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Web 2.0 Round-up

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Web 2.0 Round-up is a compilation of recent postings and comments to the UKeiG Web 2.0 blog (at http://ukeig.wordpress.com/). The primary purpose of this blog is to provide news and updates on Web 2.0 'stuff' and to link to support materials for UKeiG's Web 2.0 workshops and seminars. The RSS feed for the blog is http://ukeig.wordpress.com/feed and the comments feed is at http://ukeig.wordpress.com/comments/feed.

Twitter

The INSOURCE Conference Twitter Experiment

Note: this detailed posting appeared on Karen Blakeman's blog at http://www.rba.co.uk/wordpress/2008/02/11/the-insource-conference-twitter-experiment/.

Marydee Ojala and I attended and twittered the INSOURCE 2008 conference (http://www.insource.cz/) on business and competitive intelligence in Prague, 5th-6th February. I would not normally twitter a conference; my usual approach is to record nuggets of information and interesting sites in a Word document on my laptop and use that to follow up on presentations, speakers and useful information. On this occasion, though, two colleagues who were not able to attend asked if I would Twitter it so that they could 'follow' me and get a flavour of the event. Right from the start I made it clear to them that I was not going to tap in every piece of information from the slide presentations, as these are subsequently published on the INSOURCE web site. Instead I concentrated on noting snippets and web sites that **I** especially wanted to remember, and significant comments from the speakers that were not on the slides.

For such an experiment to work one must have a laptop with a reasonably long battery life – or easy access to a power socket for recharging during the breaks – and a reliable wi-fi connection. Those criteria were met at this conference (and the wi-fi was free!) but there was one unforeseen problem. The languages of the conference were Czech and English, which meant that I had to use headphones to listen to the simultaneous translations for the Czech papers. Unfortunately the reception on the head sets was frequently disrupted by static, apparently caused by nearby laptops, wi-fi connections, mobile phones etc. Luckily, Marydee Ojala was attending the conference and was not as badly affected by the static as I was, so she was often able to twitter on when I could not.

Aside from the technical disruption, how did we fare? Both Marydee and I are relatively new to twittering, so much of the time early on was spent discovering how the whole thing works. For us, the main issues were:

1. The 140-character limit on tweets (entries, postings, updates – whatever). At first this seemed to be a serious limitation but it does concentrate the mind wonderfully, and you learn to note just the essentials.

2. The 'timelines' or pages are public so one must be careful not to make libellous comments or offend people. It is possible to 'lock' your updates/tweets so that only selected followers can see them. If you prefer, you can send private messages to one another – a bit like passing notes in class.

3. Not all of Marydee's tweets appeared in my timeline and *vice versa*. This really did become very annoying as we had to periodically look at each other's page to check what the other person had said. I have since discovered that this is a known bug and that Twitter is working on it. See The Case of the Missing Updates (http://blog.twitter.com/2008/02/case-of-missing-updates.html) and Weekend Update (http://blog.twitter.com/2008/02/weekend-update.html) on the Twitter Blog (http://blog.twitter.com/).

4. Both Marydee and I are concerned about how long the tweets remain on the site. You can view the most recent 200 tweets on a page or in your own timeline, but there is no mention of any expiration date. Two hundred may seem a lot, but if there are several of you following each other at a conference, you quickly exceed that limit and have to resort to looking at individual pages for the older tweets. For me, that defeats the object of following conferences on Twitter. It is far more interesting and useful to see tweets on the same presentation from different people intermingled. The 200 limit also means that if you want to keep them as a permanent record, even for just a few weeks, you have to copy the tweets to a locally-held document. There is no export facility. Patrick Danowski (PatrickD on Twitter) subsequently suggested Loud Twitter (http://www.loudtwitter.com/), which posts all of your tweets in one day to a blog post.

Marydee noticed an interesting point about the time stamps on the tweets: they displayed in the order we posted/tweeted, even though the actual time stamps came from our individual computers: Marydee's was on Eastern US time and mine was set to Prague time.

Marydee and I twittered the INSOURCE conference together by 'following' each other. Apart from the technical glitches this worked reasonably well. If more people were involved, it would be far too cumbersome to identify all the twitterers at a conference and follow them. But Twitter have thought of that – see Using Twitter for Your Event (http://help.twitter.com/index.php?pg=kb.page&id=77). That could be our next Twitter experiment.

Twitter and work placements

Lilian Soon posted a comment (http://ukwebfocus.wordpress.com/2008/01/21/twitter-friday/#comment-63880) on the UK Web Focus blog about using Twitter to help students on work placements. Before sending students off on work placements, ask someone at the workplace (a mechanic, a florist, etc) to Twitter regularly throughout the day. This gives the learner some idea of what someone in that job role has to do throughout a day, and it gives them the opportunity to ask some questions. When the learner goes on work placement, they could use Twitter to log their tasks and thoughts.

Twitter for Museum 2.0

Nina Simon has posted an interesting article in her Museum 2.0 blog on the nature of Twitter and how it can be used by museums (http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2007/04/what-is-twitter-really-and-can-it-do.html). Also Shelly Bernstein, from Brooklyn Museum, has also posted a case study of her own organization's test run of the technology (http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/community/blogosphere/bloggers/2007/10/08/twitter/).

Facebook

East Renfrewshire Libraries on Facebook

East Renfrewshire Council Community Services is on Facebook at
http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=18144605260. The council has launched pages for all
ten of its libraries, four sports centres and its theatre. The pages provide information about each of
the services, opening times, details of events and news.

Wikis

Wikis for training materials and conference organising

Sarah Washford (Info Junkie) describes in Wiki Wonders
(http://swashford.blogspot.com/2008/01/wiki-wonders.html) how she used a wiki as a tool to
collaborate on the training material and programme for their new library management system, and
how they are now using it to help organise a conference.

Wikis for compiling subject guides

In "We have wiki!" (http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/index.php/2008/01/09/we-have-wiki/)
Meredith Farkas, Distance Learning Librarian at Norwich University, US, describes how she used
Mediawiki to set up library research guides (http://library2.norwich.edu/guide/index.php/Main_Page

Wikisurgery

Wikisurgery (http://wikisurgery.com/) is a free surgical encyclopaedia for surgeons and their
patients. It has been set-up by Surgical Associates Ltd, owners of the *International Journal of
Surgery*. Contributions in the form of new articles and editing can be made by anyone at any time,
anywhere in the world. The site is totally upfront about the possibility of vandalism, and in the
'About Wikisurgery' section it says:

> Older articles tend to be more comprehensive and balanced, while newer articles may still
> contain significant misinformation, unencyclopedic content, or vandalism. Users need to be
> aware of this in order to obtain valid information and avoid misinformation which has been
> recently added and not yet removed.

There is an interesting Basic Surgical Skills Program. Authored by Michael Edwards, the program
begins by checking the trainee's aptitude for surgical handicraft, learning ability profile, suitability
for surgery, attitude and preparedness. It then provides 15 surgical sections, progressing through
putting on gloves, swabbing, using suckers, retracting, and using haemostats, to excising a mole
from simulated skin and suturing the wound. The program starts at
http://wikisurgery.com/index.php?title=PrimeSkills_in_Surgery.

If, like me, you have lesser ambitions, take a look at
http://wikisurgery.com/index.php?title=Scissors_07_How_to_cut_with_scissors. Forget about 'how
to cut', how to hold scissors was a real eye-opener for me. I have now tried the techniques sug-
gested and found that I have lot more control over the scissors when tackling our very fluffy, long-
haired cat's matted fur!

Using a wiki for a Lab Open Notebook

The Useful Chemistry Blog (http://usefulchem.blogspot.com/) has reported on the Rosania Lab
Open Notebook Science Wiki (http://usefulchem.blogspot.com/2007/12/rosania-lab-open-
notebook-science-wiki.html). 1CellPK (http://1cellpk.wikispaces.com/) is the new home of the

Subcellular Drug Transport Laboratory (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~grosania/) at the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Michigan College of Pharmacy.

To quote from their wiki home page:

> Open Notebook Science is ideally suited for community-wide collaborative research projects involving mathematical modelling and computer simulation work, as it allows researchers to document model development in a step-by-step fashion, then link model prediction to experiments that test the model, and in turn, use feedback from experiments to evolve the model. By making our laboratory notebooks public, the evolutionary process of a model can be followed in its totality by the interested reader. Researchers from laboratories around the world can now follow the progress of our research day to day, borrow models at various stages of development, comment or advice on model developments, discuss experiments, ask questions, provide feedback, or otherwise contribute to the progress of science in any manner possible.

Google Documents

Google docs and the future of document management

This is an interesting posting from James Lappin on the TFPL blog on Google docs. Google docs and the future of document management (http://tfpl.typepad.com/tfpl/2008/01/google-docs-and.html) discusses how Google docs may affect the way organisations collaborate on documents in the future, and gives two examples of how it is currently being used:

> a charity where staff in the marketing department use Google docs to create and store their documents because it allows them to collaborate on documents with people from other parts of the charity (whereas their shared drive is restricted to departmental silos).

And

> a bank with a very strong compliance and information security regime, where some colleagues were using Google Docs to create and store business documents in order that they could work on documents at home (corporate systems were extremely slow to access remotely, and banned the sending of word documents as attachments to a web based e-mail address).

Blogs

Review of legal blogs

Charon QC (http://charonqc.wordpress.com/) has posted an extensive review of legal blogs, or blawgs, in Blawg Review # 141 (http://charonqc.wordpress.com/2008/01/05/blawg-review-141/). There is good coverage of UK blawgs in particular. Thanks to Lo-fi Librarian (http://www.lo-fi-librarian.co.uk/) for the tip-off on this gem.

Start Pages

Library Pageflakes start pages

Examples of Libraries using Pageflakes as a start page are now popping up all over the place.

*   Dublin City Public Libraries and Archive (http://www.pageflakes.com/dublincitypubliclibraries/ is not so much a start page as several start pages. I counted seven tabs, so it is almost a mini-website. As a regular visitor to Dublin, I love the traffic and travel tab where they have Dublin web cams, traffic updated and local travel news. A superb example of how far you can push this technology.

- Llyfrgell Ceredigion Library (http://www.pageflakes.com/LlyfrgellCeredigionLibrary/19167751) in Aberystwyth, Wales, is another good example of concentrating on providing local information.

- East Lothian Libraries (http://www.pageflakes.com/libraries0/17137920/) are also now on Pageflakes. This is another excellent library start page providing local information. There is also help with essential survival skills – check out Recipe of the Day!

- The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) and CILIP in Scotland are on Page-flakes (http://www.pageflakes.com/scottishlibraries). Their page incorporates a range of Web 2.0 'stuff' including Flickr, del.icio.us and slideshare. It also has a blog, a monthly poll, news feeds and access to Scottish Library and Information Resources (SLIR). The content is still under development and they hope to add other features, such as a podcast, very soon.

And don't forget that UKeiG has its own Pageflakes page at http://www.pageflakes.com/ukeig1

Web 2.0 in general

Phil Bradley's 30 Web 2.0 applications

Phil Bradley has loaded his 30 Web 2.0 applications presentation onto authorSTREAM (http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/Philbradley-32222-30-Web-2-applications-0-Slideshare-net-1-Pageflakes-Bloglines-3-Cl1p-4-Zimbio-5-Squidoo-6-PBwiki-7-2vocal-Education-ppt-powerpoint/) or http://tinyurl.com/34m38l. The applications he has chosen for his Top 30 are worth investigating if you are not already aware of them, and so is authorSTREAM (http://www.authorstream.com/) itself. It is similar to Slideshare (http://www.slideshare.net/) in that it allows you to upload and share presentations, but you can also provide an accompanying commentary as Phil has in this case.

authorSTREAM vs Slideshare

In response to the blog posting about Phil Bradley's Web 2.0 applications presentation, 'Will' found a comparison on presentation sharing sites at http://tinyurl.com/ywqnjx. It is a neat presentation in itself and highlights one of the major problems with Slideshare: Slideshare does not keep anima-tions or slide builds, whereas authorSTREAM does. It also mentions that you cannot keep Slideshare presentations private, but since that presentation was created Slideshare have intro-duced privacy and sharing options.