



Glossary Web 2.0 Terms and Their Implications

Web 2.0: Web 2.0 is a phrase that refers to a perceived second generation of web-based communities and hosted services — such as social-networking sites, wikis and folksonomies — which facilitate collaboration and sharing between users. This is in contrast to websites that do not feature interactive components or community building. Web 2.0 has had a major impact on how people think, communicate, prioritize, express themselves and collaborate in both professional and personal settings. Jewish organizations should understand these tools, their value and implications in order to stay relevant and “compete” for individual’s time and attention.

Social Networking: Social networking sites help people discover new friends or colleagues by illuminating shared interests, related skills, or a common geographic location. Leading examples include MySpace, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social Networking sites give users the opportunity to express themselves and communicate the multiple facets of their identity for others to see, both through an individual’s “page”, as well as who else they are linked to (individuals and organizations). In many cases, the process and value of the creative expression is as important as the fact that others view their expression of their identity. The presence of Jewish organizations and individuals in these spaces provides more opportunities for expression of Jewish affiliation, which strengthens Jewish identity. Jewish organizations should be “in the game”.

SecondLife.com: Second Life is an Internet-based virtual world that enables its users, called “Residents”, to interact with each other through motional avatars, providing an advanced level of a social network service. Residents can explore, meet other Residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, create and trade items (virtual property) and services from one another. Beth Odets has created a synagogue in Second Life, and an entire Jewish neighborhood has grown around it. They hold educational, social and religious events. While SecondLife currently attracts the “early adopters” and may be too advanced for mass adoption at this time, it is useful to learn from this example as it illustrates where and how the technology and social implications are evolving.

WIKI(s): A wiki is a web application designed to allow multiple authors to add, remove, and edit content. The multiple author capability of wikis makes them effective tools for mass collaborative authoring. Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, is one of the best known wikis. Wikis are a valuable tool for collaboration amongst educators and students. The Lippman Kanfer working Paper was composed and edited through a wiki, incorporating contributions from many sources.

IM (Instant Messaging): IM is a form of real-time communication between two or more people based on typed text. The text is conveyed via computers connected over the Internet. IM allows for quick, instant and casual communication. Users are identified by a "screen name", and have a "buddy list" of their friends and colleagues to see who is online and available at any given time. Given that the frequency of connection is an important factor in relationship building, IM has strong implications for the Jewish community.

Webinar: A webinar is a type of web conference. The direction of the presentation more often than not is primarily one way from the presenter to the audience as in a Webcast, which is transmission of information in one direction only, like watching a concert on the internet. A webinar however can be designed to be interactive between the presenter and audience. A webinar is 'live' in the sense that information is conveyed according to an agenda, with a starting and ending time. In most cases, the presenter may speak over a standard telephone line, pointing out information being presented on screen (by "sharing their desktop" with the audience), and the audience can respond over their own telephone, and also via chat or comments through the webinar screen. Webinars are an efficient mode for professional development and education, as well as meetings.

Listserv: A listserv, or list server, is a small program that automatically sends messages to multiple e-mail addresses on a mailing list. When someone subscribes to a mailing list, the listserv will automatically add the address and distribute future e-mail messages to that address along with all the others on the list. Subscribers can receive each individual email or choose a "digest" form that sends one email per day with multiple messages in it to reduce inbox clutter. Subscribers to listservs share a particular interest, and thus can develop a sense of community around it. In addition to providing an efficient way to communicate with a group, listservs allow for great specificity within a larger group, for example, "parents of Hebrew school students with dyslexia", or "Interfaith families with kids under 6 yrs old". Listservs can be open or moderated, and can be used for distribution (1 directional) as well as discussion (any member of the group can post to stimulate an online discussion). (Though not technically thought of as Web 2.0, listservs continue to be a valuable and powerful tool.)

Blog: A Blog (web log) is an online publication where entries are displayed in reverse chronological order (newest on top). Blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject and can also function as more personal online diaries or journals. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Popular blogs attract millions of followers, and may include multiple posters as well. Blogs are a useful tool for students to learn about goings on in Jewish life, or to journal about their thoughts and experiences.