

BLOGS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Neeru Gupta

Library Assistant
A.C. Joshi Library
Panjab University
Chandigarh

ABSTRACT

Usage of blogs, the new form of website is increasing exponentially with each passing day. More important they are easy to manage for blogger as well as for user it comes either free or at very nominal cost. Blogs give the power of media in the hands of individual. Relatively new form of web tools called blog is discussed in detailed and how library use this tool to its best in this paper

INTRODUCTION

Blogs provides the personal media channel to any user. In one study over millions of people, view billion pages each month. Users produce about millions new posts and millions new comments each month and these figures are growing exponentially. Virtually anyone from anywhere can become publisher now the focus of the topic is **how we can use this powerful tool for betterment of libraries**. Let us first understand the website Called BLOG.

Researchers can share their ideas with colleagues and from other online users with Blogs and it can help to gain feedback. A well-planned blog not only attract the users in sharing their ideas, information, opinions but also good way to get up-to-date with the recent developments in the field of their interest. Blogger can create, produce, upload, download and disseminate information to users.

DEFINITION:

A blog is nothing more than a personal web site with content displayed in reverse-chronological order. New posts are placed at the top of the page instead of the bottom, making it easy to see what has changed.

The word Blog comes from

WEB LOG-----WEBLOG----- (finally) BLOG

Before moving further, one must understand the difference between blogs and any other website.

On blog, anyone virtually everyone create a site and write news, experiences, or area of interest. It may be about

- Personal (personal diary)
- Business
- institution
- research
- politics, sports, or anything

One want to share anything like photos and videos with click of a button and that can be read and viewed by anyone virtually everyone.

However, the question remains How it is different from other websites all of them are doing the same thing.

In case of blogs Reader can post quotes or comment on the news posted by the blogger and this create a link between the news writer and the reader. Blogs are also the lowest cost communication channel and gets updated all the time, while most web sites do not.

Therefore, Blogs provides us our personal media channel, everyone knows the power of media today, and most important it all comes if not absolute but almost **FREE**. Therefore, every blogger can be termed as publisher on its own.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF BLOGS

In simple terms, blog is free software, which also allows you to write an online. Entry you last posted on site is called post is displayed on front page of the site.

- A blog has some form of navigation, usually menus.
- A blog layout contains a header, footer and content.
- Categories of posts.
- That reader can access the archives i.e. previous posts.
- That a post can contain texts, images and videos.
- That posts can contain links to other posts, both with in blog and to the entire web.
- Should contain a contact page and form.
- Can be accessed anywhere and anytime with an internet connection
- It allows us to publish to a large audience and allows audience to interact by leaving comments
- Can invite anyone into the conversation.
- Either free or inexpensive

MAIN TYPE OF BLOGS

Personal Blogs

These blogs are handle by individuals and they are just like personal diaries, which anybody can read and comment.

Micro blogging

It is the practice posting small pieces of digital content, which could be in textual form or pictures, audio and videos on the net. Micro blogging offers spontaneous reaction examples of this type are twitter, Facebook, tumblr etc.

Corporate And Organizational Blogs

Such blogs are run by organizations. These blogs can be subdivided for internal and external purpose.

Internal one can be used for enhancing communication, culture and dealing with problems and new ideas among all employees of organization. While externally, it can be used for business say marketing, branding and public relations.

By Genre

Blogs can be categorized on the basis of the particular subject such as political blogs, health blog, travel, fashion, Hollywood or dedicated particular research area and so on.

By Media

Blogs containing videos are known as vlogs. One comprising links are known as linklog. There are blogs dedicated to sketches are called sketchlog and so on. Idea is that blogs can be categorized on the basis particular type of media.

By Device

This type is defined by the type of device is used to compose the blog .For example mobile device or pdf could be called moblog.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BLOGS

Advantages

- The regular use of blog can improve research skills drastically.
- Effective communication skills can be cultivated.
- Endless range of resources is available either linked or hosted depending on research area.
- It transcends geographic boundaries and the ideas can shared.
- It can be easily accessible by using personal computers, mobile phones or through internet connections.

Disadvantages

- Danger of social hacking.
- There is no privacy because everyone can access whatever information you give.
- There is reduced physical interaction among the friends and colleagues.
- People develop more of writing skills and reduce public speaking skills

SOFTWARE FOR CREATING BLOG

To create a blog one need a software platform to operate upon but the good thing is that -

Firstly, one does not need a great amount of expertise for operating software, as it is user friendly and easy to use.

Secondly, there are number of software available which are either free or at very nominal cost. Such as Wordpress, blogger, squarespace, type pad, drupal etc.

BLOGS FOR LIBRARIES

Large no. of libraries are running blogs **Jenny Lenne's library side de tour** got the credit of first original library blog.

As discussed, all above it is quite clear that question is not whether we use blogs or not rather, our focus must be should be how we can set our blog and how blogs can help us in libraries.

Setting a blog for library

Librarians have to promote awareness of their programmes, activities and services. Many libraries produce brochure, pathfinders, newsletters etc. all these can be done through print media as well as multimedia tools. Blogs are the new and undoubtedly most powerful tool for all these functions.

For setting up the successful blog, every librarian must ask the following questions and answer them sincerely.

- Whom are you trying to reach?

-What are the key messages you want to send?

- What is the purpose of your blog?
- Make sure your target audience is online in sufficient numbers.
- What are the characteristics of your audience?
- Will they appreciate short posts and news updates?
- Will they like in-the- know about new developments, tools & resources?

Based on these answers you can decide THE CONTENT and THE SCOPE of your library blog. That includes

- The key messages you want to convey ?
- Are you trying to promote awareness of services and new resources to draw people into the library or perhaps to encourage use of virtual services?
- Whether you looking for a way to be more interactive with certain group in your community?

After all these self-examination, one must identify project constraints and toolkit requirement again by answering three simple questions.

- i) Will your library want to install blogging software locally on a desktop or web server?
- ii) What type of security is necessary?
- iii) Is it available to anyone or need password protection?
- iv) Whether the content stay within the firewall of organization?
- v) What features you want to have in a blogging toolkit?

All these questions make your blog as a real tool to achieve your objectives and help you to choose software, which is easily available and cheap.

HOW BLOGS HELP LIBRARIES/LIBRARIANS

Promote all forms of library events and programmes. All these programmes reach out beyond the regular visitors of web site. By using RSS, one can alert everyone connected to see what is up in the library. By putting an e-mail, subscriptions form on the blog site and encourage visitors to sign up. This type of permission –based marketing is your chance to send library news and updates to user’s inbox.

IT makes easier to support the users. In an academic library, prepare special alerts about new resources and websites for particular departments or colleges. Highlight the new acquiring of CDs, books etc.

Blogs have applications in library and information centres such as a current awareness service; to highlight news or resources of interest; to post book reviews; to list new acquisitions; to announce library news and events.

Librarians are recognized as responsible professionals for ensuring free flow of information to library users. As librarians are the intermediary between the users and the information. Blogs can be utilized not only to publish subject specific information but also to provide local information such as changes in opening hours, special lectures, and recent arrivals.

The large number of blogs maintained by librarians and the information science professionals provide valuable information. Currently, the main challenge is not to create more blogs, but to increase the awareness of those that already exist, which not only provide valuable and easily accessible information for professionals, but also for the public. We have to develop creative ways to increase the readership of these blogs. 1

Blogs help to involve the whole community for example inviting reviews and comments and suggestions and recommendations regarding other books. It helps to offer value added services. Such as a local body election, news blog that posts announcements about candidate websites, nominations, and meetings might be a natural project for libraries and all such things available to audience.

Blogs helps in creating new ties and reaching out to new areas of community by offering entries in different languages. Perhaps one can try to reach out to teachers in order to market library services and effectively reach out all other affiliated colleges and institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

Blogs provides the best tool for today's interactive society for promoting all kind of services, resources, and programmes. Blogs make them not only easier but also cheaper. By listening to our final consumer, libraries can use their estranged resources more economically. One could easily say that it is a win-win situation for all of us.

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