

LibraryCrunch

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

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Don't Forget the Need for Constant Change

Jason Boog, writing in [Publish](#), takes a look at this idea called Library 2.0 in an article titled [Library 2.0 Movement Sees Benefits in Collaboration with Patrons](#). Boog writes:

So at the Internet Librarian conference last week, over 100 library professionals speculated about how to survive in a world of Web-based, user-created content.

They've dubbed their initiative Library 2.0.

These innovative librarians realize that some Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs, wikis and online databases like Google Print, are already competing for the attentions of library patrons.

The librarians aim to build a participatory network of libraries using Web resources like blogs, wiki tools and tags.

They hope that the Library 2.0 "movement" will break librarians out of brick-and-mortar establishments and get them to interact with patrons through blog comments, IM and Wiki entries.

But the emphasis on the library as keeper of reliable information remains.

The article includes several excellent comments from experts such as [Jenny Levine](#), [Darlene Fichter](#), [Aaron Schmidt](#), and [Jessamyn West](#). The overall concept of Library 2.0 is presented as: two-way information flow, task sharing (such as tagging, classification, etc.), open services from internal and external sources (read as 'not proprietary'), and aggregating data using customer criteria – all of this being built upon the foundation that is Web 2.0. The article is well done and serves as a very good overview of [Library 2.0](#).

What I would add to this dialogue is the very important role of change to the concept of Library 2.0. Built into every decision making process, every product rolled out to the public, every service released to the customer, must be the underlying assumption that it will not be good enough and must be examined and changed. This is constant beta, or, as Caterina Fake from Flickr said, "[perpetual beta](#)."

Boog quotes Jessamyn West as saying, "Many libraries I work with are in towns where they can't get high-speed access...How can [libraries] be obsolete when people out here aren't even fully using them yet?" What happens when they do get high speed access (which I hope is tomorrow)? Imagine the change curve for those small libraries and their users! Hopefully they have plans in place that can be rolled out as soon as fast access becomes a reality, but the learning curve on both sides of the desk will be steep and the need to revisit and retool those services will be ever-present.

What we need to do is become comfortable in this reality of constant change. We cannot create our service and sit back and watch its success, for as soon as we do that we'll see the next service (perhaps a disruptive service) come along and steal our customers (and our glory) – or perhaps we won't see it until it's too late.

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