Collaboration 2.0

Technology and Best Practices for Successful Collaboration in a Web 2.0 World

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“Collaboration 2.0” Book Excerpt

Technology and Best Practices for Successful Collaboration in a Web 2.0 World

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4 Collaboration 1.0

"Collaboration on a book is the ultimate unnatural act."—Tom Clancy

Collaboration 1.0 was mastering the art of working with others who were essentially co-located. They were in close physical proximity, so you could touch, feel, see, and even smell them as you worked together. That made collaboration easier, but as Thomas Friedman pointed out in his book of the same name, *The World Is Flat!* and that has demanded new kinds of tools, processes, and awareness.

Focus on Content

From 1990-2000, most collaboration was focused inside the enterprise or around groups and teams within an organization. Figure 12 looks at the evolution of the Web from 1.0 – 4.0, right now we are in Web 2.0 (the social web), but by the end of the decade (given the pace of technology innovation) we should start to move into Web 3.0 (the semantic Web) regardless of naysayers.

We can see some of this starting through the standardization of APIs that have helped the thousands of mashups to occur. A *mashup* (web application hybrid), according to Wikipedia, is "a web application that combines data and/or functionality from more than one source."

We also are starting to see bots, intelligent agents and "augmented meeting environments" beginning to emerge as part of Web 3.0 (but more on those later).

This figure starts in the lower left and shows some of the tools and characteristics of Web 1.0, which I like to call "the content web."

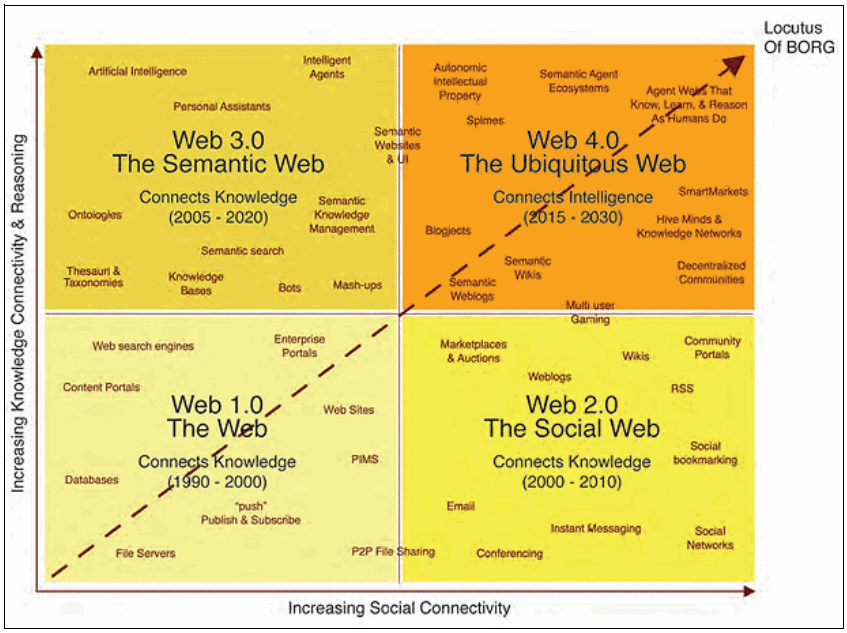

Figure 1: Evolution from Web 1.0 to Web 4.0[11]

Web 2.0 came to describe almost any site, service, or technology that promotes sharing and collaboration right down to the Net's grass roots. That includes blogs and wikis, tags and RSS feeds, del.icio.us (social

11. From Nova Spivak, Radar Networks & Mills Davis, Project 10x.

tagging) and Flickr, MySpace, and YouTube. Because the concept blankets so many disparate ideas, some have questioned how meaningful—and how useful—it really is, but there is little doubt it owns a spot in our collective consciousness. Whether or not it makes sense, we now break the history of the Web into two distinct stages: Today we have Web 2.0, and prior to that, there was Web 1.0, which was mostly the "content and search" web. With Web 1.0, we published static web sites, which people could read but there was little interaction. With Web 2.0, web sites are much more dynamic and there is a recognized interaction between people.

Interestingly, a recent Pew study found in a survey that 73% of U.S. adults own a cell phone, 68% have a desktop computer, 30% possess a laptop, and 73% connect to the Internet, but very few use them to express themselves publicly via Web 2.0 applications. The study defines Web 2.0 users as people who take advantage of technology "to express themselves online and participate in the commons of cyberspace," including maintaining a personal Web site, blogging, vlogging, remixing media or sharing new-media creations. *Only 8 percent of U.S. adults are "deep users" of Web 2.0 features.*[12]

Web 2.0 vs. Enterprise 2.0

The Web 2.0 *movement* has been gathering strength over the last few years. It espouses not only technology philosophies (ease-of-use, web-based, true multimedia, the use of broadband and mobile technologies), but also suggested behaviors (transparency, immediacy, participation, responsiveness, etc.). But Web 2.0 is very different from Enterprise 2.0: where Web 2.0 is a consumer phenomenon, Enterprise 2.0 is more focused on how to apply these technologies in a more secure and managed way to a well-known population.

Some of the characteristics that define Enterprise 2.0 include:

- Choice of distribution, SaaS, or licensed software
- Can be bought as a series of services

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12. Candace Lombardi, *Wired But Not Web 2.0? That's Normal Study Says*, http://tinyurl.com/2hhub8, May 7, 2007.

- Maintenance and support are separate services and don't always have to be purchased from the vendor but can be acquired from an ecosystem of partners (SAP offers third party maintenance through its TomorrowNow unit to Oracle apps customers)
- Bug fixes and upgrades happen automatically for all customers (on a service)
- Tools to provide process management, configuration, conversion, integration, testing, systems management, and end user training minimize expensive labor
- All service partners are vetted and certified
- Support transparency on product/service quality, customer support, etc. (as service)
- Provides a clear API and certification for integration of third party software (e.g., salesforce.com's AppExchange, Facebook API)
- Actively encourages an on-line developer/integrator community and pushes for an "open source" licensing of community intellectual property
- Is transparent with the customer about components/services, discounts and taxes
- Shares progress with customer base (part of transparency) on a regular basis on implementation and support metrics (salesforce.com provides metrics on its on-line performance)

What are some of the characteristics of Enterprise 1.0? What is driving the Enterprise to change to 2.0 (the characteristics and drivers are summarized in Table 2).

Table 2: A Comparison of Enterprise 1.0 and 2.0 Characteristics and Drivers

Enterprise 1.0	Enterprise 2.0	Drivers
Static content and web pages, focus on content	Dynamic content, focus on interaction	Consumer Web 2.0 and social networking tools
Messages pushed by e-Mail	Information pulled through RSS feeds	Users want to personalize their information.
Content produced, and edited according to policy	Content from blogs, wikis, and other participatory sites	User created content
Asynchronous interactions (e-mail)	Synchronous interactions (IM, Chat and SMS)	Net Generation, growing up with computers
IT imposed control of technology	Individuals use new technologies and create content	Situational applications, and IT backlog
Search and Browse for information	Publish and subscribe to information feeds	Overwhelming amount of information available
Transactional oriented interactions	Relationship oriented interactions	Expertise discovery, cross organizational teams
Organizational Taxonomy	Folksonomy	Tagging of content for individual use
One application for everyone	Individual and niche applications	IT backlog and situational applications

Tools like wikis are taking hold in the enterprise, especially in the R&D, IT, and Marketing areas. The use of online communities for customer service and support is also getting traction. But things move a bit more slowly in the enterprise than in the consumer space, and I expect it will take the rest of the decade for these Web 2.0 technologies to morph into something that does not scare the pants off of an IT person, and to get widespread adoption across the enterprise. However, the biggest push back from IT folks is in regard to security.

Collaboration and Security

Since September 11th, 2001, security is at the top of many people's minds, terrorism is a constant news topic, and the majority has learned to adapt to the security measures at the airports. The directives have grown out of the Homeland Security Act for all government intelligence

agencies to be willing and able to share information easily with each other. They must collaborate. But with increased access to information comes the accompanying increase in security risks.

From my experience consulting with several of the three-letter-acronym agencies, I can tell you that the cultures there are anything but collaborative, and between the “turf wars” and a culture of secrecy, it is hard to imagine even mandated collaboration being successful.

Security and collaboration do not have to be in conflict. Rather you can develop an infrastructure that can support both behaviors. Traditionally, the most frequently used tool for collaboration is e-mail. There are an estimated 30 billion e-mails sent every day (of which 20 billion are likely spam). When you consider that e-mail is not secure, that is a lot of opportunity for security breaches to occur.

Oops!

I recently received an e-mail from the CEO of a well-known software company. In it, he asked for a review and comments on the company’s sales forecasts for last year. I realized right away that the message and the attached files had been sent by mistake and were really meant for another “David;” he’d simply selected the wrong e-mail address from his list and now I was looking at confidential company information and could have perused the finance spreadsheets as well if I’d wanted to. I was, of course, discrete. And when he later called, realizing what he’d done and asking me to ignore the message, I promised I would. But the situation was embarrassing for him and a security blunder of the first order.

Despite the lack of security, billions of private communications are sent around the globe with a touch of a button every day. One of the things we need to balance in collaborating with others is risk against reward. Our communication gets to the other person faster than snail mail, so the cycle time for many (collaborative) processes is quicker. This is a big benefit, and cycle times can be reduced even further with instant messaging (IM/Chat) and other real-time collaboration tools.

No Substitute for You

Thus far, no collaboration technology takes the place of F2F meetings. However, they can go far to *augment* such meetings. Initial meetings are best in person, to establish trust with the other person (or people) before each is willing to share information (and collaborate). Humans pick up 75% to 80% of situational information about another person from visual, olfactory, auditory, gestures and other such physical cues. Once a relationship has been established, then it is much easier to continue on electronically, with e-mail, IM, or other collaborative technologies. If you simply can't be there in person, online collaboration is the next best thing.

There seems to be a generational issue around this, for example, for Baby Boomers (1943-1963) and older adults, the initial F2F meeting seems to be required because that is how we learned to establish trust. However, that does not seem to be the case for the "Net Generation" (1977-1997), who grew up with computers and meeting others online (and trusting them), seems as natural to them as breathing.

Today's distributed teams probably are a mix of generations, which can pose a problem for the team manager, as he/she might have to support different styles for different team members.

Security and Collaborative Selection: A Case Study

In 2005, we consulted with a Silicon Valley tech company that was interested in standardizing on IM and Web-conferencing tools across its organization (Stage 4 in our Evolution of Collaboration in the Enterprise model – see Chapter 15). We did our usual assessment and set off to interview all of the stakeholder groups. What was interesting was that the customer support group—which was on the East Coast—was one of the biggest users of IM (for back channel chat while on the phone with a caller), but was the least worried about IM security.

When we asked about this, they replied (a bit defensively) "This is not secret stuff we are talking about, and even though IM is not encrypted and is going out in plain text over the Internet, how is someone going to find a specific IM in all the billions of IMs that are happening every minute?"

When we talked with other groups within this organization, they all seemed to have a different view on security, and the company also recently hired their first “security officer.” Fortunately, our assignment was not to develop a security policy for the enterprise. We talked with the new security officer, who was horrified by what he saw, and was working furiously to develop a security policy for IM and web conferencing for the organization that would likely be patterned after their intact e-mail security policy.

In working with other clients in more regulated industries (e.g., Financial Services, Health Care, Government, etc.), security and governance issues were much more top-of-mind, and often were a deciding factor in selecting a collaborative technology for the organization.

But no evolution occurs in a vacuum. Even while we were using Web 1.0 technologies, early adopters were starting to use Web 2.0 technologies. So now that Web 2.0 is in full swing with consumers and starting with the enterprise, what does this foretell for Web 3.0?

Web 3.0: The Semantic Web

Web 3.0 or the “Semantic Web,” as it was named by Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the (first) World Wide Web. In essence, “the Semantic Web will be a “place”—a combination of technologies, systems, networks, standards, workflows, taxonomies, ontologies existing in the ether of cyberspace—where machines will be able to read Web pages much as humans read them. It will be a place where search engines and software agents can better crawl the Net assembling bodies of context-sensitive content based on explicit and implicit requests. While Web 3.0 will not be any more interactive then Web 2.0, per se, it will feature a greater degree of standardization for coupling content, applications and meaning, along with better tools to find people, web objects and content.”[13]

13. Tim Berners-Lee, Semantic Web Road map, http://tinyurl.com/gtbxb, September 1998.

The Semantic Web isn't a new idea. This notion of an interdependent network of machines that can better read, understand, and process all that data floating through cyberspace first entered the public consciousness in 2001, when a story appeared in Scientific American. Coauthored by Berners-Lee, the article describes a world in which software "agents" perform Web-based tasks we often struggle to complete on our own.

In the chapter on Collaboration 2.0, we will discuss how these trends are coming together with trends in collaboration to make a whole new online experience, one which may just improve upon F2F meetings or other in-person interactions. These new augmented interactions will be called Collaboration 3.0.

The Semantic Web will have bots and intelligent agents that can do many things: check potential appointment times against others' schedules, keep track of new entries across the web that meet a user's interest profile, automatically book your next vacation, or research your term paper. If intelligent enough and you invest them with enough of your personal power, such agents might even be able to attend meetings for you, for the first time in history allowing you to be two places at once.

How will this actually work? In Berners-Lee's view, it involves a reannotation of the Web, adding all sorts of machine-readable metadata to the human-readable Web pages we use today.

Six years after the Scientific American article, official standards describing this metadata are starting to move into place—including the Recourse Description Framework (RDF) and the Web Ontology Language (OWL)—and they're already trickling into real-world sites, services, and other tools. Semantic Web metadata underpins Yahoo!'s new food site. Spivack's Radar Networks is building a kind of Semantic Web portal. A development platform called Jena, is in the works at HP, and Semantic Web structures exist already in Oracle's Spatial database tool.

Annotating the whole Web could be a daunting process, so other strategies are being employed. One early example is a browser plug-in called BlueOrganizer from AdaptiveBlue. In certain situations, when you visit a Web page, this browser plug-in can understand what the

page is about and automatically retrieve related information from other sites and services. If you visit a movie blog, for instance, and read about a particular film, it immediately links to sites where you can buy or rent that film.

Another option available by having smarter agents is to put more tags (metadata) into the web pages, which would make the content, rather than the agent, smarter. Whatever the strategy, we are a number of years away from the Semantic Web, but at the rapid rate at which Web technologies progress, we may be using agents to do intelligent searches or booking appointments in the not too distant future.

About the Authors

David Coleman, Founder and Managing Director of Collaborative Strategies (http://collaborate.com) has been involved with groupware, collaborative technologies, knowledge management (KM), online communities, and social networks since 1989. He is a thought leader, frequent public speaker, industry analyst, and author of books and magazine articles on these topics. His comments and analysis are most frequently found in the "Collaboration Blog." He has worked with a wide range of collaboration vendors including IBM/Lotus, Microsoft, Macromedia, Adobe, Intuit, EMC, and Oracle, and helped them with strategy, positioning, or demand generation projects. He also works with end-user organizations to help them select collaboration technologies, and most recently has been working with them on "collaborative consolidation" within the enterprise, building online communities and creating a variety of social networks. David also works with distributed teams (across organizational boundaries) to make them high-performance teams. He can be reached at:
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Stewart Levine is a "Resolutionary." His innovative work with "Agreements for Results" and his "Cycle of Resolution" are unique. *Getting to Resolution: Turning Conflict into Collaboration* was an Executive Book Club Selection; featured by Executive Book Summaries; named one of the 30 Best Business Books of 1998; and called "*a marvelous book*" by Dr. Stephen Covey. It has been translated into Russian, Hebrew, and Portuguese. *The Book of Agreement* has been endorsed by many thought leaders; called *"more practical"* than the classic *Getting to Yes*; and it was named one of the best books of 2003 by CEO Refresher (http://www.Refresher.com). He consults for many government agencies, Fortune 500 companies, professional associations, and organizations of all sizes. He teaches communication and collaboration skills for the American Management Association. You can find more information about him at:
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