Participation in a 2.0 World

Participatory. Open. Playful. Transparent. Make these part of your motto, your vision, and build services and staff with them in mind. My hat is off to the libraries that create teams—made up of employees from all levels—for planning, that allow staff members to blog about those plans, and that take time to experiment and play with new technologies and tell their users exactly what they are up to. We can't control every little thing that happens in our libraries, and really, should we even want to?   —Michael Stephens[1]

Welcome to "Web 2.0 & Libraries, Part 2: Trends and Technologies." In this issue, we'll revisit some of the social tools presented in "Web 2.0 & Libraries: Best Practices for Social Software," address some trends guiding social technology in libraries, take a look at some newer tools, and cover some best practices for using 2.0 tools in your library.

"Some see Web 2.0 as hype and hyperbole. Others can see beyond the buzzword to a set of ever-evolving tools that can benefit online citizens."[2] That passage from the introduction of "Web 2.0 & Libraries: Best Practices for Social Software" sums up the promise of the social Web that I see for libraries: online spaces that bring people together with personal connections and the information they need, guided by a skillful librarian.

Time and technologies have not stopped in the twelve months since the last report. We've seen tools such as Twitter, Meebo, and Ning receive notice and discussion—as well as use in the library world. We've seen projects such as Scriblio and the Social OPAC add 2.0 goodness to the library catalog. And we've seen the advent of a number of books, articles, and conference presentations devoted to bringing a social component to the virtual library.

Taking Time to Experiment and Play

As we shift to a landscape of what Wade Roush called "continuous computing" in *Technology Review*, there will be many unique opportunities to build participatory resources and make connections online—to guide our users to the information they need, to put our library data out there to be shared and mashed up, and to invigorate the image of what libraries are in the 21st century.[3] So don't be shy. Don't be timid. Trust!

Try out a few of the social tools described in this report or last year's, if you haven't already. Blog the process. Wiki that rewrite of the policy manual. IM a colleague and brainstorm your next technology development seminar. Follow what the folks at PLCMC are doing with their excellent Learning 2.0 program—librarywide for all staff, open, and free. Play!

If our users are now experiencing a living, social Web, shouldn't they find librarians waiting for them? *Involved. Savvy. Creating conversations. Building community.* I urge the groups I speak to not to be afraid of these tools and to look for ways to incorporate them into their work flow and professional lives.

The best thing any librarian can do is to learn more about these tools and how they figure into our professional lives and our libraries. Learning to learn and taking time to play will benefit not only our libraries and our library users, but us as well.

Notes

1. Michael Stephens, "The Culture of Trust: One Year in the Life of Library 2.0," ALA TechSource blog, Sept. 29, 2006, www.techsource.ala.org/blog/2006/09/the-culture-of-trust-one-year-in-the-life-of-library-20.html (accessed July 10, 2007).
2. Michael Stephens, "Web 2.0 & Libraries: Best Practices for Social Software," *Library Technology Reports* 42, no. 4 (July/Aug. 2006).
3. Wade Roush, "Social Machines: Computing Means Connecting," *Technology Review* (Aug. 2005), available online at www.technologyreview.com/Infotech/14664/?a=f (accessed July 10, 2007).