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EDITORIAL

Folksonomies boost Web 2.0 Functionality

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Folksonomies are inventive and useful tools that can help nursing faculty, leaders, specialists, and clinicians present conceptual models of links, documents and other electronic resources. Folksonomies are inventive Web 2.0 tools - great for categorizing documents and resources in a collaborative way on your web site, course site, blog, or community of practice web space!

What is Web 2.0?

Essentially, Web 2.0 is a concept that shapes the online landscape into a platform for social connection, sharing, dialogue, and multimedia enhanced interaction. The goal? To promote social networking and creativity. It isn't really a "new" world wide web. Rather, it is a new perspective of how to use the Web to really capitalize on its' ever-evolving capabilities. With the advent and usability of social software applications like blogs, wikis, folksonomies, video-sharing, community software, and mobile access, the structure and tools for Web 2.0 evolution were born.



One of the people credited with the launching of the term, [Tim O'Reilly](#) described the history of Web 2.0 in this way:

"The concept of "Web 2.0" began with a conference brainstorming session between O'Reilly and MediaLive International. Dale Dougherty, web pioneer and O'Reilly VP, noted that far from having "crashed", the web was more important than ever, with exciting new applications and sites popping up with surprising regularity. What's more, the companies that had survived the collapse seemed to have some things in common. Could it be that the dot-com collapse marked some kind of turning point for the web, such that a call to action such as "Web 2.0" might make sense? We agreed that it did, and so the Web 2.0 Conference was born." [\(O'Reilly, 2005, pgh.2\).](#)





Key Principles of Web 2.0

Tim O'Reilly listed important principles that distinguish Web 1.0 (the "old" web) and Web 2.0:

- **The Web as a Platform** - web sites can be used to offer social networking, information sharing, and creative activities to ALL internet users
- **Harnessing Collective Intelligence** - many applications have been created to help web owners to share the knowledge wealth, so to speak. Hyperlinking, directories, wikis, photo and video sharing, folksonomies, blogs, open source software, all contribute to this attribute
- **Databases are Critical** - database information and applications are key to the smooth operation of Web 2.0 and are "built-in" with many of the social networking softwares available
- **End of the Software Release Cycle** - updates should be seamless, users can be co-creators
- **Lightweight Programming Models** - simple programming models are the key
- **Software above the Level of a Single Device** - this means software can be accessed via a PC, plus other media such as ipods, cellphones, Blackberries, MACs
- **Rich User Experiences** - use of new techniques can enhance the users' experience with visuals, sound, access control





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Since the launch of the most common Web 2.0 applications, virtually all disciplines have begun to explore its capabilities within their own arenas. Healthcare, education, finance, science, fine arts, politics are examples of disciplines engaged in this exploration - not to mention, everyday web surfers who use them in their own personal communications and interactions. Folksonomies offer a easy to create, and highly visual tool that can boost Web 2.0 interactivensess of a web site, blog, or community portal.

How do they Work?

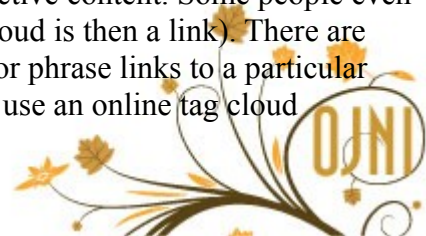
There are several different ways that folksonomies can serve web users, designers, and groups. One common way is to organize a tag cloud of all the major links to a site or resource - similar to a sitemap. Another way is to set up the folksonomy to reflect documents and files shared by site visitors or members, linking to the particular documents indicated by the word or phrase in the emerging tag cloud. Another use that is becoming quite popular is to reflect the contents of a cluster of text, or even a set of data. This has all kinds of promise for feedback, educational activities, and even qualitative research analysis.

FOLKSONOMIES RESULT FROM SOCIAL TAGGING OF DIVERSE CONTENT SUCH AS DOCUMENTS, IMAGES, BLOG ENTRIES, LINKS, AND KEYWORDS.

Just as the uses for a folksonomy vary, so do the way they appear. Some folksonomy tag clouds are very plain - they are barely discernable to regular texts except for a variance in text size or colour. Others are quite attractive looking, especially if organized with a graphic background for aesthetic quality. The way folksonomies are processed into tag clouds also varies - users can use tag cloud software or online tag cloud generators. Or, advanced users can hand code their tag cloud in php or java code to create a customized folksonomy tag cloud.

Folksonomies as Doorways

Tag Clouds are not only a great byproduct of folksonomy classification. They can also serve as a 'gateway' or 'doorway' into a section of your web site or other collective content. Some people even use them as a sitemap alternative (each word or phrase in the tag cloud is then a link). There are various ways to make these doorway tag clouds, where each word or phrase links to a particular page in your site. Probably, the easiest way to accomplish this is to use an online tag cloud generator that allows links to be included.





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Tag Cloud Generator at <http://www.tagcloud-generator.com/>, created by the German designers at Cesaria Design Projects is one of the easiest of these to use. The generator will spider the main web site page you indicate (great for using with your sitemap) or you can manually type in the words/phrases and urls that you want to see in your cloud. You can also customize the colors, fonts, size, and alignment of your cloud's words. Here's an example of a simple cloud created in this generator for the OJNI main site page.

[Archive](#) [Vendor Submissions](#) [Careers Wanted](#) [Submissions](#) [Online Journal of Nursing Informatics](#) [Journal Archive](#) [Contact](#) [Purpose of Journal](#) [Link to Us!](#) [Support](#) [Team](#) [Contact](#)
[Current Issue](#) [Donate to OJNI](#) [Silver Level Award](#) [PQ Health & Medical Complete](#) [Advertise with Us!](#) [Career Opportunities](#) [Overview and Details](#) [Awards Payment Area](#) [OJNI Team](#) [Platinum Level Award](#)
[Welcome to OJNI!](#) [FAQs](#) [Purpose](#) [Gold Level Award](#) [Coming Events](#) [Recommended Links](#) [Main Index](#) [Main](#) [Join Our Team!](#) [Bronze Level Award](#) [Student Submissions](#) [Our first Gold Award Recipient is the esteemed nursing informatics expert and pioneer, Dr. Virginia Saba.](#) [Awards Application Form](#) [PQ Nursing and Allied Health Source](#) [Board of Directors](#) [Become an OJNI Sponsor](#) [Layout by June Kaminski, Hygeia Design](#) [General Submissions](#)

Presented within this document, this cloud just looks like a collection of colorfully presented key words. But, the Tag Cloud Generator also adds a very useful function – each word can actually become a link to the content or document it represents, forming a sort of site map or guide to your collection of links or documents.

With a little creativity, you can organize this cloud in an aesthetic way, to match your site, blog, or course. An example is visible below – once you click on the actual cloud below, you will notice how each word clicks through to a major part of the OJNI site. To get an idea on how to customize the styles to fit the cloud background graphic, check out the source code (select View Source in your web browser menu) for the cloud below. This is a working example of the static tag cloud above with working links, available at: http://ojni.org/ojni_sitemap_cloud.html





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Folksonomies as Social Organizers

Folksonomies are different than the classic taxonomy used to organize hierarchies of information. A folksonomy is set up to be user-governed, organized by the tags assigned to content by the user. It is these tags that shape the words and phrases evident in a tag cloud. The capabilities of folksonomies really stand the test, when applied to social media types of data. A classic example, is Flickr's method of organizing images uploaded and tagged by users from around the world. Sites like [Flickr](#) allow tag clouds to be used to indicate top tags for searches and collaboration. A common method used by web site owners and bloggers, is to install a cloud tag widget right onto their site to present a visual organization of blog entries or site documents. For some excellent examples, check out Smashing Magazine's article, [Tag Clouds Gallery: Examples And Good Practices](#).

Folksonomies as Analyzers

Finally, another excellent way that folksonomies can serve web designers, site owners, teachers, administration, researchers and practitioners, is to organize key words, phrases, and themes in a text document or a set of data. As mentioned previously, this could be a very promising practice in the analysis of qualitative research data, in helping the researcher to see the main themes in their data.

An example of using tag clouds to highlight text documents, is the tag cloud formed by words in President Obama's recent inauguration speech, available on Flickr.

Click image for larger view





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Another example is a tag cloud generated to highlight and showcase main themes via an rss feed on a site, such as a blog. An example is this tag cloud created from my own PhD research blog.

Click image for larger view



This latter tag cloud was created using the online tag cloud generator at [Wordle Tag Cloud Generator](#). This generator will let you make a cloud text from any text you choose to copy and paste right into the form field on the site, or from an rss feed on a blog or other site.

I mounted mine in a cloud styled graphic. If you would like a cloud graphic to use for your tag cloud, you can download the zip file below with several renditions of a cloud background in a few different sizes.

Cloud Graphic Backgrounds for your Tag Clouds

Click image to download my free 27 Cloud Background Graphics (1.66 MB zipped)





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