

## What is Web 2.0?

For most of us, using the Internet has primarily been an event that involved opening a browser, entering a URL for a particular page or using a search engine, then reading information and viewing images posted on a website. The Internet in this form has certainly been an invaluable tool, giving us access to a wealth of information from sources around the world.

However, the use of the Internet in this manner has limitations. In essence, this is nothing more than utilizing it as one would use a massive library. The search engine is the card catalog. The websites are the books, magazines, and periodicals. The size of the virtual library and its ease of use are the only real advantages.

Web 2.0 refers to a new Internet world, one that has only come into its own in the past few years. Web 2.0 refers to the part of the Internet that not only gives information, it allows users to contribute information. Web 2.0 allows users to use the Internet in a collaborative manner, to customize the web for their own needs, and to form valuable networks with other users, who share the same interests, expertise, and goals.

Web 2.0 is a dynamic resource. New applications are being created almost daily. Some of the earliest tools included blogs, wikis, and filesharing sites. The list now includes, among other examples:

- Blogs—online journals that allow creators and viewers to interact, sharing news, opinions, etc.
- Wikis—collaborative web pages. Content is generated and monitored by groups, drawing on a greater pool of knowledge/resources.
- Social networks—an evolution of blogs, social networks revolve around the creation of groups of users who communicate/share similar interests, occupations, etc.
- Filesharing sites—these include sites where users can create and share audio or video.
- Digital Storytelling—create and share stories online, including images, sound, video, and more.
- Social bookmarking—sites designed to allow users to recommend websites, videos, music, etc. via online lists of favorites, or bookmarks.
- Podcasts—audio or video files that may be downloaded by users for display on mp3 audio/video players.
- RSS/XML—online subscription tools that allow users to remain constantly informed about new information, news, podcasts, etc.
- Productivity tools—online versions of traditional software, such as word processors, spreadsheets, slideshows, etc.