# Developing for the web 2.0 generation

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## 1. Executive Summary

A new generation of Internet application has emerged over the past few years, where users are actively uploading and sharing content. The impact on Higher Education is beginning to grow as students familiar with Web 2.0 technologies enter their institutions.

Today's students enter our institutions with consumer-like expectations and they expect academic members of staff to be able to communicate using a wide range of technologies e.g. Podcasts, Wikis, Blogs etc

Students also expect services and technology to be accessible 24x7, in order to interact with academic members of staff, administrators and each other.

This trend requires institutions to adopt a new way of thinking and working. It requires a different type of approach to the purchasing and development of applications, ensuring that technology is flexible, responsive and easily adaptable, to empower individuals rather than constrain them by the technology itself.
The design and development of software applications is also changing, with application components being 'loosely coupled', to enable able data to be shared more effectively across the institution and applications.

## 1.1 Developing for the web 2.0 generation

There has been a significant change in the use of the Internet over the past few years, where users are now not only searching for information, but they are actively participating in uploading and sharing content. The impact on Higher Education is beginning to grow as students familiar with Web 2.0 technologies enter their institutions.

Whilst lectures, seminars and traditional means of disseminating information remain important, student's expectations have risen significantly and they expect academic members of staff to be able to communicate knowledge more effectively, using a wide range of technologies e.g. Podcasts, Wikis, Blogs etc

Today's students are consumers with a wide number of choices, and are well versed in collaborative access to information and services whenever and wherever they want. Students are reliant on being able to access these services and technology 24x7, in order to interact with academic members of staff, administrators and each other.

Higher Education is realising the importance of supporting students and staff in their various roles, by ensuring that technology is flexible, responsive and easily adaptable, to empower individuals rather than constrain them by the technology itself. The design and development of software applications is

also changing, with application components being 'loosely coupled', to enable able data to be shared more effectively across the institution and applications.

'What issues should IT and Academic Departments in Higher Education, be concentrating on as they seek to incorporate Web 2.0 technologies into their IT strategies?'  'What kinds of services need to be provided in the future to support the new generation of students, and how will this be supported?'

This requires a new way of thinking and working. One that puts the student and his technology choices central and that caters for a de-facto heterogeneous environment.  It also requires a different type of approach to the purchasing and development of applications, to a change in the way information can be effectively delivered to students and to the way we use technology to support the teaching and learning process.