

Web Learning Integration and Community E-spaces for Libraries

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Web Integration:

Libraries have been integrating together services, collections, facilities and more to offer the best information and learning opportunities to their users for ...well... for forever! As new technology, ideas, and new models to deliver information become available, libraries have always tried them on for size and used them effectively to enhance access and learning. Enter the Internet and people are using web browsers to find a daunting array of information online. Web integration in non-tech speak can mean taking streams of that vast amount of information and trying to make sense of it while also extending what can be done with it.

E-spaces

Libraries are also very much about place and despite all that online access, users are flocking to their local libraries to take advantage of new services and facilities to connect, attend community events, use a computer to surf or network online - and they are using the collections while they visit. E-spaces are another way to make the vast Web more comfortable and localized for a group or community of users. Libraries no longer wait for the user to come to them, increasingly libraries are going to where they live.

Web and Library 2.0

Wikipedia: definition of: “Web Integration is leveraging the enormous success of the Web Browser to access services and information on the Web. The services can for example include lookup in news archives, searching cheap flights and ordering cinema tickets, even editing Wikipedia. Information can for example include search results from Google or content from any other online information source, even RSS feeds. Web Integration allows for fast integration of any Web browsable content, data, and applications into portals, wireless devices, content management systems, applications, databases, RSS feeds, REST or web services.”

Social Software:

Software that allows for user-driven computer communication and sharing, like the media share sites for video, photos, or bookmarks, or lists of materials and the social network services like Facebook or MySpace, gaming sites that invite group activities or are stand alone, software that provides for online collaboration such as with a wiki or blogs and the updates from RSS feeds (aka news feeds. These may be aggregated on one web page for one stop shopping and easy review. These new services, tools and software are allowing the creation of whole new online communities that are seeing phenomenal growth of users. Users want to connect to others to create and maintain new relationships in these communities that are important for school, work or fun. They want to create their own sources online and collaborate with community members. They want some control over their community, want to share but have an identity, want to have impact but when, where, and how they choose to.

Social Software and Libraries

Libraries want to offer services to these communities, to extend traditional library services to them by offering connections to them, by becoming a part of them, providing information on how to use them to both users and library staff. They are finding new and novel ways to utilize them in library work, but above all to extend and enhance information access. Libraries are taking one or more of the tools, software, and services and creating new opportunities for users.

Examples and samples on how some of these libraries are using them follow: (shown at presentation)

- New E spaces with a user group in mind
- My Space and Facebook library sites
 - MySpace or Facebook PLUS with newsreaders for blog entries or feeds and widgets for communication
- Gaming for literacy
- Book lovers recommendations review and more
- Managing lists
- Tutorials and Guides
- Media Sharing
- Tagging Content

An ultimate Library Mash up? Web Junction (walk through web integration)

Web Learning Challenges

- User communities to reach
- Localize/tailor more content
- User customization of more content
- Privacy
- Taking risks