

A modified excerpt from Patricia Delich's dissertation

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Pedagogical and Interface Modifications: What Instructors Change After Teaching Online

As the Internet evolves in its capacity to do more, what can be accomplished in online teaching and learning also evolves and expands. The increasing number of new technology tools and expanding bandwidth change how the Internet can be used in all facets of online activity, including e-learning. As technologies become more sophisticated and as they begin to converge (for example, cell phones becoming multimedia-capable and Internet-connected), educators will have more options for creating innovative practices in education.

The shift occurring in the Web from a static content environment where end users are the recipients of information—defined as Web 1.0—to one where they are active content creators—defined as Web 2.0—can be described as a transition to a more distributed, participatory, and collaborative environment (Wikipedia, 2005). Web 2.0 is considered to be a platform where “knowledge-working is no longer thought of as the gathering and accumulation of facts, but rather, the riding of waves in a dynamic environment” (Downes, 2005, ¶ 14). Web 2.0 is defined not only by technologies (blogs, wikis, podcasts, vodcasts, RSS feeds, and Google Maps are a few examples), but also by the social networking that it enables. As these communication-enabling technologies conjoin text, voice, and video using CoIP (Communications over Internet Protocol), they will provide a seamless integration with cell phones, PDAs, and computers (Yarlagadda, 2005). Web 2.0 technologies have the capacity to bring people together in ways Web 1.0 did not.

At the beginning of any paradigm shift, several definitions often encompass a new concept—this is also true with Web 2.0. In an interview with Ryan Singel (2005), Ross Mayfield, CEO of a company that creates wiki software, offered this simple definition: “Web 1.0 was commerce. Web 2.0 is people” (Singel, 2005, ¶ 6). Tim O’Reilly, who wrote one of the seminal articles on Web 2.0, saw it as an “architecture of participation” (O’Reilly, 2005, ¶ 26) and “not something new, but rather a fuller realization of the true potential of the web platform” (¶ 88). Web 2.0 is centered on communication—the ability to interconnect with content, ideas, and with those who create them. Social networking is a keyword for Web 2.0. The Web 2.0 framework sets the stage for a student-centered collaborative learning environment. Using existing communication tools in a way that encourages collaboration can be a step in the direction of incorporating the spirit of Web 2.0 philosophies in online learning environments.

A parallel can be drawn between the shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and the shift many instructors are making in online learning from an instructor-centered approach to a student-centered approach where students have more control over their learning. In online learning, Web 1.0 could be defined as the instructor-centered approach and Web 2.0 as the student-centered approach. Thus, the effects of Web 2.0 may influence how online

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