

European Workshop
Perspectives of Web 2.0 for Citizenship Education in Europe

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Input

Workshop 2: Web 2.0 as Innovative Toolbox

“The Web 2.0 Map of Education Events”

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It's all about creativity, participation, connecting and sharing – that's why Web 2.0 and Civic Education should be best friends.

Web 2.0 as the “Read-/Write-Web” (Tim Berners-Lee) is obviously very compatible with progressive educational paradigms. Users in Web 2.0 are not only a passive audience but also broadcasters. In the same way participants in civic educational events are not only supposed to listen, but also to get engaged, to contribute, to discuss, to create, to share, to connect – in sum: to participate.

Web 2.0 offers a wide range of tools that can be used for citizenship education – not solely online but also as a support to traditional face-to-face events like talks, panels, conferences or workshops. In this paper a map of Web 2.0 tools will be presented, connecting exemplary tools to educational purposes in traditional event formats. These are only examples and of course you can use every tool for almost every other purpose than the one I'm proposing. So I would ask you to see my map as a sketchy framework in which tools can be arranged to serve the educational purpose.

(Not) talking about...

This is *not* about e-learning. I'm going to talk about how to use Web 2.0 services as tools in traditional educational settings, in face-to-face-situations (not online-only activities). My second limitation to the subject is that I'm only referring to events not to publications.

I'm going to take typical activities from the world of educational events and connect them with tools of Web 2.0. I pick typical combinations of tools and activities.

One word about the terms I will be using: It's important but not always easy to tell apart the service from the company offering the service. So I'm mixing it up: Sometimes I'm talking about “blogs” but on other occasions I say “twitter” instead of “microblogging services” because it's much easier to understand.

Three proto formats

Let me talk about three different types of educational events. I'd like to differentiate between three kinds of events where people are coming together: First the **conference**, where we usually have a lot of people not doing the same thing all along. Typically we have plenary sessions and parallel sessions. Secondly there are **talks or panels**, which normally will last about two hours, in which dozens or maybe hundreds of people are listening to one person, maybe four or five persons talking. And finally we know the **workshop or course**, in which we have a group of people, let's say 15 or maybe 30 people, working and learning together for several days. All three formats cannot be separated precisely from each other. For example in a conference you can have talks and panels and workshop sessions. Or in a workshop there may be formats that are more input-driven, like a talk or a lecture. But as prototypes of different formats these three should work.

Typical tasks and activities in citizenship education

In the process of the preparation, conduction and follow-up of an educational event there are typical activities you want to do for or with your participants:

- invitation & promotion
- documentation & sharing (the outcome)
- collaboration, organising & coordination
- creating
- conversation, broadcasting
- evaluation

Conference

"Conference" is the most comprehensive format because talks, panels and workshop-like methods can be used within the framework of a conference.

Imagine a typical conference with 100 maybe even 500 or more attendees coming together for one day, two or three days. A typical conference schedule will include talks and panels in the plenary room and smaller formats in parallel sessions. (And there are of course the coffee breaks, which are sometimes as important as the rest.) A conference is different from other formats not only by size but also from the interest „beyond the room“. Many people are interested in a conference even though they are not participating within the same geographical position but in a shared space of thinking. Moreover many people may be interested in the conference after the conference has ended. That's why conferences often have a stronger online-presence than workshops, courses, talks or panels. Furthermore, participants also may be willing to do some (shared) preparation before the conference starts. So conferences can be accompanied by several online services – before the event, during the event and afterwards.

Let's start with a very important activity: **INVITATION AND PROMOTION**. You want to have people's attention. You can use **social networks** like facebook and **twitter** to spread the word about your event. Web 2.0 means you can easily stay connected to the people that are interested in what you're doing. And probably even more important: You should make it very easy to let other people share their interest in your event. You should provide possibilities that people out there can spread the word about your event.

Being on social networks always means a two-way-communication. You are not only **BROADCASTING** but people are coming back to you. They are asking questions, bringing in their own ideas and requests and they certainly will not hide their opinion when they are upset or disagree with your activities. Furthermore they expect you to answer when you are on facebook or twitter. That's what Web 2.0 is all about: having a **CONVERSATION** or rather having dozens, hundreds, thousands of conversations. And the desire to share the conversation won't end with the beginning of your conference. People are more and more getting used to seeing a **livestream** from a conference to be able to participate without being

there (geographically). The efforts for a livestream are reasonable but they are not too high regarding the efforts you undertake for your conference. Adding a livestream can possibly double your audience while it's far from doubling your efforts. (In 2011 we seem to see a rapid change from regarding a livestream as an extraordinary effort to regarding it as a certain standard many people will take for granted.) And it doesn't stop here. People might also not only want to watch what's happening on the conference stage but also want to bring in their own opinions and experiences. That is when a **twitterwall** comes into play. A twitterwall can put in a backchannel, in which not only questions can be asked but also the audience can get together. If this works well, you can "see the room thinking". You might even be unable to say which tweets come from inside the room and which from a viewer of the livestream who is sitting in South America. There are different nuances between having no twitterwall and having a huge screen next to the speaker. For example you can have a "hidden" twitterwall, which is not displayed in the conference room but followed by a "twitter correspondent" who contributes selected tweets to the discussion within in the room.

Let's move on to another set of activities you might want to do at your conference: **DOCUMENTATION AND SHARING**. You want to collect and publish documents from your event and make it accessible not only for your participants but also for the rest of the world. There are many different formats and different platforms to publish on: There is **slideshare** for presentations, the slides only or the slides combined with an audio-recording of the talk. For photos there are platforms like **flickr**. You can record the audio of a talk or a panel or make interviews and publish the recordings as a **podcast**. And finally you can record not only the audio but also videos and share them on **YouTube** or other platforms like **Vimeo**. (If you have a livestream than you probably already have the option to save the streams in an archive so people can watch the video there.)

When we are talking about Web 2.0 it's important that you don't limit your efforts to publishing your own and your speakers' productions. Not only you as the host can do these things but also your participants can do it, bringing in their own writings, photos, audios and videos. They even can produce their own livestream if they have a webcam or a smartphone and access to the Internet. You can help them assembling their content by opening groups, a wiki or by keeping a list on content published by others on your event.

In citizenship education we prefer not to see the attendees of a conference as a passive audience but we want them to get engaged, to be active participants. So you might want to offer possibilities for **COLLABORATION**, for shared **ORGANISATION AND COORDINATION**. For example people can connect their own sources on the topic using **social bookmarks** like "delicious" or "diigo" where a shared *hashtag* or a *group* can be used to have a collection of links and commentaries on these links. To help people get connected with each other a **community like "mixxt"** can be pretty useful. Participants can have a profile there, share their thoughts in a forum, get news from you as their host, choose what parallel session to opt in for or even introduce what session to provide itself. Probably many of you know the format "barcamp", which is also called an "unconference", because every participant is requested to be a speaker and bring in his/her own activities. In Germany almost every "barcamp" is prepared and accompanied by a mixxt-community. Impressive examples from the community of "barcamps" are demonstrating that with the help of "mixxt" and other tools you can get a whole conference organised by an un-institutionalised crowd.

Of course you can also provide a **wiki** for matters of coordination where people can collaboratively write documents online. Recently we see more and more **etherpads** coming in use for collaborative writing. For example an etherpad can be used to create collaborative notes on a session, for example the written record on a workshop.

Now looking at all the Web 2.0 tools so far you might be missing one big thing – **blogs**. I want to put them in the middle of everything else because blogs often are the centre of all your online activities. A blog is where your basic information is provided, where you link to or embed every other tool you are using. So the blog is very generic and cannot be positioned to a certain activity.

Talk or Panel

Now we'll take a look at the formats of a talk or a panel. This won't take as long as my thoughts on Web 2.0 tools for a conference because many things are quite similar. For example you will also use **social networks** and **twitter** to invite people and promote your event. You will also be able (or be requested) to have a **livestream** and a backchannel like a **twitterwall**. A livestream can extend a talk or a panel from the physical room to a (potentially) worldwide public. As a rule of thumb you can say that about the same number of people will view your livestream as people will come to your event physically. Plus you have the video online afterwards, which normally will be seen by a multiple number of viewers. Also you might have documents you would like to publish, whether these are **slides** or **photos** or **audio** or **video**.

Things are changing when it comes to collaboration, organisation and coordination. Normally a talk or a panel is a 2-hour-event with no need for participants to work together online. Although it might be that they are writing an etherpad together.

Talking about **blogs** – you probably won't set up a blog solely for your talk. But you may have an institutional blog where you can publish an article about your event. Don't forget that you create possibilities for people to bring in their own thoughts (as commentaries) or photos (e.g. on flickr).

Workshop

Sometimes a workshop is like a small conference. For this paper I would like to highlight the character of “working together” of the workshop. Imagine 10 to 30 people coming together for two days or maybe even four or five days. In citizenship education we prefer formats that make the participant work actively, to discuss, to be creative, to get engaged.

Regarding **INVITATION AND PROMOTION** you can use the same tools that we have already talked about. Don't forget that it's bi-directional, so you cannot only send your message to the world on **facebook** or **twitter**, but you can also watch the world talking about your event and you can decide if you want to join the conversation.

When it comes to **BROADCASTING** the workshop is different from the conference or the talk. A workshop often requires the safety of a non-public space, for open and frank discussions behind doors. So you probably won't want to have a **livestream** nor a **twitterwall**. (Although there are experiments using a twitterwall, which is like a “workshop-wall” behind closed doors.)

Regarding **DOCUMENTATION AND SHARING** you usually don't have as many finished products that you want the rest of the world to see. So these tools are not as important for this matter.

What is much more important are the activities for **COLLABORATION**. You can use the tools we've already talked about like a **mixxt-community**, **wikis**, **etherpads** and **social bookmarks**. Furthermore you can use other tools for collaboration in smaller groups as there is **doodle** for coordinating an appointment or voting on a choice. Or there are services for sharing files like **dropbox**.

In a workshop there is another field of activities and this is **CREATING**. Web 2.0 offers a variety of tools to create visualisations of knowledge like **mindmaps** or **dipity** (a tool for multimedia timelines), **storify** (for storytelling using social media) or **animoto** (that lets its users create short movies from photos and text). And of course your participants can use **slideshare**, **flickr**, **podcasts**, **YouTube** or even a **livestream** to publish their own works.



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So the difference between these activities and the ones mentioned in the context of documentation and sharing is that the main focus is on creating those products. Publishing them is nice but often not the most important thing.

And of course you can use a workshop-**blog** to put together your own materials as well as everything else that is created within in the workshop.

The lost files

So this is pretty much it. I just would like to mention a service which is often forgotten when it comes to a list of Web 2.0. It's **geocaching**, which to me is Web 2.0 and is very interesting for educational purposes. But that's another talk. And last but not least I would like to mention the task of **EVALUATION** which of course can be done with Web 2.0, for example with collaboratively created **questionnaires** or simply with a quiet old tool: an **Internet forum or message board**.