

## Web 2.0, Library 2.0, and the New World of Social Tools for Libraries

By *Carla Steinberg Pfahl*

There has been a lot of talk about the terms, Web 2.0 and Library 2.0, in the past year or so, but what do they mean, and how do they affect libraries (and librarians and library staff) in general?

To explain what Web 2.0 is we need to first understand what Web 1.0 is: the web's first generation defined as a user searching or browsing sites to find and access information, products, and services. Web 2.0 evolves from this structure to a platform that supports relationships and services – both human and automated – across sites. And, in the process, Web 2.0 is dramatically reshaping the way that we use and interact with the Internet.

Web 1.0 relies on computers to generate and organize content and taxonomies are used for structure. With the Social Web, people generate, organize, and analyze content and folksonomies (i.e., a decentralized, social approach to creating classification data) are used for structure.

From this, we transition into Library 2.0, which means turning library websites into interactive, user-centric sites that allow for user-contributed content and media-rich information, such as e-mail alerts, blogs, and intranet postings. This is where the library and the user partner to create and enhance library services through user needs, perspectives, practices, and skills in information research. Librarians and library staff become, as we always have, the guides for this new format.

There are many different things happening in the Library 2.0 world. Libraries are working to best utilize tools to reach out to connect with patrons and their community. When considering the need for libraries to increase their presence in the community and create an identity, the question arises: is creating a virtual presence something our libraries and we, as librarians, should pursue? While researching this topic, I went into the blogosphere to see what others were saying about this issue. There were a surprisingly mixed bag of ideas being talked about. Basically, the arguments stated that, if you're going to do it, do it right.

In my search for library sites that stood out on websites like MySpace and Facebook, in blogs, and in other social tools, I found some common themes that highlighted and separated the good from the bad. If you are going to create a site and profile for your library on MySpace and/or Facebook, you need to consider your goal. Are you creating a profile to look cool — or to make your patrons more aware of your library? Do you have an



*Carla Steinberg Pfahl*

agenda to support? Posting a picture and a few slogans about your library will not grab your patron's attention. It is more important for your site to be useful to your patrons.

Also, librarians and library staff should use MySpace, Facebook, or other social networking software that are used by patrons to house the library's portal. It is another point of access. (Incidentally, Sociableblog, <http://www.sociableblog.com/>, is a great place to learn how to best leverage use of sites such as FaceBook, MySpace, YouTube, and other social sites to reach out and connect with people.)

In the case of blogs, many libraries don't write posts that create an atmosphere of discussion or elicit feedback. Ann Arbor Public Library, however, does a good job of creating news items that encourage feedback. For instance, to advertise a recent exhibit at the library, staff posted a story asking what patrons were doing on the day the exhibit opened. This is a great way to begin an online dialog, and blogs are great vehicles to generate these types of discussion. Having a place for interaction gives patrons a voice. It also creates a safe environment where patrons feel that they can express themselves. Libraries can benefit from this by making their online environment feel like a community with contributions from patrons, employees, directors, and board members. They can also receive valuable feedback that library staff might not obtain through traditional means.

The University of Pennsylvania has begun a social bookmarking experiment with their online catalog. PennTags (<http://tags.library.upenn.edu/>) allows affiliated users to "communally collect and share web sites, links, blogs, and other content."

Also, OCLC has begun to allow users to contribute content to library records as part of their publicly accessible WorldCat.Org, and, now, with their subscription version as well. Users are able to add notes, tables of contents, and reviews. The content is not blended into the original MARC records; rather, it is listed as user-contributed information.

As I've said, it's important to have a strategy and make good use of software tools to enhance your library's presence and reach your users. Maybe you just want to work with one type of tool, such as a MySpace page. That's fine; you don't need to do everything. If you're going to have a MySpace page, give it purpose and use it as a portal to library information and services. If you're going to have a blog, update it regularly and encourage feedback from your readers. If you're going to allow user-contributed content to your site, find answers to these questions: will it add value to your site, for your users, for the community. The tools need to be worthwhile for you as well as your community.

### *MINITEX Reference Services and Web 2.0 Tools*

MINITEX Reference Services are incorporating more and more Web 2.0 tools into what we do and how we communicate with our community of libraries and library staff. We have very active blogs (Reference Services Blog, Digital Reference Blog, and the ELM Blog — <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/publications/blogs/>), that allow us to post current and pertinent information about related information.

**MINITEX**  
Library Information Network

## Reference Services

Providing reference referral and training services to all library types across the state of Minnesota

MARCH 6, 2008

### Nancy Pearl Workshops in Minnesota!

ADDED DATE & ADDED LOCATION

Nancy Pearl - Improving Readers' Advisory Skills Workshop

Sunday, March 30, 2008  
2-4 pm  
St. Paul -- Jeanne d'Arc Auditorium, College of St. Catherine, 2004 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105

Note: The time is 2-4pm for this workshop only; all other workshops are 9-noon. And, 2 hours of certification credit are available for the March 30 workshop. The other workshops last 3 hours and are eligible for 3 hours of certification credit.

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**Workshop Announcement Details - All Locations:**

**Doorways into Reading: Improving Readers' Advisory Skills (with Nancy Pearl)**

Nancy Pearl will present this workshop at 8 Minnesota locations. The session will focus on defining, refining, and using the concept of doorways into reading; the role of mood and motivation in selecting a good book to read; as well as offering tips and tricks to use in readers' advisory work at the reference desk. The workshop covers the readers' advisory transaction and readers' advisory tools.

**Presenter:** Nancy Pearl. The New York Times calls her the talk of librarian circles. Readers cannot get enough of her recommendations while bookstores and libraries offer standing room only whenever she visits. Since the release of the best-selling Book Lust in 2003 and the Librarian Action Figure modeled in her likeness, Nancy Pearl has become a rock star among readers and the tastemaker people turn to when deciding what to read next.

**Cost:** No charge! See funding statement below.

**Audience:** Library staff from all types of libraries and anyone working on the Minnesota Certification Program. (You do not have to be a participant in Minnesota Certification Program to attend the workshop.)

Minnesota Certification Program Competencies Addressed:  
Readers' Advisory: Public Services AB, A9, B2, B6, B9, B11

Registration: Register by sending an email with your name and affiliation to Rebecca Patton, [rpattton@arrowhead.lib.mn.us](mailto:rpattton@arrowhead.lib.mn.us). Advance registration for the 3/30 workshop is requested, but not required.

Registration Deadline: For the March 30 workshop, there is no registration deadline.

SEARCH

Search this blog:

www.flickr.com

What is this?

RELATED LINKS

- MINITEX Reference Services
- MINITEX Digital Reference Blog
- MINITEX ELM Blog
- MINITEX CPERS Blog

CATEGORIES

- Conferences
- Digital Collections
- ELM
- Intriguing Websites
- On the Road With MINITEX
- Publications
- Fellow Librarians' Publications
- Reference Services
- Reference Tools
- Teacher Resources
- Webinars

ARCHIVES

- March 2008
- February 2008
- January 2008
- December 2007

### *MINITEX Reference Blog*

The Digital Reference Blog has really turned into a reference tech source blog where we post information about latest Web/Library 2.0 tools and how they can be used for libraries and reference services in particular. We also talk about latest trends, presentations happening around Minnesota and nationally as well as reviews and reports concerning reference services, internet use, and social trends. We have found the blogs to be an excellent form of communication with our audiences and receive comments and feedback to that effect.

We have also begun publishing podcasts about once or twice per quarter. Usually, the podcasts are interviews with persons in the library profession and range in topic from library careers and professional development to sessions with students and presentations. (There is even a podcast about our day at the 2007 Turtle Derby with our turtle “Speedy Reference”!) Podcasts can be found under the section *On the Road with MINITEX* in the Reference Blog ([http://blogs.minitex.umn.edu/reference/on\\_the\\_road\\_with\\_minitex/](http://blogs.minitex.umn.edu/reference/on_the_road_with_minitex/)).

We have also added a Flickr badge to our blog and Reference website (<http://www.minitex.umn.edu/reference/>). A Flickr badge is a widget from your personal Flickr account that you can add to any webpage that will display a random set of images from your account. What is Flickr? Flickr is another great social networking site that allows users to create a free account and post digital images with tags and titles for each image so they can be sorted and arranged as the searcher chooses with the option of making the images public, for all to see, or private, viewable only by certain people. MINITEX Reference Services staff go all across the State meeting and talking with staff of many libraries and giving presentations, workshops, and training sessions, and we’ve had a lot of fun documenting them with photos and sharing that with our community. The pictures help put a human face on our services and personalize the services that we provide and allow us to connect with our community in a fun and informal way.



*MINITEX Reference Photos on Flickr*


We have incorporated other tools into our services, including short video training and tutorial clips to our archive of webinar and presentations to enhance our training program (<http://www.minitex.umn.edu/events/training/archived.asp>). These are intended to be prerecorded short chunks of information to provide the user with lecture-type instruction with a guided visual demonstration to accommodate and interest a broader range of learning styles. We have sessions on setting up blogs and wikis, del.icio.us, setting up and running an Instant Messaging Reference service, podcasting, website creation, and much more.

These new tools can be fun, and the learning curve is quite low. Also, the technology used for many of these tools is free and widely accessible. We do not see these fun Web 2.0 tools as toys or fads, but, as means of communication and connection. We use many of them to reach out to our community in a variety of ways, giving our audience options for communication, training, and maintaining a relationship.

It is important to stay on top of these new forms of virtual interaction because they are what our patrons are using on their own and with other groups. They will look to communicate and interact with libraries in similar ways. If libraries and librarians are not there to meet them in this environment, we may be overlooked. As I mentioned earlier, we should become guides to this new format and partner with the user to create and enhance library services through user needs, perspectives, practices and skills in information research.

If you are interested in learning more Minnesota's seven multicounty, multitype library systems launched a 12-week "23 Things on a Stick: A Library Learning 2.0 Program" online on Jan. 20. Staff in academic, school, public and special libraries, as well as members of library governing and advisory boards are invited to participate in this fun, self-paced program that encourages participants to experiment with various Web 2.0 tools including photo editing, wikis, blogs, RSS, and more. Those who complete all 23 Things on a Stick within 12 weeks will win a completion prize. More about this program can be found at: [www.23thingsonastick.blogspot.com](http://www.23thingsonastick.blogspot.com).

|  FLAG BLOG | Next Blog»



## A Library Learning 2.0 Program

SATURDAY

### Welcome to 23 Things On a Stick

Have you ever thought, "Gosh, I wish I had time to learn more about Flickr, wikis, or (enter your Web 2.0 tool here)?" Well, this is your chance to take the time to focus on your personal and professional development around Web 2.0 tools. It's fun to explore these tools and figure out ways to use them in the library, with your personal Web sites, or in other ways.

*23 Things On a Stick* is the Minnesota twist on the Library Learning 2.0 program developed by Helene Blowers at the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenberg County and adopted or adapted by many other libraries and organizations since then. *23 Things On a Stick* was developed by the seven multitype multicounty library systems as part of the staff development the multitypes offer in their regions.

#### Who Can Participate

This program is open to all staff in any Minnesota library—public, academic, school, or special—as well as members of their Governing Boards, their Friends groups, or Advisory Groups. *23 Things on a Stick* is approved for Minnesota Voluntary Certification for Library Employees and CEUs. Experienced Web 2.0 users as well as novices and everyone in between are invited to join. This is self-paced and self-directed.

**Registration begins January 20, 2008. You must register your blog by February 20 (yes, we extended it a few days!) and then complete all 23 Things by April 16, during National Library Week. Each person participating**

*This statewide program is brought to you by Minnesota's seven multicounty multitype library systems (multitypes). The multitypes improve library services by promoting & facilitating cooperation among the academic, public, school library media centers, & special libraries within their regions. This program is part of the professional development that all of the multitypes provide for the library staff of their members.*

#### What Are the 23 Things On a Stick?

Here are the Things

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#### About 23 Things On a Stick

Contact Your Multitype

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FAQs

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Web 2.0 Hints

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#### 23 Things On a Stick on the Web

23 Things On a Stick Ning

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23 Things On a Stick Wiki

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MARCH 21, 2008