



Being Mobile | Blog

# Web 2.0 to Social 3.0: The Next Big Thing

- By [Cathie Norris](#), [Elliot Soloway](#)
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**Front page** of the New York Times: Toyota and Google have built a site where individuals can come together — in real-time, simultaneously, synchronously:

“The Collaborator website allows those in the conversation to customize the vehicle’s exterior color, interior fabric and textures, wheels, transmission and features, including moon roofs and fog lights. After choosing the car’s features, users can take a virtual drive down their own block using Google Street View.”

A Web site that makes the front page of the New York Times in 2013? It’s a Web site for heaven’s sake! What makes it so newsworthy that *the* national paper of record will devote *front page* space to it when the actual site is an advertisement for Toyota cars? The New York Times is devoting front page space to a website that sells cars?

The element of the site that the New York Times deemed to be so astonishingly newsworthy is this: the site enables individuals to come together to **synchronously collaborate** on designing a car.

Support by technology for synchronous collaboration is new. We have loads of sites that support asynchronous collaboration — from Facebook to Edmodo, from Pinterest to Flickr. Indeed, those sites have been designated as Web 2.0 to distinguish them from the previous generation of Web 1.0 sites.

- Web 1.0 sites simply provided information.
- Web 2.0 sites support asynchronous collaboration, e.g., send a text; receive a reply; reply to the reply; repeat.
- Social 3.0 software (sites and apps) supports synchronous collaboration, i.e., real-time, simultaneous, collaboration.

It’s not Web 3.0 – NO NO NO!

It's **Social 3.0** since apps running on mobile devices have entered the picture – in a pretty dramatic way – to complement Web pages.

And we are not talking about screen-sharing, a la Adobe Connect, WebEx, GoToMeeting, Join.Me, etc. We are talking about true app-sharing – where two or more users can simultaneously act within an app to write text, to draw a picture, to create a concept map, customize a car you want to buy, etc. In screen-sharing, one person drives while the others watch; in app-sharing, *everyone* is a driver!

And we are not talking about services like Google Hangouts or Skype where individuals can talk to each other – talking audio only in pairs, talking audio only in groups, talking with video in pairs, talking with video in groups. These services are wonderful – but are really just extensions of the hard-plastic, rotary-dial, black telephone.

What defines Social 3.0 is this:

- Two or more individuals verbally conversing
- While those two or more individuals are engaged doing “something” inside an app or in a Web page
- While those two or more individuals are either co-located, or more interestingly, not co-located.

Where “something” could be writing, the case of the Google Docs Editor, the pioneering service that supports verbal voice and writing for two or more individuals synchronously. Or, in the case of Toyota's Collaborator site, the “something” is talking verbally while designing the parts of a car.

Or, (ahem, cough, cough, here comes the shameless self-promotion part – sorry!), the “something” could be two or (many) more students verbally talking while developing a concept map (**WeMap** for iOS, **WeMap** for Android), or developing a KWL chart (**WeKWL** for iOS, **WeKWL** for Android), or a drawing/animation (**WeSketch** for Android), or a spreadsheet-like chart (**WeChart** for Android) **while not being in the same location**. (For Android, all the collabrified apps are embedded in one app – **WeCollabrify**)

N.B. The digital cobblers at the **Intergalactic Mobile Learning Center** (UMich/UNT) are fashioning more collabrified apps as we write this blog! We are making the iOS and Android versions as identical as humanly possible in order to make it easier for a teacher to run a BYOD classroom.

In 2010 we made a prediction that by 2015 each student in each grade in each and every school in the United States would be using an MLD (mobile learning device) 24/7 for curricular purposes. Then it sounded crazy; today? Guaranteed!

In 2014, we are making another prediction that might sound ... unbelievable: by 2017 every app and every Web page will be Social 3.0-ified – will be collabified. (Okay, okay, 2018). With mobile devices – smartphones to tablets – being nearly ubiquitous and our networking infrastructure is finally there (or will be there over the next three years) to support Social 3.0 – synchronous collaboration.

**What** are educators going to do with Social 3.0 – when they are still not sure what to do with Web 2.0 (or even Web 1.0)? Well, educators-reading-this-blog: what do *you* think we are going to do with Social 3.0 technology? Comments are MOST welcome!!

**BIG Acknowledgement:** Give credit where credit is due: our colleague, Kevin Crosby, currently finishing his MBA at the University of Michigan, invented the term Social 3.0. Thank you, Kevin, for giving a name to a phenomenon that is happening as we ... synchronously collaborate!

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*Find more from Elliot Soloway and Cathie Norris at their Being Mobile blog at [thejournal.com/beingmobile](http://thejournal.com/beingmobile).*

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