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Understanding the value of technology in a “web 2.0 world”

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Overview

- Introduction (What's so different about new technologies?)
- How is the web, and web 2.0, changing everything?
- Opportunities for using new technologies by law firms
- Risks arising from new technologies for law firms
- Discussion

Introduction

The focus of information technology today is not just on developing better ways of **recording** and **storing** data, so that customers and clients can be billed.

Technology is now focused on creating better ways to **communicate** by exchanging information and on providing users with an **experience** that makes their lives more rich and rewarding.

How is “web 2.0” different?

We'll look at some features:

- Hyper-connected
- Free
- Open
- Creative
- Crowd Sourcing
- Analytics
- Cloud Hosted Mega-Platforms

Hyper-connected

- Internet everywhere - wireless connectivity
- Mobile Phones
- Blackberries
- iPhones
- iPads

Free

- Low Cost or No Cost services
 - Google
 - Austlii
 - Wikipedia
- Freely downloadable
 - Linux operating system
 - Web Applications - CiviCRM, SugarCRM, Asterisk, Drupal
 - Office Applications - OpenOffice, GIMP etc

Open

Types of Open:

- Just “open”
 - Facebook, Eventbrite, Twitter, FourSquare
- Open Source
 - Linux, CiviCRM, Asterisk, Drupal
- Open Innovation
 - Open Australia, Two Bob’s Worth
- Open Collaboration
 - Wikipedia, Google Docs, Google Wave

Creative

How is “web 2.0” enhancing creativity?

- User-centered design
- Different licensing models for different purposes, known as Creative Commons licenses
- Encouraging people to contribute through the open systems and therefore be creative about how to do things better
- The technology is shaking up the old ways of doing things

Crowd Sourcing

- Wikipedia - everyone can contribute
- Two Bob's Worth
- Influence replaces authority/control
- Referral an important part of reputation
- Need to clearly define the issue so that "crowd" can help provide a solution
 - marketing (Twitter)
 - man-power (Two Bob's Worth)
 - funding (Fund Break)

Analytics

- Google analytics provides quick access to reports that help you understand what is driving people to your website
- Jira, an issue tracking system used by developers, provides quick reports on issue status
- Reputation built upon online recommendations and involvement in relevant “communities”

Cloud Hosted Platforms

Prime example: Google (Search, Mail, Docs...)

- Expectation that Free, Open, Collaborative tools and data available everywhere, whenever we want it.
- Professional level tools available for nothing or next to nothing
- Data and tools moving out of the direct control of the organisation, to professional application hosts
- Federation models (were) developing to help address concerns over data control
- LawSuite

Opportunities for lawyers

- Higher visibility with clients - more likely to remember you
- Generate revenue through contributing precedents to legal “crowd sourcing” platforms like Smokeball
- Access to lower cost information and tools to do our work
- Ability to engage more publicly in areas of expertise
- Use/develop systems to improve the quality of legal product and the efficiency of research/transactions through online data exchange
- Engage in different work models - portfolio careers

Risks for lawyers/firms

- Letting the technology / medium drive you
- Clients may be allowed to become more demanding
- Online reputation management will become increasingly challenging
- Authentication
- Difficult to keep skills up to date to make use of new technology
- Challenge to traditional areas of legal practice through smart systems and free online information
- Loss of control over data - becoming captive to the cloud!

Examples of “web 2.0”

Some well known examples of “web 2.0”:

- “Social networks” - Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Plaxo
- “Crowd Sourcing” - Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr, iStockphoto
- “Open” - Linux, CiviCRM, SugarCRM, Asterisk etc
- “Creative” - Flickr, Wikipedia, App Store
- Analytics - Google Analytics, Jira

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