Steepster is a Web 2.0 app that effectively links a community of tea-steeping connoisseurs, novice and experienced alike, to...well...tea, of course.

This easy-to-navigate application features a homepage that highlights “Best Teas” that have been rated by Steepster community members. From Golden Needle King tea to Ginger Chai, there are literally hundreds of pages that describe and rate teas, as well as tea-making accessories. When the user rates an item, the user can also list their recommended steep times and water temperature in which they prepared the tea.

In addition, the “Best Teas” page features A-Z buttons that lead to alphabetically listed tea companies/manufacturers, as well as a side bar that allows the user to sort by highest rated, most popular, newly added, tea name, or type of tea.

Other pages include Places, Discussions, and Explore. The Places page is particularly helpful as it automatically lists tea resources within a 5, 10, or 50-mile radius of any city using a Google map. The user is able to add places, as well as update place information. The Discussion page offers a diverse listing of conversations and questions regarding all things steeped. Under the user’s “You” page, there is a link to the user's Cupboard, which allows the user to add teas relevant to the user's likes and preferences.

The overall design of Steepster.com is very clean, organized, and simple to figure out. There are links to social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as an
invitation link to invite the user’s friends to join. It is interesting to note that there isn’t an overt emphasis on selling products. There are features that allow the user to add items to their shopping list, but from what I could find, there was not a shopping cart feature. I appreciated this because it allows the users to share information because they seriously stand by a tea, not necessarily because they want to sell it. I found that this made the application feel more authentic, accessible, and community-oriented. However, I imagine that there might be users that would like to see this feature become a reality.

Granted, this Web 2.0 application will not be saving the world anytime soon, though it is certainly a creative resource for tea connoisseurs around the world. If you care about tea, or want to learn more about it – it is worth joining and adding to the dialogue.