

TECH1002-18 Social Media Innovation

Workshop 003 - Blogging

- DMU Commons Wiki and Blog Set Up Information can be found in the TECH1002 Week 002 Workshop Notes: https://wiki.our.dmu.ac.uk/w/index.php/TECH1002_Social_Media_Innovation#Workshop_Notes_2017-18
- You can discuss issues and ideas about how to improve your blog using the TECH1002 thread on <https://talk.our.dmu.ac.uk> [log in with LDAP]
- Take a look at <https://diy.our.dmu.ac.uk> and check what new blogs have been posted? Is your name on the bloglist? Are you blogs for 'diy-dmu' feeding into the site? [If not, tag Rob in a message on discourse with your blog url]

1 Introduction

"Blogs are a new medium. They're powerful and deserve to be taken seriously. Your own bog and your own writing can change the world or flounder in obscurity" (White & Biggs, 2014, p. xiii).

"To be a successful blogger, you need to concentrate on content production and audience gathering. There are many tools in a blogger's arsenal, but the most important is perseverance and understanding of your topic" (White & Biggs, 2014, p. xix).

"A blog is a website that's organised in usually short articles called posts... The newer entries are always placed at the top, while the older entries scroll down as each new one is address. As the time passes, your readers encounter each story laid out in this reverse chronological format" (White & Biggs, 2014, p. 3).

"Blogs are typically written in chronological order and displayed in reverse chronological order to the reader. Online media, such as discussion forums and email lists are also considered to be predecessors to the blog"
http://www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/history_of_blogging.asp

2 Activity - About Wordpress

- What is the difference between the different blogging systems that are available?
- Check online for information about the following blogging systems, and note the differences.
- What can you do on each system, and what can't you do on each system?
- What is an appropriate reason for selecting each of the systems?

2.1 Wordpress.Org

<https://wordpress.org/about/>

- Self-hosted content management system.
- Own URL
- Open source. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source
- Installed on your own server with PHP and MySQL.
- Manually upgradable.
- Customisable/Modular/Integrated.
- CSS Coding.
- Skinning/Themes.
- Widely used in design and simple web development.
- Drupal <https://www.drupal.org/>
- Joomla <http://www.joomla.org/>

2.2 Wordpress.Com

<https://wordpress.com/about/>

- Shared hosted account.
- Generic functionality.

- Some upgrades and personalisation.
- Own URL or Wordpress.com URL
- Competes with
- Tumbler <https://www.tumblr.com/>
- Blogger <https://www.blogger.com/home>

2.3 DMU Commons

<https://our.dmu.ac.uk/about/>

- Wordpress system hosted by DMU.
- Open Source, managed by ITMS.
- Open to all students and staff to have own blog space.
- Range of functions, but not independently adaptable.
- Open Access http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access
- Knowledge Repository
- Shared discussions

3 Activity - Types of Blogs

In the 2010s, majority are interactive Web 2.0 websites, allowing visitors to leave online comments and even message each other via GUI widgets on the blogs, and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites. In that sense, blogging can be seen as a form of social networking service. Indeed, bloggers do not only produce content to post on their blogs, but also build social relations with their readers and other bloggers. However, there are high-readership blogs which do not allow comments.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>

- There are many different types of blogs, differing not only in the type of content, but also in the way that content is delivered or written.
- Follow the links and note the main features and characteristics of each of the different types of blogs.
- Note what makes a good blog, what allows you to follow-up and connect with other blogs?
- Can you identify similar blogs that fall in the same categories and have similar characteristics?
- How can you note or bookmark these blogs so that you can come back to them later?

3.1 Personal blogs

The personal blog is an ongoing diary or commentary written by an individual.

Example

<http://jamesstodd.com/>

<http://thecakeblog.com/>

<http://www.coffeehunter.org/>

<http://www.downes.ca/>

<http://rheingold.com/>

<http://dougbelshaw.com/blog/>

3.2 Microblogging

Microblogging is the practice of posting small pieces of digital content—which could be text, pictures, links, short videos, or other media—on the Internet. Microblogging offers a portable communication mode that feels organic and spontaneous to many and has captured the public imagination. Friends use it to keep in touch, business associates use it to coordinate meetings or share useful resources, and celebrities and politicians (or their publicists) microblog about concert dates, lectures, book releases, or tour schedules. A wide and growing range of add-on tools enables sophisticated updates and interaction with other applications, and the resulting profusion of functionality is helping to define new possibilities for this type of communication. Examples of these include Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and by far the largest Weibo.

Example

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sina_Weibo

<https://twitter.com/robwmedia>

<https://twitter.com/DocMediaCentre>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microblogging>

3.3 Corporate and organizational blogs

A blog can be private, as in most cases, or it can be for business purposes. Blogs used internally to enhance the communication and culture in a corporation or externally for marketing, branding or public relations purposes are called corporate blogs. Similar blogs for clubs and societies are called club blogs, group blogs, or by similar names; typical use is to inform members and other interested parties of club and member activities.

Example

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/blog>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/production>

3.4 By genre

Some blogs focus on a particular subject, such as political blogs, health blogs, travel blogs (also known as travelogs), gardening blogs, house blogs, fashion blogs, project blogs, education blogs, niche blogs, classical music blogs, quizzing blogs and legal blogs (often referred to as a blawgs) or dreamlogs. How To/Tutorial blogs are becoming increasingly popular. Two common types of genre blogs are art blogs and music blogs. A blog featuring discussions especially about home and family is not uncommonly called a mom blog and one made popular is by Erica Diamond who created Womenonthefence.com which is syndicated to over two million readers monthly. While not a legitimate type of blog, one used for the sole purpose of spamming is known as a Splog.

Example

<http://everything-everywhere.com/>
<http://www.wired.com/2014/01/20-years-of-travel-blogs/>
<http://www.imagedissectors.com/>
<http://www.noisejockey.net/blog/>

3.5 By media type

A blog comprising videos is called a vlog, one comprising links is called a linklog, a site containing a portfolio of sketches is called a sketchblog or one comprising photos is called a photoblog. Blogs with shorter posts and mixed media types are called tumblelogs. Blogs that are written on typewriters and then scanned are called typecast or typecast blogs; see typecasting (blogging).

Examples

<http://blogtorwho.blogspot.co.uk/>
<http://www.dwin.org/home/blog/>
<http://toffeeweb.com/fans/online/blogs.asp>
<http://www.lazygirlrunning.com/blog>
<http://leicesterccg.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.leicesterpeoplesphoto.co.uk/>

3.6 By device

Blogs can also be defined by which type of device is used to compose it. A blog written by a mobile device like a mobile phone or PDA could be called a moblog. One early blog was Wearable Wireless Webcam, an online shared diary of a person's personal life combining text, video, and pictures transmitted live from a wearable computer and EyeTap device to a web site. This practice of semi-automated blogging with live video together with text was referred to as sousveillance. Such journals have been used as evidence in legal matters.[citation needed]

Example

<https://marinersoftware.com/products/macjournal/>
<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/wordpress/id335703880?mt=8>
<http://www.windowsphone.com/en-gb/store/app/wordpress/5f64ad85-f801-e011-9264-00237de2db9e>
<https://apps.wordpress.org/>
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.wordpress.android>

3.7 Reverse blog

A Reverse Blog is composed by its users rather than a single blogger. This system has the characteristics of a blog, and the writing of several authors. These can be written by several contributing authors on a topic, or opened up for anyone to write. There is typically some limit to the number of entries to keep it from operating like a Web Forum.

Example

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reverse_blog

<http://diy.our.dmu.ac.uk/>

4 Activity - Tips About Blogging

Explore and read the following sites, and note one key issue that stands out from them about blogging. Note on a Post-It-Note and

“There’s no ‘right way’ to approach blogging if you want to be successful. There are plenty of people who’ve done a great job of it though, and I thought it would be useful to learn from them”

<http://blog.bufferapp.com/blogging-advice-for-beginners-from-16-experts>

“With so many amazing arts, heritage and creative blogs out there already, how do you make yours stand out? How do you get people returning for more, and how do you increase visitor numbers and build a loyal following? There are plenty of tips and tricks to get your own creative blog rocking and therefore raising your profile and helping you to win more business. Here’s my top 20 tips for a successful creative blog, but if you can think of any more, please comment below and help me make this the best list on the web.”

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2011/nov/17/top-tips-successful-blog>

“Blogging can be great fun all the same and it's an ideal learning experience for you if you're a budding writer, a knowledge-nik who has a lot to share on a topic or hobby, or you're just keen to encourage people to see things your way! This article is focused on helping you to avoid the common mistakes many learner bloggers make; while you may still stumble into them, at least you'll be more aware and know how to correct your future approaches”

<http://www.wikihow.com/Avoid-Common-Beginner-Blogger-Mistakes>

Blogger Tips #01 | Intro to Blogging & my Blog Story

<http://youtu.be/wy2mQDVslAA>

How to start a Blog - Beginners Guide

<http://youtu.be/2y0IAhqtjw>

So You Want To Be A Blogger | Blogging Tips For Noobs: EP.1 Starting Off

<http://youtu.be/4qt1u2h3vdY>

Tips On Building A Successful Blog

<http://youtu.be/mMc5RRfVBgc>

5 Discussion – We Are All Angry on Social Media – Zoe Williams

Anxiety about social media currently clusters around what it does to traditional media, to the news it promulgates and privileges, and thence to its impact on democracy. In a carefully detailed investigation, my colleague Paul Lewis described the fears at the heart of Silicon Valley. James Williams, ex-Google employee and vivid internal critic of tech, said: “We’ve habituated ourselves into a perpetual cognitive style of outrage by internalising the dynamics of the medium.” A business model that relies above all on getting and keeping attention has little time or use for neutrality, nuance or sophistication. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/09/angry-social-media-facebook-twitter-silicon-valley>

- Read this article and identify the key points that it makes?
- Discuss how your own social media use is shaped in this way?
- What can you do to make social media use more tolerant and understanding?

6 Activity - What to do

- Go to your DMU Commons Wiki and add the URL for your blog to your wiki profile page.
- Look at the Wiki Help Guide for the format of different types of links to external sites.
- Make sure that your name is showing as your full name, and not your P:number. This is changed in the 'User' section, in 'Your Profile.'
- Using the nearest town to where you live as a reference point, search Google for the term 'blogging'.
- Make a note of the top hits and what they refer to.
- Do you recognise what blogs are listed?
- What's the content like and what does it tell you about the location it's based on?

6.1 Write a Blog

Make some notes that list the key features of the blogs that you have looked at, and what your impression was of reading them and navigating different articles and stories.

Where you able to follow-up any of the stories and join in a conversation about them?

Can you add anything useful to the page on the DMU Wiki about Blogging?

<https://wiki.our.dmu.ac.uk/w/index.php/Blogging>

Write up your idea and then post the blog on your site.

Make sure this post is set with the DIY-DMU category.

When your blogs have been set up, they should feed into the DIY-DMU blog automatically for other people to read. The DIY-DMU blog brings together the blog posts that have just been written by staff and students at DMU, so it is possible to read each other's posts. <http://diy.our.dmu.ac.uk>

7 Discussion - Writing Techniques

Working in pairs spend ten minutes thinking about ways that we write – either informally or formally?

Think about the following:

- How do we get started?
- Do we break-down the task?
- Do we have a list of sources that we bring together?
- How do we put things into our own words?
- How do we describe what we have experienced?

7.1 Discussion

Come together as a group and explain tips about writing that can be shared with other bloggers.

Note any key issues on the whiteboard, take an image and post the image to your Twitter feed, or any other forms of social media that are being used.

7.2 When writing the blog posts, think about

- What is the topic area? (introduce it to your reader clearly)
- Why does this topic area matter?
- To you? (give an example)
- To the media or wider field of life in general? (give an example)
- Can you make connections to other areas of life/media?
- Do you have any arguments or conclusions about this topic that might be of value to others interested in this topic or issues?

7.3 Reminder

- All written work should demonstrate evidence of engagement with the module curriculum such as through reading and research and the use of appropriate academic conventions of presentation such as the use of references and bibliography. Consult the module handbook for further details.

- As a general guideline, each blog post should be in the region of 200-300 words.
- The blog posts should make use of the affordances of blogging such as hypertext and embedded media that you have produced yourself.

8 Activity - Clown Sightings

Search for news articles about Killer Clown sightings.

“Last week, President Obama’s spokesman, Josh Earnest, was asked about the nasty clown epidemic. ‘I don’t know that the president has been briefed on this particular situation,’ he replied. ‘Obviously, this is a situation that law enforcement is taking quite seriously.’” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/13/why-wouldnt-it-go-viral-clowns-are-unnerving-and-funny-at-the-same-time>

The brave mum-of-four was confronted by the creepy stranger on her first night shift alone working at ADT Taxis in Netherhall Road, Leicester. The sinister figure appeared and attempted to frighten the worker known only as Rita, as she sat behind the counter at around 9pm on Monday (10/10). But she refused to be intimidated and instead turned the tables on the clown by chasing him out of the office and down the street.

<http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/female-taxi-firm-operator-chases-killer-clown-out-of-office-and-down-the-street/story-29801591-detail/story.html>

- What do you think explains this phenomenon?
- What is driving the press and media interest in this phenomenon?
- What do you think motivates people to take part in it and act it out?
- What does social media add to the phenomenon?

Social media witch-hunts are no different to the old kind – just bigger

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/13/social-media-witch-hunts>

9 Summary

“At the heart of Web 2.0 is the idea that online sites and services become more powerful the more that they *embrace* this network of potential collaborators” (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 6).

“Rather than just seeing the internet as a broadcast model, which brings an audience to a website (the ‘1.0’ model), Web 2.0 invites users in to play. Sites such as YouTube, eBay, Facebook, Flickr, Craigslist, and Wikipedia only exist and have value because people use and contribute to them, and they are clearly *better* the more people are using and contributing to them. This is the essence of Web 2.0” (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 7).

9.1 Forward Questions

- How are you going to approach your blogging?
- Will you be able to track issues of interest as you go along?
- Do you tag and links to interesting content as you go along?
- What’s the feedback and conversation like when you do post your thoughts and ideas?

10 References

Gauntlett, D. (2011). *Making is Connecting*. London: Polity.

White, C., & Biggs, J. (2014). *Bloggers Boot Camp - Learning Ho To Build, Write, and Run a Successful Blog* (2nd ed.). Abingdon: Focal Press.