

# Webb's web

## Web 2.0 for the rest of us

You will have heard of McKinsey and Company; they've been around a long time and have a reputation of providing high-level consulting to big organisations. But if your budget doesn't put you in that league they have published some of their work on the web. There's a useful report for instance at <http://tinyurl.com/b56p4p> that shows you how you can make web 2.0 work, and they have a handy summary of the Twitter responses that they received in response to the publication.

## Getting started with a blog

Not everyone gets to have a blogging platform handed to them, so if you're just thinking about starting a blog you might be wondering "what's the best way to go about it?" Happily the good people at Elance have done some of the hard work and they've published a comparison of some of the best products, both in-house or in the cloud. See it at <http://tinyurl.com/cx68my>

## But what will we wrap our fish in?

You will have seen from recent columns that I'm paying a bit of attention to newspapers and their place in the internet these days. I'm doing this because I think the newspaper industry is going to be shaken up in a big way because of the net. Papers in their hard copy form haven't changed very much over the past ten years – apart from now accepting letters and comments by e-mail – but big things are going to become obvious pretty soon. Several major publishers around the world are in serious financial trouble and they just don't know what to do. Meanwhile, online publishers are nimbly experimenting with all sorts of ideas. One

that I heard of recently is Everyblock (<http://www.everyblock.com/>) which harvests information from government sites, blogs, and other information sources and packages it for individual locales. So far, it's only working for around ten of America's biggest cities, but if it takes off we can expect to see it (or something like it) all over the place.

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## Are there any anti-social media?

Along with a lot of commentators I've been paying a lot of attention to the Twitter phenomenon – or should I say the meta-phenomenon. It's around three years since the service was launched but it's taken a couple of bad news items (the Telstra and Fake Stephen Conroy affair, for one) to make the organisational policymakers sit up and wonder what they should do about it. Maybe it's a testament to the continuing importance of old media that people won't pay attention to new things that arise until they're reported on breakfast TV shows. Back to the organisational response: a good place to start would be the draft set of guidelines developed by the Commonwealth Government's Public Service Commission (<http://www.apsc.gov.au/circulars/circular088.htm>). A bit of cutting and pasting to change the references to make them point to your own department or institution, and you'll have a useful set of rules for your staff. Of course, the requests for "a Twitter policy" or something like that might miss the mark badly. In a year or so, Twitter may be quite passé. It's better to generalise your policy as much as you can, so that it covers Facebook and other current and future services.

## Always on the go

Here's another thing to worry about: making sites usable on mobile phones. You can check with the MobileOK tool (<http://waxler.w3.org/mobileok/index.html>) to see how mobile-ready your site is, and you'll probably be told that there's too much text. But if you then reduce the size of the pages, the result will be a site that's less convenient for your non-mobile users. It's probably best to make sure that you continue to use some sort of Web analytics product or service to keep track of when there are sufficient mobile users to warrant the extra work.

## First catch your hare ...

I've observed before that it's the comments you find on blog posts that often provide the most useful information. Liana Evans' article at Search Engine Watch (<http://searchenginewatch.com/3633285>) certainly has an eye-catching title, where it implies that most corporate social media efforts will fail. Well, they may if they're not planned correctly – which is a good idea for any sort of project after all. But her suggestions are well made. Down in the comments though, you'll find one from a 'consultant' having built MySpace and Facebook pages for a company, with no idea of how to promote them to the community. Maybe a good way to ensure that your social media efforts will succeed is to get a consultant who at least knows how to do their job.

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## Mashups

I happened to be driving to work late a few weeks ago and so was listening to ABC Radio National's "Future Tense". The first segment was about the Obama administration's announcement of their new CTO, and as an example of the way that US Government agencies are working to innovate, their guest Micah Sifry mentioned a brand new service called My Environment (see it at <http://www.epa.gov>). And all the time I was thinking "I can't wait to get to work to tweet about this". <http://www.twitter.com/kwebb>

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