

LibraryCrunch

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

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Whatever tools take us there are the ones we will use

[Michael Stephens](#) mentions Library 2.0 and a post from this blog in [one of his recent entries](#). A [comment to that entry](#) takes issue with technology and the role it plays in Library 2.0. This is my response.

I think the first thing we need to realize is that Library 2.0 is not a fixed target, and every library's starting point is going to differ. If you've integrated change into every level of your service creation structure then kudos to your system, but most libraries have not reached that point yet, and for them, reaching that stage is a major mile marker on the way to 2.0.

It's easy to say that technology is a panacea for all library service woes, but it's simply not so. New technologies have been allowing us to provide better and better service for years; it's just that we've been providing that service to the same customer base, without effectively reaching out to that part of the demographic that have never been library users. Reaching this diverse group – this long tail, if you will – is a fundamental goal of 2.0.

I would never argue that technology's role is unimportant in reaching new levels of library service delivery – itself a major goal of library 2.0. But technology must never be viewed as the reason for the change, merely the [tool](#).

I think it's fundamentally flawed to say that technology is to libraries as oxygen is to our lives. Were technology to disappear (or stop advancing) today, libraries would be able to continue providing critical services and would be able to expand and change to meet the needs of our users (and those we want to be our users), all within the framework of what is available. This fluidity, this ability to use whatever resources are available, be they high tech or not, in an efficient and effective manner, is what Library 2.0 symbolizes.

Every library has a different starting point. Every library has a different set of constraints it must operate within – most often financial and political. And every library has a slightly different mission. Crafting better and better services, giving customers more and more control over library offerings, and reaching a greater and greater proportion of the population – all while seeking to fulfill that mission -- is the goal of Library 2.0.

Whatever tools take us there are the ones we will use. Many of those tools will come from the world of Web 2.0, and many of the tools we use will have *nothing* to do with technology, but will instead be ways of thinking and philosophical approaches to librarianship.

Posted by Michael on December 6, 2005 07:29 PM | [Permalink](#)

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» [Talis and Library 2.0](#) from LibraryCrunch

Talis is throwing together a round-table to discuss Library 2.0. I'm not sure what to think of this, though I hope that John Blyberg is invited to be a part of their discussion. Talis has taken a very proactive... [\[Read More\]](#)

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» [Knowledge and knowing in library and information science](#) from ...the thoughts are broken...

This post was started and mostly written on 9 Dec 05. It could probably stand updating with some more recent links but I'll let it stand for now. I have finally started reading the following book as I won't be able to renew it much longer: John M. Budd... [\[Read More\]](#)

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