Enterprise Web 2.0 Fundamentals

By Krishna Sankar, Susan A. Bouchard

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An introduction to next-generation web technologies

This is a comprehensive, candid introduction to Web 2.0 for every executive, strategist, technical professional, and marketer who needs to understand its implications. The authors illuminate the technologies that make Web 2.0 concepts accessible and systematically identify the business and technical best practices needed to make the most of it. You'll gain a clear understanding of what's really new about Web 2.0 and what isn't. Most important, you'll learn how Web 2.0 can help you enhance collaboration, decision-making, productivity, innovation, and your key enterprise initiatives.

The authors cut through the hype that surrounds Web 2.0 and help you identify the specific innovations most likely to deliver value in your organization. Along the way, they help you assess, plan for, and profit from user-generated content, Rich Internet Applications (RIA), social networking, semantic web, content aggregation, cloud computing, the Mobile Web, and much more.

This is the only book on Web 2.0 that:

- Covers Web 2.0 from the perspective of every participant and stakeholder, from consumers to product managers to technical professionals
- Provides a view of both the underlying technologies and the potential applications to bring you up to speed and spark creative ideas about how to apply Web 2.0
- Introduces Web 2.0 business applications that work, as demonstrated by actual Cisco® case studies
- Offers detailed, expert insights into the technical infrastructure and development practices raised by Web 2.0
- Previews tomorrow's emerging innovations—including "Web 3.0," the Semantic Web
- Provides up-to-date references, links, and pointers for exploring Web 2.0 first-hand

Krishna Sankar, Distinguished Engineer in the Software Group at Cisco, currently focuses on highly scalable Web architectures and frameworks, social

and knowledge graphs, collaborative social networks, and intelligent inferences.

Susan A. Bouchard is a senior manager with US-Canada Sales Planning and Operations at Cisco. She focuses on Web 2.0 technology as part of the US-Canada collaboration initiative.

- Understand Web 2.0's foundational concepts and component technologies
- Discover today's best business and technical practices for profiting from Web 2.0 and Rich Internet Applications (RIA)
- Leverage cloud computing, social networking, and user-generated content
- Understand the infrastructure scalability and development practices that must be address-ed for Web 2.0 to work
- Gain insight into how Web 2.0 technologies are deployed inside Cisco and their business value to employees, partners, and customers

This book is part of the Cisco Press® Fundamentals Series. Books in this series introduce networking professionals to new networking technologies, covering network topologies, example deployment concepts, protocols, and management techniques.

Category: General Networking
Covers: Web 2.0

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Enterprise Web 2.0 Fundamentals By Krishna Sankar, Susan A. Bouchard Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5005970 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Cisco Press
- Published on: 2009-04-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.22" h x .81" w x 7.42" l, 1.45 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

Introduction

In studying and/or promoting web-technology, the phrase Web 2.0 can refer to a perceived second generation of web-based communities and hosted services—such as social-networking sites, wikis, and folksonomies—which aim to facilitate creativity, collaboration, and sharing between users. The term gained currency following the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but to changes in the ways software developers and end-users use the web.

—Wikipedia

The emergence of Web 2.0 isn't tied to a specific technology or tool. It's a collection of advanced capabilities growing out of technologies such as Java, Ajax, and specialized markup languages that simplify sharing and repurposing of web content. These rich and interactive features change the web experience in notable ways:

• They allow users to participate without regard to geography
• They democratize information
• They allow new ideas, products, and features to emerge

The change in the nature of how content is created and these next-generation features are ushering in new opportunities for marketing, customer service, business intelligence, and internal communication. Web 2.0 is perhaps most evident in the consumer marketplace with social networking sites, mash ups, and video sharing services. This is the "play" part of Web 2.0. But this collaborative technology will make huge advances in the business effectiveness with online collaborative tools.

Just as users play a key role in a consumer-based Web 2.0 world of blogs, wikis, communities, and collaboration, they, and the content they create, are critical to the success of Web 2.0 in business as well. Blogs, for example, are changing the marketing landscape and provide an exciting new way to gain valuable customer feedback. Wikis create valuable enterprise knowledge management assets, enabling improved customer service. Bookmarking and folksonomies enable an organization to share information and to define and tag content in ways that facilitate and accelerate search and retrieval. Photos and videos make content more visual, more personal, and more human. They can also become a valuable business asset: a customer video testimonial from a known expert helps sell product.

Web 2.0 technologies enable more effective collaboration and knowledge-sharing, improve decision-making, and accelerate productivity and problem-solving among employees, partners, and customers. Collaborative technologies are key enablers, increasing productivity and reducing travel time and expense. More importantly, collaborative technologies enable business managers to re-engineer and transform their business function, department, or process to reap the business value Web 2.0 and the Mobile Web can enable.

Goals, Objectives, and Approach

A little into the writing of the book, we realized that Web 2.0 is very vast and could fill a thousand-page book! So our challenge was to see what areas we should leave out to cut through the hyperbole, the hype, the billion dollar valuations, and the security threats and still provide the readers with an introduction to the social and business characteristics of Web 2.0 as well as a glimpse of the technologies behind it.

Another challenge we had was to get the right level of detail on the topics we selected. We wanted this book to be not a guided tour but a hitchhiking experience, where sometimes the stops are quick (as in a quick look at UI or wikis), sometimes the detours linger longer (such as in social networking and cloud computing), and sometimes you need to dig deeper via the hundreds of links and references to experience the inner details.

Many of you already have some exposure to various pieces of Web 2.0, but few have a full appreciation for all the vectors of Web 2.0. In this book, we aim to provide a cohesive, coherent view of both the underlying technologies and the potential applications to bring readers up to speed and spark creative ideas about how to apply Web 2.0.

This book does not have ROI calculations or project plans. It also does not rely on extensive code fragments or programming aspects. The major challenge we faced was of omission rather than inclusion. We had to find those key pieces of Web 2.0 that would make an enterprise tick.

An complete understanding of Web 2.0 does not come just from reading a book. One has to also experience the various collaborative formats that make up Web 2.0 by creating an account in facebook.com, developing a wiki, or reading a blog about some topics of interest, or better yet by writing a blog or participating in a collaboration-based wiki.

Who Should Read This Book?

The primary target audience is anyone who has a need to understand Web 2.0 technologies. This includes program managers, marketing managers, business analysts, IT analysts, and so on, who either have to market Web 2.0 or understand enough to engage in Web 2.0 systems development. The audience also includes executives, in any field, who need to understand the Web 2.0 phenomenon.

A secondary audience is the engineers who are working on traditional legacy systems and who want to understand the opportunities Web 2.0 brings. They need an in-depth conceptual view to see how everything fits and also an evaluation of the hottest technologies.

This book does not assume any special knowledge other than general computer literacy and an awareness of the Internet and the web.

Strategies for Experiencing Web 2.0

Using Web 2.0 is like swimming: You cannot really learn it or in this case understand it by standing on the land; you need to immerse yourself in it. We have included many reference URLs to visit that will give you more in-depth information on various aspects of Web 2.0. We urge you to visit these URLs. They are listed in the appendix. You can find an electronic version of the appendix, with all the URLs conveniently hot linked, at the book's website. Keep in mind that because of the dynamic nature of the web, some links might no longer function depending on when you are reading this book.

Enterprise Web 2.0 Fundamentals Companion Website - You can find the book's companion website at http://www.ciscopress.com/title/1587057638.

How This Book Is Organized

Although you can read any chapter alone and get a full understanding of that particular aspect of Web 2.0, we recommend you read Chapter 1, "An Introduction to Web 2.0," which outlines Web 2.0 and gives you an overview of Web 2.0 that should enable you to see how the pieces fit together. After you have a good feel of the various elements that make up the world of Web 2.0, you are free to roam around! But please make sure, at the end, you do visit all the chapters to get an idea of all that Web 2.0 entails. And poke through the URLs listed in the appendix to get a full Web 2.0 experience.

The following is a summary of each chapter:

- Chapter 1, "An Introduction to Web 2.0," is the starting point. It details the various aspects—business and technology—of Web 2.0 and sets the stage for the rest of the book.
- Chapter 2, "User-Generated Content: Wikis, Blogs, Communities, Collaboration, and Collaborative Technologies," describes the importance of the user and user-generated content in a Web 2.0 world. It identifies how blogs, wikis, communities, collaboration, and collaborative technologies are creating business value.
- Chapter 3, "Rich Internet Applications: Practices, Technologies, and Frameworks," describes the essential technologies and business implications behind rich user interfaces and interactions.
- Chapter 4, "Social Networking," details the multi-dimensional aspects of social networking—business value, opportunities, and technologies—from Facebook to Twitter and from standards to offerings from the big enterprise players.
- Chapter 5, "Content Aggregation, Syndication, and Federation via RSS and Atom," is about the two-way interactions of Web 2.0, including the capability to collect and publish individual contributions via RSS feeds and Atom.
- Chapter 6, "Web 2.0 Architecture Case Studies," looks at the most successful web applications like Twitter, eBay, Amazon, and Google and talks about the infrastructure and architecture aspects of Web 2.0 from a development perspective. Web 2.0 definitely has a new feel for application interfaces, protocols, distributability, and scalability.
- Chapter 7, "Tending to Web 3.0: The Semantic Web," describes one of the most important next-generation web technologies: the Semantic Web. An introduction to this concept is followed by details of the various aspects of the Semantic Web.
- Chapter 8, "Cloud Computing," details a very important development that has lasting impact: cloud computing. This chapter looks into the business practices and the technology stacks that make up the domain of cloud computing.
- Chapter 9, "Web 2.0 and Mobility," focuses on the evolution of Mobile Web technology and examines generations of mobile phone services. The chapter touches on a number of mobile devices and key mobility features, such as voice recognition and position location. It provides examples of the types of Mobile Web services available today and identifies Cisco's efforts to create Mobile Web applications, particularly in sales.

Chapters 10 and 11 provide a set of Cisco case studies of Web 2.0 technology adoption:

- Chapter 10, "Web 2.0 @ Cisco: The Evolution," describes the evolution of Web 2.0 technologies at Cisco Systems, Inc. It provides basic steps and best practices for leveraging blogs, discussion forums, and wikis based on Cisco experience.
- Chapter 11, "Cisco's Approach to Sales 2.0," focuses on how Web 2.0 is changing the selling process and how Cisco Sales is leveraging Web 2.0 technology to transform how it does business through more effective communities, collaboration, and collaborative technologies.

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