

Business Research Tips is a monthly email with practical ideas for managing business information and research.

Web 2.0 in two minutes

This month's tip summarises an article written for the Australian Marketing Institute. (Marketing Update, April 2008, <http://www.ami.org.au/followon.aspx?PageID=6234>)

Web 2.0 is the umbrella term used to describe some new collaborative web tools that are proving to be extremely popular. It's the web that fits perfectly with our desire to share our creative output in words, pictures, video or sounds to a connected world.

Social networking

On the surface, all social networking sites connect people to a wider network of contacts that are on a similar wavelength. Sign up and start building your global online connections with a world that want to share videos (youtube), photos (flickr), music (myspace), business achievements (linkedin) or online life story through words, videos and photos (facebook).

The success of social networking sites is that they complement the physical world, where we search for information on things that interest us and then talk about what we have seen and heard with our friends and colleagues.

Wikis

Wikis are collaborative websites. The most famous is Wikipedia, a collaborative encyclopaedia that has grown to more than nine million articles contributed by more than 75,000 people all over the world. You don't need to establish your credentials to write on a topic, so anyone can register and add or edit an article. It should be chaos, and sometimes it is.

Within organisations, wikis are likely to be popular in the second phase of intranets, because they are easier for large groups to update and maintain and require less third-party maintenance.

Blogs and forums

Blogs and forums are discussion platforms. Forums are commonly used by online communities for members to post their opinion that will invite comments from other registered users. Blogs are more often the comments of an individual that are posted to the web and that encourage comments from readers.

We are only beginning to scratch the surface of web 2.0. Media companies have been leaders in adopting the potential of web 2.0. For many other industries, web 2.0 offers opportunities for companies to connect with, research and market to their target audiences.

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