

UAL Guidelines and Considerations in Use of Web 2.0 Services

Guidance for Using External Web 2.0 Services for Teaching and Learning at UAL

The distinguishing feature of Web 2.0 services is that content is generated by people who interact with a given website as well as by people or organisations who manage the site.

Many companies offer Web 2.0 services such as blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, and virtual worlds that are useful in an educational context and are increasingly being used by teaching staff, administrators and students within the university.

This document sets out to recognize the value of using Web 2.0 services to enhance learning and teaching and to provide guidance as to its appropriate use in supporting students in learning. It is also acknowledged that no Higher Education Institution can keep up with the functionality available via the plethora of quickly evolving Web 2.0 services available online.

In developing this guidance, the University aims to:

1. Highlight the benefits of using Web 2.0 services in improving students' learning experiences and in preparing them for life after graduation;
2. Highlight the key issues and considerations for using Web 2.0 services in learning, teaching and assessment.

We endeavor to keep these guidelines up to date, however, web 2.0 services change rapidly and the guidance provided in this document may therefore not be complete. You should seek additional advice as appropriate and use your own common sense prior to embarking on use of these tools.

Why use an external Web 2.0 service?

1. There are potential benefits for the institution and its staff and students in using Web 2.0 services for learning, teaching and assessment.
2. The social aspect of many services is predicated on very widespread usage. For example, there is no point in the University trying to replicate del.icio.us or Facebook which are successful in large part because they are accessed and used by people around the world.
3. It's quick and easy to sign up and check out a service. Many services are free for basic functionality, and cheap for more advanced functionality.
4. It is easy for students/colleagues/research partners to sign up for the same service so collaboration with internal and external users is possible.
5. Using an external service may make it easier for students to retain access to their work once they leave university.
6. Engagement with these tools can enhance student's online communication and collaboration skills (part of digital literacy) which are important for many of our graduates in continuing to develop professionally after graduation.
7. Use of the tools can widen participation and social engagement beyond institutional borders.
8. Many of the tools available encourage peer-support and review.

Considerations of Risk and Good Practice Guidance

Web 2.0 services can be used freely, anytime and anywhere. However, there are some limitations when using external Web 2.0 services in the University's courses. The University's existing policies and regulations as regards IT use and general conduct still apply to staff and students when using Web 2.0 services, as the technology is essentially unchanged. However, the nature of the content and how it is used can change as more and more data is shared and recorded, and this has its own implications. Tutors and students should be aware of the following key risks and good practice guidance:

1. Reliability and Accessibility

- a. Learning materials and communication submitted to or created using the service may not be securely backed up if the Web 2.0 service provider changes the nature of its service or if the service is discontinued. Generally, it is not easy to export your data or retrieve it in a format that allows you to use it elsewhere.
- b. To use an external Web 2.0 service you typically need to sign up for an account. Issues such as multiple passwords in addition to the University login may cause problems.

2. Support for External Web 2.0 services Performance, Development and Interoperability

- a. The University cannot provide support for performance or technical problems with externally hosted Web 2.0 services.

3. Privacy and Data Protection Act

All Web 2.0 services harvest non-personally identifying data to target their services and advertising. You often have no, or very limited, control over what data they can use. To prevent the University or tutors becoming legally responsible for any breaches of the Data Protection legislation by external Web 2.0 service provider(s), the following is recommended:

- a. **Good Practice Guidance 1:** Tutors using external Web 2.0 services in their learning and teaching are expected to make students aware of the need for multiple logins and the fact that their University log in credentials do not extend to external sites.
- b. **Good Practice Guidance 2:** Students are expected to be informed of the possible risk to the accessibility and reliability of the service during any submission or contribution to the Web 2.0 service.
- c. **Good Practice Guidance 3:** Tutors and students using external Web 2.0 services should make sure they have a back-up of any critical content posted to the social service. NB: In addressing Good Practice Guidance 3 staff are recommended to use the zip functions available in many external wikis or use tools such as ScrapBook (Firefox extension) which allows easy capture of websites and files.
- d. **Good Practice Guidance 4:** Tutors should be aware of the potential performance and technical support issues for external Web 2.0 services and consider how they will deal with these if an issue occurs during the course delivery.
- e. **Good Practice Guidance 5:** Tutors should inform students that any use of Web 2.0 services means a direct link between the student and the service provider and not with the University. It should be made clear in the learning material or assignment that the Web 2.0 services used is an external site provided by external service providers. For example, a brief statement on Blackboard: "This is an activity which involves the external Web 2.0 service provider, Flickr – you will leave the University's Blackboard after clicking the link below..."
- f. **Good Practice Guidance 6:** Before making use of external web 2.0 services, tutors are strongly advised to explore the site's Terms and Conditions of Use (usually found at the bottom of the website's homepage) to determine who will own the content and what use will be made of it. A checklist of the key things to review in terms and conditions is included at the end of this document.

4. Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights

- a. Uploading and storing material for learning and teaching purposes to external Web 2.0 services sites is now common practice within and outside the University. However student use for these purposes is governed by the Student Regulations and the University's IT Regulations, and staff use is governed by their Contract of Employment and the University's IT Regulations. Those uploading content to such sites need to ensure they do not contain material that infringes someone's copyright. It should also not contain material that is defamatory about another person. Many services require you to grant very extensive rights to the service provider, which may not be appropriate in some research and teaching and learning contexts.
- b. **Good Practice Guidance 7:** Tutors are advised to consider the copyright issues before posting University materials to an external site.

Acknowledgments:

This document has been based on Guidelines for Using External Web 2.0 Services (August 2007) produced by Edinburgh University and the Social Software Policy produced by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at the University of Glamorgan. The guidelines are made available under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported Licence allowing other educational institutions to incorporate aspects of, or edited text from, them in their own guidelines. See <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/Web2wiki/Web+2.0+Guidelines> Also note that JISC Legal has recently released a new version of its Code of Practice for the Further and Higher Education Sectors on the Data Protection Act 1998, which contains a section on Web 2.0 Services.