

Chapter 12

The Web 2.0 Mandate for a Transition from Webmaster to Wiki Master

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the how the advent of Web 2.0 has influenced the role of webmaster and given rise to the wiki master. In section 1, the author provides an overview of the role of webmaster and how a Web 2.0 mindset began to exert an influence on the duties of this individual. The section concludes with the rise of collaborative Web technologies, specifically Wikis. Section 2 describes the evolution of the wiki master and provides a distinction from its predecessor. The specific roles of a wiki master are described in detail here. Section 3 provides a case study-type overview of the wiki master at ELATEwiki.org. Section 4 provides more detail by looking a typical day in the life of the wiki master at ELATEwiki. Conclusive remarks are provided in the final section of this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

When the Internet first emerged as a world-wide communication network, no one envisioned the social media revolution that would follow. Among the first steps along this path were the development and acceptance of technologies and protocols that permitted the creation of the World Wide Web

(Berners-Lee, 1992). The idea of websites quickly captured the general public's enthusiastic attention and all forms of information began to appear in easy-to-access online formats. Web sites were informational in this environment and comprised a collection of linked pages usually containing text and images. Later, videos and digital assets such as flash animation were added to the mix. These

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websites were hosted on one or more web servers which were sometimes tied to database systems or application servers, and were accessible through Internet addresses known as Uniform Resource Locators (URLs). The collective whole of public websites became known as the World Wide Web.

From a technical perspective, web pages are documents constructed according to governing specifications known as Hypertext Markup Language (W3C, 2009) that permit a wide variety of software developers to create systems that work according to the same rules. This means web pages created anywhere by anyone, as long as they conform to the standards, will work on all compliant browsers and computer systems. Web pages are distributed and accessed using the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which means a web browser acts as a *client*, requesting a page a user wishes to view. The pages are stored on a networked computer running a program that responds to client requests. So, the computer hosting a website functions as a *server*. Technically speaking, the client submits an HTTP *request* and the server responds by searching through stored content and returns a response message which generally contains the requested content. The transmission of requested web pages can use encryption (HTTPS) to provide higher levels of security and privacy. Once the transmitted material is received by the client application, usually a web browser, that will interpret the HTML markup language instructions and render the page into a human visible form that appears on the display terminal. The arriving material may also take the form of other digital artifacts that result in animation, video, or audio outputs.

It stands to reason that the process of creating, maintaining, updating, protecting, and monitoring web pages takes skill and acquired expertise. In fact, many IT professionals specialize in these areas and often use titles such as web analyst, web developer, web administrator, or webmaster to represent their roles. Of these, the concept of webmaster is most relevant to this article.

Webmaster Concepts

Generally, a webmaster is the person responsible for the oversight of one or more websites. A webmaster may have responsibility for the web server hardware and software, site organization, storage hardware and software, security, controls, navigation design, spam filters, day-to-day operations, site design and redesign, web page creation and updates, maintenance of a public presence, visitor comment response, site reputation, advertising placement, user rights, and traffic analysis. For some websites, webmasters must also be experts in secure payment processing and the prevention of system intruders and attacks. Webmasters must have a wide range of knowledge and need the ability to recognize when specialists are needed for particular task accomplishments (TechTarget, 2008).

In smaller organizations or for specific websites, the webmaster may have responsibility for technical implementation. In larger organizations with greater levels of resources, the webmaster may be viewed more as a manager. In these scenarios, the webmaster may use online media and other software systems to oversee operations such as product marketing, sales, order entry and fulfillment, and publicity.

Advent of Web 2.0

As Internet-based software and hardware systems become more sophisticated, powerful, and faster, more applications became viable. A variety of new web sites began to use this platform for real time communication, collaborative content development, and social interaction. The ability to connect to the Internet moved from the work place to the private sector and this promoted the integration of technology into everyday lives. The term, *Web 2.0*, is used to describe using Internet technologies in a different way. Web 2.0 doesn't refer to a technical update of underlying software and hardware but rather to changes in the way

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