

September 2006

I Hear the Train A Comin' -- Web 2.0

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Recommended Citation

Tananbaum, Greg (2006) "I Hear the Train A Comin' -- Web 2.0," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 18: Iss. 4, Article 37.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4944>

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WHAT'S A POOR PRINT JOURNAL TO DO? WRITE MORE IN DEPTH? GET OUT!

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

With all the breaking news online, serious journalism as well as tabloids are always lagging. The two media would like to enhance one another rather than bleed each other dry. So they've decided to start putting more depth to the print(!) *The Star's* on-the-ground-in-St. Tropez reporter was doing constant updates on the **Pam Anderson-Kid Rock** nuptial orgy, so the home staff — wait for it — saved the verbatim of the couple's vows for the print version!!!

See — Sarah Ellison, "How Weekly Magazines Try to Balance News on the Internet, in Print Editions," *The Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 21, 2006, p.B1.



A WEE BROWSE

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

It's Scotland for second hand book stores. Edinburgh has 30 with **McNaughtan's Bookshop** the longest lived, dating to 1957. A copper pipe that diverts a roof leak is shaped like a serpent slithering down the tree of knowledge. **Armchair Books** is nestled among strip joints.

Voltaire and **Rousseau** in Glasgow has the gravity-defying piles of books and utter disorder plus a shop cat you long for in an anti-quarian dealer. And then there's the book village **Wigtown** and **Quarto Bookshop** in St. Andrews sought out by golf book collectors from Sweden to China. **Quarto** will also sell you "experienced balls" from off the famous nearby course.

See — Hannah Adcock, "Read all about it," *Scotland Magazine*, Sept. 2006, p.28.

I Hear the Train A Comin' — Web 2.0

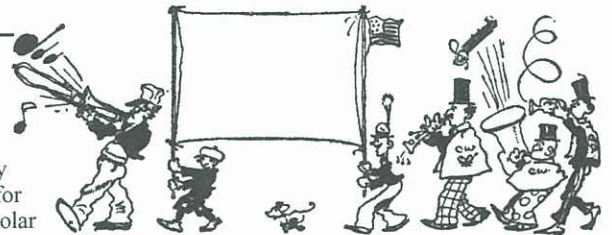
Column Editor: Greg Tananbaum <gtananbaum@gmail.com>

I remember when I made my first professional foray into the brave new world of Internet technologies. In the halcyon days of 2000, new paradigms and buzzwords were sprouting like mold in the basement utility sink. Cyberspace. eCommerce. Portals. B2B, P2P, and Z2Z (that last one is facetious, though, not surprisingly, a quick search reveals that **z2z.com** is a vessel for the hopes and dreams of the obscure **Robert** and **James Zarywacz**). In some ways, these terms were quite meaningful. They helped startup companies that sold fish food in bulk to other fish food companies raise \$50 million. They formed the basis of virtually unintelligible conversations among vested twentysomethings in bars from San Francisco to London. More importantly, these terms eventually provided the basic lexicon for actual Web services and interactions. I knew that the functional definitions had been distilled from the buzz when my mom engaged in a detailed explanation of her online **Sopranos** DVD purchase, liberally sprinkling in terms like eCommerce and secure connection. Just as Mom grew comfortable enough with cyberspace to learn if **Patsy Parisi** would whack **Tony** to avenge his twin brother **Philly Spoons's** gangland execution, we are confronted with a paradigm shift. It's not about the Web any longer, we are told. Nope — today we must confront **Web 2.0**. Much like the gulf that divides B2B dog food and my mom's DVD purchase on **Amazon**, we are again in a cycle through which catchy yet largely meaningless phrases will be winnowed away from durable, important concepts and functionality.

Let's start with the term "**Web 2.0**" itself. What exactly does it mean? The phrase was coined by computer book mogul **Tim O'Reilly** in 2004. A quick look at **O'Reilly's** explanation (see <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html>) yields more candy floss than steak. **O'Reilly's** five page explanation is actually quite good, but I lost interest mid-page one when

I read, "**Web 2.0** doesn't have a hard boundary, but rather, a gravitational core." I did slog through the full treatise, and I think I came away with a fairly good sense of what is relevant for our scholarly communication solar system. **Web 2.0** refers to the emerging practices and services that use the Internet as a platform for communal participation. The **Web 2.0** movement signals an increasing collaboration among Internet users. People are sharing information, data, content, expertise, and opinions in a way that first generation static Websites could not accommodate. This sharing often takes the form of peer-to-peer communication, unvetted by any expert authority. **Britannica Online** is **Web 1.0**; **Wikipedia** is **Web 2.0**. The former is a top-down site in which information is disseminated from a team of experts, to be read by the general public. The latter is a grassroots site in which visitors are encouraged to add their own expertise to evolving definitions.

Given this applied definition of **Web 2.0**, the next few years should herald the emergence of new forms of scholarly communication. In actuality, "new" is a poor choice of words. I often insert a cartoon in my canned **PowerPoint** presentations in which one caveman is nervously showing his cave drawing to another caveman. This was peer-to-peer communication in its earliest form, of course. Intervening events (humanoid evolution and the invention of the printing press, to name but two) changed the distribution of ideas. Today's scholarly journal circulates one person's work into the hands of many people. The one communicates with the many, but true feedback loops through which the many can communicate back to the one, and to each other, are rare. Though time and financial constraints are no doubt factors in the dearth of mass scale, real time print media forums, this tells only a partial story. The culture of academic information dissemination has not been



particularly geared for this type of freewheeling exchange. The tweed jacketed professor who doles out pearls of wisdom in staid journals is a cliché for a reason. That professor is an expert in his or her field, however narrowly this field may be defined. No one knows exactly what that professor knows, and therefore any discussion and debate would necessarily involve substantial differences in weight class among the participants. This is a gross oversimplification, of course, but it helps explain the general reluctance with which the scholarly communication world has met the **Web 2.0** movement.

Rereading the preceding paragraph, you will see that the first and last sentences are somewhat contradictory. The next few years will see the emergence of new forms of scholarly communication, I began, only to conclude that there has been resistance within our community to **Web 2.0** concepts. I greatly suspect that this resistance is starting to give way. This is due to several factors. The technologies in question are becoming too widespread in other areas of the Web to ignore. Community rating systems and reader comments are ubiquitous on sites like **Amazon**. (I was particularly honored when rockstar26 said my humor book *Atomic Wedgies, Wet Willies, and Other Acts of Roguery* was "destined to be bathroom reading material for generations.") Twelve year olds are running their own blogs. As these technologies have moved into the mainstream, their ease of use, ease of implementation, and cost of implementation have improved dramatically. Implementation becomes compelling at this conver-

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Something To Think About? — Compact and Powerful!

Column Editor: **Mary E. (Tinker) Massey** (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Jack R. Hunt Library)
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If you have been following our discussion this year, we are talking about the periodical weeding process in libraries. First and foremost, we are in need of keeping as many shelves or parts of shelves empty for expansion. Sometimes we make decisions about how many years of a journal to keep, thereby making the older issues unneeded in our collection. Sometimes we decide that specific titles are not needed any longer because their scope does not add to the information bank required for courses being taught today in our schools and universities, or our patronage interests have shifted in the public venue.

This issue's discussion revolves around the usage of microform as a substitute for print issues. The four by four boxes of microfilm or four by six inch fiche stored in cabinets, take up far less space than print issues on open shelves and they can be retained in the busier and more functional areas of the library. The 1930's saw the advent of the 35mm camera and possible use of both negative and positive film to record print in a much smaller format. Scientific and government reports were some of the first to be preserved on film and fiche. Now, we have scores of journals that are reproduced on microfilm and microfiche as a regular routine. It is still our best format for retention, lasting over one hundred years (digital has not proven its longevity yet — too young). Of course, those

companies have to buy the privilege of being able to film the journals and resell them, but there seems to be adequate cooperation in that area. One of the few problems of microform is that reading and printing equipment have to be available to the user. Over the past five to ten years, technology has improved the capabilities of these machines as well. We have readers, we have printers, we have combination reader/printers, and we are now seeing the capability of the reader/printer that can send the visual information to a computer or to your disks, etc. This makes the data so much more useful and effective for reports, papers, articles and other presentations.

We have been used to having newspapers on microfilm for years, but now even the most scientific and technical journals are being captured on film. Being a somewhat specialized library as well as academically oriented, we are conscious of the extensive use of our film and fiche as a substitute for older volumes of journal titles. This allows us to retain the latest five years of the print on our shelves (which is most heavily used for research), while offering another ten to fifteen years in a microform format that allows students to do more historical studies. We are a smaller sized library, but we pack a punch information wise.

Since we are adding to our microform hold-

ings every day, we strive to keep our facilities clean, neat and the boxes in good repair. We have recently purchased five sets of arches that allow a central passageway with pull out upright drawers on each side of the walkway. We also have some microfilm and microfiche cabinets that expand our collection. Some of the cabinets house specific titles or masses of technical reports. The arches house journals on microfilm. When I arrived last year, the microfilm still had rubber bands on the reels, so we removed them in a quick but thorough project. Rubber bands tend to eat their way through film over the years of chemical changes within the packaging. (Best not to take chances on this one point.) We have spent some time this summer going through all the boxes in those arches, making sure they are functional. When we find damaged boxes, we replace them with new ones. I personally like the acid free boxes that store flat and pop-up when you need them. These allow space for labels to be generated on the computer and applied to the appropriate boxes. This year has been a clean-up/fix-up time for all of our collections. The anticipation of gaining more microform holdings in our weeding process has excited us all. Many of our one to three year retentions will have microfilm backup for the older years. Perhaps, we can begin to move our reading/printing equipment to the new age of technology and allow students and faculty a chance to send them to disks and office/home computers. That is truly something to think and dream about! 🐼



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gence. It also becomes expected. When RSS is sufficiently omnipresent and straightforward that the **Asheboro North Carolina Zoo** begins syndicating its content, it is obvious that every scholarly publisher should be on the bandwagon. And many are. So, too, will we see publishers and other content providers adopt other **Web 2.0** services as these services cross the chasm. Community rating systems and blogs, mentioned above, seem like obvious candidates. So, too, do folksonomies, in which readers and site visitors help categorize the content which they are reading. Chatting/message

board technology is well established, providing a natural gateway to real-time discussions and debates among authors, editors, referees, and readers. When Web users are fully at ease with the protocol for sharing their photos on sites like **Flickr**, how big a leap will it be for the scholarly subcommunity to share their data and supplementary materials? When the **MySpace** model of community interaction is part of our cultural fabric, how great a jump are we from an academic **MySpace** at which professors and students network amongst themselves? The **Web 2.0** services that become ingrained in our everyday lives will be adapted and adopted by our scholarly communication solar system just as the printing press, and, indeed, the **Web 1.0**, were. 🐼

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these small buns, you are linked to lists or chat rooms where people are talking about them, you get pictures of them. Yes, you also get advertising but we have all been trained during thousands of hours of TV as children to ignore ads (even in 1950's Idaho we had advertisements between our mix of Agriculture Department films and Crusader Rabbit episodes). How can we ensure that our libraries (the physical places and the virtual places where our expensive databases, e-journals, and eBooks are kept) are equally rewarding? But that is the hard question. Since I have already exceeded my 1,000 word count I think I will go into the kitchen, push our Filipina cook out of the way and cook some hash browns, over easy eggs, toast and hot chocolate to eat while watching the **CBS** evening news that appears on TV here each morning on our side of the earth. I will let you all think about how to give our users what they want quickly, efficiently, and with great enthusiasm. Bon appétit/ sihk faahn!

PS Unless this column gets yanked, I may return with food/service memories of Bergdorf's in Chicago, the Capital Deli in New York, and the Peking Garden in Seattle. 🐼

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To see some digital collections managed with **CONTENTdm** software, visit: <http://www.contentdm.com/customers/>.

Well, we're out of space for this issue. Hope to see you all at the **Charleston Conference** in November! Register online at www.katina.info/conference. See you then! 🐼