

Web 2.0

At a recent training event that I attended we were given the task of creating a 10 minute training intervention. We had a choice of subjects and our facilitator advised us that he had significant content that would enable us to create the intervention. One of the subjects was using web 2.0 to deliver training. As a group we took one look at the topic and decided it wasn't for us. We hadn't a clue what web 2.0 was and decided it sounded too technical for the limited technical knowledge we had as a team. Yet if I was to talk now to the team and ask them if they had ever used Wikipedia, visited You Tube or read a blog they probably all would have experienced some or all of these attributes of Web 2.0.

In order to learn some more about Web 2.0 I decided to look at some writings and journals. In his journal "What is Web 2.0? Ideas, technologies and implications for Education" (2007) Paul Anderson cites an interesting quote from Sir Tim Berners-Lee inventor of the Web. When asked if Web 2.0 differed much from Web 1.0 Sir Tim Berners-Lee replied

"Totally not. Web 1.0 was all about connecting people. It was an interactive space, and I think Web2.0 is of course a piece of jargon, nobody even knows what it means. If Web 2.0 for you is blogs and wikis, then that is people to people. But that was what the Web was supposed to be all along. And in fact, you know, this 'Web 2.0', it means using the standards which have been produced by all these people working on Web 1.0."

Laningham (ed.), developerWorks Interviews, 22nd August, 2006.

Paul Anderson goes on to explain that when the web was originally set up it had the aspects that we associate with web 2.0 collaboration and editing. Technology constraints at the time meant that these facilities were in a sense switched off to enable the systems develop further. So really what we are seeing now is what Sir Tim Berners-Lee envisaged it is just that it has taken technology a while to develop.

So for me Web 2.0 is a new way of interacting with the web. Instead of going on line to find out information I can go online and create information or collaborate and contribute to existing information. What does this mean for me as an educator? In an organisation where the majority of learners are "Digital Immigrants" the challenge is to challenge the traditional forms of learning that are expected by Digital Immigrants. The introduction of a wiki or a version of You Tube where videos are created by colleagues rather than trainers may take some time to be accepted. These learners rather than surf the web will ask a colleague so there is some form of information transfer taking place it's just not online. We have the subject matter experts and shortly we will have the technology whether the two will combine or not only time will tell.