

Using Blogs as a tool for Information Transfer

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ABSTRACT

In the present Internet era Information is disseminating through different types of media in which blogs are playing an important role. A blog features diary-type commentary and links to articles on other websites, usually presented as a list of entries in reverse chronological order. The present study is an attempt to define meaning, types, characteristics, functions and advantages of blog. Blogging has become the latest trend on the Internet. Weblogs (blogs) don't just impact the mainstream media and private Internet users but also business to the point that it can no longer be ignored by organizations.

Keywords: Blog, Weblog, ICT, Internet, Network, Information Sharing.

INTRODUCTION

A blog is a website, which is updated very frequently post dated and arranged in reverse chronological order. A blogger maintains his/her blog with varied and unlimited information depending upon the purpose and nature of the blog where everybody can read and write their views and ideas without changing the original content. A blog is a frequently updated online personal journal or diary. It is a place to express yourself to the world. A place to share your thoughts, and ideas.

Well-known companies like Microsoft, Sun Microsystems and Google use them internally as a knowledge-sharing and communication tool as well as externally to express their point of view to the public.

A weblog is characterized as a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links. Most weblogs are part of a community that has permanent links to each other and to late-breaking news. Information spreads very fast in most cases even before it reaches the mainstream media. This fact makes weblogs an essential and unique source of finding late-breaking news and discovering newest trends that are discussed in blog communities.

It is suggested that blogs give platform to express yourself to the world, enhance writing skills, encourage critical thinking, facilitate reflecting themselves and active learning. Blogs are well suited to serve as library service because they enable librarians to share files and resources and publishing then on blogs and users has the can read and retrieve the information. Weblogs play an important role, especially for library professionals and Information providers. It is their responsibility to inform their users of the latest trends and news that is relevant to their parent organization.

WHAT IS BLOG OR WEBLOG?

A blog (shortening of "weblog") is an online journal or informational website displaying information in the reverse chronological order, with latest posts appearing first. It is a platform where a writer or even a group of writers share their views on an individual subject.

"Blog" is an abbreviated version of "weblog," which is a term used to describe websites that maintain an ongoing chronicle of information. Blogs range from the personal to the political, and can focus on one narrow subject or a whole range of subjects.

A weblog or blog, is a listing of text, images, or other objects that are arranged in a chronological order that first started appearing in 1998. Blogs are often maintained and run by a single individual, updated daily, or contain personal remarks about a topic, a personal ramble, or an update on the person's life.

In simple terms it is a piece of software which allows you to write an online diary on a website. Your last entry, called a post, is displayed on the front page, home page, of the site.

One of the most exciting features of blogging tools are the comments. This highly interactive feature allows users to comment upon article posts, link to your posts, and comment on and recommend them. That is that it can be updated and it allows the visitor to communicate through the comment section attached to each individual post. Blog is an online diary where one can post information (not only text but also audio, photographs and videos) on a regular basis. There are some related terms in creating blogs like blogger, blogging, blogging software, blogrolling, blogosphere, etc. Blogger is a person who can create, maintain, and edit or write entries to a blog. Blogging is the act of creating, authorizing, maintaining or adding an article to a blog. Blogging software (Blogger, Word Press) makes it easier for people to create blogs.

Why a blog?

The purpose of writing blogs could be promotion of a product or service, awareness about social issues, information sharing about any subject or purely passion for writing. ... Company Blogs: Many companies manage a blog and share about their business, products or services.

Why to Blog?

1. You'll become a better writer. At its core, writing is communication. It is about recording thoughts on paper and compelling others to agree with them. To that end, writing (just like every other form of communication that has ever existed) improves with practice. Blogging will not force you to become a better writer, it'll just happen as you do it. And becoming a better writer holds important benefits for the rest of your life—whether you are creating a book, a presentation, a résumé, or an anniversary card for your spouse.

2. You'll become a better thinker. Because the process of writing includes recording thoughts on paper, the blogging process encourages you to stop and think deeper. You will delve deeper into the matters of your life and the worldview that shapes them. Unfortunately, at this point, many will choose not to blog (or write at all) based on the faulty reasoning that they "have nothing to say." But to that line of thinking I always respond the same way, maybe you just haven't discovered yet what you have to say.

3. You'll live a more intentional life. Once you start writing about your life and the thoughts that shape it, you'll begin thinking more intentionally about who you are, who you are becoming, and whether you like what you see or not. And that just may be reason enough to get started.

4. You'll develop an eye for meaningful things. By necessity, blogging requires a filter. It's simply not possible to write about every event, every thought, and every happening in your life. Instead, blogging is a never-ending process of choosing to articulate the most meaningful events and the most important thoughts. This process of choice helps you develop an eye for meaningful things. And remember that sometimes the most meaningful things appear in the most mundane—but you'll see what I mean once you get started.

5. It'll lead to healthier life habits. Blogging requires time, devotion, commitment, and discipline. And just to be clear, those are all good things to embrace – they will help you get the most out of your days and life. Since beginning to blog, I have become an early riser, a runner, and can now properly identify my favorite drink at Starbuck's (Caramel Macchiato). And even if those three habits don't personally appeal to you, blogging will provide opportunity for new life habits to emerge in yours.

6. You'll meet new people. Whether it be through comments, e-mails, or social media, you may be surprised at how quickly you meet people on-line. And by meet people, I mean legitimately form relationships that seek to serve one another. The blogging community is friendly, encouraging, and genuinely cheering for you to succeed—the only thing missing is you.

Blog structure

The appearance of blogs changed over time, and nowadays blogs include different items. But, most blogs include some standard features and structure. Here are common features that typical blog will include:

- Header with the menu or navigation bar
- Main content area with highlighted or latest blog posts
- Sidebar with social profiles, favorite content, or call-to-action
- Footer with relevant links like a disclaimer, privacy policy, contact page, etc.

Types of Blogs or Weblog

There are many types of blogs on the Internet. These are distinguished by their nature of the written contents. Blogs are divided into the following five categories:

- **Corporate Blog**

A blog can be of any type if it is a corporate blog, then it contains information about the organization, it's culture or it's strategies, purposes that is called corporate or official blog.

- **Niche Blog**

Fix type of stuff blog which provide information on a particular topic is called a particular/Niche blog , like their niche is fix it may be education, phones, Music, fashion, arts, web designs, sports and thoughts.

- **Personal Blog**

These are most common type of blogs. Blogging is not just way of communicating and sharing, it is more than that. Personal Blogs are commonly written in the personal language and with emotional touch for friends and colleagues.

- **Forum Blogging**

It is a place to discuss general blogging issues of where blogger can share their thoughts about blogging. Here you can ask question, give answers, express things, share how we can improve in blogging.

- **Review Blog**

It is a blog where a blogger share reviews about like Mobiles, iphones and other products. Readers can also give comments on the product reviews & Discuss more about it.

Blog or Weblog Characteristics

There some specialties that are common to blogs:

- **Archives**

You may look at the front page of a blog and overlook its appearance. In most cases, they have few recent articles or links to other blog posts. But, much more is hidden below the surface. When you post a new article on your blog, it appears on the first page. The more content you post, it begins going down the list. Eventually, it will move to the next page (archive) of your blog.

- **Comments**

Feedback from visitors is critical to any blogger who writes and posts content online. Conversational posts encourage interaction with blog guests. At the end of every blog article, readers can share their different opinions via comments. A better method of learning how it works is to take the initiative and leave your comments on blogs. Go online read few blog posts that are of your interest and share your opinion by commenting.

- **Make Your Post Pertinent**

No matter how well-written, or how informative the blog post, without relevant content it is wasted breath. Relevance should be your number one priority when writing a blog post. Know your audience and write which is not only be

appropriate, but pertinent to user community. Find important information that's missing, and share your unique perspective.

This is absolutely vital for building authority within your chosen niche. If your company specializes in the food industry, your readers will likely be uninterested in a blog post about the latest fashion in footwear. Likely, you'll lose branding power as well.

- **Include Useful Information**

It's not enough that a blog post be relevant to a subject. It also needs to be useful and important information. Your blog should aim to help and educate your audience, offering valuable takeaways. People appreciate about your given information, and will post comment to your blog if you consistently write on your blogs that are not only relevant, but useful.

- **Make Your Post Engaging**

A blog post must be meaningful and easily understandable and it's not enough to have perfect grammar and spelling but also it needs to be useful, interesting, and interactive. Try to let your personality shine through in your writing. Don't be afraid to write in a conversational tone. Personal stories and anecdotes are a great way to make a blog post more engaging. Southwest's blog does a solid job of being personable.

- **A clear focus**

Great blogs have a clearly defined focus. They don't try to be all things to everybody, and they can summarize what the blog is about in one sentence. Blogs who try to cover everything are doomed to fail – simply because you can't cover everything with any credibility. Choose a niche and focus on a topic you're passionate about.

- Weblogs are chronological. Weblog entries display recent information at the top of the Page.
- Weblogs are personal. Users can express their own points of view about any subject. He or she can eliminate blog spam.
- Weblogs allow readers to give their own comments to individual posts.
- Weblog is collaborative and communicative. It allows multiple users to post comments, which bring some interesting and valuable discussions. It includes Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed of all postings.

Functions of Blog or Weblog

The basic functions/activities which can be carried out using a Blog are:

- **Instant Publishing – Easily Edited**

You can publish a blog in minutes meaning the latest news or advice can reach library readers instantly and blogs can be kept up to date simply by editing posts to amend information if it becomes inaccurate.

- **Themes and Customization**

Blogs are easy to customize using one of the hundreds of free themes available or by designing and uploading your own headers

- **Sharing is fun!**

Blogs can be easily shared via Facebook and Twitter so that information and news can be disseminated quickly across different social media platforms – potentially reaching more readers.

- **Discussion**

Blogs enable commenting on each post made, meaning that the content can easily be discussed by readers and questions can be posed and answered quickly.

- **Make it Multimedia!**

Blogs are a great platform for displaying information using multimedia. It's quick and simple to insert photographs or other images, links to other blogs or websites, quotes, presentations and videos! Such features can really make a blog stand out to readers and make getting the information out there more fun and dynamic.

- **Polls**

Linked to both discussion and multimedia, one great feature of blogs is the ability to embed polls into posts. This is a simple and quick way to ask readers to provide either opinions on your blog, suggestions about the library or feedback about the blog or library service. (And there's always the comments box for those who choose 'other' to explain their views further!) This is very useful for library marketing and reflection on whether projects are working successfully.

- Blogging is an effective way to get peoples attention.
- The basic technology effectively allows access to a blogs and allow to add content to your blogging page.
- It allows people to have conversation and give their rapid feedback not only in the same blog, but also in other blogs. and readers can immediately and instantaneously reply on blogs.
- The links can also be provide on blogs so users can interact on any blog in any corner of the world.

ADVANTAGES OF BLOG OR WEBLOG

Besides the advantages that weblogs inherited from being based on Internet technologies, weblogs have advantages of their own that can be translated into real benefits for users, as follows;

➤ **Networking with various people worldwide.**

One of the important benefits of blogging is its feature that helps us to network with a wide range of bloggers from different walks of life across the globe. Interacting with people from different country and culture may lead to friendly relations with them that may help you start new ventures like starting a new business with someone outside of your country. It may help you get more fans for your business or celebrity facebook page or on other social media sites.

➤ **Blogs help you to improve your writing skills.**

If you start to write a blog, all of a sudden you get into the habit of improving your writing skills and style. You may feel that you are going to be criticized if you make a mistake. This fear is a big step that will make you motivated for improving your writing skills. Automatically, you will start trying to improve your writing skills while writing more and more posts for your own blog.

➤ **Mastering a subject.**

Another advantage of having a blog is its ability to make you a master in a chosen subject. If you are writing on a particular niche for a long time, it will enrich your knowledge as you carry on doing research on that particular topic or niche.

- Weblogs can be updated easily, from anywhere without having to worry about FTP connections, web authoring software, etc.
- Weblogs are easy to setup and administrate in contrast to other technologies;
- Weblogs makes easier to publish all types of information in the form of (text, images, video, etc.) to the Web when compared to other web publishing medium.
- Weblogs allow instant publishing with just one click: weblogs are easy to create and maintain, as opposed to traditional web pages that are labor-intensive and require at least some web design knowledge (HTML, CSS, JavaScript).
- Weblogs have the ability to reach a large audience without losing information quality and allowing for different levels of detail. Weblogs break the tradeoff between reach and richness of information.
- 24/7 (anytime, anywhere) access to information posted in weblogs Other technologies can be applied jointly. For instance, using of Wikis as enablers for group writing and knowledge sharing. For example, building glossaries.

Applications of Blogs in Providing Library and Information Services

Librarians have long used a variety of means for getting information about the library out to our communities – newsletters, alerts, emails, posters and flyers and more. Using a blog offers the opportunity to innovate your communications. Blogging gives you a way to push information out, but also to gather feedback and build a community without having very much technical know-how.

News gathering and dissemination: Blogs provide a useful way for librarians to disseminate small snippets of information to their library users. A subject librarian in an academic library might find it useful to gather database updates, new site and service notices and event information in the one place on a blog.

Blogs Can Help to Communicate With Your Library Users

Librarians have long used a variety of means for getting information about the library out to our communities – newsletters, alerts, emails, posters and flyers and more.

Using a blog offers the opportunity to innovate your communications. Blogging gives you a way to push information out, but also to gather feedback and build a community without having very much technical know-how.

Types of Blogs

Blogs can be personal or professional. They may be private with use internally in an organization or they may be publicly available – this is controlled by the settings on your blog site.

Blogs can be individual, group or subject blogs. An individual blog is a personal blog reflecting the thoughts of one person. A group blog is a collective effort written by a team or organization, and a subject blog is written by any number of people, and is focused on a particular topic.

Once you have decided on the blog's purpose think about which of these different approaches will work best for you. You may also like to think about developing a set of blog policies to help outline the blog's scope, and focus your target audience.

Weblogs or blogs can be used as an information consumer and as an information provider in libraries and information centres. Blogs provide latest information on what is going on in various fields in the world. Blogs help to enrich and develop the knowledge. Users are able to share knowledge among the same interest groups.

The most important application of blogs in libraries is that, they can be used as a platform for in-house publication. For example, a library may set up a blog as a part of its permanent development tool where the user community can suggest titles of their choice and interest. Moreover, book reviews published on the library blog may also help the user community to choose and suggest an appropriate title for library collection. Libraries can also provide reference services through the blog where users can post their comments and queries and receive real-time responses from reference departments where these questions and answers can be tagged and automatically archived for future users.

Clyde mentioned the following purposes for library weblogs:

- News or information for users;
- Links to recommended internet resources;
- Book reviews, information about new books;
- Entertainment or amusement for users;
- News or information for librarians;
- Book discussions;
- News or information for trustees;
- Research tips;
- Communication among librarians (in a library system)

The various uses of blogs in library setting are given below:

This is just a small selection – blogs are very versatile and there are many more practical applications.

News gathering and dissemination: Blogs provide a useful way for librarians to disseminate small snippets of information to their library users. A subject librarian in an academic library might find it useful to gather database updates, new site and service notices and event information in the one place on a blog.

From the librarian's desk: Blogging about your daily routine work gives your library users an idea into what roles you are playing and handling responsibilities. It helps to provide openness and transparency, whilst informing of library news and events.

Community building: As librarians we are part of a group of professionals which benefit from the sharing of our good experiences. Blogs can be a very timely way to give advice and commentary on current library issues.

Library resources: Raise the profile of the resources in your library by blogging about their features. If you have a collection of resources for speakers of other languages, why not invite a few people using these materials to blog about them, and build an online community.

Special projects: Are you building a new library, refurbishing a new section, or other library developments that are visible to your library community? Blogging about the project will allow your users to engage in the project and become involved in decision making, and photos or videos of progress can add interest to your blog.

Task groups: Use a blog to capture and collect the thoughts of members involved in a task group. Blogs have built in archive features to record your work and tagging can be used to categorise sections.

Reflective journaling: Blogs don't have to be public affairs. Think about your own professional development and chronicle your activities on a blog. It's amazing how a few minutes spent reflecting on your daily activities adds up so you can see a path of progression and achievements. If appropriate, share these thoughts with your colleagues so they also have a record of your activities. Apart from this blogs are used in libraries in collection development, providing reference services, promote library events, encourage debate and interaction, alerting services.

CONCLUSION

The importance of the phenomena of Blogging as an innovative emerging tool of the internet is sure to have its impact on the tomorrow's world of communication and dissemination of information in libraries, journalism and similar other bodies. Realizing the dynamic role of blogging various institutions, academic bodies, professional bodies etc. are planning to have full-fledged course of subjective study at different levels of standards. This tool gives an upper hand to library & information professionals to disseminate and share information in faster and in an innovative way which is not possible through other conventional methods.

Blogs or weblogs are not only a sharing tool for information and communication but also a working tool for promotion and publicity of library services. They are playing a dynamic and pervasive role in today's social, cultural, civil and economic spheres of the society. The success of the weblogs depends on blogger's inspiration, motivation, dedication and ability. It is going to be a powerful communicating and information sharing tool in library and information services in near future.

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