

## Web2.0 and SEO: Fit or Misfit

Internet is a source of information, a platform for interaction and a marketplace to do business. The uses of Internet surpass all our collective imagination, as each given moment people give it a different utility dimension. Information sharing and online trading are however the top two activities that are performed via the Internet. Online businesses actively seek avenues to exploit the online marketplace and thus increase revenue – the ultimate business goal.

Internet marketplace has witnessed a boom in recent past and now serves as an efficient platform for trade worth billions of dollars. Competition in the online arena has skyrocketed and therefore making money online is easier said than done. In order to succeed in the prevailing market conditions, it is imperative to attract and engage visitors. Having a plain website that sells products/services is passé as such websites fail to engage the visitors at granular level. With numerous options available to the customers, they would soon exit your website and go somewhere else. Web 2.0 platforms could very well be leveraged to save your website from a premature online demise.

Web 2.0 technologies are characterized by slick user interface, user friendly controls, and aesthetically appeasing and appealing layout to keep visitors hooked. AJAX (asynchronous java script and XML), a web 2.0 technology, is a suitable candidate for interactivity on a website. AJAX, when implemented, responds to user's request without actually re-loading the entire page. Numerous webmasters have adopted AJAX to enhance user interaction and website usability in an attempt to boost conversion rate. Therefore it would be safe to say that failure to incorporate web 2.0 technologies could spell disaster for your online business.

Unfortunately, web 2.0 elements such as AJAX, flash, podcasts, etc. are not search engine friendly. This means that search engine spiders cannot completely crawl such websites and thereby affect search engine indexing. So on one hand you have enhanced customer interaction, greater website usability and higher conversion; while on the other hand you have a website that is not search engine compliant. Since it is difficult for search engine spiders to read such websites, it would effectively mean that it is difficult to get them to rank. Don't misinterpret this, it difficult not impossible. Therefore there is no reason to be dejected if you have a website that uses any of these web 2.0 technologies.

A lot has changed in terms of search engine algorithms, its sophistication and technology. They are now better at indexing AJAX based or dynamic websites. Plenty has been written about ways to do it (since it is outside the purview of this article, the discussion on how to optimize such websites is not included) and has been successfully accomplished by many. Reason enough to cheer.

Any deliberation about web 2.0 is incomplete without mentioning blogs, forums and other social media websites. User generated media (UGM) and various social media platforms are now main stream strategy for any search marketing campaign. Web 2.0 will play a crucial role in shaping your present and future online marketing initiatives.

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