Book Reviews

Web 2.0 and Libraries: Impacts, technologies and trends

Parkes, Dave and Geoff Walton, eds.
Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2010

The editors of the timely book, Web *2.0 and libraries: Impacts, technology and trends*, request that it "...be seen as a narrative describing experience so far and a signpost to further developments, rather than a definitive work" due to the ever changing nature of Web 2.0. The reader is encouraged to view Web 2.0 optimistically, as an opportunity for change with limitless possibility. Although it is not stated explicitly in the preface, it becomes evident through reading the chapters that the audience for this book is mainly higher education (HE) staff involved in e-learning. This book would also be useful for librarians interested in Web 2.0 in any type of library.

The book is conveniently divided into four parts. The first on 'Place', is divided into two chapters, the first of which examines changes to the learning and teaching environment in HE and further education (FE) and the factors driving change. The second chapter covers the physical shape of the library including the effect of e-books on libraries. The reader is invited to reflect on the current purpose of libraries and the role of librarians within these new library spaces with the thought-provoking question "If libraries didn't exist would we build them today?"

Part two, 'People', includes findings of a study at Staffordshire University in which online social network learning led to successful student learning. This study is offered by the author as a useful template for using any Web 2.0 application for educational purposes. The chapter that follows provides a helpful case study where e-learning models were shared by a community of practice for higher education staff.

The third part on technology explores the use of Web 2.0 technologies within libraries and issues surrounding the use of these new technologies. The first chapter in this section offers a helpful risk assessment toolkit for institutions wanting to implement Web 2.0 services while managing associated risk. The next chapter is very broad in scope, covering new digital technologies and providing definitions and explanations such as Web 2.0, ubiquitous computing, and RFID. This chapter concludes with a discussion of twenty-first-century learners and the consumerisation of IT. Although this chapter could benefit from a narrower, more in-depth focus, it is a useful overview. For those busy information professionals with an interest in emerging technologies who do not have time to read the whole book, this chapter is the one to read.

Part four is the conclusion. Information professionals are encouraged to make use of Web 2.0 technologies for the opportunities they offer for self-training as well as for enabling learning in others. This book is recommended to librarians interested in Web 2.0 trends and developments.

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