WEB 2.0 INTERACTION AND EDUCATIONAL GENRES:
SOCIAL, INTERACTIONAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND MULTIMODAL ASPECTS

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Precisely because Web 2.0 is still evolving, a consensus on its exact meaning has not yet been reached and is unlikely to be reached in the near future. Those who have proposed or promoted the Web 2.0 concept say that it differs from early web developments, retroactively labelled Web 1.0, in that it constitutes a move away from static websites, the use of search engines and web surfing, to a more dynamic and interactive system of communication that relies on the notion of individual users participating in communities. Others argue that the original and fundamental concepts of the web are not actually being superseded, while sceptics hold that the term is little more than a buzzword, that it means whatever its proponents want it to mean in order to convince their customers, investors and the media that they are creating something fundamentally new, rather than continuing to develop and use well-established technologies.

In the author’s experience, Web 2.0 may be looked upon from diverse standpoints:

- **socially**, it refers to an approach in which the market is seen as a ‘conversation’, a place for open communication in which the freedom to share and above all reuse and recontextualise texts arises from the apparent decentralisation of authority;

- **economically**, it represents a shift in value of the web, a marketing term that differentiates new web businesses from those of the rather discredited and somewhat superseded dot.com boom of the late 1990s;

- **technologically**, it has more organised and categorised content, made possible by deep-linking web architectures; it marks a transition from websites construed as sets of isolated texts to platforms that provide web applications such as Google, YouTube, Netvibes, Doodle, Ning, Flickr and so on; all this promotes websites as sources of content, knowledge, information and social functionality;

- **semiotically**, it represents a series of innovations in the genres used in the Internet which instantiate rather special combinations of action and meaning potential (Baldry, Thibault, 2006: Chap 3).

My paper will attempt to sketch out a framework in which Web 2.0 will be presented generally from a synthesising but multiple viewpoint. While it is commonplace to refer to social networking software in terms of tools, nevertheless the ultimate focus in this context will be on their implementation of new genres involving new expectations and new perspectives in interaction and learning whose characteristics require a multimodal approach (Marenzi, in press).
References:
