

Florida Social Network

Alfredo Sanchez, QoS Labs
April, 2008

Looking at Florida as a unique social community under the perspective of its diversified population, rich natural resources, values, priorities, regulations, industries, customs, education, political activities, relationships with other states and countries, and under many other relevant aspects that conform its local culture and economy, opens an fascinating space to apply the Web 2.0 vision that has generated epic growth for social networks like Facebook and MySpace. In this white paper we will analyze how this vision can positively impact this diversified community by creating the Florida 2.0 Initiative digital social network.

What is the concept behind Digital Social Networks?

Thanks to the Internet evolution, digital social networks are rapidly becoming widely available to everyone as a media of shocking proportions that encourages online community participation. They enable people to express their ideas and communicate with those who share common interests. Through voluntary communities, participants can contact other people they would like to know for personal or professional reasons and whom they might be unlikely to meet in person. An interesting aspect of social networking is the ability of an individual or group of individuals to create a virtual community to interact with other people who are already part of other social networks, stretching the range of contacts, access to information and social influence this person or group may have.

Social networks have the potential to create content and digital services that trigger appealing network effects to attract members of a social community to participate in them. Membership is voluntary and reputation of the participant is built by earning the trust of other members of the virtual community. Thanks to the collaborative and multiplying effects of social software, the Internet global community doesn't have to play any more the role of a passive consumer of information (typical of Web 1.0).

The use of the Internet to publish web pages, documents and e-commerce web sites is rapidly evolving into a Web of open knowledge exchange and participation. Many people and organizations are becoming active participants in social networks with world-wide coverage as it clearly happens in www.facebook.com, www.friendster.com, www.myspace.com, www.secondlife.com and other Web 2.0 sites that have become extremely popular in many countries around the world. This powerful media can promote not only online contact but also some sort of offline engagement produced by the dynamic interaction that happens within the virtual communities. For example, www.eharmony.com and www.match.com focus on personal relationships, and www.linkedin.com, www.xing.com, www.plaxo.com and www.ryze.com promote professional connections--both of them aimed at establishing one-on-one type of engagements. Social networking spans from children and teenagers to college students, and from public sector employees and leaders to corporate executives.

What is Web 2.0?

Web 2.0 is a vision of the Web in which information and digital media are broken up into reusable digital content units that are distributed over one or more social networks under an open collaborative scope. According to Tim O'Reilly, CEO of O'Reilly Media, "Web 2.0 is the network as a platform, spanning all connected devices. Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform, delivering software as a continually updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation,' and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences."

Modular pieces of content are posted directly by people who act as producers, distributors or value-added aggregators of community-oriented information. Web design in Web 2.0 is focused on creating context-driven experiences, rather than creating attractive web sites to publish information or to sell products over the Internet. There is no need to limit navigation on the Internet in the traditional ways, looking for the sources of information we are aware of or that we can find through our favorite search engine. Many people nowadays look for direct aggregation, remix and contribution of intuitive content and ideas in more meaningful ways for them and for their community. They want to make their contribution readily available for other members of the social networks in which they participate, expecting content to be easily reachable by those who share the same interest on a particular subject, event or service.

This new paradigm in content and web design principles based on social contribution offers a new Web publishing model that has already proven to be broadly accepted. A social collaboration platform would have no value if community members were not able to produce and consume content on their own terms, making it convenient and meaningful to them. Rich Internet Applications (RIA), user-friendly vocabulary, simple communication and search tools turn out to be critical factors for market adoption, requiring an open publishing framework that enables constant communication and feedback from the community within the collaborative space. Social software addresses these needs, allowing users to interact, share, and meet other users, and enabling the digital services of the social collaboration platform.

Making use of social software, users actively contribute content and express opinions, recommendations, ratings, classifications, and many other aspects of things. Rather than using the web to find static content, they make contributions to their community and share their own ideas and digital media, without having to learn anything about computer programming or managing a web site. By collaboratively creating and managing tags based on their own keywords to categorize content, and by rating things on the web according to their own perception, they can indirectly voice their opinions independently of others' ideas. When consolidating everyone's opinion into a folksonomy (described later on in this white paper), the community discovers interesting aspects, issues and trends emanating directly from its members.

Based on the user interface, reusability and remixing capabilities of social software, digital content can be found away from the source where it was created. Finding content may be done by means of a syndicated content feed, a link on a blog or wiki, a keyword that describes the content unit, a Web service that retrieves information from a web site or a system, or by means of some other form of content aggregation or data interface. In order to facilitate the process of finding and remixing content, it must be described in meaningful ways. Programmers use HTML and XHTML markup languages mainly for display purposes, typically using tags so that web designers can apply styles. Web 2.0 uses a different type of tag which represents a basic form of semantic markup based on people's keywords to describe content the way they see it so that it can be easily found by other people or by other Web 2.0 applications. Keywords or tags are used to describe resources such as web pages, songs, photos, computer files, bookmarks, videos or other types of digital media, allowing users to add their own basic metadata in a simple way. For example, members of <http://www.last.fm/> tag their songs; members of <http://www.flickr.com/> tag their photos and members of <http://del.icio.us/> tag and share their bookmarks. Accurate tagging is a function of the level of personal experience and knowledge on a given subject and it may also be influenced by arguable subjective interpretation, provoking open debate.

Most digital social networks allow users to create an identity and an individual profile so they can describe themselves or express the role or personality they want to play in the community. Participants identify peers through their identity with whom they have or would like to have some type of interaction or simply share certain information. Typically, they find a list of peers with their URLs, so they can visit the peer on the list and can also visit the people on the peers' lists of peers. An individual may even create multiple online identities to access different things. Many web sites don't require these interactions to be approved by peers and user data is rarely verified or checked in them (although advanced identity management and privacy tools are available if it was required by the community or by the application).

Governance, as applied in any social group activity as an extension to obvious compliance with state and federal laws, may be defined by the community itself in the form of a Code of Ethics, which objective is to restrict potential events that may have a negative impact on the members of the virtual community.

Web 2.0 Technology Building Blocks

Social software offers the building blocks for Web 2.0 applications. It includes communication tools to capture, store, and present digital media in the form of text, audio and video. It also includes interactive tools to support mediated interactions among participants of the social network. The purpose of the following building blocks is to establish and maintain the interaction among users and allow open contribution to their online communities.

Folksonomy

Can be described as the practice of collaboratively managing tags to annotate and categorize content. Acting as a basic form of metadata of modular content units, tags are not only generated by experts but also by creators and consumers of the content. Keywords are freely chosen, creating a shared vocabulary that is familiar to its primary users. A well-developed folksonomy is ideally accessible to the entire community it serves and is intended to provide meaningful information to them.

A folksonomy does not guarantee the accuracy of personal tags under the perspective and understanding of all members but wide participation on the social network reflects trends that are meaningful to them. Tags relevance can be weighed based on content popularity within the community. Under this scope, a folksonomy offers a “tagging democracy” that can benefit entire communities in different ways.

Blogs

Bloggging is certainly one of the most popular components of Web 2.0 technologies. The word blog comes from a portmanteau of Web log and refers, in general terms, to the composition of direct user contributions on a website. It basically resembles an interactive online journal that can be regularly updated directly by the originating author of the blog. The most successful blogs traditionally like www.blogger.com, www.wordpress.com and www.typepad.com provide news and opinions about the author’s topics of interest. In response to a blog entry, readers can post comments to interact with the author. They can also post comments or ideas to interact with other readers who read and wrote comments about a common blog topic.

All logs are typically displayed in chronological order, showing the most recent entry first. Posts on a blog can be accompanied with text, photos, video, audio, and links to other blogs and to external resources. Blogs can be individually linked to other web applications as valuable modular content.

Wikis

Wikis have turned into an important foundation of the Web 2.0 collaboration platform. The term seems to resemble the idea of “quick web”, addressing the capability to allow users to easily edit website content. Wikis offer an intuitive interface and a single repository, making it simple for members of the community to contribute in a massive scale, and for web administrators to manage the wiki website without much intervention other than backing up the repository and probably supervising codes of ethics for members’ contribution.

Wikis encourage community participation and generate valuable, relevant and dynamically updated content for all users. The best representative example is www.wikipedia.org, the free encyclopedia project. Wikipedia has proven what the power of collaboration can achieve around the globe when the tool is simple and accessible to anyone. Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia explains his motivations: "Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing." Other efforts such as www.dmoz.org also encourage open community participation to create global web directories and domain-

specific knowledge. Wikis are gaining traction in business and Government collaboration.

Podcast

According to Wikipedia, “A podcast is a digital media file, or a related collection of such files, which is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers.”

A podcast can be either listened/viewed on a computer or transferred to a portable multimedia device which means that the user can enjoy it whenever and wherever he wants. The concept involves broadcast on-demand over the Internet directly by the person who created or aggregated the content (“broadcast yourself”), just as radio and TV programs are transmitted over the airwaves by media companies. The recipient must have a program on the computer or a podcast-enabled device that allows him to subscribe, manage, and play his favorite podcasts. When using the word podcast, most people expect an entire series of a specific kind of content and not just one audio or video file.

Web Syndication

It is a form of syndication in which web content is automatically made available to others, providing a summary of this content to users who subscribe to this service. The most relevant web syndication standards are: RSS which stands for “Really Simple Syndication” which is an XML format for syndicating content, Atom which is an XML language used for web feeds and Atom Publishing Protocol which is used to create and update Web resources. Web syndication offers a simple way to inform people in the community when new content is available, including news, blogs or podcasts. Instead of browsing their favorite sites to check for new content, members can subscribe to a web feed simply by typing the URI into a piece of software that acts as a feed aggregator which periodically checks out the publisher’s web site, notify when new digital content is found, retrieve it and present it through a feed reader on the user’s browser. Existing web feeds can be combined into a new feed that presents a summary of multiple content units related to a specific topic of interest.

Web syndication software can be available on any computer with web access and is supported today by all leading web browsers, simplifying the process to notify the user. Syndicating content increases inbound access to web sites as well as search engine rankings when the web syndication software is adequately applied to target communities.

Widgets

Widgets come from the software engineering concept of reusable code, allowing an application to be embedded in a web page, in a blog, in a social profile, etc. Two representative examples are LastFM widgets (www.last.fm/widgets) to embed radio stations and GoogleMaps (<http://maps.google.com>) to embed cartographic data. New widgets are appearing every day and new services on the web are increasingly using

them in the market. Some good examples of widget distribution sites are: <http://widgets.yahoo.com/> and www.widgetbox.com.

Mashup

The mashup concept comes from hip-hop and DJs when producing a new song by mixing two or more existing pieces of music. When applied to Web 2.0, this concept involves combining data from multiple sources into a single service or content environment for a specific purpose within a community. A representative example is <http://sfbay.craigslist.org> which uses location information from <http://maps.google.com> and combines it with real-estate and other kinds of data to produce a distinct service for classifieds and real estate not available directly from the individual aggregated sources.

Mashups can bring valuable content from the most popular Web 2.0 sites (and even from Web 1.0 sites) to a target community under the context of its own social network and its own look and feel.

Impact of Web 2.0

Disregarding the buzz around Web 2.0 and its different interpretations, it is important to analyze various market events and perspectives in order to realize the real impact of the Web 2.0 vision. Incredibly successful social network developments are led by simple ideas such as www.facebook.com, www.myspace.com and www.friendster.com in which teenagers, musicians, ecologists, doctors, teachers and all kinds of people have found a virtual space where to hang around in the cyberspace to meet other people, contribute their ideas to one or more communities and receive back something of value to them. We will review a few representative areas of the impact that Web 2.0 may have on social communities.

- Blogging is turning increasingly attractive to individuals, corporations and public agencies. It has been adopted by teenagers, professionals, researchers, managers, and politicians across diverse social networks and industries around the world. Over 60 million people maintain their blog and the trend is growing at a rapid pace. Senator Mike Haridopolos' blog is a good example of a new generation of politicians in Florida who are early adopters of the Web 2.0 vision.
- The Internet has proven many new alternatives to television, radio, newspapers and magazines as a source of entertainment. According to Veronis Suhler Stevenson, the hours per person per year consuming media in the U.S. decreased from 797 hours in 1999 to 684 in 2006 for broadcast television and increased from 630 hours to 871 for cable and satellite users. During the same period, this number increased from 65 to 190 for Internet users. According to News Corp, for 12–24 year old individuals the Internet is now the dominant entertainment source, enjoying 30% of media hours per week compared with 24% for TV. These facts show a clear trend which is impossible to ignore by incumbent media companies in the state who must participate if they want to keep market share.

- Apart of web sites like YouTube, Flickr, LastFM and AllMusic, there are a plethora of innovative Web 2.0 delivery channels for the entertainment industry such as: www.joost.com for Web TV, www.netflix.com for movies and video; www.jaman.com for independent movies; and www.wedigtv.com for web TV shows. Internet eyeballs are increasing in such way that the media players who rejected the advertisement model in the early Internet stages are realizing that they will lose audience soon should they not enter the Web 2.0 movement. A fascinating example is how content is being produced by people living through severe weather events who shoot videos or photos onsite and transmit them over the Internet right at the moment that a hurricane, wild fire or tsunami is happening, so that not only Internet viewers but also TV viewers can share their experience on the Weather Channel live or just minutes after it happened. Same thing applies to any kind of news channel today if they are open to this clear participatory movement trend.
- Changes in the business model of Internet companies such as eBay, Amazon and Google to preserve their leading position in the market are also representative of the impact of Web 2.0. A wave of acquisitions made by these companies as well as by many other media players reminds us of the pre-Internet bubble age. YouTube acquired by Google, Flickr acquired by Yahoo and LastFM acquired by CBS at stratospheric prices are only a few examples of the Web 2.0 success. The social networking wave is expected to drive business decisions not only coming from leading Internet players but also from specialized web sites, niche e-commerce sites, professional association sites, etc.
- The academic and research community, through the efforts of advanced organizations who believe in the participatory Web effects are developing new means for education. For example, the PiggyBank project at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Piggy_Bank); Stanford University creating Stanford on iTunes for their students to subscribe to the Stanford U podcast; the Open University in the UK evolving its online education through <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>; the <http://teachersteachingteachers.org> web site for teachers; the University of Arizona teaching a Web 2.0 class in conjunction with IBM; web sites such as <http://school20.wikispaces.com> as open Web 2.0 spaces for education, or <http://classroom20.ning.com> specializing on elementary education. By understanding the concept behind all these efforts, one can imagine the impact that Web 2.0 will have in the future on education at all levels.
- Science fiction realization may be taking place on fascinating topics like living in virtual societies which may also have an impact on the ways the Internet may be used in the future. Web sites such as www.secondlife.com, www.there.com, www.activeworlds.com, www.clubpenguin.com and www.redlightcenter.com allow virtual residents who are represented by an avatar to participate in the creation of content and services of their virtual worlds. Companies like Reuters and recognized political figures like Governor Mark Warner and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich have endorsed the virtual reality space by openly participating in this peculiar form of social expression.

- The analyst firm Gartner Group predicts that by 2008, the majority of Global 1,000 companies will adopt several technology-related aspects of Web 2.0 to advance their businesses. To succeed in an enterprise environment, Web 2.0 applications must offer enterprise-grade security and identity management, role based access functionality and single sign-on capabilities. These technologies are rapidly maturing in the enterprise market and will most likely be incorporated as part of an enterprise social network. Blogging and wikis have attracted enterprises' interest to enhance collaboration among employees, customers and vendors. Representative Enterprise 2.0 applications are already in use by early adopters in the business and government communities. Enterprises are increasingly applying wikis to product information, documentation, best practices and many other things, maintaining a content repository that authorized users can access and edit. Many CEOs are using blogs today to communicate with their employees and customers for direct feedback before making strategic decisions for their companies. The same trend will certainly permeate to the concept of Government 2.0, involving collaboration of public officials and constituents in a diversity of areas.

What is the concept behind State 2.0?

Enlisting citizen volunteers for social work to help their fellow citizens solve specific problems identified in their community, politicians blogging with their constituents about state budget cuts or tax incentives and people recommending the best way to process government paperwork based on their own personal experience, are very simple examples of the use of Web 2.0 as a participatory media in a state community. Thinking about the various Web 2.0 cases presented by this white paper, their positive effects and impressive business success stories around them; it would be incumbent upon state public sector leaders and enterprise executives to stay abreast of the development of the Web 2.0 phenomenon. Why not not apply Web 2.0 at a state community level?

Representative democracy shows the traditional approach for how a democratic government works. It takes place through Congress, state legislatures, and city halls where debates produce collectively supported decisions. Technology enables broader direct engagement with citizens in informing and supporting decisions that affect those debates. The Web 2.0 vision is being applied by early adopters who are trying to prove its potential for extending the scope of political debates. Many politicians have found in blogs or wikis powerful tools that allow comments on government policy issues, such as infrastructure requirements, budget cuts, quality of government services, digital divide and new regulations. For example, Assemblyman Tom McClintock's blog (www.carepublic.com) has influenced the state budget debate in California. The Oregon House of Representatives' blog (www.oregonhousedemocrats.com) proposes a Roadmap for Oregon's future. Senator Mike Haridopolos blog (<http://www.senatormike.com/>) supports the Senator's lead on providing long overdue property tax relief for people who live in Florida. President Barack Obama's FaceBook profile, his Flickr and YouTube accounts and the web site tools used by his team, were excellent examples of the power of Web 2.0 applied to a presidential campaign that

motivated people to participate over digital social networks and proved to be effective to attract the votes.

Participation can span across members of Congress, Congressional committees and caucuses, House Majority Leaders, Governors, city mayors, legislators, presidential candidates, universities, and law enforcement departments, engaging directly with constituents on specific matters of the society that they live in. In fact, Web 2.0 tools have the potential to impact internal communications of government agencies and expedite internal processes for the benefit of the whole community.

But State 2.0 is not just about government or relationships of government and its constituents, it is really a much wider scope applied to the diversified state communities and is all about people, personal interests and professional activities that enables better ways to communicate, educate, promote and advocate under the state's identity and priorities. Social networking affects government and corporate interactions with no boundaries other than those accepted by the community itself under applicable regulations. By promoting a social network that relies on local state resources and initiatives, and by encouraging its participants to exchange ideas, voice their opinions on state matters, recommend solutions to social problems, exchange information in potential areas of opportunity, participate online in local sports and entertainment, and do creative business in the cyberspace, a Web 2.0 initiative can represent a valuable proactive resource for the cultural and economic development of the state.

The Florida 2.0 Initiative (FL2I)

If we considered the fact that Florida is a unique entity under the scope of a social network, with its own economic areas, problems, resources, plans, and regulations, we would think about the need for not one, but a collection of social networks tied together by geographic, political and cultural boundaries. The strategy to build "Florida 2.0" should consider a gradual plan to generate the Web 2.0 culture and create the most representative communities first, as part of the state's identity and economic development priorities under the restrictions of its digital inclusion reality. The State 2.0 vision applies not only those under served communities which have no access to the Internet, but also to those who have access but do not have the Web 2.0 culture. This strategy can have a multiplying effect, attracting new communities to form based on the actual Web 2.0 experiences of the originating communities and the natural relationships that could be established among them within a social ecosystem.

For example, if technology development was a state priority, a technology community can be created to promote communication and collaboration of IT professionals at the private enterprise and state government levels. Eventually, the technology community will encounter natural synergies and associations with other communities like Health Care, e-Government, Tourism or Environment, focusing on those IT issues that affect them. Those new communities can then expand into a broader space of their own, adding specialized areas of interest that have nothing to do with technology. Moreover, if the technology social network starts to spread around, it can easily extend its scope beyond its local territory. Out of state residents and organizations may be attracted to

find out about local experiences in Florida, looking for IT talent, job opportunities, engineering sourcing, or regional expansion options into the state. Companies like Dow Chemical, Procter & Gamble and DuPont are already making use of Web 2.0 technologies to find talent outside their enterprises. They may want to find out about tax incentives when moving to Florida; receive an RSS feed about government or enterprise RFQs; blog with a local CIO or a legislator to share out-of-state experiences; read state regulations and tax laws; or find out about the next relevant IT event in the state. All resources are available in one collaborative space tied together by relationships and common interests. There are wide opportunities open for FL2I to support this kind of efforts creating a social network ecosystem.

It is obvious that a vast amount of information related to any potential social network already exists somewhere on the web. For example, you can check www.myflorida.com for government services and general information about the State of Florida, eFlorida.com for information about economic development in Florida and mySpace for rock concerts in Florida. The intention of FL2I should never be to replicate these sources. Following the Web 2.0 principles described before, the original purpose of the Florida 2.0 Initiative site should be to offer the Web 2.0 building blocks (blogs, wikis, folksonomy, podcasts, forums, mashups, etc.), to aggregate or complement valuable resources under the context of the FL2I virtual communities, to encourage unique content and to find the appropriate promotion schemes to trigger new communities through spontaneous relationships. Once created, each community should grow on its own merit. The FL2I social network should guide participants to attractive sources of information or services under the context of an overall state community. It should be capable of reusing existing content or aggregating it with new services into Web 2.0 mashups specially targeted in a way that they better serve the local community needs as expressed by them.

Using IT as a seed community, FL2I can drive participation of and content creation by the local technology groups, state universities and the research community, local business promotion agencies, legislators, economic development organizations, vendors and other entities involved directly or indirectly with technology issues in the state. The objective is to create a dynamic social network that invites students, teachers, professionals, state employees, CIOs, CEOs, legislators and other members of the state community to join and collaborate openly on technology issues. However, a Web 2.0 strategy should not restrict its success tied to a technology seed community as if digital social networks were only about technology. FL2I is working on launching efforts in different communities of the state, listening to opinion leaders of each one of them, and expecting to leverage the Web 2.0 multiplying effects as they are created.

Here are some communities and ideas posted by the FL2I members in various priority areas that make interesting topics to collaborate on the Florida social network:

- Technology community: innovation, disruptive technologies, wireless state
- Government community: public server blogging, budget cuts discussion groups

- Economic Development community: Florida small and medium enterprise, including Venture Capital and government funds
- Environment community: Business-friendly Clean environment, green buildings, ocean and coast line conservancy, energy efficiencies
- Health Care community: Medical research, electronic health records, e-prescription
- Higher Education community: Virtual university, competitiveness against other states and other countries
- Digital Divide community: Access devices, digital inclusion strategy
- Sports & Entertainment community: Tracking local bands and sports matches, mashup of cultural and sports events in Florida, promoting local talent and skills
- Trade & Tourism community: Florida visitors, cruises and the Caribbean, Space Tourism, trade with affiliated states in the U.S. and affiliated countries

Under a state scope, many of these topics are related across multiple communities. For example, electronic health record is originated by the Health Care community; it is related to the Technology community for standards and to the Government community for regulatory issues. One important advantage of social networks when applied at a state level is that people can communicate not only within their community but also across other communities contained in the state's social network ecosystem (sharing the same user interface and social software tools). Moreover, communication and content aggregation can span to other social networks finding compatible peers and participating on their virtual communities or inviting them to participate on the FL21 social network. Non-restricted content relevant to the state's communities that resides anywhere on the Internet can be mashed up, facilitating members' access to it without leaving the site and driven by the context of their participation on the social network.

In order to achieve the state social network goals, it is important to identify the initial communities by figuring out the value that social networking can offer them as well as community members' inclination to communicate online and generate/consume content and services. This is specially complex due to factors such as age structure and social diversity in the state of Florida (e.g. large elderly population who do not use the Internet frequently, under served communities, etc.) First of all, creating an evangelization effort with the support of the higher education system in Florida to bring the Web 2.0 culture to the state, will help to disseminate the digital social networking culture, providing continuity via open virtual spaces on the social network for new members who form part of the digital inclusion effort. By inviting opinion leaders as the first members of the communities and providing them with an open collaboration environment, it is possible to define effective objectives, ideas for discussion and attractive seed content based on the actual priorities of each community. Thought leaders must be approached not only to obtain feedback and define specific social network purposes and topics of interest, but also to help promote the initiative through their own personal contacts. The final step is to launch the social network with the seed content produced by recognized members of the community and to open it up for free membership to anyone interested in Florida to participate.

It is necessary to find the appropriate support and promotional mechanisms that will expedite the Web 2.0 evangelization effort and the initial nurturing and growth of the first communities which will be crucial for the success of the FL2I by leveraging the multiplying effects of social networks.

Innovation

One interesting characteristic of the State 2.0 concept is the need to traverse the social network across communities effectively. Web standards play an important role to implement an open web platform that follows up with the principles contained in the Web 2.0 vision. But in order to provide inter- and intra-community communication, additional technology building blocks are required. Knowledge representation standards extend the basic use of tags and folksonomy to allow the social network to build higher layers of value across its communities.

Extending the mature Internet and Web standards such as HTTP, HTML and XML, worldwide standards organizations have been working on an ambitious scope for a new Web (sometimes named as Web 3.0). Ongoing efforts to adopt standards such as the World Wide Web Consortium's Semantic Web, OASIS' Search Web Services and ISO's XML Topic Maps are proposing more intelligent ways to produce and communicate knowledge. The scope behind these knowledge representation standards is to leverage digital media on the Web, extending the tools to make use of semantic resources to model the social communities. This semantic approach will have an impact in the way people find peers, contribute and find content and make use of digital services. These technologies will also have an impact on making better use of tags, metadata and other classes of associations across communities.

FL2I can contribute local innovation to the digital social network movement not only by creating the first State 2.0 site, but also by applying knowledge representation standards and technologies that are not widely adopted yet in the market but are well defined by international standards organizations and will add value to the State 2.0 site. FL2I will create a semantic model of the diverse Florida communities and priorities, driving people to participate and meet in the cyberspace around common topics of interest proposed by members of the state communities. These technologies can differentiate the way state-wide knowledge is produced and delivered, anticipating basic functionalities of what is known as the Semantic Web or Web 3.0.

Conclusion

Web 2.0 is a vision of the Internet and the social use of mature web technologies rather than a pile of new standards and technical aspects of those technologies. The impressive results achieved by many digital social network implementations and the various Web 2.0 areas of impact and opportunity mentioned in this paper, illustrate how early adopters are gaining competitive advantage by deploying these technologies.

State 2.0 is not a concept restricted to government. A combination of digital social networks under a state scope can offer meaningful advantages to people who live in Florida, visitors, state government and the private sector in many ways:

- Low entry barriers for local communities and engagement
- Leveraging the power of the community to offer improved communication between people in different sectors of the state and out of state
- Leverage network effects to capitalize collective intelligence in a cost-effective manner
- Direct feedback for advocacy on state policy, regulation and specific economic development areas
- Freedom to share and re-use local modular content
- Transition of relevant local websites as individual information entities to sources of dynamic content and services
- Decentralization of social network authority as a democratic effort under the Florida 2.0 Initiative non-profit entity
- Open architecture of participation with intermediation processes among people
- Enhanced organization and categorization of user generated content
- Extensive data aggregation by members of the communities
- Extensive customization targeted to each community
- Better knowledge representation schemes via tags, folksonomy, metadata and ontology
- Knowledge-based relationships across social communities
- Global distribution, promoting the state of Florida
- Increased inbound web access to participating sites and rankings
- Open environment to promote small and medium enterprise
- Valuable tool for digital inclusion, allowing isolated populations to voice out their ideas and needs, to find educational resources and job opportunities, etc.

A State 2.0 initiative represents an early adoption unique opportunity that can lead innovation in Florida in various social segments with the participation of the State Government and the local community under Florida's identity and priorities. Innovation can be further extended by making use of Web 3.0 standards as part of the next generation wave to enhance members' online experience when joining the FL2I social network as compared to other social networks.

FL2I can act as an enabling resource to enhance the model of a modern democratic State, detecting and improving local digital divide conditions, and opening a new voice for everyone to participate in making Florida a better state to visit, to do business with or where to live.

Boca Raton, FL 33487

U.S.A.

+1(561)988-8020

www.qoslabs.com

Copyright © 2007, 2008, QoS Labs. All rights reserved.

The contents of this document are subject to change without notice.