Blog Uses and Applications

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Blog Uses and Applications
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Warm-up questions
- How do you define a blog?
- What are the motivational factors to contribute to the continuing blogging behavior of bloggers?

Content Overview
1. What is a blog? means “Web log”—is an online, chronological collection of personal commentary and links. Easy to create and use from anywhere with an Internet connection.

Do you blog?

Research on blogging
  http://jcmc.indiana.edu/ or http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ (4 articles on blogging to choose from).


Psychological factors
- Positive feedback
- Benefit to self
- Benefit to relationship with others
- Need for information gathering skills

Social factors
- Intention to continue blog writing
- Positive feedback
- Satisfaction
- Benefit to acquire information
- Benefit to provide information
- Need for reassurance
- Need for social interaction

Intention to continue blog writing

- In their responses to the survey, women tended to describe themselves as more interested in the social aspects of blogging, while men tended to be more interested in information and opinion.
- Men demonstrated more technical sophistication.
- Privacy was a major issue for women (and also for gay bloggers of both sexes).


- Two types of Anonymity:
  - visual (e.g. distorted photo)
  - discursive (e.g. personal profile, pseudonym)
- Visual anonymity is not associated with self-disclosure
- Discursive anonymity is somewhat related to self-disclosure.
- The target audience is related to how much anonymity bloggers perceive themselves to have. Bloggers whose target audience does not include people they know offline report a higher degree of anonymity than those whose audience does.
- Target audience also influences the way posts are written and what information is made available.


We Now Share Expertise in Many Ways (e.g., blogs, wikis, wikibooks, online news, open access journals, etc.)

Michael Wesch, Digital Ethnography blog, Kansas State University

Alexandra Juhasz: Media Praxis blog
http://aljjean.wordpress.com/
Stephen Downes, Canadian Research Council: 
OLDaily blog
http://www.downes.ca/ 

George Siemens: ELearnSpace blog
http://www.elearnspace.org/blog/

Will Richardson, Weblogg-ed
http://weblogg-ed.com/

Jay Cross, Internet Time Blog
http://www.internettime.com/

Henry Jenkins, Confessions of an Aca-Fan
http://www.henryjenkins.org/

Gardner Campbell, Baylor University
http://www.gardnercampbell.net/blog1/
Edupunk Bloggers, Jim Groom, Instructional Technologist, Mary Washington University; http://jimgroom.net/about/
• Describes growing movement toward high-tech-do-it-yourself education.
• Mainly motivated by astronomical costs of higher education.

TravelinEdMan
We are entering a jumping off point...from the Web 2.0 to???
Web 2.0
• The Web As Platform
• Harnessing Collective Intelligence
Elements of the Web’s Next Generation

Personalized Learning Environments
(leadrs include: Scott Wilson, Graham Attwell, George Siemens, and Stephen Downes)

Content Overview
2. What is a videoblog? A videoblog, or vlog, is a Web log (blog) that uses video rather than text or audio as its primary media source.
3. Who is blogging? Hundreds of millions of people.

BLOG

Content Overview
4. Why instructors use: Keep students up-to-date, extend course beyond class (blending), make course more interactive and personal, etc. Fosters student reflection on content—a content and course focus.

Roles of Blogs: Per Jay Cross
• Weblogs are a personal writing space. Easy, sharable, automatically archived.
• Weblogs are easily linked and cross-linked to form learning communities. The school logs projects are examples. The school logs also enable a teacher to evaluate a student’s thinking, by reading explanations and assignments.
• Weblogs can become digital portfolios of students’ assignments and achievements.
• Weblogs are a novice’s web authoring tool.
• Accumulated weblogs become a content management system.
• Via digital storytelling, weblogs play a role in professional development.
Roles of Blogs: Per Jay Cross  
(posted in Will Richardson's blog)
1. Content Creation.
2. Decentralization of power.
3. User is in control.
5. Pipe (sharing network) more important than the content (i.e., new stuff will arise).
6. Increase in shared meanings and understandings.
7. Ideas presented are a starting point for discussion, not ending point.

Roles of Blogs: Per Anne Davis  
(posted in Will Richardson's blog)
1. Sharing space (with parents, teachers, others).
2. Place to improve writing.
3. Place to think outside the box.
4. Place for surprise and anticipation.
5. A personal space for active experimentation.
6. A place to collaborate.
7. Just in time learning arena.
8. A way to connect with others and make connections to learning.

Content Overview
5. Pros and Cons.
• Pros: quick, flexible, ownership, can determine student thinking, can lead to a writing portfolio, etc.
• Cons: Takes time, not confidential, another tool to learn, a lot to read, etc.

Content Overview
6. Theoretical rationale: Blogging links to research on metacognition and the social construction of knowledge—reflect, negotiate ideas, and respond to the ideas of others.

Content Overview
6. Theoretical rationale continued: Feedback is also possible on blog posts. Sharing is also a key component. Video blogging links to dual coding theory.

Univ. of Maryland Baltimore County
...chemistry labs had groups of students posting their findings to a blog and receiving feedback from other students, the average passing rate in class went from 71.2 percent to 85.6 percent.
David Wiley (BYU)
“A group of approximately 60 people from around the world who read, worked, wrote, and discussed together - and fewer than 10 of them were registered for credit at my university.”

David Wiley (BYU)
“When the costs of “open teaching” are so low, I ask myself a question. Do we professors, who live rather privileged lives relative to the vast majority of the planet’s population, have a moral obligation to make our teaching efforts as broadly impactful as possible, reaching out to bless the lives of as many people as we can? Especially when participatory technologies make it so inexpensive (almost free) for us to do so?”

Content Overview
7. How instructors use: Course announcements, task reminders, posting resources, and general course communication. Might also use to communicate with those teaching similar courses. They might also network with others.

Content Overview
8. How students use: post article reflections, dialogue, draft ideas for projects, collaborate across institutions or cultures, compose a summary of course learning or a blog on a blog, respond to peers on their ideas, etc.

Content Overview
9. Blogging tools possible (Movable Type, WordPress, Blogger, LiveJournal, Twitter, etc.)
10. What to share: text, hyperlinks, images, multimedia, etc. Others can post comments.
Blogger (from Google)

Word Press (an open source project)

Movable Type (a more professional publishing platform)

Xanga (a huge community)

Tumblr (a feature rich system)

Posterious (simple with much functionality)
Soup.io (scrapbook—a personal remix of the web just click and add, easy to include multimedia, and lifestream—aggregates all you create online)

Edmodo (effectively makes password protected groups of blogs; polling, instant messaging, mobile access, class calendars, etc.)

Content Overview
11. Twitter posts are for micro-blogging (short 140 or less character text messages): instructors might post course announcements, resources, events, share lesson plans, extend or reduce office hours, etc.

Content Overview
12. Twitter for students: might follow professors, follow experts, ask questions of instructors, follow conference events, find industry leaders, etc.

Content Overview

Twitter (microblogging)

Content Overview
14. Trackback notifies bloggers when one of their posts is referenced by another blog, making it possible to determine the popularity of a post based on the number and diversity of incoming links to a post.
A case study of blog-based learning in Korea: Technology becomes pedagogy

Jung Kang, Chungsik Bok, and Young-Chul Eom

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential of technology in enhancing student learning. The study was conducted in a Korean university where students were required to maintain a blog as part of their coursework. The blog entries were analyzed to identify patterns in student learning. The results showed that students who used the blogs more frequently had higher grades. The study also revealed that students who engaged in interactive discussions through the blogs had better understanding of the course material.

Fig. 1. The feedback cycle (Bars et al., 2009, p. 35).

Fig. 2. Multi-layered interactivity.

Fig. 3. The number of blog entries and diverse comments received.

Fig. 4. Active interaction among the participants.

Fig. 5. Multi-layered interactivity among and between blogs.
Content Overview

15. Caution: Students might post inappropriate content.

16. Meta-tagging blog and videoblog postings will help people find them more easily.
Content Overview

17. Blogging power comes in personal publishing as well as hyperlinking to other blogs.

Examples of Blogging

1. Instructor course blogs.
2. Student blogs on content.
4. Team blogs.
5. Language learning blogs.

Instructor Cross-Cultural Blog

Critical Friend Blogs

Read Language Blogs (e.g., “The Spanish Blog”)

Discipline Specific Blogs
Other Blogging Activities

6. Write “super summaries” of blogs.
7. Expand blog posts into papers.
9. Archive blogs for later years.
10. Bring blog posts to class.

11. Assign students to do video blogs (vlogs)

Vlogs (Blogs with video)

Blogging is popular around the world

ePals and iEARN (collaboration between K-12 schools)

The Flat Classroom Project
Ice Stories Project
(Exploratorium)

Cross-Cultural Rhetoric (CCR) Project
(writing, blogging, videoconferencing to build intercultural competence, Stanford U and universities in Sweden, Singapore, Russia, Egypt and Australia)

Advice and Guidelines
1. Create scaffold for any blogging collaboration. Include instructions and procedures to avoid offensive or inappropriate content (e.g., Netiquette).

Advice and Guidelines
2. Be sure that students receive feedback on their blog posts.
3. Instructors might not read every blog post, but, instead, read and grade student super summaries of their blogging reflections.

Advice and Guidelines
4. Perhaps assign students to read a particular blog each week.
5. If it is a blended class, have students bring in their blog transcripts with key concepts circled for discussion.

Advice and Guidelines
6. If you are using discussion forums, ask students to include blog comments in them.
7. Consider having students subscribe to the blog feeds of others or create an RSS feed on their blog.
Advice and Guidelines

8. Allow students to select the blog tool that they will use.
9. Post sample blogs from prior students (with permission).
10. Post testimonials from students.

11. Model blogging procedures as the instructor.
12. Praise exemplary bloggers.
13. You might set minimum or maximum blog posting guidelines.

14. Videoblog postings of 3 minutes or less might be best.
15. Most blogs are social, but can be used or analyzed for educational purposes. There are dozens (if not thousands) of expert blogs for nearly any educational discipline.

For More Information, Contact:
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