

Getting started

Embracing social media is about adapting your practice rather than learning new skills or tools. There are specific web2tools for specific media types, Flickr or Picasa for images, YouTube or Blip.tv for video, or Slideshare for presentations. However, they all share common functionality, based on ease of publication, and the ability to share and comment.



Ten things to try

1. Search for an image using a photo sharing site such as Flickr.
2. Search for a book on Amazon that you've already read, click on the 'star rating' and give a rating based on your opinion.
3. Use a blog search engine to find a blog about a subject you're interested in and a comment.
4. Keep a diary for a month about things that you think your colleagues might be interested in; at the end of the month see if your notes are the basis for two or three blog posts.
5. If you have access to a digital camera, take a photo that represents your day and share it online using a free photo sharing site such as Flickr or Blipfoto.
6. Pick a story from today's news, read it, then record yourself reviewing it. How does it differ from a written review?
7. Search a video sharing site like YouTube, Vimeo or eHow for videos on something you'd like to be able to do. Would you be able to do it after watching these videos?
8. Search a consumer review site like Yelp for somewhere to eat near where you live. Go eat there, then add your own comments or review.
9. Make a list of what media you could capture using the devices you have in your office and/or home.
10. Find a video you like/dislike on YouTube and post a video response to it.

Social media

Don't just consume, participate and join the conversation!

Web2practice: Guides to emergent technologies & innovative practice

When we think of traditional media, be that audio, video or print, we often assume that it has been created and published on a commercial basis and requires specialist equipment and expertise. However, with the emergence of web2tools, anyone with an internet-connected computer has the ability to be both publisher and consumer of almost any type of media.

Participation is a key characteristic, with everyone in the community able to engage in conversation around any published media, hence the term 'social media'. Instead of simply consuming information, the audience can interact and respond to the author by commenting, editing, sharing or even publishing their own media response through the web.

Social media services have been made possible by cheaper hardware and faster web access, enabling the creation and distribution of quality media for a larger number of people. This massive growth of social media has greatly increased the range and diversity of resources openly available. There are many specialist social media tools available, either by subject or by media type, for example images, videos, documents and audio.



In Practice

The opportunities afforded by the use of social media in an education and research environment are diverse in today's digital age where communication, collaboration and creativity are key skills.

Researchers are likely to discover a rich array of existing social media produced by peers in their field, open for informal peer review and academic debate. Engaging in the conversation can lead to new opportunities to collaborate.

Teachers can publish their media to enhance their teaching by encouraging social engagement. Additionally, possible uses are to provide media for revision purposes or supplementary material to that covered in the classroom or lecture theatre.

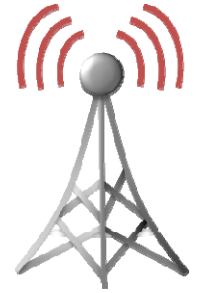
Social media is a powerful communication tool, that can be used to engage with a specific or diverse audience. All users may be surprised by both their serendipitous discovery of quality media and the discovery of their material by colleagues located around the world and the feedback provided.

The published media is open to informal peer review and validation, helping you and the wider community evaluate its quality.



Who's using it?

We are! The Web2practice animations are hosted on blip.tv. This makes them available to a worldwide audience and allows us to embed them into the Web2practice blog. Anyone watching them can add a comment, subscribe to the RSS feed and also distribute them further by embedding the animations on their websites and blogs.



What are the risks?

Placing material in a public space has its risks. For each web2tool you use, find out who retains ownership of the media and never rely solely on a specific service to store vital media content. Many web2tools enable a high level of privacy, allowing you to nominate who can view, comment upon or even edit the specific media document or file.

"I've lost data on a few sites, including those owned by UK Public Service Broadcasters."

IP, copyright and legal issues should be taken into consideration when using social media. Be sure to read and understand the terms of use for any web2tool you begin to use and rely upon in your practice. For further guidance, visit the web2rights project website:

<http://www.web2rights.org.uk/>



Find out more...

<http://web2practice.jiscinvolve.org/>