

May/Jun 2009 • Issue 12

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# Game On, Singapore



## Underage Marksmen: GunBound

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**Ah Boy's  
Debut**

**NEW**

## Editor's Note

May and June are the months where new champions are born from Interschool competitions. This issue, we received lots of entries from readers, some telling us about their champions, others defining what the word Champions means to them. We have also taken this opportunity

to feature meaningful quotes and ideas from teachers and students who remind us the hidden and deeper meanings behind the word "Champions".

Also, we are delighted to introduce three new sections to you – Books Galore, Reel Life

and Comics Corner, with book vouchers and movie passes to be given out! This issue also features one of the most popular games in town, Gunbound, and we have lots of exciting in-game items awaiting you. Enjoy!

*Christine*

**Christine Yee**  
Editor



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By Dr. Ashley Tan

# Educational Web 2.0

Image by Erica Marshall

In this issue, I will explain what “Web 2.0” is and its impact on education.

You have probably seen or heard about examples of Web 2.0, but you may not know why they are given this collective term. Examples of Web 2.0 include blogs (EduBlogs), microblogs (Twitter), wikis (PBwiki, WetPaint, Wikispaces), podcasting (Podbean), social networking (Facebook, MySpace), social bookmarking (del.icio.us, Diigo), and artefact creation and sharing (Flickr, MindMeister, SketchCast, VoiceThread, YouTube).

The predecessor of Web 2.0 enabled most users to be passive recipients of information. On the other hand, Web 2.0 comprises of tools and services that allow ordinary users to easily create, share, and shape content online.

The table below is a list of some key differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Content prepared by experts E.g. articles prepared by professional writers and editors.	Content prepared by layman E.g., blogs, wikis, podcasts.
Taxonomy: Categorisation by experts or only a few people E.g. Yahoo! Indices	Folksonomy: Categorisation and ranking by layman and the reliance on collective knowledge or wisdom.
Pull technology: Users need to visit websites for information E.g. Straits Times Online.	Push technology: Customised information from Web sites can be selectively delivered to users E.g. RSS feeds.

One particular result of Web 2.0 is the explosion of user-generated content in the forms of text, images, audiocasts videos, and other artefacts online. To make sense of this information, users form communities based on content that are relevant to them.

Take “mummy blogs” for example. Mothers all over the world can connect by sharing birth stories, child-nurturing tips, product reviews, education issues, and advice amongst other matters. To do this, they might start relating their experiences and embedding photos or videos in their own blogs. Other mothers read these blog entries and comment on them. Alternatively, a few mothers might share and rank their favourite sites with social book-marking tools like Diigo or del.icio.us and other mothers follow suit. Gradually, an informal community emerges.



With tools like Facebook and Twitter, you define the members of your community. You then automatically receive updates from them. For example, by following the Twitter updates of a few

educational technologists and teachers, I keep myself updated on the latest technology trends as they relate to education and happenings in schools in Singapore, the UK and the USA. Alternatively, you could use a system called Really Simple Syndication (RSS) to get the latest feeds (updates) from blogs, wikis, podcasts, or any other RSS-enabled sites you are interested in. You might think of this as being able to subscribe to specific sections of a newspaper that you are interested in instead of getting the entire newspaper. For more information about RSS, refer to the resource at the end of this article.

What impact is Web 2.0 already having on education? The fundamental shift is the fact that students can be active participants in their learning instead of passive recipients. Consider how the strategic integration of Web 2.0 might engage students.

- **Ownership:** Individuals sign up for and maintain their own blogs or Facebook accounts instead of using the school's learning management system (LMS). They customise the look and feel of their Web pages to "make it theirs" and are accountable for the content they generate.
- **Informal and independent learning:** Students might create and then share on YouTube instructional videos on computer game strategies, mini documentaries on a community cause, or simply show off their skills playing a musical instrument. To create such videos, they must not only learn videography, storyboarding, and scriptwriting skills but also master the video content.
- **Collaborative content creation and critiquing:** Learners can collaboratively brainstorm by creating an online mind map at MindMeister. They can invite users, add notes, images and web links to their maps and even review their thinking processes by

using the built-in history tool. Alternatively, they may sign up for a wiki in order to co-author documents, manage a project, maintain portfolios, etc. Content in a mind map or a wiki page is initiated by one or more learners and built upon, edited or critiqued by their peers.

- **Socially negotiated meaning:** The relevance or accuracy of a blog entry, statements made in a podcast, a Facebook wall comment, a YouTube video snippet or a wiki article are all subjected to public or peer scrutiny. In most cases, almost anyone can comment on or even edit the Web 2.0 content so that the value of the product is a result of this social process.

The use of these tools and services will not automatically enable the processes described above. Educators who want to integrate these tools must first be users themselves. For example, teachers must first actively engage in Facebook to realise its strengths, weaknesses and educational possibilities. They might then weigh the merits of having a discussion there, in a LMS discussion forum, or in class.

The belief system of the teacher is key to the successful integration of Web 2.0 for teaching and learning. If a teacher prefers the traditional delivery-oriented model of teaching, then Web 2.0 is unlikely to add any value onto teaching. On the other hand, if the teacher believes in student-centred, independent and collaborative forms of learning, then Web 2.0 can be an important enabling factor.

#### Information on RSS

Watch the video at [http://www.commoncraft.com/rss\\_plain\\_english](http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english)

## Profile:

Dr Ashley Tan is an Assistant Professor in the Learning Sciences and Technologies Academic Group. He is currently in charge of the Media eXperientiaL (MxL) Studio in the National Institute of Education. In the MxL, he coordinates the curricular and research efforts on Web 2.0, Second Life, and educational gaming. As a teacher educator, he facilitates a core course, ICT for Engaged Learning, for teacher trainees. He also conducts workshops and offers consultancy on mobile learning and educational Web 2.0. Prior to being a teacher educator, Dr Tan was an instructional designer and distance educator in the USA, and a project manager and school teacher in Singapore.

