- Blogging means to maintain or add content to a blog.
- Providing you have Internet access, you can easily and freely create a blog on any topic.
- Blogs radically changed the way in which the Internet was used, by allowing people to publish their own content on a webpage, without the technical expertise needed to set up a website – or the funds to rent web space.
- A blog is usually maintained by an individual, but can also be done by groups or organisations.
- Blogs contain entries called 'posts' of written commentary, news, events, and other resources. Blogs can include multiple media such as text, photos, video clips and audio files.
- Blogs start with the newest not oldest posts – this gives them a sense current relevance.
- Users can set up a blog on an existing blog platform, or download blog software to run on their own web space. Most blogging platforms are free-to-use.
- Blog authors can allow others to comment on their posts and engage in discussion.

- Many blogs platforms allow authors to tag posts with multiple keywords.¹
- If a blog is popular, it will be linked to by a lot of other blogs. Search engines like Google prioritise websites with more links.
- The blogosphere is a collective term encompassing all blogs and their interconnections. It is the perception that blogs exist together as a connected community (or as a collection of connected communities).
- Using blog search engines, you can track the interconnections between bloggers and topical trends and find other blogs by topic.
- Micro-blogging tools allow you to send and receive short posts via the Internet or a mobile phone. They may be more appropriate for low bandwidth bloggers.²

Why blog for development?

- Blogs...
- can regularly disseminate information
 - encourage others to participate
 - can be used for raising awareness
 - help to inform, trigger and foster debate and/or mobilise action
 - allow us to participate in ongoing conversations online
 - link to other related blogs to form new online networks and information pathways

¹ See also Tagging, p.117 (this issue).

² See also Micro-blogging, p.108 (this issue).

- can be an expression of personal opinion, a good process of self reflection and can help to digest learning
- are an easy and cheap way to get your voice heard or publicise an issue

Some tips on how to start a blog

- Choose a topic and have an audience in mind.
- Check similar blogs. Start by commenting on them if you do not want to start your own blog right away.
- Develop your own style of blogging (writing), which suits you.
- Stay focused. Write consistent, interesting and useful content. Try not to over-generalise.
- Stay well informed and up-to-date. You will need to lead discussions (and eventually moderate comments).
- Add content regularly and answer any comments and feedback.
- Become part of a network by linking to your favourite blogs.
- Use your blog to highlight and add to existing discussions.
- Provide links in your blogs posts to where readers can find more information. If you refer to other blogs, make sure you link to them.
- When you reference or link to another blog, use the 'linkback', 'trackback' or 'ping' function to automatically notify them that you have referred to them on your blog. It helps build community and often other blogs will list all the trackbacks a particular post has had underneath the original post.
- There are specialised search engines for blogs. Just as with normal search engines and websites, you should register your blog with engines like Technorati. Also use their 'ping' features to notify them when you have updated your blog so that the

Global Voices is a community of more than 200 bloggers who work together to bring you translations and reports from blogs and citizen media everywhere, with emphasis on voices that are not ordinarily heard in international mainstream media.



blog search engine will index the content of your new post.

- Allow your blog to be syndicated via RSS feeds.^{3,4} This means that others can easily feature headlines from your blog on their own websites and your readers can automatically receive updates when new material is published on your blog.
- You may also wish to automatically feature content from other blogs and websites (e.g. headlines) on your own blog by importing relevant RSS feeds.

Keep in mind...

- Writing takes time and patience. Do not underestimate the effort of blogging.
- Writing regular posts keeps your blog dynamic and interesting.
- Always quote your information sources.
- Clearly distinguish between opinions and facts.
- Low bandwidth limits access to blogs with photos, audio and video.
- Blogs can be used as references

³ See also RSS feeds, p.115 (this issue).
⁴ Syndication is where material on one website is made available to multiple other websites. See also glossary, p.124 (this issue).

providing they are properly cited – always remember to check first.

- Explore which blogs are popular or trusted by others. Get to know who is using them.
- Always tag your posts. Use popular and relevant keywords so that others can search for them and find your content more easily.

Where to get started

There are several free or low-cost, easy-to-use blogging websites. Here are some examples.

Blogging websites

- www.blogger.com
- www.livejournal.com
- www.typepad.com
- www.wordpress.com
- www.xanga.com

Blogging software

To download and host on your own web space:

- www.wordpress.org
- www.moveabletype.org

Blog search engines

Find other blogs by keyword, topic or trend and track the interconnections

between bloggers:

- <http://technorati.com>
- <http://blogs.google.com>
- www.blogscope.net
- www.blogpulse.com
- www.icrocket.com

Tips on blogging

- <http://blogsessive.com>
- <http://tinyurl.com/globalvoicesblog5>

Video: Blogs in Plain English

Also in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. Also with multiple language subtitles on Dotsub.com:

- www.commoncraft.com/blogs
- <http://tinyurl.com/dotsubblogs6>

Examples of development blogs

- Afrigator: <http://afrigator.com>
 - Alive in Baghdad: <http://aliveinbaghdad.org>
 - Crisscrossed: www.crisscrossed.net
 - Ghana GINKS blogspotters: www.ginks.blogspot.com
 - Global Voices: <http://globalvoicesonline.org>
 - iCollaborate: www.icollaborate.blogspot.com
 - Indian Kisan blog: <http://kisan.wordpress.com>
 - Kabissa: www.kabissa.org/blog
 - Roxanna Samii: www.rsamii.blogspot.com
 - Reporters Without Borders: www.rsfblog.org
 - Voices of Africa: <http://voicesofafrica.africanews.com>
 - Web2forDev conference blog: <http://blog.web2fordev.net>
- See e-participation for more information about the websites listed (p. x, this issue).

⁵ Full URL: <http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide-blog-for-a-cause>
⁶ Full URL: <http://dotsub.com/view/dc75c2e2-ef81-4851-8353-a877aac9fe3c>

Micro-blogging and Twitter

Tips on using micro-blogging tool Twitter for development

What is micro-blogging?

- Micro-blogging is a form of blogging where users mostly publish very short text updates.
- Twitter.com is one of the best known services. Users can send short 140 character text updates (known as 'tweets') via SMS on their mobile phone or a computer connected to the Internet.
- Updates will appear on their Twitter page and be visible to any other Twitter member who is 'following' them (i.e. subscribed to them).
- Since Twitter allows people to submit updates via SMS it can also be a very powerful tool for on-the-ground citizen journalism, protest coordination and campaigning, situation monitoring and for keeping in touch over distances.
- Users can search everyone else's updates in real time for keywords, as well as subscribe to other user's updates, meaning that it can also be very useful for sharing and monitoring breaking news or particular topics of interest.
- Since updates can only be 140 characters long, people use URL-shortening services like Tinyurl.com to enable them to send webpage links in their updates.
- Putting a hash symbol # in front of a word is used to denote that it is a keyword tag, to make searching for relevant messages easier.

- Users can also maintain a conversation or direct their messages to a particular user by using '@username' within their messages.
- Using the letters 'RT' in a message encourages others to 're-tweet' or re-send the message so potentially reaching thousands of people in minutes.

The Web2forDev web portal now uses Twitter. Updates will appear on the Web2forDev Twitter page and are visible to any other Twitter member who is 'following' them.

- Twitter also provides RSS feeds of user's updates, or of the results of searches for keywords, enabling the stream of messages to be displayed on other websites.
- Users can also feed Twitter itself with an RSS feed by using services such as Twitterfeed.com or Rstotwitter.com.
- Many other Web 2.0 websites and other services are integrating with Twitter. People can use services like Twitpic.com to send a photograph they have taken on their mobile phone which will appear on their Twitpic page. Twitpic will also automatically send an update to their Twitter account showing the URL of the photograph.
- There are a growing number of third party applications designed to make managing multiple Twitter accounts easier and enable users to manage multiple blogging, micro-

The screenshot shows the Twitter profile for 'web2fordev'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Login' and 'Join Twitter!'. Below that, a banner reads 'Hey there! web2fordev is using Twitter.' with a 'Join today!' button. The profile section shows the user's name 'web2fordev', 33 following, and 102 followers. There are sections for 'Updates' (292), 'Favorites', and 'Following'. A recent tweet is visible: 'Maneno: A Multilingual Blogging Platform Built For African Bloggers: 2009/06 - Global Voices Online' with a link to tinyurl.com/cjftq. Below the tweet, there are two more tweets: 'The TWIT Netcast Network with Leo Laporte' and 'Video for Change: This issue of The Drum Beat looks at the varied ways in which video has been used as a communi..'. The bottom of the page shows an RSS feed link for 'RSS feed of web2fordev's updates'.

blogging and messaging platforms.

- Many of the ways in which Twitter can be used can be implemented through phone-based SMS and through bulk messaging software like FrontlineSMS.com and implementations like Ushahidi.com.¹

Where to get started

Examples of development organisations using Twitter

- Web2forDev on Twitter:
<http://twitter.com/web2fordev>

- Global Voices:
<http://twitter.com/globalvoices>
- Kabissa:
<http://twitter.com/kabissa>
- MobileActive:
<http://twitter.com/mobileactive>

Video: Twitter in Plain English

Also in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. Also with multiple language subtitles at Dotsub.com:

- www.commoncraft.com/twitter
- <http://tinyurl.com/dotsubtwitter>²

Other similar micro-blogging tools

- Identi.ca: <http://identi.ca>
- Yammer: www.yammer.com

Resources

Web2fordev.net article
'Micro-blogging: 140 characters of gossip or added value for development organisations?'

- <http://tinyurl.com/twitterfordev>³

DigiActive Guide to Twitter for Activism (PDF)

- <http://tinyurl.com/digiactive-twitter>⁴

¹ For more information about Ushahidi and FrontlineSMS see Okolloh, p.65 (this issue).

² Full URL: <http://dotsub.com/view/665bd0d5-a9f4-4a07-9d9e-b31ba926ca78>

³ Full URL: www.web2fordev.net/component/content/article/1-latest-news/68-micro-blogging

⁴ Full URL: www.digiactive.org/wp-content/uploads/digiactive_twitter_guide_v1-0.pdf

Wikis

Tips on online collaboration using wikis

What are wikis?

- Wikis are online collaborative workspaces.¹
- A wiki is a simple, text-based web page or collection of web pages where teams of people can work together online from different physical locations.
- Wikis are like very basic websites in style and structure. They are designed to be read and edited using a web browser.
- Unlike conventional websites, wikis enable anyone who has access to write, edit, discuss and comment on the wiki content, including each other's contributions. Users can constantly modify and organise the content.
- Wikis can be made public or private. Administrators can choose who can access a wiki and specific sections within it and define users' rights.
- All wiki page versions are kept, from when a wiki page is first created. Collaborators can monitor and compare recent and past changes and revert to older versions if needed.
- Wikis will also show which user has edited the content.
- Wikis separate formatting from content, so people can work on improving content without concern for layout. Most wikis offer a WYSIWYG editor, which makes it

¹ *Wiki* is Hawaiian for 'very quick'.

easier to edit content online.²

- Most wikis also enable users to upload e.g. documents and photos.
- Wikis are also particularly good for developing complex documentation.
- Many individuals also use wikis much like an online personal notebook, to store and develop ideas.

Why use a wiki for development?

Wikis can be used to...

- quickly and informally share, develop and organise ideas and information together online
- foster participatory and collaborative working online from individuals, project teams, community groups and organisations to international networks and the general public
- collate resources from project information and meeting minutes to trip reports and photos
- create and edit content from sharing ideas, developing projects, and writing documents to developing online training manuals
- enable project partners to contribute and provide a workspace for them to adapt content to local conditions
- find agreement and/or consensus among users
- easily create simple community or project websites and jointly develop content on them

² WYSIWYG or 'What You See is What You Get' is a computing term to describe a system in which content displayed during editing appears very similar to the final output.

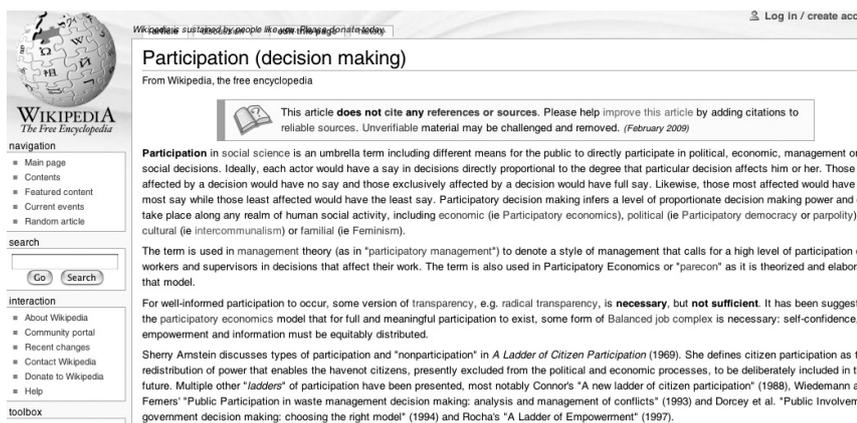
Some tips on creating a wiki

- Visit other wikis to get a feel for how they work and what they do.
- You can either sign up to a free-to-use wiki platform via one of the many wiki providers – or download the software to run on your own web space.
- List your known requirements and preferences in detail before selecting a wiki platform. Can it expand to meet future needs? Can you migrate from one wiki platform to another later on?
- Try to choose an open source wiki platform so that if your partners wish to start their own wiki, it will be freely available for them to use.^{3,4}
- Plan and organise how you want to structure your content. A well-devised structure will be important as your wiki grows. Remember you can also modify the structure as the project expands.
- Include a table of contents on each page for ease of navigation.
- Regularly check internal wiki links and external web links to ensure they are still active.
- One useful feature about working on a wiki is the ability to create pages that should exist, even if you do not have the content or the information to fill them yet. This encourages others to add the missing content and create relevant pages.
- When creating a new wiki page, think about where you want this page to be linked from. Then edit those pages to include a link to your new page.
- Give new pages sensible names. Do not use abbreviations but ensure the

³ Open source software (OSS) is usually computer software where the source code and certain other rights are in the public domain. See glossary, p.122 (this issue).

⁴ Choose one that is distributed e.g. under a GNU General Public or Creative Commons License (which enhances free use and development) and is supported by an active wiki community (who will be able to provide advice and support). See e.g. www.creativecommons.org

Wikipedia is a free online encyclopaedia that anyone can edit. Wikipedia is multilingual and is now the ninth most popular website in the world.



name is short and descriptive.

- For larger or more formal projects, wikis require constant maintenance. With multiple people contributing to a wiki there will be many works in progress. Budget for and appoint a coordinator to maintain the wiki, ensure consistency and keep things in good order (style and formatting, navigation etc.).
- Set aside time to agree on shared editorial guidelines on how to use the wiki – and then follow them consistently.
- Make sure the guidelines are easy-to-follow and provide training if necessary. Users need to know how your wiki works before editing and contributing to it.
- Include a practice page (known as a 'sandbox'), which allows people to experiment. It helps encourage people to familiarise themselves with how the wiki works.
- Before opening up your wiki to a larger group of participants ask a few people for comments and feedback. Making universal changes to an extensive, existing wiki is harder than doing so at the start.
- Decide who will have access and contribute to what (and when). You may want to open up access to others gradually as your wiki develops.

- Usually for best results, a disciplined workflow is needed with good communication among all collaborators.

Keep in mind...

- Choosing whether or not to create and use a wiki should be a collaborative process. Who is the intended community of users? Who can participate and who cannot? Is a wiki the most appropriate platform?
- While wikis can be very informal, you still need to write clearly. Avoid the use of slang terms which others may not be familiar with.
- As with all online publishing tools, always quote your information sources and provide links where available. Clearly distinguish between opinions and facts.
- If converting existing materials to a wiki format you may need to revise some materials to best suit the change in publishing medium e.g. a training manual.
- Wikis are based on collaboration and can be used to encourage debate. However, they are not necessarily the best place for finding consensus amongst dissenting voices. A mailing list or face-to-face meetings may be more appropriate for these types of discussions.

Where to get started

There are many free, easy-to-use wiki platforms. Here are some examples.

Free or very low-cost wiki platforms

- <http://pbworks.com> (formerly PBwiki)
- www.wikispaces.com
- www.wikidot.com

Downloadable wiki platforms

To run on your web space:

- www.dokuwiki.org
- www.mediawiki.org
- www.tikiwiki.org
- www.atlassian.com/software/confluence

For more tips on using wikis

- <http://tinyurl.com/wiki-tips5>

Compare available wiki platforms

- www.wikimatrix.org

Video: Wikis in Plain English

Also in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. Also with multiple language subtitles at Dotsub.com:

- www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english
- <http://tinyurl.com/dotsub-wiki>

Examples of wikis used in development

- Agropedia: <http://agropedia.iitk.ac.in>
- Appropedia: <http://www.appropedia.org>
- Kabissa Space for change in Africa wiki: <http://wiki.kabissa.org>
- Web2forDev wiki: <http://wiki.web2fordev.net>
- Wiki Advocacy: <http://wikiadvocacy.org>
- Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

See e-participation for more information about the websites listed (p.130, this issue).

⁵ Full URL: www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/network/2006/07/07/what-is-a-wiki.html

Online social networking

Tips on using online social networks for development

What are online social networks?

- Online social networks are a new generation of online community platforms which are similar to websites but offer specific interactive features and tools.
- An online social network brings people together and enables them to find others who share common interests or activities and who are interested in learning more about each other and what they do.
- They enable users to establish and make visible relationships, discuss topics of interest, access material, find contacts and encourage the growth of networks of people.
- Membership can be restricted or open.
- You can start a new 'group' of people with similar interests on an existing social networking website or create your own using free-to-use platforms.
- Social networks can range from friends and family, small dedicated communities of practice or interest, professional networks, to networks with global membership.
- Most online social network services provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as messaging and instant messaging, membership profiles (sometimes including curriculum vitae), online discussion forums, blogs, photo- and video-sharing, and other digital resources.

- These services are designed to be straightforward to use, from signing up and logging on, creating a profile and inviting people to access it, through to interacting with friends, colleagues, partners, and even people you have never met.

Why use online social networks for development?

Online social networks can be used to...

- target, create or enhance networks or communities of practice
- foster and enhance participation and collaboration and promote a sense of membership and solidarity within these networks
- interact with particular audiences e.g. civil society groups, policy makers, private sector
- facilitate better linkages between groups, for example partners, service providers and decision makers
- easily share and access information – from event announcements, work opportunities and reports to practical manuals, photos and videos
- enable greater information-sharing and support dialogue on key issues within the network
- build capacity by providing information and resources on particular topics
- learn about the professional background of people sharing your interests and establish professional

relationships with them (e.g. via LinkedIn)

- keep up-to-date about work carried out by your peers

Comparing different types of social networking platforms and websites

- For most people who are interested in using online social networks, joining and contributing to an existing network is sufficient. However, if you are thinking of creating an online social network, you may want to start a new group on an existing website or create an independent one.
- Existing social networking websites often allow users to create new groups within them. They are often more appropriate for less sophisticated forms of networking, which focus more on promoting topics, issues or events within a more public sphere.
- Such websites work well for basic networking tasks but often the infrastructure is not available for more collaborative working. Examples would be Facebook or LinkedIn (which has a more professional focus compared to Facebook).
- Social networking platforms like Ning allow you to create your own customisable online social network. They contain a package of useful features, such as online forums, groups, blogs, and video and photo libraries. As you have control over the appearance of your website it allows for a more professional online presence.
- The third option is to download software to run on your own web server, but this requires more technical expertise and resources.
- Running your own social networking platform on your own web server provides far more security for your data and your users since you are in control of every part of the service.

- Free open source content management systems (CMS) such as Drupal or Joomla can be used to create more customisable online social networks. They offer a wider range of tools and applications, enabling you to customise your social networking website even further.
- Elgg is another free open source platform which is designed specifically for social networking websites. It is mostly used in the educational sphere, where it has been used to power social networks for various institutions and communities, such as Eduspaces.net with over 20,000 members. It is also the platform that the new Unionbook.org website has used.¹
- Buddypress is a newly-updated suite of plug-ins which turns Wordpress MU (a popular multi-user blog platform) into a fully-featured social networking platform.

Some tips on joining an online social network

- Typical examples of social networking sites are LinkedIn and Facebook as well as photo- and video-sharing websites like Flickr and YouTube.
- Look for relevant communities. Subscribe to a social network whose members share your interests.
- Popular social networking websites vary from country to country. For example Orkut.com is popular in India and Brazil, Hi5.com in South America, and Friendster.com in the Philippines.

Keep in mind...

When joining an online social network

- Stay safe: never upload personal information that may compromise

your safety and security – or that of other people.

- Consider who you will be networking with – and who will see your profile. Social networks can be used for ‘professional’ or ‘social’ purposes. Some are a combination of the two – however, some people use different profiles to separate their professional and personal identities.
- If in doubt, keep your profile information private or restricted.
- Always consider others when uploading content. Get permission before uploading e.g. someone else’s work, culturally sensitive information or photos of other people.
- Consider the tradeoff between making information publicly available and who may use it and for what purposes.²
- Is the material you want to add appropriate? Remember to check and adhere to any editorial policies before adding content.
- Be clear about who owns the information that you enter on your profile or that you upload. Always check the terms of service before joining an online network – some service providers retain the right to use your material without your permission.³ Find out what rights the service provider has in terms of using your data and what rights you have to recall/delete your data.

Some tips on creating an online social network

- Be clear about the purpose for your social network and ensure you have a

clearly defined audience. This helps to create a genuinely interested and active membership with useful experience to share.

- Decide whether to create an independent online social networking website or a new group within an existing one.
- If creating one, determine what features your website should contain.
- Develop a framework. Begin by uploading a few useful reports, example blog posts, discussion topics, photos and videos to stimulate interest.
- Once you have set up your group or website, invite potential members to join.
- All new members should receive a welcome message. Encourage them to invite others who might find the website useful.
- Send members regular, short email digests to inform them of recent updates.
- Encourage repeat visits and new members. Keep the content fresh with links to new information e.g. reports, manuals, announcements, resources, discussions, blog posts, photos and videos.
- If you are creating an online social networking website for an existing network, ensure that important content from the network is published, e.g. interesting news features, workshop reports, country developments etc.
- Keep content relevant, informed and up-to-date, especially if you want to lead discussions.
- If your website includes forums or blogs, help start interesting discussions and encourage active debate. Use thoughtful discussion topics and summaries to which participants can respond.
- Encourage members to take a

¹ See www.ericlee.info/2009/02/unionbook_launched.html

² For further discussion, see Overview, p.8 (this issue).

³ For example, Facebook and YouTube retain the rights to use any information uploaded by members. In addition, some websites such as Facebook may retain a permanent archive of all material uploaded – even after deleted by the member from their own profile page.

Research and Media Network is an online social network built using Ning that brings people together to improve communication of research findings.

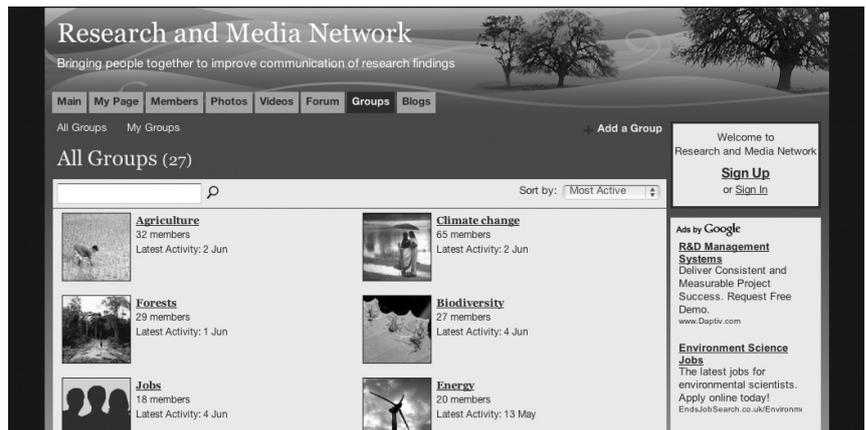
proactive role in contributing to the network – uploading material, notifying people of forthcoming events, writing event reports or messaging other members – this participation will provide wider exposure to member's ideas and materials, as well as generate new content for the website.

- You may want to stipulate that key members share materials – participation is critical to broadening future contributions.
- Remember to offer guidance in the form of a help page and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on how to use and contribute to the website.
- Consider running a blog covering the development of your social network website, describing new features and gathering feedback from users.

Keep in mind...

When creating an online social network...

- Social networking websites may not be appropriate for your target audience. Other, more accessible communication platforms (such as email discussion lists, DGroups.org or regular face-to-face meetings) may be more appropriate.
- Remember that managing online social networking websites takes energy and time. Allow at least one hour per day. Larger, more active networks may require longer daily maintenance. Remember to budget for the time.
- Avoid members adding inappropriate material to your website with clear editorial guidelines or moderation. Use polite, private messages explaining why such material is inappropriate.



Deleting or rejecting unwanted content should, wherever possible, always be mutually agreed between the moderator and the contributor.

- Keep an email contact list for the members of your social networking website in a different location to the server that is hosting the website. Should anything go wrong with your social networking website (e.g. if your account is closed or a company goes out of business and ceases service etc.) you will still be able to contact your members.

Where to get started

There are several free or low-cost platforms to choose from – either as a new member of an existing network or to create your own. Here are some examples.

Social networking platforms

- www.linkedin.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.meetup.com
- www.ning.com
- www.buddypress.org
- www.elgg.org
- http://drupal.org
- www.joomla.org

Review of various popular social networking platforms similar to Ning:

- <http://tinyurl.com/tcrunchsn4>

Privacy and security issues

For further discussions on issues related to social networks, terms of service, privacy and intellectual property rights see Ashley *et al.*, p.x (this issue) and also e.g.:

- <http://tinyurl.com/bbcfbbook>
- <http://tinyurl.com/ericlee-faceb>
- <http://tinyurl.com/wikipfbbook>
- <http://tinyurl.com/wikipmpsp>
- <http://tinyurl.com/digiactivefb5>

Examples of social networking websites for development

- Africa ICT Network: <http://ictafrica.ning.com>
- Forest Connect: <http://forestconnect.ning.com>
- i-genius: <http://i-genius.org/home>
- OneWorld TV: <http://tv.oneworld.net>
- Research and Media Network: <http://researchandmedia.ning.com>
- Web 2.0 Mapping and Social Networks Group: www.meetup.com/webmapsocial

⁴ Full URL: www.techcrunch.com/2007/07/24/9-ways-to-build-your-own-social-network
⁵ To see the full URLs for these websites, see e-participation, p.130 (this issue).

RSS feeds

Tips on using RSS feeds to access and share development online content – and how to filter it for relevance

What are RSS feeds?

- RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a data format used for syndicating web content in the form of RSS or web 'feeds'.^{1,2} They have become very popular with publishers and users alike owing to the ease and simplicity of their production and use.
- Each RSS feed is comprised of one or more feed 'items'. Each item consists of a URL, text and (optionally) multimedia content. An RSS feed could contain the latest news stories, weather reports, the latest publications, press releases, or even radio or television programmes.
- Individuals can subscribe to RSS feeds to read them, or RSS feeds can be incorporated into other websites.
- RSS feeds are popular with users for keeping track of news and new content from any number of websites because updates are delivered directly to them without the need to visit each of the websites in turn. Feeds could come from RSS enabled websites, news websites, blogs, social networks and social bookmarking websites.
- Users can use a feed 'reader' (or 'aggregator') to subscribe to and view different RSS feeds. A feed reader can either be an online website/service or a software application installed on your computer.

¹ Syndication is where material on one website is made available to multiple other websites. See also glossary, p.124 (this issue).

² Atom is another data format used in syndication.

- Some feed reader applications will download the content onto your computer and enable offline viewing.
- RSS feeds are popular with publishers as they are a powerful marketing and outreach tool and can be produced automatically by many website platforms and blogs etc.
- RSS feeds are popular too with web developers as they can incorporate and display external RSS feeds on their website and share their own RSS feeds with other websites.
- The RSS icon  on a web page shows visitors they can subscribe to an RSS feed by clicking on it or by copying and pasting the link from the RSS icon into their feed reader.³
- Content from multiple RSS feeds can be aggregated into one place i.e. a new RSS feed, a web page or a feed reader. They can also be manipulated either using filters – to increase relevance – or through mash-ups – to combine sources of information, adding value to the original content.

Why use RSS feeds for development?

With RSS feeds you can ...

- improve the visibility and accessibility of development content online
- promote your organisation, news, campaign, project or ideas by allowing other websites to automatically

³ Other syndication icons include Atom or XML.

incorporate content from your website

- add value to websites by automatically incorporating relevant information from other websites
- keep the level of content received manageable, targeted and relevant using filters – don't forget that information overload is a real problem for many web users⁴
- improve information-sharing, especially with the combined use of tags, social bookmarks and RSS feeds⁵

Some tips on using RSS feeds

- When subscribing to RSS feeds, spend time searching websites, blogs, social networks and social bookmarking websites to find relevant and trusted sources of information.
- Some online feed readers such as Bloglines allow you to see other users' RSS subscriptions – it is useful to see what others in your field are also reading online.
- If bandwidth is an issue in your community, download a feed reader application and install it on your computer, which will enable you to read your RSS feeds offline.
- Users can choose the frequency with which their feed reader checks RSS feeds for new information. Decide how often you want to receive updates.
- Personal start-pages such as Pageflakes, iGoogle and Netvibes allow you to create and customise your own web page, integrating multiple RSS feeds and other social networking applications and widgets.⁶
- There are various websites that allow

⁴ For further discussion and critical reflection on the use of filtering see Ethan Zuckerman, p.87, (this issue).

⁵ See Social bookmarking, p.119; also Tagging, p.117 (this issue)

⁶ Widgets are mini portable applications which can be easily added to a website to provide additional functionality and dynamic content. Widgets can also be combined to create new functionalities.

NewsforDev.org uses RSS feeds and email to share news with agricultural development practitioners in African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries.

newsfordev.

solid sources
trustworthy articles
specific dossiers



Home | Contact

Sources | Newsletters | Top Ten | Search | Help

18 June 2009 CTA English

mynewsfordev

- > Submit Source
- > New User

Username

 Password

Dossiers

- > ACP-EU
- > Agriculture
- > Biodiversity
- > Biofuels
- > CTA
- ▣ Climate Change
- ▣ Development
- ▣ HIV/AIDS
- ▣ ICT
- > ICT4D
- ▣ S&T
- > S&T4D
- > Trade
- ▣ World News

News for development professionals

Welcome to NewsforDev. NewsforDev is a project of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) that employs RSS and e-mail news technology to bring knowledge and information to agricultural development practitioners in ACP countries.

DEVELOPMENT
newsfordev.

- POLITICS-GABON: Will Bongo's Death Signal a New Chapter?
IPS | Development 18 06 2009
- AFRICA: "Boost Development Through Labour-Intensive Farming"
IPS | Development 18 06 2009
- Climate change is pushing Malawi further into poverty: women are hit worst
Oxfam International | Press Releases 18 06 2009

More...

CTA NEWS
newsfordev.

- EU and West Africa move forward on regional EPA
CTA | Brussels office | Web log 18 06 2009
- Dimitra Newsletter
CTA | Brussels office | Web log 18 06 2009
- Development policy and the crisis affecting globalisation
CTA | Brussels office | Web log 18 06 2009

More...

YAHOO! / World News
YAHOO! NEWS

- Many thousands of reform supporters rally in Iran (AP)
18 06 2009 AP - Tens of thousands of protesters wearing black and carrying candles filled the streets of Tehran again Thursday, joining opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi to mourn demonstrators killed in clashes over Iran's disputed election.
- Tens of thousands Mousavi supporters rally in Iran (AP)
18 06 2009 AP - Opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi has called tens of thousands of black-clad supporters to the streets of Tehran, filling a downtown square to mourn demonstrators killed in clashes.
- Somali security minister killed in explosion (AP)
18 06 2009 AP - A suicide bombing in western Somalia killed at least 20 people Thursday including the national security minister. The Somali president blamed al-Qaida while an extremist group with alleged links to the terror network claimed responsibility.

More...

AGRICULTURE

you to manipulate, combine (aggregate) and/or filter the content of RSS feeds – improving the relevance of the content and producing a new RSS feed which can then be subscribed to using a feed reader or displayed on other websites.

- Some websites allow you to create an RSS feed of content from any website either automatically or by manually bookmarking specific web pages. This could then be used to create your own RSS feed of new content on your website if your website is not RSS enabled. Social bookmarking website Delicious can be used in this way. Another simple tool to create RSS feeds is Feedmarklet.
- If your mobile phone can access the Internet, you can access your RSS feeds on your phone.

- You can send micro-blogging service Twitter.com an RSS feed via Twitterfeed.com or Rstotwitter.com.⁷

Keep in mind...

- RSS feeds from trusted websites and well-filtered multiple sources are incredibly useful. However, web portals that put news into meaningful contexts, which have expert commentary and translate into other languages add additional value. For example, Global Voices Online is project where people also filter new content online (see below for details).

Where to get started

There are many feed readers available. Here are some examples.

Web-based feed readers

- www.bloglines.com
- www.google.com/reader
- www.newsgator.com/individuals/newsGatoronline
- http://feedshow.com

Downloadable feed readers

- www.newsgator.com/Individuals/FeedDemon (Win)
- www.newsfirerss.com (for Mac)
- www.newsgator.com/Individuals/NetNewsWire (for Mac)

Note: several web browsers e.g. Firefox or Opera also include basic feed reader functionality.

RSS feed filters, mashers and editors

- www.feedrinse.com
- www.feedsifter.com
- www.filtermyrss.com
- http://pipes.yahoo.com/pipes
- www.zaptxt.com
- www.feedmarklet.com

Very basic guide to RSS from BBC

- http://tinyurl.com/rssbbc⁸

Video: RSS in Plain English

Also in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. Also with multiple language subtitles on Dotsub.com:

- www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english
- http://tinyurl.com/dotsubrss⁹

Examples of development websites using RSS

- Afrigator:
http://blog.afrigator.com/about
- Global Voices Online:
http://globalvoicesonline.org/feeds
- IIED: www.iied.org/rss-feeds
- NewsForDev: www.newsfordev.org

⁷ Content received via Twitter is only up to 140 characters in length. See also Micro-blogging, p.108 (this issue).

⁸ Full URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/help/3223484.stm

⁹ Full URL: http://dotsub.com/view/69aa48a4-a95f-4bc8-a511-bb0a1ee95e12

Tagging

Tips on using tags and tagging for development

What is tagging?

- Tagging is the process of assigning online content with keywords or tags.
- A tag is a form of metadata.¹ It is a one-word descriptor or keyword that a user can assign to online content, such as documents, blogs, photos and videos.
- Tags describe and categorise content and allow it to be found again by searching the Internet using that keyword.
- Tags are also usually hyperlinks, which if clicked, will show all content tagged with that keyword.
- Tagging makes it easier to organise and describe information in a manner that is personally meaningful.
- Tags are chosen according to the personal preferences of the user. While some websites provide existing categories of tags for users to choose from, users can also create their own tags or keywords.
- A 'tag cloud' or 'word cloud' is a visual list of tags that have been used on a website or blog etc. The tags that are used most often are shown in larger font sizes and/or different colours.
- Most blogs and social networking websites allow users the option to tag their content e.g. Flickr, Ning and Technorati.

¹ Metadata is a form of data assigned to any piece of data, which allows it to be retrieved. See glossary, p.122 (this issue).

- Tagging is particularly important for media such as photo, video and audio, which unlike text does not have word-searchable content other than a title or short description.
- The practice of 'social tagging' to share resources with others is quickly becoming a staple of Web 2.0. A collection of online user-generated tags is often referred to as a 'folksonomy'.²
- Social bookmarking websites like Delicious allow users to add their own tags to Internet bookmarks to help organise and remember them.³ This is also especially useful for content which cannot be tagged where it has been uploaded.
- Websites that support tagging will often allow an RSS feed to be generated for a particular tag or set of tags. This RSS feed enables tagged content to be syndicated to other websites or read via a feed reader.⁴
- Geotags are tags that give a geographic location for a piece of content (e.g. a photograph) often using longitude and latitude information. Flickr allows photographs to be geotagged and geotagging is becoming increasingly important especially for use in mash-ups.⁵

² See glossary on p.121 for a definition of folksonomies.

³ Internet bookmarks (or 'Favourites') are stored web page locations (URLs) that can be retrieved. See Social bookmarking, p.119 (this issue).

⁴ See also RSS feeds, p.115, this issue.

⁵ A mash-up is combining data from two or more external online sources. See glossary, p.122 (this issue).

Why use tags for development?

Tags can be used to...

- organise, structure, find and share development content
- open up more possibilities for sharing and collaboration, making it easier to share interesting online content on particular themes with others
- improve information-sharing, especially with the combined use of tags, social bookmarks and RSS feeds
- create collections of popular development tags used by others (e.g. a development folksonomy).

Some tips on using tags

- Where possible, always tag information or data that you upload online e.g. online presentations, blog posts, photos, videos and reports.
- See what tags other people in your field are using for similar content. For example, social bookmarking websites list popular tags chosen by other Internet users to describe online resources they have bookmarked.
- Assign multiple tags to a piece of content. Include the most important keywords: Is it a report? What year was it published? Is it about an event? Which organisations? Which countries? Which topics?
- Creating unique tags is an important way of differentiating content. This can be particularly useful for events/conferences where organisers encourage participants to use a pre-specified unique tag to identify material from that event (such as reports, write-ups, photos or blog posts).⁶

⁶ For example, during the Web2forDev conference, participants were encouraged to use the tag 'Web2forDev' to describe any uploaded content related to the event, e.g. blog posts and photos.

Keep in mind...

- Some keywords can have several meanings. For example, 'orange' can refer to the colour, the fruit or the telecommunication brand.
- Be consistent in the way you use tags to identify content related to a particular topic. This enables yourself and others to find information more easily.
- If you want a community of users to use tags e.g. members of an online social network, provide easy-to-follow guidelines on how to create and use tags as well as a list of popular or specific tags that are used in the specific area of interest.
- If you are creating tags for a specific topic, event, website or online group to use, decide on your unique tags in advance – and make sure people know what they are. This will prevent the need to retag numerous documents later on and ensure that related content can be found more easily by others.

Where to get started

Some common examples of websites using tags

- www.flickr.com (for photos)
- www.delicious.com (for bookmarks)

The cover image of this special issue represents some of the more widely-used keywords or 'tags' associated with Web2forDev.



- <http://technorati.com> (for blogs)
- www.youtube.com (for videos)
- www.slideshare.net (for presentations)

To see an example of how content tagged with a particular keyword (web2fordev) is displayed in Delicious, see e.g.:

- <http://delicious.com/tag/web2fordev>

To see how content tagged with 'web2fordev' is syndicated on a

website see e.g.:

- www.web2fordev.net
- <https://twitter.com/web2fordev>

Create graphical tag (or 'word') clouds for any text, feed or Delicious user's tags:

- www.wordle.net

Video: Introductions to tagging and folksonomies

- <http://k12onlineconference.org/?p=273>

Social bookmarking

Tips on using social bookmarks for development

What is social bookmarking?

- Social bookmarking allows users to tag and save links to web pages and online documents in the form of bookmarks that they want to remember and/or share.
- Social bookmarking websites have evolved from free online bookmark websites, which simply allowed you to store your web page bookmarks (or 'favourites') online so you could access them from any computer connected to the Internet.
- Social bookmarking websites now allow users to tag, organise, search and share their own and other people's bookmarks, often producing RSS feeds and sometimes allowing comments and discussion of particular bookmarks.
- People increasingly use social bookmarking to organise, share and promote content.
- Social bookmarks are saved on a remote web server, not on your computer, so can be accessed from anywhere with an Internet connection.
- Most commonly, bookmarks can be either public or private, but it is the ability to share with others that builds collaborative value.
- Users can view other users' bookmarks chronologically and also see how popular different bookmarks are i.e. how many times particular web pages or documents have been bookmarked by others, as well as the

most common tags that have been used to classify a particular web page.

- Tagging is a key element of social bookmarking. Users can search for bookmarks using one or more tags.¹
- Many social bookmarking websites provide RSS feeds for lists of bookmarks created by users or tagged with particular keywords. This allows subscribers to see new bookmarks as they are tagged, saved and shared by other users and for RSS feeds to be incorporated on other websites.²
- Some social bookmarking websites allow features such as adding notes or commenting on bookmarks, rating bookmarks, and saving copies of the content being bookmarked.

Why use social bookmarks for development?

Social bookmarks can be used to...

- organise, structure and share development content with others
- follow what websites and documents other people in your field are reading
- enable others to find information on particular themes more easily
- create collections of popular bookmarks related to development and share these lists with other users
- share information in a more powerful way by combining the use of social bookmarks, tags and RSS feeds

¹ See also Tagging, p.117 (this issue).

² See also RSS feeds, p.115 (this issue).

Some tips on using social bookmarks

- Social bookmarking websites often have downloadable add-ons (or 'extensions') available for your web browser to make it easier to bookmark web pages and content with one mouse click.
- If your website is not able to produce RSS feeds, you can create your own by bookmarking and tagging your new content in Delicious. This allows you to manually create and add new items to a new RSS feed of the content tagged with a specific keyword. The RSS feed could then be displayed on your website and would also be available for others to use.
- In the same way, you can use Delicious to create and manually add items to new RSS feeds highlighting content from any website. Used strategically, this is a way of classifying and then promoting content by making it available for syndication to other websites and viewing in feed readers.³

Keep in mind...

- When tagging bookmarks, some keywords can have several meanings. For example, 'orange' can refer to the colour, the fruit or the telecommunications brand.
- Just because you create a bookmark for a web page or online document, it does not mean that page or document will always be there. Content on the Internet can be moved or removed without warning. It is a good idea to save a copy of any important information you want to keep.

³ For example, <http://forestconnect.ning.com> uses Delicious to create a list of documents already available online as well as website links, and then uses the RSS feed from Delicious to display the list of documents and links on their Ning website.

An example of how bookmarked content tagged with 'web2fordev' is displayed in Delicious.

The screenshot shows the Delicious website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'delicious' and menu items: Home, Bookmarks, People, and Tags. Below this is a section titled 'Recent web2fordev Bookmarks' with a sub-header 'Recent | Popular'. A search bar contains the tag 'web2fordev'. The main content area displays a list of bookmarks, each with a date, title, author, and a list of tags. The 'web2fordev' tag is highlighted in each entry. The bookmarks listed are:

- 18 JUN 09 About the Broker / Broker - Broker** by petecranston. Tags: research_communications, ict4d, web2fordev. Count: 2.
- Maneno: A Multilingual Blogging Platform Built For African Bloggers** by 2009/06 - Global Voices Online. Tags: euforic, text, news, en, ikco, web2.0, web2share, blogging, npk4dev, global_voices, africa, web2fordev. Count: 2.
- 16 JUN 09 The TWIT Netcast Network with Leo Laporte** by kpaintin. Tag: web2fordev. Count: 2.
- Coming your way: International Development Data Barcamp @ the World Bank** by gquaggiotto. Tags: development2.0, npk4dev, web2fordev. Count: 2.
- Web 2.0 can benefit the world's poor - SciDev.Net** by bieni64. Tags: h800, h800_block3_2009, i, ict4d, poverty, web2.0, web2fordev. Count: 9.
- 15 JUN 09 Video for Change** by ppgis. Tags: ctaexplore, video4d, video, media4d, ict4d, africa, web2fordev. Count: 19.
- HP test mobile social network** by ppgis. Tags: mobile, phone, network, social, web2fordev. Count: 19.
- Africa pioneers mobile bank push** by ppgis. Tag: web2fordev. Count: 13.

Where to get started

There are several social bookmarking websites that you can join. Here are some examples.

Social bookmarking websites

- Delicious: www.delicious.com
- Technorati: <http://technorati.com>
- Google Bookmarks: www.google.com/bookmarks

- Digg: <http://digg.com>
- Diigo: www.diigo.com
- Muti: www.muti.co.za
- Stumbleupon: www.stumbleupon.com

Review of top ten social bookmarking websites:

<http://tinyurl.com/bookmarks-review>⁴

An example of how content tagged with a particular keyword (e.g. web2fordev) is displayed in Delicious:

- <http://delicious.com/tag/web2fordev>

An example of how this content can be syndicated on a website:

- www.web2fordev.net
- <https://twitter.com/web2fordev>

⁴ Full URL: <http://websearch.about.com/od/best-websites/tp/freebookmarks.htm>

Glossary of Web 2.0 terms

This glossary lists most of the commonly-used terms describing Web 2.0 tools that are found in this special issue of *PLA*.¹ Please note that the glossary is not an exhaustive list and does not include more technical computing terms.

Aggregator (see also RSS feeds)

An aggregator (or 'news aggregator' or 'feed reader') is a piece of software or online service that receives and displays multiple web feeds of syndicated web content such as news headlines or blog posts. An aggregator could be a website displaying the latest headlines from multiple other news websites or a feed reader application that a user downloads to run on their computer to enable them to subscribe to, and view, RSS feeds of the latest content from multiple websites without having to visit each website in turn.

Audio blog (see Blog and Podcast)

Blog

A blog (short for 'web' and 'log') is a website, usually maintained by an individual. Blogs contain regular commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as photos, audio files or videos. Blogs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news. Some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is

an important part of blogging. Most blogs are primarily textual although some focus on photographs (photoblogs), videos (vlogs), or audio files (audio blogs or Podcasts) and are part of a wider network of social media. To 'blog' or to be a 'blogger' means to maintain or add content to a blog.

Blogosphere

Blogosphere is a collective term encompassing all blogs and their interconnections. It is the perception that blogs exist together as a connected community (or as a collection of connected communities) or as a social network.²

Bookmarks (see also Social bookmarks)

Internet bookmarks are stored web page locations (URLs) that can be retrieved. As a feature of all modern Internet web browsers, their primary purpose is to easily catalogue and access web pages that a user has visited and chosen to save. Saved links are also sometimes called 'favourites'. Bookmarks are normally visible in a browser menu and stored

¹ Throughout this special issue, we make reference to Web 2.0 'tools', which includes applications, platforms and services. See our definition of Web 2.0 tools in this glossary.

² Source: Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogosphere

on the user's computer. Many external applications exist for managing bookmarks online (see Social bookmarks).

Content Management System (CMS)

A server-based software used to publish, edit and control the workflow of content in a website. It integrates many functions that enhance web services and their interfaces can be freely customised. For example, web portals are structured using CMS.

Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing means to outsource a task to a crowd of undefined, generally large group of people. Commonly used in Web 2.0 projects such as citizen journalism where the input of individuals is solicited. For example, Okolloh (this issue) describes the use of crowdsourcing to gather and distribute citizen reports.

Feeds (see RSS feeds)

Feed reader (see Aggregator)

Folksonomy (see also Tags)

The term 'folksonomy' (combining the words 'folk' and 'taxonomy') refers to a collection of online user-generated tags. Folksonomies are created collaboratively when people create and use tags to annotate and categorise content such as blog posts, photographs, web links and other web content. This bottom-up classification system has emerged from social tagging, also known as collaborative tagging, social classification, and social indexing.³

³ Adapted from: Wikipedia.

Free Open Source Software (FOSS) (see Open Source Software)

Geotagging

Geotagging is the process of adding geographical identification metadata to various media such as photographs, video, websites, blog posts or RSS feeds. It is increasingly used to create visual maps of data through mash-ups.

Mash-up

A mash-up is aggregating or combining data from one or more external online sources together. At its simplest, a mash-up could be just creating a webpage that pulls in different content from multiple RSS feeds, such as text, pictures or videos. A more advanced mash-up is one that actually combines online data sources to produce a new set of data or service that was not provided (or necessarily intended) by the original publishers of the content sources.

Metadata

Metadata is data about other data, from keywords in the html of a webpage describing the content, to information about the size of a picture or file. Tags are a form of metadata.

Micro-blogging

A form of blogging where users publish very short posts, commonly submitted via a variety of means including SMS text messaging, email or instant messaging as well as via the Internet. Micro-blogging updates can be text, photos or very short video clips.

News aggregator (see Aggregator)

Online social networking (see Social networking)

Open source software (OSS)

Open source software (OSS) can be defined as computer software for which the human-readable source code is made available under a copyright license (or arrangement such as the public domain) that meets the Open Source Definition. This permits users to use, change, and improve the software, and to redistribute it in modified or unmodified form. It is very often developed in a public, collaborative manner. OSS are typically free-to-use (for this reason, they are often referred to as FOSS).⁴

PC2PC (see VoIP)

Personalised start-page

Personal start-pages are web pages that allow users to create their own customised web page, integrating multiple RSS feeds and other social networking applications and widgets.

Podcast

A Podcast is a series of audio or video digital media files automatically distributed via the Internet. A Podcast is distinguished from most other digital media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to and downloaded automatically when new content is added via a feed. Like the term broadcast, Podcast can refer either to the series of content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated.⁵

Post

A post (or posting) refers to content

that is uploaded to the Internet. Typically, commentary written on blogs is referred to as a post.

RSS feed (see also Web feed)

RSS is a web feed data format used for web syndication to make content available to other websites or for individuals to subscribe to via a feed reader. Each RSS feed is comprised of one or more feed 'items'. Each item consists of a URL, text and (optionally) multimedia content. An RSS feed could contain the latest news stories, weather reports, the latest publications, press releases, or even radio or television programmes. RSS is defined as Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication. 'Atom' is a similar content syndication format.

Short Messaging Service (SMS)

Mobile phone text messaging service. Sending a text message via mobile telephone is known as Short Messaging Service, or SMS.

Social bookmarks

Social bookmarking is a web-based service to share Internet bookmarks. Social bookmarking websites are a popular way to store, classify, share and search links through the practice of folksonomy techniques. Since the classification and ranking of resources is a continuously evolving process, many social bookmarking services allow users to subscribe to web feeds based on tags, or a particular user. This allows subscribers to become aware of new resources for a given topic, as they are noted, tagged and classified by other users.

Social software

Social software is a type of software or web service that allows people to communicate and collaborate while

⁴ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_and_open_source_software

⁵ Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>

using the application. Email, blogs, and even instant messaging are all examples of social software. Many advocates of using these tools believe that these create actual community, and have adopted the term 'online communities' to describe the social structures that they claim result.

Social networking

Online social networking tools focus on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Social networks are a new generation of online community tools devoted to Internet-based networking, which are similar to websites but offer specific interactive features and processes. A social network service brings together people who share common interests, such as photography or a social issue and who are interested in exploring the interests of others and learning more about their peers. Social networking websites make the relationships between people visible.

Start-page (see Personalised Start-page)

Syndication (see Web syndication)

Tags

A tag is a (relevant) keyword or term associated with a piece of online content (like a picture, article, website, or video clip) to describe the item. Typically, a piece of content will have more than one tag associated with it. Tags are mostly chosen informally and personally by the author/creator or the consumer of the item – i.e. not as part of some formally-defined classification scheme (taxonomy). A collection of online user-generated tags is often referred to as a folksonomy. Tagging is the

association of keywords (metadata) to the file or document that makes it easier to locate during an Internet-based search for related content.

Tag cloud (see also Tag)

A 'tag cloud' or 'word cloud' is a visual list of tags or keywords showing groups of user-generated tags or website content. A tag cloud links together a collection of other associated tags. More popular tags are shown using larger font sizes and/or different colours.

Tagging (see Tag)

Trackback

A trackback (or linkback) function on a blog is to notify another blog that you are referencing them on your own blog.

User-generated content

The concept of enabling a community of users – not just individual authors – to create the content on a website, contribute to what is already there, govern it by determining its accuracy, usefulness, and relevance and ensure that the resource is updated as needed. User-generated content is typified by information resources such as Wikipedia or YouTube.com. On these websites, user-generated content is everything: without the users there is no content.

Vlogs (see also Blogs)

A form of blog that contains video content.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

VoIP services are free or low-cost online platforms which enable you to make individual or conference 'phone calls' from one computer to another (referred to as PC2PC). Skype is one

example of a VoIP service. See: www.skype.com

Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 refers to a perceived second generation of web development and design that facilitates communication, secure information-sharing, cooperation and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Sometimes referred to as the 'read and write' web, Web 2.0 concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted services, and applications. These include applications such as social networking websites, video- and photo-sharing websites, wikis and blogs.

The term Web 2.0 was first used by Eric Knorr in December 2003 and became notable after the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but to changes in the ways software developers and end-users utilise the web.

With the first phase of the web, most people could only read information online. New Web 2.0 technologies now make it possible for most Internet users e.g. to edit and create their own content on websites that incorporate these technologies. They allow non-web designers to put their own content (writing, audio, video, etc.) online easier than ever before. They make content more portable than ever and easier to remix, mash together or reuse in a different context. Web 2.0 tools utilise this user-generated content and the economy of scale/network multiplier effect created to draw valuable connections between related users and content.

They make the discovery of new

content more automated and relevant than ever before.

They have the potential to exponentially increase the amount of information that any of us are able to access, store and recall.

Web 2.0 tools

Tool is used here as shorthand for a computer software application and also for applications that are web-based. There are dozens of emerging free or low cost interactive web applications and services (often referred to as the participatory web or Web 2.0). These can enhance the ways we create, share, and publish information. Examples of Web 2.0 tools include social networking websites, video-sharing websites, wikis, and blogs.

Wherever web tools are mentioned in this special issue, the terms web application, method, technology or approach might have been more appropriate to use depending on the actual use of the tool. We generally use the term ‘tools’ to cover all the different applications, tools, methods and technologies that we are referring to as Web 2.0 tools.

Web2forDev

Participatory Web 2.0 for development – or Web2forDev for short – is a way of employing web services to intentionally improve information-sharing and collaborative production of content for development. The distinction between Web 2.0 tools and Web2forDev is that Web2forDev is about the active use of these tools in development. It is about how development actors can relate and connect to other stakeholders, produce and publish their own material, decide on levels of access to information and redistribute pieces of content released by others.

Web2forDev is about integrating, combining, aggregating, generating, moderating and mediating development information, ideas and perspectives.

Web feed (see RSS feed)

Web log (see Blog)

Web syndication

Web syndication is where material on one website is made available to

multiple other websites or individual subscribers (using RSS or web feeds).

Widgets

Widgets are mini portable applications which can be easily added to a website to provide additional functionality and dynamic content. Widgets can also be combined to create new functionalities. Many blog platforms, social networking websites and personalised start pages provide libraries of widgets for their users to pick and choose from.

Wiki

A wiki is an online collaborative workspace. A wiki is a website that allows users to add, remove, edit and change content. It also allows for linking among any number of pages. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for mass collaborative authoring. The term wiki also can refer to the collaborative software itself (wiki engine) that facilitates the operation of such a website, or to certain specific wiki sites, e.g. encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.