

Competencies of Library and Information Professionals in Library 2.0

Kishore Kalita

This article brings out a definition and theory for "Library 2.0". It suggests that recent thinking describing the changing Web as "Web 2.0" will have substantial implications for libraries, and recognizes that while these implications keep very close to the history and mission of libraries, they still demand a new paradigm for librarianship. The paper applies the theory and definition to the practice of librarianship in the library 2.0 environment)

Keywords: Library 2.0, Web 2.0

1. Introduction

Libraries are changing. Funding limits and customer demands are transforming staffing levels, service models, access to resources, and services to the public. Administrators and taxpayers are seeking more efficient ways of delivering services to achieve greater returns on financial investments.

Library 2.0 is a concept of very different library services, geared towards the needs and expectation of today's library users. The vision of library 2.0 is makes information available whenever or wherever the user required it, as well as seeks to ensure that barriers to use and reuse are removed. Library 2.0 service is new trend for library and information services is being discussed online, at conferences, in administrative offices, and at the reference desk. If the library and information professional not aware about this, they should pay attention that Library 2.0 could revitalize the way we serve and interact with the customers

2. Web 2.0

Before going to discussed library 2.0, one must known the little concept of Web 2.0. The term "Web 2.0" is commonly associated with web applications which facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Examples of Web 2.0 include web-based communities, hosted services, web applications, social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, mashups and folksonomies. A Web 2.0 site allows its users to interact with other users or to change website content, in contrast to non-interactive websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of information that is provided to them.

The term is closely associated with Tim O'Reilly because of the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but rather to cumulative changes in the ways software developers and end-users use the Web. Whether Web 2.0 is qualitatively different from prior web technologies has been challenged by World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, who called the term a "piece of jargon"—precisely because he intended the Web to embody these values in the first place.

Web 2.0 mean: RSS, Wikis, new, simple and revised programming methods like AJAX, J2EE, widgets, gadgets, Mashups, and API's, blogs and blogging, advanced portals and portlets, commentary and comments functionality – everywhere, personalization and 'my profile' features, personal media such as podcasting and MP3 files, streaming media audio and video formats, reviews and user-driven ratings, personalized alerts, web services for enhancement and data mining, social networking software, open access, open source, open content, social bookmarking (such as del.icio.us) etc.

3. Library 2.0

According to Miller (2005a), "Library 2.0" is a term coined by Michael Casey on his Libra Crunch blog. Though his writings on Library 2.0 are groundbreaking and in many ways authoritative, Casey (2006a) defines the term very broadly, arguing it applies beyond technological innovation and service. In addition to Casey, other blogging librarians have begun conceptually exploring what Library 2.0 might mean, and because of this disparate discussion with very wide parameters, there is some controversy over the definition and relative importance of the term. The nature of this controversy Lawson (2006), Peek (2005), and Tebbutt (2006) explore and begin to adequately rectify, and Crawford (2006) provides a very thorough account of the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the term, partially suggesting that there is nothing inherently novel about the idea.

A theory for Library 2.0 could be understood to have these four essential elements:

- **It is user-centered:** Users participate in the creation of the content and services they view within the library's web-presence, OPAC, etc. The consumption and creation of content is dynamic, and thus the roles of librarian and user are not always clear.

- **It provides a multi-media experience:** Both the collections and services of Library 2.0 contain video and audio components. While this is not often cited as a function of Library 2.0, it is here suggested that it should be.

- **It is socially rich:** The library's web-presence includes users' presences. There are both synchronous (e.g. IM) and asynchronous (e.g. wikis) ways for users to communicate with one another and with librarians.

- ⇒ **It is communally innovative:** This is perhaps the single most important aspect of Library 2.0. It rests on the foundation of libraries as a community service, but understands that as communities change, libraries must not only change with them, and they must allow users to change the library. It seeks to continually change its services, to find new ways to allow communities, not just individuals to seek, find, and utilize information.

4. **Library 2.0 and Competencies of Library Professional**

The role of the information specialist and librarian is one undergoing continual change and growth. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the crucible of corporate librarianship, where the evolution of both information and information sources converge with growth in technology and the relentless demands of business. In library 2.0 environment, today's library professional faces added challenges due to recent technology growth, necessitating a professional that is better equipped and broadly educated than one just ten years ago.

We cannot have these changes without some improvements in the capacity, competences, aptitudes and attitudes of library workers. Library professional have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invent a new future. Library professional with thought of library 2.0 is the guru of information age. Library professional in library 2.0 makes effort to

- ⇒ Be aware of the power of the web 2.0 prospects.
- ⇒ Combines e-resources and print formats seamlessly.
- ⇒ Understands the 'long tail' and leverages the power of old and new content
- ⇒ Is container and format agnostic.
- ⇒ Learns the major tools of web 2.0 and library 2.0.
- ⇒ Is device independent and uses and delivers to everything from laptops to PDAs to iPods.
- ⇒ Develops targeted federated search and adopts the Open URL standard.
- ⇒ Connects people and technology and information in context.
- ⇒ Doesn't shy away from non-traditional cataloguing and classification and chooses tagging, tag clouds, folksonomies and user-driven content descriptions and classifications where appropriate.
- ⇒ Embraces non-textual information and the power of pictures, moving images, sight and sound.
- ⇒ Sees the potential in using content sources like the Open Content Alliance, Google Book Search and Open World Cat.
- ⇒ Connects users to expert discussions, conversations and communities of practice, and participates there as well.
- ⇒ Uses the latest tools of communication (such as Skype) to connect content, expertise, information coaching and people.

- Uses and develops advanced social networks to enterprise advantage.
- Connects with everyone using their communication mode of choice – telephone, Skype, IM, SMS, texting, email, virtual reference, and so on.
- Encourages user-driven metadata and user-developed content and commentary.

As a general statement, the role of the information specialist is changing from information gatekeeper to information guru. Librarian professional in library 2.0 environment is still the expert, but is neither the sole owner nor source of information. Rather than being a threat, this provides an opportunity to not only broaden the skill set, but also to reestablish information mastery and add value to the company. Specifically, these lie in guiding the use and dissemination of information, and in translating information into knowledge. These can also be described as information enabler and knowledge creator. Information enabler. As information enabler, Corporate Librarian 2.0 acts to transfer ownership of lower-complexity searches to patrons. This involves two roles: deploying simpler tools to the end-user, and teaching how to best use them, creating patron ability.

Knowledge creator. Information is data. But knowledge is that knowledge is the application and integration of information into a context and actionable results. As knowledge creator, Librarian professional in new era has three major opportunities: custom alerts, competitive intelligence, and improving knowledge sharing methods.

5. Conclusion

Library 2.0 is a change; it is of a nature close to the tradition and mission of libraries. It enables the access to information across society, the sharing of that information, and the utilization of it for the progress of the society. Library 2.0, really, is merely a description of the latest instance of a long-standing and time-tested institution in a democratic society. The library 2.0 changed the concept of traditional librarianship. The library and information professional should cope up with the new technology.

References

1. www.wikipedia.com, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
2. Gavgani, Vahideh Zarea and Mohan, V. Viswa (2008) Application of Web 2.0 Tools in Medical Librarianship to Support Medicine 2.0, *Webology*, Vol. 5, No. 1
3. Mannes, Jack M. (2006) Library 2.0 Theory: Web 2.0 and Its Implications for Libraries, *Webology*, Vol. 3, No. 2

About Author

Mr. Kishore Kalita, Assistant Librarian cum Librarian I/c, Royal Group of Institutions, Guwahati.
E-mail: kklibsc@rediffmail.com