

Blogs

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Blogs are a fairly recent phenomenon which have exploded during the past ten years. They have attained popularity and now seem to have become part of the media landscape with mainstream media now making reference to blogs. The 'blog' was initially known as a 'web journal' and 'weblog' dating back to the late 1990s.

At a basic level, a blog is a sort of website (or can actually be part of a website) where entries are posted and appear in reverse chronological order, which is the defining feature of a blog. Those who blog and post these entries are referred to as 'bloggers'. So whenever a blogger creates a new entry it appears directly above the last post so that the most up to date goings-on is the first thing readers see.

So what does a blog post comprise of? Basically, it can be on anything. Typically many blogs provide news or commentary on particular subjects, whereas others function as an online diary and are more personal. For example, a sportsperson may have a blog detailing their activities during the week.

The blogger chooses the topic or subject to write on and then writes accordingly. As most blogs focus on a range of topics (even if within one subject), entries are categorised ('tagged') for future reference. This makes it easier for readers if they are looking for all the posts on a particular topic. For example, if a blogger is writing on marketing techniques the different types of techniques will be 'tagged' into categories so any reader who wants to read about 'viral marketing' will be able to find these posts quite easily.

The blog has the capacity to provide links to other web pages and/or allow comments from readers, making them interactive. Reader's ability to publish their own comments underneath the original post allows a two way conversation to occur which is very different to traditional media. Further, the blogs capacity to link to other sources makes a single blog part of the blogosphere and interconnected within a community. Bloggers tend to share information so when they find relevant content, they usually share the content with a direct link to the newly discovered information. The more links to your blog, the more opportunities to be discovered.

As the Internet allows interconnection on a fairly large scale blogs can potentially be quite powerful in terms of reaching a mass audience and community discussion. Being part of this conversation and sharing information and experiences is what blogs and social media in general is all about.