

Web 2.0 Guide

Web 2.0: A foreward

Web 2.0 is the "new wave" of the internet - a collaboration of a new age designing methodology that encourages ease-of-use, an increase of social interaction amongst internet users, "cleaner" interfaces and usability, free and open-source software, and cross-website synergy.



Below are brief explanations of each of these aspects, with examples to help you visualize each, or even help make the transition of your current website to Web 2.0

Web 2.0 Design

Web 2.0 design has no definition, yet it is widely recognizable. Consisting of a light and "easy on the eyes" look, Web 2.0 design utilizes whitespace with bright, vivid colors and gradients. Fonts play a major role in Web 2.0 - the "H1" tag resurfaces as



a major part of a web page's design, as it is typically a large, bright statement of what a page or paragraph is about. Links are bright and typically neon in color, and color combinations themselves are heavily contrasted against their backdrop (color patterns such as white, neon green and fuchsia make for an eye-appealing mix). Overall, Web 2.0 typically borrows from [minimalist](#) styles - where "less is more."

Some sites barely need any graphics at all - on such sites, it's all about the text! Tasteful placement of H-tags, rounded fonts, justified paragraphs and CSS/DIV sections without separator lines make for a "newspapery" looking layout, that is easy to read or skim through.



ABOVE: Web 2.0 logo design is all about eye candy. Attractive colors, soft corners, gradients, subtle shadows, inner glows and contrasting text make Web 2.0 design stand apart.

Web 2.0 Fonts

Arial Rounded

Futura HV

Tahoma

Trebuchet MS

Meta-Bold

Lucida Sans

Myriad Pro

Kartika

Segoe UI

Calibri

Futura MD

Font2.0

Above: A typical Web 2.0 font style, complete with a neon color, thick white stroke and a center-positioned drop shadow.

Hello.

Above: Sometimes, plain, simple and big are all you need. This neon font has class and pops with its bright color.

Web 2.0 fonts have no definition. They're classy, techy, plain and simple, but have style. They can be serif or sans-serif - large and bold, or thin and rounded. It's all in the eye of the beholder!

Web 2.0 Development

Web 2.0 development an equally important facet of Web 2.0. Ease-of-use and the desire to conform to SEO (search engine optimization) prompts the need for "cleaner" code, quicker methods of performing traditional actions, and easier ways to store or share pages.



Web 2.0 developers particularly favor heavy usage of CSS, traditional HTML, PHP, and Ajax. [CSS](#), which stands for "Cascading Style Sheets," is an old stylesheet language that has taken on an incredible amount of importance in Web 2.0. It allows a developer to code a site through a style sheet, which defines spacing, colors, link and text size, margins, and much more. It uses "calls" within divider tags to "call forth" these settings - making the actual web pages themselves be very light on code, and overall, more optimized. [Ajax](#), the other major player in Web 2.0, stands for "Asynchronous JavaScript and XML," and aims to facilitate web page usage through exchanging small amounts of data with the server to dynamically load content in that web page, without the need to reload the page.

Web 2.0 Functionality

Web 2.0 functionality has a heavy emphasis on social networking and sharing. Social networking involves the contact amongst web site users. This contact takes place through commenting (leaving comments at the end of a blog or article), sharing (swapping or sharing favorite links, articles, pictures or videos), message boards (traditional forums for discussions), and other such practices.



Web 2.0 Design Elements

Several trends have been seen in Web 2.0 design - one of which are the return of the plastic effect (a design style that simulates translucent plastic with an inner glow and shadow, and a shiny surface). For some plastic badge examples and a generator, visit Web20badges.com. Another generator for Web 2.0-styled text can be found at Web2.0V2 Logo Creator. Alternately, learn how to [make your own](#) plastic web 2.0 badges.



- Stripes play a big role in Web 2.0 design, as a light and eye-appealing backdrop for a web page. Take a look at this [stripe generator](#), which quickly and easily lets you create repeating stripes on the fly.
- Reflections add to the polished look of a web page. By "mirroring" an image on your site, it will appear to be standing on top of a shiny floor. This effect can be replicated through your favorite image editing program (such as Photoshop), or even with generators such as [this one](#).
- Pixel Bars are a popular way to offer quick access to a validator or RSS feed. They're usually very tiny, rectangular, two-color pixel-based graphics. There's even a [pixel bar generator](#) that will let you create your own.
- Tabs continue to be a great way to navigate through the main areas of a site, and they, too, have taken on a Web 2.0 appearance. Plastic tabs with attractive fonts are amongst the most popular. Here's a [CSS tab generator](#) that will get the job done quickly and easily for you.

Web 2.0 and Social Networking

Social Networking is an important part of Web 2.0 functionality. As previously discussed, it involves the encouragement of interaction

amongst web site users. Social networking sites have various methods of providing these services: forums, AJAX-based live chat and instant message and commenting. Social networking was popularized by many of its founders, including [Myspace](#), [Facebook](#), [Livejournal](#), [Friendster](#). New niche-based

social networking sites, such as [WAYN](#), are also surfacing at a fast pace. Other social networking sites are geared towards social shopping, and allow the customer to practically run the site. [ThisNext](#) and [Kaboodle](#) lets the community add and rate products dynamically, and [Epinions](#) is centered around the integrity of customer reviews. [Twitter](#) is a niche social networking site that allows others to know what you're doing at the moment, and is rivaled by Google-backed competitor, [Jaiku](#).



Web 2.0 and Social Bookmarking

Social Bookmarking is a practice of storing one's favorite links, and

sharing those links with others. It involves the usage of "[tags](#)," which are descriptive links assigned to a saved URL that describe its main purposes.

Tags are usually designated as nouns that describe what that URL is about. In turn, these tags are spidered across the entire Social Bookmarking site,

and collaborated to link together everybody else who has used that tag. This encourages visibility when a person clicks a tag, and the site displays all of the other URLs that share that particular tag. Social Bookmarking was popularized with the site [del.icio.us](#). It later mushroomed into dozens of other bookmarking sites, including other giants [Mixx](#), [Faves](#) and [Diigo](#).



Tags are further displayed through a variety of ways, including [tag clouds](#): a "paragraph" format of space-separated tags that are usually displayed by size differentials (tags that are used more often are larger fonts than those that are displayed less often, and are smaller fonts). Other tag clouds can be displayed as "heat clouds", where tags are further differentiated by color (i.e., perhaps the more used tags are bright orange, and the lesser used ones are light gray).

Web 2.0 and Social Portal Sites

Social Portals are a new concept, where a user can create a free account, and "register" pages within the site itself (for instance, you can search for and register a page, which permanently becomes your property - like [socialportalsite.com/yourpagehere](#)). [Squidoo](#) is the best example of a social portal. Other social portals include [Hubpages](#), [Launchtags](#), [Spongefish](#) and [Associated Content](#).

[Ning](#) is a social portal that lets you create a networking site as a subdomain of their own URL. [Wetpaint](#) allows you to register your own Wiki on their site.



Web 2.0 Bookmarking and Badges

Bookmarking practices are typically offered by a webmaster through badges (sometimes referred to as "chicklets"). Badges are tiny, thin bars that advertise a particular social bookmarking service. When clicked by a web site user, the badge will bring that user to the social bookmarking site, where he or she will have to fill out a brief form that allows them to add that website to their list of bookmarks. The person can then assign tags to the link, click 'submit', and be taken back to the original website they were viewing.



All social bookmarks offer badges or chicklets for free usage (take a look at [del.icio.us's badge codes](#) for example). In addition, there are several free services that allow a user to click a Javascript-written badge that will pull down a large list of multiple social bookmarking services, and allow the user to choose which services they want. Such multiple bookmarking badge services are [ShareThis](#) and [AddThis](#).

Web 2.0 Mash-Ups & API

Gaining a great deal of popularity in 2007, "Mash-Up" is a technique that takes "bits and pieces" of other websites to create one new website. It essentially thrives on RSS, as well as various applets, widgets, plugins, image and video pulling services, screen scrapers, affiliate store item pullers and other content that creates a very dynamic site.



The concept of a Mashup is not very foreign, as it has typically been alive since the inception of RSS. However, it has evolved, thanks to various free services, including [Dapper](#) and many other API (Application Programming Interface) services available through popular services, like [eBay API](#), [Commission Junction API](#), [Facebook API](#) and [MySpace API](#) (the latter two are programs allowing anyone to create applications, such as quizzes and games, that synergize with the social networking sites: Facebook and MySpace).

A breakthrough Mash-Up site, [Pipes](#), was released by Yahoo Inc. in late 2007. The site allows users to create free accounts, and augment a very sophisticated series of RSS and other site feeds, images, video and other resources to define a one-stop shop of information, for any category of their choosing. Pipes slowly gains popularity, despite its rather steep learning curve and user un-friendly interface. Similarly, Yahoo's alternate Mash-up project, [Yahoo Mash](#), is a hybrid social networking & mashup portal.

Google has its own Mash-Up service as well: [Google Mashup Editor](#), as does Microsoft with its [Popfly](#) website.

Web 2.0 Widgets & Badges

Widgets play a role in Web 2.0 - these code snippets allow webmasters to place tiny informational boxes, sometimes dynamic and usually involving Flash or Ajax, which promote anything from the current number of reader signups, to live games, or a declaration of membership to an external internet club or clan. Sites like [Widgetbox](#) and [Yahoo Widgets](#), provide a portal for anyone looking to develop their own widgets, or simply download one of thousands that have already been made, to add additional functionality to a site. Many modern businesses develop Widgets as a way to promote their site and maintain visitors, such as this example from [Last.fm](#).



Widgets are also used for gaming platforms, including XBOX Live, to connect gamers via a dynamic bar displaying icons of current games being played, scores, and rankings within the online game itself. They are typically displayed in the signature area of the user profile on message boards.

Web 2.0 and Information Sharing

Sharing information has always been a huge part of Web 2.0 - in fact, several sites have dedicated themselves to the topic. The most important Web 2.0 info sharing site is arguably [Yahoo Answers](#), a site where people can select a broad category and ask any question they want to know about - whether its about fixing an engine part or getting pregnancy advice. Respondents can immediately answer to the best of their ability, and get "points" for participating. Following close to this methodology is [Wis.dm](#), another social information question & answer sharing Web 2.0 service.



Web 2.0 and Article Sharing

Article Sharing is the act of posting articles or blog postings for public viewing. This creates a community-based news site, where articles that are of interest are "voted up" (or down, or removed entirely). In essence, the community is in charge, and collectively decides what is interesting or not. The biggest article sharing site on the internet continues to be [Digg.com](#), and other great examples include [Propeller](#), [Reddit.com](#), and [Newsvine](#).



Open Source Content Management Systems (CMS)

Free, open source CMSs are an important part of Web 2.0. They allow regular people to create complex websites with databases and admin panels, and edit the code itself. Read all about CMSs, with many examples:



[Choosing the Best Content Management Software for Your Project](#)

Finding the best Content Management software is indeed the biggest and most difficult step. Can you live with your CMS several years from now? How expandable is it? This guide will get you through these tough issues.

Web 2.0: Blogs and Blogging

Blogging is the practice of maintaining one's own journal or article site for public viewing purposes. Blogging began as a way to create a private or public journal or diary, that friends or the entire public could access. It later evolved into a full-fledged article site that was used to share opinions or create subculture-based communities. Today, it has evolved once again into a money-making and promotional effort. Two of the most successful blog earners are [Shoemoney](#) and [John Chow](#). Even some of the world's most prestigious Fortune 500 companies have caught on to blogging, as seen on [this list](#).



Some of the most popular blogging platforms are [Wordpress.org](#) - a downloadable software package that can be installed on your server, and its lesser popular counterpart: [Wordpress.com](#), Google's [Blogger](#), [Typepad](#), and [Blog.com](#).

Web 2.0 and Wiki

A Wiki, most popularized by the site [Wikipedia](#), is a community-edited encyclopedia. Wiki framework allows for anyone and everyone to edit its content - which includes additions, subtractions and edits to its content. Another example of an implementation of Wiki is seen on [AboutUs.org](#) - a Wiki of website profiles. As Wiki popularity grew, more and more webmasters began creating "niche" Wikis for particular topics (Wikis just for cars, just for computer programming, just for history, etc.)



The most popular Wiki software is [MediaWiki](#), which was used to create Wikipedia. It is a free, open source software package. Other popular packages include [TikiWiki](#) and [PMWiki](#). To see and compare Wiki software packages, visit [Wikimatrix](#).

RSS (Really Simple Syndication)

RSS or Really Simple Syndication is a web feed format that compiles all of the articles on your blog, and formats them in a linear, date-sorted format, which can be "subscribed" to by anyone. In essence, people can check on a site's updates without having to actually visit the site, thanks to the RSS feed (it can be seen as a drop-down list of pages from the browser window, or inserted as an auto-updating list on a website or blog thanks to an applet known as an RSS Feed Aggregator).



The universal RSS logo is a rounded orange box with a dot and wavy lines. By subscribing to an RSS feed, a person can become notified of new articles or changes. It can then be syndicated on another site (through an RSS feed applet), increasing your exposure. *Learn more about [RSS](#)*. Some webmasters have created entire news sites by using RSS feeds from other sites, such as [PopURLs](#). [FriendFeed](#) is a service that lets you collaborate all of your feeds into one big account.

Blogging platforms including but not limited to Wordpress and Blogger have built-in RSS capability. There are many services that help webmasters syndicate, share, or notify other sites about their RSS feed updates. Several good examples are [Technorati](#), [Feedburner](#), [Icerocket](#) and [Syndic8](#).

Many websites do not have RSS functionality right out of the box - therefore, it must be created. You can create an RSS feed for any website using free services like [Feed43](#).

RSS Ping services "ping" or notify other sites when your site has been updated. The aforementioned sites all have ping services, as do [Google Blog ping](#), [Yahoo Publisher Network](#), [Ping-o-matic](#), [MillionRSS](#), [Yahoo Pipes](#), [Pingoat](#), [RSSMicro](#), [Feedster](#), [WeBlogALot](#) and [Weblogs](#), amongst many others.

Web 2.0 and Video Sharing

Video sharing is an incredibly popular and vital part of Web 2.0. Now that creating video and special effects is a feat that can easily be achieved at home, many casual web users are creating their own films, home videos and "vlogs" (video blogs) for the sole purpose of broadcasting them to complete strangers. Through the usage of popular video sharing sites like [Youtube](#), [Veoh](#), [Myspace TV](#), [Yahoo Video](#), [Google Video](#), [vSocial](#), [MetaCafe](#) and others - users can upload their raw videos as they will be automatically formatted, optimized for smaller file size, and be made available for the viewing public. Sites like [Channelme.TV](#) let you create your own video portal + social networking site. The site [SlideShare](#) is like the "Youtube" of PowerPoint presentations, for those looking to upload and share a presentation or webinar.



In Web 2.0 video sites, videos will maintain a hit counter, 5-star rating bar, copyable "share this" line of code for syndication on other websites, and a comments area for visitor feedback.

Web 2.0 and Picture Sharing

Picture sharing has existed long before the concept of Web 2.0, but now takes on an entirely new meaning. With major Web 2.0 image sharing services like [Flickr](#), [PhotoBucket](#) - you can upload and categorize your image based on keywords; linking them to similar images and people. Photo sharing has become so popular, that it has spawned off Photblogging as well (see sites like [Photoblogs](#) for more information). Most important to the Web 2.0 methodology - picture services, including but not limited to Flickr, have dozens of external plugins and widgets that allow images to be pulled and displayed on other external websites.



Web 2.0 and Search Engine Optimization

SEO is a major focus of Web 2.0. It involves the re-structuring of a website to conform to today's search engine specifications, to allow the site to become more easily seen when an internet user searches for a particular subject.



Web 2.0 Reader Feedback

