

**SEM Gorilla**  
**Guide to Web 2.0**

**BONUS:**

**SEM Gorilla**  
***UNCOVERS the***  
***Best Link Baiting***  
***Techniques***

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# **What exactly is Web 2.0?**

Web 2.0. You've heard the hype, and you've probably heard the phrase tossed around by professionals in the business. You might even have some idea of how Web 2.0 works. As a marketer, any evolution in the Internet and its workings is something you need to keep up with. In this chapter, I'll try to explain what Web 2.0 is and how it can help you with your business.

In order to consider Web 2.0, we must first revisit the beginnings of the Internet. Web 1.0, the original World Wide Web, was considered a source of information. Web 2.0 by contrast is considered a networking platform. Whereas people used the Internet at first for data storage or data searches, it is now a medium whereby data is the driving force, but it is used to modify, restructure, and share common data.

In other words, Web 2.0 isn't really a kind of site. It's the ability of the users to modify the site they're on.

Often readers participate in Web 2.0, contributing their own content or adding to what's already there. Web 2.0 is often referred to as having an open source development, meaning that the information you see on a site may be compiled from a number of sources and by numerous different developers.

As an example, think about YouTube. The site, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), is nothing more than a video uploading site. Yet less than two years after its creation, YouTube was purchased by Google—for \$1.64 billion. This is only one example of how the concept of Web 2.0 is proving to be profitable.

Another good example of Web 2.0 in action is Myspace, located at [www.Myspace.com](http://www.Myspace.com). It's a community, where users create a profile page about themselves and invite friends to join and communicate with them. MySpace registration, like many other Web 2.0 applications, is free. The site offers templates for easier page creation, or you can create your own.

There are plenty of other interactive sites where people post pictures, videos, and more. These are easy to find via an Internet search; you've probably already been on plenty without even realizing it. Any time you see users actively participating in the content of a site, you are looking at a Web 2.0 site. Let's take a look at some examples in the next section.

# Why Web 2.0 Works

Web 2.0 is very easy for visitors to understand. They can learn the applications easily (and often it's not even considered "learning"). They readily see what you are looking for, and it requires nothing more than an Internet connection on their end in order to work.

Consider some of these Web 2.0 models:

## **EBay**

Started as a sole proprietorship in 1995, EBay has grown into a gigantic online auction house. The company itself doesn't sell anything; instead, users join (the membership is free) and list items for sale for very small fees. EBay's money is made from the nickel-and-dime insertion and listing fees; they also charge a commission at the end of the sale.

This site would have been useless without people to offer products and other people to bid on them. Instead, it's one of the biggest sites on the Internet. Users are "rated" by those who do business with them. If a person tends to list items for sale and not deliver, or if he's slow in shipping, buyers can readily find this out before placing a bid.

Some EBay users write online guides, which you can read in order to perform research on a particular kind of item. For example, let's say you like buying porcelain dolls. A quick EBay search reveals that there are 81 related "guides" to dolls. You can learn what constitutes a "collectible" doll or an "antique" doll. You can find out how to care for the dolls, and the difference between bisque and porcelain. There are tons of other guides, covering every topic from how to do your taxes to comparisons of plastic and wooden accordions.

EBay also offers user reviews of products like cameras, computer monitors, and video games. The review scores are averaged to give the total rating for the product; the reviews themselves can also be rated as helpful or not helpful.

All of these factors serve to help EBay retain its customer base. Users are apt to turn to the guides and user reviews first as their research source, so they're more likely (since they're already on the website) to bid on EBay listings than to go to other sources.

Another Web 2.0 example is **craigslist**.

It's an online classified advertising site; membership isn't even required in order to post an ad, although it's easier to control your ads or the ones you're interested in if you do have an account. You can find almost anything there—jobs, services, romance, and goods. Officially, it covers 450 cities; don't

discount it if your city isn't listed, though. With over 7 billion page views per month, users aren't necessarily limited to a certain geographical area.

**Craigslist** was started in 1995 and became incorporated in 1999. It is user-oriented and, rather than being run as a typical corporation, depends on users to find more ways to create income for the site. Craigslist aficionados are a loyal lot, tending the site as if it were their own—which is the whole point of the Web 2.0 concept. They tend to be active on the message boards and are quick to flag postings that are inappropriate.

**Del.icio.us**, though a newer member of the Web 2.0 community, is an application that helps bloggers increase traffic. It also has created a new method for the Internet community as a whole to create searches. The users themselves define methods to determine how searches work, which should make searching both more effective and more productive.

Web 2.0 is changing everything about the way we search the Internet. With its integration into our world, we are not passively practicing read-and-click. Instead, we post comments, modify search engines through the use of our own vocabulary, and share photographs, videos, and information with each other.



# **What Can Web 2.0 Do For My Business?**

Because Web 2.0 invites participation, you can utilize it to promote and market your business. Whereas in 1990 your “web site” might have consisted of nothing more than a static-looking business card, today your site can be totally interactive.

Depending on your product, you might invite customers to write reviews, modify descriptions, add comments, and much more. If you have a blog, be sure to enable comments so that your readers can share information with you (more on that in a moment).

Because of the give-and-take social nature of Web 2.0, customers tend to bookmark and revisit your pages often. The customers themselves carry out the “updates” to your site. For example, if you offer a forum, you will find that members strike up conversations with each other, often with little prompting from you. This gives you more “hits” to your site, resulting in higher rankings; it also serves as an update to your webpage.

Letting customers have free reign to comment on your products may seem scary at first, but it can give you the tools you need to improve your product line and your business. Plus the sense of

ownership those customers develop causes them to have a loyalty that you would not have seen in the 1990s.

Plus, as visitors become customers and read your blog, your emails, or your other communications, they feel as if they know you—creating even more loyalty. If you're old enough to remember walking to the corner market as a child to get an ice cream cone, then you know exactly how that feels. You wouldn't have dreamed of going to the Minute Market or 7-11 Store when Mr. Smith's grocery had exactly what you needed—and he knew you. He asked about your family, your school grades, and your dog. That's the kind of relationship that Web 2.0 can help you develop, if you do it right: a sense of camaraderie.

Web 2.0 is easy to integrate into your website and your business. It's considered a “lightweight” business model. It works sort of like a beta software—the content and interaction continually changes. Any reader is free to change it or improve it, if you set it up that way.

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