

# A Brief Guide to Web 2.0

## Social Networking (Web 2.0)

**Definition:** Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making individual connections. While social networking has gone on almost as long as societies themselves have existed, the unparalleled potential of the Internet to promote such connections is only now being fully recognized and exploited, through web-based groups established for that purpose. Based on the concept of six degrees of separation, social networking establishes interconnected Internet communities (sometimes known as personal networks) that help people make connections with people they would be unlikely to have met otherwise.

**Examples:** Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>), LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>)

## SMS – Short Message Service

**Definition:** Short Message Service, commonly referred to as "text messaging," is a service for sending short messages to mobile devices, including cellular phones, smart phones and PDAs. SMS messages can be sent to digital phones in a number of ways, including: digital phone to digital phone, web application to digital phone, and IM to digital phone (and vice versa), among others.

**Examples:** Ask your middle-schooler or teenager

## RSS – Really Simple Syndication

**Definition:** RSS is an XML-based (eXtensible Markup Language) vocabulary that specifies a means of describing news or other web content that is available for "feeding" (distribution or syndication) from an online publisher to web users. A person who wants to publish some of web content, such as news headlines or stories, creates a description of the content and specifically where the content is on her site in the form of an RSS document. The publishing site then registers its RSS document with one of several existing directories of RSS publishers. A user with a web browser or a special program that can read RSS-distributed content (an RSS aggregator or browser) can read periodically-provided distributions.

**Examples:** SharpReader (<http://www.sharpreader.net/>), Google Reader (<http://www.google.com/reader>)

## Blog

**Definition:** A blog (short for web log) is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs are defined by their format: a series of entries posted to a single page in reverse-chronological order. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or reflect the purpose of the web site that hosts the blog. Blogs often include links to other sites the author favors, especially those that support a point being made on a post. The author of a blog is often referred to as a blogger. Many blogs syndicate their content to subscribers using RSS.

**Examples:** Alltop (<http://alltop.com/>), A List Bloggers (<http://www.alistbloggers.org/>)

## Microblog

**Definition:** Microblogging is the practice of sending brief posts to a personal blog on a microblogging web site. Microposts can be made public on a web site and/or distributed to a private group of subscribers. Subscribers can read microblog posts online, request that updates be delivered in real time to their desktops as IMs, or send microposts to a mobile device as an SMS text message.

**Examples:** Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>)

## Podcast

**Definition:** Podcasting is the preparation and distribution of audio and/or video files using RSS to the computers of subscribed users. These files may then be uploaded to digital music or multimedia players like the iPod. A podcast can be easily created from a digital audio file. The podcaster first saves the file as an MP3 and then uploads it to the Web site of a service provider. The MP3 file gets its own URL, which is inserted into an RSS XML document as an enclosure within an XML tag. Once a podcast

has been created, it can be registered with content aggregators for inclusion in podcast directories. People can browse through the categories or subscribe to specific podcast RSS feeds which will download to their audio players automatically when they next connect. Content producers are increasingly turning to podcasting as an inexpensive and user-friendly new distribution channel that has the potential to reach a large audience.

**Examples:** iTunes (<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>), Podcast Pickle (<http://www.podcastpickle.com/>)

## Wiki

**Definition:** A wiki is a program that allows users to collaborate in forming the content of a web site. With a wiki, any user can create and edit the site content, including other users' contributions, using a regular web browser. Wiki web sites operate on the principle of collaborative trust. The term comes from the word "wikiwiki," which means "fast" in Hawaiian. The simplest wiki programs allow editing of text and hyperlinks only. More advanced wikis make it possible to add or change images, tables, and certain interactive components such as games.

**Examples:** Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>), Associapedia (<http://www.asaecenter.org/wiki/>)

## Collaborative Software

**Definition:** Collaborative software is a group of programs that help people work together collectively while located remotely.

**Examples:** Central Desktop (<http://www.centraldesktop.com/>), Basecamp (<http://www.basecamp.com/>)

## List Servers

**Definition:** A list server is a program that handles subscription requests for an electronic mailing list and distributes new messages, newsletters, or other postings from the list's members to the entire list of subscribers as they occur or are scheduled.

**Examples:** Lyris (<http://www.lyris.com/>), Majordomo (<http://www.greatcircle.com/majordomo/>)

## Internet Forum

**Definition:** An Internet forum is a web application for holding discussions and posting user-generated content. The terms "forum" and "board" may refer to the entire community or to a specific sub-forum dealing with a distinct topic. Messages within these sub-forums are then displayed either in chronological order or as threaded discussions. A sense of virtual community often develops around forums that have regular users.

**Examples:** phpBB (<http://www.phpbb.com/>), Lithium (<http://www.lithium.com/>)

## Mashups

**Definition:** A mashup is a web page or application that integrates complementary elements from two or more sources. The term "mashup" originated in the music industry. Mashups are often created by using a development approach called Ajax. Mashups are part of an ongoing shift towards more a more interactive and participatory web with more user-defined content and services.

**Examples:** HousingMaps (<http://www.housingmaps.com/>), Twitvision (<http://www.twitvision.com/>)

## Social Bookmarking

**Definition:** Social bookmarking is a user-defined taxonomy system for bookmarks. This is sometimes called a folksonomy, and the bookmarks are referred to as tags. Unlike storing bookmarks in a folder on your computer, tagged pages are stored on the web and can be accessed from any computer. Web sites dedicated to social bookmarking provide users with a place to store, categorize, annotate and share favorite web pages and files.

**Examples:** Del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>), Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>), YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/>)

## **IM - Instant Messaging**

**Definition:** Instant messaging, often shortened to simply "IM" or "IMing," is the exchange of text messages through a software application in real-time. IM software generally includes the ability to easily see whether a chosen friend, co-worker or "buddy" is online and connected through the selected service. Instant messaging differs from ordinary email both in the immediacy of the message exchange and in the simplicity of continued exchange. Most exchanges are text-only, although some services now allow voice messaging, file sharing and even video chat when both users have cameras.

**Examples:** MSN Messenger (<http://webmessenger.msn.com/>), Apple iChat (<http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/ichat.html>)

## **Semantic Web (Web 3.0)**

**Definition:** The idea of the Semantic Web was created by World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee. Berners-Lee's concept is that the web as a whole can be made more intelligent and perhaps even intuitive about how to serve a user's needs. Although search engines index much of the web's content, they have little ability to select the pages that a user really wants or needs. Berners-Lee foresees a number of ways in which developers and authors, singly or in collaboration, can use self-descriptions and other techniques so that context-sensitive programs can intuit what users want.