out of reach. Attempts were made early on with the Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML), but just having a rotatable teapot in your web page wasn't all that useful. Perhaps the difficulty is that for the virtual space to be interesting, it must be shared, but once it is shared, it is difficult for it to remain decentralized. Decentralization is vital to the scalability and autonomy of the Web. This will be an important area to watch, and it's certainly the next logical step for the Web if we try to extract a consensus from science fiction.

18.4.5.7   Web 2.0, Web 3.0, …

We're really not done with Web 2.0 yet: it includes push and advanced mark-up features that are not yet being taken advantage of on a large scale, and it always takes several years for fundamental innovations to propagate across browser versions and the development community.

Perhaps some simple extrapolation can give us a definition of Web 3.0. Web 1.0 was created by site owners and Web 2.0 was created by interactions between users. Web 3.0 must be created by the Web itself; in other words, an emergent consciousness from within the Web, capable of creating new content and new applications. Perhaps this new consciousness can at last answer the ultimate question: should we restrict mark-up to well-formed XML?

■ 18.4.6   Chet Haase

In the future I see two possibilities. The first is that the Web will be a happy place for all: safe for children to roam free, highly organized and easy to navigate, and chock-full of wonderful information—both useful and educational.

The other possibility is that the Web will continue to be the greatest festering cesspool of chaos since the Big Bang.

In this increasingly littered, content-full, and guidance-free virtual world, we have a greater need for methods of finding the information we're seeking and processing it quickly. Once upon a time, it was acceptable to use shopping sites that required lots of clicking, reading, browsing, and scrolling to buy each item. But those types of sites are now cumbersome and we find ourselves drawn toward other sites that make the experience quick and painless. The faster these vendors can separate you from the money in your account, the closer they are to profit, or at least solvency.

So what I actually predict, despite my utopian and possibly drug-addled ramblings in my introduction, is a web full of applications and sites