



Be a Blogger

What is a BLOG?

The name BLOG comes from Web Log and is a web page that someone can easily update on a regular basis. Most blogs focus on a specific topic and consist of a running commentary. People reading a blog can post their responses to the author, generating an on-going discussion with everyone that cares to read. Blogs can include photos, movies, and sound files.

All of the blogs together - each referring to the others comments is called the blogosphere and is becoming an important part of the Web.

Some famous (and not so famous) bloggers

The Baghdad Blogger http://dear_raed.blogspot.com/ who wrote about the beginning of the Iraq war in 2004. No one knew who he was. He included photos and first-hand impressions of the war as it happened.

Mark Cuban - Owner of the Dallas Mavericks

Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the Web started blogging in January 2006 - He talks about the future Web called the Semantic Web as well as Net Neutrality. He had to turn his response option off because he was getting so many responses from around the world.

Jeff Bridges has a really different type of blog. He uses a special camera to shoot the wide-angle black & white photos in his gallery.

William Shatner - The Star Trek captain has been busy the last few years.

Micah Johnson's photo blog

Peter Johnson has two blogs:

<http://howwelearn.blogspot.com/> which talks about learning in general and [WebExplorations](#) which focuses on material relating to his courses.

Why Blog?

Through centuries people have written journals and diaries about themselves, their ideas, and the world around them. With blogging you can post a journal entry and seconds later millions of people around the world are able to read what you wrote.

Why People Blog

- Blog as a **journal** to "Document my Life"
- Blog as **commentary**: "A Point of View, not Just Chatter"
- Blog as a **catharsis**: "Me Working Out my Own Issues"
- Blog to **build community**: "Getting in Conversation with Each Other Electronically"
- Blog as a **form of business communication**: "Another channel like print, audio, video, presentations and so on to build stronger relations with important target groups."



How to Blog

1. Decide the following:

- A user name for your blog account(s)
- A password (use letters, numbers, and capital letters)
- Your 'stage' name or psuedonym
- A topic for your blog
- A title for your blog

2. Find a blog site

<http://www.blogger.com/start> - this is a free site for writers. Blogger is owned by Google.

3. Create an account

- Write down your login/password information so you can find it in the future
- Save any emails from in an email folder called "registration"

4. Pick a template

5. Start writing - Here's Ten Tips:

1. The two most imporant words - **You** and **Because**.

When it comes to writing engaging content, "**you**" is the most powerful word in the English language, because people are ultimately interested in fulfilling their own needs.

One of the most important characteristics of compelling, persuasive content is specificity. There are many ways to be specific in your writing. One of the best is simply giving a reason why. And the most effective transition word when giving a "reason why" is **because**.

2. **Link like crazy** - link to other web pages that relate to your post.

3. **Write less** - Give the max amount of information with the least amount of words. Blast your knowledge into the reader at the speed of sound.

4. **250 Words is enough** - A long post is easier to forget and harder to get into. A short post is the opposite.

5. **Make Headlines snappy** - Contain your whole arguement in your headline. Check out national newspapers to see how they do it. Write with passion.

6. **Include bullet point lists** - we all like lists and lists work well on a web page

7. **Make your posts easy to scan** - Every few paragraphs insert a sub heading. Use white space to separate ideas into scannable blocks.

8. **Be consistent with your style** - People like to know what to expect, once you have settled on a style for your audience stick to it.

9. **Litter the post with Keywords**. Think about what keywords people would use to search for your post and include them in the body text and headers. Make sure the keyword placement is natural and does not seem out of place.

10. **Edit your post** Good writing is in the editing. Before you hit the submit button, re-read your post and cut out the stuff that you don't need. Have no mercy. If a word does not add power to your post, cut it.

-- adapted from: <http://www.problogger.net/archives/2005/12/30/tens-tips-for-writing-a-blog-post/>

Benefits of Blogging



- Become the Expert
- Customer Relationships
- Media Relations
- Internal Collaboration
- Knowledge Management
- Recruitment
- Test ideas or products
- Rank high in Search Engines

Become the Expert

Position yourself and your company/classes/ideas as one of the experts.

Customer Relationships

In a forum where your main objective not is to sell, you'll have a more personal relationship between you and your customers. Blogs are a fast way to join the customers' discussions, provide tips and insights or receive feedback.

Media Relations

It's every PR-consultants dream to create a channel where media regularly check what you have to say, instead of media just being passive - sometimes indifferent - recipients of press releases.

Internal Collaboration

Use blogs as a workspace where project members keep each other updated without wasting time writing reports or searching the email inbox.

Knowledge Management

Blogs works in two ways. First of all, they're an easy way for the readers to find information and resources they want or need. That's obvious and could be used internally in many organizations. Second, blogs are a kind of "university light" for the blogger. Blogging is on-the-job learning.

Recruitment

If you establish your company as a thought leader, people in your business will pay attention. They'll read and discuss what you have to say.

Test ideas or products

A blog is informal. It's part of a conversation where people (often) can comment, and the blog can provide you with a measure of value. Publish an idea and see if it generates interest. Does anyone link to you? What do they say?

Rank high in search engines

Well, this has nothing to do with relations. But Google and other search engines rewards sites that are updated often, that link to other sites and most importantly, that has many inbound links. Start a blog at your regular site and your ranking will boost. Ranking is becoming more and more popular as we move toward an on-line learning environment.

Adapted from [Fredrik Wackå's](#) blog: [CorporateBlogging.Info](#)

Blogging Guidelines

Why are guidelines important to me?

As a blogger you can publish anything in a matter of seconds. No publisher, no editor, no one else to edit your work. And **anyone** on the Web can read your stuff, anywhere in the world.

But, this power with this comes a huge responsibility. You are responsible for your work. Here are some guidelines to help you define what is right and what could get you into serious trouble.

You are responsible for your writing.

As a blogger you may be held personally liable for anything you write that is:

(Fill in the blank with what you think each of these means. Answers are at the bottom of this page.)

- defamatory _____
- obscene _____
- proprietary _____
- libelous _____

This means that as a blogger you should be careful about exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks. You blog at your own risk. Outside parties actually can pursue legal action against you for what you have written.

Four Golden Rules

1. **Be respectful** - Think about how others will be affected by what you write. Write as if that person is sitting next to you reading as you write.
2. **Get your facts straight** - double check your information. If you are not certain about a fact than don't write it. Be mindful that what you write will be public for a long time – protect your privacy.
3. **Provide background and context** - There are a lot of different opinions. But, there is a difference between simply saying "Such and such sucks." and explaining the reasons why you believe this is true. You may find out, once you look a little deeper that your original opinion was not really valid.
4. **People will generally believe what you write.** If you write "I feel like killing myself." to impress how embarrassed you were, people might take this at face value and someone might come knocking on your door to see what's going on with you. Words are very powerful. Use the words that really say what you want to say.

Answers:

defamatory - de-fames someone or ruins their reputation

obscene - anything that is Indecent, lewd, or offensiveness in behavior, expression, or appearance.

proprietary - privately owned or something that is exclusive like a trade secret or secret recipe.

libelous - writing that says bad things about another person, bad enough to ruin their reputation.

- adapted from Yahoo Blog Guidelines <http://jeremy.zawodny.com/yahoo/yahoo-blog-guidelines.pdf>

and IBM Blogging Guidelines http://www.snellspace.com/IBM_Blogging_Policy_and_Guidelines.pdf

Be Safe



photo from iStockPhoto.

by andrea k. gingerich

If you put a frog into boiling water it will jump right out.

However, if you put a frog in room temperature water and slowly turn up the temperature it will become accustomed to the heat until it dies. It never thinks to jump out until it is too late.

Don't be a frog... There are predators surfing the Web looking for people like yourself. They are known to pose as teenagers while they build your trust, sometimes over years.

Here's some tips for safe blogging:

When setting up your account

- **Hide your Account Login Details** - Once you have become a member of the blog website, hide your login details so that others cannot gain access to your membership information and user profile.
- **Select a Sensible Blog Topic** – Select a topic you are passionate about and think others would enjoy reading.
- **Password Protect your Blog** – Make sure nobody else can enter information into your blog.
- **Use an email that is not identifiable.** Use your online name instead of your first name and surname.
- **Use Cool (but safe) Avatars and Photos** – Select a picture of an avatar that suits your personality but doesn't disclose your identity. Don't use your own photo on your blog.
- **Hide Profile from Public View** - If possible stop others from looking at your profile by password protecting it, or setting up any options that let only those people you choose to view it.

When you are Blogging

- **Personal Information** - Never enter in personal details or anything that can identify you. Remember, once something is entered on the Internet it is often very hard to remove.
- **Remember** - photos are not of the people but only symbolic of who they want to be. Someone posing as friend your age could just as easily be an older man wanting to get to "know" you better.
- **1 in 5 kids online is sexually solicited** - Never disclose any personal information about your friends or family.
- **Amy's Story** - Hear the true story of a 15-year-old girl who left home to meet in person with a man she first "met" online. <http://www.netsmartz.org/stories/amy.htm>

-- From <http://www.netalert.net.au/02516-What-are-some-popular-blog-websites.asp>

This Web Exploration was written by Peter K. Johnson - <http://peterkjohnson.com>
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