

The Wisdom of the Mob:

How User Contributed Material is Changing the Web

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Questions to Explore

- What is the world of Web 2.0 and user contributed material?
- Is this material **genius** or **junk**?
- Is the *many* smarter than the *one*?
- How can teachers and students can use it for educational purposes?
- How can students can share and publish their own work?

Among topics discussed:

Wikipedia * Second Life * FaceBook *
YouTube * DIGG * Time magazine * Marriott
hotels * the Portland Trailblazers * Wal-Mart
* the CIA * Pachabel's Canon * the song
"Bubbly" * a slaughtered ox * Halliburton *
Curriki * TeacherTube *

What is "Web 2.0":

- Term coined in 2004
- Many definitions
- "The Read/Write Web"
- "The Live Web"
- "Collective intelligence"
- "Cooperate, don't control"
- Users add value
- "We, the media"

Using "Web 2.0":

- User contributed material is the hottest thing on the Internet today. "Web 2.0", is built on this material.
- "The Read/Write Web".
- Time magazine named "you" as their person of the year.

User contributed material:

- Blogs, wikis, podcasts, mash ups, vidcasts, and social networking sites are drawing millions of visits every day.
- Sites such as YouTube, MySpace, Flickr and Second Life have captivated today's kids.
- Even businesses are using Web 2.0 for communication and opinion sharing.
- Blogs, wikis, virtual worlds
- Genius or junk?
- Amateur or professional?
- Virtual county fair, garage bands, personal journals.
- Copied or created? Mashups.
- New form of journalism?

YouTube:

- Over 10 million videos, 100 million viewed daily
- 75,000 videos uploaded per day
- 25 million users per month
- Bought by Google for \$1.6 *billion*
- Copyright issues
- Now used by TV networks

Digg:

- Social media.
- Everything on Digg: news, videos, images podcasts is submitted by users.
- Other people see it and Digg what they like best.
- If it receives enough Diggs, it is promoted to the front page.
- A conversation happens around the content.
- People have a voice in deciding what is news.

Blogs:

- "Blogosphere"
- Perhaps 15 million active blogs.
- "We, the media" - the former audience, not a few people in a back room, decides what's important.
- Chronological
- Feedback from viewers

Second Life:

- M.U.V.E.
- Millions of users
- I.S.T.E. Island
- “A Child’s War”
Global Kids – Virtual Video Project

Habbo & Club Penguin**MySpace:**

- 100 million accounts - 60 million uses a month
- 4th most popular in U.S.
- Publicity and parties
- Purchased by Rupert Murdoch – Fox News

Who Is This?**Facebook:**

- Invited social network.
- Based on school, company or region.
- 6th most visited web site.
- 49 million registered users.
- Over half return daily.
- No. 1 photo sharing application.
- Applications.

Wikipedia:

- College instructors
- 1.8 million articles.
- 130,000 edits per day.
- 25 million visits per month.
- Contributors between 1% - 2%.
- 1% create or edit 70% of all articles.
- The 1% rule -

The Wisdom of the crowd:

- Is the crowd usually right?
- Can the many be smarter than the one?

“19th century scientist Francis Galton observed that a collection of individuals, acting independently, managed to achieve what even experts could not: averaged together, their answers were right, though no individual managed to get as close as the average did. In his case, the exercise was estimating the weight of a slaughtered ox

Group Knowledge in Real Life:

- Democracy- 1 man, 1 vote
- The jury system
- The stock market
- Horse race odds

Group Knowledge in Cyberspace:

- Amazon customer reviews
- iTunes scales
- Google Page Views
- Trip Advisor reviews
- YouTube most viewed vs. most stars

Wikipedia contributors have detected a large number of mistakes in the Encyclopedia Britannica, including the name at birth of Bill Clinton and how to calculate leap years.

“The task before us is to extend into the digital world the virtues of authenticity, expertise, and scholarly apparatus that have evolved over the 500 years of print.”

Michael Gorman

(writing at the Britannica blog site)

Need some formalized learning**Airbrushing Wikipedia:**

- Wikiscanner.virgil.gr
- Diebold
- Halliburton
- Wal-Mart
- Jimmy Wales – founder
 - Edited own entry 18 times
 - Co-founder
 - Porn site

James Surowiecki’s 2004 book:**The Wisdom of Crowds:**

Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations.

Quality of this material... is it genius or junk?

- Is the crowd usually right?
- Mob rule

Collective Wisdom:

- Act collectively to solve problems.
- A few smart people.
- Groups often smarter than the smartest person in it.
- Can work even with ill informed groups.
- Mob rule – collective madness
- Groups need rules

Best Used For:

- Cognition problems
- Coordination problems
- Cooperation problems.

Separating wise crowds from irrational ones:

- Diversity of opinion - Each person should have private information even if it's just an eccentric interpretation of the known facts.
- Independence - People's opinions aren't determined by the opinions of those around them.
- Decentralization - People are able to specialize and draw on local knowledge.
- Aggregation - Some mechanism exists for turning private judgments into a collective decision.

Use of crowd wisdom in politics, society and business:

- National Intelligence and the CIA have created a Wikipedia style information sharing network called Intellipedia.
- Aimed at helping the free flow of information.

Web 2.0 in politics:

- Bloggers
- Instant polls
- Majority rules?

Issues:

- Creativity
- Bullying
- Accuracy
- Plagiarism
- Mash ups
- Copyright
- Digital ethics
- Privacy and safety issues

Business use of Web 2:

- For communication and opinion sharing.
- Wikis and blogs provide flexible ways to aggregate, organize, share, and amplify the value of personal knowledge and experiences.
- E-mail is the most widely used tool for collaboration but its use is so prolific that, at times, it has the opposite effect as users can't recognize important messages from noise.

Corporate online communities:

- Discuss - complain
- Get discounted tickets
- Meet at games

“Crowdsourcing”

- Beastie Boys video shot by 50 fans
- SportingNews.com made social networking and blogging central. Traffic and ad revenue soared.
- Zazzle uses designs by users for products and gives them a cut.
- Marketocracy – Community of 60,000 online stock traders sets the investment strategy for its mutual fund.
- iStockPhoto – 22,000 amateur photographers. Over 10 million licensed per year.
- InnoCentive – pays people outside companies to do R&D.

Demo of a school using Web 2.0 for communication and opinion sharing.

How teachers can capitalize on kids' interest and skill in consuming and producing this material:

- Collaborative learning.
- Watch for bullying.
- Monitored by other students.
- Teacher coordinates doesn't control.
- Have a goal.
- Sometimes you need to step in,
- Be flexible and open-minded.

How it can be used for educational purposes:

Shared Class Notes:

“This semester I started using the class wiki for a collaborative note taking project. Two or three students are assigned to post their notes for a particular class session on a wiki page. Their classmates review the notes, adding in anything they learned that the two starting authors may have omitted. Together, the students are writing the text that reflects what they actually learned (not what I taught!) in each class session. If I feel that something important is missing from the notes, either I’ll go back and add it, or more likely, we’ll talk about it in the next class, and undoubtedly a student will have made the appropriate updates”.

Mark Frydenberg, Bentley College

Yahoo You Witness News

Curriki.org

- Open source resources and curricula
- User contributed (wiki)
- Global Education and Learning Community

How students can share and publish their own digital work.

- Blogger
- Ning and Nexo
- PBWiki
- Gaggle.net
- Protospace

For handouts, links, publications, workshop and presentations contact:

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