The Next Generation: Social Networking and Online Collaboration in Foreign Language Learning

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Goals of the volume

- Introduce readers to new tools that they may not be familiar with
  - Or present those tools to them in a new light
- Showcase the latest techniques for incorporating Web 2.0 tools in the service of language learning and teaching
  - Offer insight into the results of such incorporation
- Explore options for carrying out SLA research within this “2.0” generation of web tools
“Web 2.0”

- Emphasis on:
  - social interaction
  - online collaboration
  - networking
  - sharing among users

- As defined by [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org):
  - “A term describing changing trends in the use of WWW technology and web design that aims to enhance creativity, secure information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the web”
O’Reilly (2005) Web 2.0 meme map

Web 2.0 challenges

1. Difficult to define:
   - “cunning moniker” (Davis, 2005, ¶2) – little agreement of what Web 2.0 means
   - Attitude or technology?
   - Web 3.0?

2. Phases of research
   - Levy (2007): “generally speaking, the researcher’s approach and goals tend to differ according to whether the technology is more established or emerging” (p. 183)
   - New technology often begins with pilot studies or investigations of attitudes and perceptions (e.g., surveys) before empirical linguistic research
Volume contents
Featured tools and projects:

- Podcasting
- Social networking
- Micro-blogging/Twitter
- RSS feeds
- Wikis
- Chatbots
- Second Life
- Multiuser Virtual Environments
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Chapter 2: Podcasting

- **Author:** Rosell-Aguilar
  - Reviews approaches to podcasting, taxonomy of podcasts.
  - Examines research for contributions to SLA and CALL.

- **Benefits:** target language listening, authentic listening, motivation, learning styles, self-paced learning

- **Tools:** i.e., [http://www.iTunes.com](http://www.iTunes.com); [http://www.gabcast.com](http://www.gabcast.com); etc.
Chapter 3: Social Networking

- **Author:** McBride
  - Discusses the pros and cons of social networking sites for foreign language courses and activity ideas.
  - Suggests possible ideas and tasks.

- **Benefits:** Create communities of users, connect students and teachers outside of class, increased L2 input in contextual situations
  - **Tool:** i.e., [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com), [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com); etc.
Chapter 4: Micro-blogging

**Author**: Antenos-Conforti
- Intermediate Italian students.
- “Tweeted” three times a week with classmates, professor and native speakers of Italian for 14 weeks.

**Benefits**: Quick, unintimidating; interaction with native speakers; versatile platform

**Tool**: [http://twitter.com](http://twitter.com)
Chapter 5: RSS and feed aggregators

- **Author:** Román-Mendoza
  - Students choose 4 or 5 feeds to follow throughout the course.
  - Teachers follow students’ blog posts and feeds subscriptions in their teachers’ pagecasts, which allows them to submit individualized and immediate feedback when necessary.
  - Students create and join communities of practice according to their goals for the course.

- **Benefits:** subscribe to blogs, podcasts; personalize pages; personalize content
- **Tool:** [http://www.pageflakes.com/](http://www.pageflakes.com/)
Chapter 6: Wikis

- **Authors:** Arnold, Ducate & Kost
  - Intermediate German classes, small groups of students.
  - Used wikis to collaborate on a project based on cultural and historical topics related to the novel *Am kürzeren Ende der Sonnenallee*.

- **Benefits:** supports knowledge creation; collaboration; peer editing
- **Tool:** [http://www.wikispaces.com/](http://www.wikispaces.com/)
Chapter 7: Chatbots

- **Authors:** Williams & vanCompernolle
  - Students of all levels.
  - Interact on open topic with French chatbot.
  - Investigate learner and chatbot language characteristics.

- **Benefits:** relaxed atmosphere, built in repetition, free, convenient

- **Tools:** [http://www.aghate.org/default.asp](http://www.aghate.org/default.asp);
  [http://aidreams.co.uk/chatterbotcollection/category_contents.php?id_cat=60](http://aidreams.co.uk/chatterbotcollection/category_contents.php?id_cat=60)
Chapter 8: Virtual Reality

**Authors:** Kuriscak & Luke
- Students visited virtual university campuses.
- Discussed strengths/weaknesses of each campus.
- Planned own virtual campus.

**Benefits:** Authentic interaction with target language speakers; visual representations and nonverbal cues; dynamic platform for interaction

**Tool:** [http://secondlife.com](http://secondlife.com)
Chapter 9: Virtual Reality – MUVEs

- **Author**: Sykes
  - *Croquelandia* designed for upper-level Spanish students.
  - Practice requests and apologies.

- **Benefits**: Realistic opportunities for education, training, simulations; increased student interest; illustrate and practice L2 pragmatic complexities; participant experimentation

- **Tool**: [http://croquet.umn.edu/](http://croquet.umn.edu/)
Volume "extras"
&
Discussion
Volume also includes....

- Discussion questions
  - Each chapter concludes with questions for further consideration, discussion and investigation
- Annotated bibliography
  - Final chapter (Chapter 10) contains references mentioned in and relating to the chapters to aid in future research
- Glossary of important terms
  - Defines key words and other relevant terms used in the chapters
Future directions and discussion – 1

- How do you use Web 2.0 tools in your language classroom?
- What are the best ways to incorporate Web 2.0 applications in language classes?
- What linguistic benefits do Web 2.0 tools offer language learners, and how?
- What are the theoretical underpinnings of Web 2.0 tools in SLA?
- What areas of language learning are most suited to teaching through Web 2.0 technology, and which areas may not benefit as much?
Future directions and discussion – 2

- What challenges do educators face in using Web 2.0 tools?
- What role does the teacher play in integrating Web 2.0 technologies into the classroom?
- How can we best train teachers to incorporate Web 2.0 technologies in their teaching?
- How can we best train students to effectively use Web 2.0 technologies?
- What revisions are needed in terms of assessment techniques in order to accommodate Web 2.0 tools and applications?
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