

## A-Lib 2.0: New Avatar Academic Libraries with Web 2.0 Applications

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### Abstract

*The web has seen the explosion of social networking tools, which are empowering ordinary people to connect, collaborate and contribute in a global collaboration. These social software applications are now the hottest properties of the Internet users. This article explains the how Web 2.0 tools could be applied in academic libraries to convert them as A-Lib 2.0 or Academic Library 2.0. The paper further includes a few cases from different libraries which have already adopted these new services. One recent survey found that 34.41% of total academic libraries in New York State are using Web 2.0 Services; the major ones include IM, Blogs, RSS, Book marking, Wiki, Social Networks, etc. Library 2.0 has changed the traditional way of thinking about the profession where library only engage in creating the content and services for user shifted to the side of user where librarian will enable user to create them for themselves.*

**Keywords:** Library 2.0, Social Networking, Library Technology, Blog, Wiki, RSS

### 1. Introduction

A report was prepared by Association of College and Research Libraries<sup>[1]</sup> regarding top ten assumptions for the future of academic libraries and librarians. Out of these ten assumptions, the two assumptions which will put forth here are: (i) students and faculty will increasingly demand faster and greater access to the library services, and (ii) the demand of technology related services will grow.<sup>[2]</sup> These assumptions underscore the dominant role that technology and consumer expectations are increasingly playing in the libraries. The changing trends underlying these assumptions will offer new opportunities for the academic libraries to reach out the boundaries of its self domain which confine and engage with building website, creating databases of local holdings, subscribing e-journals and motivate the staff to take up the future challenges. These two assumptions are featuring the role of Academic Libraries will be every time and everywhere.

For being everywhere, library has to push their genuinely valuable content, services, staff expertise from the self defined boundaries to where user might stand to take benefit from them. Library can take the advantage of Web 2.0 technologies and implement them in the different services to meet the expectations of new generation of users. In this changing environment, the marriage of web 2.0 with academic library create a new buzz word 'Academic Libraries 2.0' or A-Lib 2.0, which the new generation librarians see as a great survivor.

## **2. The Theory of Library 2.0**

The term Library 2.0 (L2) was first coined by Michael Casey in his blog Library Crunch in September 2005<sup>[3]</sup>. The main theory and philosophy of Library 2.0 has been evolved from Web 2.0 concept. The term Web 2.0 which is first defined and interpreted by Tim O'reilly<sup>[4]</sup>, who argued that companies which survived of the technology market crash because they have common characteristics like they were collaborative in nature, interactive, dynamics and the line between the creation and consumption of content in these environment was blurred. The application of Web 2.0 technologies in library services to make it, interactive, collaborative and web-based has been framed as Library 2.0.

According Wikipedia, Library 2.0 is a loosely defined model of library services that reflects a transition within the library world in the way that services are delivered to users<sup>[5]</sup>. Maness defines Library 2.0 as "The application of interactive, collaborative and multi media web based technologies to web based library services and collection" (Maness, 2006). He mostly focuses on web based services which library can use in this Web 2.0 environment. The basic idea of Library 2.0 is to transform library service by making them more personalize, more interactive, collaborative, more web-based, driven by community needs.

## **3. Library 2.0 in Academic Library: The Changing Scenario**

It can be argued that academic libraries are in a unique position to implement library 2.0 services. It is because Academic Libraries are driven by most of the young generation user, they are frequently visiting net and they are grown up with internet. Due to the impact of social networking software (SNS) most of them have profiles in Internet in different social network sites. India has seen heavy rise of user on social networking sites. According to a report from Business standard "Social networking on the rise" has mentioned that there are so many social networking software sprung up in few months apart from Orkut, Facebook, and Myspace these are yaari.com, minglebox.com, zhoom.com, bigadda etc. A JuxtConsult India online 2006 survey reveals that Orkut which unleashed the potential of social networking in India is among the top ten most recalled online brands among internet users. According to Conkurs Subho Ray, President, Internet and Mobile Association of India "The active internet user base comprises 23 million of which 9-10 per cent are active on social networking, that is 2-2.5 million users currently, but it is set to grow with the internet users base growing

exponentially<sup>[6]</sup>. There are a large number of young generation user are using these Web 2.0 tools like Myspace have 200 billion user, Facebook 53 billion user, 75 million Blog already on internet, Wikipedia have 500 million article in 200 language and Flickr has 200 billion photo. It is only start and it's increasing day by day. So from this data we can assume that typical student for the foreseeable future are comfortable with Web2.0 tools and services.

Driven by the Web 2.0, a good numbers of academic library are in the process of planning for library 2.0 applications. In America most of the academic libraries are using 2.0 services in their library environment. One recent survey has shown that 34.41% of total Academic library in New York State are using web 2.0 Services in their library (Xu; 2007).

#### **4. Conceptual Framework of Academic Library 2.0**

There are a numerous discussion are going on about library 2.0 model. Many libraries are developing library 2.0 model although there are services library were using before the word library 2.0 evolves, for example reference services through IM messenger. Developing a model for Library 2.0 depends upon the library, type of services it provides and the user community. Librarian need to evaluate the services which they are providing and find the new way to incorporate web 2.0 services in to the existing services. There are few model recently developed are discussed below, one of them is Conceptual framework drawn by Micheal Habib.

In his model, Micheal Habib (2006) has drawn library position as a physical space in student life and then draws library's place online. It describes that student's life is divided between the social and academic life and libraries provide a unique location that mixes of these two. One ends its strictly academic formal classroom and other end purely social occasion. At the academic end of the spectrum the lies course management software like Blackboard and the social end of the spectrum it's maybe Wiki, Blog, facebook, Myspace etc. Library might provide the Virtual place for students; one possibility may be the Virtual group study room. Such place provides the read/write tool to enable students to collaborate remotely on course project. These spaces might provided by library online resources and link to live references help to assist student in their work. This model looks interaction from a boarder perspective. However the basic goal is facilitate thought about how to design virtual and physical space according to the type of interpersonal interaction will be having in these environments. Worth noting is that all of the interaction mentions occur both in physical and virtual place (Habib, 2006).

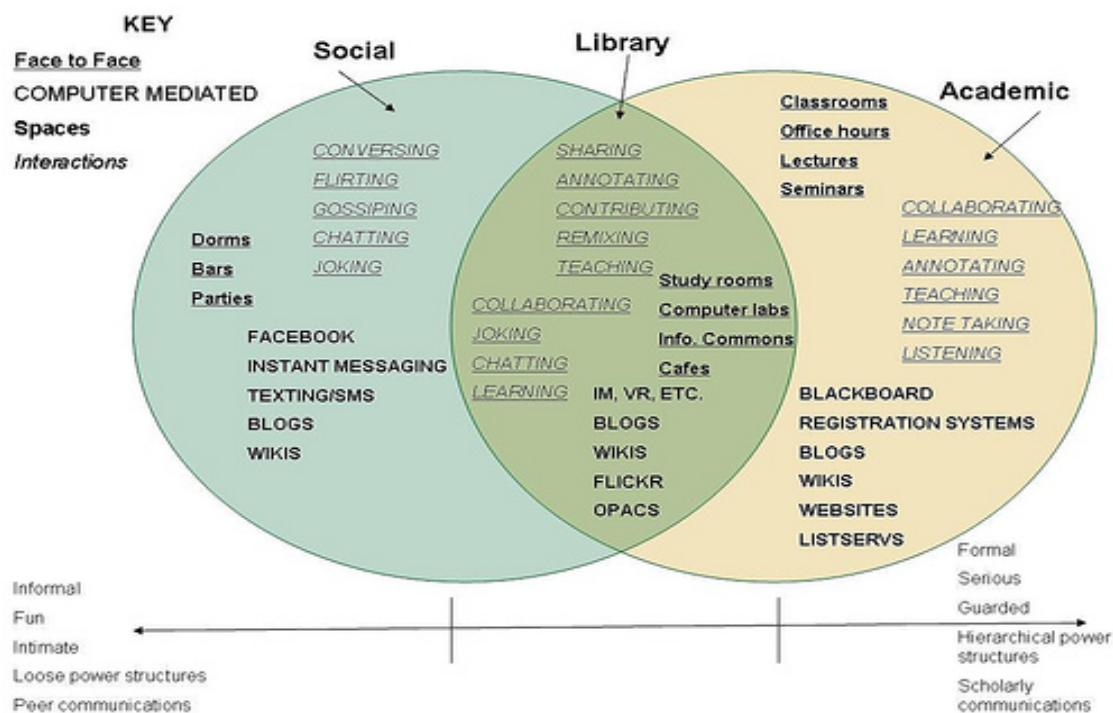


Fig-1: Model of Academic Library 2.0 drawn by MIcheal Habib

(Source: Michael C. Habib. Toward Academic Library 2.0: Development and Application of a Library 2.0 Methodology. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. November, 2006.)

However Habib model criticized for not focusing exclusively on the relationships between students and libraries in the web 2.0 environment. However, these attempts are very good sign and forward looking in the contemporary library fields. It's a mixture of physical library world with virtual ascent so that user don't fill that library is only place of issue and return only. But library should be careful enough in their approach to deal with patron and evolve their current services so that library can make its own benchmark.

## 5. Transformation of Academic Library 1.0 into Library 2.0

The libraries are changing and they must have to change if they want to prove they are still the information provider and should try to adopt new technologies to deliver the services that the modern users expected from them. Library has to reach where the users are, so they need a broader movement for libraries to consider the web based library facilities which will fit for the libraries in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. The world libraries not at all compatible to this

modern user, so libraries are seeing a transformation on their services using modern toll and technology. Library 2.0 which we have discussed above has created a sea change in the library from starting from philosophy to services. Adopting library 2.0 itself require evolutionary changes across wide range of system, processes and attitude regarding new services. The distinction between the Academic library 2.0 and Academic Library 1.0, given in a tabular form,

<b>Academic Library 1.0</b>	<b>Academic Library 2.0</b>
In Library Only	everywhere in this world with internet
Information controlled by Library	Information controlled by User/Stakeholder
Static Library Website	Dynamic user website
Publishing	Participating
Available locally	available worldwide
One way	Two way
Library as an service	Library as an experience

Table: 1: Transformation of Academic Library 2.0  
(Source: <http://eprints.rclis.org/archive/00012108/>)

## 6. Library 2.0 services in Academic Libraries: Few Cases studies

Library 2.0 services are meant for reaching where users are, so the fundamental changes in services should be thinking beyond the four walls of library and offer services through pushing out from the conventional library space to where the users are interacting. Library 2.0 services providing new means of information delivery, distribution and manipulation. For example library OPAC can link with website, and in social networking space (e.g. Myspace or Facebook) with creating an account and providing a search box on that social space, so that it will be available everywhere, and the user will be happy to search OPAC from his favorite social software like Myspace, Facebook and Orkut. In other side Library also benefited taking advantage of these services, putting library in the users' space. Library OPAC is only one example of pushing out the services from conventional library zone to the user comfort zone. There are a lot of innovative services library can provide only library has to bend towards its old services, examine holistically these fundamental services and try to renovate it into 2.0 format.

There is a list of web 2.0 tool which has the potential to serve and apply in the library world. Most of these tools have the potential to keep library more relevant to a whole new generation and to bring about interesting changes in the way that library services can provide.

Web 2.0 Tools RSS (really simple syndication)	Library 2.0 applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcing arrival of new books, journal and databases</li> <li>Promote event organized by library</li> </ul>	Cases New York University Library ( <a href="http://library.nyu.edu/feeds">http://library.nyu.edu/feeds</a> ) using feed for providing more general to specific information, like Library instruction Classes, library orientation, database search, database management, Library News: about library hour, new event Liblink: providing tips for better use of library
Wikis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Tool</li> <li>Library website</li> <li>Subject guide</li> <li>Library suggestion</li> </ul>	Ohio University Library Biz Wiki ( <a href="http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/bizwiki/index.php/Main_Page">http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/bizwiki/index.php/Main_Page</a> ) is a collection of business information resources of Ohio state university library. Its contain article, reference book, business website and other research guide. They have also provided service for online chat through Library Services Electronic Resources Wiki ( <a href="http://library.hud.ac.uk/wiki/Main_Page">http://library.hud.ac.uk/wiki/Main_Page</a> ). Wellesley College Library ( <a href="http://wellesleylibrary.blogspot.com">http://wellesleylibrary.blogspot.com</a> ) Blog provided link to valuable information pertaining to student need. Library also providing information regarding exam schedule, changes in library timing, link to new resources, education cd and video.  Western Carolina University, Library News Blog ( <a href="http://hunterlibrarynews.blogspot.com">http://hunterlibrarynews.blogspot.com</a> ) Providing latest news about library collection, exhibits, hours, database trail and library happening.
Blogs and blogging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Library instruction</li> <li>Staff Communication</li> <li>Subject Resources</li> <li>Course Materials</li> <li>Breaking News</li> </ul>	Arizona State University Library ( <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/asulibraries/sets/72157601621243043/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/asulibraries/sets/72157601621243043/</a> ) has two type of collection ASU Libraries events(event organized by ASU libraries)and about ASU Libraries.  American Library Association ( <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/ala_members/ala_members/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/ala_members/ala_members/</a> )
Flickr (photo sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event: annual symposium, Library Function, Book Sale</li> <li>Regular Occurrence: tour, reference transaction, Computer use, classroom scenes.</li> <li>Library poster</li> </ul>	American University Library ( <a href="http://www.library.american.edu/ask/im.html">http://www.library.american.edu/ask/im.html</a> ) using virtual reference service for providing online reference for research questions from student and faculty.
IM Messenger (Chat Reference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual reference</li> <li>Research Assistant</li> </ul>	Syracuse University Library ( <a href="http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2380333929">http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2380333929</a> ) has a profile in facebook. This was designed to connect student with library in L2 way. Library provided link to library catalogue for book, database search, chat reference and changing library schedule.
Social Networking Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As web portal</li> <li>For Library Promotion</li> <li>Extension of Library website</li> <li>Catalogue, Database search</li> </ul>	

Table: 2: Web 2.0 tool and its application and cases

## 7. Conclusion:

Library 2.0 is not to replace traditional philosophy and service what ever library has, but it's about enhancing and extending its services into new areas. According to Chad, "The concept of Library 2.0 builds upon all that has been best about libraries to date, harnesses technological potential and community capability in order to deliver valuable, valued and world-class services directly to those

who stand to benefit from them, whether they (ever) physically enter a library building or not”(Chad, 2005). Library 2.0 has change the traditional way of thinking about profession where library only engage in creating the content and services for user shifted to the side of user where librarian will enable user to create them for themselves. The ball is now in the court of library professional, implementing library 2.0 services need a bigger change in the professional mindset to adopt this new way of services with the objective to have “access to information from anywhere at anytime”.

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