

## **Web 2.0 - The 'Social' Web?**

MS 3305 Information, Knowledge, Power

Web 2.0 - The 'Social' Web?

Web 2.0 a buzzword, part of the rhetoric around the resurrected Web

The social Web? Refurbished, debugged, attractive, and inclusive?

What's different to Web v1.0 or v0.97 beta?

MS 3305 Information, Knowledge, Power

"It's not a real concept. It has no meaning. It's a big, vague, nebulous cloud of pure architectural nothingness. When people use the term Web 2.0, I always feel a little bit stupider for the rest of the day."

Joel Spolsky, chief executive of Fog Creek Software and an eager blogger, cited in Schofield 2005

## This lecture:

1. Revisiting Web 1.0
2. A "Hi-Tech Gift Economy" (Barbrook)
3. The mixed economy of today's Web
4. Unraveling Web 2.0
5. Web 2.0 - The inclusive Web?

Bibliography see handout!

## Revisiting Web 1.0

Web visionaries:

Ted Nelson [Xanadu]  
extreme hypertext

Howard Rheingold [Virtual communities]  
creating the global village

Tim Berners-Lee [WWW, Semantic Web]  
empowerment through standards

## Revisiting Web 1.0

Some notions of Web 1.0:

- The Web as universal public access medium ('public sphere')
- The metaphysical Web
- The sober Web

## Revisiting Web 1.0

The Web as universal public access medium

"The magic [sic!] of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts cultural acts (...) in the hands of all participants; it radically decentralizes the positions of speech, publishing, film making, radio and television broadcasting, in short the apparatuses of cultural production."

Poster 1995

## Revisiting Web 1.0

The metaphysical Web

" (...) the cyber world as a process of personal and communal unshackling, a journey that frees us from traditional constraints on our intelligence, our communities, our meager physical selves. We become free-floating netizens in a more enlightened, almost angelic, realm."

Carr 2005

## Revisiting Web 1.0

### The sober Web

"The utopian vision of a worldwide agora which would revitalize democracy has to confront the harsh reality of lawsuits and regulations of commerce and entertainment, of political parties, organized interest groups and political activists, and most importantly, of masses of bored and indifferent citizens."

Resnick 1998

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

### Barbrook 1998: The Web as a Hi-Tech Gift Economy

A gift economy is an economic system based on "doing a favour for a favour"; a society that lives by (free) contributions that members give to each other

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

Barbrook identifies three major players (in the US) shaping the gift-economy of the Internet:

The New Left of the 60ies  
Academics  
The Hacker Subculture

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

The New Left of the 60ies ("anarcho-communists")

Gift Economy proves that individuals neither need the state nor the market

Motor for powerful DIY media movement: alternative press, community radio stations, home-brew computer clubs and video collectives.

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

The New Left of the 60ies ("anarcho-communists")

"(Encouraged by McLuhan's predictions ...) the creation of the electronic agora was the first step towards the implementation of direct democracy within all social institutions."

Barbrook 1995

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

The Academic Realm

A gift-economy 'par excellence': academics contribute ('freely') to the body of knowledge built on work of colleagues; in turn, these academics acquire intellectual respect by being cited and referenced in the academic debate.

## The 'Hi-Tec Gift Economy'

### The Hacker Subculture \*

The free flow of information was essential for progress of computational media

"From its earliest days, the technical structure and social mores of the Net has ignored intellectual property."  
Barbrook 1998

\* S. Levy (1984/1994)  
Hackers: Heroes of the  
Computer Revolution

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

### The Hacker Subculture

"Unix (...) is not so much a product as it is a painstakingly compiled oral history of the hacker subculture."

Stephenson 1999[331]

## The 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy'

Barbrook:

Hippie radicalism  
+ conservative libertarian economics  
= Californian Ideology

Door-opener for commodification of  
computational media and  
... the Web

## The status quo of today's Web

Activities on the Web are embedded in  
different, often contradictory,  
contexts of interests, values, and  
networks.

The Web today:  
The universal public access medium  
The mirror site of society  
The stage for big business (as part of  
the Culture Industry)

## The status quo of today's Web

The universal public access medium  
Worldwide community of electronic  
'giving and taking' using

- Websites
- Blogs
- Newsgroups
- Forums
- Peer2Peer
- Chatrooms

## The status quo of today's Web

The universal public access medium

Excluded from this medium:

- people without access to the network  
(no computer, no telephone)
- people living in countries with  
controlled access (e.g. China, Burma,  
Iran, Saudi-Arabia, Singapore, Yemen)\*
- computer-illiterate people

\* see: OpenNet Initiative,  
<http://www.opennetinitiative.net>

## The status quo of today's Web

The mirror-site of society  
Reflecting societal structures,  
inequalities, and representations (e.g.  
gender, race), reinforcing existing power  
relations

Thomas and Wyatt 2000

Loader 1998

Sterne 2000

## The status quo of today's Web

The stage for big business and the Culture  
Industry

Operations on the Web according  
to capitalist strategy:

colonising ground > infiltrating networks >  
creating syndicates (e.g. annexing start ups) >  
maximising profit

"Digital Capitalism", Schiller 2000

"Hypercommercialism", McChesney 2000

"Cybernetic Capitalism", Robins & Webster 1999

## The status quo of today's Web

Today's Web: a mixed economy

"In 2005, the dotcom commodity economy and the hi-tech gift economy are at one and the same time in opposition and in symbiosis with each other."

Barbrook 1998 (commented upon 2005)

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Web 2.0 - what's the difference?

<b>Web 1.0</b>		<b>Web 2.0</b>
DoubleClick	-->	Google AdSense
Ofoto	-->	Flickr
Akamai	-->	BitTorrent
mp3.com	-->	Napster
Britannica Online	-->	Wikipedia
personal websites	-->	blogging
evite	-->	upcoming.org and EVDB
domain name speculation	-->	search engine optimization
page views	-->	cost per click
screen scraping	-->	web services
publishing	-->	participation
content management systems	-->	wikis
directories (taxonomy)	-->	tagging ("folksonomy")
stickiness	-->	syndication

From: O'Reilly 2005

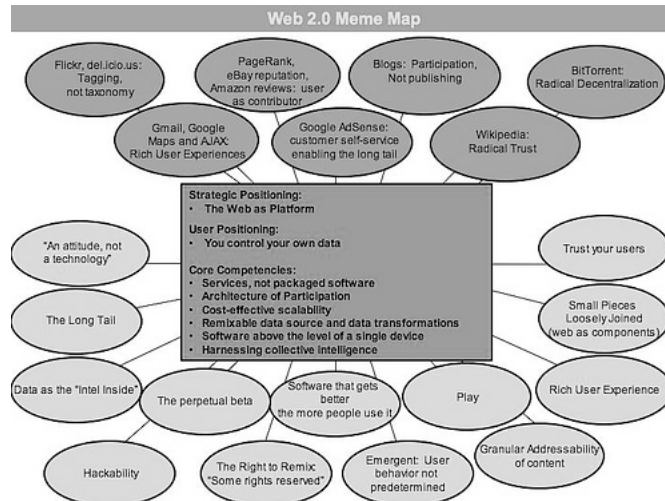
# Unraveling Web 2.0

The lowest common denominator:

"The idea of a new, more collaborative internet"

Singel 2005 (Wired)

# Unraveling Web 2.0



From: O'Reilly 2005

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Some instances of Web 2.0:

- del.icio.us
- Wikipedia
- flickr
- livejournal
- myspace
  
- lastfm (playlist generator)
- tadalist (list editor)
- writely (text editor from Google)

## Unraveling Web 2.0

The layers of Web 2.0:

Appearance  
Technology  
Ideology  
Economy

## Unraveling Web 2.0

### Appearance

blogging, wikis, feeds, tagging,  
social bookmarking, mapping, photo  
and video sharing ...

- Wikis
- Folksonomy
- Blogs

## Unraveling Web 2.0

### Appearance

#### Wikis

“A website that allows the visitors themselves to easily add, remove, and otherwise edit and change available content, typically without the need for registration. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for mass collaborative authoring.”

From Wikipedia

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Phenomenology  
Folksonomy

Neologism derived from 'taxonomy'

Collaborative categorization of content  
using freely chosen keywords, often  
referred to as tags

Authors of tags are the main users  
and sometimes creators of the content  
to which the labels are applied

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Appearance  
Folksonomy appears

"Organization appears  
spontaneously through the actions  
of the group"  
Singel 2005

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Appearance  
Blogosphere

Neologism:  
web + log + sphere = blogosphere

A blog is a personal home-page in form of a diary; blogosphere is the universe of (interlinked) blogs and bloggers

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Appearance  
Blogosphere

Common features of blogs:

- reverse chronology
- unfiltered, personalised, opinionated style
- open for comments
- Heavily hyperlinked
- Copy and paste approach
- template design

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Appearance  
Blogsphere

"If Web 2.0 is harnessing collective intelligence, turning the web into a kind of global brain, the blogsphere is the equivalent of constant mental chatter in the forebrain"  
Singel 2005

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Technology  
e.g. XHTML, RSS, CSS, Ajax ...

Web-based Applications working with  
(latest generation's) HTML browser

Highly dynamic, highly standardised

Desktop functionality  
(e.g. bookmarking) moves applications  
from a local computer to a network

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Ideology  
The Rhethoric of Web 2.0

"Web 1.0 was commerce. Web 2.0 is people."

Ross Mayfield, CEO of SocialText, a company that sells collaborative wiki software to enterprises, cited in Singel 2005

## Unraveling Web 2.0

Ideology  
The Rhethoric of Web 2.0

"Harnessing collective intelligence"

"Architecture of participation"

O'Reilly 2005

Social software  
Social networking  
Rich user experience  
The wisdom of crowds

## Unraveling Web 2.0

### Ideology

#### The Rhetoric of Web 2.0

The 'early' Web (no version number):  
cumbersome, diverse, contested, never  
considered for marketing

'2.0' signifies complete product,  
remoulded, homogenous, shiny and  
state of the art - as prepared for initial  
public offering

## Unraveling Web 2.0

### Economy

#### The new business model

"Web 2.0 is shaking up the status quo in  
web publishing, and feeding a surge of  
dealmaking"  
Singel 2005

Internet giants snap up start-ups, e.g:  
Flickr & del.icio.us > Yahoo  
Myspace > Murdoch  
Writely > Google

## Web 2.0 - All inclusive?

Web 2.0 apps contribute to establish the idea of the gift-economy; however: Internet has always been an open-access medium

Web 2.0 applications contribute to the diversity of narrative genres on the Web ("participatory media") Blood 2005

Web 2.0 apps. contribute to eroding borders between 'public sphere' and 'market place'

## Web 2.0 - All inclusive?

David Wilcox (2006), 'Digital divide in the era of social networking'

Social inclusion by digital inclusion:

- easy participation, engagement through interaction (biggest benefit)
- personalisation
- networking (social and digital)

"Go with the Web 2.0 flow!"