

Similes for Understanding and Explaining Library 2.0 Services and Content Creation Tools

Wednesday, April 23, 2008
AACRL/CUS – Alabama Library Assn Meeting
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Part 1

Conceptual Background

Introduction: Conceptual Background

What's Up With Web/Library 2.0?

- What are Web 2.0 and Library 2.0?
 - Information production and consumption (the read/write Web)
 - Information infrastructure
 - Library 2.0 is the deployment of Web 2.0 services and tools in library contexts
- Librarians have a mediating role:
 - Between publishers and readers (aggregating across publisher information resources)
 - Between readers as publishers and readers (aggregating content across publishing readers)

Introduction: Conceptual Background

Librarians Bring a Lot to the Table!

- 132 years of collaborative professional activities:
 - Collection building
 - Cataloging and organizing activities
 - "Live" reference services
- Dealing with format changes.
- Experience in explaining technological concepts to our users.

Introduction: Conceptual Background

Conceptual Goals for Today

- Placing Web 2.0 technologies within conceptual "comfort zones" whenever possible:
 - Demystification ("is that all there is!!")
 - Eureka! ("this tool could be really good for that need!!")
- Helping you create a platform for future critical study of the application of Web 2.0 tools to library needs.
- Devising means for teaching the world!

Introduction: Conceptual Background

Using Similes for Understanding

- Similes defined: "a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as" (Merriam-Webster).
- Similes are like pictures that are worth a thousand words.
- Because of their descriptive power, similes can serve as a basis both for gaining personal understanding and for explaining new concepts to others.

For Today – Web/Library 2.0 Similes

- Understanding the Web 2.0 *infrastructure*:
 - RSS is like a magazine subscription service
 - Tagging is like a targeted communication channel
- Understanding the roles that basic Web 2.0 *content creation tools* play in facilitating the communication of information:
 - Blogs are like serially published works
 - Wikis are like multi-edition monographic works
 - Podcasts are like audio works
 - Screencasts are like video works

Part 2

Web 2.0 Infrastructure Similes

Part 2: Web 2.0 Infrastructure Similes

RSS is Like a Magazine Subscription Service

Hyperlinks are a Problem

- What could be more simple than clicking on a hyperlink???
- Well, like many things, problems emerge when seemingly simple systems must scale up to meet the demands required of a real world application.

A Statement of the Problem

- The combination of the explosive growth of web resources coupled with the fixed amount of time available for reading such resources leads to efficiency problems.
- And, yes, this can be blamed entirely on the lowly little hyperlink:
 - Users must click on the hyperlink every time they want to check a website for new information
 - This results in inefficiency ... many times, users waste precious time by revisiting a website that has not updated since my last visit

Irony: Print Resources Address Problem!

- Newspapers, magazines, and yes, even books, will ALERT US when they are ready to be read:
 - They show up on our doorsteps
 - They show up in our mailboxes
 - They appear on the new book shelf
- (We should have a new appreciation for print resources!)
- Of course, print resources still pile up waiting to be read!




Enter RSS

- It would be great if I could subscribe to my favorite Web resources like I can with my magazines!
- Acronym for:
 - Really Simple Syndication
 - Rich Site Summary
 - And others
- KEY POINT: RSS can reduce the problem of keeping track of newly published information on hundreds (or more) websites by *subscribing* to them like magazines.

RSS Definition

- RSS is an XML-encoding standard for generating a feed of a website's changes.
- It is a service that is made available by webmasters:
 - RSS logo: 
 - UA Gorgas Library [new book shelf](#)
 - iLibrarian [blog](#)
 - OR
 - XML logo: 
 - [NY Times](#)
 - Morrisville State College library's [Advertising Resources](#) page

How do RSS Feeds Help?

- Webmasters uses RSS to syndicate their content:
 - The result is a feed of all changes
 - However, individuals must subscribe to these feeds
 - Therefore, whenever you see a  or a , you can subscribe to that website 
- But how does this help?

Missing Link: RSS Feed Aggregators

- In order to take advantage of the increasing number of available RSS feeds, one needs software through which to subscribe to individual feeds.
- Generally, these are referred to as RSS Aggregators, but also as:
 - Feed reading software
 - Blog reading software
 - RSS readers
- My Bloglines subscriptions are [available here](#) (or with log in: [here](#)). (Common Craft)

Part 2: Web 2.0 Infrastructure Similes

Tagging is Like Setting Up Topical Communication Channels

Topical Access to Web Resources

- The classical problem of [vocabulary control](#).
- But how does this apply to the Web?:
 - It IS NOT about information search and retrieval (no controlled vocabulary, thus, recall is lower)
 - It IS about setting up targeted topical communication channels for discovering resources in an era of information overabundance
- Incorporates users' perspectives when organizing:
 - Plenty of web resources for all to organize their own way!
 - Let "pop" be pop and "soda" be pop, too!
 - Keep dachshund people separated from the doxie people

Social Classification (“Folksonomy”)

- User added (topical) metadata – aka: “tagging.”
- Tagging is the establishment of a relationship between an online resource and a user:
 - No designed vocabulary control across users
 - However, the goal is information discovery (“I need something, anything on my topic of interest”)
- KEY POINT: Tagging is used to organize overabundant Web resources via third party collaborative websites so that you’re *communicating* with like people:
 - Photographs
 - URLs (i.e., bookmark collections)

Virtual Photographic “Shoeboxes”

- Collections of digital photographs stored at a third party website.
- Users “tag” their digital photos and these tags can be searched or browsed.
- Lack of vocabulary control; however, in this “social” context for organizing overabundant resources.
- **Flickr**: dachshund vs. doxie people.
- Now, *subscribe* to the tag’s RSS feed for photo alerts!

URLs (i.e., Bookmark Collections)

- Collections of bookmarked URLs stored at a third party websites.
- Users “tag” their bookmarks and these tags can be searched or browsed.
- Lack of vocabulary control; however, in this “social” context for organizing overabundant resources.
- **del.icio.us** (see also, **PennTags**).
- Now, *subscribe* to the tag’s RSS feed for bookmark alerts!

Part 3

Web 2.0 Content Creation Similes

Part 3: Web 2.0 Content Creation Similes

Blogs are Like Serially Published Works

Serial Publishing

- There has always been the human need for keeping journals:
 - Personal diaries and correspondence
 - Formal scholarly journal publication
- There has (nearly) always been the need for scholarly journal publishing:
 - Response to the limitations of book publishing:
 - Easier to update knowledge base
 - Faster publication turn around for new knowledge
 - *Article* surrogates indexed since the 19th century

Emergence of the Blog Platform

- The term “blog” is a contraction of “web log”:
 - “Bloggers” evolved from purely personal posting towards commentary of current events
 - Blogs are now recognized as a new form of scholarly communication
- **KEY POINT:** Blogs are like serially published works that contain blog *posts* rather than articles.

Structural Anatomy of a Blog Post

- Title.
- Body – main content of the post.
- Permalink – the URL that points the post.
- Post date – date and time the post was published.
- Tags – subjects about which that a blog post discusses.
- Comments – like letters to the editor.
- Trackback – other blogs linking to (i.e., citing) a given post.

What about Monitoring Blogs with RSS?

- As we have learned, there is a problem concerning efficient blog monitoring, a problem that is shared with all web resources.
- Problem is “How often should I revisit a blog (or other web resource) to see if it has been updated?”
- As librarians, we understand this problem as one of selective dissemination of information (SDI), a service we’ve been providing to many library users.

Part 3: Web 2.0 Content Creation Similes

Wikis are Like Multi-edition Monographic Works

Monograph Publishing

- (Non fiction) monographic content is highly structured (chapters, chapter sections, etc) and are also granularly indexed.
- There has (nearly) always been the need for monograph publishing:
 - More comprehensive source for content than individual journal articles
 - Useful for quick lookups

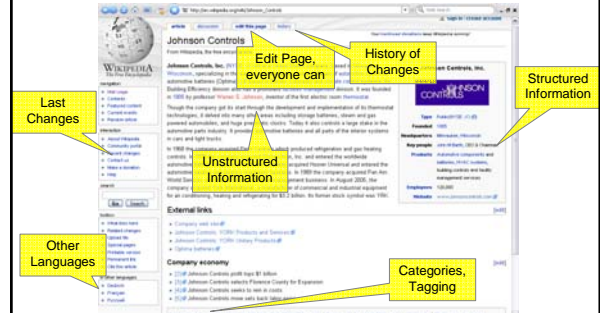
Emergence of the Wiki Platform

- The term “wiki” originated from “wiki wiki” (mid 1990’s).
 - Are highly structured collaborative publications
 - Evolved as collaborative writing environments that update when necessary rather than serially
- **KEY POINT:** Wikis are like multi-edition monographic works.

Structural Anatomy of a Wiki Entry

- Title.
- Body – main content of the entry.
- Edit page – entry point for authorized users to make changes.
- Edit history – record of all changes made to a page.
- Page structuring – structures entries into sections.
- Tags – subjects about which that entry discusses.

Key Parts of Wiki (courtesy of CogNeon)



What about Monitoring Wikis with RSS?

- Why would I want to monitor a wiki?
 - As an editor, I would like to know that a new or changed entry might need editing
 - As a reader, I would like to know when a topic is updated
- Would need to subscribe to the feed generated by the changes on the wiki as a whole or changes on a particular wiki page.

In Conclusion

- Conceptual difficulties often arise when comprehending the infrastructure of the information superhighway.
- Similes can be useful devices for holistic personal understanding and a basis for conveying concepts to others.

Thanks for your attention!

- Questions?
- Please feel free to communicate your feedback to smaccall@slis.ua.edu

Part 3: Web 2.0 Content Creation Similes

Podcasts are Like Audio Works

Audio Publishing

- The rise of networked digital audio and digital video resources provides new opportunities for libraries.
- The potential to collect and organize podcasts continues to provide “time shift” convenience for listeners when using audio resources.

Podcasting Background

- Terminology:
 - *The Guardian*'s Ben Hammersely suggested “podcasting” as a name for distributing audio files over the Web in 2004.
 - In June 2005, Apple Computers integrated podcasting support in its iTunes and Quicktime Player as well as creating manuals for creating podcasts using this software.
- KEY POINT: The potential to collect and organize networked podcasts continues to provide “time shift” convenience for listeners when using audio resources.

Podcasting Terminology

- Podcast (audio) – serialized audio broadcast that is distributed via the internet and has appropriated the power of RSS and its subscription capacity for distribution.
- File format(s) – no single standard but very common formats are mp3, ogg, WMA. (compressed for web delivery).
- Podcatcher – software that pulls down digital files to a harddrive from a web server.

Structural Anatomy of a Podcast

- Title, or episode number.
- Date of episode.
- Body, usually chronological including Show Notes.
- Permalink to digital file.
- Comments.
- Tagging or categories.

What about Monitoring Podcasts with RSS?

- Why would I want to monitor a podcast?
 - As a podcaster, I would want to know that the feeds are properly configured with its enclosures and if listeners are commenting
 - As a listener, I would want to know when a new episode was available
- Technique would be to subscribe to the feed using a podcatcher rather than an aggregator.

Part 3: Web 2.0 Content Creation Similes

**Screencasts are Like
Video Works
(Audio Track over Visuals)**

Screencast Publishing

- The rise of networked digital screen capture resources provides new opportunities for libraries.
- The potential to collect and organize screencasts continues to provide “time shift” convenience for listeners when using multimedia.

Screencasting Background

- Term was introduced in 2004 via Jon Udell’s blog contest.
 - Comes out of the software development discipline where it’s important to capture what is on a computer screen
 - Lends itself well to tutorials
- **KEY POINT:** Because of its audio track over visuals capability, screencasts can mix media together: video, audio and screen captures for time shifting their listening to multimedia files.

Screencasting Terminology

- Screenshot – A snapshot of a computer screen.
- Screencast – A digital capture of what happens on a computer screen including voice over narration.
- Screencast genres (Udell), including:
 - Tutorial
 - Feature story
 - Directional
 - Introductory