

Blogging - what's it all about?

Contributed by Inka-Maria Kunz
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A blog usually is a web page that contains brief, discrete hunks of information called posts. These posts are arranged in reverse-chronological order (the most recent come first) and each is uniquely identified by an anchor tag which is marked with a permanent link that can be referred to by others who wish to link to it.

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A blog is a means of communication and there are many different types of messages carried by blogs. Some are nothing but pointers to other web sites, while others run long essays, some are personal diaries, others feature technology, and some are edited by one person, others by teams. There are hundreds of thousands of blogs on the Internet, and new blogs are created every day. Can anybody and more importantly can you blog? Yes, there are bloggers of all types, equipped with all levels of technical skills. Bloggers approach their sites with as much variety and passion as the general Net public approaches the Web itself.

The most commonly used blogging tool is Blogger. It requires the least amount of commitment in time or resources, allowing you to go from wanting a blog to having one in about five minutes and at no cost. The Blogger software is the property of Pyra Labs (www.pyra.com). Blogger is often credited as the reason for the explosion of blogging that's occurred in the last couple of years. It is a web-based tool, requiring no installation of software on your personal computer or on your server if you happen to have a web site. You access the tool through the Blogger web site (<http://blogger.com>) and the blog pages are posted to your web site or to Pyra's BlogSpot (<http://blogspot.com>) community blog server. For more detailed information on this see O'Reilly's Essential Blogging.

Re-read anything before you publish. Electronic text can expose unintended meaning easily and it will also make what you say a lot more focused. If nothing else, it should help you catch spelling mistakes! Blogging is a way to share your opinions and thoughts to the rest of the world. If you post interesting things, share links with other bloggers and post comments on other blogs. Linking is the way of the Web that is the key of successful blogging. In order to keep your blogs really fresh, invite a group of your friends / colleagues and give them blogging access. That way you will have several reporters blogging information and you won't end up killing yourself, trying to keep your blog populated with good information. If you use Blogger, upgrade to Blogger Pro. You can have your team post to the blog from email, create and syndicate your blog as an RSS feed, and a whole lot more! Adding the ability to post comments on your blog extends interactivity and usefulness to the blog itself. Blogs are about community and information, and commenting is a real way to gauge your viewer's blogging efforts. Blogging is one of the quickest ways to update your site. Syndicating others' blogs into your own site is another. There is a wealth of information out there – just tap into it!

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