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Spring 2009

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Recommended Citation

Caravella, Mary; Ekachai, Daradirek; Jaeger, Charles; and Zahay, Debra, "Web 2.0: Opportunities and Challenges for Advertising Educators" (2009). *College of Communication Faculty Research and Publications*. 302.

https://epublications.marquette.edu/comm_fac/302

Web 2.0: Opportunities and Challenges for Marketing Educators

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Web 2.0 technologies dramatically reduce the technical knowledge required to create and share web content such as podcasts, videos, blog posts and websites. Using Web 2.0-based applications like YouTube, Facebook, MySpace and iTunes, dramatically increasing numbers of consumers are interacting with each other and with marketers in a much more socially enabled online environment. This paper focuses on two distinct but complementary questions for marketing educators raised by the increasing use of Web 2.0 technologies and applications by consumers and advertisers. First, how can we use these technologies in our own course delivery, to increase the accessibility and relevance of our course content for our students? Second, what new or revised learning outcomes should we be including in our courses, to enable our students to be effective marketers in this exponentially more interactive consumer environment? The goal of is to start a discussion about the opportunities and challenges of these technologies in the marketing and advertising classroom, by sharing experiences and proposing areas for future discussion.

Web 2.0: the social web

So what is this Web 2.0 stuff? At first glance, much of the discussion about Web 2.0 appears to be focused on technology, and there seem to be as many definitions of Web 2.0 as there are startup companies hoping to replicate the meteoric growth of MySpace, YouTube and Facebook. However, as people such as Forrester Research

analysts Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff describe in their book *Groundswell*, the technologies dubbed “Web 2.0” and associated with these popular applications and their offspring are important because of how they enable people to act on their natural desires to interact with each other.

First, Web 2.0 technologies allow people to create web content much more easily than had been previously possible. Previously, most web content was published by corporations, particularly media companies and advertisers, and only read by web users. Now people easily co-create their own web experience: reading and writing product reviews on Amazon and service reviews on Expedia, creating content on their own social network profile pages and blogs, or even simply by customizing the news feeds and other information displayed on personalized versions of Google or Yahoo.

Second, because these technologies also enable this new content to be easily shared, this content can be used to enable and support relationships between people. From posts on Facebook walls, to feeds showing what your friends have recently bookmarked, posted or uploaded, to comments responding to blog posts and sharing product experiences, to passionate discussions in forums or user groups, Web 2.0-based technologies help support offline relationships and develop new online relationships and communities.

As a result of Web 2.0 technologies, the web is now a much more social place. People can now

quickly and easily tap their friends' knowledge and opinions about what is interesting and valuable, and also tap the communal expertise, experiences and support of people they have never met. As people interact more and more with each other, advertisers' carefully crafted messages are subject to filtering, examination, criticism and rejection in this communal conversation. Targeted customers can approach a point of sale display and then use their mobile phones to quickly poll peers for immediate feedback, or leverage the information supplied by thousands of strangers that reveal the same product is available for a lower price at the store across the street.

As educators, Web 2.0 technologies offer both opportunities and challenges. It is now easier to create new and customized content for our classrooms, and we can much more easily draw from the collective knowledge of marketing and advertising professionals to make our course content more interesting and relevant. (How nice to be able to quickly find and show commercials on YouTube!) However, as advertisers themselves grapple with how to engage consumers in this much more interactive environment, we also find ourselves challenged with how best to prepare our students to join them.

Using Web 2.0 technologies to improve course delivery

Debra Zahay

The first question tackled in the special session was to leverage Web 2.0 technologies to improve the classroom experience. Having used podcasts to deliver course content and student feedback since 2006, the presenter talked about creating content that students can download and play on digital audio devices like iPods.

The course specifically discussed was one of two required courses in the Internet Marketing curriculum. Podcasting is used to address two pedagogical dilemmas raised in this course. The first dilemma was how to keep up with grading. The course was built around a 6-8 week consulting project for a large, real-world company, and involved multiple student revisions before delivering the project results to the sponsor. Fast, continuous feedback needed

to be provided to ten groups, over four revisions, in order to closely monitor the project quality. Recording and posting audio clips allowed faster, clearer and more specific feedback. Importantly it also made it accessible in a format that students used daily as they listened to their iPods.

The second pedagogical dilemma that podcasting addressed had to do with effectively delivering course content. The course content for internet marketing is constantly changing, and many guest speakers were utilized in the course. As a result, both the resources and the class time to deliver basic course content were lacking. Podcasting enabled evolving course content to be quickly created, updated and distributed. The podcasts combined the time students spend reading textbooks and listening to lectures, and freed up classroom time for informed interaction with guest speakers.

Charles Jaeger

In addition to increasing our potential for developing and distributing content, Web 2.0 technologies increase the potential for students to contribute content of their own. Using proprietary course platform tools, one can add in open Web 2.0 platforms available on the web to the course material and activities delivered. Blackboard was first used for basic tasks: outbound class communication and posting course information and exercises. Over the next several years, this advanced to facilitating group activities, file sharing, and within-group communication. About three years ago, the professor began actively exploring forums, chat rooms, and other dynamic communications, asking, does it communicate what I want? Does it create engagement in the minds of my students? Does it help match classroom messages with the students' own thoughts, feelings, and associations? Does it enhance student contribution in a peer-to-peer network?

Like the advertising professionals we are preparing our students to become, the key question that kept returning was engagement. Student-developed content was intermittent, at best, in the course platform forums and chat rooms. At the same time, most students had an account on Facebook or MySpace and were actively using Web 2.0 social networking, blogging, texting and other creative, user-

developed content sites. Why were students embracing these sites but not the interactive Blackboard functionality?

The first step was to create a blog and invite students to join a website of the week (“WOW”) exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to provide incentives for students to interact with each other—to create their own content through comments, thoughts and feelings, and thus begin change the interaction patterns in the classroom (see Figure 1).

It was observed that students became much more active on the blog than they were on Blackboard. Posting numbers and word counts increased, and quality improved. Notably, students who were shy in the classroom were contributing particularly useful blog content.

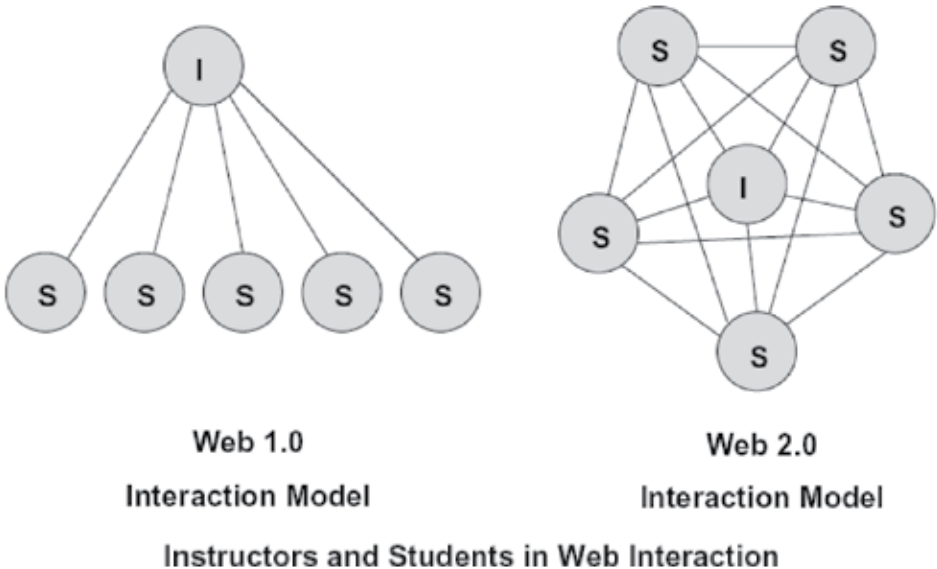
To begin to understand why the blog was more engaging, web-based surveys and interviews were used to gather comments about blogs and Blackboard. Students found Blackboard a useful medium to deliver cognitive content, but it was not exciting. They saw a closed, proprietary context, a computer-bound, businesslike look and feel, and sterile communication environment. In contrast, they are excited by YouTube, phone images and iPhones. The Web 2.0 context was

homey, fun, modern and entertaining for them. The context itself made content more relevant and participatory, boosted the value of their classroom peer network, and helped internalize the meaning. These findings were consistent with those of other published studies of the pedagogical value of blogging, see for example: <http://www.higheredblogcon.com/teaching/watrall/blogs-for-learning2/player.html>.

Building on this positive experience with blogging, a student networking site using Joomla! (www.joomla.org), an open-source content management system (CMS) that includes blogs, forums and other interactive features adaptable to mobile computing formats, is now being developed. Like most Web 2.0 applications, Joomla’s developers offer new functionality daily. In addition, they offer an advertising component, which will offer students practical experience with online advertising tools.

It was noted that the Web 2.0 context is a complement rather than a substitute for course platforms like Blackboard. Following is a comparison of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the tools which have been used room (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1:
Web 1.0 vs Web 2.0 Interaction Patterns**



Teaching Web 2.0 –a framework for learning

Daradirek “Gee” Ekachai and Mary Caravella

What are the challenges raised by Web 2.0 technologies for the learning objectives of advertising and marketing courses. What should our students be learning about Web 2.0 and how might they best learn it? A framework was presented for thinking about these questions, based on experiences using and discussing Web 2.0 in core and upper level marketing and advertising courses.

It was suggested that at a minimum, the rapid growth of Web 2.0 applications such as social networks and blogs merit definition and discussion of their value for reaching and engaging targeted customers, compared with more established media. Given the rapid evolution and inevitable hype surrounding Web 2.0, even this relatively straightforward objective is a moving target. One way to address the highly perishable nature of this information is to leverage the technologies themselves to develop course materials that can be quickly updated and easily distributed, as the previous

example of podcasting shows.

As discussed earlier, Web 2.0 technologies enable a more social web experience that has deep implications for advertisers. This suggests a broader assessment of learning objectives for educators. As with the first generation of the Web, there will be some who will argue that Web 2.0 changes everything. Others will argue instead that this more connected consumer environment rewards those who better understand the same core marketing concepts, even as the tactics to execute them change. This reinforces the importance of learning objectives that encourage students to reflect on their own underlying mental models of how marketers and consumers interact, reflect on those likely in use by their future customers, clients and employers, and think about where misconceptions might arise as technology creates new interaction possibilities. These more reflective learning objectives can be more demanding to implement, but Web 2.0 technologies themselves help support these objectives by enabling students to easily interact with each other to create and share their own

**Figure 2:
Comparing Course Platform and Web 2.0 Tools for Course Delivery**

Tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
Courseware (e.g. Blackboard)	Widely used Integrated campus data Institutional support and setup Publishers’ courseware packages Many features (e.g. digital drop box, groups, file sharing) Integrated email	Sterile environment and format Inflexible communication interface Limited password protection levels Limited viewing platforms (e.g. cell phone, iPhone, Blackberry) Email limitations
Blogs	Modern, Web 2.0 based Creates engagement Students will use in careers Many students already use them Widely accessible (no institutional account needed) Portable to off-campus; public Viewable on mobile platforms Shy students may use it Participative; creative culture Viewed as “a tool of my generation”	Limited content, features Little or no interoperability with other campus resources
Content Management Systems (CMS, e.g. Joomla!, SMS, XOOPS)	Very flexible in formatting Developers continually add features Integrated blogs Rich user profile display, access No institutional account needed Good context for advertising (also a disadvantage)	Complex set-up and installation Little or no interoperability with other campus resources Substantially different than lecture and book (also an advantage)

thoughts and insights.

A framework for learning outcomes relevant to Web 2.0 (see Figure 3) was presented. This framework built on Nilson’s four dimensions of learning assessment, themselves based on Bloom’s 1956 framework for learning objectives. Within each dimension, they suggested broad learning outcomes for principles-level courses, and more specific outcomes for upper level courses. At the lowest, declarative knowledge level, suggested outcomes focus on specific new Web 2.0 terms or concepts, but also on key existing concepts that are particularly relevant in the Web 2.0 environment. These latter outcomes offer opportunities to reflect on how our existing knowledge may fit or need to be adapted. More applied objectives are related to marketing tasks such as creative development and media

planning that are particularly impacted by Web 2.0. Finally, reflective learning objectives challenge students to think about their underlying assumptions, to help them learn to adapt their knowledge to the changing environments they will experience throughout their future careers. These reflective learning experiences are themselves supported and enhanced by Web 2.0 media that encourage students to interact more frequently in peer networks.

Conclusions about getting started

Implementing Web 2.0 in the classroom does come with some nuts and bolts challenges. For example, what makes a “good” blog entry? Once again, there are Web 2.0-based applications that offer help to answer the questions that they raise.

**Figure 3:
Framework for Web 2.0 Learning Outcomes**

	Core/Principles Marketing Courses	Upper-Level Advertising/ Marketing Communications Courses
Declarative Knowledge (“learning what”: <i>facts, principles</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define types of Web 2.0-based applications currently in use by consumers and by marketers • Explain the sources of credibility available to be tapped by Web 2.0-based interactions (reflective--same as for all interactions?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the factors involved with creating compelling content for Web 2.0 campaigns (reflective- same as for all content?) • Explain how marketers measure the success of Web 2.0 marketing campaigns
Procedural Skills (“learning how”: <i>applying knowledge to specific tasks of a given discipline, plus more universal skills like writing, critical thinking and reasoning</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Web 2.0 and communications skills) Use commercially-available blogging tools to communicate, express opinions and interact with audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Web 2.0 and creative development) Create compelling marketing blog entries using commercially-available blogging tools. • (Web 2.0 and customer research) Research content on Web 2.0 sites and develop a research report describing the current perceptions of a company/brand by its consumers. • (Web 2.0 and campaign measurement) Assess the return on a specific marketing campaign that uses a Web 2.0 application.
Conditional Judgment (“learning when and where”: <i>evaluating knowledge and skills for a given purpose</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Web 2.0 and media planning) Evaluate the relative value of Web 2.0-based applications for specific industries and target markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web 2.0 and media planning) Evaluate the relative value of Web 2.0-based applications for specific marketing plan goals (e.g. accelerating new product launch, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty)
Reflective Thinking (“learning why”: <i>analysis and synthesis</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how technological, economic, social and psychological factors may contribute to consumer’s motivations to create and share content with each other, and how these compare with motivations to engage in other consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-marketer interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how to decide which factors should be the most important for marketers to consider when assessing the success of marketing campaigns in a Web 2.0 environment

Use a social bookmarking site like del.icio.us to look up “blog best practices” or “blog rubrics” and you will find a wealth of information that has been collected and critiqued by others with interest and expertise in this topic.

But implementing Web 2.0 also provides great reflective learning opportunities. For example, should “number of comments received” be used as a metric for assessing blogs? While this would be consistent with how blogs are evaluated in the real world, it also allows groups of friends to collude to raise each others’ grades. But is this so different from how bloggers interact with each other in the real world? Marketing professionals refer to the best practice of “blogger outreach:” raising the profile of your own content by adding comments to other targeted blogs. Since one’s comments automatically include a link to one’s own content, the practice raises the visibility of your own content and encourages both the readers and especially the other bloggers to check it out and reciprocate with their own comments. This line of reasoning can be part of reflective class discussion about the impact of these actions on the credibility of a blog author.

In sum, in addition to the information provided, two key insights emerge. First using Web 2.0-based applications in the classroom increased student engagement, in part because it mirrored the interactive world our students live in when they are not in our classroom. Teachers find their own experiences worthwhile and encourage colleagues to take the leap. Web 2.0-based applications are growing because they are easy to use, and there are lots of choices—so if you don’t find something to be easy, go find another application! And, second, while the rapid growth of the Web 2.0-based social web raises questions about what and how our students should be learning, we can also turn to this same social web for help working through our own answers to these questions.