



What is the Web 2.0

2.2.3. 1 WAHT IS THE WEB 2.0

2.2.3.1 What is Web 2.0

In a previous paragraph we mentioned that the very first web page published to the general public was in August 1991 by Tim Berners Lee. A screenshot of this web page is shown in Figure 14.

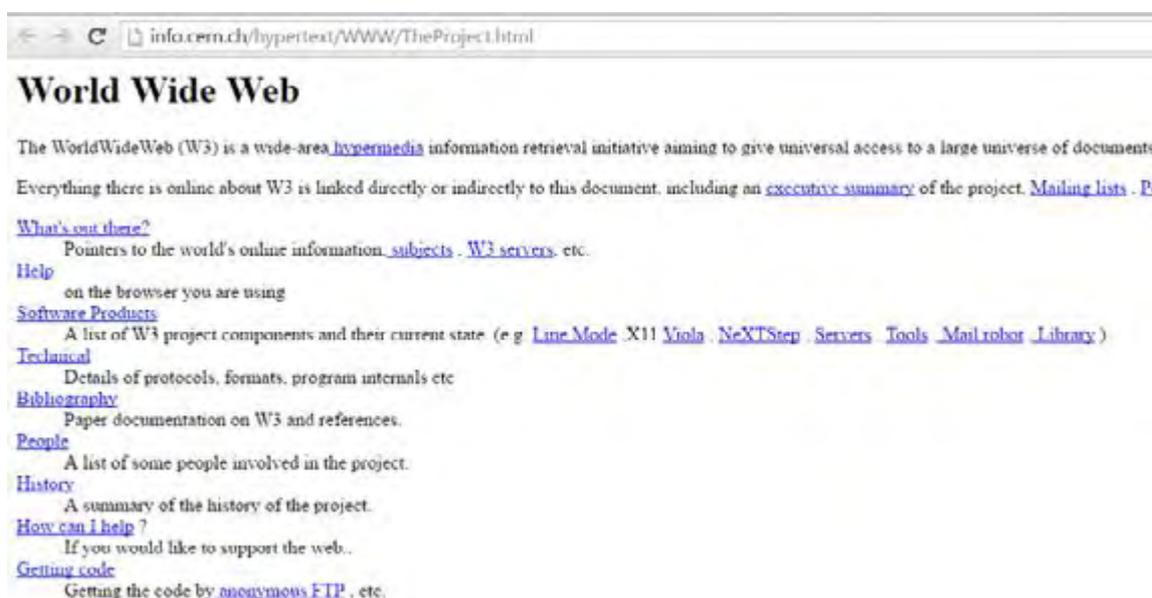


Figure 14: The first page of World Wide Web published in August 1991 by Tim Berners Lee.

As we can see, it is a web page consisting of simple formatted text and hyperlinks (text on which we can click and be transferred to another web page). In such a web page we cannot have any advanced interaction, since the only thing we can do is to just view the information and click on some hyperlink to visit another web page.

From that infancy era of World Wide Web till now many things have changed. The web pages have become more complex and many of them incorporate particular characteristics that enable advanced interaction like content creation by the user, user collaboration etc. The Web 2.0 term was introduced to refer to that kind of web pages or tools. In the following paragraphs we will describe the potential features a Web 2.0 tool may offer. As an example we will use wisemapping.com, which is a tool for creating concept maps.

2.2.3.2 Web 2.0 Features

No need for software installation

One key feature of a Web 2.0 tool is that it is essentially a software tool that does not need any local installation to our computer. The only thing we need is a web browser through which we can interact to create content by ourselves like be working in a program locally installed in our computer. To see it in practice, let us visit wisemapping.com. The first thing we need to do to use the tool is to create an account, that is to create a private area within the tool that we will be able to access only using our username and password. When we log into our account we can use the tool and create a concept map. A screenshot of the interface of the tool and a concept map we have created is shown in Figure 15.

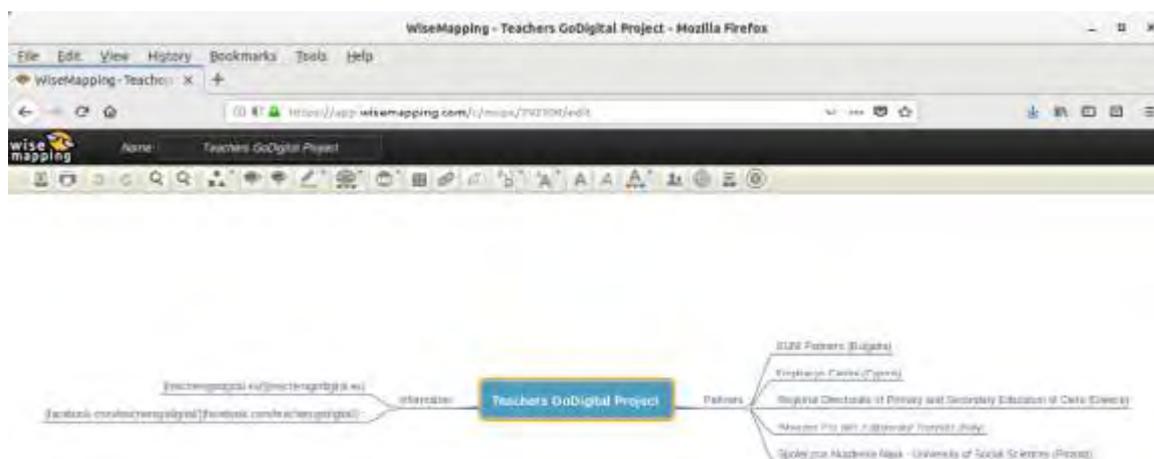


Figure 15: Wisemapping.com is a Web 2.0 tool with which we create concept maps.

Cloud storage

The content we create in a Web 2.0 tool is saved on the Cloud. In fact our work is saved in the servers managed by the Web 2.0 tool. Cloud is a metaphor of the networked devices that offer a service (see Figure 16). The Internet itself is sometimes presented as a cloud within which every connected to it device is included.

In simple and few words the content we create with the Web 2.0 tool is being automatically saved online. The next time we log in to our account we see the work we have done. For example the concept map we created in wisemapping.com will be there the next time we will access our account in the tool.

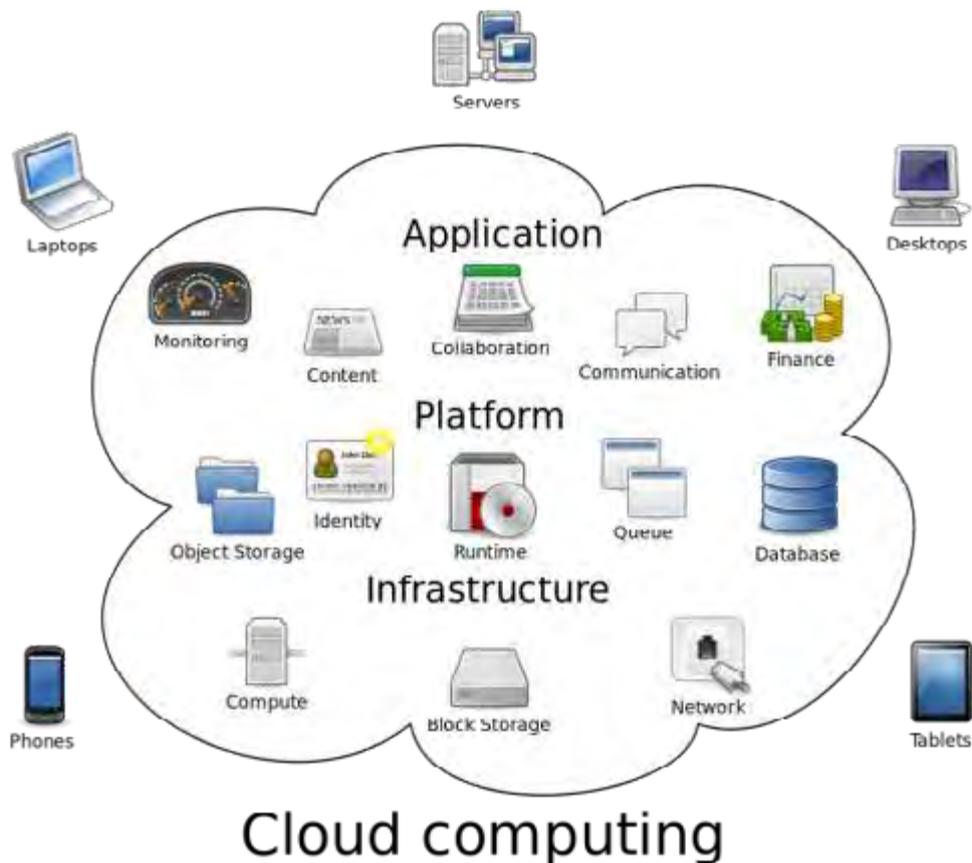


Figure 16

No need for backup

A subsequent feature to the cloud storage feature is that we do not need to take care of backing up our work. The Web 2.0 tool (and of course the administrators of it) is responsible to keep our work safe and secure from any data loss. Suppose that we create a big document consisting of many pages. Since it is a work that needs a lot of effort to be done, it is wise to have a backup so that to be sure that we will not lose it e.g. due to a technical problem. If we use a locally installed software such as Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer then we should not forget to keep this work in an external device (e.g. in an external hard drive or usb stick). With a Web 2.0 tool, like the Google Docs tool that is described analytically in the next section, we do not need to do so, as the work is saved on the cloud and the data there are being regularly backed up.

Access from everywhere with any internet connected device

Another important feature of Web 2.0 is that we can access our work from everywhere using any device (desktop computer, laptop, tablet, mobile phone) connected to the internet. A teacher can create teaching material at home using a Web 2.0 tool and access it at school by just logging in his/her account at it.

Collaborative file processing

Many of the Web 2.0 tools offer another powerful feature that is the ability to share the created file to other users either just for viewing it or for editing collaboratively. For example we can invite other users to edit the concept map we created in wisemapping.com (see Figure 15). The file can be edited either synchronously or asynchronously by the other users.

Embedding files in other websites with instant update

Some Web 2.0 tools offer the potentiality to embed a file of it to another website. Let us suppose that we have a blog or we administer or edit a website (e.g. the school's website). We can embed there a Web 2.0 file provided that this feature is offered by the Web 2.0 tool we used to create it. The nice thing is that any change we do in the file is updated immediately in the place we have embedded it. For example, if we embed the concept map of Figure 15 in our blog and subsequently we make a change in the concept map, then this change will immediately be shown in our blog at the place where the concept map has been embedded.

Usually there is a button or hyperlink with name "Publish" where we can click and either get a URL to share the file to other users or get the embed code to place it in our blog or website.

2.2.3.3 Examples of Web 2.0 tools

There are plenty of Web 2.0 tools and day by day many more are being created while some other stop being maintained. Below we mention several Web 2.0 tools that can be useful for a teacher. Of particular importance is the Google Drive for which we dedicate a separate section to describe it in detail. Below we present a short list of Web 2.0 tools.

- Blog platforms (e.g. blogspot.com, wordpress.com)
- Wiki platforms (e.g. wikipedia.com, wikibooks.org, wikiversity.org etc.)
- Social media platforms (e.g. facebook.com, twitter.com)
- padlet.com
- kahoot.com
- coggle.it
- mindmup.com
- slatebox.com
- draw.io
- edmodo.com
- canva.com
- realtimeboard.com
- prezi.com
- animoto.com
- powtoon.com
- glogster.com
- storybird.com
- voicethread.com
- asana.com