Web 2.0 Tools for school librarians

Statement of the Problem

School librarians know that using emerging technologies to enhance access and use of information is one of our most important responsibilities. The Internet, no longer an emerging technology, is now so much a part of daily life that a recent Pew Internet and American Life Project report confirmed that three fourths of Americans log on and use the internet daily. (Rainie, 1/5/2010) Although many people just look for information on the Internet, the growth of applications and sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Blogger, and Google Docs indicate that social networking and user-interaction is here to stay. How can school librarians use web tools to encourage teachers and students to access, use, interact with, create, and communicate information more effectively?

The term "Web 2.0" describes “web-enabled applications that are built around user-generated or user manipulated content.” (Peltier-Davis, 2009) Instead of just reading material published by others, users create, share, and remix information, ideas, and creative works. Web 2.0 offers powerful opportunities to support collaboration and student learning. Most applications are free or low-cost, easy to use, and fully hosted by their providers. They require no expensive infrastructure or extensive training to learn. (Driscoll, 2007) Yet, time pressures, lack of resources, and intellectual freedom issues (including district filtering policies) lead many school librarians to continue to emphasize the use of more traditional technologies in their instruction and management tasks. (Snyder and Miller, 2009) The use of social networking, a specific kind of Web 2.0 application, demonstrates the gap between technology adoption by librarians and by the young people we teach. Pew reports that nearly three quarters (73%) of online teens and young adults use social network sites. (Lenhart et al., 2/3/2010) But a recent survey found that almost 25% of the 559 school librarians who responded do not use social networking technology at all, and another 48% report using social networking tools only for personal use. (Dickinson, 2010) Is it possible that a similar gap exists with the use of applications like blogs, wikis, mashups, and other cool tools? Barriers notwithstanding, school librarians must consider how we can use Web 2.0 tools to engage student interest, inspire creativity, and foster collaboration as we advance into the 21st century.

Research

A Framework for Using Web 2.0 Tools

The AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner and the NETS-S standards provide a framework for using Web 2.0 tools. (Fredrick, 2010) The AASL standards are inclusively broad, and students could use any number of collaborative web tools to “inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge; to draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge; to share knowledge and participate ethically and
productively as members of our democratic society; or to pursue personal and aesthetic growth.” (AASL, 2007) NETS-S standards state “students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.” (ISTE, 2007)

Groups of students could work collaboratively in Google Docs, on blogs, or on wikis. They can share information with each other using social bookmarking sites. They can create podcasts, photo stories, video streams, or tutorials to share what they have learned. They can connect with experts, authors, and other students using videoconferencing software and a webcam. Students can share and use images posted on Flickr, Picasa, and School Tube. (Fredrick, 2010) The number of open source applications continues to grow. There are hundreds of applications and endless opportunities. Where should a time-strapped librarian begin?

**Solutions**

Getting Started: some suggestions, in no particular order.

Consider joining Facebook. You can sign up for groups with interests similar to yours, find old friends and family members, and give brief updates about what you are doing with your students. A school library Facebook page can post updates about new materials and interesting projects. (Mills, 2010). Remember to observe the distinction between social networking sites, like Facebook, and educational networking sites that are usually restricted to a defined group of users. (Hegna and Johnson, 2010) On Facebook, it is very difficult to maintain the line between professional friends, social friends, and family, and some have expressed concerns about Facebook’s privacy policies. In fact, many people are quitting Facebook because of issues with privacy settings. (Daily Press, 2010) Familiarize yourself with best practice guidelines, such as those by Hegna and Johnson (below).

Spend some time on YouTube watching tutorials about Web 2.0 applications. It will be hard to watch just one. The main idea is to realize how much support is here for learning how to use web tools. Try these:

Web 2.0. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsa5ZTRJQ5w&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsa5ZTRJQ5w&feature=related)

What is a Mashup? [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRcP2CZ8DS8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRcP2CZ8DS8)

Video: RSS in Plain English [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KlgLsSxGsU&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KlgLsSxGsU&feature=related)

Video: Twitter in Plain English [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o)

Sample Web 2.0 tools using 23 Things, the staff development project at Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. [http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/](http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/) In 15 minutes a day,

Mary Keeling
over a period of a few months, you can sample blogs, photo sharing sites, image generators, search tools, wikis, tagging, podcasting, video, and productivity tools.

Become informed about the ethics of social networking. See Networking Guidelines for Educators, by Jen Hegna and Doug Johnson.

Look at Gail Lovely’s Top 10 for Young Learners: http://glovely09.wetpaint.com/page/TopTen+for+Young+Learners

Michael Gorman shares his pick of “22 web applications” here: http://21centuryedtech.wikispaces.com/Web+2.0


See Tom Barrett’s series of Google Docs presentations on “Interesting Ways” to use technology tools in the classroom. http://edte.ch/blog/interesting-ways/Teachers are invited to contribute ideas, and Barrett states that the collaboration has been a “great example of crowdsourcing good quality classroom ideas” (Crispino, 2010)

Set up a Personal Learning Network (PLN), using one of the models listed below. Nielson’s approach takes the user from information consumer to information producer. Use your PLN to participate in the Read/Write Web.


A menu: Creating a PLN with Web 2.0 Tools http://sites.google.com/site/buildingapln/

Buffy Hamilton: strategies for keeping up with (almost) everything http://theunquietlibrarian.wikispaces.com/

While you are building your PLN, consider linking to these blogs:


Sign up for a free Twitter account. Web 2.0 tools offer tremendous possibilities to communicate. According to one school librarian, “following certain “Tweeters” like Valenza, Warlick, November, etc., gives me links to more reading than I could ever hope to find by doing random searches. . . plus, they “retweet” things from other people that they follow. . .[like] sort of a Super-PLN that throws out short microbursts of info to pique your interest.” (Doering, 2010)

**Additional Resources**

Need a quick start? Here are a few web tools recommended by Michael Gorman, Gail Lovely, Richard Byrne, and David Warlick, loosely arranged by function.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound Recording</td>
<td><a href="http://audacity.sourceforge.net">http://audacity.sourceforge.net</a></td>
<td>Free, open-source, multiplatform recording software Not technically a Web 2.0 application, but permits the user to easily record podcasts for posting to the Web.</td>
<td>Record students reading for fluency or create podcasts to upload to your school website</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://Voki.com">http://Voki.com</a></td>
<td>Speaking avatar</td>
<td>Write original poetry and record using a voki</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://Blabberize.com">http://Blabberize.com</a></td>
<td>Animated, talking pictures</td>
<td>Research a famous American, upload a picture or drawing, record student telling about subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Writing,</td>
<td><a href="http://www.Storybird.com">http://www.Storybird.com</a></td>
<td>For young children</td>
<td>Collaboratively write a class story based on a field trip or other class experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td><a href="http://classblogmeister.com">http://classblogmeister.com</a></td>
<td>Blog accounts are established and</td>
<td>Online reflection</td>
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Mary Keeling
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Social Networking</strong></th>
<th><strong><a href="http://kidblog.org">http://kidblog.org</a></strong></th>
<th>maintained by the classroom teacher.</th>
<th>journals and/or discussion topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://edu.glogster.com/">http://edu.glogster.com/</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Set up a classroom blog without student email addresses.</strong></td>
<td>Interactive, multi-modal “poster;” look for tutorials on home page</td>
<td>Online reflection journals and/or discussion topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Networking</strong></td>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.wallwisher.com/">http://www.wallwisher.com/</a></strong></td>
<td>Online message board maker. Click, write, drag. Post audio and video. Easy.</td>
<td>Use for announcements, Quick assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.twiducate.com/">http://www.twiducate.com/</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Social networking for schools. Teachers create a closed, online classroom community</strong></td>
<td>Share readings, assign- ments; Create quick surveys; commun- icate with parents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Visual tools</strong></td>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.zoo-m.com/flickr-storm/">http://www.zoo-m.com/flickr-storm/</a></strong></td>
<td>Search for images with Creative Commons licenses</td>
<td>Provide a selection of images to use as creative writing prompts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.picnik.com">http://www.picnik.com</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Photo Editing Software</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.bighugelabs.com">http://www.bighugelabs.com</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>“Do Cool Things with images (or</strong></td>
<td></td>
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| Discussion | http://VoiceThread.com | Record discussions around a picture or video | “tool for having conversations around media
Check out “100 Ways to Use Voicethread in edu”

http://Skype.com | Free voice and video calls to anyone else on Skype; free conference calls with three or more people; free instant messaging, file transfer and screen sharing | Participate in a video conference with an expert in a field of study

http://www.tokbox.com | Video chat with up to 20 people with webcam |  |

Movies and Animation | http://animoto.com/education | Create a stunning photo/video slideshow | Create a slideshow for back-to-school night or to highlight student work

http://memoov.com/ |  |  |  |

Mashups | http://www.gurulib.com/ | free online personal library database where you can easily keep track of your games, movies, books, and music | Use Mashups to gather information about a specific topic or follow a current event.

http://www.mibazaar.com/gulfoilspill.html | Tweets on the Gulf Oil Spill/mashup of Google Maps & Twitter |  |  |
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<tr>
<th>Screen Recording</th>
<th><a href="http://www.jingproject.com/">http://www.jingproject.com/</a></th>
<th>Snap a picture of your screen, record video of screen action, and share via web, IM, email</th>
<th>Record step-by-step “how to” directions for any computer function, i.e. how to check out books</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.screenjelly.com">http://www.screenjelly.com</a></td>
<td>Screenjelly records your screen activity with your voice so you can spread it via Twitter or email.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Software</td>
<td><a href="http://moodle.com/">http://moodle.com/</a></td>
<td>Open source software for online courses or online modules within face-to-face courses. Extensive documentation and teacher support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documents, Presentations</td>
<td><a href="http://www.docs.google.com">http://www.docs.google.com</a></td>
<td>Create and share documents, spreadsheets and presentations</td>
<td>create surveys to gather patron data; create self-grading quizzes to test student knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration Tools</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wikispaces.com/">http://www.wikispaces.com/</a></td>
<td>Free for educators</td>
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<td>See 50 Ways to Use Wikis for a More Collaborative and Interactive Classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://drop.io">http://drop.io</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Online collaboration and file sharing service. Private and real-time way to chat, share media files and digital content through user created “drops”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com/ig">http://www.google.com/ig</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Build a home page that acts as a home base for gathering information, managing calendar, email, and to-do lists, and sharing information</td>
<td>create a customized homepage for students to access course content, collaborate on documents, and share information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.diigo.com/">http://www.diigo.com/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social bookmarking and Web highlighting site.</td>
<td>Highlight, organize, archive, search and access information. Student groups post and share information with each other</td>
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Summary

If you are still not sure where to start, think about your own learning and teaching style. Are you a visual learner? Do you teach with lots of pictures? Then begin exploring the visual tools. Use Flickr-storm and begin to build a set of pictures for students to use. Are you a story teller? Use Animoto or Photo Story to create an introduction to a new unit. Are you a very social person? Facebook would be a perfect starting place. Do you look for patterns in data? Do you wonder what people are thinking? Try Google Docs, and learn how to create a survey form. While you are experimenting, maintain your enthusiasm but avoid overwhelming your patrons (teachers and students) with too many new things at once. Introduce change in small increments. A high school librarian advises:

Get them comfortable. Explore the possibilities of a set of tools, but don't throw every new tool that you come across at your patrons. As excited as you might be about the latest and greatest, you risk [frustrating your patrons] if you pummel them with 10 new tools while they're just getting comfortable with the last set that you introduced. A fine balancing act, to be sure.....especially when things in this arena are exploding as quickly as they do. (Doering, 2010)

There are applications for every possible information need. Set goals. Start small. Get started, and keep moving, even if it is only one small step at a time! The future won’t wait.
Bibliography


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