Using Web2.0 to Harness Collective Intelligence and Build Community Among Students

This wiki space is a work in progress. It is a presentation for this year's Tech Ed Conference in Ontario, California, March 25-28, 2007. Read My Proposal. I will be co-presenting with Amy MacPherson. Wiki Address: http://drcoop.pbwiki.com/WebTwoPointO

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is a term referring to the ongoing transition to a full participatory Web, with participation including both humans *and* machines. Michael Wesch, Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Kansas State University created this video to explain Web 2.0.

The Machine is Us/ing Us

- What Is Web 2.0
- Introduction to Web 2.0
- http://www.nmc.org/nmcpedia/Content_Is_You_Links
- Using a Blog for a \"Web 2.0\" Presentation instead of PowerPoint

Harness Collective Intelligence

"The principle behind collective intelligence is that a conclusion reached in collaboration with and from competition among multiple individuals will be more intelligent than any conclusion reached by an individual, no matter how smart" (by msaleem on December 10, 2006).
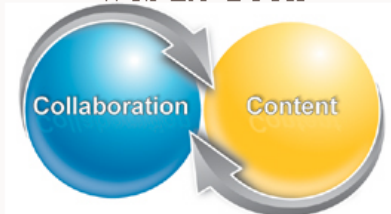
- Lessons From the Center of Collective Intelligence
- Five Great Ways to Harness Collective Intelligence
- The Hype and the Hullabaloo of Web 2.0

Building Community with Web 2.0

Blogger David King stated that a big chunk of web 2.0 has to do with different forms of participation. You can see this in the large, popular, user-created-content sites like myspace, flickr, or youtube - those sites **depend on participation** (i.e., content creators freely give away their creations) for their very survival. He also believes that Web 2.0 is all about starting conversations, building community, and telling our stories. "'Online community' is the concept of convening people in virtual space and describes a range of online activities including electronic collaboration, virtual networks, Web-based discussions or electronic mailing lists"(*Victoria Bernal, Community Building Associate, Benton Foundation*).

- Inviting Participation in Web 2.0
- Building Online Communities *The Internet exists to improve communication. Communities can grow anywhere communication occurs.*

Web 2.0 Tools

Blog

A frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links. Blogger David King created a song & video last year that sums up all that Web 2.0 is. It's a fun look at some of the Web 2.0 tools users around the internet are using to harness collective intelligence and build community. Check it out.

- LiveJournal is the best blogging site for creating community among students because of the way they handle friends. I think of the Livejournal friends features as student features. I create a "friends" page for the class and can track their journal postings from one location. This eliminates the need to visit each individual student's blog/journal. With the use of pics and tagging, we can all keep up with who is who and what topics they are commenting on. But the best part is that LJ allows for students to get comments posted to their post via email, and then allows for them to respond via the same email message without having to go to the blog. This encourages students to keep the discussion going without having to check into the blog to see if anyone has responded yet.
- WordPress blogs allow for users to create community by adding authors to any blog. You can add up to 30 authors for any one blog. So for class projects an instructor could have students study and blog about a class topic, and students would be contributing to a class blog and not their own. The one thing I like best about Wordpress blogs is the ability to create pages on the blog, so you can have more than just a blog; you can also add other content that is more static.
- Blogger is another free blog service that I use with students. This is probably the easiest blog to set up and start using.

RSS & Feed Readers

RSS is a family of web feed formats, specified in XML and used for Web syndication. RSS is used by (among other things) news websites, weblogs and podcasting. We use feed readers to subscribe to RSS feeds.

- Yahoo! doesn't have a traditional reader, but offers the option to put RSS feeds on the start page, and it has a reader built into the webmail program. I've been using Yahoo! for more than 5 years, and I'm not sure I can really change to something else, even though there are others that I like. They're just different.
- Google Reader is new for me this year. I've been trying it out as a reader that I can introduce to my students. What's nice about the Google Reader is that it is easy to use. Firefox makes it easy to subscribe to feeds easily in Google Reader, and it's easy to tag and organize articles. You can also share saved items with people, like below:

> **Dr.Coop's shared items**
>
> Use A Startpage to Blog More Efficiently
>
> Tubing For Teachers
>
> E-Portfolios and E-Learning
>
> Search through lists with WhatALi.st
>
> Weekly Wrapup, 19-23 March 2007
>
> Read more...

- Firefox & Internet Explorer both have built in RSS readers now in the newest versions. I'm starting to use the Firefox reader a bit.
- NewsGator Online Search - Subscribe - Syncronize

Wiki

Wikis are free, online writing spaces. Wikis use simple formatting rules, so you don't need to understand HTML or an HTML authoring tools, such as Microsoft FrontPage or Dreamweaver to contribute. For some, wikis convey a highly collaborative view of composing and creativity. People who contribute to a wiki need to understand that their words may be deleted and changed by others. Wiki authors do not claim ownership of a text (WritingWiki.org).

- For Teachers New to Wikis
- Using Wiki in Education
- PBWiki
- WetPaint

Start Pages

Richard MacManus describes start pages as homepages for Web information, gadgets and widgets. The difference from old-style web portals are: the user can personalize them much more (with RSS, inline email, etc), the content is more interactive and potentially much more useful (i.e. gadgets, widgets), they can be collaborative, and there is Ajax pixie dust to make it more of a desktop-like experience.

- Which Start Page is best?
- Pluses to Using a Startpage as opposed to a traditional feed reader.
- Google
- Netvibes
- Pageflakes enables you to *publish* your Pageflakes homepage so that others may view it - perhaps just friends, or even make it totally public. These shared pages can be edited too.
- My Yahoo!

Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking is the practice of saving bookmarks to a public Web site and "tagging" them with keywords. Bookmarking, on the other hand, is the practice of saving the address of a Web site you wish to visit in the future on your computer. To create a collection of social bookmarks, you register with a social bookmarking site, which lets you store bookmarks, add tags of your choice, and designate individual bookmarks as public or private. Some sites periodically verify that bookmarks still work, notifying users when a URL no longer functions. Visitors to social bookmarking sites can search for resources by keyword, person, or popularity and see the public bookmarks, tags, and classification schemes that registered users have created and saved (Educause).

- 7 Things You Should Know About **Social Bookmarking**
- Del.icio.us
- Yahoo! My Web

Other Cool & Useful Stuff

- Photos - Flickr is really useful for creating community on the web. Everyone loves a picture, and Flickr makes it easy to take them, upload and post just about anywhere on the web. Once a photo is uploaded to Flickr, you can link to it from blogs, wikis or any webpage. I usually take a photo of all of my students in the beginning of the semester and I upload them to my Flickr account. Then when students need a photo for their blog and wiki pages, they can just copy the URL and post the photo where it is needed. Flickr automatically creates four sizes of each photo giving you the option of choosing an appropriate size.
- Photos - Mypictr is a site that lets user edit their own digital images to create icons and photo for various user sites like LiveJournal, Blogger, Xanga, MySpace, YouTube and many more. You choose which network you want the photo for, and it gives the correct size dimension and allows you to crop the photo and save it to your harddrive. Nice tool for students who want to use their own photos and not the one I take.