institutional repository as well as those institutions that are in the planning or investigation stage. Since repositories are a fairly new development (despite the fact that the executive summary notes that one responding library had an operational repository in 1999) and a culture change for libraries, a follow-up survey and a comparable summary of the results would be very beneficial to the profession.—Mary Beth Weber, (mbfecko@rci.rutgers.edu), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

References


Library 2.0 and Beyond: Innovative Technologies and Tomorrow’s User.


One of the challenges facing any reader investigating “Web 2.0” is the seeming lack of consistent terminology. The introduction to this volume states that Web 2.0 refers to the technologies or tools available to expand into the newer realms available to libraries. Yet my own previous understanding of the term Web 2.0 is that it refers to the participatory Web in general. Then there is the term “Library 2.0” (yet to be globally accepted) that the author of the preface defines as “a reasonably good term to express how Web 2.0 concepts, practices, and technologies can be integrated into the library domain” (i). Fortunately, many of the seeming inconsistencies and confusing terminology concerning Web 2.0 are cleared up in the first chapter of the book.

Library 2.0 and Beyond consists of eleven chapters, each focusing on a different topic and each authored by an individual well versed in that area. Each chapter includes a separate reference section, and the book concludes with a bibliography of suggested background readings. Brief biographies of contributing authors appear at the end of the book.

Chapter 1 was written by Elizabeth Black, a systems librarian for Ohio State University Libraries who, along with responsibility for the Web site, institutional repository, and Knowledge Bank, works to apply Web 2.0 technologies in those libraries. The main theme of Black’s chapter is explaining in considerable detail the variety of definitions of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0. She explains the consistencies and contradictions within those definitions and proceeds to describe the various technologies, their functions, capabilities, and applications. Black’s chapter is an excellent primer and overview, especially for those librarians who are exposed to Web 2.0 technologies at work without understanding their broader implications. Her chapter puts the technologies into theoretical context and helps to fill in the gaps. It is a great way to begin the book and could serve as a stand-alone introduction to Web 2.0.

Michael Casey’s chapter on library catalogs demonstrates clearly how current online catalogs are as antiquated as the paper card catalogs of the past. Drawing examples from Google, Amazon, Internet Movie Database, and other popular sites, Casey makes recommendations for what the library catalog of Library 2.0 should look like and how it should function. After reading Casey’s chapter, I no longer feel guilty for surreptitiously checking Amazon to verify a correct title, ISBN, or the correct spelling of an author’s name, or to find a mystery similar to those of my favorite authors. Casey’s chapter, although he does say it explicitly, is a cautionary tale. If librarians persist in imposing a static, unidirectional catalog on our users, we will have only ourselves to blame for being viewed as irrelevant.

Chad Boeninger’s chapter on wikis defines them as Web sites “in which the content can be created and edited by a community of users” (25). He discusses three potential uses for wikis in libraries: internal communication, institutional collaboration, and research guidance. He includes a discussion of the two kinds of wiki software available, the self-hosted option and “wiki farms,” Web-based wiki hosting services. Two great wiki research sites are recommended in this chapter, also. I found particularly helpful the references to WikiMatrix (www.wikimatrix.org), a site that helps librarians choose the best way to host a wiki for their particular circumstances, and Wiki Index (www.wikindex.org), a directory of wikis that are topic-specific. Reference librarians would do well to remember Wiki Index as a potential point of entry for queries for which traditional resources are few or nonexistent.

Christ Kretz writes about “Podcasting in Libraries.” He explains that the term evolved from the words iPod and broadcasting and that it grew from bloggers placing audio files on blogs. Kretz talks about different ways that libraries are applying podcasts, such as booktalks, displays, library education, instruction and professional development, story times, teen shows, and tours, and he includes legal issues surrounding podcasts, software applications, and how to get started. His concluding list of references includes resources for producing podcasts.

The title of Christopher Strauber’s chapter, “Handheld Computers in Libraries,” is deceptively simple. He has compiled a comprehensive list of devices that he defines as “any device weighing less than 2 pounds that is capable of performing one or more of the library-relevant functions of a computer” (49). The variety of devices, their capabilities, price ranges, and applications are overwhelming. The author explains everything from MP3 play-
ers, smart phones, E-book Readers, to Ultra Mobile PCs (UMPCs). He gives price ranges and suggested vendors. At the end of the chapter he talks about uses within the library, archiving, and when to adopt a particular technology. His rule of thumb is to support technologies that most of your patrons are using, and he goes on to suggest that the approximate time to implement this support is when 50 percent of your households own the technology. Strauber concludes with suggested sources for additional information and trend spotting.

Eric Schnell defines a “mashup” as “a hybrid application whose content and functionality result from combining together third-party data sources” (64). I find the examples of mashups easier to understand than the definition. Schnell talks about ChicagoCrime, a database that combined police data from reported crimes with Google Maps. The final product consisted of a mapping site that illustrated where crimes were committed. Also, the avian flu site sponsored by the journal Nature combines information about avian flu outbreaks from the World Health Organization and United Nations data with Google Earth. Schnell says mashups are very dynamic and especially useful for unique customer subgroups. He lists development tools and examples of the burgeoning use of mashups within the library scene. Finally, Schnell covers the special challenges associated with mashups: intellectual property versus fair use, data security, changes in application programming interface, and the verification that the data used in a mashup is genuine. He contends that the technologies involved need to be simplified in order for mashups to develop into practical, standardized tools.

Brian S. Mathews defines and discusses online social networking and lists its core features. These include user profiles, friending, groups, individual messaging, announcements, message boards, photos, blogs, ice-breakers, search functions, and privacy controls. Besides citing the well-known sites such as MySpace and Facebook, Mathews talks about the business site Linkedin and the journal site LiveJournal. He gives an honest appraisal of what he labels the “dark side” of the social Web, including online predators, stalking, addiction, and potential invasion of privacy, and he lists the pros and cons librarians cite about the place of social networking in the library. Finally, he lists the steps and sequence a library may wish to follow when entering the social networking environment.

The book also includes detailed discussions of folksonomies, tagging, virtual worlds, gaming, and digital storytelling. Notably missing in this otherwise thorough compilation is a chapter on blogs. For incorporating the many uses and contributions of blogs see Library 2.0: A Guide to Participatory Library Service by Michael E. Casey and Laura C. Savastinuk. Library 2.0 and Beyond provides a foundation and starting point for librarians, teachers, and instructors who wish either to understand more about the various technologies their patrons are using or who wish to begin implementing them. The lists of required technologies and potential vendors would be particularly helpful. The book also offers sufficient explanation for the reader wishing to learn more about the technologies. I feel confident that I now can read with more understanding articles and blogs regarding these technologies because of the thoroughness of the definitions and discussion in the book. The book also could serve as a handbook for anyone using the Web site 43 Things (www.43things.com). The chapters are self-contained, so they would make a good “on-desk” assignment, and the book could be kept as a reference in a departmental library.—Cleo Pappas (cleop76@uic.edu), University of Illinois at Chicago.

Reference