

# Wikis, Blogs and Other Collaborative Tools in Library Services: A Workbook and Reference



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## **Web 2.0 and Library 2.0**

Web 2.0 is...

- The web as platform
- Controlling your own data
- Services, not software
- Participatory architecture
- Software no longer device-dependent
- Harnessing collective intelligence
- Perpetual beta
- Radical trust
- The long tail
- Rich user experiences

Library 2.0 is...

- The library available everywhere, anytime
- No barriers
- Participatory
- Flexible with regard to systems
- Encouraging
- Human
- Recognizant of users' humanity

## A Brief Survey

I am familiar with blogs:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have read a blog:	yes	no	not sure	
I have participated in a blog:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have created a blog:	yes	no	not sure	
I know what RSS is:	yes	no	not sure	
I am familiar with podcasts:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have downloaded a podcast:	yes	no	not sure	
I have created a podcast:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I am familiar with wikis:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have edited a wiki:	yes	no	not sure	
I am familiar with instant messaging:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have used instant messaging:	yes	no	not sure	
I am familiar with Flickr:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have posted pictures on Flickr:	yes	no		
I am familiar with MySpace/Facebook:	yes	sort of	no	not sure
I have accounts on MySpace/Fb:	yes	no		

## Scenarios

#1. You are in charge of the summer reading program outreach to teens. What are some things you do to get young adults involved?

#2. The employee manual is hopelessly out of date, and updating it would require input from a number of people. How would you proceed?

#3. Attendance at public programs at your library is low. Those who do come say that it's hard to find out what's going on. How could you better notify the public about events?

#4. The pathfinders/subject guides you've created are not being used. You're putting a lot of effort into keeping them up to date with the best material you can find, and think the information is valuable to your patrons. How could the guides/pathfinders be improved?

#5. You've noticed a drop in reference statistics, especially with regard to email questions and chat reference. What can you do to increase use?

#6. Your library's new services and resources aren't getting much use. What are some ways you could better educate your users about them?

#7. The same reference questions (or policy questions, or cataloging questions, etc.) keep coming up, but the best answers change quickly. What are some ways to share and keep this information up to date?

#8. You want to do regular staff training but can't find a time when everyone is available. What are your options?

## Blogs

Things to remember:

- Blogs are easy to set up
- Blogs are usually free or low cost
- Blogs are user friendly
- Blogs can be password-protected
- Blog posts can be organized by categories
- Blogs can allow for user feedback and comments, right on the page
- Blogs can be read right from the site, or via syndication (<http://www.bloglines.com>, for example)
- Blogs can be run by one person or a group

Some examples of blogs:

Librarian.net: <http://librarian.net/>

*A personal weblog by Jessamyn West, running since 1999. Posts are categorized by the author to aid in searching and retrieval, and comments by readers are allowed.*

Ann Arbor Public Library: <http://www.aadl.org/aboutus/librarynews>

*Allows readers to comment on entries, several people at the library contribute to the blog, the director has a separate blog, posts are categorized and can be searched/viewed by category.*

LISNews: <http://lisnews.org/>

*A collaborative library news blog, run by librarians around the country. Readers can comment on posts and also have personal blogs through the site.*

### **Activity:**

Develop an idea for your library involving blogs! It could be about professional development, outreach, information dissemination... Write it down below and be ready to share!

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## Podcasts

Things to remember:

- Podcasts are generally audio in nature (some include video, and sometimes RSS feeds are called textcasts)
- Podcasts can be used right from the site, saved to a disk for later, or received via subscription with an RSS feed
- Podcasts are generally serial in nature (like a lecture series) but can be a one-shot recording as well
- Podcasts do require some equipment and computer know-how for the creator, but are easy to use once completed
- Podcasts are portable!

Some examples of podcasts:

Lansing Public Library: [http://www.lansing.lib.il.us/podcast\\_directory.htm](http://www.lansing.lib.il.us/podcast_directory.htm)  
*Lansing PL offers audio recordings of special library events like author lectures as well as instruction in using services such as the catalog and Yahoo email.*

Pritzker Military Library: <http://www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/podcast/>  
*This special library offers podcasts of library events and lectures.*

Chattanooga State College: <http://library.chattanoogastate.edu/podcasts/podcast.htm>  
*This community and technical college has podcasts instructing users on its services, lectures on the importance of these services to education, and recordings of special events.*

Check This Out!: <http://cto.libsyn.com/>  
*A weekly podcast from Jim Milles, University at Buffalo Law School, dealing with "Law, libraries and life in a Northern town."*

### **Activity:**

Come up with an idea for your library involving podcasting. It can be for internal or external information sharing, professional development, and so on... Write it down here and be ready to share!

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## Wikis

Things to remember:

- A wiki is an easily editable web page—no knowledge of HTML is required
- Wikis can be as open to editing as one would like
- Wikis/wiki software is usually free or low cost
- Wikis are truly collaborative, allowing several people to create and edit content on one page

Some examples of wikis:

Wikipedia: <http://www.wikipedia.org>

*This is the 'mother of all wikis.' Many young adults consider this to be the ultimate reference source—easy to use, freely available, updated constantly!*

Biz Wiki: [http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/bizwiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/bizwiki/index.php/Main_Page)

*This was one of the first library uses of a wiki, to replace static subject guides in the business field. In the year since it was created, it's been used over 28,000 times, versus the 5,000 times the subject guide web page it replaced. Faculty, students, and library staff can all contribute to this guide to business resources.*

Library Success, a Best Practices Wiki: <http://www.libsuccess.org/>

*An online community for librarians and library workers to share knowledge and learn from one another on various library topics. Users may contribute new ideas, add comments and make changes as necessary.*

### **Activity:**

Come up with an idea for your library involving a wiki. It can be for internal or external information sharing, outreach to your patrons, and so on... Write it down here and be ready to share!

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## Instant Messaging

Things to remember:

- This is one area where our profession has taken a lot of initiative!
- However, we use IM differently from most of our patrons
- IM is quick, simple textual communication
- IM is free
- IM is portable (can do it from any computer and from most cell phones)
- IM can be social (buddy lists)

Some examples of IM:

Trillian: <http://www.trillian.cc/> or Gaim: <http://gaim.sourceforge.net/>  
*These are two free software programs that can be used to monitor IM messages from multiple accounts from multiple providers.*

Meebo: <http://www.meebo.com>  
*A website that allows you to monitor multiple IM services and accounts at once.*

Thomas Ford Memorial Library: <http://www.fordlibrary.org/chat/>  
*This library has chosen to make free IM clients their primary virtual reference choice. They've had very good success with using a service their patrons are used to in a way that promotes the library and its services.*

Text a Librarian: <http://www2.selu.edu/Library/ServicesDept/referenc/textalibrarian.html>  
*This university library offers reference assistance via SMS/text message over cell phones. This is a popular way of communicating among teens and young adults and is growing among older users.*

### **Activity:**

Think of a way to involve IM or SMS/text messaging in library services outside of the typical chat reference interaction. Be ready to share your response!

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## Other Social Networking Applications

Things to remember:

- New web 2.0 applications are appearing every day!
- These applications strive to:
  - Eliminate barriers between people
  - Invite participation in communities
  - Incorporate flexibility and ease of use

Some examples of social networking applications:

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com>

*Share your digital photos with the world. Join groups of people and share photos on a specific topic or location. Create your own groups! Comment on others' photos and receive comments on your own.*

See: <http://flickr.com/groups/ala2006/> - ALA 2006 picture-sharing group  
<http://flickr.com/groups/montanalibraries/> - Montana libraries/librarians  
<http://flickr.com/groups/seattlelibrary/> - Seattle Public Library

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com> or Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com>

*MySpace is the most popular website in the United States, drawing over 7% of all web traffic in June 2006. Both MySpace and Facebook provide an online 'space' for users—a customizable page with graphics, photos, blog, music and video options. No knowledge of web design or HTML is required. Users can form and join groups based on interests and 'friend' one another, creating a literal network between their pages. Facebook is restricted to those with school/college/university email addresses.*

See: <http://www.myspace.com/hennepincountylibrary>  
<http://www.myspace.com/morrisvillecollegelibrary>  
<http://www.myspace.com/WULibrarianJoy> – personal page

Del.icio.us: <http://del.icio.us>

*An easy way to collect, label, and share web links. You can see who else has "tagged" the same link and how they labeled it. A great example of folksonomies.*

See: <http://del.icio.us/Shines/pnla> – A page of links I mentioned today  
<http://del.icio.us/thomasford> – Thomas Ford Memorial Library (again!)  
They then publish these links on their website:  
<http://www.fordlibrary.org/links/>



## Further Resources

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