
Book review

Information literacy meets library 2.0
Peter Godwin and Jo Parker (editors)
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When I was given this book to review I agreed because it was an area I thought I should really be very familiar with, but to be frank I felt rather unsure. I hoped I would find enough about the topic to be able to talk confidently about its relevance and, if I were lucky, to be able to gain some useful ideas to use in my day-to-day work.

Edited by a well-known speaker on the topic of web 2.0 in libraries at conferences, Peter Godwin, and by Jo Parker from the Open University, who has written on various aspects of information literacy, this collection of chapters is from all sectors – public, higher education and school libraries – and from a variety of regions: North America and Australia as well as the UK. It covers all the aspects of web 2.0 that you would expect – blogs, use of web-based videos, social networking sites, tagging, RSS feeds, wikis and podcasts – but from the angle of how these technologies can be applied to information literacy. Well-known speakers and authors on these topics litter the list of chapters.

The book is set out into 4 main sections. It moves from a discussion of what makes something 2.0 to case studies in current and future information literacy (IL) practice and in various libraries.

‘The Basics’ includes an introduction and overview of the topic by Godwin plus a useful glossary of key tools from Brian Kelly. In ‘The implications for IL learning and Library 2.0’ Sheila Webber looks at IL learning for LIS students and makes suggestions for the ‘seven pillars’ model (see www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/information_literacy/sp/model.html), stressing the importance of CPD in the area of learning about web 2.0 tools. Judy O’Connell sees web 2.0 as an opportunity for teachers and librarians to reach out to pupils in

schools and Michelle McLean explores the way public libraries have embraced examples of IL and web 2.0, pointing out that before public librarians can provide IL they need to be information-literate themselves and that the best way of learning about web 2.0 tools is via web 2.0 tools.

The section 'Library 2.0 and IL in practice', as the name suggests, concentrates on case studies and practical applications: using RSS feeds to advertise training from different providers at the London School of Economics; using Wikipedia to help students gain academic writing skills at Oregon State University; using a clever piece of software, the Assignment Survival Kit (ASK), produced at Staffordshire University to guide students through the stages of researching and writing their assignment; and using a variety of web 2.0 tools within a complete information literacy tutorial at the Open University. Georgina Payne's interesting case study on the use of blogs as an assessment tool highlights a common concern by web 2.0 users for privacy, particularly when it is used for assessment, and points to the fact that the best users of the technology do not necessarily have the best evaluating or analytical skills (ie. the real purpose of the assignment). Some students also had difficulty with the technology, and even though those in the 18–21 age bracket 'may have been born into a digital world, not all were born digital', emphasising the importance of not making assumptions about users' technical abilities. Cameron Hoffman and Sarah Polkinghorne provide an ingenious example of using an appealing technology, Flickr, to help students understand about a less than exciting topic for the average student: subject headings and controlled vocabulary.

In the section called 'The Future' the chapter on 'Teaching information literacy through digital games' looks at three projects that are aiming to harness the popularity of games as a learning tool at the University of North Texas, the University of North Carolina and Arizona State University. It will be interesting to see how successful these are.

In his conclusion, Peter Godwin talks about the need to keep up with whatever the next most popular technology will be: a new Facebook, maybe mobile technology or the Semantic Web or web 3.0. He ends by asking 'how long should libraries spend gauging the success of the Web 2.0 pioneer's experiments? Or do they just jump in and roll out their own versions?' This book gives plenty of examples for ideas – I have taken two very useful ideas to improve my own practice: set-

ting up an RSS feed from academics' web pages to know when new research has been added and establishing an internal wiki for the business and economics database information and training notes that anyone can update. Some of the chapters were written a while ago and certain case studies seem a little dated. However, the strengths are where the contributors focus on the information literacy and the pedagogy rather than the technology, meaning that much of the content of book is and will remain relevant and inspiring for some time. Overall it is well written and engaging and I would recommend it.