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## **Web-2.0 Ideas for Language Education**

*'I have always imagined the information space as something to which everyone has immediate and intuitive access, and not just to browse, but to **create**.'*

*Tim Berners-Lee (the founder of WWW)*

The Internet gives great opportunities for teaching and studying English. The Internet for teachers and students can be: a monitor which controls the work during the classes; a source of information that can be found in it; a helper and organizer of real communication with native speakers; a tool with the help of which a teacher can create his own projects, didactic materials and even interactive computer programs.

Nowadays, using the Internet, we should distinguish Web-1.0 and Web-2.0 technologies. If the main factor of Web-1.0 is technology itself, then the main factor of Web-2.0 is a human-being. And unlike Web-1.0 technologies that are oriented on getting information from the net as a source of it, Web-2.0 is a platform for social collaboration. It helps to transfer the accent from the software onto communication, partnership and cooperation. This very transfer is the main goal of education.

In the first generation of the Internet there was a clear-sharp border between readers of the net and its creators – engineers because filling the net required rather specific technical skills and knowledge, while the Internet of the second generation is not just a place for communicating and collaborating, but it is a special platform for doing that. Web-2.0 lets users create and edit the Internet content cooperatively, exchange information and artifacts, store links and multimedia documents.

The term “Web-2.0” appeared in 2005 in the article by Tim O’Reilly “What Is Web-2.0”, but the author insists that this term is not clearly defined yet. Nevertheless we can try to determine the principle technical, didactic and social characteristics of the second generation of the Internet. First of all, Web-2.0 is intended for using just

programs-browsers without installing special software to be able to work with its sources and content. Secondly, “harnessing collective intelligence” [2] enhances developing and filling the technologies with the information. Thirdly, presence of so called social nets enables users to collaborate and exchange information rapidly.

So, Web–2.0 moves the borders of users↔author, local↔removed, private↔public. As for the border users↔author: While in the Web of the first generation users could just consume information that had been published by the author of the web-site, then due to Web–2.0 everybody on the net can become a coauthor that means we can change, correct, comment, evaluate educational products, consult with the professionals, ask questions and get answers. Hereby, the content that is being created by the net-users is becoming the greatest channel of social communicating and collaborating.

The examples of this attribute can be such teachers’ tools as Quia, ESL-video, Mindomo, Blogs, Wiki, Quests, the most famous Web–2.0 service YouTube and a lot of others. On these sites you can publish your own electronic projects for the teachers around the world. So, you become famous in one minute because everybody can use you publications and give you permission to use his works as well.

As for the border local↔removed just imagine such a situation. You are invited to a conference and suddenly you are struck by the idea to demonstrate your projects. How to do it if they are saved on your local home computer? The technologies of the second generation of the Internet allow saving personal information in special places called web data or media storages and reaching your data anywhere in the world at any moment. In addition it is very save because in order to get access to your data you don’t have to use any flash cards, disks or other information carriers which are not very reliable. The examples of such services are: information sharing sites, media storages, and even your e-mail box.

Removing the border private↔public is the main feature of Web–2.0. It’s up to you to decide to make everything you publish private or public. And every Web–2.0 service can be the example of it, especially, social networks. If you make you materials public other people can find them with help of the tags. This technology is

called folksonomy – it lets people give tags to their web-products and find different materials using the tags. It is so called folk classifying of sites.

Generalizing the works by Paul Anderson, O'Reilly and our own experience in this field, will try to accentuate the basic social features of Web–2.0. Among them:

- openness and simplicity;
- presence of a great anonymous discrete audience that encourages self-expressing and self-revealing;
- users' partaking in sources' developing and their self-controlling of the process;
- technical mediation of communicating on the net;
- a radical decentralization, that means all the users have the same rights and responsibilities;
- having no border, every user can expand Web–2.0 services and its content endlessly;
- collaborating and communicating in different social groups;
- individual production and user generated content;
- harness the power of the crowd;
- radical trust for every user;
- moving from individual intellect to the collective one.

The synonyms to Web–2.0 are: collaboration, information sharing, recommendation, participation, cooperation, usability, mobility, accessibility and even economy (you don't have to buy any disks of flash-cards and you don't have to print your Handouts any more).

As for educational and didactic peculiarities of the second generation of the net, they flow from the technical and social ones. These characteristics enable a teacher to create his own Learning Environment, use element of Distance Education, actualize individual students' work, motivate students greatly and raise teacher's own professional activity to a new level – level Web–2.0.

Teachers around the world consider Web–2.0 to be a great platform for project work because of using the wisdom of the crowd as the psychologists say that a group

of people collaboratively can find a much wiser decision to a problem than the wisest member of this group working individually.

With the emergence of the notion Web-2.0 there appears a term education-2. Some scientists consider it to be just a successful metaphor, but a lot of teachers around the world believe that education-2 is a certain conception. This notion is defined as a complex of educational systems that are based on the principles which are adequate to the purposes and objectives of education in the postindustrial society.

And finally we can make an attempt to define Web-2.0 as a new generation of the Internet based on users' collective work as for creating and exchanging content, it is a distributed technology built to integrate that collectively transform collective participation into valuable emergent outcomes. And it's up to you to broaden this definition.

And as the Internet is being created nowadays collectively by all the people around the world this very net is becoming valuable for every member of the society. So it will develop the information culture of us, teachers and our students as well.

The lists of Web-2.0 characteristics suggested in the report give us just a vague notion about the second Internet generation, but it's possible to find practical recommendations and much more information on the topic on the site for philologists <http://shvidko172.narod2.ru/> on its page WEB-2.0 services in teaching English. Here you will find a catalogue of WEB-2.0 services and some examples how to use them to teach and study English.

We use widely the ideas of Web-2.0 in our University. On the page Students' Corner on the site you will find materials for students and on this very page there is a video-class for students where they can study new material, do exercises and have tests on listening, writing and speaking.

So, nowadays nobody considers Web-2.0 to be just a commercial trick any more, but a great principally new platform of the net; a modern social notion; a contemporary way of perception and using the Internet.

## Resources:

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