

Discourse in the Blogosphere

What Museums Can Learn from Web 2.0

Abstract Web 2.0 is a term that describes web-based applications on which users generate, share, and curate the content. Over the last three years, Web 2.0 sites, from blogs to YouTube to Wikipedia, have transformed the ways that web users interact with content and with each other on the web. This article explores the ways that the philosophies of Web 2.0, which promote user participation and peer-to-peer interaction, can be applied in museums to encourage active discourse among visitors. Current web-based projects and potential in-gallery applications are explored, with a focus on networking individual visitor experiences as a basis for communal action.

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Introduction

Imagine a museum whose mission statement is to encourage substantive interaction among strangers. How would you design such a place? How could you transition from being an institution that provides content about things to one that provides opportunities for interpersonal discourse? How could you encourage visitors to share and respond to each other openly and respectfully?

There's a powerful model for this "architecture of participation" (O'Reilly, 2005) on the internet: Web 2.0. "Web 2.0" is not just a buzzword; it's a definition of Web-based applications in which users generate, share, and curate the content. The more familiar Web 1.0 encompasses standard content providers, websites that give you information. The user experience with Web 1.0 is passive: You are a viewer, a consumer. Web 2.0 removes the authority from the content provider and places it in the hands of the user. Now, you are a participant. You determine what's on the site and you judge which content is most valuable.

Over the last few years, Web 2.0 sites have exploded and eclipsed traditional Web content providers. You know you're in 2.0-land when you watch homemade videos on YouTube, read an article written by Wikipedia users, or comment on someone's blog. Other times, it's subtler, like when Netflix recommends a movie to you based on other renters' ratings, or you find the perfect photo on Flickr via user-defined tag. In all these cases, the experience with the content is informed and refined by other users' submissions and judgments.

What does this have to do with museums and civic discourse? Web 2.0 has cracked open the potential for strangers to interact with each other in meaningful ways. These interactions break all the traditional rules of discourse. The people involved don't have prior relationships. Their comments are neither geo-spatially nor temporally co-located. Yet millions of people rely on a collective, faceless mass of strangers to recommend books, music, and movies to them. They engage in conversations and projects around politics, religion, personal relationships, money: all the big untouchables.

If museums want to become venues for discourse, the Web's transition to 2.0 is a powerful model. Like museums, the Web is traditionally a place where authorities distribute content to visitors. But the Web has been

taken over by new platforms that have radically changed content distribution. As of May 2007, MySpace is the most visited website in the U.S., and six other Web 2.0 sites (including Facebook and Wikipedia) are in the top fifteen (Hitwise, 2007). People spend more time on 2.0 sites than on traditional sites; they get more personalized content, and their engagement and passion for that content is reinforced by the social, networked aspects of their experiences. Web 2.0 transforms Web visitors into Web users.

The potential rewards for enabling the same transition in museums are enormous. "Museum 2.0" can provoke significantly greater repeat visitation, more personalized, meaningful visitor engagement with content, and perhaps most importantly, the opportunity for communication and sharing among visitors.

Specifically, with regard to promoting civic discourse, Web 2.0 has several unique and well-developed characteristics:

1. Web 2.0 is social. Content is accessed through the lens of other users, who serve both as content providers and content curators/commentators. It provides a framework for social participation that can be an enabler of discourse between strangers.
2. Web 2.0 supports diverse access paths. Instead of designers determining what metadata defines certain content or experiences, the metadata is developed collectively by users, both actively and passively.
3. Web 2.0 is democratic. Content is developed, organized, and accessed via bottom-up rather than top-down design. Instead of being a content provider, Web 2.0 is a platform provider.

There are however, also several basic tensions that pit museums against 2.0:

1. Museums are designed spaces; Web 2.0 platforms are open to all kinds of user designs, even intentionally ugly or uncivil ones.
2. Museums launch exhibits in a "completed" state; Web 2.0 content is always changing.
3. Museums rely on authorities: curators, researchers, designers, educators. Web 2.0 relies on users, who grant each other authority at will.

Part 1: Lessons from Web 2.0

Designing in Virtual Space: Museum Projects in Web 2.0

This article is primarily about applying the Web 2.0 model and structure to physical (non-virtual) museum spaces as a tool for civic discourse. Let's start with reviewing some innovative Web 2.0 museum projects.

- **Community Blogs.** Several museums maintain blogs, but most are “push” websites on which museum staff provide content about the institution or topics related to the museum’s theme. Science Buzz (www.smm.org/buzz) and Red Shift Now (www.redshiftnow.ca), maintained by the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Ontario Science Centre respectively, stand out as two blog communities that actively invite user/visitors to contribute alongside staff. Both sites are intentionally interactive, soliciting visitor response via quizzes and “What do you think?” Both also encourage visitors to register, create personal profiles, and post content as part of the community.
- **Mash-ups with Major 2.0 Providers.** The Brooklyn Museum of Art and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum stand out in their adoption and use of Web 2.0 providers. The Brooklyn Museum of Art, along with hosting its own blogs, podcasts, photo and video streams on their community site (www.brooklynmuseum.org/community), also maintains an active presence on MySpace, Facebook, and Flickr, where tens of thousands of people have accessed and interacted with museum content. In the spring of 2007, Google Earth released a new layer (interactive 3D map), “Crisis in Darfur” (www.ushmm.org/googleearth), using content from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to allow Google Earth users to explore first-hand accounts, photos, and other resources regarding the genocide in Sudan.
- **Open, Searchable Collection Databases.** Many museums are digitizing their collections for online visitors and researchers, but some are taking it to the next step by using 2.0 techniques to allow visitors to manipulate the metadata associated with items in the collection. The Powerhouse Museum’s online collection database, OPAC2.0 (www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database), allows users to tag artifacts in the collection with keywords (plate, ugly, Olivia Newton John), which are then available as search



Figure 1. An eclectic group meets on the SL New Media Consortium campus. Courtesy Electric Sheep Company, 2006.

terms. Users can search via the museum's official taxonomy of the items or via the keywords created by other web users.

- **Forays into Second Life.** Second Life, an online 3D virtual world, isn't Web 2.0 per se. But it is a social, creative environment in which strangers interact with one another. Some believe it is the future of Web 2.0 (Web 3.D?). The New Media Consortium, a community of universities, museums, and libraries, maintains an educational space in Second Life through their virtual campus (sl.nmc.org), where visitors and Consortium members can interact in virtual galleries, libraries, and meeting sites with each other and with virtual content.

Moving into the Museum: Web 2.0 Tools in the Galleries

For many museums, the decision to engage in Web 2.0 at all—whether via production of new content or involvement in established online platforms—requires institutional buy-in to the power and potential of the Web. And yet, I'm concerned that most of these initiatives are led by and rel-

Museums and Web 2.0 Resources

Some of the lead “virtual pioneers” of museums and Web 2.0 can be found at

- The fresh+new blog from the Powerhouse Museum, maintained by Seb Chan (www.powerhousemuseum.com/dmsblog/)
- The Walker Art Museum’s New Media Initiatives blog (blogs.walkerart.org/newmedia)
- The Museums and the Web conference papers and proceedings, ten years of which are available for free online (www.archimuse.com/conferences/mw.html), including an excellent introduction to Web 2.0 by Mike Ellis and Brian Kelly (www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/ellis/ellis.html)

egated to media and technology staff and are not pursued as global strategies across the museum. If museums open their collections for visitors online, why not allow visitors to tag artifacts in the galleries? If visitor comments and content are solicited on your website, why not do it onsite? Understanding what museums are doing and can do on the web is important, but the potential applications for Web 2.0 concepts stretch beyond the computer screen.

Consider visitor-authored content. There are many Web 2.0 sites that are built entirely on user content, whether it's photos on Flickr, videos on YouTube, or any of millions of blogs. I'd like to see the same spirit of visitor authorship and sharing in museums, and it doesn't take technology to get there. The London Science Museum exhibition *Playing with Science* (November 2006–March 2007) offers a simple and elegant example. *Playing with Science* displayed the history and importance of toys in scientific learning. As part of the exhibition, visitors were invited to bring in their own toys to add to the exhibition. Each contributor was photographed with their favorite toy and wrote a short statement about the value of that toy. The photographs were cataloged, and on the exhibition's website (www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/galleries/playing_with_science.aspx) you can flip through dozens of funny, evocative images with accompanying statements like “Bunny was made for me by my sister when I was born and has been well loved over the years,” and “I like making girls do boy parts because I am a tomboy.” This simple and delightful addition to *Playing with Science* didn't require computers or elaborate design, just a



Figure 2. A visitor contributes his own toy—and story—to *Playing with Science*. Image courtesy London Science Museum.

willingness to support visitor contributions. There are a few other Web 2.0 techniques and tools that are worth sneaking into the museum.

Tagging

Mentioned above in the description of OPAC2.0 at the Powerhouse Museum, tagging is a way for Web 2.0 users to categorize and describe content with keywords that can then be used as search terms. Flickr, a photo sharing website, provides a great example of the power of user tags. More traditional search engines, such as Google, rely only on the metadata provided by the content provider to judge the relevance of keywords to that image or document. If you search for an image on Google image search with “old door,” Google will return any images that have “old” and “door” in the file name or text surrounding the image in its original web location. But if you search for “old door” on Flickr, Flickr returns the same thing as Google, *plus* any images that other users tagged as being related to “old” and “door.” Allowing users to contribute to the metadata around an image, artifact, or document creates more diverse and flexible paths for accessing that content.

How can tagging be applied in museum galleries? Visitors can tag exhibits with their impressions; in 2006, the Swedish Västernorrlands Läns Museum presented the Post-it Project, in which visitors were encouraged to put up notes with their comments anywhere in the galleries. But tagging becomes most powerful when the tags can be aggregated and available for users as search and navigation tools. Because tagging supports

diverse navigation of content, it has powerful potential for museum maps and self-guided tours. Tagging is a natural way for visitors to label and define artifacts in ways that most make sense to them for return visits and for other visitors' navigation of the museum. Museum staff may know that the Bees exhibit is in the Red Wing, but it might be more intuitive to recall that it's near the Bubble exhibit. Visitor tags could lead to maps specific to particular age groups, interests, and time constraints, all derived from visitor experiences and observations. When taken en masse, user tags can allow visitors to reaggregate the elements of the museum—exhibits, artifacts, and programs—that they feel, based on their own and other user keywords, are most useful to them.

Unique User Identities and Personalized Content

Most social networking websites, such as MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Live Journal, are built on user profiles—individual pages or sites that express the self-defined identity and interests of users. Having an online profile gives users a virtual home for content they've generated, content they enjoy, and communication with other users. It personalizes the online experience, giving you immediate access to the content you have selected and also satisfying the narcissistic desire to be known and noticed. Similarly, websites like Amazon and Netflix, which tailor the shopping/renting experience based on your previous purchases and indicated preferences, use custom content to create an experience that is “just for you,” making the sites seem prescient (and supports their bottom line).

Offering museum visitors opportunities to create robust profiles that uniquely identify and support their visit is complicated, both technologically and with respect to privacy. But there are many museums using aspects of the unique profile model to great effect. At Sony Wonderlab in New York City, each visitor enters and immediately “registers” at a kiosk that takes their name, photograph, and a quick voice clip (and stores them on an RFID chip). Then, each time the person approaches an interactive, the kiosk addresses you by name. If the interactive is about graphic manipulation, the graphic altered is the photograph of your face. When playing with sound, you distort your own voice. Finally, at the end of the experience, each person receives a printout of all the interactives used at the museum. This tracking and personalization places the visitor at the center of the experience (as in profile-based social networking sites). When the experience is about you—your health, your opinions, your abilities—you

feel that the exhibits are there for you, which makes you more amenable to engagement.

Collaborative Content Authoring and Wikis

A wiki is “a website that allows visitors to add, remove, and edit content.” This definition comes from Wikipedia, an encyclopedia of over 1.8 million entries entirely authored and edited by users. Wikis employ simple design to support maximal interaction; it’s easy for non-technically savvy people to add pages, share content, and work collaboratively within the wiki space. Many companies use wikis for internal project development; for example, the New York Hall of Science education department hosts a wiki (<http://nyhoseducation.wikispaces.com/>) to document projects in progress and resources of interest.

In the museum, talkback walls are a simple step towards wikis. But the power of wikis comes when it’s easy to see and react to other individuals’ contributions. Several museums have created short-term timeline or map projects in which visitors can contribute, via post-its, pushpins, and note cards, their own personal histories and memories. These maps and timelines often turn into highly popular displays of the high and low points in the life of the visitor community. Other museums have tried to encourage depth rather than breadth of submissions by creating centers for visitors to engage in research related to museum topics, significantly in the arena of tracing genealogies and immigration paths in history museums. Finally, there are projects like Citizen Science (www.birds.cornell.edu/LabPrograms/CitSci), which give visitors tools to generate scientific data, which is then collaboratively processed and used by scientists and other visitors alike.

Part 2: Tailoring Web 2.0 Lessons to Design Social Spaces for Discourse

The Web 2.0 Model for Social Engagement

How can Web 2.0 tools be used specifically to encourage discourse among visitors in museums? On a fundamental level, few of us are willing or interested in discourse with strangers on the other side of an issue. Pleasant-ries or argument, sure. But discourse? When it’s hard to do with someone you respect and care about, discourse with strangers seems insurmountable. So how can museums design for discourse? Web 2.0’s starting point is personal, not relational. In Web 2.0, the entrance to *we* is through *me*.

Consider LibraryThing (www.librarything.com), on which people catalog and tag the books in their personal libraries. At first glance, LibraryThing is providing a me-oriented service. I enter the titles of my books, tag them with useful descriptors (poetry, funny, made me cry), and it creates a library-quality, searchable database of my books complete with authors, publication dates, and ISBN numbers that lives on the Web (and thus will survive even if my computer explodes).

But LibraryThing is not a piece of personal software; it's a Web 2.0 application. The tags and catalogs are shared, so I can check out what other people who enjoy a given book also love. When I look at my library, I can click on my own books and see who else liked them (and link to their libraries). From my profile, I can click on the profiles of other people based on the number of books we share in common. I get recommendations, chat about books with strangers, all *in addition* to having a good way to catalog my own library. I am finding simpatico readers who are strangers to me. I have the most informed "Staff Picks" shelf in the world, and, even better, relationships with those other readers.

If I just had a database system to serve my library, I wouldn't get the benefit of all the social network effects that LibraryThing offers. On LibraryThing, I start with a me-oriented operation—cataloging my own books. Then, I perceive the value from the we operation—the linking of different users and their books. I'm drawn in by the me, but once the me operation is done, the we sustains my interest and involvement. As the *Christian Science Monitor* put it, "LibraryThing appears poised to turn the cataloging of books into a form of communal recreation."

In the 2.0 museum imagined in the introduction to this paper, the visitor experience shifts from one focused on observing artifacts to one that encourages communal sharing. Stepping back from the LibraryThing example, we can envision an "ExhibitThing" live in the galleries by applying the Web 2.0 model for progression from individual user experiences to collective experience. One way to look at this model is by defining five levels of user interaction (this time, in museums), as shown in Figure 3.

What would ExhibitThing look like? On level one, it would start by offering quality content in a neutral/safe environment. On level two, it would create ways for visitors to interact with exhibit elements individually. On level three, it would network individuals' experiences to enable data sharing and flexible use for a better individual experience. On level four, it would offer social tools that encourage users to interact with one

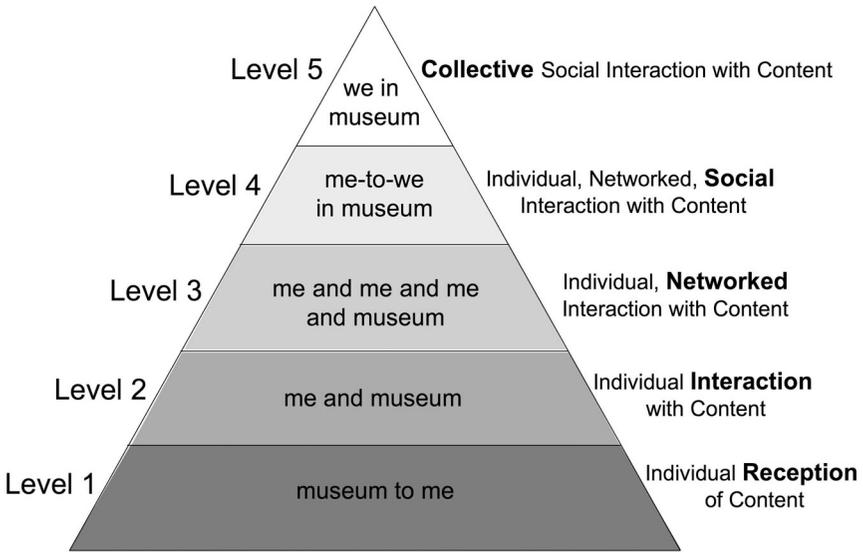


Figure 3. A Hierarchy of Social Participation based on Web 2.0. ¹

another. And finally, on level five, it would support communal activities among socially networked users.

Most museum exhibitions reside on levels one and two. The lesson from Web 2.0 is that you can't jump to level five and design for communal action without first connecting people to one another via their individual experiences (levels three and four).

For example, consider an ExhibitThing on religion and civic life. Religion is a highly personal and potentially contentious topic; there is both great opportunity for and high barriers to discourse. On level one, ExhibitThing might provide content about historical tensions between church and state, present personal stories from followers of different faiths, etc. On level two, ExhibitThing might give visitors the opportunity to contribute their own observations and opinions via polling, "What do you think?, etc. On level three, ExhibitThing would network the individual level two interactions so each individual's interaction is available, in a limited capacity, to the entire group of visitor/viewers. When visitors press a button at the Religious Freedoms kiosk registering support for students who wear hijab, they see the votes of other visitors who also interacted with this kiosk. Level three can be as simple as displaying the cumulative votes on a poll question or as complex as sorting visitor comments by topic (and

presenting visitors with intelligently selected counterpoints to their own opinions). A successful level three experience makes the user aware of and connected to others who have used the same content; visitors start to wonder why others voted/expressed themselves as they did.

Imagine ExhibitThing on level four. Individuals still interact with the content singly, but their interactions are available for comment and connection by other users. The architecture promotes these connections automatically. By networking the ratings, tags, or comments individuals place on content, individuals are linked to each other and form relationships around the content. When a visitor registers a vote, they can see how other people who voted. They can click on another user who voted the same and watch the video clip she recorded at another kiosk with her opinions on prayer in school. Every time users interacts with an element in the museum, they're aware that their unique profile is growing. The data they contribute and have access to is growing as well. Users are not having a private experience. They are part of a community of museum-goers who are engaging with a topic.

Which brings us to ExhibitThing on level five. Finally, now that visitors have grown comfortable both with contributing their own content (on level two) and being part of a larger community of individual contributors (on levels three and four), they may be willing—even eager—to connect with other members of that community. To turn to the person next to them and ask, what made you vote that way? To send a message from a kiosk to another museum visitor and tell them, I really like what you said about X. To join a museum-sponsored discussion or blog around this topic. To form relationships with strangers. To engage in deep personal dialogue about a social issue.

Who Is the We?

In the model presented above, positive environments for communal interaction are shown to develop from a core focus on individual visitor experiences. Therefore, design must start by considering users as discrete individuals, not as a communal we. As a designer, I support museums creating networked, social experiences. But as a museum-goer, what if I don't *want* to have a networked, social experience? What if I just want to look at the art and be left alone? When designing “for the we,” it's often easy to forget that catering to certain folks (i.e. social networkers) can exclude others.

Integrating 2.0 into museum design can widen, rather than replace, the range of user experiences available. Good 2.0 experiences serve three kinds

of we's: contributors, judges, and lurkers.² Consider YouTube. The large majority of YouTube users are lurkers; they watch videos, but do not submit them. The next group of people is users who rate, tag, comment, and recommend videos, but do not submit videos. These people might be thought of as "judges." They add metadata to videos about their value and content, which may be for their own use (for future navigation), for friends (to send them interesting videos), or for public collective use (to add to the larger conversation about what's good and what isn't). The smallest set is the users who actually upload videos they have made themselves: "contributors."

How does this relate to the experience design in museums? Most museums offer lots of lurking, some contributing, and almost no judging/curating—and most experiences are in one of those buckets without dipping into the others as well. Visitors can make a video, but can't rate them. They can touch the Van de Graaff generator and have funny hair, and watch other people touch it, but can't vote on videos of the funniest Van de Graaff hair experiences. They can't email the video of a hair experience or the funniest one to their friends (which might also motivate them to come to the museum). They can leave a comment and read today's comments, but can't flip through the archive of cross-referenced comments going back in past years.

There are many museum interactives for single users that have an unintended lurker benefit (funny hair from the Van de Graaff being just one example). On sites like Flickr, the role of the contributor as performer for an audience is explicit—and a source of motivation to continue contributing. Not every museum visitor wants to be a performer, but when the interactive elicits a funny, exciting, or fabulous result that will be watched and enjoyed by surrounding visitors anyway, that "performance" could be captured and enjoyed in other ways, in the museum, on the museum Web site (live Van de Graaff cam?), or on other sites like YouTube for a wider audience of lurkers and curators to enjoy.

So how can we design to support different kinds of use? Here are some considerations to satisfy all kinds of visitors:

For the contributor:

- If the interaction has a performance component, make that clear and reward the active participant with a small slice of fame.
- If the interaction involves an opinion or a person-specific reaction, show the contributor how their input relates to the larger network of previous contributors.

- Allow the contributor to develop a personal profile/site/collection of data based on their interactions throughout the museum. Network these profiles at the contributor's discretion.

For the judge:

- Wherever comfortable, give people a way to judge and classify content. This can be physical in the museum or virtual on the Web. They can take the form of ratings, tags, or comments.
- Let people recommend and share content with people outside of the museum.
- When someone judges something, connect her or him to other users who have made similar (or dissimilar) judgments/comments.
- Make the judgments count. Use them to prioritize content for lurkers and other judges. At best, let the judgments drive content presentation—let the users curate.

For the lurker:

- Make the content easy to access from multiple entry points (on video, in-person, Web, books).
- Make the content easy to navigate and incorporate “frictionless serendipity” (Chan, 2007b) by using automatic tracking to make educated guesses about what the lurker is searching for.
- Update the content frequently and provide multiple forms of announcement about those changes.

The goal is to develop museum experiences that are available to all of these users at the same time. We're all each of these kinds of users at different times of the day or points in our museum experience. I'd love to climb the rock wall but I'd prefer to just watch you throw the baseball. You'd love to give that painting a piece of your mind but will peacefully listen to that installation.

Interest in different types of engagement may also change over time. As Jim Spadaccini put it in a comment on a *fresh + new* blog article on this topic, “All of this is still quite new, and today's lurkers very well might be tomorrow's alpha-users. Another point worth making is that not everyone needs to participate to make a site a ‘success.’ There's a depth of experi-

ence for those who do participate—that is beyond a “Web 1.0 experience—and (as Seb pointed out) those who do participate can add value to sites and collections for those who visit but don’t interact in the same way” (Chan, 2007a).

What About the Uncivil We?

There’s another kind of user not mentioned above: the griever. This is the troll, the spammer, the grump who enjoys abusing other users and embarrasses the host institution. What happens when someone makes a statement or comment that is inappropriate from the museum’s perspective but reasonable according to the 2.0 provider’s standards? Does that reflect the museum’s support of free speech, or does it reflect negatively on the institution?

David Klevan, Education Manager for Technology and Distance Learning Initiatives at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, reflected on this issue, saying: “No matter what disclaimer we put up about posters’ views not reflecting the views of the institution, we know that content on our site reflects upon us. There’s the double-edged sword of wanting to make it a welcoming and safe place for free expression—without making people feel threatened” (personal interview, March 20, 2007).

While acknowledging grievers’ detrimental impact to other individuals’ experiences is important, the fear about their impact often outweighs its harm. Museums already have developed ways to deal with grievers of a different type: the ones who vandalize exhibits and disrupt other visitors’ experiences. When it comes to people who want to vandalize the community spirit, the same techniques—proactive staff, model users, encouragement of positive and respectful behavior—can prevail.

What if the “We” Don’t Say Anything Good?

Perhaps the greatest philosophical obstacle for museum designers to overcome before they will embrace 2.0 is the fear that visitors will create low-quality content. After all, what happens if you design your democracy ExhibitThing, and the visitors just use the social tools to talk about John Edwards’ hair?

One way to hone visitor content is to use discussion as the basis for exhibition rather than its centerpoint. Consider the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's experience with online discussion boards and exhibitions, which are highly facilitated. On their most popular discussion board, in which people are asked to share their memories of reading the diary of Anne Frank, only 151 out of 655 comments submitted in a six-month period in 2006 were approved for publication on the Web site. It was neither spam nor hate speech that kept comments off the site; it was redundancy and lack of quality. Apparently, a lot of people submit comments like, "I love Anne Frank," and those comments don't add a lot to the conversation.

Or do they? Go onto MySpace and check out the postings in the "Friends Comments" section at bottom right. Many are redundant, short, and silly. But when someone posts a comment on MySpace, they know the comment will appear (unless the maintainer of that page finds it offensive). There is an instant reward for participating—momentary stardom. You are motivated to write more comments because of the success at "joining the conversation" this time; even if the contribution was insignificant, it gets as much space as anyone else's. Similarly, many designers have railed against the ugliness of MySpace pages, and yet those pages—and all their design flaws—reflect the preferences and interests of their creators.³

Museums need to determine what role they want to play, that of MySpace, which tolerates inconsistent quality in exchange for maximal participation, or that of USHMM, which restricts participation in exchange for substantive content. Once decided, the museum needs to communicate whether visitors are contributing to an exhibition (which makes editing understandable) or participating in a conversation (which makes openness paramount).

Conclusion

Going 2.0 isn't just a design decision. It's a trust decision. All museum endeavors require a certain element of trust in visitors—that they will take their role seriously and respectfully. But the integration of 2.0 requires "radical trust" in visitors' abilities to create and judge, not just receive, museum content.⁴ When you design for the web, you must trust visitors to use the exhibits as they see fit—not as you do.

This doesn't mean that design goes out the window; instead, designers need to confront the new challenges inherent in creating environments that foster meaningful discourse among strangers. When visitors' contributions to a 2.0 exhibit are insubstantial, that reflects the exhibit design and visitors' opinion of it. If the design does not respect visitors' opinions, give them private, individual ways to interact with quality content, and connect them with others in a respectful and useful manner, visitors won't feel that the experience is valuable (and therefore won't be motivated to add valuable content themselves). Web 2.0 applications provide opportunities forums for discussion, content sharing, and relationship building among strangers. It's up to museum educators and designers to take those opportunities to the museum floor and make them resonate.

Notes

1. This graphic was originally created and displayed on the Museum 2.0 blog (www.museumtwo.com).
2. While the names of these categories are my own invention, they are closely related to those explained in Charlene Li's report, *Social Technographics® Mapping Participation in Activities Forms*. The Foundation of a Social Strategy. Published and available from Forrester (www.forrester.com). A free view of Li's categories is available at the fresh + new blog at <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/dmsblog/index.php/2007/04/23/more-on-levels-of-participation-forresters-social-technographics/>.
3. Web commentator Ze Frank has an excellent video commentary on the positive educational impact of ugly MySpace pages that Museum 2.0 linked to at www.museumtwo.com/2006/11/what-if-its-ugly.html.
4. The concept of "radical trust" as applied to libraries and museums originated with Darlene Fichter on her blog, http://library2.usask.ca/~fichter/blog_on_the_side/2006/04/web-2.html

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