

LibraryCrunch

Bringing You A "Library 2.0" Perspective, by Michael Casey

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Take My Desktop - Web 2.0 and Libraries

Richard MacManus, in his Web 2.0 Explorer blog entry titled [The Web-based Office Will Have Its Day](#), talks about the many pluses, and few minuses, of a web-based office platform. He details the issues surrounding the corporate world's possible slow acceptance of such tools – security being top on that list. But for libraries, the emergence of these web 2.0 applications means a radically altered landscape for service delivery at our OPACs. Suddenly it does not matter if your library does or does not offer word processing, spreadsheets, and other office apps. Now all of these things are available online – for free.

It is now (NOW) possible to offer customers MS Office-like applications without having to purchase and install them locally. This means no more licensing issues, no more last-minute security update patches, no more local troubleshooting for lost files, misbehaving dictionaries, and malicious macro fears. And while these new apps do not yet offer all of the abilities found within Word (they soon will) they do offer sufficient capabilities to satisfy 90% of our customers' needs.

There are greater possibilities here, as well. With the development of more and more robust web 2.0 applications, the need for locally based software applications is greatly diminished, calling into question the need even for a desktop and the powerful operating system that runs that desktop. Suddenly we face the possibility of running simply a browser to access all of our applications, thereby reducing the hardware requirements of the average computer users – look at [this development project out of MIT](#) for the \$100 laptop, keeping in mind what was just discussed. Where we used to think in terms of open source applications like Open Office we can now think of connectivity as the key – universal connectivity is now the holy grail for cheap computers and computer applications.

Browser + Web 2.0 Applications + Connectivity = Full-featured OPAC

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