

## Web 2.0 - What You Need to Know

Contributed by Michael Fleischner  
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"Web 2.0" is a weird phrase. It began as the name of a conference, but the people organizing the conference didn't really know what they meant by it. Mostly they thought it sounded catchy. However, "Web 2.0" has since taken on a meaning. There are some interesting new trends on the Web, and it's the nature of a phrase like that to adhere to them.

{bot\_wrgoogle}From what I can gather, Web 2.0 is all about the social networks being created on the web. Websites like Digg, MySpace, Flickr, Blogger, Wikis, etc. are all operating inside this bubble we call Web 2.0. If you want a really detailed explanation of Web 2.0, visit the site that started it all at

<http://www.oreillynet.com> . I'll save you a lot of reading... it's complicated – but incredibly simple at the same time.

Web 2.0 simply defines the evolution of the world wide web. It describes the Internet as it was intended to be - a resource that allows for information creation, sharing, and dissemination. Why is this important to us as marketers? Because marketing is all about WOM (you guessed it, "Word-of-Mouth"), building brand, and communicating your message.

If you've been following the blogging circles lately, you've not doubt heard of the latest controversy- blogging for payment. The idea that someone would actually pay you to blog about their products or services would only be possible in the Web 2.0 world. Yet it's indicative of Web 2.0. In this environment its all about information sharing, ideas, and communities with similar likes and dislikes.

The viral nature of Web 2.0 is contagious. Just visit Digg or Del.icio.us and you'll soon find out what I'm talking about. As a marketer in this environment, you have to understand the importance of viral marketing and managing your marketing messages - even creating a buzz around your products.

Some of the leading brands have been doing this for ages... Nike giving away their sneakers to the best athlete at a school; PowerBar giving away samples to athletes, and so on. The only thing that's changed with Web 2.0 is vehicle. In addition to 'feet-on-the-street', there are now online tools – communities that are available to spread your message.

### Developing a Strategy

The best way to utilize this new technology is to really understand the value that each has to offer. Begin with a clear understanding of your desired outcome. Then, consider the tools in your tool box. For example, if you want to communicate how customers feel about a given topic or issue, maybe you want to blog about it... or conduct an interview via a podcast.

You should approach your Web 2.0 with the same strategy you use when developing your traditional marketing plan. An integrated approach always works best. Regardless of the vehicle, apply the same basic marketing standards you do today. Use messaging points, create value, and segment.

Michael Fleischner is an Internet marketing expert and the president of

[www.MarketinScoop.com](http://www.MarketinScoop.com) . He has more than 12 years of marketing experience and has appeared on The TODAY Show, Bloomberg Radio, and other major media. Visit [MarketinScoop.com](http://MarketinScoop.com) for more free marketing articles .