Remote training tools – the wonder of Web 2.0, or just a chance to get in a tangle? How new technologies are being used to support training in online information resources

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Background

Web 2.0 technology has generated a lot of interest in the library and information sector and clearly has many potential uses that can enhance the online end-user experience. However, we felt we were still unclear as to the actual benefit and value these tools provide in the context of understanding online resources and effective training in their use.

Objectives

To understand more about how organisations are using established and new technologies to support end-user training of their online information resources and to investigate which approaches are the most successful.

Methods

A survey was undertaken to assess the online training materials that were made available on various websites associated with online information resources, to which we had access. The different technologies and applications were categorised and then evaluated in terms of their usefulness in delivering training direct to end-users, and/or their value in supporting local trainers or training sessions.

Results

The sample of websites we looked at employed a range of training materials in different styles and technological formats. More traditional training manuals and quick search guides were available to download, along with more innovative options such as interactive training courses, vodcasts/podcasts and wikis. All had advantages and disadvantages in terms of end-user experience, technological requirements and overall cost effectiveness. We are currently in the process of assessing what this means for information and library services needing to support training and learning in online resources and also for those responsible for devising these materials.

Discussion

We will present our findings and evaluation of how newer technologies can best be used. We will also be actively seeking the opinions and assessments of conference attendees to see how their experience compares with what we have observed. We also hope to learn more about how they feel online tools can be used in the exchange of experience to enhance and benefit the training and learning needs of library users.