

LibraryCrunch

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

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Who Controls It?

[Michael Stephens](#), in his latest [ALA TechSource](#) entry, references a white paper by Ken Chad and Paul Miller titled [Do Libraries Matter? The Rise of Library 2.0](#) (PDF file) that's posted at [Talis](#). I'm not all that familiar with Talis, but I do know that they tout themselves as being ["the market leading provider of products and services for public and academic libraries in the UK and Ireland."](#)

I made the following comment on ALA TechSource regarding the Talis white paper (and not about Michael Stephen's well argued essay):

Regarding the Talis white paper, when we speak in terms of revolution, in this case a revolution in the way library services are conceived and delivered, I am hesitant to look to those companies that fueled library 1.0 as the purveyors of ideas that will bring about our understanding of library 2.0. I appreciate many of the comments made in the Chad and Miller paper, but I imagine that the development of library 2.0 – and the inherent nature of free and open source content, applications and services – rather scares any company currently built upon older, closed, proprietary service delivery models.

Perhaps I am being overly optimistic, but I would like to think that at some point library applications such as catalogs (and the databases that drive them) will not be proprietary middleware written by third party companies but will, instead, be open source applications that pull together the library's catalog data (because the data DOES belong to the library) with an Amazon API. This is nothing new, and has been talked about for some time, such as here at [Library Web Chic](#). We control the data, we tailor the interface, and we harness the community to constantly improve and expand it.

And when Chad and Miller say "relevant aspects of that library experience should be reproduced wherever and whenever the user requires them, without any need to visit a separate web site for the library," I think of such tools as [Ross Singer's](#) new [WAG the Dog Web Localizer](#), which he describes:

Library websites and resources tend to be awkward and non-intuitive (for many reasons, certainly one of which is the rather wide diversity of content and services libraries provide) and most likely wouldn't be the first location that springs in a user's mind when trying to solve problems while on the web. My overarching plan is to deemphasize the importance of "the library website" and instead push our content contextually out to users in the places they would think to look. "Ah, I notice you just searched for 'Hegel's Dialectic' in Wikipedia (which, oddly, has no matches). This search would return 3 results in our catalog. It also returns 253 results from our metasearch application. Would you like to see those results?"

Chad and Miller state, "Library 2.0 is about working with partners and suppliers to increase the availability of information." This democratization of information is an excellent goal, and it is key to the philosophy of Library 2.0. Perhaps it's the cynic in me, but I am a little uncomfortable believing that these changes we refer to as Library 2.0 will be pioneered and initiated by a Talis or SirsiDynix.

Rules of Web 2.0

Richard MacManus over at [Web 2.0 Explorer](#) has been writing a case study of [Yellowikis](#) and its attempt to become the next Yellow Pages. In doing his study, he takes a very fundamental look at what comprises a Web 2.0 service, several of which bear repeating here:

- Any user can both read and write content - adding business listings and editing them. To put it in 'Web 2.0 wanker' terms, it *harnesses collective intelligence*.
- Requires a significant amount of 'trust' in the users.
- Can be deployed via the Web in countries all over the world (see Emily Chang's interview with Paul Youtlen for more details on this aspect).
- Has fast, lightweight and inexpensive development cycles.
- Uses Open Source LAMP technologies (Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP) - meaning it is very cheap to run.

- The content has no copyright and is freely licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License 1.2.
- Can and will hook into other Web systems, e.g. Google Maps. Indeed if it introduces its own APIs, then it will be able to be remixed by other developers.
- Yellowikis will get better the more people use it. The Wikipedia is an excellent example of this.

Posted by Michael on November 19, 2005 08:28 AM | [Permalink](#)

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<http://www.librarycrunch.com/mt/mt-tb.cgi/55>

Listed below are links to weblogs that reference [Who Controls It?](#):

» [Talis begins to describe vision for Library 2.0](#) from panlibus

One of the white papers that we released last week for Insight was a first iteration of Do Libraries Matter: the rise of Library 2.0 [PDF download]. This was written by Ken Chad and myself, but incorporates ideas being... [\[Read More\]](#)

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» [Blyberg on the ILS/Library 2.0 Discussions](#) from Tame The Web: Libraries and Technology

<http://www.blyberg.net/2005/11/20/ils-customer-bill-of-rights/> Please read John Blyberg's ILS Customer Bill of Rights. It's excellent and part of the discussion playing out concerning Library 2.0, reations with vendors and the future of libraries. I'm ... [\[Read More\]](#)

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➔ Comments

Michael,

I share your skepticism that the established library services vendors can be looked to as leaders in any sort of movement to open up our data. In fact, I recently left such a company precisely because I'm frustrated with that business model in the face of the 'library 2.0' paradigm. However, I am not sure that we should discount the role of established vendors' products in helping to actualize 'library 2.0'.

The fact is that, because of widespread adoption of ILS and Digital Library products from commercial vendors, most libraries already have highly-structured data available in an electronic format that is likely to be portable in some way or another. Granted, they may not have the web services APIs that we've come to know and love with web 2.0 applications, but we almost always have some way of getting the data out and putting them into some other nifty applications that can offer the kind of services that we want. So the established vendors have already provided one very big piece of the puzzle for us.

<http://jonvw.com/articles/2005/11/19/adding-to-the-ils>

Posted by: [Jonathan Williams](#) | [November 19, 2005 01:07 PM](#)

Michael

thanks for your comments on the paper, many of which I agree with.

I, too, look forward to a time when "library applications such as catalogs (and the databases that drive them) will not be proprietary middleware", which is exactly why we have had a long involvement with standards-making processes such as those supported by NISO, W3C (of which we are, unusually amongst ILS companies, a member), BIC, VIEWS and more. We are increasing these involvements as the environment around us shifts to a degree that some of our long-held desires actually become achievable.

You said "I am a little uncomfortable believing that these changes we refer to as Library 2.0 will be pioneered and initiated by a Talis or SirsiDynix."

I cannot speak for other companies and their ability or willingness to engage in anything other than the perpetuation of their legacy business models, but we at least have every confidence in our ability to do just what you doubt, and to provide sound Library 2.0 foundations upon which we, our customers, our competitors, and others can build in a fundamentally different way to that in which things have been done in the past.

Watch this space or, even better, work with us to ensure that everything we do meets your needs, too.

Posted by: [Paul Miller](#) | [November 21, 2005 08:08 AM](#)

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Posted by: [white paper](#) | [February 25, 2006 11:18 PM](#)

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