Social Media for Scientists

Are there Apps for that?

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Web 2.0 and the Science Community

- Popular Social Media (or "Web 2.0") services like MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and Twitter emerged to support mainly informal, recreational socialization among individuals and groups

- Peer networking, self-promotion (often rather narcissistic) and sharing of things like photos and videos were primary goals

- Initial formal applications tended to focus on communication or information sharing with a marketing or promotional flavor

- Increasingly understood that Social Media and other Web 2.0 tools can be repurposed or extended to support narrower professional communities with a need to communicate, collaborate, or share information and ideas at distance

Communities of Practice

- Defined as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Etienne Wenger)

- Informal, self-organizing and regulating, independent of formal organizational governance structures

- Not a new social construct in the sciences:

    - Accademia dei Lincei (Rome, 1603)

    - Royal Society (London, 1660)

    - Lunar Society (Birmingham, 1765)

Ecosystem Services Community

- Ecosystem Services are broadly defined as the benefits (life-sustaining, economic, cultural, aesthetic) that people obtain from ecosystems

- Diverse membership including government, non-governmental organization, academia, tribal, and private sector

  - Scientists (ecologists, wildlife biologists, geographers), economists, planners, conservationists and other stakeholders

- Consciously exists outside of formal organizations (and their myriad access and other policy constraints)

- Idea rich, cash poor

Ecosystem Services Community Support Website

- Proof-of-concept

- Goal to provide centralized source for topic-specific

  - News and communication

  - Collaboration support

  - Peer professional interaction (networking)

  - Knowledge management and sharing (learning)

  - Research support

- Testbed for evaluating existing and emerging Web 2.0-based tools and services' adaptability and usefulness
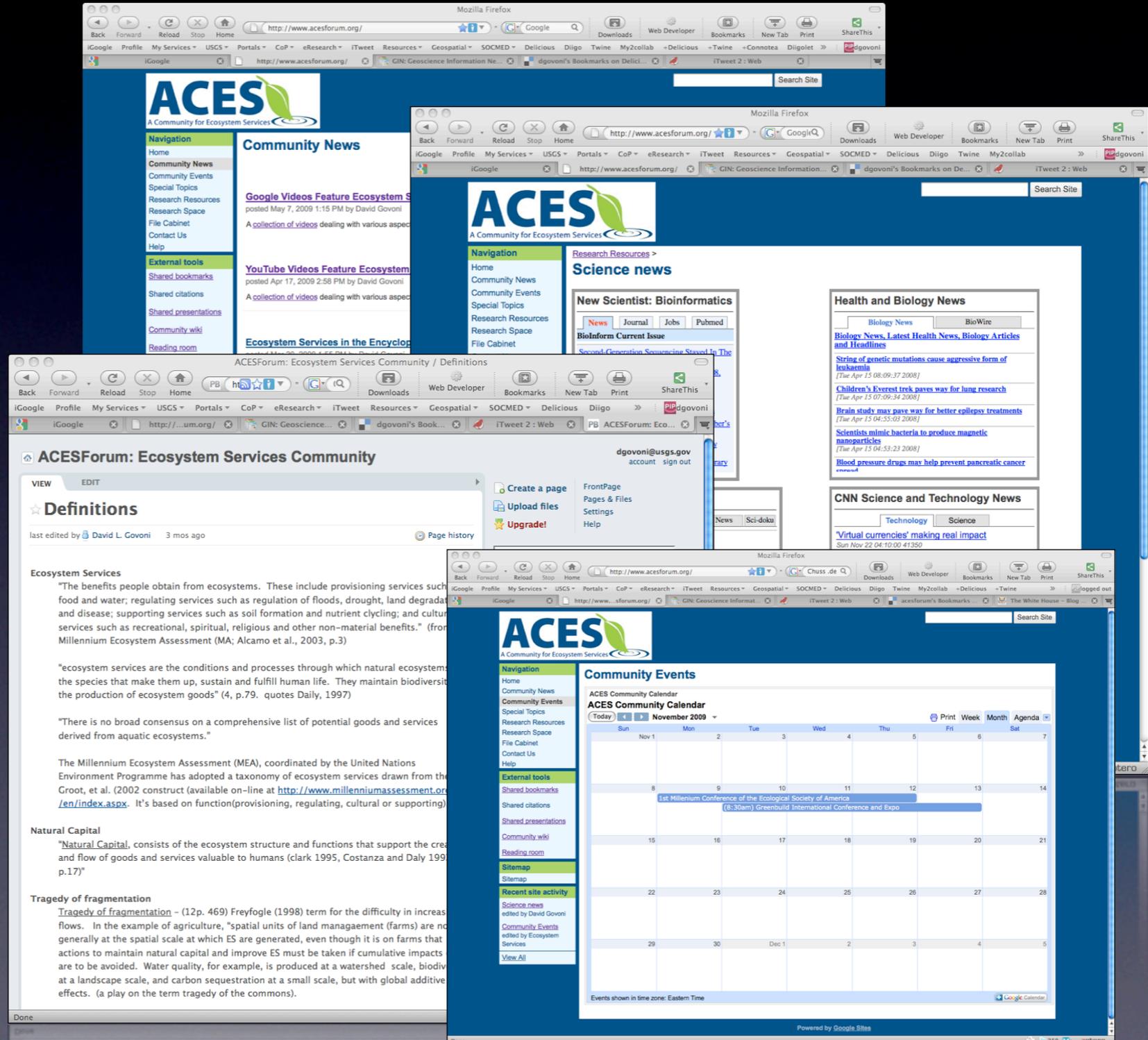
Community Access Portal

- Google Sites

- Central point of entry to "native" (embedded) and external tools, services and content

- Managed under MOU with Univ. Florida at Gainesville

- www.acesforum.org
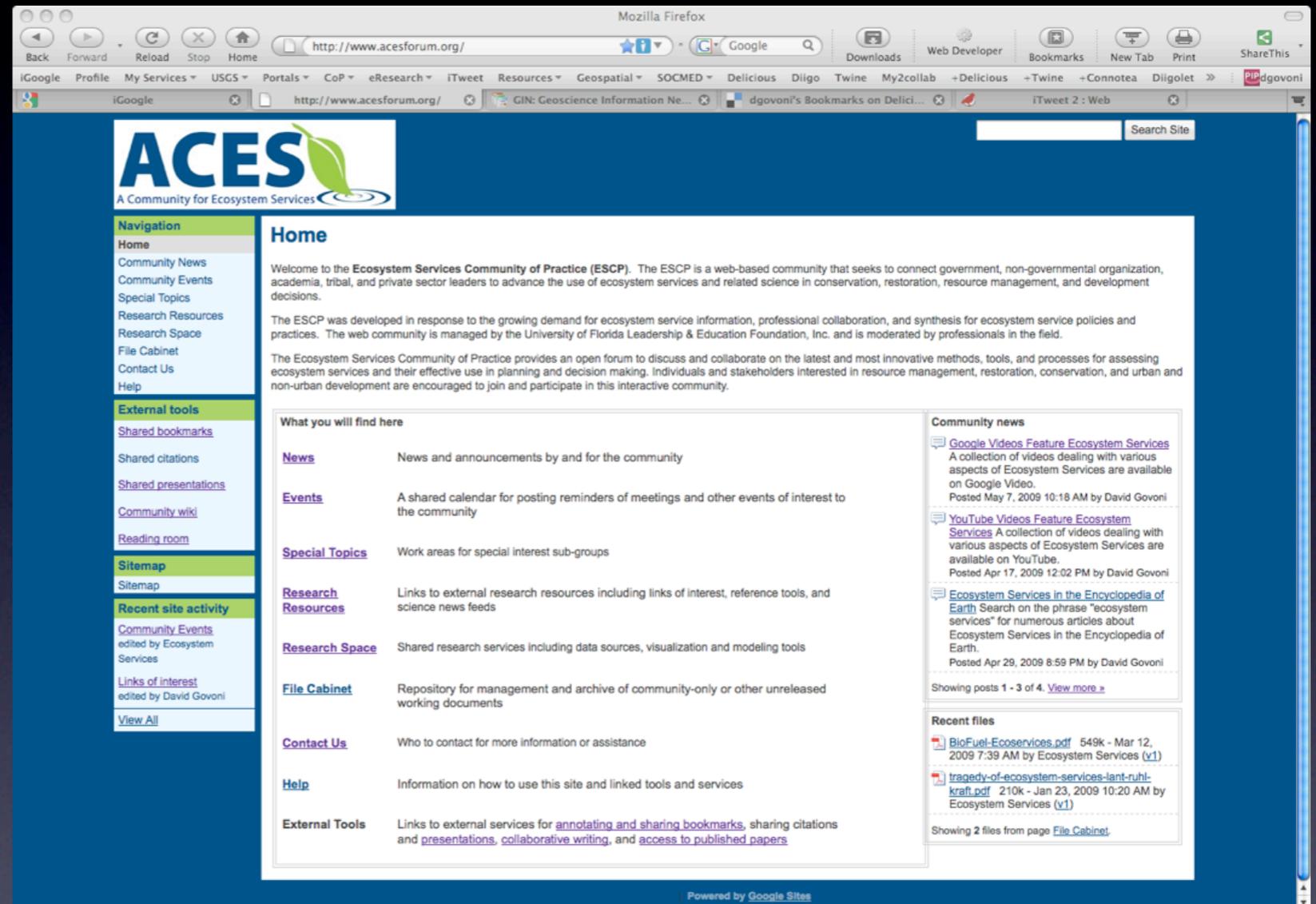
Tools and Services

- <u>News &</u>
<u>Communication</u> (topical news feeds, chat, instant messaging)

- <u>Collaboration</u> (shared events calendar, wiki, word processing, spreadsheet)

Tools and Services

- <u>Knowledge Management</u> & <u>Sharing</u> (journal articles and documents, presentations, bookmarks, photos, videos, data)

Tools and Services

- <u>Peer Professional Networking</u> (identity, trust, communication)

Tools and Services

- <u>Research Support</u> (reference tools for personal and shared digital library and citation management, library search, special purpose "gadgets" for mapping, modeling, data analysis, etc.)
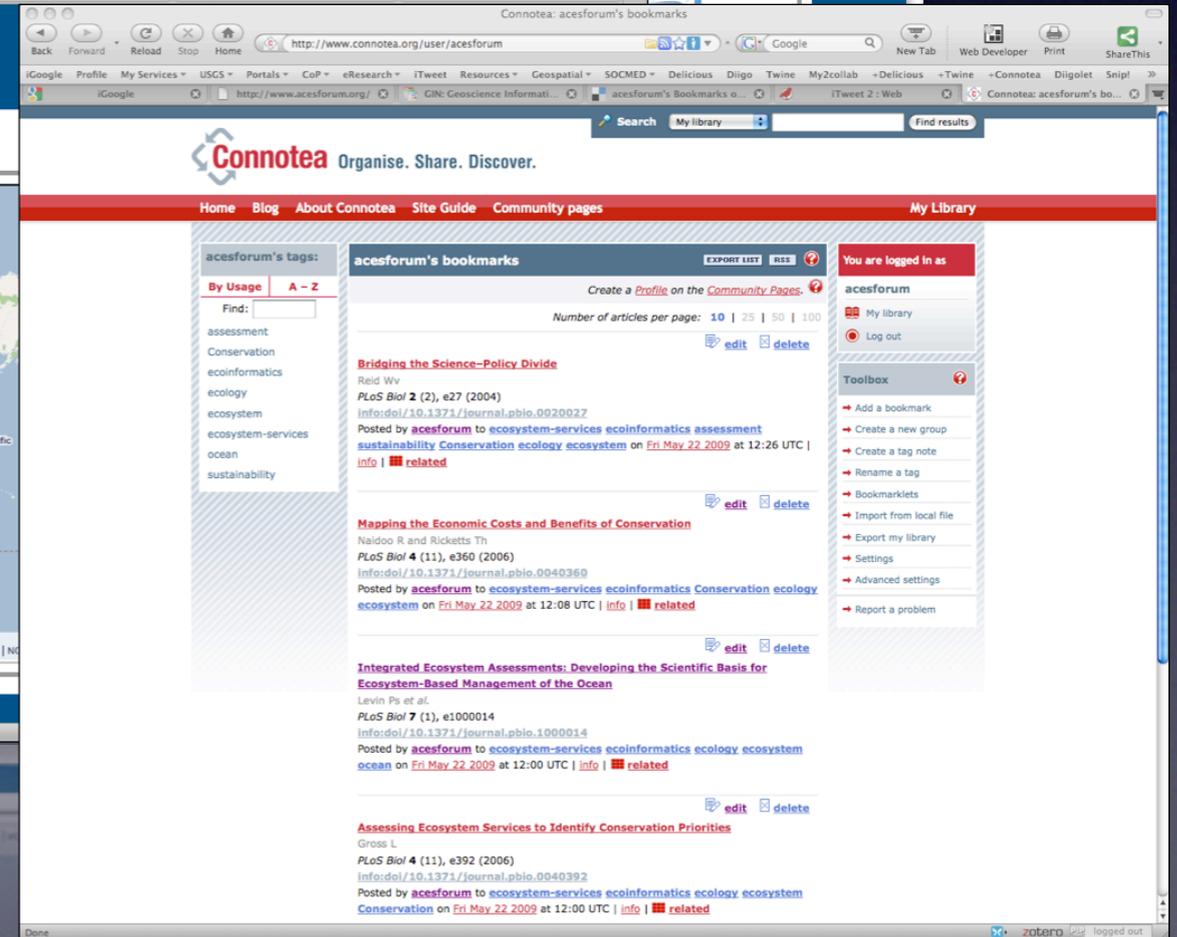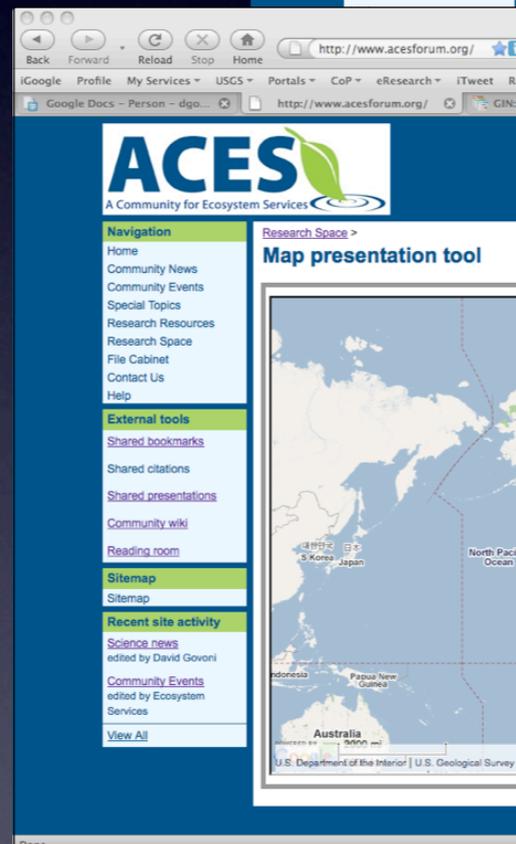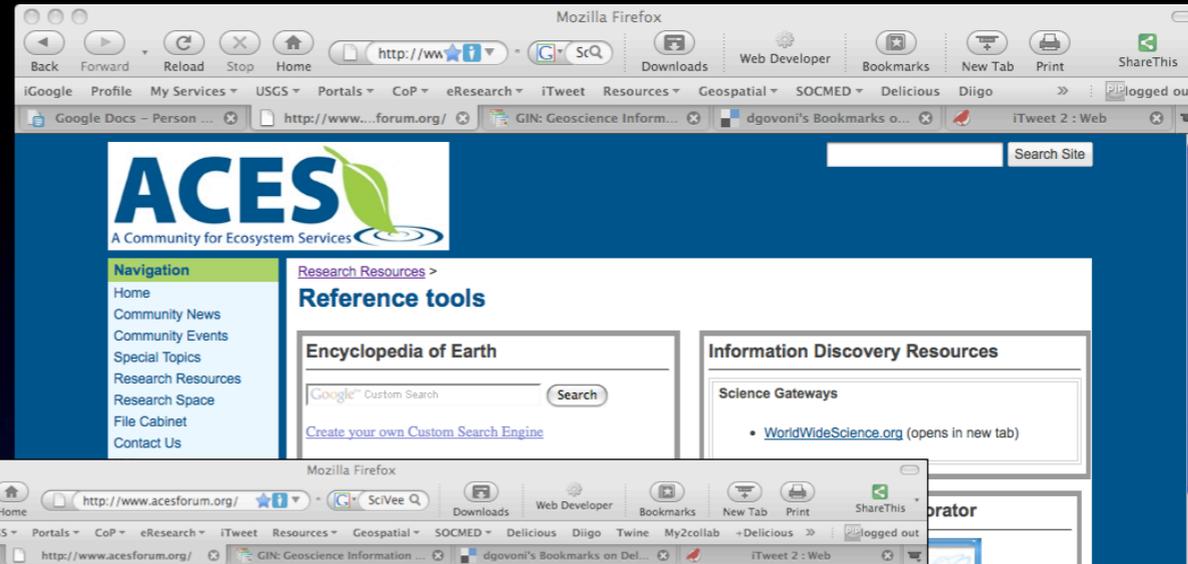
The Web 2.0 Toolbox

Function	Current Tools	Possible Additions or Alternatives
Access (Portal)	Google Sites	SciLink, ResearchGATE
News & Communication	News feeds & aggregators (in/outbound), Twitter	--
Collaboration	PBworks (wiki), Google Docs, Google Calendar	ZoHo, Wikispaces
Knowledge Management & Sharing	SlideShare, Scribd, Delicious, SciVee	YouTube, Google Video, ResearchChannel, LiveScience, Twine, Diigo, Docstoc, Mendeley
Peer Professional Networking	LinkedIn	Facebook
Research Support	Connotea, various "gadgets" for search, visualization, data storage	Zotero, CiteuLike, Drop.io, Amazon S3

Lessons Learned - Negative

- Convenience low compared to "all-in-one" systems due to need to maintain multiple accounts, sign-ons

- Services blocked by some organizations; blocking inconsistent

- Learning curve fairly steep overall; multiple, sometimes advertisement-riddled interfaces may be difficult to master

- "Free" services often limited in capacity, features; easily outgrown

- Complex site and content management issues:

  - Technology (e.g., customization, integration, backup)

  - Content (e.g., copyright, records management)

  - Users (e.g., access, participation rights, help)

Lessons Learned - Positive

- Many tools and services geared toward (or easily adapted to) scientific professional community needs exist and are improving

- Relatively low cost of entry for small to moderate size communities (most services offer limited "free" versions)

- Relatively quick set-up (days, not weeks)

  - Google Sites is a sufficient framework for organizing and providing access to the "à la carte" set of tools and services

- Further extension possible by linking to additional existing services or developing new capabilities with customized "gadgets"

- Emerging standards for identity, single sign-on, interlinking, etc.

Thank you.

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