



Cathy: Today we're going to talk about *Web 2.0*, and *what's in it for me?*

Well, let me just tell you that there's a lot in it for everyone. You might be wondering what this has to do with blogging and with WordPress, but it has everything to do with blogging and, *particularly* with WordPress.

So, let's talk about Web 2.0. Let's say you have a blog, or you want one. Maybe you feel like you need one, but you're not sure where to start. Whatever the case, listen and absorb this discussion on Web 2.0 because it's here and it's here to stay. Even when Web 3.0 happens, Web 2.0 will still be important. Actually, Web 2.0 is about:

- 25% Marketing
- 75% Internet hype

That doesn't mean that it's not important, because it is. It *is* a way of thinking; it's a way of thinking when it comes to creating, to designing, and even updating your blog.

I forgot to talk about the quote of the call, and it really is important. The quote is "Like many important concepts, Web 2.0 doesn't have a hard boundary, but rather, a gravitational core." That's from Tim O'Riley.

Tim O'Riley absolutely has the right to say whatever he wants to about Web 2.0, because he kind of invented it. If you can call it inventing, he's the one who came up with the idea of Web 2.0. It was coined way, way back in 2005, (I know, I know, that's a long though in internet terms). It was not clearly defined at the time, as you can see. "It doesn't have a hard boundary, but rather a gravitational core." So, this was a concept as far as he was concerned, but it has taken off, it has legs now, and it's really running.

What he meant was that, it would be the next generation of web applications, to turn the web from a static experience into a more active, and well, hopefully a more useful one. If you remember, if you were on the web before 2005, you saw static websites; they talked *at* you. You really couldn't do too much, except read, absorb, and buy stuff. Buying stuff was the whole point of what became the Internet.

Now, O'Riley was thinking that things needed to change, because you had a VCR, you could time shift your television watching, and that was really

an interactive way of interacting with your television. So, he envisioned all of this interaction, making the web a friendlier place, which it certainly has become. I mean, it's still kind of the wild, wild West out there, but thanks to him, we now have a lot more tools, a lot more interaction, and a lot, lot more ways to get our businesses noticed.

So, Web 2.0 is a funny term. In computer terms, the 1.0 version of software is barely out of beta. Generally it's full of bugs. A 1.1, (at the very least) version comes out pretty soon after the 1.0, because that's the very first release. When you finally get up to version 2.0, the software is better. Much better; much more stable with a lot more robust features, and it easier to use. So, he coined Web 2.0 as the next version of the web. We had version 1.0, which was all static stuff, and now we have Web 2.0, a much more robust version of the web.

Why am I talking about this, and what does it have to do with WordPress? Well, let me tell you, you could have the coolest, flashiest WordPress blog in the entire world, but if you don't take advantage of Web 2.0's stuff, then it won't mean a thing to you or your business; because Web 2.0 is the way that you get found.

It requires work on your part, it's not "build it and they will come," but it's so well worth it because you have the tools available to do it now. At the time that this phrase was coined it was loosely meant that all stuff that makes the web fun. We now have a lot more interactive games, yeah, you could play games before, but they weren't interactive at all. It was you punching keys with your mouse to play a game.

Some of the applications that O'Riley and his little crew thought of were things like Google AdSense for advertising, Flickr for photo sharing. Also, there's Wikipedia a site where articles by users make up the entire content; it's an encyclopedia-like site, but you find articles written by people who are experts in their fields, but perhaps the facts have not been checked yet.

So, you kind of have to take Wikipedia with a grain of salt, but on the other hand, I'm not downing Wikipedia at all, just know that it's not really an encyclopedia where everything has been fact checked.

The way that we're going to talk about Web 2.0 is of course, the blog, and the associated add-ons that you can implement to make your blog interactive. Now, your readers are going to become visitors, rather than just readers, because they can participate and get to know you as well as others who visit your site.

Blogs themselves tend to be thought of as Web 2.0, even though they actually predate Web 2.0. Blogs have been around for a long time (well long is a relative term), but the thing is, they were personal diaries, and

then political pundits started using blogs to express their opinions. You might be able to leave a comment, but that's really about it; they weren't though of as communities. The fact that blogging software makes it easy to *frequently* update the content on your site, is *very* Web 2.0, and the fact that many, many blogging systems (and I'm talking about almost all of them, and WordPress does this to the Nth degree) have reader commenting features built right in.

Now, you see, bloggers are asking their readers to comment, when before they didn't. It was there, and if you figured out how to leave a comment that was fine, if you didn't that was fine too. Now, though, you can create that sense of interactivity that can help you build an entire online community.

This is huge. Many blogging platforms (including WordPress, yes, yes, *yes!*) have syndication tools built right into them that allow people to subscribe to your blog and read them in special applications called feed readers. They can get an email alert when there are new posts, and then ultimately (and you hope that this is going to happen) publish automatic links to your work on their website. That didn't happen before Web 2.0. People read – sure, they just didn't talk about each other. Bloggers didn't talk about each other on their blogs.

Another way to integrate Web 2.0 into your site is to take advantage of the many video sharing sties, and I'm seeing a lot more of this on blogs as time goes on, and it's wonderful. You can get videos and put them right in your blog from places like Flickr, YouTube, Yahoo! video, and now Google video. These are web applications in communities of their own right, but they offer you enhancements to your own blog. User friendly, user friendly, user friendly and a lot of good content. These video sharing sites allow you to have really good, good content.

If you use rating sites, like Digg, and Technorati, to help others find entries that you post. You also give your readers, for example, with the ShareThis WordPress plug-in, the ability to go out and social bookmark you. That's huge in getting people to come to your site.

If you allow people, (of course you really don't have to allow them, because people are going to do it anyway), but give people the ability to easily Digg, Technorati, Spurl, I can't even think of many of the other ones, but there are zillions of social bookmarking sites. Delicious, Furl, (they all have very strange names), are some others. That allows you and your readers, visitors, to share your bookmarks as well as links to your blog, and that's the important thing; you want to get links out there.

Use social networking sites. Go out onto Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, for crying out loud. Twitter – I’m addicted to Twitter, I love Twitter [laughing], but you could spend a lot of time doing this, but if you limit yourself and say, “Okay, I’m going to spend X amount of time today on Facebook,” or, “I’m going to spend X amount of time tomorrow on Myspace,” and “I’m going to Twitter every opportunity that I get,” because I love Twitter. [Laughing]. You’re going to find out that that increases your visibility. Now, these social networking sites used to be for teenagers, and college students, but then, we adults are kind of slow learners and we finally caught on and said “Oh my gosh!”

There are some that are especially created for business like LinkedIn, but businesses and adults are on Facebook, they’re on Myspace, and I think that we’re probably the biggest users for Twitter, for crying out loud. Go put up Squidoo Lenses. If you don’t know what a Squidoo Lense is, then I’m going to talk about that in one of our upcoming classes, because it’s really a good enhancement to your blog.

Squidoo has an excellent page rank. It’s way low and it’s a lesser ranking, which is good. You get some very relevant incoming links from your Squidoo Lense. Just go to squidoo.com, it’s really very user friendly, and you might not understand yet, but the word lense, (I didn’t), but I came to understand that it’s a little focused area on Squidoo where you can share your expertise with the world. You can put your articles up there; it’s an excellent place. You can build on Squidoo lense per article, and have them come back to your website. How many incoming links is that? If you have 125 articles out there, then you have 125 lenses. That will take some time to build, but once you get the hang of building a Squidoo lense, it’s very easy.

Another Web 2.0 concept, well its kind of amorphous, but its design sensibility. You know, we used to have all of this flash stuff, and very big elaborate sites that screamed at you. Well, people are tired of being screamed at, I know that I am. So, the design sensibility part of Web 2.0 is one of simplicity. Sort of, form follows function, if you will.

I like to say that a lot of screaming flash stuff is so two weeks ago. I think that so two weeks ago, is so like a year ago, but I still like that. That means that it’s just passé, it’s just old. It doesn’t apply anymore. I had someone ask me, in fact about Web 2.0 blogs and, you know, how do you do the sidebar, how do you do the footer, how do you do the header for a Web 2.0 blog? That’s not the concept. The concept is the overall look and feel of cleanness and simplicity. It’s not mandatory, you can feel free to express yourself, but make it look fresh, and clean, and new, but do express yourself.

Although, you always need to keep your visitor in mind. Your visitor wants clean lines, ease of navigation, don't make it hard for them to get around in your site – make it easy. Put your links right there, put your pages right there, let them know that you have their comfort and ease of navigating their site in mind.

Now, I've touched on this a little bit, but what you do outside of your blog to promote it, is really the heart of Web 2.0. I just got this today, so I'm going to have to read it, but it's really good. It's from Boost Your Business Blogging and New Media, by Chris Garret. "Sneezers and Linkerati are people who will spread your message or help to promote your work by linking to you. While the Linkerati are obviously going to link to your content, Sneezers are people who spread idea viruses." (My editorial comment: How cool is that?).

Which is a fancy way of saying that they tell other people about your stuff via:

- Word of mouth
- Email
- Social boating (that's social bookmarking)
- Messaging, (rather than linking to it)

So the Linkerati link, the Sneezers spread (and boy they do, I know I still have a cold). For you, your Linkerati could be:

- Fellow bloggers
- Writers
- The media
- Forums
- Webmasters
- Directories (which I haven't even talked about yet)
- Social media users
- Emailers

So, why does all of this matter? According to Chris, job 1 is to identify your Linkerati and delight them! More than anyone else, they will aid your promotion efforts by getting the word out. A third party endorsement tends to be much more believable than blowing your own trumpet, how true.

How do you identify these people? Look where your links are currently coming from; find out who's talking about you. If you have a happy client, or have recently done someone a favor, don't be afraid of asking them to vote or link you up. What goes around comes around, so make sure that you're giving love before asking for it.

Do you have fans in your comment section? Do you have Twitter followers? The first time that I found out that someone was following me I said, "Oh my gosh! A.) Is it a stalker? B.) Oh no! Should I be really happy about it?" So, make sure that you're keeping them nurtured and happy.

Build new connections all the time. Network. Network. Network. Chris sums this up with the bottom line, “If you look after your Sneezers, they will look after you.” How cool is that? It’s true too. Perhaps the most important thread that runs through most blogs is this (and this is very important): “They seek to create and/or become a part of some social community.” I think that that’s really the heart of Web 2.0. So, you see, it isn’t software, it isn’t stuff, it’s a concept.

You know the format of a blog itself, with dated entries, newest first; can give readers a window into the topics that you want them to explore. They’ll know what you’re thinking. They’ll know what you’re doing now, as opposed to what you’re doing before. With the other tools that we discussed, Wikis, social networking, photos, video, audio, you can add a number of different features and entry points to make your site more interactive and more compelling for people you want to have visit.

So an entry point, I think that I should probably define that. An entry point is where people come into your blog; they don’t always come in on the front page. If someone links to a particular post, they’re going to come into that post. That’s why it’s important to have good stuff in your sidebar, because they’re going to be on a particular post page. So make sure that you have navigation available, also, in the sidebar so that they can find their way around and go to other places in your blog.

An entry point can be a post; it can be a separate page. Just like when you go to thewizardweekly.com (which I hope that you do often!), it’s an entry point into thewordpresswizard.com. So, I know how many people come into my blog (because I check my statistics) on that particular page. If you’re checking your statistics (which I hope that you are!) with your hosting company and you use AW stats, which I’ve talked about before, and love, then you will get this information about where your entry points are.

You may want to blog about your entry points, and by blogging about your entry points I simply mean write a post. I could write a post about the Wizard Weekly, which I have done, and I point people there, because I know that it’s a place where people enter into my blog. When I say “my blog,” I really mean my little corner, my playground, and my little area of the web; so keep in mind that people don’t come in strictly on your front page; by typing in yourblogname.com.

How many of you felt (this is a silly question, but in a way, it’s really not because I felt this way), when you first started your blogs that you were blogging for no one? Boy, I did. How did you grow your audience, if you already have? How did you do it? By actively engaging people! You

didn't just sit there; you went out and got yourself an audience, by commenting on other blogs, participating in social media.

If you have a good readership, if you have a good visitorship (we'll start calling it that), and if you have any anxiety over doing any of that stuff, you need to quickly get over it, or you'd still be blogging to no one. For those of you who are just starting out (and I know that a lot of you are), just get over it. Go out and find other blogs that are similar to yours, on a similar subject. Make comments on a post that you like. Write about them on your blog. You're not sending traffic away; you're attracting traffic to your blog. There's a big difference between sending people away, like when you might want to use BlogRush (which I do not recommend anymore) that sends people away from your blog, and you don't know where they're coming and you don't know if they'll ever come back. If you write about another bloggers posting on your topic, then you're linking to that blogger, the other blogger is more likely to write more about you and link back to you.

People who have read the other post will come back to your blog and comment on your post about the other post. Is this getting confusing? [Laughing], I hope not! You know, choose a few blogs in your niche, and put the effort into getting to know the bloggers. It's going to pay off for you in the long run because now you have friends that you can link to, and comment on. Believe me, they're going to do the same thing for you.

Now, this brings us to one of the more important items, and that's planning your blog. I know that I've talked about this before, but please, go to thewizardweekly.com, and download the blog strategy guide, if you haven't already. It's up there, and it's free for now, I'm going to redo it and make it bigger, and then it's going to be up for sale, and you won't be able to get it without paying for it, so go ahead and get it now, and let me know what you think about it. I always want to make things better, so if it was helpful, tell me. If you think that there are points that should be included, but weren't tell me that too! If it didn't help you at all, tell me about that too. [Laughing].

Okay, so you need to do some planning. Consider why you want a blog in the first place. One great reason is because you want to start a web community. If you think about blogging it's going to make you, you're probably not going to be that successful. You want people come to you and view you as the authority. As soon as they know, like, and trust you, and view you as the authority, they're going to start buying your stuff. So, lay the groundwork, and I know that you need money (I need money too), everybody needs money, but if you make that the focus of your blog, then you're really missing the point. You want to bring people in to your community.

You know, businesses and organizations are really quickly finding out that blogs are a great way to communicate with people they want to read their blogs. Whether it's to sell products or services, build a community among a base of donors if you're a non-profit. Or, spread news and opinions, because there are lots of different types of blogs, and we're running out of time, but I have lots of questions, so I'm going to talk about the blogs in another session. In fact, I'll probably do that next week, I'm just going to continue this because I have a lot more to talk about.

I'm going to get to some questions right now. Sharon in Charlotte has a good question "Can you explain what it is about Twitter that you like?" No I can't! [Laughing] I just love it though. Go to Twitter.com, sign up, and see what I mean. When people start following you, you can say "I could have gone to Twitter, but I probably would have missed the call and stayed on there too long." I could have gone to Twitter and said, "Cathy's getting ready for The Wizard Weekly!" Actually I could have put a link in there, and maybe I could have gotten some more people on the call! You can follow people who are interesting, and people are going to start following you if you put a lot of your activities out there. It's really fun; I can't say what it is about it that I like.

YouTube videos, "When I attempt to add a video to my blog, I can only get the link to show. I have seen some that have the video in the blog. What am I missing?" Oh gosh, that's a very good question. If you go to YouTube, pick the video that you like, look over on the right hand side of that screen and you will see a little tiny thing that says, "Embed." It's like one line of code, all you do is copy that code, paste it where you want it to go in your blog, and it's there. So, you probably are not getting the embedded code.

Robin in Iowa wants me to say why I no longer recommend BlogRush. Well, BlogRush was really cool at the beginning and I did put it on my blog. Then, I realized that I had no control over what appeared in BlogRush. It might have been my direct competitors and it was sending people away from my blog in a way that I thought they might not come back. BlogRush is there for the benefit of John Reese, who founded BlogRush. It's going to have advertising on it, if it doesn't already, I haven't checked into it for a long time. It'll have advertising though. So, it either has or will have advertising and it sends people away from your blog and you don't know whether they'll come back. If you recommend a site in a post, that's very different. If you post about another blog, that's very different from having a Widget in your sidebar that sends people away over which you have no control. So, that's why I don't recommend BlogRush.

Now, you'll find a Widget on my site that is a Spring Widget. You can go to springwidget.com, create your own widget. You then have control over where you send people. You don't have control over the people, I'm not saying that you want to have control over the people, but you will have control over where you send people, and I think that's even more important.

Catherine Marrow in Flat Rock, Michigan. Hi Catherine. "Someone contacted me with the opportunity to embed their 12 slide shows, some very appropriate for my blogs. What does embed mean? Do you see any downside to embedding? Thanks." Embedding is simply putting their code, in your blog, somewhere. Whether it's in a sidebar Widget, or whether it's in a post, so that something else will play automatically. That's the point behind the YouTube embed code, that's the point behind these 12 slide shows.

Now, you said that some of them are very appropriate for your blogs, and it's a way of putting up more really good content because if you put up a slideshow, you can blog about it, and it's more content. Probably it's going to have links back to their site, but see this is the difference between putting up something like BlogRush, and putting up something that you want and endorse. You need to look at the slide shows. You need to decide whether they're really going to help your or not, and whether the link love that you're going to give the owner of these slide shows is going to come back to you.

Danny in Michigan, this is so good. "I'm hearing about Web 2.5 being released, is this something that we should upgrade to, or will our Web server will not touch your WordPress blog, which is a very good thing. It's up to you to do it. Now, most web hosts, mine included (HostGator), GoDaddy, (and I can't think of some of the others that I know this happens) will not release an upgrade until they know it works. So, that's wonderful. You can rely on your web host. For example, right now, if your web host is saying that version 2.3.2 is available, well version 2.3.3 is out there, but your web host and most web hosts have decided that 2.3.3 is not really that stable. It's not stable enough for them to release, so they do research. The web hosts know what's going on. So, while they won't do it automatically, when they recommend that you upgrade, that's the time to upgrade.

2.5, I have a beta version of that. I haven't looked into it too much because I'm not too keen on upgrading on the very first release of 2.5. So, no, I'm not upgrading when it's out either. It was supposed to be out several weeks ago, then it was supposed to be out on the 17th, and gee, here we are on the 26th, and it's still not out. So, they're having some problems with it, obviously, and when things run behind the release date, another red flag goes up, because, what does that mean? Are they rushing

now, just to get the release out because they promised it? It doesn't bode well for we WordPress users at all.

So, I'm waiting, and I'm going to be putting 2.5 on my test site when it's released and I'm going to be testing it myself, and I'm going to be watching for the web hosts to recommend it. So I take a very cautious view of any new release of WordPress, I never rush to be the first one. You know, you might want to rush to a sale when some item that you want goes on sale, and you might want to be the first one in line. Maybe when the iPod was released, you were the first one in line to get it, go for it. Just be very careful about software upgrades.

Now, the next question that I'm going to answer is the last one, and it has nothing to do with Web 2.0, but it's really an important one, and I know that we've run over time, but these are two really good questions, and I'll try to keep my answers short.

This is from Catherine Marrow again. Question number 1: "I remember reading, but don't remember who said, that if you move your blog to a hosting account, you should still keep the WordPress hosted site up, just for more exposure. What do you think?"

No. No. No. No. As soon as you have your content, if you're importing your WordPress hosted blog into your own site, take that site down. Get rid of it. It's not more exposure, because a WordPress hosted blog doesn't get that much in the first place.

If you can't take it down, if you don't know how to take it down, then delete all of your posts and comments, put up one post that says, "Please visit my new blog at..." and give the domain. That's probably a better idea than trying to take the whole thing down, because you want people to get used to coming to your own site. You don't want them hanging around on your old site, because you need to keep posting to it. If you're going to maintain two blogs, on the same subject, more power to you, but no, I wouldn't keep that site up.

Question number two is: "How do search engines know that it is still a blog if it's not being hosted by the blog hosting company? If it's on my own hosting."

That's a good question. Google and the search engines know that you have frequently updated content, that you have a lot of visitors, and they don't care if it's a blog. They don't say, "Oh this is a blog, so...I'm going to give it a page rank of 100, (even though Google's highest page rank is 10)." They don't care if it's a blog or a website. What they care about is

content, content, content. Freshly updated content. So, don't even worry about whether they're going to know if it's a blog because they don't care.

I'm just going to refresh and see if we have any more questions. I mean, I know that I've taken up a lot more of your time.

A question from Sharon: "What was the article on your site that you recommend that we check out?"

Go to thewizardweekly.com, and get the blog strategy guide, download it, and even if you already have a blog up and running, and it's been up, it's going to help you refocus. If you're new and don't have a blog yet, then it's going to really help you hone in on what you want your blog to be.

So, that's it. I want to thank you so much for being with me today, and of course I invite you to come back next week when we'll talk more about blogging and WordPress, and I do think that we're going to talk more about Web 2.0, because I didn't get everything today.

Thank you again for being here, and remember, blog on, and blog now!
Bye everybody!