

Web 2.0 Technologies and the Digital Divide

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly



A PRESENTATION FOR THE
MORTENSON CENTER ASSOCIATES

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Buzzword #1: Web2.0



- Web2.0 – A transition from seeing the internet as a giant databank technology to a socio-technical ecology fundamentally about services and collaboration
 - Not exactly new, no specific birth date
 - Producer is the consumer and vice versa
 - Collaborations over distance between known and unknown individuals: collective intelligence
 - A playground for innovation and creativity; often a diversity of media types
 - The possibility for a purely virtual existence

Web2.0... For Today



- Social Networking Sites – Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Cyworld, Xanga, Live Journal Orkut, StudiVZ, Mixi, QQ, Hi5, Xiaonei.com, etc...
- Wikipedia
- Multimedia Sharing – YouTube, Flickr
- Mapping – Google Maps/Earth, Open Street Map, Platial
- Social Bookmarking – Del.icio.us, Digg, feeds/podcasts
- Websites – Wordpress, Google Sites, Wikis
- Google Suite – Docs, Calendar
- Commerce – Ebay, Craigslist

Buzzword #2: The Digital Divide



- The Digital Divide – Originally seen only in the context of people with access to information technology and people without access, the term has broader implications
 - Physical access – software, hardware, infrastructure and internet connection
 - Educational access – resources and support to learn how to use technologies
 - Perception of access – perceived usefulness, perceived access, and perceived ease of use
 - These inequalities are not new, they are a result of existing power disparities

Digital Inequality



- **Experiential Access**
 - Digital Literacy – knowledge of how to understand technological tools as well as express oneself with them
 - “Digital Natives” – a controversial subject, the idea of learning to think naturally with technology; “thinking with Google,” developed insider understandings of everyday use of the web
 - Virtual Identity – Individual, community, and organizational identities (entities) that exist only or differently online
- **Critical Access**
 - Knowing enough about a technology to evaluate its worth and potential use for you; determining if you need it at all
 - Having the capacity (skills, resources, motivation) to critique a technology and change it to suit your needs

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly



- My objective is to look at some of these sites with you and discuss their benefits and also drawbacks
- This presentation could last a lifetime so I will only use a few examples
- Stop me at any time for questions or comments

Social Networking Services

A chaque continent ses préférences

LES SITES DE RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX LES PLUS FRÉQUENTÉS...

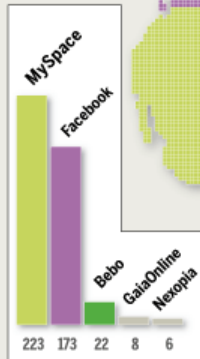
... PAR PAYS	Nom du site	MySpace	Facebook	Bebo	Cyworld	Skyblog	Hi5	Friendster	Orkut	Live Journal
Nationalité de l'entreprise :	Etats-Unis	Etats-Unis	Etats-Unis	Corée du Sud	France	Etats-Unis	Etats-Unis	Etats-Unis	Etats-Unis	Russie

... PAR CONTINENT

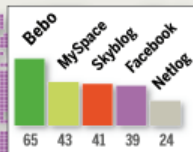
En millions d'heures par mois
(août 2007)

AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

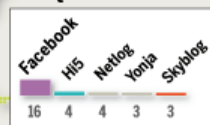
Un quart des inscrits dans le monde.



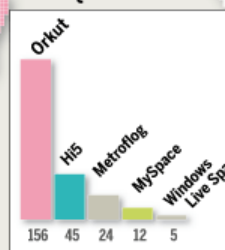
EUROPE



AFRIQUE - PROCHE-ORIENT

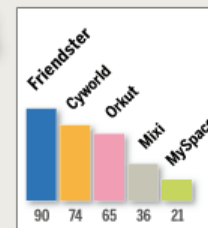


AMÉRIQUE LATINE



ASIE - PACIFIQUE

Un tiers des inscrits dans le monde.



Infographie Le Monde

Sources : ValleyMag août 2007, Datamonitor

What is a Social Networking Site?



- A convergence of technologies
- Most are based around a virtual representation of a real person in the form of a profile; an identity
- Profiles are connected to one another via ‘friendship,’ groups, events, media (pictures/video), organizations (companies) and more
- Users communicate with one another, share and search for ideas, and engage in all kinds of social activity
- Many of these websites are a virtual extension of life in person, with architectural differences (asynchronous, persistent, search-ability, invisible audiences)

The GBU



- **The Good**
 - Useful for learning more about people... and yourself!
 - More comprehensive digital communication
 - Event planning and organizational presence
 - Social capital & viral spread of ideas and media
 - Business/application platforms
- **The Bad**
 - Identity tourism
 - Constraints of the interface
 - Social capital can be used for bad causes
 - Issues of privacy
- **The Ugly**
 - MySpace pages (barriers to entry...)
(<http://www.zefrank.com/theshow/uglymyspace/>)

Wikipedia, the GBU



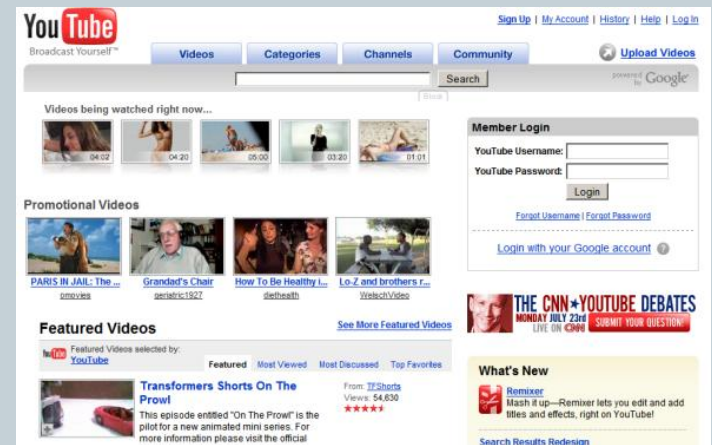
- The Wiki: a web page that anyone can change
- How do we know what we know? Who really knows best? Truth through negotiation!
- Use [Wikipedia](#) to supplement your library collection
- The Good
 - Fewer errors, more up to date than any book and with the possibility for multimedia
 - The reversal in education (inspiration)
 - Collective intelligence, democratic
 - Don't like it? Go change it!
 - Knowledge > Author
- The Bad
 - Lack of verification for subjective statements
 - The reversal in education (easy way out)
 - Individual accountability
- The Ugly
 - Too English/Western centric

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for "Amphibian". At the top, there are navigation tabs for "article", "discussion", "edit this page", and "history". A "Sign in / create account" link is in the top right. Below the navigation is the text "Your continued donations keep Wikipedia running!". The main heading is "Amphibian" with the subtext "From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia". A note says "For other uses, see Amphibian (disambiguation)". The article text begins: "Amphibians (class Amphibia; from Greek αμφίβιος 'both' and βίος 'life') are a taxon of animals that include all living tetrapods (four-legged vertebrates) that do not have amniotic eggs, are ectotherms, and generally spend part of their time on land. Most amphibians do not have the adaptations to an entirely terrestrial existence found in most other modern tetrapods (amniotes). There are around 6,000 described, living species of amphibians. The study of amphibians and reptiles is known as herpetology. Amphibians are able to breathe through their skin." To the right of the text is a photograph of a "Western Spadefoot Toad, Spea hammondi". Below the photo is a "Scientific classification" box listing: Kingdom: Animalia, Phylum: Chordata, Subphylum: Vertebrata, Class: Amphibia, Linnaeus, 1758. On the left side of the page, there is a "navigation" menu with links like "Main page", "Community portal", "Featured content", "Current events", "Recent changes", "Random article", "About Wikipedia", "Contact us", "Make a donation", and "Help". Below that is a "search" box with "Go" and "Search" buttons. At the bottom left is a "toolbox" with links like "What links here", "Related changes", "Upload file", "Special pages", and "Printable version".

Multimedia Sharing



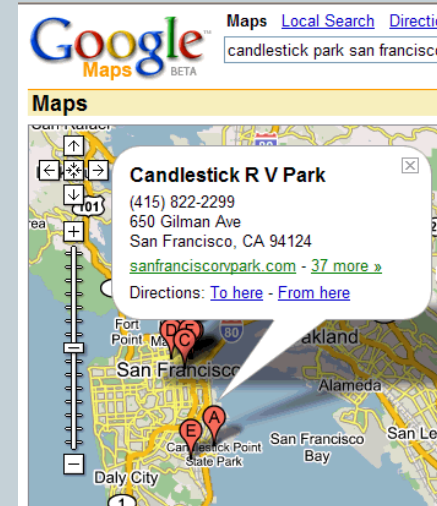
- [YouTube](#) : video sharing, [Flickr](#) : mainly picture sharing
 - See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPAO-lZ4_hU
- The Good
 - Most computers can access them (flash, pictures)
 - Any media file you can think of, almost like Google
 - Remixing and sharing of content, crossing cultural barriers
 - Social justice, free speech
 - Tagging concepts and people
- The Bad
 - Bandwidth requirements vs. low quality
 - Copyright
 - Free speech... (user comments, hate speech)
 - Colonization with western media
- The Ugly
 - YouTube Celebrities (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_YouTube_celebrities)
 - Numa Numa (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60og9gwKh1o>)



Mapping!



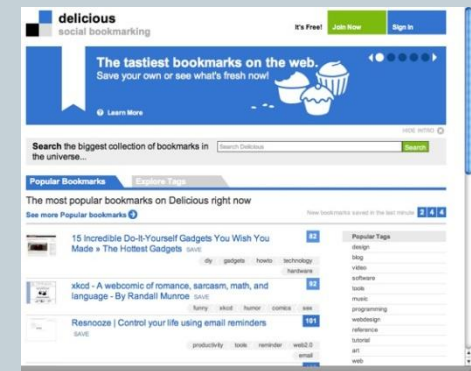
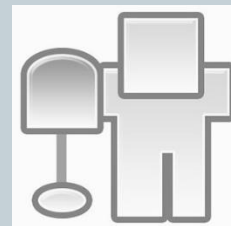
- There are many websites for mapping on both a local and global scale
- Best done through demonstration: [Google Maps](#)/Earth, [Platial](#) and [OpenStreetMap](#) as alternatives
- Put a map up of your community in the library – develop it physically and digitally
- The Good
 - Find your way!
 - Ability to better understand place and space
 - Making geographic communities virtual
- The Bad
 - Doesn't catch topography
 - Who's on the map?
 - No medium for negotiation like Wikipedia
- The Ugly
 - A lot more work to go – find your home town on one of these sites



Social Bookmarking



- Web services to help you find, organize, and share websites, news and other digital information
 - [Del.icio.us](#) – custom tagging, [Digg](#) – user driven news, Feeds and podcasts – user selected news
- Consider these sites another method of finding relevant knowledge for users, a more advanced and specialized way of searching the internet for information
- The Good
 - Specialized tools for finding relevant information
 - Build community around like interests
- The Bad
 - The majority is not one size fits all
- The Ugly
 - Landslides...



Collaborative Websites



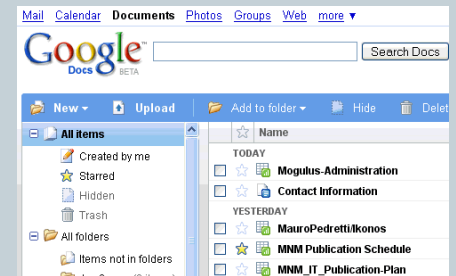
- It's becoming increasingly possible to make websites online with easier to use (“content management”) website creation tools
- Multiple people can work together on a single website
- Examples include [Google Sites](#), [Wordpress](#), and Wikis like [Wikia](#) or [pbwiki](#) or perhaps blogs like [Blogger](#)
- Does your library have a website? Make one with your patrons!
- **The Good**
 - Free
 - Generally easy to use
 - Many people can contribute
- **The Bad**
 - No short and easy URL
 - Not always very flexible
 - Not original
- **The Ugly**
 - The cost of free = information
 - You're not in complete control...



Google Docs and Calendar



- Google has a [huge suite of applications](#)
- You can create documents, spreadsheets, presentations, event schedules and more collaboratively with others
- You might develop a public Google calendar for your library on your website - allow community events!
- The Good
 - Free, potentially public
 - Easy to use, access everywhere there's internet
 - Autosaves, spell check, version history
 - Connection to other software applications
- The Bad
 - Need internet for access
 - Size limits
- The Ugly
 - Dependence on Google



Business and Commerce



- [Ebay!](#) A big website where people can buy and sell items direction to one another (or Amazon...)
- [Craigslist](#) – like Ebay only more local emphasis and more diverse listings, like jobs or personal ads
- Potentially a good place to acquire and sell books
- The Good
 - International trade
 - Sometimes cuts out middle-men
 - Charity auctions
- The Bad
 - Restrictions on what might be sold, import laws etc...
- The Ugly
 - [Swindlers come in the international variety too](#)



So Where From Here?



- Explore these sites and services. Learn how to use them. Think about how you could think and act with them to better your community:
 - Civic political engagement
 - Civic environmentalism
 - Use in education
 - Journalism and production of media
 - Entrepreneurism and job training
 - Healthy communities
- Most importantly don't be afraid to critique these new technologies and invent new ways they might be used that help to make them relevant and empower your community