Script for Learning 2.0 for Associations Presentation

By Jeff Thomas Cobb (http://www.jeffthomascobb.com)

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This script has been adapted and edited to create an eBook which includes all of the illustrations available in the orginal presentation. The eBook is available at http://blog.missiontolearn/resources/.

Slide 1 (Cover)
Thank you for joining this presentation on incorporating social media into online learning programs. During the course of the presentation we'll consider how approaches to learning have evolved and what impact the range of new technologies dubbed "Web 2.0" is having. We'll also take a look at some of the ways in which associations are using these new technologies and what possibilities they may represent for your professional development and other learning initiatives.

This presentation assumes a high level of comfort with the Web, but it does not assume deep familiarity with social media tools. In my examples, I talk about general areas of social media and to illustrate these areas use tools that have a high likelihood of being familiar to most viewers. Viewers who already make significant use of social media technologies may find some of the content a bit basic, but my hope is that the examples and some of the general thinking about Learning 2.0 as a concept will nonetheless be helpful.

Let's start with a look at what we mean by the term "Learning 2.0."

Photo credit: jefield, Flickr, http://www.flickr.com/photos/50021255@N00/20582060/

Slide 2
No text

Slide 3
The idea of sticking a version number on the end of nearly any noun you can imagine has become very trendy lately. In the world of software, from which this practice was borrowed, it makes a reasonable amount of sense. But for a broad concept like "learning," the significance of this sort of versioning is less clear. What exactly has changed so much about how learning happens?

One of the ways to come at the question is to start with basic teaching and learning models as they existed before the introduction of modern communication technologies. The idea of an expert, tutor, or mentor conveying knowledge and experience to a student or apprentice, for instance, has been around at least as long as recorded history. The teacher, in this relationship, holds the position of dominance, and while there may be dialogue between teacher and learner the teacher is the ultimate and authoritative source in the dialogue. The Socratic method, for instance, is a time-honored approach to such dialogue. Socrates engages the learner in a series of questions, but ultimately it is Socrates who has the answer.

Slide 4
This sort of teacher-student relationship can be one-to-one or one-to-many. And as education has evolved throughout the ages, there is as often as not an institution—be it church, the state, or an accrediting body—that stands behind the teacher as the real ultimate authority. In any of these cases, however, the learner is primarily a vessel to be filled with knowledge and the teacher is the authoritative conduit of that knowledge. The model is teacher-centric, institution centric, or possibly course-centric, but it is definitely not learner-centric. Clearly, this type of learning environment is also greatly constrained by both place and time. Learning typically takes place at a specific time, within a clearly defined space, and within a relatively limited geography.

Slide 5
A great deal has happened over time, of course, to further define the role of the teacher and we have arrived a fairly iconic set of views about what a teacher or trainer should be.

Slide 6
Even so, up until relatively recently the common understanding of "learning" has been based upon the traditional, hierarchical teacher-student model.

Slide 7
And while the notion of distance learning can be found even in the wandering teachers of old, the dependency on the teacher as expert as well as constraints of geography have limited the possibilities for learning.

Slide 8
The teacher, in short, has usually had to be wherever the students are and cannot be in two places at once.

Slide 9
That has changed, of course, and the first real wave of change came with the introduction of broadcast technologies that broke geographic and, to a certain extent, temporal constraints. While it is no longer anyone's idea of high technology, the printing press represented the first swell in this wave and we have been riding the wave right up into our recent Internet past. Television and recording technologies, in particular, made it

possible for teachers, trainers, and other experts to reach dispersed groups of learners simultaneously…

Slide 10
and even to reach the individual learner in the office…

Slide 11
Or in the home.

If the old, pre-broadcast model can be thought of as Learning 1.0, this might be labeled Learning 1.5. Some of the constraints of the old model where thrown off, but the teacher-student relationship really had not changed dramatically. Learning was still teacher-centric, institution centric, or course-centric, but not really learner-centric.

This was true—and still is true—in many of the learning paradigms that exist on the Internet. Most learning scenarios are still driven by the notion of an authoritative "expert" even if no teacher figure seems to be present.

Slide 12
In the Learning 2.0 paradigm, the old teacher-centric, expert-dominated model breaks down and the remaining constraints on time and geography are loosened to the point of almost disappearing entirely. Learning dialogues and collaborations become dramatically more prevalent not just between teacher and learner, but between learner and learner.

Slide 13
One of the key characteristics of the Learning 2.0 environment is the ease and speed with which these connections can be formed.

Slide 14
And as they form, one of the effects is that the teacher's role as authoritative, dominant conduit of knowledge begins to weaken considerably. Learners themselves begin to drive many—and in some cases, all—aspects of the learning experience, including the creation, co-creation, and sharing of key knowledge.

Slide 15
In a sense, everyone is a learner, but everyone is also has the potential to be a teacher.

Slide 16
So, in the Learning 2.0 model, temporal and geographic constraints are dramatically loosened; the old expert-student paradigm shifts to a learning network, learner-centric paradigm; and last, but certainly not least, the potential scale of the network assumes astronomical proportions. This image, for example, represents the millions of user connections that constitute the Flickr photo sharing network. This is light years from Learning 1.0.

Image source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/cobalt/34248855/

Slide 17
Now, clearly I left out quite a few details and exaggerated others in what preceded simply to help make my point. But it is also clear that something has fundamentally changed, and advances in Web technologies have played a major role. So how did all of this come about?

Slide 18
Before there was Learning 2.0. there was Web 2.0. The term became popular in the aftermath of a conference held by O'Reilly Media in 2004. The image presented here attempts to map out some of the key conditions and innovations that Tim O'Reilly and others felt characterized a new generation of the Web that was fundamentally different from the one that had proceeded it. While there is a lot of debate about what Web 2.0 really means and even its validity as a term, it is clear that a handful of key changes in the Web started to emerge and solidify during the past few years.

Image: http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html#mememap
From "What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software," Tim O'Reilly, 9/30/2005.

Slide 19
First, there has been a dramatic increase in user control over content and data. End users simply have much more ability to create meaningful content and manage data on the Web than has ever been the case before. What used to involve production crews, writers, editors, and teams of programmers can now be done by an individual with relatively inexpensive equipment and a few clicks of the mouse.

Second, there has been a significant increase in the ability to interconnect software applications using new technologies like XML-based Web services and other application programming interfaces, or APIs. Anyone who has used a tool like iGoogle, for instance, knows how easy it is to plug in a variety of different applications to the iGoogle portal interface.

Third, there has been an tremendous leap in the ease with which users can form meaningful communities and collaborate among one another. The rise of the open source software movement is the example most often cited in this regard, but there are many other types of productive communities that have formed using Web 2.0 tools. Part of YouTube's power, for instance, is not just the ability it offers for users to upload video, but also the tools it provides for easily commenting on, rating, and distributing the videos. It is this social interaction with the user-produced media content that leads to the term "social media."

Image: http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html#mememap

From “What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software,” Tim O'Reilly, 9/30/2005.

Slide 20
The impact of this change on software developers and others who are continually thinking up new ways to use the Web can be seen in a site like Go2Web20.net, which maintains a catalog of the logos of every Web 2.0 application submitted to the site. It can be a great place to poke around just to see what is going on out there and try a few new tools. But there are a lot there. More than 15 new applications were added just during the time that it took to put this presentation together and record it and the total will likely pass 1700 by the time this presentation is first viewed. This leads to an obvious observation about Web 2.0 and the incorporation of social media technologies into your learning programs…

Slide 21
It can be overwhelming.

Slide 22
No script test (Picture of Cartman from SouthPark with caption "It can be overwhelming)

Slide 23
It is a good idea to start simple.

Slide 24
So what are some ways in which associations and other nonprofits are actually using social media technologies right now, and how can they be incorporated into your learning programs? In the following slides we’ll take a look at some concrete examples and consider the possibilities they represent. The range of social media technologies presented here is by no means exhaustive, but my hope is that the set of examples will offer enough to inspire without overwhelming. Also, note that a resource document that covers the tools mentioned here as well as additional tools will be made available at http://blog.missiontolearn.com/resources.

Slide 25
Example site: http://pod.aamva.org/

I’ve arranged the examples I plan to present here in what I consider to be a roughly logical order and have placed podcasting first because in some ways it might be called the least “2.0” of the group. Most people are at least moderately familiar with podcasting at this point, if only because of the huge success and ubiquity of Apple’s iPod. Basically, podcasting enables you to capture audio or audio and video content easily using tools like the open source sound editing application Audacity, Apple’s Garage Band, or a variety of Web-based services. It is then possible to provide distributed access to the content using one of the key technologies of Web 2.0, really simple syndication*, or RSS. Without going too deeply into the details, RSS basically provides a way for podcasts and other types of content to be packaged up and sent across the Web to anyone who asks for them.

I say that podcasting is the least 2.0 of the technologies I discuss here mostly because it has tended to be used more as a broadcast medium than as a community tool or user production medium—at least within the association space. That said, it does not have to be used that way, and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators site pictured here, while primarily broadcast-oriented, does also invite user commentary.

*For those reading the notes, what the acronym RSS can also stand for RDF Site Summary or Rich Site Summary

Slide 26
As far as educational uses go, the ability to produce and broadcast important information easily is a very powerful tool, in spite of my suggestion it has as much affinity with 1.5 approaches as 2.0 approaches. One of the particularly powerful uses of podcasting, in my opinion, is the ability to interview stakeholders in your field and among your membership base and then share that information broadly. This can be done using a simple phone line and digital recorder set-up or by using Web-based telephony like Skype—which is free in most instances—along with simple recording software. AAMVA, for instance, takes this approach in interviewing a truck driver about highway safety issues in one of its podcasts.

Similarly, conference sessions can be captured and distributed using simple digital recording tools and standard podcasting technologies. In fact, the great ease with which podcast content can be produced leads to one of its most powerful educational uses—namely, the ability for learners themselves to produce and share content and thereby learn more effectively by doing rather than by simply reading or hearing.

Slide 27
Example site: http://schaechter.asmblog.org/

Along with podcasting, blogging is one of the most popular new media tools. In fact, a recent study indicates that 8 out of 10 Americans know what a blog is, almost half have visited blogs, and as many as 8 percent actually publish blogs.*

In contrast to the audio-driven content of podcasts, blog content is primarily text based, though blogs can also include a variety of other media or even be primarily video driven. The example here—a blog published by a former president of the American Society for Microbiology—is relatively typical. An individual with passion for and knowledge about a particular topic or set of topics posts information, opinions, and resources on a regular basis for others interested in the same topics to access and comment upon. Readers may access the blog content by going to the blog site, subscribing to the blogs RSS "feed" using an RSS reader like Google Reader or Bloglines, or by receiving new postings via e-mail.

* http://www.synovate.com/current/news/article/2007/08/new-study-shows-americans-blogging-behaviour.html

Slide 28
As the American Society for Microbiology blog suggests, blogging can be a great way to tap not just staff but also member expertise to generate and share knowledge with your stakeholders. Aside from providing day-to-day knowledge, blogs can help extend the impact of conferences and other learning events. A significant number of bloggers have begun posting before, during, and after the ASAE annual meeting, for instance, to share information from the meeting along with their personal views. In a similar way, blogging can help build upon and extend the impact of on-demand learning modules.

To an even greater degree than podcasting, blogging makes its easy for learners themselves to create and share content. As a result, it can be useful for group-oriented projects in which learners collaborate in developing blog content, or it can be a very powerful personal learning tool for the individual learner. The process of consistently monitoring and writing about a particular set of topics generally results in much deeper understanding of those topics.

In publishing a blog, associations might also tap multiple members and employees to participate. ASAE's own Acronym blog, for instance, features posts by a number of ASAE staff as well as by guest bloggers from the membership base.

Slide 29
Example site: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6lA1P2tF0o

One of the factors that has driven the popularity of blogging is the tremendous reduction in cost and complexity it represents in comparison to older, more capital intensive publishing models, whether in the print world or even on the Web. In the world of video, a similar reduction in cost and complexity has had an even greater impact. While both video and film had a relatively long and rich tradition in education even before the advent of Web 2.0 technologies, the start-up costs associated with production and distribution were generally well beyond the means of individuals or even most organizations.

Advances in digital technology, the Web, and RSS have dramatically altered this situation. An interview scenario similar to the one depicted here in an Alzheimer's Association video on YouTube might be created with a standard digital video camera, perhaps some basic lighting, and video editing software such as the open source Jahshaka or commercial packages from Pinnacle or Apple. All of this can be assembled for less the $1,000 and the YouTube account is free. If your organization happens to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, YouTube has also recently introduced a program which provides for increased upload capability and broad promotion of your videos.

Slide 30
So, video on demand is relatively easy to do and picturing the possibilities that it can offer is probably not difficult for most educators. Recording and publishing conference sessions, interviewing experts and other stakeholders, and capturing stories to bring learning objectives to life are all easily achievable. And video uploaded into a service like YouTube can easily be made available through a standard Web site, a blog, a social

networking site like Facebook, or other Web-based learning environments. Additionally, the relatively low complexity and cost of producing and distributing on-demand video may open up opportunities to collaborate with the marketing and memberships functions within your organization in ways that simply may not have seemed feasible before.

Slide 31
Example site: http://www.slideshare.net/jcolman/cultivating-your-constituents-online-american-marketing-association

Two even lower costs and lower complexity approaches to sharing visual media online are slidesharing and photosharing services. The example pictured here is a set of PowerPoint slides that were part of a presentation at the American Marketing Association's Nonprofit Marketing Conference. These were posted by one of the presenters at a service called SlideShare that enables users to view the slides online, comment on them, easily share them with others, mark them as a "favorite, and if the person who posted them allows for it, download the presentation as a PowerPoint file.

Slide 32
Anyone who relies on PowerPoint as part of their delivery media for education can probably see the many ways in which a service like this can be of use. Certainly, simply making slides available from conferences and other learning events can be a valuable way of supporting an event and providing for access to some of the resources it offers after the fact. In fact, if you go to SlideShare.net after viewing this presentation and search for user "jtcobb" you will find a version of the slides from this presentation available for online viewing.

One caution is that many PowerPoint presentations do not hold up well without a presenter to go with them. If your goal is simply to make slides available as a resource, this may not be a problem. If you want your presentations to stand on their own, however, you may need your presenters to put a bit more work into them. Either way, slides uploaded in this way can also be easily embedded into other Web sites and services and the comment function opens up the possibility of a group engaging in discussion around a particular presentation.

Slide 33
Example site: http://flickr.com/photos/americanredcross/509265613/

Similar activities are possible when using a photo sharing site. In this example, the Red Cross has posted a group of photos related to its "Be Red Cross Ready" initiative.

Slide 34
Using a service like Flickr, you can post photos from recent learning events, create a stock of photos that you might use in multiple online education experiences, or encourage learners in you stakeholder base to share photos that support learning activities.

Slide 35
Example site: secondlife://Koh%20Samet/48/130/21 via
http://www.car.org/?id=Mzc1NjE

So far, the examples we have seen involve weaving well-known, established media like photos, audio, video, PowerPoint, and text into the Web 2.0 environment. Virtual worlds take things into a different dimension entirely. In a virtual world, a learner actually assumes an on-screen identity and interacts with other users and Web-based objects in a three dimensional digital environment. Advances in video gaming technologies, in particular, have driven the development of virtual worlds, and games of one sort or another do provide the basis for most environments of this type. In recent history, however, platforms like Second Life have emerged that provide "real world" type experiences for users. In these virtual worlds, users develop relationships, conduct business, and of course, participate in educational events and interactions.

Slide 36
The example here is from the California Association of Realtors' virtual office in Second Life, where my avatar is watching a presentation from one of the association's conferences. A virtual world like Second Life enables you to bring learners together in real time to access resources and interact with each other in much the same way they would in a real conference or seminar—even voice chat is possible. Teams can potentially meet and collaborate, and virtual information centers can be maintained for access by visitors. Perhaps the most interesting application of a a tool like Second Life or other virtual worlds, however, is a chance to experiment in ways that might be costly or simply not possible in the real world. Conducting simulations of crisis events related to disaster preparedness or medical emergencies, for instance, can provide opportunities for learning that are very difficult to create in real life.

Slide 37
Example site: http://weblog.infoworld.com/udell/gems/delicious.html

Returning to somewhat less flashy but still very powerful Learning 2.0 approaches, organizations may want to consider social bookmarking as a tool to support and enhance learning activities. The basic concept behind social bookmarking is that, instead of just bookmarking sites in a "favorites" folder on your personal computer, where no one else can see them, you bookmark them through a Web service that enables you to share them with other people. In this example, for instance, a user of the social bookmarking service Del.icio.us has bookmarked a variety of sites related to healthcare. For each item that is bookmarked, it is possible to see how many other users have bookmarked the same item and also visit the bookmarks of each of these users to find related items of interest. A user can choose to subscribe to a particular "tag" or keyword, such as healthcare, and then easily track new bookmarks from all Web users or specific users that contain this tag. The service also allows for creating a defined network of users to share bookmarks.

Slide 38
In general, social bookmarking can be a great way to collect a set of resources related to educational activities and share them broadly or with a specific group of users. Bookmarks can supplement place-based learning events as well as collaborative team activities, and like most social media tools, they can be distributed via an RSS feed for inclusion in blogs and other Web destinations. Your organization might, for instance, maintain a centralized list of key Web sites related to your industry and make it available to chapters or member organizations by RSS for inclusion on their Web sites.

Slide 39
Example site: http://www.rxwiki.com

While social bookmarking is mainly concerned with Web users collecting and sharing data about Web sites, wikis provide a way for users to come together and collectively create and maintain a Web site. The term "wiki" derives from a Hawaiian language word for fast, suggesting how rapidly Web environments can be deployed using the technology. Wikipedia is no doubt the wiki site with which people are most familiar, and it is an excellent example of the possibilities for collaborative production of meaningful content that wikis represent. By making it possible for users to easily author, edit, and organize Web content using a standard browser like Firefox or Internet Explorer, Wikipedia has evolved into an encyclopedia that many consider to be on a par with old, established publications like Encyclopedia Britannica.

Slide 40
For associations, the potential for harnessing the collective expertise of a membership base is tremendous. The site pictured here, for instance, grew out of an initiative of the National Community Pharmacists Association. Now spun into a for-profit initiative and sponsored by NCPA, the American Pharmacists Association, and the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations, it provides a destination where pharmacists collaborate to provide a free medication guide for consumers. It is not difficult to imagine this same sort of approach applying to collaborative management of educational resources, team work, and management of resources related to events like conferences or training seminars.

Slide 41
Example site: http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2216059283

The last area I'd like to cover in this presentation is social networking. I mentioned at the beginning of the examples that I put things in a rough order that seems logical to me, and there are a couple of reasons I placed social networking last. The first is that while, in a sense, all of the technologies we have looked at here are about networking, social networking sites are the form of social media that are most pointedly about forming associations with other people and they help open up the question of what forming associations in a networked environment means—a question we will return to in a moment. Also, the more popular social networking sites increasingly offer ways to aggregate many of the other forms of social media I have covered into a more or less

unified environment. MySpace, for instance, offers a blogging component, and Facebook, pictured above, has made a tremendous push recently to attract software developers to integrate with and enhance its application. As a result, it is possible to pull features like YouTube, Flickr, Del.icio.us, and SlideShare right into a Facebook environment.

Slide 42
The Facebook site shown here is for American Library Association members. It has nearly 1,700 members at the time of this presentation and makes use of discussion boards, photo sharing, and the ability to connect easily to other related groups as well as to provide information about events like Teen Read Week and the association's mid-winter conference. There are clearly good ways to use Facebook for building community and sharing resources around education events. Perhaps more importantly, widespread use of sites like Facebook and MySpace may help drive an expectation on the part of learners that learning should be accessible and manageable through a personal learning environment. Although it is beyond the scope of this presentation to discuss them in detail, there are already a number of personal learning environment, or PLE, software applications available and it is possible to imagine an eventual blending of social media type environments and traditional learning management systems with these PLE applications.

Slide 43
So where does that leave us? First, it is worth suggesting that, while a new version of software is intended eventually to replace an old version, the same philosophy does not necessarily apply in the realm of learning. There are still situations where traditional teacher-centric, institution-centric, or course-centric approaches may be warranted. Where compliance with a particular law or process must be validated, for instance, or an assessment of knowledge for credentialing purposes is needed, more traditional forms of learning may be more efficient or effective. One of the challenges learning professionals now face is determining when and how new learning approaches and technologies are best used.

Slide 44
Photo: http://www.flickr.com/photos/stephen_downes/287697453/
CC License: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/deed.en-us
Quotation from: http://www.downes.ca/cgi-bin/page.cgi?post=35839

And making the leap into use of social media can feel somewhat daunting. One of the comfort points of traditional teacher-centric and course-centric approaches is that they enable a significant degree of control over the path the learner takes to achieving learning objectives. Designed appropriately, they also tend to produce clearly measurable results. This degree of control and clarity is not always—or perhaps even most of the time—a characteristic of Learning 2.0.

Slide 45
For the association learning professional, then, embracing Learning 2.0 may mean embracing Clarence Fisher's concept of the teacher as network administrator—someone

who, rather than acting as a dispenser of expert knowledge, facilitates the connections that lead to the achievement of learning objectives.

For Clarence Fisher's thoughts on teacher as network administrator, see http://remoteaccess.typepad.com/remote_access/files/teacher_as_network_admin.pdf

Slide 46
George Siemens' concept of the teacher as similar to a museum curator may also be useful. For Siemens, a teacher is like an expert behind the scenes who "creates spaces in which knowledge can be created, explored, and connected."

For George Siemens thoughts on curatorial teaching see:
http://www.connectivism.ca/blog/2007/08/networks_ecologies_and_curator.html

Slide 47
Of course, there is always the danger that these approaches and Learning 2.0 in general can lead to unproductive "coloring outside the lines."

Slide 48
But they can also lead to the sort of innovation that cannot be unlocked within old paradigms.

Slide 49
To wrap up, I recommend the following as you consider the role of social media in your learning initiatives. First, get your hands dirty. Most social media tools are free. Try out the tools we have covered in this presentations or others that are mentioned in the resource document available at http://blog.missiontolearn.com/resources. Visit Go2Web20.net and pick some new tools at random. Get a feel for what is possible.

As you do this, consider the context of your organization. Is there an openess to the kinds of interactions and diversity of thinking that the successful use of social media requires? Are there pockets within your membership base where you can take first steps? Is social media truly relevant to the types of learning your organization seeks to provide at this time and under its current strategy? It's easy to experiment a bit around the edges, but really the answer to these questions needs to be "yes" for Learning 2.0 to work within your organization. You may have some groundwork to lay.

Slide 50
If you do move ahead, consider what the successful use of social media approaches means for the learner. In a learner-centric model, the learner's responsibility for achieving learning goals necessarily increases. This means developing a more conscious approach than may come naturally to the process of creating, organizing, and sharing learning content. Teachers and trainers can and should help learners develop this new awareness of their own learning activities

Last but not least, I'm happy to be of help. There are a variety of ways to contact me, and I try to be as responsive as possible to all of them. So, feel free to send me an e-mail, call me, or visit and comment on my blog at http://blog.missiontolearn.com