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Two takes on Web 2.0

Ottawa's jaded Pixel and market2world are betting their businesses on a more interactive, social web

Peter Hum, The Ottawa Citizen

Published: Thursday, February 16, 2006

However, while the product is not yet ready for prime time, Lutke and jaded Pixel have released some related fruits of their labours to the Rails community. They made Liquid, a template engine, available, and already another Rails-based web application, stikipad.com, makes use of it.

"Most of the cutting-edge companies are just two to six passionate people doing products they want themselves, scratching real itches," Lutke adds. He commends Hansson's company, 37 Signals, as a role model for jaded Pixel and other Web 2.0 application businesses. "They can compete with companies like Microsoft because they use better tools and quicker processes," Lutke adds. "Often they release a product before a big company would be done holding meetings about it. The big guys are scared of the small guys. It's great."

While Shopify is still being developed, it's been covered in the blogosphere. When the Web 2.0-focused blog TechCrunch profiled jaded Pixel, it drove more than 3,000 people to jaded Pixel's website and blog, Lutke says.

That kind of interest is exactly what market2world is trying to create for its clients. Rudyk and his six-person company take their inspiration from the celebrated 2001 book *The Cluetrain Manifesto* to affirm that markets are conversations – and that blogs, podcasts, videocasts and wikis buzz with money-making chatter. Companies have much to gain if they get on the social-media bandwagon, Rudyk says. "It just ripples through the digital pond. It creates your market position," he says. Rudyk won't divulge details of his company's campaigns for clients such as MD Funds Management and Acco Canada, but his website says that his company can put Web 2.0 tools to use to grow businesses.

Creating market2world, which turns a year old in April, was not much of a stretch for Rudyk.

He and Mark Jodoin, the company's creative strategist, marketed the old-fashioned way for Ottawa software giant Cognos in the 1980s. They started digIT in 1996, which grew into a 30-person web marketing firm before it was sold in February 2000 to nurun, a Quebecor subsidiary.

After a stint as vice-president of marketing at Ottawa software company Databeacon, Rudyk launched market2world, inspired by two trends – the rise of search engines and social media on the Internet, and the health and optimism of smaller Ottawa tech firms that might need the services that his company could offer.

Rudyk notes that tech's big boys such as Oracle, IBM, Hewlett Packard and Microsoft are hot on social media, using the web to allow senior executives to talk directly to customers and solicit customer feedback and requests.

"Your next big product idea can come naturally and easily from customers," Rudyk says.

Too many tech employees are out of touch with the people who use their technology, he contends. "But if you use social media to open the dialogue, some find that customers actually help to build the product," he says.



Nathan Rudyk of market2world.
Photo by Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen

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Most of all, company evangelists need to be conversing on the web, Rudyk says. "If they're not blogging or using social media, they're not allowed to have the job anymore," he says.

Jodoin says that Web 2.0 resources help companies shrink both top- and bottom-line expenses. Social media can generate sales and leads. They can also help deliver product support, with, for example, blogs and wikis (interactive web pages such as the online encyclopedia Wikipedia) replacing e-mail and phone calls. "The information will grow organically and it's all searchable," Jodoin says.

"That's the magic of these things," Rudyk says. "It's very easily created and distributed user-generated content."

Rudyk also regards his company's use of Google's paid AdWords feature as a Web 2.0 practice. "If you accept as we do that Web 2.0 is all about user-generated content via easy-to-use technologies that place the uses in control of the tools, not vice versa, then AdWords marketing is absolutely Web 2.0."

Market2world has run AdWords campaigns for the Ottawa Mac telephony company Parliant. Searches for phrases such as "Mac voice mail" and "Mac present" yield Google results pages that prominently display sponsored links to Parliant webpages.

Rudyk says that his colleague Jodoin was speaking to an Ottawa software CEO this week who said: "Without Google AdWords, we wouldn't be in business today."

"We'd turn that around to say, 'if you're not using AdWords marketing, how can you expect to be in business tomorrow?'" says Rudyk.

Since last November, Rudyk has also co-hosted a monthly podcast for the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation at [OCRIRadio.com](#).

His show has featured interviews with Ottawa tech executives from the companies DNA Genotek and Third Brigade as well as a broadcast of an Ottawa speech by Microsoft's chief executive Steve Balmer.

While OCRI hasn't kept track of its audience numbers due to technical difficulties, Rudyk has said he's noted mention of the podcast in blogs all over the world.

OCRI president Jeffrey Dale says that he's "quite happy" with his organization's initial efforts at blogging and podcasting. "We're learning as we to go use Web 2.0 technologies to reach our members," Dale says.

He says that Ottawa companies have been slow to adopt Web 2.0 tools to get their messages out. "They're not focusing on their web presence," he says.

However, OCRI's blogs and podcasts are generating comments and feedback, while e-mail is often generating frustration – OCRI mail-outs sometimes cannot get past spam filters, Dale says.

"If you're not trying to get to your audiences in new ways, and getting your audience to interact with you, you'll be left behind," he says.



Mark Jodoin, market2world's Creative Strategist, says social media can improve a company's top and bottom lines. Photo by Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen