

The Serials Librarian

From the Printed Page to the Digital Age

ISSN: 0361-526X (Print) 1541-1095 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wser20>

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David Lee King & Stephanie Willen Brown

To cite this article: David Lee King & Stephanie Willen Brown (2009) Emerging Trends, 2.0, and Libraries, The Serials Librarian, 56:1-4, 32-43, DOI: [10.1080/03615260802672452](https://doi.org/10.1080/03615260802672452)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03615260802672452>



Published online: 13 Mar 2009.



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Emerging Trends, 2.0, and Libraries

DAVID LEE KING

Presenter

STEPHANIE WILLEN BROWN

Recorder

Has your library discussed creating a Flickr account, a MySpace teen website, or a blog? David discussed the current social networking transformation taking place, and applied those changes to a library setting. He explained and demonstrated several Web 2.0 tools, including blogs, RSS, Flickr, as well as many “friending” sites like Facebook and Twitter. Finally, David reviewed the changes a library needs to make to meet and participate in our new online and participatory world.

KEYWORDS *blogs, Flickr, social networking sites, Internet, Web 2.0, websites*

INTRODUCTION

David Lee King provided information about a variety of Web 2.0 tools, including RSS, RSS feed readers, tagging and folksonomies, commenting, and user-generated content. He showed how to create and update a blog, and he demonstrated many social networking sites such as Flickr, YouTube, bookmark managers, podcasting, and videocasting.

David started by defining Web 2.0, the development of which he compared to the development of gaming. To illustrate, he showed screen shots of some older games, like Zork, Pong, and PacMan. Nintendo's Wii is a far cry from Zork, illustrating the vast evolution of gaming technology. Showing a photo of Stephen Abram and a child playing Wii at the 2007 American Library Association annual conference, he noted that Wii is uniting generations and mentioned that there are Wii bowling tournaments in nursing homes. The analogy between games and Web 2.0 is that early games were for one person whereas Wii games can be played interactively in person and online.

WEB 2.0 DEFINED

David takes his Web 2.0 definition from Wikipedia: “A . . . second generation of Internet-based services—such as social networking sites, wikis, communication tools, and folksonomies—that let people collaborate and share information online in ways previously unavailable.”¹

He then reviewed the “old Web,” noting that pre-2000 there was not much participation among users. Instead users surfed and found content, but they did not interact with each other. Web 2.0, by contrast, is all about “communication, conversation, participation . . . Community,” according to David, and there is nothing “techie” about any of those words. There are many versions of Web 2.0, including “Church 2.0,” in which congregants can see podcasts, blogs, and videos of church services. David offered the Perry Branch of the Maricopa, Arizona County Public Library as an example of Library 2.0, where: “tens of thousands of books in the Perry Branch library [are] shelved by topic, similar to the way bookstores arrange books.”²

GLUE OF WEB 2.0

Now that the audience had a broad sense of Web 2.0, David moved on to describe the “glue” of Web 2.0 including: RSS and RSS feed readers, tagging, folksonomies, commenting and user-generated content, Web as platform, mashups, and “friending” (Figure 1). He defined and provided examples of all of these elements.

RSS and RSS Feed Readers

David started his explanation of RSS by following his now-familiar pattern of explaining the old way and comparing it to the new way. With RSS, he

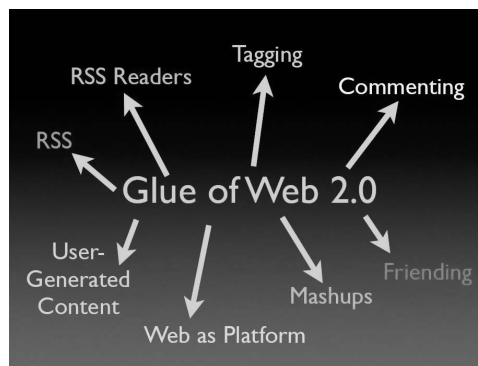


FIGURE 1 Glue of Web 2.0.

discussed the old way of visiting websites with changing content such as newspapers, new book lists, and events taking place at the library. Staying up to date the old way involved going to each site on a regular basis (daily? weekly?) to see if anything had changed. The new way, using RSS technology, is a way of subscribing through an RSS feed to content that has changed and only seeing changed content through that feed. David emphasized that this includes any content such as text, photos, audio, or video. Media feeds include the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, whereas library feeds may include updated events and services,³ or receiving alerts every time the library catalogs a new book in your area of interest.

David compares RSS to e-mail: the RSS feed exists, but we also need a way to read, or follow it, either in an application or browser, for instance. He mentioned the free websites Bloglines and Google Reader, and showed a screen shot of his RSS feeds in his Google Reader account.

Tagging

Tagging is a way to categorize the Web in personally meaningful ways, and tags are both browsable and searchable. David showed a photo in Flickr and showed some different tags applied to the same object (see Figure 2).

The photo is of the Monongahela Incline in Pittsburgh, which David visited in 2006 while presenting at the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Annual Meeting.⁴ He gave the photos the following tags: *alsc06*, *pittsburgh*, and *incline*. However, he found other images of the same location and those were given tags like *Duquesne*, *Monongahelaincline*, and *funicular*. This example nicely illustrates the personal value of tagging.

Commenting

Web 2.0 permits people to leave comments for the author or creator of items on the Web. The old way of providing feedback to content creators was to send a letter or e-mail. Web 2.0 tools easily permit commenting in a variety of ways. David provided a few examples such as the Ann Arbor District Library's "Director's Blog" which, in 2006, wrote a post called "Library Issues RFP for Downtown Library Space Needs/Facility Study."⁵ This story received twenty-nine comments including some exchanges between community members and the director. David suggested that in the old way, there would have been an open meeting or maybe a press release in the newspaper that might have generated a few comments but not as many as this blog.



FIGURE 2 Monongahela Incline (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

User-Supplied Content

Through all of this, David emphasized the importance of user-generated content, stressing that Web 2.0 does not exist without one's own content. He pointed to Flickr, YouTube, and Wikipedia as examples.

Web as Platform

In the Web 2.0 world, the Web is a platform for all sorts of activities. In the earlier world, most of the systems were tied to one computer, such as Microsoft Word being available only on your computer at work. The new platform allows people to interact simultaneously. For his shared column in *Public Libraries* David and his co-author Michael Porter use Google Documents to write their content, and they can share this with their editor. This method is much easier than sending Word documents back and forth.

Mashups

David quoted Wikipedia's definition of a mashup: "A mashup is a website or Web application that seamlessly combines content from more than one source into an integrated experience,"⁶ and provided some useful examples. For instance, his library has created a Google Maps mashup of the location of bookmobile stops. David also pointed to a wiki that displays a Google Maps map showing the prices at various gas stations around town. He also referenced the NASIG conference NetVibes page, which pulls together the weather in Phoenix, Flickr photos, and blog posts tagged with *nasig2008*.⁷

Friending

David's final piece of glue for Web 2.0 is friending, which is a way of keeping up with friends in the short and long term, from high school, college, former jobs, and so on. Friending sites like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube are places where you can friend someone and keep up with their activities.

WEB 2.0 EXAMPLES

Blogs

Now that he had given us a thorough definition of Web 2.0, David proceeded to show us some live examples of Web 2.0 technology. He started with blogs, showing us his own blog and how he writes posts on it. He then asked us, "Is this techie?" He argued that no, it's not techie at all. It is hardly more complex than using a word processor. This WordPress blog software is the same used by the Atchison Public Library, a small public library in Kansas.⁸

David then offered several ideas of what libraries could do with blogs, including:

- Communicate with your patrons
- Start conversations about various topics
- Promote new books, videos, or what's new at the library
- Deliver an internal staff newsletter
- Offer subject guide current awareness
- Reach customers where they are

The group discussed how to encourage colleagues and patrons to read blogs, particularly those who are not familiar with this technology. Some ideas were to show them feed readers to simplify blog reading and to

remind colleagues that if libraries are using blogs as communication tools they must keep up at least with the library's blog, as a library's website also serves as one of its branches. Other ideas included tying blog readership and contribution to library goals and even a blog trophy to the person who posts the most or gets the most comments.

Social Networking Sites

David moved on to showing us "sites that share stuff." David described these sites while defining and explaining Web 2.0, but the demonstration itself was key in understanding how they work. The Additional Resources section describes some of the sites David showed, along with some of the examples that he used.

David described Flickr as being about photos, photos, photos, some of which use the Creative Commons license, stating that photos can be reused for many purposes, except for commercial use. You can subscribe to a person or group photo feed, such as NASIG2008, via RSS and view them in your feed reader.⁹ YouTube is similar to Flickr, except that it is about videos. Many diverse groups and individuals have posted videos there, including many libraries. In addition to seeing the videos themselves, viewers can write and read comments on them and can see how many times something was viewed. Last.fm is a tool to listen to and share music you have heard, and it's also a song discovery service, so listeners can find related music based on what they have listened to. LibraryThing is a social tool for sharing what books one has read and connecting with other people who have read the same books. LibraryThing also offers recommendations based on shared books. MySpace permits users to create blog entries and other social elements including photos and songs. David offered a great idea for public libraries: have a teen library MySpace account like the Steele Creek Teen Library (Charlotte, NC) page. Users can search their catalog and find out that they have free Wi-Fi in the library. David pointed out that this page *is* the library to some teens. Finally, David explained Twitter, which is "microblogging," similar to Facebook status updates. It can be a useful tool for answering quick questions like "Does Denver airport have free Wi-Fi?" as well as following news and other real time events. David listed some other ideas of things libraries can do with social networking sites, such as reaching patrons in their space, using contact lists to push events and news, providing direct links to library material, explaining why teens should attend your programs, and using them as search tools.

Bookmark Managers, Wikis, and Instant Messaging

David continued by describing three additional social networking site ideas for libraries. Social bookmarking sites like del.icio.us permit portable

bookmarks rather than bookmarks that reside only on one computer. You can add a bookmark, add tags, description, clipping, and then others can add comments, ratings. Your patrons and colleagues can subscribe via RSS.

Wikis are websites that allow anyone to add and edit content, and they are great for collaborative authoring. They track changes so you can revert back to an older page if needed, and you can monitor changes via RSS. They are searchable and you can allow or disallow comments.

Instant messaging is sometimes also known as IM and is a pretty easy synchronous communication tool. One person types a message, hits enter, and then waits for the other person to type their reply. The chat history is tracked and is real time communication. Note that PCs, cell phones, and PDAs all have IM clients or software. Some are website-specific clients, such as AOL, Google, Yahoo!, and MSN, whereas others are multi-client services such as Trillian, Gaim, and Meebo. Note that a Meebo widget permits embedding one's IM availability on library Web pages, such as the "no hits" page in the library's OPAC.

Podcasting, Videocasting, and Extending the Library Catalog

David discussed three additional elements that are not website-specific but involve furthering the library's reach using Web 2.0 tools and technology. These include podcasting, videocasting, and extending the functionality of the library catalog.

Podcasting is a Web feed of audio to which anyone can subscribe, similar to a blog, only with audio. To listen, one needs an MP3 player, an RSS feed for the podcast and feed reader, or a podcasting aggregator (i.e., iTunes or Juice). To create a podcast one first needs something to say. After that, technical requirements include a microphone, software called Audacity, which is free, open source software for recording and editing sounds, a place to store the podcast (free options include archive.org and ourmedia.com), and an RSS feed to distribute the podcasts (FeedBurner is a nice, free option). David cautioned that podcasting is free but can require a lot of time. He also provided some ideas of how libraries can use podcasts including library news, upcoming events, booktalks, oral histories, lectures, local music, author readings, library instruction, and guided tours. Basically, podcasts allow libraries to reach patrons where they are.

Videocasting is the same idea as podcasting, only with video. To watch them, one needs a video player, an RSS feed from the videocast and feed reader, or a videocasting aggregator like mefeedia, FireAnt, or iTunes. David noted that libraries can use videocasts to share lectures, events, instruction and/or book talks, to provide virtual tours, or even

offer something completely original. Videocasting can be a way to reach new patrons.

Finally, David talked about ways to use Web 2.0 to extend, or increase the value of, the library catalog. He argued that the current catalog is boring and offers examples of two libraries that are making their catalogs more interesting and relevant to users. The Hennepin County, Minnesota library offers the ability to refine or broaden searches using Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and other material from the catalog record as well as the ability to leave feedback on items in the catalog. The Ann Arbor District, Michigan library (AADL) catalog permits users to tag and rate items as well as see items that might also be relevant by clicking on the link labeled "Users who checked out these items also checked out." In the AADL catalog, David showed the entry for Cecilia Hae-Jin Lee's cookbook *Eating Korean: From Barbecue to Kimchi, Recipes from My Home* and suggested comparing the user-generated tags to the Library of Congress Subject Headings for the item. This exercise nicely returned the talk to the earlier discussion of tags and folksonomies.

TIME AND WEB 2.0

David ended the session with two useful discussion questions. He answered the first, "Why should I make time for Web 2.0?" with several points. First, libraries have to make the time because these tools are relevant to the next generation, and if libraries are not using Web 2.0, they will lose those patrons as they are already using these tools with eBay, Amazon, and even within newspaper websites. The proliferation of iPhones, Blackberries, and other mobile devices suggests that patrons will expect services from the library to be available on those devices. Further, David suggested that libraries use Web 2.0 tools to teach information literacy. Show "grandpa how to use Flickr," show small business owners how to stay current, and introduce "news junkies to RSS feeds." Libraries can also teach patrons how to subscribe to library updates using RSS feeds. These technologies can help library staff save time by facilitating professional reading, using IM instead of the phone or e-mail, using social bookmarks, and generally working smarter by using social networking technology.

David clearly demonstrated that patrons want to participate in the Web 2.0 elements of library websites by referring back to comments on the AADL's Director's Blog, pointing out how many patron-posted videos there are on YouTube and Flickr, as well as all the comments on the various 2.0 websites. Using Web 2.0 tools, David continued, can help the library become a community leader, and he compared this to libraries teaching patrons to use Microsoft Word and other software in the 1990s. Finally, David suggested

that knowing these technologies can help librarians get a cool job, referring to a job post on NextGen Librarian: “We need someone to manage Web 2.0 tool development to support member librarian blogging, podcasting, a Moodle server, Drupal, and other services.”

One of the most common questions in response to a session like this is, “How do I make time for new stuff?” and David had some good responses. First, he showed a photo of the ALA book cart drill team, indicating that people find time to practice for that. In addition, David recommended a switch of focus; instead of thinking about the time needed to keep up, one should have a willingness to change focus to make learning new technologies a priority. He encouraged audience members to think of it as “this is an important part of my job,” and possibly include adopting new technologies in their job descriptions. He suggested that scheduling time is an important element. Reference librarians have desk time that could possibly be used to learn some of these skills. He gave an excellent analogy: If you wanted to learn to use a chainsaw, would you accomplish that by reading the manual fifty times, or by actually using the chainsaw? Finally, David had some suggestions for supervisors to affect this change:

- give staff time for reading, playing, learning, creating
- send staff to formal training
- practical training for staff—teach what’s relevant to your staff and library
- buy books for training

Supervisors can explain their plan to administrators and set goals and project results, with zero money spent, emphasizing that participating in Web 2.0 adds real value to the library. Supervisors can show administrators how Web 2.0 fits into, and possibly enhances, the library’s organizational plan.

David concluded with some simple recommendations for how to get started learning about Web 2.0 tools:

- Start by spending fifteen minutes a day on learning about these new technologies.
 - Explore some blogs consistent with your interests and experiment with leaving comments on a blog post that you like.
 - Work through a Learning 2.0 plan like that pioneered by Helene Blowers at the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County.¹⁰
- Ideas for starting a blog:
 - Use blogger.com or wordpress.com
 - Think about what you are going to write about
- Ideas for starting a wiki:
 - Use pbwiki
 - Create a wiki for your next committee project

- Ideas for using instant messenger:
 - Sign up for AOL Instant Messenger
 - Use Meebo to chat with co-workers
- Ideas for joining a social network
 - Get a Facebook account
 - Friend other librarians
- Ideas for podcasting and/or videocasting:
 - Think of a reason and a goal, then go for it
 - Use whatever technology is handy; a digital camera video is fine

David concluded his session with a few photographs indicating the changed library situation. He captioned a black and white photo of a 1950s bookmobile with “This is not your library” and showed photos of people with mobile devices, patrons using laptops in places clearly not a library (a coffee shop, a tree, and a meadow), with captions saying “This is your library.”

NOTES

1. Wikipedia, “Web 2.0,” *Wikipedia*. 2008. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0 (accessed July 6, 2008). In true Web 2.0 fashion, the definition of Web 2.0 has changed on Wikipedia since David collected it for his presentation.
2. Yvonne Wingett, “Gilbert Library to be First to Drop Dewey Decimal,” *The Arizona Republic*. May 30, 2007. <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0530nodewey0530.html> (accessed July 6, 2008).
3. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, “Topekas and Shawnee County Public Library: RSS Feeds,” *Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library*. <http://www.tscpl.org/rssfeeds>. (accessed July 6, 2008).
4. David L. King, “Pittsburgh Incline,” *Flickr*. <http://flickr.com/photos/davidking/247961709/> (accessed July 6, 2008).
5. Ann Arbor District Library, “Library Issues RFP for Downtown Library Space Needs/Facility Study,” *Ann Arbor District Library blog*. December 21, 2006. <http://www.aadl.org/node/3405> (accessed July 6, 2008).
6. Wikipedia, “Mashup (Web Application Hybrid),” *Wikipedia*. 2008. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mashup_\(web_application_hybrid\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mashup_(web_application_hybrid)) (accessed July 6, 2008). Note that again, the Wikipedia definition changed since David first quoted it.
7. “NASIG 2008” on *NetVibes*. <http://www.netvibes.com/nasig2008> (accessed July 6, 2008).
8. Atchison Public Library. Home page. <http://atchisonlibrary.org/> (accessed July 6, 2008).
9. NASIG2008 photo feed at Flickr. <http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=nasig2008/> (accessed July 6, 2008).
10. Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, “Learning 2.0 Program.” <http://plcmcl2-about.blogspot.com/> (accessed July 6, 2008).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A hyperlinked list of these sites is available on the CogSci Librarian Blog at <http://tinyurl.com/nasig2008>.

Social Networking Sites to Try

Flickr	http://www.flickr.com See David's photo "stream" at http://www.flickr.com/photos/davidking
YouTube	http://www.youtube.com See the Topeka and Shawnee County (Kansas) Library's videos at http://youtube.com/user/TopekaLibrary
Last.fm	http://www.last.fm
LibraryThing	http://www.librarything.com/ See David's LibraryThing catalog at http://www.librarything.com/catalog/davidleeking
MySpace	http://www.myspace.com/ Steele Creek (Charlotte, North Carolina) Teen Library on MySpace: http://www.myspace.com/steelecreeklibrary .
Twitter	http://twitter.com/ David's Twitter "feed" is at http://twitter.com/davidleeking MarsPhoenix Twitter "feed" is at http://twitter.com/marsphoenix

Web 2.0 Examples

del.icio.us	http://del.icio.us See the Lansing (Illinois) Public Library's del.icio.us bookmarks at http://del.icio.us/lansingpubliclibrary
wikis	Sample wikis: St. Joseph County (Indiana) Public Library's Subject Guides http://www.libraryforlife.org/subjectguides/index.php/Main_Page Chad Boeninger's "Biz Wiki" http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/bizwiki/ Stevens County (Washington) Libraries Wiki Project http://209.173.246.13/index.php/Main_Page
Instant Messaging	Search the Topeka Shawnee catalog for subject keyword = "willen" and on the "no hits" page, you'll see a Meebo widget for IM when the library is open: http://catalog.tscpl.org/ (if the library is closed, you'll see an e-mail form for questions)
Podcasts	Thomas Ford Memorial Library's Click-a-Story http://www.fordlibrary.org/children/clickastory/ Oral histories from the University of Georgia's Richard B. Russell Library http://www.libs.uga.edu/russell/collections/oralhistory.shtml Stanford University faculty lectures http://itunes.stanford.edu/
Videocasts	Brookside Baptist Church (Brookfield, Wisconsin) "Live Services on the Internet" http://www.brooksidebaptist.org/liveservices El Día de Los Niños/El Día de Los Libros (Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library) http://tinyurl.com/dianinos
Extending the Library Catalog	Hennepin County (Minnesota) Library Catalog entry for the <i>Da Vinci Code</i> : http://tinyurl.com/hennepin (note how you can refine or broaden searches using LCSH as well as the ability to leave feedback on items in the catalog) Ann Arbor (Michigan) District Library Catalog entry for <i>Eating Korean</i> : http://tinyurl.com/eating-korean (compare the user-generated tags to the Library of Congress Subject Headings for the item)

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

David Lee King is the Digital Branch and Services Manager at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. You may reach him at davidleeking@gmail.com or at <http://www.davidleeking.com>. A PDF version of his PowerPoint presentation is on David's blog at <http://www.davidleeking.com/2008/06/05/nasig2008-presentation/>.

Stephanie Willen Brown is an Electronic Resource Librarian at the University of Connecticut. You may reach her at stephanie.brown@uconn.edu or at her blog <http://cogscilibrarian.blogspot.com>.