



## **Implications of web2.0 for bilingualism on websites – towards best practice**

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## 1. Introduction

This report is being written at a time when organisations in Wales and beyond are making their first exploratory forays into web2.0. This is both an exciting time and a challenging time for these organisations. For many organisations web2.0 suggests a very different relationship with the public and with its own staff, and a reappraisal of the notion of ownership of content. There is the real possibility that web2.0 may be a transformative technology that will radically change the way some organisations operate. However there is also the possibility that this opportunity may be missed due to uncertainty on the part of organisations or over-prescriptive attempts to guide and control these organisations' use of web2.0.

The introduction of web2.0 poses a number of challenges for an organisation, but in this document the focus is specifically on those issues which directly impact on bilingualism and the notion of dealing with languages on the basis of equality. It has been suggested that concerns about bilingual provision may delay the uptake of web2.0 by organisations in Canada (Kujawski). It is not clear whether similar concerns are prevalent in Wales.

### 1.1. *Methodology*

In preparing this report several approaches were followed in order to understand the language-related challenges posed by web2.0 and approaches towards mitigating those challenges.

A review of the literature was conducted. Twenty-eight academic publications were examined, but few of these provided any useful insights. A summary of this can be found in Appendix 1.

A small number of stakeholder interviews were conducted, totalling 5 people from 3 organisations. These were particularly revealing and provided insight into the wider environment within which a set of guidelines would need to operate and the type of guidance which would actually be beneficial to organisations who wish to use web2.0 whilst being sensitive to the concerns of a bilingual community. A summary of this can be found in Appendix 2.

A search of the WWW for existing bilingual guidelines was only able to identify guidelines relating to web1.0. These have little direct application in web2.0.

An examination of some existing bilingual web2.0 services was conducted. This was useful in contextualising some of the challenges and identifying possible approaches. The results of this can be found in Appendix 3.

### 1.1. *Overview*

This report begins by identifying the characteristics of web2.0 that pose particular challenges for bilingual provision, outlines some potential approaches and re-examines the notion of dealing with languages on a basis

of equality within the context of web2.0. This is discussed in sections 3, 4 and 5.

On the basis of the information gathering activities, it has been possible to assemble some principles which are sympathetic to the concerns of organisations but which remain true to the notion of treating Welsh and English on the basis of equality. These are discussed in sections 6 and 7.

This report also makes some specific suggestions and recommendations to the Welsh Language Board for carrying forward work in this area. These are made in section 8.

## 2. Web2.0 characterisation

Web2.0 is diverse and can be defined and characterised in many different ways. Among the most well known examples at the moment are social networking applications (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), collaborative authoring applications (e.g. Wikipedia), media sharing applications (e.g. Flickr, YouTube), social tagging and ranking applications (e.g. Delicious, StumbleUpon) and blogging (e.g. Blogger.com, Twitter). Some earlier applications such as newsgroups, email lists, forums and bulletin boards can also be considered to be web2.0. There are no clear boundaries between these different application types – for example Facebook facilitates a form of photo sharing as well as social networking.

From this diversity, there are four characteristics that appear to have particular significance for bilingual provision:

- User generated content – expectation that there will be user generated content and that this is to be encouraged.
- Dialogical – the overall communication is more like a dialogue or conversation between the organisation and the users.
- Agile – the conversation between the organisation and the users is fast paced, responds to events quickly and the course of the discussion cannot be predicted.
- May be hosted by external service providers – so limited control over the interface.

Compared with traditional web1.0 web presences, web2.0 appears to require an organisation to operate in a far less controlling fashion. It cannot absolutely control the content, the topic, the speed of the conversation, or in some cases the very software platform used to deliver its web2.0 presence. There is a general loss of clarity in the boundary of an organisation's responsibilities and control. There are also boundary issues around whether individual members of staff are representing their organisation or are acting as private citizens.

This lack of clear boundaries has relevance with regard to the extent of application of Welsh Language provision, for example:

*If my organisation is hosting a blog, do I need to ensure that user-generated content is bilingual?*

*Can my organisation release our video content on YouTube if the interface is only in English?*

The suggestions presented in this report are intended to support organisations experimenting with web2.0 whilst at the same time addressing the issue of bilingual provision.

## **2.1. Terminology**

In this section a variety of terms are introduced in order to add precision to the subsequent discussion and suggestions.

### **2.1.1. General**

**Application** – a web2.0 system hosted externally to the organisation, e.g. Facebook.

**Service** – a web2.0 service that an organisation provides, e.g. a blog, a Facebook group, or content contribution to Wikipedia. These may be hosted on external applications or internally hosted by the organisation, e.g. running blogging software on its own servers.

### **2.1.2. People**

**Staff:** representatives of the organisation.

**Public:** people other than those who represent the organisation. They may be private individuals or may be representatives of other organisations.

This distinction is not straightforward in web2.0 and an individual may sometimes be acting as staff and sometimes as public. This issue is not explored further here as it is a wider web2.0 issue and organisations will need to decide for themselves where this boundary lies.

### **2.1.3. Content**

While web2.0 technologies take a variety of different forms, we can conceptualise their basic common operations in the following way:

- A **message** is posted by staff. Messages are more substantial pieces of content (text, images, audio, video) which are more likely to be subjected to some form of quality control and are less responsive (less informal, more likely to be perceived of as being from the organisation rather than an individual member of staff, less personality). Therefore there is more opportunity to take these through a translation process or to produce a parallel language version. Messages will typically be discussion starters rather than responses. The originating individual

may be identified, but a message may well be presented as a collective output, e.g. from “the team”.

- One or more **comments** in reply to the “message” or other events may be posted by the public. All content created by the public (user-generated content) is referred to in this report as comments.
- One or more **responses** in reply to the comments, messages or other events may be posted by the staff. These are unlikely to be subjected to any form of quality control, are responsive and present more the personality of the individual member of staff. The originating individual likely to be identified.

Thus a message may be a blog post, an image on Flickr, a video on YouTube, the creation of a thread on a message board, and so on. It could be a tweet (a short message) on Twitter, but most tweets would seem to be better described as responses. The combination of messages, comments, and responses within a particular service (e.g. a blog) is referred to as a **stream**. A service may contain one or more streams.

#### **2.1.4. Basic structural alternatives**

A person will access a stream in one of three ways: embedded in the interface provided by the application, embedded in the interface provided by the organisation (in the case of a service), or through their own interface (for example a blog feed reader).

Where the stream is embedded in an interface provided by the application, there may be both Welsh and English interfaces (e.g. Facebook), or versions (e.g. Wikipedia and Wicipedia), or the interface may only be available in one language.

Where the stream is embedded in an interface provided by the organisation, the options are to either provide separate Welsh/English interfaces or a bilingual interface.

#### **2.1.5. Basic language alternatives**

A stream may deal with languages in one of three ways:

- The stream is bilingual, mixing Welsh and English content together.
- Two parallel streams, one in Welsh and one in English.
- A monolingual stream in either Welsh or English.

A bilingual stream can be made to appear monolingual, for example by providing separate syndication feeds (e.g. RSS or Atom) for each language in a blog, or by providing filtering methods. While this may work for messages, it is not easily extended to comments and responses.

### 2.1.6. The organisation's role

The role of an organisation in a specific service may be characterised along a rough spectrum from “Moderator” to “Content Provider”.

**Moderator** – a privileged role, with authority, power, control, responsibility for entire stream including moderating role over content provided by the public. A strong commitment to making the community work and the organisation will be willing to expend additional resources to try to ensure its success.

**Agent** – a non-privileged role, authority, power and control rests with other parties. The organisation has responsibility only for own contributions to the stream. The organisation has influence within the stream and may have a strong commitment to making the community work. The organisation may be willing to expend additional resources and exert influence to try to ensure its success.

**Participant** – a non-privileged role; authority, power and control rests with other parties. The organisation has responsibility only for own contributions to the stream. Making the community work is not a major reason for the organisation's involvement, and the organisation's commitment of resources is unlikely to go beyond its own contributions.

**Provider** – the organisation does not participate directly in the stream but allows its content to be used in that stream by others. It is assumed that the organisation does not engage directly with the stream in any role and also does not act as a host for the stream. It is further assumed that all such content can be understood as messages rather than responses. No commitment by the organisation to making the community work, making content available is the limit of the resources expended.

## 3. The spirit of this report

One of the themes identified in discussions with stakeholders was a degree of doubt about the concept of producing this report. It may therefore be useful to begin by trying to define the spirit in which the suggestions are proposed and within which they should be interpreted and applied.

These suggestions are meant to support organisations that choose to adopt web2.0, rather than place hurdles in their way.

These suggestions take as a given that organisations have a genuine commitment to providing services in Welsh and English on a basis of equality.

Web2.0 presents a large number of unknowns; it is still essentially an experimental medium. As such it is inevitable that not everything that is attempted will be successful. Organisations must be free to experiment and be comfortable with the possibility of failure. The value of this experimentation lies in understanding the failures and the successes, so that future attempts are more likely to be successful.

Guidelines for web2.0 should be understood as a work in progress (or a perpetual beta, to use the web2.0 jargon), rather than a definitive statement. These suggestions will also require some thought and interpretation when applied by organisations, as they are deliberately generic.

## **4. Equality of what?**

### **4.1. *Equality of content***

In web1.0 the concept of treating the users on the basis of equality equated fairly directly to providing content in both Welsh and English. This was reasonably achievable as the content was largely relatively static.

In one sense this is a fairly simple approach for web2.0, as it involves no intellectual intervention other than that involved in translation. It has a benefit in that neither language appears quantitatively or qualitatively less strong than the other (unless translations are marked). However it arguably misses the main purpose of web2.0, creating communities and conversations.

To take one example, imagine an organisation which posts messages bilingually, only posts responses in Welsh and which only ever receives comments in Welsh – these are all translated into English. At the level of equality of content an equal service is being provided, in terms of building communities and conversations, it is clear that the English provision is failing for some reason.

To take another example, imagine two vibrant communities each having a satisfying, engaging conversation in its own language, each conversation independent of the other. Why should each of these discussions be constantly disrupted, fairly randomly, by translated content from the other community which may be discussing very different topics?

There are of course significant questions about whether such equality could actually be achieved. Machine translation in some languages may be rapid and cheap enough, but the quality is not yet satisfactory. Human translation could provide acceptable quality, but it is not necessarily rapid, or cheap.

It is likely that the greatest resource required would be that for translation.

While extreme examples have been selected to make a point, equality of content does not appear to be sufficient, neither is it necessary. It is also unlikely to be achievable.

The measurement of equality of content is very easy.

### **4.2. *Equality of opportunity***

The two language streams contain different content. The organisation posts messages bilingually. Comments are welcomed in either languages and responses to comments are given in the same language as the comment. No

attempt is made to translate content and the two language streams contain different content. It has the disadvantage in that one language may quantitatively dominate the other, possibly leading to eventual abandonment of that language within the stream.

This is a laissez-faire approach to creating communities and conversations.

Its resource requirements are relatively light. Aside from messages, no translation is required if the organisation's staff are able to cover the two languages.

The most active language community would consume the greatest resource.

The measurement of equality of experience is fairly easy.

### **4.3. *Equality of experience***

While the two language streams contain different content, each is providing a rich, engaging experience for its community.

While there is no necessity for translations, bridges between the two communities are important, both to provide a degree of openness and also to cross-fertilise ideas.

In order to provide an equality of experience an organisation is likely to need to expend more resource on a weaker language community. However this "weakness" may not be down to simple member numbers, but may be more a reflection of engagement within the community.

The measurement of equality of experience is very difficult.

## **5. Suggestions for development of bilingualism in web2.0**

The suggestions presented here are high level, focussing on general approaches and issues, rather than the detail of a specific web2.0 application or service.

Several general principles underpin them:

- Providing an equality of service to the two language communities.
- Equality of service based on equality of experience.
- Supporting the two language communities.
- Supporting user choice of language.
- Equally high quality of organisational involvement in both languages.
- Building bridges between the language communities.

While the present report refers only to Welsh and English languages, there may be contexts where additional languages need to be included. The report can be used to include those additional languages and these can be applied in those additional contexts.

## 5.1. Overall approach

**Suggestion 1:** Provide a monolingual service only where this can be justified.

**Comments:** In some circumstances an organisation may be justified in providing a monolingual service either in Welsh or English. However, the justification must be in accordance with the general principle of providing an equality of service to the two language communities. Such cases are likely to be exceptional. **Note particularly** that the fact that Welsh speakers are able to use an English language service does not demonstrate that there is no demand for a Welsh language service.

**Suggestion 2:** In the absence of a justification for providing a monolingual service, a bilingual service should be provided.

**Comments:** The default assumption should be that providing both a Welsh language service and an English language service is appropriate.

**Suggestion 3:** Where a bilingual service is provided, separate streams for Welsh and English are preferred.

**Comments:** Bilingual streams are problematic for several reasons. They disrupt the reading experience, the less frequently used language may be visually dominated by the other language, making it difficult to locate content in that language and making the public uncertain as to whether or not it is appropriate to use that language. However, it is important to provide bridges between the separate language streams.

**Suggestion 4:** Aspire to provide equality of experience.

**Comments:** This does not mean that equality of content or equality of opportunity should never be the model chosen. There may be specific contexts in which they are the appropriate approach. However the organisation needs to be clear about the reasons it is not providing, or aspiring to provide, equality of experience.

**Suggestion 5:** Drive users to the appropriate language stream

**Comments:** Not only should speakers of each language be driven to the web2.0 services provided in their language, it should also be made clear where services are made in the other language and easy navigation to them should also be provided.

**Suggestion 6:** Organisations should monitor the “health” of their communities.

**Comments:** Although this is necessary, it is far from clear how this should be done. The work of Preece, identified in the literature review below, has started to explore these issues. Among the potential

measurements she suggests are: messages per member, quality of contribution, number of participants, and number of uncivil behaviours. It is also not clear whether the measures of “health” for two parallel monolingual streams should be the same or at the same threshold. For some measures (e.g. quality of contributors) they might be, whilst others (e.g. number of participants) might not be. A possibly simpler and more useful approach would be to ask the users about the experience of using the stream.

## 5.2. *Messages and responses*

**Suggestion 7:** Messages (as opposed to responses) should be provided in both languages.

**Comments:** If the stream is bilingual then the message may be bilingual or two separate monolingual messages may be posted at the same time. If there are two monolingual streams, then a message in the appropriate language should be posted to each at the same time.

**Suggestion 8:** Messages should be posted in both languages simultaneously.

**Comments:** It is assumed that for messages (as opposed to responses) there is more opportunity to take these through a translation process or to write a parallel text. A severe posting lag in one language may undermine the usefulness of that community.

**Suggestion 9:** Where an application or service supports tagging of messages (these may be texts, photos, videos etc.), tag in the language appropriate to the message, or if the message has no language, tag in both languages.

**Comments:** Organisations should also consider whether it is appropriate to tag a message with a tag denoting the language itself.

**Suggestion 10:** Responses (as opposed to messages) should be provided in the same language as the comment or message which provoked the response.

**Comments:** The only exception to this might be if the comment provoking the response breaks the language policy for the stream (i.e. it is using the “wrong” language in a monolingual stream) [Suggestion 38].

**Suggestion 11:** The speed of response should be the same for both languages.

**Comments:** Excessive delays in responses will be damaging to the sense of responsiveness and communication within the community. If a difference in the speed of response between the language

communities is unavoidable, this should be explained in the stream's terms and conditions.

**Suggestion 12:** In situations where responses have not been provoked, they should be either in the language of the stream (if monolingual) or in the poster's language of choice.

**Comments:** In this situation an organisation should be mindful of the principle of equality of experience. It would not be appropriate for an organisation to only ever provide non-provoked responses in one language, unless a monolingual service is provided [Suggestions 1, 2].

### 5.3. *Translation*

**Suggestion 13:** Do not require or suggest that users provide translations for their comments.

**Comments:** The mandating of, or the implication of an obligation on, users to provide translations will act as a barrier to their participation in the community.

**Suggestion 14:** Do not require or suggest that staff provide translations for their responses.

**Comments:** The mandating of, or the implication of an obligation on, staff to provide translations will act as a barrier to their participation in the community and reduce responsiveness.

**Suggestion 15:** If an organisation does decide to translate comments or responses, these translations should be clearly marked as such and the original poster acknowledged.

**Comments:** While this approach is not recommended, if it is necessary it needs to be handled carefully [Suggestion 16]. This should be mentioned in the terms and conditions.

**Suggestion 16:** If the organisation intends to translate content, they should consider introducing an appeals procedure in cases where the public are unsatisfied with the translation of their comments.

**Comments:** Because web2.0 is often about personalities and online brands, people may object to the way in which a translation presents their words. While getting their approval for every translation is infeasible, allowing them the possibility to correct obvious errors or misrepresentations is important. This should be mentioned in the terms and conditions.

### 5.4. *Language*

**Suggestion 17:** Adopt a relaxed attitude towards the style of language used by staff in responses.

**Comments:** The nature of web2.0 and the principle of preserving personality suggest that an informal language style, whether Welsh or English, is both natural and appropriate for responses.

**Suggestion 18:** Accept that the organisation is not responsible for the quality of language in user comments.

**Comments:** While the terms and conditions for a stream may reasonably prohibit foul language, personal attacks and so on, it should not attempt to mandate the quality of language used as this may act as a barrier.

**Suggestion 19:** Accept that the organisation is responsible for the quality of language in messages and staff responses.

**Comments:** While an informal *style* may be appropriate (particularly in the case of responses) the language should be of an acceptable standard of correctness.

## **5.5. External applications**

**Suggestion 20:** Where organisations are using external web2.0 application to provide services, these should be clearly identified as an “official” activity of the organisation and linked to from the organisations website.

**Comments:** Whilst this is not specifically a language related issue, it is important that those activities associated with an organisation are clearly distinguished from those which are not.

**Suggestion 21:** Where organisations are using external web2.0 applications the organisation’s terms and conditions and practices regarding bilingual provision should be extended to these services.

**Comments:** In some cases the form or function of the application may not lend itself easily to bilingual or parallel monolingual use and the organisation may need to consider the best approach on a case by case basis.

**Suggestion 22:** Organisations should think carefully about providing services in applications that do not provide interfaces in both Welsh and English.

**Comments:** Many popular web2.0 applications do not provide a Welsh language interface. This should not be seen as an absolute barrier to their use, but the organisation must consider their use carefully and be able to provide a justification if asked. Among the questions they should consider are: is there an alternative application which does provide a Welsh interface (if so should the entire service be moved to

that application or just the Welsh language service); would moving the Welsh language service to another application make it less findable or have other negative effects; is the application just so popular that the Welsh provision has could be placed there despite its using an English/other language interface.

**Suggestion 23:** Where an organisation decides to use an application that does not provide interfaces in both Welsh and English, it should look for opportunities to support the development of an interface for whichever language is not supported.

**Comments:** This support could take different forms, such as contacting the application provider to ask for a different language version, supporting campaigns calling for additional language versions, or contributing translation towards crowd-sourced translation efforts.

**Suggestion 24:** Consider a separate Welsh and English presence in applications; one identified by the Welsh name of the organisation and the other by the English name.

**Comments:** In some cases an application may lend itself easily to having a single bilingual point of presence for an organisation, but typically this will result in a cumbersome solution. If separate presences are provided it is important to provide links between them.

**Suggestion 25:** Where an organisation is providing content for use by a community it should do so on a basis of equality.

**Comments:** If, for example an organisation is offering English language content for use on Wikipedia, it should make the same/equivalent Welsh language content available for Wicipedia.

## 5.6. *Bridges*

**Suggestion 26:** Provide bridges between language communities in parallel monolingual and bilingual streams.

**Comments:** In order to provide openness between the language communities, provide some form of cross-posting of ideas. Ideally this would be in the form of Language Champions as discussed below. The posting of weekly translated summaries appears to lack flexibility and audience specificity, but may be appropriate in some circumstances. Machine translation does not appear to provide a satisfactory solution at this time.

**Suggestion 27:** Provide bridges between language communities in both directions.

**Comments:** In parallel monolingual streams there is a clear case for providing Welsh to English bridges, as the Welsh content is

inaccessible to non Welsh speakers. However the organisation should also provide English to Welsh bridges where possible, members of the Welsh community may not read the English stream for a variety of reasons even though they are able to. In a bilingual stream it is perhaps more acceptable to only provide Welsh to English bridges as the Welsh community cannot avoid the English content.

**Suggestion 28:** Provide bridges between language communities in wider contexts.

**Comments:** The introduction of ideas from other streams is a common feature of certain web2.0 services, such as blogging. Where an organisation has a strong commitment to making a community work, it should consider bringing in ideas from other communities. This would be best achieved by a Language Champion, but there may be some merit in providing a “news roundup” along the lines of the weekly translated summary. Again, machine translation does not appear to provide a satisfactory solution at this time.

**Suggestion 29:** Accept or even encourage members of the community to act as bridges by bringing ideas from one language community into the other.

**Comments:** This is discussed further under Language Champions below. This might involve translation or summarisation, but is essentially sensitive to the conversation and the community in a way that mandatory translation is not.

## **5.7. Language policies and terms and conditions**

**Suggestion 30:** Each stream should have an associated set of terms and conditions.

**Comments:** These terms and conditions should be easily accessible and clearly written. It should be provided in both English and Welsh.

**Suggestion 31:** Where organisations host a service, the role they play in the service needs to be articulated in the terms and conditions.

**Comments:** It is important for both staff and the public to understand the limits of an organisation’s responsibility.

**Suggestion 32:** The terms and conditions should provide a clear language policy for users.

**Comments:** Clear guidance should be provided as to which language or languages users are welcome to use on a stream. Alternative language streams should be clearly indicated and the user should be able to navigate to that alternative stream easily. The actions to be taken in the case of a breach of language policy should be made clear.

**Suggestion 33:** Where appropriate, the terms and conditions should also lay out the organisation's responsibilities with regard to language.

**Comments:** This might be general principles, or may specify response times and so on. This is particularly important if a monolingual service is being provided, in which case a justification should be provided, or an intended timetable to provide a bilingual service.

**Suggestion 34:** The organisation needs a code of practice for staff.

**Comments:** This is obviously generally true of web2.0 but it is important for staff to understand when they are representing the organisation and therefore should operate under the code of practice for staff (including language policies) and when they are acting as a private individual (under the general language policy as laid down in the terms and conditions). This may be particularly complex if they are allowed to operate as both staff and private individuals within the same stream.

## 5.8. *Moderation*

**Suggestion 35:** Comments in both languages should be moderated on the same basis.

**Comments:** Unless there is specific reason to treat the language communities differently, e.g. they have each defined their own terms and conditions. It is likely that organisations will want to moderate user generated content, particularly when it appears on services hosted by the organisation. Details of the moderation policy should be included in the terms and conditions.

**Suggestion 36:** Moderators need to be aware that language may become an issue even though it is not a topic of the community.

**Comments:** It is possible that the issue of language may be raised within a stream even though it is not an appropriate topic for that stream. Moderation of these comments needs to be handled with care. The best approach may be to point out that this stream is not for discussing language issues and direct them to another stream or service where it is appropriate.

**Suggestion 37:** Organisations need to define the action to be taken in the case of an incorrect language being used in a monolingual language stream. This should be articulated in the terms and conditions and applied consistently.

**Comments:** There are various options, the comment may be:  
Deleted.

Ignored.  
Kept and translated into appropriate language.  
Translated into appropriate language, deleted.  
Cross posted to appropriate language stream, deleted.  
Cross posted to appropriate language stream, translated into appropriate language, deleted.

The organisation may wish to consider different responses depending on the intention of the poster. A deliberately provocative use of the incorrect language may be treated differently to an innocent mistake.

**Suggestion 38:** If the organisation intends to reserve the right to modify, delete or translate comments, this should be clearly stated in the terms and conditions.

**Comments:** While this may be possible for services hosted by the organisation, it may be problematic on externally hosted applications, where the external host's terms and conditions may apply.

## 6. Building bridges and Language Champions

While parallel monolingual streams are the preferred approach, both the literature and discussions with stakeholder representatives raise concerns that this approach lacks openness and that a cross-over of ideas between the language communities is important. Organisations must consider how they can provide “bridges” between the parallel streams.

An idea that came from the literature (Cunliffe and Harries) and which was well received by stakeholder representatives was that of Language Champions. Whilst the role of a Language Champion as conceived by Cunliffe and Harries was mainly to promote the minority language community, in this report the role is effectively to promote both communities by acting as an informal channel between the two.

The idea is not that the Language Champion formally translates content from one language community to the other, but that they act as a conduit through which relevant ideas can be introduced from one community into the other. This has the benefit of avoiding the need for direct translation or summarising, and it is also a far more natural model for bridging the communities. This approach fits well with the concept of providing equality of experience.

In order to fulfil this role a person would need to be fluently bilingual, a topic expert and good at writing for the applicable web2.0 medium (e.g. blogging).

It would be possible to combine this role with other roles, in one or both of the language streams, though this is not necessary. These other possible roles include moderator, conversation leader, and producer of messages. Given the language skills required, it may be that the Language Champion is particularly tasked with supporting and developing the minority language community.

Clearly the set of skills required by a Language Champion makes them a limited resource. This may represent a new responsibility for an existing member of staff who may require training, or it may be a new member of staff. In either case there are likely to be resource issues.

It was initially conceived that the Language Champion would be a member of staff, but discussions with stakeholder representatives suggested other possibilities, including volunteers from the public, or representatives of other organisations involved in the community (charities, societies, businesses etc.). Similarly this could apply to the roles of moderator, conversation leader, or producer of messages. A full exploration of these possibilities is well beyond the remit of this report, but it may provide one way for organisations to address resource issues.

## **7. Recommendations for the Welsh Language Board**

The task of producing this report has been a challenging one for a variety of reasons:

- The changing nature of web2.0. Whilst the abstract model is quite general it is difficult to predict new services and the challenges they will pose.
- The limited evidence base. While these suggestions have an evidence base in the research literature and the practical concerns of stakeholders, there is a lack of detailed, experience-based evidence.
- Differences in the specific contexts of bilingualism make it difficult to generalise from the experiences of other language communities.
- Differences in the way organisations roll-out web2.0 services and the extent to which this roll-out is resourced make it difficult to provide generally applicable guidelines.
- It has not yet been possible to test the suggestions in practice.

During discussions with stakeholders a number of useful suggestions were made concerning the process of producing guidelines. Taking into account these concerns and suggestions, the following Recommendations are made:

### **Recommendation 1.**

This report should be considered as an interim set of suggestions only. They should be revisited in due course.

### **Recommendation 2.**

During at least the period for which the interim report is applied, the Welsh Language Board should work with selected organisations in order to develop a set of best practice case studies.

### **Recommendation 3.**

The Board should consider ways in which it can promote communication among those organisations rolling-out bilingual web2.0 services in Wales. One possibility would be to set up (or arrange for someone else to set up) and publicise some form of web2.0 forum

where experiences (both positive and negative) can be shared, questions can be raised and so on. This may also help to foster the “environment of safe exploration”.

#### Recommendation 4.

The best practice case-studies and additional evidence which may have emerged should then inform a set of revised suggestions and be fed into further versions of the Welsh Language Boards *Guidelines and Standards for Bilingual Computing*.

#### Recommendation 5.

The Board should consider how it will monitor and respond to potentially significant new web2.0 applications and services emerging in the future. While a forum of the type mentioned in Recommendation 3 may be part of the answer, it may be appropriate to provide briefings on how the recommendations apply to these new technologies, or to provide an updated version of the suggestions.

## 8. Conclusions

It is clear from discussion with stakeholder representatives that there is an enthusiasm for web2.0, but that this is tempered by uncertainty. While much of this uncertainty is simply about web2.0 itself, there is uncertainty specifically around the issue of bilingual provision.

The views of those stakeholder representatives have been instrumental in defining the spirit of this report. The intention of the suggestions has been to support their experimentation with web2.0 whilst ensuring that bilingual considerations are put into practice.

Bilingual provision in web2.0 should be seen as as a natural characteristic of the conversation that an organisation wishes to have with the public in Wales and not as a barrier of any sort.

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## Appendix 1: Literature review

While the review of the literature revealed little which directly addressed the issue of guidelines for bilingualism and web2.0, some relevant concerns were identified. These are summarised briefly in this section.

Some of these sources present issues that have relevance in their specific language context, but may be less applicable in Wales. Many of the concerns identified in the literature were echoed by stakeholder representatives.

The year of publication has been omitted here for brevity.

### **Models**

While many of the sources considered did not discuss the overall approach taken, three models were identified. It should be noted that none of these approaches appears to have been evaluated in any significant way.

“Create a policy for all social media use in government to be “open” to whatever language someone feels comfortable writing in. If citizens want to comment in French, that’s fine...someone should answer them in French. If they comment in English, answer in English. Create an

open platform of bilingualism, not a one-way bilingual communication vehicle.” (Kujawski)

“To encourage people to offer their ideas when using blogs, they must be allowed to do it quickly in their language of choice in order to make effective use of this medium. Instead of making it mandatory to translate everything, we summarize it all in both languages on a weekly basis. This seems to satisfy bilingual requirements.” (Cochrane)

Separate Welsh and English forums with the Facilitator seeding debates with translations of pertinent issues from the other language. Suggestion that support be given to minority language “champions” among the community – acting as editors, moderators, content providers, keeping debate live. (Cunliffe and Harries)

### **Translation**

While the idea of translation was mentioned in many sources and applied in some, it was clear that this was not seen as an easy approach, or in some cases seen as an acceptable approach at all. To a large extent these concerns are based on the current state of the art in machine translation. Future developments may reduce or remove some of these concerns.

- Speed of response may be compromised if translation is necessary before publication. (Kampa; Kujawski)
- Users may be concerned about the length of time a translation will take. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- 10 hour translation turn-around provided in one instance (not clear if this was acceptable to users). (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Users may not wish to lose control over their own words. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Users may feel that they are imposing a burden if translation is provided. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- There may be a lack of resources available for translation. (Kujawski)
- Good translation may increase the chance of a person using their preferred language. (Climent et al.; Cunliffe and Harries)
- Users must have faith in the translations. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Do not require users to provide translations. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- The importance of preserving “personality” in translations. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Machine translation may have difficulties with informal writing style. (Climent et al.)
- The notion of quality of translation is related to the purpose of the translation. (Thomas et al.)

### **Openness**

- Separate language communities risk developing into inwardly focussed groups. (Kampa)
- A language barrier complicates transparency and openness to outsiders. (Kampa)

- Bilinguals may act as bridges between two language communities. (Herring et al.)
- Separation of language communities reduces the visibility of the minority language to majority language speakers. (Cunliffe and Harries)

### ***Language choice***

- Minority language speaking users may write in majority language out of courtesy, uncertainty, wanting to reach the widest audience, prestige. (Climent et al.)
- Possible that the users' language choice is influenced by whether it is a "spontaneous" event or a response. (Climent et al.)
- Minority language use may be seen as a political act, majority language often seen as apolitical. (Fernandez)
- Due to weight of numbers, majority community may be more active and attractive, attracting bilingual minority language speakers away from the minority language community. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Some topics may particularly attract minority language speakers, e.g. language related issues. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- May also be preferences among bilinguals e.g. reading certain types of news stories in a particular language. May need to be aware of minority language operating only in restricted domains. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Language inertia, people favour their usual language of the topic, or usual language of the forum. (Cunliffe and Harries)

### ***Policies and moderation***

In most of the sources where policy and moderation were discussed, they were not discussed in detail and no policy documents were found.

- If there is moderation of user generated content, then moderators must be able to read both languages. (Atkinson and Powell)
- Change in language policies may confuse or agitate users. (Atkinson and Powell)
- A policy on language use is necessary. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Support users' language of choice in reading and writing. User choice should be only factor. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Might be appropriate to offer some monolingual forums or allow user choice. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- May be need for positive discrimination in favour of minority language. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Maintain the visibility of the minority language. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Support minority language Champions among the community – as editors, content providers, keeping debate live. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- Success needs a social solution, not just a technical one. (Cunliffe and Harries)
- There is a need to adapt guidelines and policies on bilingualism. (Kujawski)

## **Monitoring**

While some attempt at monitoring is reported in Cunliffe and Harries, this did not appear to be an ongoing process. This issue of monitoring the “health” or “success” of online communities is best explored in the work of Preece and the concept of “sociability”. Preece identifies the need to define measures of success and to apply these measures. Among the potential measurements she suggests are: messages per member, thread depth, reciprocity, quality of contribution, number of participants, percentage of lurkers, number of uncivil behaviours, trust and quality of contributors.

One interesting additional question is whether or not the measures of success for two parallel monolingual streams should be the same and at the same threshold. For some measures (e.g. quality of contributors) they might be, whilst others (e.g. number of participants) might not be.

## **Appendix 2: Stakeholder perspectives**

Three separate interviews were conducted with five stakeholder representatives from three organisations. The issues described here are an interpretation and fusion of their views in order to provide a sense of their perspectives and concerns. In some cases an issue may have only been raised by a single stakeholder representative and other stakeholder representatives might have disagreed if they had considered the point.

### **Personality**

- Personality is an important element of web2.0.
- In order to be of interest, content must be targeted towards a specific audience.
- Feeling of accessibility is given by organisation’s response to user comments.
- Stimulating conversation + ease of use = empowerment.

### **Control**

- Lack of control – need to go with the flow.
- User generated content = loss of control, may be hijacked.
- Staff work/non work barrier breaking down – staff talking about work, to what extent do they represent the organisation – should organisational policies apply to them?
- Chain of command within organisations broken.
- Lack of clear boundaries.
- Benefits outweigh downside.
- Issues for those organisations with Welsh language Schemes.
- Does the Welsh Language Board have any control over web2.0 services – it’s people not organisations?
- Welsh Language Board should adopt a light-touch advisory role rather than a regulatory role.

## **Translation**

- It is in the nature of web2.0 that material in one language will be taken by users and translated and used elsewhere.
- Facilitate community translations.
- Translation of messages is enough.
- Translation = disruption of flow, issues around integrity of conversation.
- English speaker cannot understand translation of their words; Welsh speaker may not approve of the translation of their words, and feel loss of ownership of their words – their language.
- Trust issues with translation, particularly with dynamic content.
- Translation after initial post is time sensitive.
- Need to respond to events quickly.
- Take translation process away from original author to allow them to respond quickly.
- Translation loses personality – would be useful to have guidelines for translators.
- Voice lost in translation.
- Mark translations as such.
- Complaints that Welsh too formal – support multiple levels (styles/registers) of written language.
- Summaries may also be dangerous.
- Would like to reveal more professional content, typically monolingual – translation, or English only, or presentation and allow community translation.

## **Language Champions**

- Language champions interesting idea, bringing ideas across.
- Need conversation starters.
- Not necessarily responsible for messages.
- Movement of ideas in both directions.
- Who would champions be?
- Fluently bilingual.
- Topic expertise.
- Open conversation – personal but representing the organisation
- Staff buy-in required – make it as easy as possible – write and publish quickly.
- Good blogger (would require training – different form of media = resources)
- Single person for both languages (resources, effort).
- Able to moderate well – recognising potential problems (language antagonism).
- Moderation: bilingual moderators, competent Welsh speakers.
- Need for quality of Welsh moderation to be equal to that of English moderation.
- Possibility of hostile responses to language, therefore needs moderation.
- Special new media officer or lots of different people?

- Limited capacity of web2.0 savvy Welsh speakers – content person, moderator, content provider.
- Existing members of staff, new members of staff – where does this come from?
- Possibility of user champions? Volunteers – may not be appropriate.
- Correspondents – charities, other organisations, societies, and businesses (help generate content, maintain conversation...).

## **Community**

- Critical mass problematic.
- Text based polarises language communities - little understanding of minority language by non Welsh speakers - no fuzzy middle (bilingual).
- Need to actively create scenarios where Welsh can be used.
- Important to show commitment to language by organisation – conversation directed to the user.
- Highlight Welsh side of it is there – make it over obvious – drive Welsh speakers to Welsh community
- Try to get the communities to do the work, provide same service, get different take-up.
- Language as an important part of the culture – translation is a problem – English only is a problem
- Language issues – confidence, status, dealing with authority (need to emphasise that this is an informal conversational setting)
- Need to connect with Welsh speakers.
- Not box communities by language - main portals multi-language.
- Proactive invitation of community.
- Virtual geographically bounded networks - do these make sense?

## **Resources**

- Needs resources.
- Translation is an issue due to cost.
- Commitment on the part of organisations – but lack of reality about resource required.
- Need adequate, affordable capacity – limited capacity of web2.0 savvy Welsh speakers.

## **Policy**

- Need to explain why have chosen particular route – explain what is happening – may explain imbalance in content – openness.
- Set out “rules” or “use guidelines”, “policies”.
- User involvement in defining a set of policies (including language).
- Policy needs to be clear.
- Be clear that they are committed to receiving interaction in both languages.
- Monitoring the experience – essential in the guidelines – measure success of language provision.
- Should organisation mandate translation or allow monolingual communication if appropriate to the audience.

- May be appropriate in some cases to have only English or only Welsh.
- Organisation faces pressure to contribute to wider web2.0 – how to handle this.
- Are staff acting as an individual or on behalf of the organisation?
- Respond in language of user.
- People need to be comfortable using either / both languages.

### ***Equality of content***

- Equality of content lacks transparency, not open enough, misses the point.
- Not workable as a web2.0 model.
- Conversation is the important part.
- Organisation response more important than simple equality of content.

### ***Equality of opportunity***

- Equality of opportunity – no engagement or commitment to community.

### ***Equality of experience***

- Equality of experience is preferred option.
- Need conversation in their language.
- People who speak Welsh may have a different perspective – different sorts of communication, also different topics.
- Equality at the level of service, not at level of access.
- Allow discussions in both languages independently - separate conversations.
- Danger in parallel communities - can be negative if language communities don't interact.
- Compliance is not sufficient.

### ***Suggestions***

- For guidelines to be effective – need limited life span and commitment to update.
- Quite general guidance.
- Supportive of organisations which provide services bilingually but sometimes use monolingual services.
- Not too prescriptive.
- Community orientated.
- Organisations have a range of communications – from corporate to relaxed – language response must be flexible.
- Content exposed on other websites.
- Providing content to web2.0 services.
- No Welsh interface – what to do? Offer to do translation? Use Welsh language equivalent if exists? Other options...?
- Interface doesn't determine language used.
- Need principles and pitfalls.
- Voluntary code.
- Ethic of bilingualism.

- Acceptance of guidelines by web community both Welsh and English speakers – TRUST.

## **Ethos**

- Appeal – heavily user defined, user shaped.
- Challenges – responsiveness, flexibility.
- Able to say why we have done it this way.
- Space to try things out.
- Need to feel “safe”.
- Need to explore.
- Don’t be afraid of failures – safety, mutual respect, learning.
- Need to be free to use these technologies – pick up and go.
- Try it!
- Avoid “cultural bundle”.
- Need to get this right – FLEXIBILITY.
- Is web2.0 for you? Shouldn’t be pressure to take on web2.0.
- Supporting organisations.
- Positive focus.
- Positive and open.
- We don’t know the answers.
- Need to ensure that Welsh organisations can exploit web2.0.
- Web2.0 provides challenges – language an additional challenge.

## **Appendix 3: Basic language models**

This section presents six different abstract languages models which could form the basis for a web2.0 service. It suggests how messages and responses should be handled and also how to respond to comments in each language. The two languages are denoted as W and E for the sake of illustration.

### **Bilingual stream #1**

Messages bilingual  
Comments in either language accepted  
Responses bilingual

### **Bilingual stream #2**

Messages bilingual  
Comments in either language accepted  
Responses in the same language as the comment

### **Symmetrical monolingual stream for language W**

Messages in W [equivalent message in E in E stream]  
Comments in W accepted, translated into E and cross posted to E stream

Comments in E - various options:

{  
Deleted.  
Ignored.

Cross posted, kept and translated into W.  
Cross posted, translated into W, deleted.  
}

Responses in W [equivalent response in E in E stream]

### **Asymmetrical monolingual stream for language W**

Messages in W [equivalent message in E in E stream]  
Comments in W accepted  
Comments in E – various options:

{  
Deleted.  
Ignored.  
Kept and translated into W.  
Translated into W, deleted.  
Cross posted, deleted.  
Cross posted, translated into W, deleted.  
}

Responses in W

### **Highly Asymmetrical monolingual stream for language W**

Messages in W [not necessarily an equivalent message in E in E stream]

Comments in W accepted  
Comments in E – various options:

{  
Deleted.  
Ignored.  
Kept and translated into W.  
Translated into W, deleted.  
Cross posted, deleted.  
Cross posted, translated into W, deleted.  
}

Responses in W

### **Stand alone monolingual stream for language W**

Messages in W [no equivalent E stream]  
Comments in W accepted  
Comments in E – various options:

{  
Deleted.  
Ignored.  
Kept and translated into W.  
Translated into W, deleted.  
}

Responses in W