Workshop: Catching up with our students: using web tools to create communities

Glossary of terms

Blog
A blog is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed (typically) in a reverse chronological order.

Blogs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

The term "blog" is derived from "Web log." "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

As of November 2006, blog search engine Technorati was tracking nearly 60 million blogs worldwide.

Wiki
A wiki is a website that allows the visitors themselves to easily add, remove, and otherwise edit and change available content, and typically without the need for registration. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for mass collaborative authoring. Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia, is one of the best examples of a wiki.

Web Feeds (incl. RSS and Atom formats)
A Web Feed is a data format used for serving users frequently updated content. Content distributors syndicate a web feed, thereby allowing users to subscribe to it. Making a collection of web feeds accessible in one spot is known as aggregation.

In the typical scenario of using web feeds, a content provider publishes a feed link on their site which end users can register with an aggregator program (also called a feed reader or a news reader) running on their own machines; doing this is usually as simple as dragging the link from the web browser to the aggregator. When instructed, the aggregator asks all the servers in its feed list if they have new content; if so, the aggregator either makes a note of the new content or downloads it. Aggregators can be scheduled to check for new content periodically.

The kinds of content delivered by a web feed are typically HTML (webpage content) or links to webpages and other kinds of digital media. Often when websites provide web
feeds to notify users of content updates, they only include summaries in the web feed rather than the full content itself.

Web feeds are operated by many news web sites, weblogs, schools, and podcaster. The two main web feed formats are RSS and Atom.

**Podcast**

A podcast is a media file that is distributed by subscription (paid or unpaid) over the Internet using syndication feeds, for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. Like 'radio', it can mean both the content and the method of syndication. The latter may also be termed podcasting. The host or author of a podcast is often called a podcaster. The term "podcast" is derived from Apple Computer's mp3 playback device iPod.

Though podcasters' web sites may also offer direct download or streaming of their content, a podcast is distinguished from other digital audio formats by its ability to be downloaded automatically, using software capable of reading feed formats such as RSS or Atom.

**Instant Messaging (i.e. MSN messenger, iChat, Yahoo! Chat etc.)**

Instant messaging or IM is a form of real-time communication between two or more people based on typed text. The text is conveyed via computers connected over a network such as the Internet. Microsoft's MSN messenger is a typical example of IM. Amongst its users it is often referred to as "MSN".

**Internet forums (including web forums, message boards, discussion boards.)**

An Internet forum is a facility on the World Wide Web for holding discussions and posting user generated content, or the web application software used to provide the facility. A sense of virtual community often develops around forums that have regular users. Technology, computer games, and politics are popular areas for forum themes, but there are forums for a huge number of different topics.

Internet forums are also commonly referred to as web forums, message boards, discussion boards, (electronic) discussion groups, discussion forums, bulletin boards, fora, or simply forums.

The term "forum" and "board" may refer to the entire community, or a specific forum (for example, "off-topic") within the community.

**Source:** [http://en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org) [accessed 29 Jan 2007]


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