

THE VIEW FROM THE SADDLE

Web 2.0: It's Not Just for Social Media Anymore...

The Web 2.0 desktop allows agents to personalize their desktop workspace with widgets and gadgets for increased productivity.



Now is the time to start thinking about what your social media strategy will be in 2011 and beyond.

By Paul Stockford, Saddletree Research

With all the industry buzz about social media, the fact that there's much more to Web 2.0 than social networking is getting lost in the avalanche of hype. It's important to remember that Web 2.0 isn't a new technological innovation, but rather a different way of using Internet attributes that have existed for as long as the internet has. In the case of social media, Web 2.0 utilizes the Internet as a participatory platform, allowing users to do more than just retrieve information. In the case of the contact center, Web 2.0 means open architectures for technology platforms the likes of which the industry has never seen before.

The contact center industry has been lusting after a truly "open" platform since the advent of computer telephony integration (CTI) nearly 20 years ago. With a promise of all applications working together as one, with common administration and user interface, there have been many attempts at coming up with the truly open platform over the past couple of decades. Most fell short of the goal.

With the advent of Web 2.0, the promise of the open platform seems to have finally arrived. To better understand what this means to the industry, think Microsoft Office for the contact center. In other words, all applications have a similar look and feel, users can move seamlessly from one application to another and find a familiar toolbar and interface, and applications are integrated with each other to the point that it is often difficult to tell when one application ends and another begins. Now apply that kind of ease of use to your contact center technology solutions and that's

what we're talking about.

One company that has been working hard to bring the dream of a Web 2.0 framework to the contact center is Calabrio, and the results of their efforts are worth looking at. Like so many other companies out there, Calabrio's previous product suite was the result of several acquisitions. To make their collection of disparate workforce optimization (WFO) solutions work together, they needed an open architecture platform and turned to Web 2.0 to meet that need.

We've all heard the terms "widgets" and "gadgets" in reference to small applications, or applets, that can be installed and executed within a web page by an end user. These applets allow the user to populate his or her desktop with content that is useful and relevant to the job.

The Web 2.0 desktop, such as the one developed by Calabrio, allows the contact center user to personalize the desktop workspace so that individual preferences are accommodated. Users see widgets and gadgets that are needed for the task at hand, as well as items like important metrics and activities that need to be accomplished that day. Unlike most agent and management desktops today, users are not locked into any one set of applications. Since the desktop workspace is web-based, adding new applications doesn't mean having to add new servers. The Web 2.0 desktop environment is extremely cost effective while accommodating individual needs and personal preferences.

As the next-generation workforce → [page 2](#)

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enters the contact center industry, having tools that they are comfortable working with will be critically important to success. The Web 2.0 environment offers the agility and familiarity that the millennial generation workforce will require in order to be productive contributors and enjoy a pleasant work experience.

I believe the impact of Web 2.0 on the contact center, beyond social media, will be staggering. Think about the productivity gains that will come with being able to drag and drop appropriate applets to the desktop and dynamically change those applets as circumstances dictate, all done by the user and accomplished within minutes. Since all the applications in the Web 2.0 environment are web-based, the desktop can go wherever the employee is. That means an employee of any level that may need to work at home on occasion will have access to exactly the same desktop and applications in the remote location that they have in the office. In the contact center, assigned seating can become a thing of the past.

There are only a few companies in the industry today that, like Calabrio, "get it" when it comes to Web 2.0. I expect that will change eventually but in the meantime, be wary of those that keep feeding you the same tired pitch about social networking and customer care. Web 2.0 in the contact center isn't just for social media anymore. 

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Online Resource

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