

Web 2.0 - Entrepreneurial technology for all

Julius Caesar was questioned by one of the ministers, " Why are you planning to entrust the power in the hands of Romans?" He quipped "Let Rome follow the voice of its citizens and the world will follow Rome." That is the story of web 2.0 - The power to change is in the hands of the people.

Web & Web 2.0

The advent of internet and its ramifications on our lives is still being digested and analyzed after all these years. Meanwhile, this baby has grown into a charismatic adult. All of us are aware of the concept and impact of Web in our daily lives but what is this new version of Web? Why is it called web 2.0? Is there a Web 3.0 also in the pipeline? Why is it creating so much buzz in the social, economic, and tech circles? A cross reference is given below for the two Web versions.

	Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Platforms	Netscape, Internet Explorer	Google Services, Ajax, Flock
Web Pages	Personal Websites	Blogs
Portals	Content Management Systems	Wikis
Encyclopedia	Britannica Online	Wikipedia
Talk \ Communication	Netmeeting	Skype, Asterisk
Referencing	Stickiness	Syndication
Content	Akamai	BitTorrent, P2P
Events	Evite	UpComming.org
Knowledge	Directories, Taxonomies	Tagging, Folksonomies

(Source: Digital Enterprise Research Institute)

The readers & viewers of the yesteryears have become the contributors, collaborators, and the knowledge centers of the Web 2.0 era. You guessed right, there is a talk of Web 3.0 also, but its characteristics are nebulous at the moment. As is true with any social platform, if the baton of power is passed on to the people, it creates ripples. The Web 2.0 consumers have become more powerful than any union and their collective voice can be a nemesis as well as an advertising bonanza for any corporate empire.

Tools for the Entrepreneur - courtesy Web 2.0

Are you able to keep track of your small business? Managing your finances? Business networking? Do you have a marketing strategy? - The Web 2.0 tools provide a simple, easy to use, and economically viable solution to your entrepreneurial needs. The most reliable tools in the marketplace are given below -

Finances, Money Management, Payments

The following apps can take the headache of managing the financial nuances - Prosper, Dimewise, NetworthIQ, Wesabe, Instacalc.

Timesheets, Invoicing, Billing

Freshbooks, Harvest, SidejobTrack - These apps will give you the time needed for strategic planning.

Communication & Collaboration

These Web Applications will handle the integral pieces of conferencing, team work collaboration, voice & text communication, and workspace sharing - Campfire, Meebo, Userplane, Concept-share, Near-time.



Organization

The following apps would manage your schedules, itineraries, deadlines if you cannot afford a personal secretary - Google Calendar, Remember the Milk, Neptune

Networking, Social Spaces

Every entrepreneur needs to network with peers and established market leader for spreading the word and to reach out to the clientele. They can utilize these Web 2.0 tools - LinkedIn, Facebook, Ning,

Content Creation, Office & Productivity Tools

These tools will help in maintaining records, hard copies, document management, backups etc. - Zoho, Thinkfree, MyStickies, EyeOS

Promotion, Marketing, Sales & Support

Start-up Entrepreneurs cannot afford the ad agencies for creating brand equity, and marketing campaign - So, what do they do? Utilize the following tools - Veetro, Google AdSense, Ebay, and Coop.

Areas of Web 2.0 Entrepreneurship

As we know, every entrepreneurial endeavor has its own barriers of entry - so, I am listing some of the Web 2.0 opportunities with the lowest barrier of entry-

Rich Media Producer

All you need a webcam, a free video editing software (should accompany your operating system), a YouTube (www.youtube.com) account, and most important your directorial skills. You can be a producer of webisodes, documentaries, news programs, and any creative content which can be captured through a lens. Some of the sites on which you can post your content and get paid are - Youtube, Revver, BrightCove, Metacafe, Veoh, Google Video, Yahoo Video etc.

Independent Publisher

Web is a boundary-less medium but publishing - You must be joking. But, that's true. Go to Lulu (www.lulu.com) and you can have your dream book published without stepping out of your house. Lulu will print and ship your magnum opus for a percentage revenue cut and next thing is checking the sales on Amazon.

Independent Product & Service Advisor

If you are a professional/enthusiast photographer, painter, cyclist, or even a serious hobbyist, then Web 2.0 could be your key to financial freedom. You can start a product or service driven blog which is reflective of your passion and knowledge and in-depth analytical source of knowledge is a highly priced commodity on the net.

E.g. Vincent Versace's blog on Nikon Cameras - <http://nikonblog.wordpress.com/>

An anonymous customer who was a big fan of target started writing her experiences and thus started the Blog of the departmental store - Target - <http://slavetotarget.blogspot.com/>. She is now been hired by target.

Citizen Journalist

Also called 'Participatory journalism' or 'People journalism', is undertaken by citizens who collect, analyze, report, and disseminate reliable information. Most citizen journalist utilize the tools of Web 2.0 like blogs, podcast, wiki (www.wikipedia.org), YouTube (for Video Journalism - suited to professional and amateur videographers), Flickr (www.flickr.com - for professional & amateur photographers)



E.g. Snaparazzi are [citizen journalists](#) or passers-by who are witness to a newsworthy event and capture it on video or digital picture using their [mobile phone](#). The [7 July 2005 London bombings](#) provided a large number of cases where stills from the bombed underground trains were made available online almost immediately after the events.

Community Architect

Individuals with a social bend can utilize the Web 2.0 tools (CMS - Content management System tools like Joomla and Mambo) to create their own online community with an eye on a niche audience. We have seen Industry leaders like Myspace (www.myspace.com) and Orkut (www.orkut.com) grow into mega-community sites in a flash.

The opportunities for creativity are endless, the tools to realize your dream is at your fingertips, and a there is every chance that you can bid farewell to your 9 to 5 job once you leverage the full potential of Web 2.0 platform. So, put on your thinking caps!

About the Author:

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