

# YOU ARE NOT PREPARED

—World of Warcraft, Blizzard



Social media, sometimes referred to as Web 2.0, is the new buzz word and the latest online trend. Those trying to get a handle on what it means will find as many definitions for Web 2.0 as there are Web sites writing about it. Everyone has their own idea about what it all means, and that in itself is representative of one of the basic ideas behind social media: everyone can now readily share their own opinions or ideas with the world.

Before we go any further let's take a moment to jump out to the Web and pull in some of the more scholarly definitions:

*"The term 'Web 2.0' describes the changing trends in the use of World Wide Web technology and web design that aim to enhance creativity, communications, secure information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the web."* Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_2.0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0)

*“Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them.”* Source: Tim O’Reilly at <http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2006/12/web-20-compact.html>

Not sure that helped, but it seems like something that needed to be done. Examples might help shed some light, but although I can think of many examples of the use of Web 2.0 online, describing these to people who have not yet made the Web 2.0 plunge would do little to help portray the true meaning. So I am going to use an example from the non-digital world:

One day I had to kill some time waiting for a flight so I took a tour of Yale’s campus. During this tour, we passed by one of the campus quads where a student had taken position on top of a large slab of granite in order to share his wisdom with the gathering crowd. In this same area, others were lounging on seats or on the grass talking in groups of various sizes. Further down the quad, a group had drawn up monopoly squares on the sidewalks forming a square around a central patch of grass. They were engaging folks walking by to play their game of monopoly. These students had even created visual aids such as a pair of oversized dice.



All of these activities personify in real life what is going on now in the digital space. People who have ideas and want to share them with others are talking on top of virtual slabs or creating online objects and tools designed to engage others and entice them to spend a little quality time with them. So to me Web 2.0 has become the digital or online representation of what typically goes on at a college’s quad on a typical day.

Now, that should give us some idea about what to expect as we venture forward, and if the reference to returning to the campus quad didn’t frighten you enough, remember **NEW THINGS ARE SCARY!!**

That is why we are going to take this nice and easy. By the time you go through this guide, you will, like a level 80, Tauren Shaman in World of Warcraft, be prepared.

We start with a fun tool for engagement with which most of us are familiar—a survey!

Please choose which of the following best describes you:

1. I visit one or more Web sites each day
2. I occasionally visit a Web site if I am able to get access to a computer
3. I use a computer but never go online
4. Computers are the devil's tool, and I refuse to have one in my home.



If you chose #4, close this document and walk away . . . do this very fast and don't look back.

If you chose # 2 or #3, you might want to refer to Appendix A for a quick review of Web 1.0 since we begin by assuming you are familiar with the use of e-mail and surfing standard Web pages. You may advance to the next section once you complete your review of Appendix A.

If you chose #1, you are to proceed to your preflight check.

*“Let's pound those noobs” —Paul Broviak, age 8*

*Fortunately, none of you will encounter my son as you negotiate the jungle of social media. Well, unless you play World of Warcraft. But you might find along the way, someone referring to you as a “noob” or “newbie.” If so, please do not take offense; the people using that term will most likely be doing so in a loving and supportive manner. If someone is using the term in a negative and offensive way towards you, the best advice I can give you is to move along. The person obviously has no social skills and most likely is an eight-year-old boy. Remember, we were all noobs once, and we realize with new tools being introduced every day, we will all be noobs once again.*