Introduction to blogging

The purpose of this document is to provide background information on what is a blog and why blog for those new to blogging.

We’ve also included an anatomy of a blog and blogging vocabulary with links to helpful resources — the idea is for you to use this information as quick reference guides.

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What is a Blog?

The term blog originated from the blend of the term “web log”.

Nowadays blogs compete with mainstream media in delivering news and information. Important events, war coverage and celebrity deaths are often reported quicker and more accurately on blogs and Twitter than traditional news service.

Why? Because any one can easily set up their own blog and share their thoughts (known as their voice) online.

Blogs are written on just about any subject and for a wide range of purposes, including personal, business, work and sharing news stories.

Examples of educational blogs

1. Teachers Personal blogs:
   - Larry Ferlazzo’s Websites Of The Day - http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/
   - Langwitches - http://langwitches.org/blog/
2. Class blogs:
   - 2KM@ Leopold Primary School - http://2kmblog.globalstudent.org.au/
   - Mr. Salsich’s Class - http://jmsalsich.edublogs.org/
   - Mrs. Yollis’ Class Blog! - http://yollisclassblog.blogspot.com/
   - The Ins and Outs - http://theinsandouts.co.nz/

3. Student blogs:
   - BB’s awesome blog – http://biancasblog.globalstudent.org.au/ Grade 2
   - Grace's Blog – http://graceblog09.edublogs.org/ Grade 7

4. Other useful sites
   - The Edublog Awards website - http://edublogawards.com/
   - Education blogs listed on PostRank - http://www.postrank.com/topic/Education

The Basic Structure of a Blog

Blogs are normally made up of the following main elements:

1. Dashboard

This is the back-end area of your blog where you make changes and edits. This area is only accessible to logged in blog administrators, editors, authors, contributors or subscribers.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:


2. Theme

Usually one of the first things bloggers do is pick out a theme. This is the template or look of the blog that people see when they visit your blog.

This is what gives it your personal touch.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:

3. Theme layout

Blog themes normally include a header, a content area (for your posts), sidebar area (for your widgets) and come in several standard layouts:

- **Single column** with no sidebar (widgets are located at the bottom of the blog)
- **Two Column** – normally a wide column for content and narrower sidebar
- **Three Column** – with sidebars side-by-side on one side of the blog or either side of the wider content column
- **Four Column** – one content column and three sidebars. The content column is often the same width as the other columns. This type of layout tends to be cluttered looking and less suited to reading lengthy content.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:

- The 137 Edublogs Themes Separated Into Categories To Make Choosing Your Next Theme Easier - [http://theadublogger.com/2010/05/13/the-137-edublogs-themes-separated-into-categories-to-make-choosing-your-next-theme-easier/](http://theadublogger.com/2010/05/13/the-137-edublogs-themes-separated-into-categories-to-make-choosing-your-next-theme-easier/)

4. Header

The header is the area at the top of a blog where the blog title, graphics, and possibly navigational links appear.

Using your own custom image header means you can obtain a much more customized look and feel adding your “own personal touch” to your blog.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:


5. Posts

Posts are where you normally publish the latest update or new article on a blog. They are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order with the most recent post at the top of the page.

Most of the content published on a blog is normally written as Posts. E.g, information on what’s happening in your classroom, assignment instructions, homework and discussion topics are normally published as Posts and not on Pages.

Blogs are designed to have only one Post page which normally displays
on the homepage of the blog.

Check out ‘The Edublogger’ (http://theedublogger.com/) to see how posts are displayed in reverse chronological order on the home page (http://theedublogger.com/).

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:


6. Comments

Posts commonly allow readers to publish comments on the posts they read. This is where the reader can share their thoughts, connect with the blogger and interact with other readers.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:


7. Pages

You normally use pages for information that you want to share with your readers but don’t expect to update frequently. Not all blogging software includes the ability to add Pages.

The most common type of page you’ll find on a blog is an About Page.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:

8. Sidebar

The location and even existence of sidebars depend on your theme. Some themes even have 3 or more sidebars. You can add and rearrange widgets in your sidebars using your blog dashboard.

The most common theme layout is two columns with one sidebar and on content area.

9. Widget

These are the blocks that make up sidebars. Popular widgets include the ability to subscribe to a blog, user statistics, and suggested links.

Here’s where you’ll find more information on:

- Top widgets for the sidebar of your class or student blog - [http://theedublogger.com/2010/10/21/top-widgets-for-the-sidebar-of-your-class-or-student-blog/](http://theedublogger.com/2010/10/21/top-widgets-for-the-sidebar-of-your-class-or-student-blog/)

10. RSS

RSS is an acronym which stands for Really Simple Syndication.

In simple terms, RSS is a simple and effective way of keeping in touch when new information is added to a website without having to visit the website to check for new updates.

How it works is you subscribe to your favorite website using the RSS feed in a RSS feed reader such as Google Reader ([http://www.google.com/reader/](http://www.google.com/reader/)). Whenever new information is added to the website it is automatically sent to your RSS feed reader where you can read it at your convenience.

For example, whenever your favorite blogger publishes a new post it is automatically sent to your Feed reader. Sites with RSS feeds are normally indicated with the word RSS and/or the orange RSS icon.

For more information:

2. Follow these instructions to subscribe to blogs using Google Reader - [http://theedublogger.com/2010/02/19/week-7-add-your-student-blogs-to-a-folder-in-google-reader/](http://theedublogger.com/2010/02/19/week-7-add-your-student-blogs-to-a-folder-in-google-reader/) — just replace the student blogs with your favorite blogs and news services

**Please note:**

- Blogs on all standard blogging platforms automatically include RSS feeds and don’t necessarily use words or an icon to indicate the presence of the RSS feed. For all Edublogs, the rss feed is found by going to yourblog.edublogs.org/feed.
- RSS lets you do lots of cool stuff including adding latest updates from your favorite blog(s) or news website(s) to your own site using RSS widgets like FeedWind’s RSS widget ([http://feed.mikle.com/env/](http://feed.mikle.com/env/))