

Web 3.0 – The Future is Here

What is this mystical entity called Web 3.0 that so many are still waiting for? Like the silhouette of a stranger through the dense fog. Man or Monster? Friend or Foe?

That is the nature of predicting the future. From afar, everything looks good. From up close, it's a mess. The good news is we can affect the future, that the future is not some inevitable result assigned to us.

What will Web 3.0 look like? Let's start from how the web has evolved, and go from there.

What Happened?

In the old days, you really need to read a whole book to get all the nuggets of knowledge from an author. With search, you can get to what you need faster and faster. So more people can now publish more ideas. Referred to as Web 1.0, static websites have sprung from every corner of the world.

Fast forward to today. The core of Web 2.0 is the latest generation of user-contributed content.

1. The unit of communications has shrunk dramatically. Instead of publishing a book or article, we can publish a simple blog. Just a few words and we're done.
2. The speed of publishing has increased dramatically. It's now lightening fast from the time the author has a thought to the time the reader understands it.
3. Multi-user collaboration has become massively parallel. Forums, Chats, people are communicating everywhere.

With Web 2.0 applications, anyone can easily setup a blog or shop on eBay. Or join the major Web 2.0 sites like Wikipedia, Facebook, and Digg. These sites provide dynamic user-contributed content. People now flock to Web 2.0 sites because they can find any idea, or any community.

What's Missing?

So if things are so good, what's wrong?

Well, Google often returns a whole bunch of garbage, because it can't read our minds. That's because search terms aren't expressive enough. Search terms are not sufficient to provide your meaning, your context. There are billions of pages out there now, with text that can only be understood after being read by humans. So with search results, we must wade through pages and pages before we get what we're looking for.

So the direct thought for a solution is, why not make these billions of pages contain the meaning, not just the words? And then create an engine that understands your meaning, and search for your meaning, instead of the today's simple search terms. Will that work?

What's Not Happening?

Web 3.0 is touted as the saviour. So what is it?

It's been 6 years since the prediction of the Semantic Web evolution, with RDF, OWL, SPARQL, RIF, metawebs, and ontologies. It's a deep mess. You have to be either crazy or a genius to figure that stuff out. Another faction has Web 3.0 pegged as becoming a service, somehow transforming unstructured information into structured information. Somehow, if machines talk to each other more effectively, people can access the right information quicker. That's wishful thinking.

Why will this grand vision of Web 3.0 involving intelligent machines never happen? Because humans will never be surpassed by machines in judgemental intelligence. To be interested in certain things, that is a uniquely human trait. To belong to groups, another human trait. Because a machine-generated solution, regardless of how advanced, cannot replace humans. In the end, only humans can help other humans.

What's Next?

Web 3.0 is about ideas and knowledge. It's not about shopping or entertainment. Technology-wise, we're ready for the next generation of the web, the real Web 3.0. We have everything we need to create that vision. Let me describe that vision.

Different words have different meaning to different people. Different people are identified by different demographics. There's no need for the machine to understand all that meaning stuff. As long as people understand, and communicate with the smallest possible unit of related meaning. Which is the question and answer.

By simply matching questions with other similar questions, and group the answers from all the experts, users are given access to the best possible knowledge available from all perspectives. So you can learn at a much faster rate, bypassing the uninteresting noise for the interesting nuggets of knowledge.

Are You Ready?

- If you would benefit with more accurate search by providing accurate demographics, wouldn't you?
- If you would benefit with more accurate search by asking what you're interested in, wouldn't you?

- If you would benefit with more accurate search by answering what you know, wouldn't you?
- If you would benefit with more accurate search by rating what you like, wouldn't you?

The next generation of the web will make use of what we like, what we know, and what we've done, to give us what we need. Based on our recent search history. Based on our demographics. Based on our ratings, questions and answers.

Given your usage, the system should know what you're interested in, and can show you questions based on the community you naturally belong to. So you will not have to avoid people you find annoying... the system will segregate you naturally. Also, other people similar to you will, through their ratings, constantly be finding things that are interesting to you. This system is adaptive, so that as your interests change, your search results change with you.

The good news is Web 3.0 is here. And it's simpler than anybody have thought. The bad news? It's just not what anyone expected. The remaining question? Who's going to build this first.