Web 2.0 Authoring Tools in Higher Education Learning and Teaching: New Directions for Assessment and Academic Integrity

A framework for field-testing and refining good practice guidelines in pilot projects at Australian universities during Semester One 2010

An Australian Learning and Teaching Council Priority Project, 2009-2010

The guidelines in this document are in DRAFT form for further refinement in pilot projects.

Citing this document:

This document is based on collaborative work by the project team, the project advisory group and the project reference group.

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This project would not be possible without the participation of approximately 70 teaching academics who contributed their experiences through surveys and interviews, and the observations of staff and students in approximately 20 university subjects who have agreed to pilot good practice guidelines.

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The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, or the views of individual contributors apart from the project team. The project team takes responsibility for any errors or omissions in this document.
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Foreword

This document has been produced as part of project to develop a set of guidelines formalising academic practices, standards and reporting relating to the use of “web 2.0” or the “social web” for assessing student learning in higher education.

Web 2.0 forms of authoring or content creation activities include blogging / microblogging, photo and video sharing, podcasting, social bookmarking, social networking, virtual worlds and wiki writing. Well-known tools or sites include WordPress, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Second Life, Delicious, Facebook, MediaWiki, and so on.

For convenience, the assessment of student web 2.0 authoring activities is abbreviated throughout this document as ASW2A.

The draft guidelines produced by this project are based on:
1. Reviewing the literature for key ASW2A concepts, issues and examples
2. Documenting Australian teaching academics’ experiences with ASW2A
3. Holding a national roundtable to share and discuss good practice in ASW2A
4. Consulting with a reference group from the three lead universities

The findings of (1) and (2) are summarised in a discussion paper that is downloadable from http://web2assessmentroundtable.pbworks.com/. This website also has details of participants in and proceedings of (3).

The draft guidelines will be refined and expanded with case studies and exemplars in the first half of 2010 – after field-testing by staff and students in approximately 20 diverse learning and teaching settings where ASW2A occurs. These pilots are expected to generate creative and constructive approaches to ensuring academic standards, practices and reporting in ASW2A.

The final guidelines will be disseminated nationally in the second half of 2010.
What is good practice in assessing students’ web 2.0 activities?

Some pointers to good assessment practice relevant to ASW2A can be found in:
- general guides to assessment (e.g. James, McInnis and Devlin, 2002; REAP, 2007)
- guides for assessing group learning (e.g. Isaacs, 2002; Race, 2001)
- guides to online assessment or e-assessment (e.g. Crisp, 2007; JISC, 2007)

But web 2.0 activities are sufficiently different from anything that has preceded them that such guides may not cover all of the issues raised by ASW2A.

The guidelines to be produced in this project are intended to be used in conjunction with advice about good practice in assessment that is provided in more general guides, not to replace these. They are intended to assist academics who are using or who plan to use ASW2A to address its distinctive features and to articulate creative and constructive approaches to good practice.

These guidelines will be relevant in the use of student web 2.0 activity even when this is only for optional enrichment or for formative or low-stakes assessment. The guidelines become more critical in medium- or high-stakes assessment (that is, where ASW2A results may be externally reviewed, may determine student progression and may affect the standing of the course).

This document sets out a framework for field-testing and refining good practice guidelines, in the form of three checklists. Each has a different orientation to good practice, catering to the variety of aspirations, strategies and drivers that academics may have in introducing or improving ASW2A. Some of the points in these checklists pertain to more traditional forms of assessment as well but their use in combination specifically for good practice in ASW2A is the aim of this document.

A. An affordances checklist, to support an appropriate fit between what web 2.0 activities entail and what assessment is trying to achieve
B. A processes checklist, to support individual and organisational learning throughout the cycle of assessment activities
C. A policies checklist, to support practices that make assessment safe and fair for students and staff

Ideas for innovative ASW2A designs are not included in these checklists; however academics who are planning to introduce ASW2A into their teaching may find useful sources of such ideas in the Supplementary Resources section of this document. Subsequent versions of this document will be further supplemented by case studies and suggestions drawn from the experience and expertise of academics who contribute to this project. Selected examples of the experiences of academics interviewed to date are included here, where available.
A. Affordances checklist

Use this checklist to support an appropriate fit between what web 2.0 activities entail and what assessment is trying to achieve.

For each affordance in this checklist, consider:
   If YES: How is this utilised for this assignment? What is the advantage of this feature over other methods of assessment (online or otherwise)?
   If NO: What were the factors involved in opting not to use this affordance as part of this assignment? Could the educational benefits from making some use of it outweigh these factors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open publishing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Student work can be made easily accessible to an audience of peers for mutual benefit including reviewing and rating.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Review and assessment of student work from outside the university can be invited or anticipated.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Examples of opportunities and challenges:</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ The peer review component of an assignment can feed into the final product that students create: “They get their [peer] feedback on the assignment and the next (part of) the assignment is to take their write-up, improve it based on the feedback and shorten it to mount it on the web as part of a career guide for high school students.”</td>
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<td>➢ Competitive students may not wish to share their work. “I know one or two of the very high distinction (students) tend to hold off posting their work, right up until the deadline. I know they’ve done it because they don’t want others to copy them.”</td>
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<td>➢ One lecturer encouraged external academics to read and respond to her students’ blogs, which contained reviews of those academics’ work. “It really reaches out their communication beyond the boundaries of the classroom and that’s got enormous value. From a motivation perspective and ... it just stops that echo chamber inside the classroom. It’s not just my view anymore; they can go and look at other people’s views as well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Openly published content can be openly critiqued. In one example, music culture students kept public blogs and it was “not unusual for the musician or his manager or someone to make a comment on the blog and to correct misinformation.” Students “have to think about what they’re writing and be accountable for what they’re saying.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Peer review can be seen as an exciting time and the most social time of the course. It can also be seen as the time when more learning occurs than at other times for those students who have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
not achieved as much as other groups. These students have the opportunity to see possibilities for what they may have missed.

- Peer review can be disappointing at times if the students are not good at setting their own objectives. In a diverse group of students there can be different levels of competence at setting objectives.

### Communication styles:

- Students are enabled to produce frequent short pieces of academic work that employ conversational non-academic language and combine audio, video, images and text in an online mode authentic to a profession or industry.

- Feedback to students about their work and feedback from students about the assignment can be exchanged rapidly, using rating or ranking systems, informal rejoinders and non-textual forms of expression.

### Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- The informality of writing in a blog may provide a valuable forum for encouraging students to develop a writing style appropriate for the subject: “As part of this course it’s also about learning art writing styles for art criticism and this [blog] actually would provide quite a useful forum for them.”

- Journalism students posted Twitter feeds in a self-reflection task. Twitter was valuable in this context because it encouraged brevity: “Tweets are like writing a headline which is vital for journalism students to master.”

- Web 2.0 tools may enable students to write in a more informal style, complementing other more formal forms of assessment: “the idea is to let them express their thoughts, reflections, interests in the different topics rather than focusing on good grammar and formal sentence structure, which I think tends to constrain a lot of essays.”

- Students can be daunted by the assignment at the outset. They may not find the journey easy if they don’t attend a campus-based class and the assignment forces them to engage with the sort of things that are not always successful in engaging students, e.g. online discussions. The dropout rate may be normal or less than normal, perhaps because the students find it fun.
Personal identity and experience:

- Individual student work can be authored by an online identity different from the student who is recognisable in class or in other learning and teaching interactions.
- Students’ social or cultural experiences of web authoring can influence the work they produce for assessment.
- Reflection and self-reflection about the idea of identity are prompted by the need to create and express an online identity.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- While identity can be hidden or manipulated in online environments, it can also be made more visible if necessary. One lecturer said: “I make them take a self-portrait ... so when I or anybody else looks at any [student work], we know whose it is because their identity comes up next to it.”
- Students may need encouragement in developing their online identity and writing with authority: “there’s a process that goes into them finding their different voices, how to share appropriately, how to write with authority [...] Some will always write, even at the end ‘I’m just a student, I’ve got no point of view’, so there are identity issues.”
- One lecturer commented that while international students did not experience difficulty using a blog, they were not accustomed to dealing with the critical reviewing component of such a task: “I think that there’s ... not wanting to criticise people or being seen to criticise what somebody has written.”
- An issue was reported with a couple of students who were experienced users of the technology being demeaning to other students who were not.

Co-creation and collaboration:

- Critical mass and critical membership for group work can scale between a small closed participant group and a large free-to-join learning community
- The substance and the history of an individuals’ contributions to group work can be distinguished.
- Groups can be supported to work on large, complex tasks.
- Students’ assessable work may assemble argument and evidence as a mashup of
of original content and reused web content from diverse sources.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- One lecturer noted that some students had difficulty with “the idea of collaborative writing. The fact that someone would step in and actually change their words was quite challenging for some [...] They saw what they had typed in and their lovely wiki page being changed by somebody else. There were some instances where whole sentences or paragraphs were being removed.”

- Guidance may need to be provided to students who are asked to contribute and build on another student’s work: “We talked about what we meant by [co-authoring] in class ... I said it had to be [500 words] that you had to add and then you had to value add to the content. So we talked about what we meant by that. And as a rule some of the students did that honestly, like they saw that what they were doing was being a co-author.”

- The most important aspect of the assignment may be the collaborative aspect—the users generating content in a shared space together simultaneously — “the essence of what Web 2.0 is really about”, as one academic saw it.

Content management:

- Students’ assessable work may be posted on several complementary host sites and work posted on one site may be syndicated by others and tracked back.

- Students can control the content that they produce for assessment in accordance with terms of service, end user agreements or other governance policies of host sites.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- Staff and students can look back on online content: “normally they will do an assignment, you will mark it, you give it back to them and it gets thrown under their bed ... or sometimes doesn’t even get picked up but this way the classes that they do [on the web], it is there all the time for them to reflect on and it is there for us to look back on what they did in their last assignment and see if they have improved.”

- Persistence of web-published content can be a problem if students do not have control over what happens to their work: “I think there is a problem having it done like that [using a public blogging tool] because things on the web are very hard to get rid of ... They can make [the blogs] private but they’re still there, and they [the students] don’t have control over it.”
B. Processes checklist

Use this checklist to support individual and organisational learning throughout the cycle of assessment of student web 2.0 activities.

For each stage of the assessment process in this checklist, consider:
   If YES: How is this done for this assignment? Why is this method used in preference over other methods?
   If NO: Why is this not done for this assignment? Are there any grounds for considering it in order to improve the way this assignment works?

Designing

The rationale for the way this assignment uses student web 2.0 activity for assessing desired learning outcomes is to:

- Enable staff to assess student learning of curriculum that can’t be assessed with as much effectiveness, reliability or validity by using any other type of assignment.
- Enable staff to engage students in striving to achieve excellence that would demonstrate learning of curriculum more than they would in some other type of assignment.
- Enable staff to manage their student assignment related workload in a particular learning and teaching setting more sustainably than they could with some other type of assignment.
- There is another rationale....

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- The open publishing aspect of web 2.0 can be useful when students and teaching staff are working across distance, a key consideration for this interviewee: “the other thing that’s been very much a part of this, one of our teachers is full time in Scotland, one is in Canada ... so the staff very rarely meet.”

- In many cases found in our survey, web 2.0 tools were chosen because they provided an opportunity for students to develop generic skills or profession-specific skills in using the technology.

- Marking that can be done anytime/anywhere can be convenient for tutors: “I have got colleagues who say that this is fantastic as they do not have to come in to do their marking, they
An educator commented that they needed to consider carefully why they were using the technology and its value towards learning outcomes.

The assignment was seen to provide an opportunity for students to play with the technology in a structured and scaffolded way.

The decision was made to try using blogs as a way to make student thinking more public and enable academics to give more feedback to students on what they were thinking about.

### Implementing

Staff prepare students to do the best they can in this assignment by:

- Explaining the timing, weighting and criteria
- Showing and discussing exemplary student work
- Explaining academic attribution and citation practices that are expected
- Providing opportunities to practice and show learning based on formative assessment, before submitting work for summative assessment
- Using other teaching techniques....

### Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- Providing models of exemplary student work can make a difference in a web 2.0 environment when students can see each other’s work. If “the first one they see is not very good, they tend to think that’s the standard to which they’re working.”

- In one subject students were asked to create podcasts. This involved a significant learning curve for students, so they were introduced to the technologies at the beginning of the subject: “workshops in the Multimedia Centre ... were embedded as part of their unit.”

- In one example, because of the novelty of the technology used and the peer review component of the learning activity, students had the opportunity to do a trial run of the task: “[students have] previously done a practice exercise on the website where they wrote a biography of a classmate and then peer reviewed that.”

- The opportunity for assessment tasks to take place continuously during the unit of study was a consideration for one lecturer: “I also wanted to make sure that they did something continuously through the semester.” However, this didn’t always work as planned: “I didn’t put time limits (on it) so we did have some people that actually hadn’t even logged onto the site until after halfway through the semester so they just did all of their blogs and comments at the
Web 2.0 assessment tasks may work better as second or third assignments during a semester to avoid introducing too many new learning issues simultaneously (e.g. new technologies, difficulties in adjusting to the demands of group-based learning + new learning theories).

“...it’s hard yakka for the teachers ... because we often have to be on almost all hours at times ... You tend to do that to give the support ... but again there are times during the process when you hardly need to be there at all because they’re [the students] interacting with each other. So it balances out, but that aspect is critical.”

An issue reported with introducing web 2.0 technologies was that the IT team did not like setting them up in the labs on campus because of firewall and other security problems. Students did not have these restrictions at home though.

One academic expressed concern that some of the technologies could involve the students incurring a cost.

One academic emphasised that it is important that students know why they are using the technology.

In one instance, “those staff that did engage and read the blogs more regularly tended to use what they read on the blogs in tutes. So rather than comment on a student’s blog, they would take the knowledge that a student had said that and use it in the tute.”

Marking

Marking techniques ensure that students’ results are an objective and reliable indicator of their achievement of desired learning outcomes, using:

- Rubrics
- Reference to standard levels of attainment and grade descriptors
- Cross-marking and moderation in a teaching team
- Systematic checking for plagiarism or collusion
- Other marking techniques...

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

- It can be easier for teaching staff to monitor students’ contributions: “so much is open, I mean we can go into the chat rooms at any stage and there’s group emails and we make a habit of going in there regularly and making comments on what’s happening. So we can see the progress...”
is happening.”

- Assignments that allow for a great deal of flexibility in what students produce need very clear criteria to facilitate marking. One lecturer commented “[students] are producing very different things, so I suppose the criteria need to capture that in some way.”

- Marking criteria can reflect variations in academic standards to be expected from different levels of study. One interviewee, noting that this is more difficult when students are being assessed on the creation of web 2.0 content, raised the issue of marking superficially: “[Differences in marking different levels] is sort of formally in place with essays, you know, the number of words you write as a masters student is different to a grad dip but when it comes to creating [web 2.0 content], perhaps it’s a bit less clear.”

- Consideration about who will be doing the marking and how they are employed may affect do-ability. In one example, the workload involved in continuously monitoring and marking students’ blog posts could not be supported by casual tutors: “the way in which the staff were paid wasn’t conducive to this type of work and attempts to encourage change in the way the organisation did that were not successful.”

- Marking can be onerous. “Last year I had them doing a blog every week ... the marking was killing me because you’ve got to mark them and get them back in a week. And then you’ve got four or five classes, that’s six or seven hours work a week in marking. And then you’ve got assignments and exams.”

- In an assignment involving postings to a discussion board, the markers needed to investigate links to other sites. To help with this one lecturer required the students to duplicate their submissions in a Word document, and was considering using a semi-automated tracking system, if one could be found.

- One lecturer was considering dropping the collaborative group component, so that the students would still experiment and research the Web 2.0 possibilities but they wouldn’t be put through the process of having to collaborate and they would not necessarily be peer assessed.

**Reporting results**

Students receive timely and constructive information about the quality of their work, in the form of:

- Confirmation whether the work is of acceptable standard or not
- Correction of specific shortcomings in the work
- Explanation of what would improve the standard of the work
✓ Diagnosis of factors that have helped or hindered learning
✓ Elaboration, i.e. additional advice or resources to extend learning
✓ Other types of feedback....

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

➢ When individual feedback is provided in an open forum (e.g., comments on a public blog), one academic felt that it was not appropriate to point out spelling mistakes or openly criticise a student’s work.

➢ One interviewee described providing students with guidance at the beginning of the course, on how to review and constructively comment on their peers’ work: “We are very thorough at the start of semester about the dos and don’ts and I give them a vocabulary of words, they have a page printout of ways of looking and being analytical and I say ‘you can’t just say “I don’t like it” – why don’t you like it?’ Explain why you don’t and how do you think that person could improve it, not just say you don’t like it and that’s it. They have to say ‘perhaps this could be improved if you did this or that.’”

➢ In one case, students were provided with a partial mark on the assignment earlier in the semester: “They were given written feedback, individual feedback, particularly with suggestions on how they can improve for the second half of the semester”. Lecturers can also provide direct feedback on work that needs improvement: “They’re given an indication of how they’re performing on their criteria with further comments.”

Reviewing and monitoring

Staff continuously review and improve the way this assignment is done, in response to:

✓ Student feedback about this assignment
✓ Input from relevant professional or industry advisors
✓ Longitudinal evaluation of student performance in this assignment
✓ Academic peer review in learning and teaching forums
✓ Other methods of continuous improvement....

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

➢ Both lecturers and students can provide continuous feedback during the assignment process. “... I have had a look at it and keep refining it but I made it compulsory from the beginning that every student, every week, had to post three comments to another student’s work. ... Everybody
becomes involved in it.”

- At any time students can refer back to comments made earlier. “It is not like a comment in class that you say and it is forgotten or misinterpreted. The comments are put there and they are there for the whole semester.”

- The teacher can collect each student’s comments and appraise them. “At the end of semester they all print out the comments that they have made, i.e. the 33 over the semester so it gives me a little photo of who they are, it gives me the photograph they have commented on and it gives me the photo of the person whose work it was that they commented on, it gives me a date and time when they commented and it gives me what they said.”
C. Policies checklist

Use this checklist to support practices to ensure that the assessment of student learning activities based on web 2.0 affordances is safe and fair for students and staff.

For each element of academic policy in this checklist, consider:

If YES: How is this done for this assignment? Why is this approach used in preference to other approaches?
If NO: Why is this not done for this assignment? Is there any risk if it is left unresolved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓ This assignment provides for equitable assessment for students with a disability.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of opportunities and challenges:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One lecturer interviewed had had students with disabilities enrolled in a collaborative multimedia project course (e.g. a deaf student, a student who could not speak and a student who had difficulty using text). This meant using different technologies to enable collaboration to take place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>One of the lecturers interviewed described a wiki assignment that was one of several assignments that students could choose from.</td>
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<tr>
<th>✓ Students are guaranteed access to IT services or equipment to complete this assignment.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of opportunities and challenges:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students may need support in signing up to the services / tools being used: “There’s always [the challenge] of getting the technology to work, being able to sign up ... Students sort of get turned off as soon as there’s a hurdle”</td>
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<tr>
<th>✓ Before undertaking this assignment, students are advised of guidelines on appropriate conduct and safeguards against inappropriate conduct in the use of IT facilities and services.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of opportunities and challenges:</td>
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| “The ... focus capability ... is development as a reflective practitioner, which is about
reflecting on the feedback and editing process.”

In one case, students working at home were discovering many new web 2.0 tools that they could use and set up, but working this way it was not so clear that they understood how the university’s IT conduct code applied to them.

✓ When undertaking this assignment, students’ identity and privacy online are safe-guarded.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

It may be appropriate to offer students the option of making their work and contributions anonymous: “The students were told that if they wished to stay anonymous to each other then they would have that option. However, they’ve pretty much all decided that they don’t mind having their name listed”

If these issues are discussed in the course, students are probably more aware of them than they would be otherwise. This is an issue with students being encouraged to go out and explore different applications such as Facebook.

✓ This assignment encourages academic honesty and integrity.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

The open publishing and continual development of students’ work using web 2.0 tools can make it easier to identify academic dishonesty: “one of the reasons why I chose to go with the blogs and make it an informal writing exercise (was) because then I could get a sense of their voice, get a sense of consistency as well ... so when it comes to marking the formal assessment tasks that’s another plagiarism check”.

In spite of training and emphasising that copying and pasting from web pages is not acceptable, it still happens. One staff member said that this was a particular problem with international students. “Amongst the international students, there is an understanding that people copy other people’s work, and having it open went to the belief that obviously other people are going to copy, aren’t they?

“Students are required to keep track of their research – all the URLs have to be there so they are not presenting it as their own work.”
One academic claimed that there were rarely issues with academic integrity within a particular cohort of future library information professionals, and stated that they would be a bit concerned if such students didn’t know how to reference or cite or weren’t taking that on board.

One academic reported “We’re looking at FireFox, we have a nice little add-on called Advanced Dork and it allows you to highlight sections of the text and stick it straight into a Google search and you can pretty well get a hit straight up and know where it comes from.”

If staff control the accessibility of work in progress it can mean that “students start off being able to see their own posting. So they can’t sort of copy off one another. And then later on they see the other postings but then they can’t edit their own. So it truly is their own work because that first bit is done in their creative sense.”

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<th>✓ Students can be provided with an extension of the due date or other modification of the assignment if there are special consideration reasons.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of opportunities and challenges: [None so far]</td>
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<tr>
<th>✓ Students’ moral rights and copyright in work they produce are protected.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of opportunities and challenges:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students need to be kept informed of the risks involved in publishing content on the web: “I tell the students over and over again that it is on the World Wide Web, it’s not associated with the university, be careful what you put up there, make sure you are comfortable with this.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student permission should be sought if their work is to be made publicly available (for example: students in one course gave permission to put their podcasts on the iTunesU site).</td>
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<tr>
<td>One lecturer said, “I actually debated with my students, it was one of the biggest blogs about four weeks ago, ‘Is Copyright dead?’”.</td>
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✓ Student work which shows evidence of cheating or misconduct is investigated and if indicated disciplinary procedures are followed.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

In one instance an academic reported, “I’ve just finished a whole bunch of marking and five of the students out of fifty of them just gave me an assignment from another subject and changed the cover sheet. So they’re going to get zero and get reported.”

✓ Copies of students’ marked work are on file at the university for an agreed period of time, if needed for reference in student appeals / complaints or for audit.

Examples of opportunities and challenges:

The transparency of some web 2.0 tools (e.g. wikis) makes it easier to record students’ contributions to collaborative work: “It’s brilliant actually. I mean if we get someone saying ‘I did more work than so and so’ we can actually go and look at the record of their activity.”

An academic noted that their university learning management system archived web 2.0 assignments on a server. “As a teacher I can request a burnt disc of it, which I don’t do every year because I don’t need the student’s work. I can clone the website.”
Supplementary Resources

Checklist A. Affordances


Checklist B. Processes


Checklist C. Policies

Your University’s assessment policy documents

Supplementary Resources (continued)

Selected published examples illustrating ASW2A— for reference; recommendation not implied

Blogging


Podcasting


Social bookmarking

Oliver, K. 2007. Leveraging web 2.0 in the redesign of a graduate-level technology integration course. *TechTrends*, 51(S) 55-61. Also available from: http://www.springerlink.com/content/n2345n6113hq1286/.


Social networking


Vodcasting


Virtual worlds


Wiki writing


Web 2.0 Authoring Tools in Higher Education Learning and Teaching: New Directions for Assessment and Academic Integrity
A framework for field-testing and refining good practice guidelines during Semester One 2010 Updated 2010-01-29 Page 21 of 25
Appendix 1: What’s special about social web activities?

According to Wikipedia (2009, November 10):

The term "Web 2.0" (pronounced "Web two point oh") is commonly associated with web applications which facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Examples of Web 2.0 include web-based communities, hosted services, web applications, social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, mashups and folksonomies. A Web 2.0 site allows its users to interact with other users or to change website content, in contrast to non-interactive websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of information that is provided to them.

Web 2.0 authoring forms can support co-creation of web content by large numbers of people during a fixed period of time and also over extended time spans. While the iconic web 2.0 sites encourage general public authoring of open content (Wikipedia, for example), they also support the establishment of private groups of participants (Facebook, for example); web 2.0 sites designed for specialised user groups also flourish (Connotea for researchers, for example). Web 2.0 content is open to all participants to create or manipulate by commenting, editing, mashing, rating and tagging. Communication about web content among participants may be facilitated via avatars, fans, friends, locating, profiling and syndication.

There is not only widespread popular engagement in web 2.0 activities but also growing private sector and public sector interest in it—thus, references to ‘enterprise 2.0’ and ‘government 2.0’. Educational commentators (such as Alexander, 2006 and Richardson 2006) have enthused that web 2.0 activities are more promising than traditional forms of documenting student learning, by virtue of the way that they can produce work that is co-constructed, interconnected, continuously updated and composed using mixed media, giving rise to ‘education 2.0’ and ‘learning 2.0’. “One of the fundamental ideas underlying Web 2.0 [is] that successful network applications are systems for harnessing collective intelligence ... a large group of people can create a collective work whose value far exceeds that provided by any of the individual participants” (O’Reilly and Battelle, 2009, p. 2).

There are also critical perspectives. “Web 2.0 also embodies a set of unintended consequences, including the increased flow of personal information across networks, the diffusion of one’s identity across fractured spaces, the emergence of powerful tools for peer surveillance, the exploitation of free labor for commercial gain, and the fear of increased corporatization of online social and collaborative spaces and outputs” (Zimmer, 2008, para. 2).
Appendix 2: Why worry about assessing social web activities?

Student engagement and student learning

Many pedagogical rationales are advanced for the use of student web 2.0 activities in university learning and teaching, including:

- to engage and empower students
- to increase peer learning and creative expression
- to develop literacy and communication skills
- to facilitate lifelong learning

(e.g. Barnes and Tynan, 2007; Berlanga et al., 2007; Brown and Adler, 2008; Drexler, Baralt and Dawson, 2008; Godwin, 2007; Lamb and McLaughlin, 2007, pp. 6, 10; Renner, 2006).

Good practice in ASW2A could improve student learning but equally, non-purposeful or poorly managed assessment could have a deleterious effect on student learning. “Assessment influences not only what parts of a course get studied, but also how those parts are studied…. Appropriately designed assessment that exploits the potential of ICT can change students’ approaches to learning” (Kirkwood and Price, 2008, p. 5).

Integrity and reputation of higher education

It is widely recognised that ASW2A raises significant and complex challenges for academic integrity and other aspects of educational quality in higher education (Anderson, 2007, pp. 54-56; Dron, 2006; Elliott, 2007; Horizon Report, 2008, p. 5; Nilsson, Ekloff and Ottosson, 2005; Roberts, 2007; Selwyn, 2007, p. 7).

For example, established academic practices supporting originality and attribution (for example, major citation and referencing styles) – as well as traditional marking and feedback practices for reinforcing these in student learning – are scarcely applicable to the dynamic content creation features of web 2.0 (Gray et al., 2008).

Academic practices related to ASW2A need to address four key issues that can affect the reputation of the field of study or the university where it is used – major accreditation frameworks, other external stakeholders’ expectations, endorsement of learning resources and activities, and questions of intellectual property (Collis, 2008, p. 100-101).
References


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