

An expert on the internet is being interviewed about the Web 2.0 “revolution”.

Optional activity:

While you listen, decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

Sentence	True or false?
1. According to the presenter, the internet has had a big effect on our lives.	
2. Web 2.0 will changes our lives even more.	
3. Mark Mulcahy is a criminal.	
4. According to Mulcahy, the term “web 2.0” is misleading.	
5. Facebook, YouTube and MySpace are examples of Web 2.0	
6. “Social networking” is a new, frequently-used expression.	
7. Mulcahy’s site uses social networking.	
8. Mulcahy’s site is for bands who have recording contracts.	
9. According to Mulcahy, record companies are still highly important.	
10. Mulcahy thinks music will not die.	
11. Mulcahy thinks Web 2.0 will have big effects on business.	
12. MySpace is run by people who do it for fun	
13. Google and Facebook are owned by companies with some traditional ideas.	

A: Radio presenter; B: Mark Mulcahy

A: Web 2.0 – it’s a term that may not sound like that much – after all, the internet, what could be called “web 1.0” has now been around for nearly two decades, and its effects on our personal and professional lives has already been profound. But are these changes just the tip of the iceberg? Will the radical new formats and approaches that characterise Web 2.0 revolutionise our working habits even more profoundly than the original invention of the internet did?

Somebody who certainly thinks so is Mark Mulcahy, a former DJ and self-confessed “net pirate” who has recently set up his own website to encourage legal exchanges of music files.

Mark, can you tell us exactly what you think “Web 2.0” is?

B: Well, that’s a good question – it’s quite a vague term, invented, I think, by people who don’t really know that much about what is happening in terms of web development. Basically, Web 2.0 are a number of sites which encourage much great user participation – sites which, effectively, you the user create by uploading your own pictures, or music, or ideas...whatever...

A: Facebook is the obvious example...

B: Sure, Facebook, and MySpace, are good examples, YouTube being another one – but there are many more, perhaps many not as well known...

A: “Social networking” is a buzz phrase...

B: Yes – everyone’s saying it, as though it’s something new, but really it’s about these sites creating their own communities, a space where you might have “friends” who you’ve never actually met, and may never meet...

A: And your site encourages this?

B: It certainly does.

A: How?

B: Well, it’s a site where unsigned musicians and bands can post music or videos of their own music...

A: How does this revolutionise the industry?

B: Quite simply, because it means record companies are no longer necessary. New groups don’t need to send their music to record companies, and depend on them – now they can reach people who are interested in listening to new music, directly...

A: So you’re a pirate?

B: (laughs) No, not at all. I make sure any money made goes directly to the artists, and not to some big company.

A: Record companies are saying that this will “kill music”...

B: Well, that’s obviously nonsense – music will not die. People will always continue to pick up guitars or keyboards and sing and play music. Music will not die – but the record industry – as we know it today – might...

A: So what does this mean for the world of business as a whole?

B: I think it means that we certainly have to think a few unthinkables..

A: What do you mean by “unthinkable”?

B: Revolutionise our way of thinking about business in the same way that the net has revolutionised systems of marketing, publicity and distribution. It could lead to the demise of traditionally-structured companies.

A: Surely that's a bit drastic...

B: Possibly, yes – but it's worth doing some blue skies thinking here. Multinational companies know this, and want in on it – MySpace, for example, is not some independent operation run by volunteers and enthusiasts – it's owned by Rupert Murdoch, a billionaire capitalist! And Google and Facebook – all run by firm believers in individual capital.

A: Lots to think about there, then...Thanks Mark!

B: My pleasure.

Answer key: 1T; 2F; 3F; 4T; 5T; 6T; 7T; 8F; 9F; 10T; 11T; 12F; 13T.