

Web Design Sydney, Web 2.0 Agency SHIFT Interactive

What is Web 2.0

Originally in 2004, Web 2.0 was referred to as this idea of the "Web as a platform". The concept was such that instead of thinking of the Web as a place where browsers viewed data through small windows on the readers' screens, the Web was actually the platform that allowed people to get things done. But this really didn't catch on. In fact, it's fairly hard to grasp what that really means.

Later people started thinking of Web 2.0 as the programming tools used to create the Web pages that were considered "cutting edge Web 2.0". This included AJAX and SOAP and other XML and JavaScript applications that allowed the readers to actually interact with the Web pages more like you would with an application on your desktop.

Now Web 2.0 is really starting to mean a combination of the technology (like AJAX) allowing the customers to actually interact with the information. Web 2.0 is starting to mean the situation where amateur writers and developers are able to create applications and Web sites that get more credibility than traditional news sources and software vendors. This combination of powerful JavaScript tools like AJAX enabling nearly anyone to contribute to and interact with the data that we are all working with is really what Web 2.0 is.

But is This Really New?

No.

AJAX

JavaScript and XML have been around nearly as long as HTML and many sites have been using both to good effect. As Paul Graham said, "Basically, what 'Ajax' means is 'Javascript now works.'" This means that Web applications can now be created that interact with the users the way we have become accustomed with desktop applications. The lag and delay caused by server calls is mitigated by a lot of that information being sent asynchronously through JavaScript calls.

Democracy and Community

These have both been around in limited formats for a long time on the Web. What makes them exciting is when they are combined with the applications that are possible with AJAX and more modern browsers. Web pages gave people the ability to express themselves like no other time in history. And Weblogs made an easy thing even easier. When Blogger was first set up, they thought of themselves as just an easy-to-use FTP client for Web pages. Now they allow many many people to get online and express their views.

But it's more than just getting content on-line. With Web 2.0 type sites, it is possible to combine data from various sources, even sources that you don't own control or even exist, and turn that into data that people can use. For example, an idea for a Web 2.0 site might be to combine a Flickr tagged gallery of restaurants with actual reviews that people have written about those restaurants and a connection to Google Maps to find the restaurants in your area. The Web site which put this up might not have any of the data for the reviews, none of the photos from Flickr, and only an interface to allow people to pinpoint where they are or where they are going and either read reviews of local restaurants or even post a blogged review and attach it to those already tagged.

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