

Web 2.0: A Glossary

AGGREGATION: Gathering information from multiple web sites, typically via RSS. Aggregation lets web sites remix the information from multiple web sites, for example by republishing all the news related to a particular keyword.

AJAX: A programming platform that enables Web sites to work more interactively because features can load one at a time. It lets Web sites have the power and feel of a desktop software program, rather than a slow-loading Internet application. The ability to “grab” a Google map and move it around on a page is an example.

BLOG/VLOG: Although online diaries, or Web logs, have been around since the Web first became popular, the software allowing blogging has become increasingly easy to use and thousands of people have taken it up. Blogs now cover a range of topics, from parenting to world news, and while some remain purely amateur, many draw ad revenue. The addition of video has created a new category, video blogs.

COMMUNITY: Many Web 2.0 sites rely on users to fill them with content, to edit the content and to keep the site's other users behaving politely. MySpace.com created a vast community by allowing anyone to establish an online presence; sites like Digg and StumbleUpon allow users to rate news stories and other Web sites while connecting with other like-minded users.

CREATIVE COMMONS: A San Francisco nonprofit group chaired by Stanford law Professor Lawrence Lessig, Creative Commons also describes a new type of copyright -- one with “some rights reserved,” enabling artists, authors and others to share their works freely with the world at large.

DIY: The do-it-yourself credo, while around for decades, has gained new life among young urban dwellers, who follow bibles like Berkeley's Ready-Made magazine and create their own furniture, clothes and Web sites. Web 2.0 provides cheap and easy-to-use tools for blogging, podcasting, file sharing and other online activities.

FOLKSONOMY: a portmanteau word combining “folk” and “taxonomy,” refers to the collaborative but unsophisticated way in which information is being categorized on the web. Instead of using a

centralized form of classification, users are encouraged to assign freely chosen keywords (called tags) to pieces of information or data, a process known as tagging. Examples of web services that use tagging include : Flickr, del.icio.us, etc.

MASHUPS: The combination of two Web sites into a new site, such as www.housingmaps.com, which mashes Craigslist's real estate ads with Google Maps to create a visual representation of apartments for rent (or homes for sale) in a given region.

NEWSREADER: A newsreader gathers the news from multiple blogs or news sites via RSS (see below), allowing readers to access all their news from a single web site or program. Online newsreaders (like Bloglines, Pluck, or Newsgator) are web sites that let you read RSS feeds from within your web browser. Desktop newsreaders download the news to your computer, and let you read your news inside a dedicated software program.

OPEN SOURCE: A movement in which software developers make their source code, or the guts of their programs, available to anyone for collaboration. The prime example is the Linux operating system, created by Linus Torvalds, which is free for users and has an army of volunteers working to keep it up to date. Many other companies like IBM and Red Hat earn money by selling services that help companies implement open-source software, and Microsoft and Oracle said recently that they will provide support for Linux systems.

PEER-TO-PEER: Although Napster no longer allows the free sharing of music from one user to another, its breakthrough in that arena spawned the peer-to-peer movement, in which content can be posted online and shared with others.

PODCASTS: The iPod portable music player created a boom in the once-sleepy world of Internet audio. Now people can easily record their own radio-style shows and put them online for others to download, either to play on their computer, save on a CD, or listen to on iPods or other MP3 players.

RSS: A format for storing online information in a way that makes that information readable by lots of different kinds of software. Many blogs and web sites feature RSS feeds: a constantly updated ver-

sion of the site's latest content, in a form that can be read by a newsreader or aggregator.

SOCIAL BOOKMARKING: The collaborative equivalent of storing favorites or bookmarks within a web browser, social bookmarking services (like del.icio.us or Furl) let people store their favourite web sites online. Social bookmarking services also let people share their favourite web sites with other people, making them a great way to discover new sites or colleagues who share your interests.

SOCIAL NETWORKING: Web sites that allow people to link to others, whether it's music fans on MySpace, business people on LinkedIn, or high school chums on Classmates.com. The field hit its stride with Friendster in 2003, although that site hit technical trouble and has been eclipsed by others.

TAGS: Keywords attached to photos or Web pages to help identify them and make them searchable. Photos on Flickr typically carry many tags, and the social bookmarking site Del.icio.us allows users to post their favorite Web sites and then tag them, creating a new tool for searching those sites.

USER-CREATED CONTENT: Many sites are discovering that they don't need to hire large staffs to produce content, but merely need to provide a platform where users are happy to share their work. When it works, sites like MySpace and Flickr attract millions of users, all looking at each other's content.

WIKI: The word comes from a Hawaiian phrase, wiki-wiki, meaning fast. But Jimmy Wales applied it to the Web-based encyclopedia he was building, Wikipedia, and now the prefix has come to mean a Web site that allows users to add, delete and edit its content.

WISDOM OF CROWDS: The phrase comes from New Yorker columnist James Surowiecki's book, “The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations.” Surowiecki writes about how technologies like Google's page rank are built on the notion that the masses, working separately, can produce better judgments than the experts in a given field.

SOURCES:

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