

Inspiring Innovation: Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating the *Web 2.0 Challenge**

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The three authors created the Web 2.0 Challenge for the Computing Services Special Interest Section of AALL. In this article they describe their experience running the Challenge and the feedback from the librarians who participated in the Challenge.

Introduction

¶1 Law librarians need Web 2.0. The web is increasingly the primary way we reach our users—through our web sites, online catalogs, research resources, and information guides. Over the past ten years, our users have seen the rest of the web grow increasingly interactive: news sites encourage readers to discuss articles,¹ wikis provide new frameworks for understanding and appreciating popular culture,² and organizations and associations communicate with their members through weblogs.³

¶2 If law libraries continue to develop primarily static web sites with no tools for our users to communicate, collaborate, and discuss resources and policies, then we will increasingly be seen as out of touch. Already, conventional wisdom believes libraries are irrelevant.⁴ We can only reestablish our credibility if we can convince our users to take advantage of our unique skills and resources. To do this, we need to offer services and applications that work like those with which they are already familiar.

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1. A recent story in *USA Today*, for example, generated almost 5000 comments from readers. See comments for Laura Petrecca & Christine Dugas, *Obama's Budget Offers Middle and Working Class 'Good News'*, USA TODAY, Feb. 27, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/taxes/2009-02-26-budget-taxes-obama_N.htm?imw=Y (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

2. For example, see Wikia's "The Big Wikis," which cover popular topics like *Star Wars*, cooking, and genealogy. Wikia, Big Wikis, http://www.wikia.com/wiki/Big_wikis (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

3. Bar associations, for example, often use blogs. See, e.g., New York State Bar Association Journal, <http://nysbar.com/blogs/barjournal> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

4. See, e.g., Book Rental Fail, Posting by Isaak Kwok to Blogging Librarian, <http://www.blogginglibrarian.com/2008/06/05/book-rental-fail> (June 5, 2008). The Blogging Librarian found a suggestion on a forum where the poster recommended starting a business that would charge to rent books. "I guess the person posting it . . . has never heard of a place called a 'LIBRARY.'"

¶3 This does not mean that law librarians need to immediately embrace every available Web 2.0 technology. But law librarians must develop a Web 2.0 toolbox from which we can choose the applications that are best suited to our patrons and our libraries—weblogs to broadcast the latest library news, chat boxes for instant communication, or online photo-sharing accounts to highlight recent library events.

¶4 How can law librarians find the best tools for their libraries? Few librarians have time to explore all of the possibilities and learn every new resource. To help them focus on the most important new Web 2.0 applications, the AALL Computing Special Interest Section (CS-SIS) hosted a five-week online course designed to introduce popular Web 2.0 applications to all types of law librarians. Participants ranged from court librarians to firm librarians to academic librarians, from recent library school graduates to librarians on the edge of retirement, from technological newbies to librarian hackers. The course, the *Web 2.0 Challenge*, guided one hundred participants through tools they could add to their toolboxes right away—tools such as weblogs, wikis, and social bookmarks.

¶5 Shortly after the *Challenge* ended, we wrote a short piece about it that appeared in the *AALL Spectrum*.⁵ In that article, we briefly described the structure of the course and discussed participants' reactions to it. But we felt that there was more to be shared about our experience with the *Challenge*: what was the motivation behind the course?; who was involved?; how was the course managed?; which technologies did participants find useful or not?; and which teaching methods were successful or not?

¶6 Unlike the *AALL Spectrum* article, which simply offers a description and assessment of the *Web 2.0 Challenge*, this article analyzes the course in more depth. It explores law librarians' reactions to and use of Web 2.0 technologies and provides guidance to others who may wish to develop a similar training program. Some duplication between the two articles was unavoidable, though, in order to provide the necessary background.

About the CS-SIS *Web 2.0 Challenge*

¶7 The *Web 2.0 Challenge* provided a free, interactive online learning opportunity designed specifically for law librarians by directing them in hands-on use of several useful Web 2.0 technologies. Participants were required to complete a series of weekly, self-directed activities, including watching instructional screencasts, completing hands-on exercises based on the lessons, weekly blogging about their experiences, and participating in weekly small group chat sessions. The course culminated with each participant developing a proposal for implementing a Web 2.0 tool in their library.

¶8 The course, which took place between July 21 and August 18, 2008, covered the following topics:

5. Deborah Ginsberg, Meg Kribble & Bonnie Shucha, *I Want My Web 2.0: Reflections on the CS-SIS Web 2.0 Challenge*, AALL SPECTRUM, Apr. 2009, at 28.

- Week 1: Blogs & RSS
- Week 2: Wikis
- Week 3: Social Networking and Second Life
- Week 4: Flickr and Social Bookmarking
- Week 5: Next Steps: Web 2.0 @ Your Library

The *Web 2.0 Challenge* was open to any law library employee or library student. Ultimately, over 125 law librarians were involved in the course. Three administrators organized the course, nine instructors created the content, and twenty facilitators led one hundred participants through each week's lessons.⁶

Planning the *Web 2.0 Challenge*

Inspiration and Examples

¶9 The idea for the *Web 2.0 Challenge* was proposed by then-incoming CS-SIS chair, June Liebert, at a board meeting in 2007. She was intrigued by courses such as the popular *23 Learning 2.0 Things* program developed by the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.⁷ That free, online program encouraged librarians to explore various Web 2.0 technologies through a series of twenty-three self-directed exercises. June felt that CS-SIS could draw on the technological expertise of its members to design a similar learning experience specifically for law librarians. The three authors were selected to coordinate the course.

¶10 One of the first tasks of the coordinators was to study similar online courses, including *23 Things* and *The Learning Challenge 2.0*, with which Meg Kribble had been involved at Nova Southeastern University (NSU).⁸ One course that particularly caught our attention was *Five Weeks to a Social Library*.⁹ As its name implies, the course ran for five weeks and introduced one or two Web 2.0 technologies every week. Each week's content consisted of a combination of live webcasts and prerecorded screencasts explaining the technology, suggested readings, and examples of how libraries are using the featured technologies. In addition to viewing this content, participants were required to complete hands-on activities and blog each week about their experience.

¶11 Of all the courses that we reviewed, *Five Weeks to a Social Library* most closely matched our vision for the *Web 2.0 Challenge* in timing, structure, and content. Fortunately, their Creative Commons license¹⁰ allowed for distribution and adaptation. With this and the blessing of the course creators, we used *Five Weeks to a Social Library* as a starting model for the *Web 2.0 Challenge*.

6. Some individuals involved with the course served in more than one role.

7. The *23 Things* program can be found at: <http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

8. See TLC 2.0, <http://marps.library.nova.edu/tlc> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

9. *Five Weeks to a Social Law Library*, <http://www.sociallibraries.com/course> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

10. See Creative Commons, Licenses, <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

Course Organization

¶12 We felt that a five-week model was ideal for the *Web 2.0 Challenge* because it was long enough to cover a range of technologies, but not so long as to become a burden on our participants. Because summer is a less busy time for many law librarians, we felt that offering the course at that time would afford more people the time to participate.¹¹ Because the July AALL Annual Meeting falls in the middle of the summer, and we did not want the course to overlap with it, we decided to offer the *Challenge* in the five weeks immediately following the conference.

¶13 Each week of the *Challenge* consisted of four course elements. The first was a short written introduction to that week's technology. This provided participants with a big-picture frame of reference. The next element was a screencast describing some aspect of the technology.¹² Third, we provided participants with links and examples of how the featured technologies are being used in libraries, especially law libraries. It was important to us in customizing our course to demonstrate the ways in which many law librarians have already embraced Web 2.0. These links and examples included articles, blog posts, videos, and web sites.

¶14 Finally, we assigned participants a series of tasks that required them to use the technology for themselves. This hands-on experience was, perhaps, the most important element of the course. Using a tool for the first time can be intimidating. Our assignments forced participants to overcome their discomfort and "just do it." Helene Blowers, creator of the *23 Things* program, incorporated the same goal into her program. She reflected that the one of the most important aspects of that course was

providing staff with "exposure" to these new tools and just encouraging them to get out [of] their comfort zone. I don't think this core idea discounts the notion that staff should also have *knowledge* about how to use these tools, but the first step in gaining knowledge is really *exposure*. Once you have a little bit of information behind you it's [sic] gives you the confidence to seek and learn more.¹³

One of our participants added some corroboration to this view, stating in an exit survey that "the most important thing I learned is that most of these technologies are best experienced first-hand by simply diving in and trying them out."¹⁴

¶15 In addition to these four course elements, the *Challenge* also offered tools for collaboration. Each week featured a forum and chat room where participants could discuss the featured technologies with one another. The forums functioned as bulletin boards where participants could asynchronously post questions and share their thoughts. The chat rooms, on the other hand, served as a place for small groups of participants to gather at scheduled times for a live discussion of the

11. That said, summer is also a popular time for vacations, and a number of librarians were unable to participate.

12. Rather than trying to schedule live webcasts that all of the participants would be required to attend, we opted for prerecorded screencasts that participants could view anytime.

13. Nine Seven Best Practices on Learning 2.0 & Two Additions, LibraryBytes, <http://www.librarybytes.com/2006/11/nine-seven-best-practices-on-learning.html> (Nov. 8, 2006).

14. See *infra* appendix B for a copy of the survey questions. All results are on file with the authors.

week's technology. Each participant also had a blog within the course management system where they were expected to record their thoughts each week.

Course Content

¶16 With the course timing and structure in place, our next task was to select the topics that we wanted to teach. Once again, we looked to the *Five Weeks* course for inspiration; most of the topics we chose were similar to those included in that course, although we reorganized and expanded upon them. In the first four weeks of the *Challenge*, we explored one or two technologies per week. For week five, we brought it all together with a topic entitled, *Next Steps: Web 2.0 @ Your Library*. In this lesson, we challenged participants to consider why law librarians would want to implement Web 2.0 technologies in their libraries, if at all, and how they might go about doing so, including ways of selling their implementation to library administrators.

¶17 Because we wanted to tailor our course to the needs of law librarians, we felt that it was important to create customized content for the *Web 2.0 Challenge*. To help with this, we recruited six additional tech-savvy law librarian instructors, most of whom were already members of the CS-SIS Emerging Technologies Committee.¹⁵ Along with the three coordinators, these volunteers developed the weekly lessons for the course. We assigned two instructors for each week of the course, with the exception of the last week, for which there was only one instructor. If two topics were covered in the same week, the instructors divided the responsibility between them. Instructors were tasked with developing the four course elements: introduction, screencast, links and examples, and assignment.

¶18 The instructors used various applications for creating screencasts. Some used desktop applications like Camtasia and Captivate, others used free, web-based tools like Slideshare, Screencast-o-Matic, and Wink. The availability of all these tools made creating the screencasts a fairly simple process.¹⁶

Participant Engagement

¶19 In addition to offering valuable course content, the coordinators endeavored to create a positive educational experience for participants. This can be a challenge in an online course where students may feel isolated working on their own. Therefore, we designed a collaborative atmosphere where they could connect with, encourage, and learn from one another. This was primarily accomplished through the creation of small groups.

¶20 Each small group consisted of five participants and a facilitator who served as the group leader. Facilitators were recruited from among CS-SIS members who were interested in and experienced with Web 2.0 technologies.¹⁷ These volunteer

15. The nine instructors were Charlie Condon, Wei Fang, Kate Fitz, Deborah Ginsberg, Liz Glankler, Brent Johnson, Katie Jones, Meg Kribble, and Bonnie Shucha.

16. The use of multiple applications did lead to some inconsistency in the quality of screencasts, however, which some participants noted in the exit survey. For an in-depth look at the screencasting tools Camtasia and Captivate, see Diane Murley, *Tools for Creating Video Tutorials*, 99 LAW LIBR. J. 857, 2007 LAW LIBR. J. 53.

17. The twenty facilitators were Susan Boland, Tom Boone, Beverly Butula, Kathleen Casey,

facilitators were responsible for answering questions, scheduling and leading weekly small group chat sessions, reading participant's blogs, evaluating their effort,¹⁸ acting as a liaison for course organizers and, most importantly, offering encouragement and support to group members.

¶21 Another way that we attempted to engage participants was through the use of course incentives. Participants who completed all the assignments for each week were entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card.¹⁹ In addition, participants who completed all assignments in the program (even if they previously missed the deadlines for the weekly drawings) were eligible for the grand prize drawing—an iPod Touch.²⁰

Online Course Management

¶22 In considering how to manage the course, we looked at the tools used by similar online Web 2.0 programs. *Five Weeks to a Social Library*, for example, used separate blogs, webcasts, and IM chats. However, for the *Challenge*, we wanted a more structured application that was capable of providing additional integration with feedback and participation. This application would also need to support the varied roles in the *Challenge*: the course content, assignments, and collaborative tools.

¶23 Therefore, we decided that an application designed especially for online learning would work best. Two open-source options appeared to be well-suited to our needs: Drupal and Moodle. Drupal allows users to create web sites through modules that control particular functions.²¹ Although it is easy to install and set up a basic site, configuring a Drupal site for the specific needs of the *Challenge* would have been difficult because of Drupal's steep learning curve.²²

¶24 Moodle, on the other hand, better met our needs "out of the box" so we decided to use it for the course.²³ Moodle is often used for traditional course web

Marin Dell, Jason Eiseman, Elizabeth Farrell, Deborah Ginsberg, Barbara Ginzburg, David Holt, Sally Irvin, Resa Kearns, Sara Kelley, Meg Kribble, Susanna Leers, Raizel Liebler, Lyonette Louis-Jacques, Jim Milles, Sharon Nelson, and Renee Rastorfer.

18. Participants were assigned grades so that the coordinators could assess eligibility for prize drawings. When grading, facilitators were instructed simply to determine whether the participants had sufficiently completed the assignments.

19. Weekly winners selected their card from the following choices: Amazon, iTunes, Linden Dollars (for Second Life), Flickr Pro membership, or CaféPress, where we set up merchandise featuring the *Web 2.0 Challenge* logo. All winners except one chose the Amazon gift card.

20. Cindy May of the University of Wisconsin was the lucky winner of the iPod Touch.

21. For more on Drupal, see <http://drupal.org> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

22. Many users have experienced issues configuring and using open-source content management systems (CMS) like Drupal. Karen Coomb's reaction at Library Web Chic is typical: "All CMS have a pretty steep learning curve. I've used Joomla, Drupal, and Plone none of them have a UI that is up to snuff in my opinion." Drupal Learning Curve, Library Web Chic, <http://www.librarywebchic.net/wordpress/2009/01/05/drupal-learning-curve> (Jan. 5, 2009).

23. For more about Moodle, see <http://moodle.org> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009). The *Web 2.0 Challenge* used Moodle 1.9.2. Installation was not an issue for either Drupal or Moodle because we had access to Fantastico. Fantastico is an application offered by our webhost that automatically installs several open-source web applications including Moodle and Drupal. It can also install WordPress, TikiWiki, and the content management system Joomla!

sites,²⁴ but it also met our needs for teaching online. The interface was simple to navigate and we were easily able to set up the features we needed.²⁵ No coding or complex configurations were required.

¶25 Like Drupal, Moodle offers a variety of customizable modules. However, Moodle's modules are designed specifically for educational web sites. The modules can be modified using a basic web form. We started by creating a web site for the *Web 2.0 Challenge* that we divided up into the five weeks of the course. Next, we added forum modules and chat modules to each week of the *Challenge*. Weekly assignment modules were also added to help the facilitators track which participants had completed which elements of the course.

¶26 One of the most important features included in Moodle was the ability to easily assign particular roles to each person in the *Challenge*.²⁶ Those with responsibility for the overall Moodle web site were assigned the administrator role. Administrators could control all aspects of Moodle, including assigning roles to others. Instructors were given "teacher" level access, which allowed them to upload materials and edit pages.²⁷ Facilitators were assigned a role as "non-editing" teachers. Although they could not add or edit materials, they could provide feedback and assign grades to participants. Participants were assigned the "student" role, allowing them to read materials, respond on forums, post to their blogs, and turn in assignments. Finally, we created a "guest" role, allowing interested librarians who were not officially enrolled in the *Challenge* access to online course materials (guests could not post in forums or participate in chats).

¶27 Once roles were assigned, Moodle allowed us to divide the participants and facilitators into their small groups. The chat modules were set up to allow each group's facilitator and participants to talk without any interference from other groups. Facilitators could easily track their own group's conversations in blogs and forums as well as review and grade their participants' assignments.

Project Management

¶28 Although we were pleased to have so many wonderful instructors and facilitators from all over the nation contribute to the *Web 2.0 Challenge*, it did make communication and management a challenge. Fortunately, we discovered several tools that helped us stay organized. The first was a project management site called Basecamp, which allows users to communicate, share files, and post to-do items and

24. For example, in *Faculty Perspectives on Moving from Blackboard to the Moodle Learning Management System*, the authors describe their transition to the Moodle course management system. At the time, approximately 10% of the classes that used online technologies at San Francisco State University used Moodle. Brian Beatty & Connie Ulasewicz, *Faculty Perspectives on Moving from Blackboard to the Moodle Learning Management System*, TECHTRENDS, Aug. 2006, at 36, 36.

25. As Prof. Ulasewicz noted in her assessment of Moodle for a traditional course web site: "What initially attracted me to Moodle was the visual presentation of the screen with the three columns of information that could easily be manipulated and updated throughout a semester." *Id.* at 37.

26. For more about using roles in Moodle, see http://docs.moodle.org/en/Standard_roles (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

27. "Teachers" could control almost everything in the specific course web site for the *Web 2.0 Challenge*, but nothing in the overall CS-SIS Moodle site installation.

schedules in a central online location.²⁸ After creating logins for all of our volunteers, we used Basecamp to assign tasks, track due dates, and post messages about the course.

¶29 There were times, however, when we needed to have live briefings and demonstrations. For these, we used FreeConference to host telephone conference calls.²⁹ FreeConference offers both desktop sharing and call recording options, both of which we used for the *Challenge*.

Implementing the *Web 2.0 Challenge*

Enrollment

¶30 Because this was the first such course to be targeted to just law librarians, we had no idea how much interest there would be in the *Web 2.0 Challenge*. We wanted to make the course available to as many people as possible while still maintaining a manageable size for collaborative learning. We decided that one hundred participants was the maximum number that we could comfortably accommodate.

¶31 To collect applicants' registration information, we created a web form using Google Docs.³⁰ As applicants completed the online form, their responses were collected directly into a spreadsheet, along with a time stamp for each application. We opened registration on June 13, 2008, and in less than twenty-four hours over one hundred people had applied. Ultimately, over two hundred law librarians applied for our one hundred participant slots.

¶32 Although we were pleased at the overwhelming interest in the course, we then faced a difficult task in deciding which applicants would be selected to participate in the *Challenge*. On the registration form, we had asked applicants to rate their level of commitment to the course. Those who felt confident that they would be able to devote adequate time to meet the requirements of the course were identified for possible participation. However, even this group exceeded our one hundred seats, so we proceeded to a second round of selection based on the date and time of application.

¶33 After selecting our group of participants, we divided them into twenty small groups each consisting of five participants and one facilitator. When making the small group assignments, we tried to include in each a mix of people from different types of libraries. We felt that this would give participants a broader sense of how various law libraries are using Web 2.0 technologies and allow them to make connections beyond their usual peer groups. For scheduling purposes, however, we attempted to keep small groups within the same or nearby time zones.

28. For more information about Basecamp, see <http://basecamphq.com> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

29. FreeConference is available at <http://www.freeconference.com> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

30. Google Docs, <http://docs.google.com> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009)

Participant Backgrounds

¶34 The *Challenge* brought together a diverse group of law librarians from different types of libraries and geographic regions, and with different levels of experience. Participants represented all branches of law librarianship—academic, court, firm, and public. They hailed from thirty-three states as well as Alberta and Ontario, Canada, and Nottingham, England. There were at least three library school students, several heads of departments, and at least one director. Years of experience in law librarianship ranged from nine months to thirty-seven years. As the *Challenge* began, we created a basic SurveyMonkey questionnaire to ask our incoming participants about their Web 2.0 experiences and expectations; eighty-six responded.³¹

¶35 Although the participants joined the *Challenge* to learn more about Web 2.0 applications, we found that nearly all of them already had at least some experience with Web 2.0. Only ten described themselves as novices who had never used Web 2.0. At the other extreme, six identified themselves as “highly experienced,” with active accounts on ten or more Web 2.0 services, and two were “experts,” with accounts on ten or more services and experience creating their own services/widgets—they should have helped us teach the *Challenge*!

¶36 We learned that most participants were already familiar with Web 2.0 basics. Seventy-nine replied that they read professional weblogs. Fifty used wikis for research, and forty-eight used social networks like Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn. Fifty-six used an RSS or other kind of feed reader.

¶37 While many participants were consumers of Web 2.0 content, fewer had created content with Web 2.0 applications. Only fourteen wrote professional blogs (twelve wrote personal blogs). Six had edited a wiki for public use. Seven had posted a video on YouTube. Social bookmarking sites like Diigo were a little more popular, with sixteen respondents. Most popular was digital photography: twenty-six had posted online photos to Flickr or some other site.

¶38 Because so few participants had created Web 2.0 content, we were not surprised to find that the use of Web 2.0 applications in their libraries was fairly low. Forty-one reported that their libraries offered no Web 2.0 content. Of the rest, internal library wikis (24) and library blogs (23) were the most popular. Thirteen libraries had Facebook or other social network pages. Least popular were public wikis (3), shared videos on YouTube or a similar site (2), buildings in Second Life (4), and shared bookmarks (4).

¶39 Of course, we hoped that the participants would consider implementing Web 2.0 technologies after the *Challenge*. When asked about their plans in this preliminary survey, however, only fifty said they were definitely planning to implement Web 2.0. Thirty-four replied that they were not sure. Fortunately, only one participant said his or her library had no plans for Web 2.0. Of the applications the participants were considering, blogs and wikis were the most popular.³² Many of the participants wished to remain open minded about what they would learn during

31. See *infra* appendix A for a copy of the survey questions. All results are on file with the authors.

32. Seventy-seven participants answered the open-ended question, “what technologies are you considering?” Forty-four mentioned blogs; thirty-seven mentioned wikis.

the *Challenge*. Said one, “I will have to evaluate other technologies as I go through this course.”

¶40 Nearly all of the participants were either enthusiastic about³³ or interested in³⁴ Web 2.0 technologies. Twenty-five thought that a few applications might be helpful.³⁵ Only three were uncertain³⁶ about the usefulness of Web 2.0, and no one felt that “it would be a waste of time and resources for our library to use these applications.”

¶41 In their comments, many shared their excitement about the potential of the applications introduced in the *Challenge*, while still remaining realistic. One commented, “I’m excited about using tools that help us communicate better with our customers. I am not for using a tool because it’s new—there needs to be some type of return on investment.” Others expressed concerns that their ability to implement new tools might be constrained by their home libraries. “Our options may be limited due to institutional concerns,” one participant remarked. That said, they were willing to learn more as the *Challenge* progressed: “Perhaps as I learn more my attitude will adjust.”

¶42 When asked the open-ended question, “What Web 2.0 application/service are you most excited about?,” most were excited about blogs (26), RSS (17), and wikis (27). In response to the open-ended question, “What Web 2.0 application/service are you most skeptical about?,” the participants were unsure about Second Life (37) and social networks like Facebook and Twitter (22).

Participant Feedback

¶43 At the end of the *Challenge*, we surveyed our participants a second time to find out what they learned, how their plans had changed, and what they thought of the course itself; fifty-three responded.³⁷

¶44 “As a result of the *Challenge*,” we asked, “which Web 2.0 applications or services have you implemented—or will you soon implement—in your library or organization?” Blogs, RSS, and wikis had been frequently mentioned by participants at the start of the *Challenge*, so we were not surprised that most of the respondents were planning to use at least one of those applications.³⁸ We were very pleased, however, to learn how successful our social bookmarking lesson had been. Most participants had not been considering using social bookmarks at the beginning of the *Challenge*; some were even skeptical about their utility. In the exit survey, however, twenty-nine reported that they were planning to use social bookmarking in their libraries. As in our preliminary survey, only one librarian

33. Twenty-nine agreed with the statement: “Web 2.0 will offer us new and powerful ways to reach our users.”

34. Twenty-nine agreed with the statement: “Many, but not all, of these applications could be useful for our library.”

35. They agreed with the statement: “A few applications may be helpful.”

36. They agreed with the statement: “These applications don’t seem like they would be useful to our library.”

37. See *infra* appendix B. We also surveyed our guest participants at the end of the course, but only one responded.

38. Forty-two were planning internal or external wikis, nineteen were planning to use RSS, and eighteen were planning blogs.

reported no intention to implement any new technologies. Other librarians hoped that they would be able to implement more than one.

¶45 The hands-on assignments contributed the most to the participants' enthusiasm for implementing new technologies. Thirty participants reported that they found the assignments the most helpful aspect of the course. Screencasts were the second most popular aspect, with eleven participants saying they were the most beneficial. One participant remarked, "[It was] difficult to choose just one. The introductory text was important to focus attention on the new week, forum discussions and chats brought a real classroom feel to the *Challenge*. Assignments and incentives provided the extra push to explore all aspects of the week's Web 2.0 tools."

¶46 Nearly all participants reported that their knowledge of Web 2.0 improved as a result of the *Challenge*. Thirty-one agreed with the statement that they "learned something new every week" while nineteen agreed they "learned something new most weeks." No one agreed that they had not learned anything new or that they were more unclear about Web 2.0 at the end of the *Challenge* than at the beginning. "I had some knowledge of Web 2.0 tools coming in," said one participant, "but learned a lot even about those I thought I was reasonably familiar with—this class was great!"

¶47 We also asked our participants, "What was the most important thing you learned during this *Challenge* and what important question remains unanswered?" Many said they'd learned a lot themselves, but were not sure how to get others in their organization to agree to implement new technologies. One typical response was, "My unanswered question is how to get buy in from busy lawyers. . . ."

¶48 Time was another issue for our participants. "The biggest struggle is finding time to do any of this," reported one. However, many were pleased that they had discovered ways to connect with their users. "The most important thing is that new and old technology all have the same purpose which is to create/build/empower the relationship between the library and the community."

¶49 We also requested feedback from our facilitators at the end of the course. We wanted to find out what worked for them; twelve responded.³⁹ We asked which features of the course worked best for teaching and learning. All found the chats helpful or very helpful (although the participant response was more lukewarm), and all found the screencasts helpful or very helpful. Nearly all said the hands-on assignments were helpful or very helpful. Reaction was more mixed, however, to the forum discussions, which the participants generally seemed to like.

¶50 From the facilitators' point of view, the blogs, RSS, wikis, social networking, and social bookmarking were the most successful lessons overall. However, both the participants and the facilitators were frustrated with the Second Life assignment. One facilitator remarked:

Second Life was the only significant flop as far as my group was concerned. I've been able to poke around in SL, but everyone in my group either didn't have the computer power or had access restricted through work and couldn't use it. I think the idea of virtual worlds is

39. See *infra* appendix C for a copy of the survey questions. All results are on file with the authors.

something important for law librarians to be aware of, but the barriers and learning curve to SL get in the way of people realizing their potential.

It did not surprise us, therefore, that no participants said they planned to create buildings in Second Life.

¶51 The Second Life assignment aside, the *Challenge* was well received by everyone. Forty-eight percent of the participants gave the *Challenge* a rating of 5/5, and the other 52% rated it 4/5. Seventy-five percent of the facilitators gave it a 5/5 rating; 25% gave it a 4/5. No one rated the *Challenge* less than 4. Equally telling is that many were willing to participate again. Most of the facilitators said they would be willing to return in some role. Thirty-five percent of the participants would be willing to be facilitators for future *Challenges*.

¶52 Despite the high approval rating, both participants and facilitators experienced frustrations that should be addressed in future *Challenges*. Most frustrating were technical issues with the Moodle web site. We discovered that the Moodle chat program did not work well because the server processing time available through our host was insufficient to power multiple chats. So while the chats worked well when we beta-tested the site with about twenty people, they tended to freeze up after the site went live and more than a hundred were enrolled in the course. Attempts to find other chat applications were somewhat successful, with facilitators alternating between Chatzy (www.chatzy.com) and Meebo (www.meebo.com). Both were more stable than the Moodle chats, but both presented their own problems—Chatzy's servers sometimes were unavailable, and Meebo users could not save their transcripts.

¶53 The server processing problem led to other issues as well, most notably issues with duplicate e-mails from Moodle and the site locking up several times. Because Moodle is open source, only limited help is available from the forums and the bug reporting site.⁴⁰ While Moodle could be a great platform for future *Challenges*, we recommend that it be hosted on either a private server that would allow more control over the back end, or on a specialized Moodle server such as Classroom Revolution.⁴¹ Alternatively, future *Challenges* may wish to explore Drupal with education modules if the expertise is available, consider other open-source course management systems like Sakai,⁴² or explore commercial course management systems like Blackboard.

¶54 Future *Challenges* could also be improved if more direction were given to facilitators and instructors. Some participants remarked that there “was lot of difference in quality among the screencasts.” These could be made more consistent if instructors were provided with clear guidelines about what the screencasts should contain.

40. The Moodle forums and bug reporting site were able to address some issues, such as a problem with tag clouds that occurred at the beginning of the course, but were unable to solve some of the more frustrating problems. The forums are available at <http://moodle.org/support>. The Moodle creators track bugs at <http://tracker.moodle.org>.

41. Classroom Revolution.com, LLC, <http://www.classroomrevolution.com/?moodlelead=cr.general> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

42. Sakai Project, Home, <http://sakaiproject.org/portal> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

¶155 Some participants requested more feedback from the facilitators. This could be accomplished by offering guidelines about the kinds of feedback expected. In addition, future *Challenge* coordinators may also wish to provide guidelines about conducting chats, which some participants found “unstructured.”

Do-It-Yourself Challenge

¶156 For readers who are interested in spreading the word about Web 2.0—perhaps in their libraries or local association chapters—there are many resources available. It is not necessary to start from scratch when creating a learning program like the *Web 2.0 Challenge*. Nearly three hundred programs in fifteen countries have been run based on the *23 Things* model, and many of them are viewable on public web sites.⁴³ Like *Five Weeks to a Social Library*, *23 Things* also uses a Creative Commons license, and author-librarian Helene Blowers encourages others to copy and adapt it, or simply rerun the program using the original site.

¶157 When planning a local program, obtaining approval from the “powers that be” in one’s organization is vital. Support may depend on the institution’s mission, attitude toward technology, and other ongoing projects, so framing proposals within those contexts is helpful. When approaching skeptical decision-makers, use relevant examples and reasons demonstrating why librarians should spend valuable time on what some may regard as play. We hope that this article may help provide some of that support.

¶158 As an example, at NSU, Carrie Gits, assistant director of reference at the Alvin Sherman Library (NSU’s main library), presented the idea to the University Libraries Executive Council as a staff development initiative. The council was receptive, and Gits was supportively charged with forming a task force to create a preliminary plan. Because NSU planned to stick closely to the *23 Things* model, the task force did not have to start over with the program’s structure. The proposed program, *The Learning Challenge 2.0*, was approved a month later.

¶159 NSU’s task force was composed of about a dozen staff members from all departments in the three major university libraries who had demonstrated interest in and had experience with Web 2.0 technologies. It included enough members to simply divide up the weeks, leaving each member with two or three lessons to work on. Similarly, the *Web 2.0 Challenge* used over twenty-five librarians to create the content and run the course. For a smaller group, one or two people might be sufficient to plan and facilitate a program, especially if lessons are recycled from other courses.

¶160 Because these programs generally run over several weeks—NSU’s was nine weeks—scheduling is important. The planning committees for both the NSU and CS-SIS programs struggled with this issue. Schedule it during summer, and many people will be traveling for work or pleasure. Schedule during fall, and people might be too busy with their regular job functions. There is no ideal time, and plan-

43. In addition to the sites listed in notes 7–9, *supra*, there is an exhaustive list of courses inspired by *23 Things* at hblowers’s learning2.0libraries Bookmarks, <http://delicious.com/hblowers/learning2.0libraries> (last visited Apr. 23, 2009).

ners will have to accept that not everyone who might like to participate will be able to do so. However, the course material is mostly non-cumulative, so those who are interested but pressed for time during part of the course can still be encouraged to participate as time allows.

¶61 A hallmark of both *23 Things* and *Five Weeks to a Social Library* is that the lessons feature materials that appeal to a variety of learning styles. When customizing course content, this variety should be retained. For example, the *Web 2.0 Challenge* included several different teaching methods for each lesson, from reading articles to watching screencasts to hands-on work. We also stressed to participants that many readings were optional, depending on interest, pre-existing knowledge, and time.

¶62 In both the NSU and CS-SIS programs, assignments for each Web 2.0 technology focused on basic tasks that every participant should master. In addition, the programs offered a few optional advanced tasks so that those who were already familiar with a technology had an opportunity to stretch themselves. Depending on the scope of the program and audience, program organizers might decide to focus on one or the other.

¶63 Organizers will also need to decide how to grade participants. In both the CS-SIS and NSU programs, merely attempting each task was deemed sufficient for success, so long as the outcome and reaction to the technology were reported. It was thought that less pressure would lead to a greater willingness to experiment.⁴⁴

¶64 One reason it is important to track completion of assignments is to award incentive prizes. Prizes are not essential, but they are a fun way to reward learners if there are funds in the budget for them. NSU supplemented its budget by successfully soliciting donations from other university departments. In CS-SIS, we considered approaching vendors, but ultimately decided to fund our own awards.

¶65 Even if an organization cannot afford to give out prizes, it should recognize the efforts of the program's learners. At the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, home of the original *23 Things*, the participants received a small MP3 player. At NSU, "blog bling" awards were given periodically for creativity and adventurous spirit. The bling awards were images that winners could display on the blogs they used to report their course activities. In addition to prizes, everyone who completes a program should receive acknowledgment of their achievement. If there are no funds for such a token, a certificate will do.⁴⁵

¶66 Planners may also wish to consider hosting a kick-off party, a wrap-up party, or both. Parties are easier to plan for a single library or campus than for a national or even regional association. At NSU, the parties book-ending the program were enthusiastically attended. CS-SIS considered holding a virtual party in Second Life, but ultimately decided against it due to lack of time.

¶67 Planners will need to consider distance when implementing the course. Because its program was held on a single campus, NSU coordinated activities using

44. At NSU, a librarian created a form for participants to report completion of assignments, while that function was built in to the Moodle system used by CS-SIS.

45. *Web 2.0 Challenge* participants who completed all of the requirements by the end of the course were presented with a certificate of achievement.

task force meetings with a few e-mails in between. Conversely, the CS-SIS planners held several conference calls with many e-mails in between. Distance also affected how the participants were guided through the course. Although self-directed learning is a principle of these learning programs, the organizers of both wished to provide opportunities for guidance. NSU offered open lab times when participants could seek help or work on their assignments together. The CS-SIS program used small, facilitator-led groups.

¶168 Planning a Web 2.0 learning challenge is not without pitfalls. It will require a great deal of time and work. Moreover, most Web 2.0 technologies still have glitches, as we learned with the chat software in the *Web 2.0 Challenge*. Addressing technological problems takes a lot of effort. Participants may fail to respond to some parts of the challenge, for example, by not posting on their blogs or failing to show up for lab times. And even when participants are excited by new technologies, they might find that their employers' IT policies prohibit using them at work.

¶169 However, these learning programs are also rewarding experiences. At NSU, Meg enjoyed collaborating with and getting to know colleagues from other libraries in her institution who she might not otherwise have met. In the *Web 2.0 Challenge*, we liked working with librarians across the country and learned quite a lot about new technologies ourselves. It was also gratifying to see a "we can do it!" attitude emerge in our course participants and to hear their fresh perspectives on Web 2.0 tools.

Conclusion

¶170 On Valentine's Day 2009, the popular blog TechCrunch tolled the death knell for Web 2.0:

Web 2.0 seems to become more and more a void (and an avoided) term . . . the number of startups that contact us and include the term Web 2.0 in the subject line or message is visibly dropping . . . and I hardly ever see it mentioned anymore on other technology blogs and news sites either.⁴⁶

Although this may mean the term "Web 2.0" is losing popularity, the concepts behind it are still extremely important. Perhaps Web 2.0 is simply being absorbed into the way we think about the web and its capabilities. The technologies traditionally encompassed by "Web 2.0"—blogs, wikis, virtual worlds, social networks, social bookmarking, and others—are increasingly useful to law libraries. These web applications allow us to reach our library users where they are, in ways they have already come to expect from the rest of the web.

¶171 If we are to remain relevant, we need to continue to explore new technologies, determine their possibilities, and teach them to others. We will need to document our successes and analyze our failures. The terminology may change, but the purpose will remain—what is the technology, how does it work, and how can we use it to help ourselves and our libraries' users?

46. Robin Wauters, *The Death of "Web 2.0,"* <http://www.techcrunch.com/2009/02/14/the-death-of-web-20> (Feb. 14, 2009).

Appendix A

Web 2.0 Challenge Participants Survey

Welcome to the *Web 2.0 Challenge*. Please take this brief survey about your current experience with Web 2.0.

All questions, including demographic questions, are completely optional. We may contact you with follow-up questions if you provide us an e-mail address.

This survey is for participants only. Guests will be asked to complete a separate survey.

Please complete this survey by the end of the first week of the *Challenge* (July 27).

1. Optional demographic information. We may use this data to contact you with follow-up questions. Your personal data will not be shared with others.

Name:

Company:

City/Town:

State:

Country:

E-mail Address:

2. Which Web 2.0 services/applications do you use now?
 - Read professional weblogs
 - Write professional weblog(s)
 - Read personal weblogs
 - Write personal weblog(s)
 - RSS/other feed reader
 - Use wikis for research
 - Edit a wiki for public use
 - Edit a wiki for internal library or organizational use
 - Social network like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Ning
 - Avatar in Second Life
 - Post photos in Flickr or similar site
 - Other (please specify)
3. How does your library or organization currently use Web 2.0?
 - We don't
 - Library blog(s)
 - Public library wiki(s)
 - Internal library wiki(s)
 - Page or group in a social network
 - Building in Second Life
 - Share photos in Flickr or similar site

- Share videos in YouTube or similar site
 - Share bookmarks in Del.icio.us, Diigo, or similar site
 - IM widget like Plugoo or Meebo
 - Browser toolbar like Libx
 - Other (please specify)
4. Are you planning on implementing any Web 2.0 technologies after finishing the *Web 2.0 Challenge*?
- Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
5. If “Yes” or “Undecided,” what technologies are you considering?
6. Rate your knowledge of Web 2.0:
- Novice (never used it)
 - Some experience (use a couple of Web 2.0 services)
 - Average experience (some experience with blogs and wikis, possibly others)
 - Highly experienced (active accounts on more than ten Web 2.0 services)
 - Expert (active accounts on more than ten, created your own services and widgets)

Your comments:

7. What is your attitude toward Web 2.0?
- Enthusiastic (Web 2.0 will offer us new and powerful ways to reach our users.)
 - Interested (Many, but not all, of these applications could be useful for our library.)
 - Aware (A few applications may be helpful.)
 - Uncertain (These applications don't seem like they would be useful to our library.)
 - Unconvinced (It would be a waste of time and resources for our library to use these applications.)

Your comments:

8. What Web 2.0 application/service are you most excited about?
9. What Web 2.0 application/service are you most skeptical about?

Appendix B

Web 2.0 Challenge Participants Exit Survey

Thank you for taking the 2008 *Web 2.0 Challenge*. Please take this brief survey about your experience.

All questions, including demographic questions, are completely optional. We may contact you with follow-up questions if you provide us an e-mail address.

This survey is for participants only. Guests will be asked to complete a separate survey.

Please complete this survey by September 6.

1. Optional demographic information. We may use this data to contact you with follow-up questions. Your personal data will not be shared with others.

Name:

Company

E-mail Address:

City/Town:

State:

Country:

How long have you been a librarian?

Type of organization (Academic Law Library, Private Law Library, Government Law Library, or Other):

2. Did your knowledge of Web 2.0 improve as a result of the *Challenge*?
 - Yes, a great deal. I learned something new every week.
 - Yes. I learned something new most weeks.
 - Yes, but only a bit. I learned something new in the course.
 - I didn't learn anything new.
 - I am more unclear about Web 2.0 than when I began.

Your comments:

3. Which parts of the *Challenge* did you find most helpful for learning Web 2.0?
 - Introductory text
 - Screencasts
 - Forum discussions
 - Facilitators chats (when they worked!)
 - Hands-on assignments
 - Weekly incentives

Your comments:

4. As a result of the *Challenge*, which Web 2.0 applications or services have you implemented—or will you soon implement—in your library or organization?
- Library blog(s)
 - RSS Feeds
 - Public library wiki(s)
 - Internal library wiki(s)
 - Page or group in a social network
 - Building in Second Life
 - Share photos in Flickr or similar site
 - Share photos in YouTube or similar site
 - Share photos in bookmarks in Del.icio.us, Diigo, or similar site
 - We aren't implementing any new technologies
 - Other (please specify)
5. What was the most important thing you learned during this *Challenge* and what important question remains unanswered?
6. How much time did you spend on the *Challenge* per week?
- 5 hours or more
 - 3–4 hours
 - 1–2 hours
 - Less than 1 hour

Was the time commitment what you expected?

7. What changes and new technologies would you like to see in future challenges (other than “working chat” and “fewer duplicate e-mails”)?
8. Would you be willing to be a facilitator in the 2009 *Web 2.0 Challenge*?
- Yes
 - No
 - Uncertain, but please ask me later

Comments:

9. How would you rate the *Web 2.0 Challenge*?
- 5 – It was excellent! The course was perfect.
 - 4 – I liked most of it, but not everything.
 - 3 – It was OK, but needed some improvements.
 - 2 – It could have been a lot better.
 - 1 – I didn't like it at all. It was a waste of time.

Comments about the *Challenge*:

Appendix C

Web 2.0 Challenge Facilitators Survey

Thank you very much for being a facilitator for the 2008 *Web 2.0 Challenge*. We thought you might like to provide some feedback through this brief survey.

All questions, including demographic questions, are completely optional. We may contact you with follow-up questions if you provide us an e-mail address.

Please complete this survey by October 17.

1. Optional demographic information. We may use this data to contact you with follow-up questions. Your personal data will not be shared with others.

Name:

Company

E-mail Address:

City/Town:

State:

Country:

How long have you been a librarian?

Type of organization (Academic Library, Private Law Library, Government Law Library, or Other):

2. Before the course started, how familiar were you with the topics taught in the *Challenge*?

	Not very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
Blogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wikis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flickr	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Bookmarking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing Web 2.0 in a library setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your comments:

3. Please rate those resources you found most helpful for teaching.

	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Very helpful
Forum discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chats (when they worked!)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hands-on assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screencasts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your comments:

4. How would you describe each lesson? Click the box if you agree the lesson met the criterion.

	Introduction explained basic concepts	Screencasts clarified how to use the technology	Links & examples showed practical uses from a variety of library and other sources	Assignment(s) provided hands-on experience
Blogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wikis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flickr	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Bookmarking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Next Steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments about the lessons:

5. How much time did you spend facilitating the *Challenge* per week?

- 5 hours or more
 3–4 hours
 1–2 hours
 Less than 1 hour

Was the time commitment what you expected?

6. Did you find your students to be engaged?

- Yes—all of them almost always participated in the chats, commented on forums, updated their blogs, and completed assignments.
 Mostly—they generally attended chats, sometimes commented on forums, usually updated their blogs, and completed most assignments.

- Inconsistent—some of the students were engaged, but some were not.
- Not at all—most of my students rarely participated in any part of the *Challenge*.

Your comments:

7. What changes and new technologies would you like to see in future Challenges (other than “working chat” and “fewer duplicate emails”)?
8. Would you be willing to be a facilitator in the 2009 *Web 2.0 Challenge*?
 - Yes, as a facilitator again.
 - Yes, as an instructor.
 - Yes, as a coordinator/administrator.
 - Yes, in whatever capacity I’m needed.
 - No, I’m not interested in participating again.
 - Uncertain, but ask me later.

Your comments:

9. How would you rate the *Web 2.0 Challenge*?
 - 5 – It was excellent! I really enjoyed teaching it.
 - 4 – I liked teaching most of it, but not always.
 - 3 – It was OK, but needed some improvements.
 - 2 – It could have gone a lot better.
 - 1 – I didn’t like it at all. It was a waste of time.

What did you find most rewarding and what did you find most frustrating?