

WHAT TO
WHEN **BLOG**
HOW

BLOG BASICS FOR MARKETERS

a BLUCKZ.com presentation

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Blogging is HOT.

The phenomenon of creating and managing web logs has caught the imagination of the online community.

Weblogs – or '**blogs**' – and their related tools, tricks, tips and paraphernalia are springing up all around you.

As a savvy web marketer aspiring to be 'ahead of the curve', **what do YOU need to know** about blogs and blogging?

A lot.

And the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

By picking up this book and reading it, your exciting voyage into blogging begins now.

Enjoy the ride!

Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian

Author of the **First ORIGINAL** blogBook:

GET BLUCKZ'ed

33 Blog Profit Ideas YOU Can Use Today

<http://www.BlogProfits.com>

1. WHAT IS A BLOG?

One of the first people to ask me this question was 'Affiliate Marketing Queen' Rosalind Gardner, author of the bestselling '[Super Affiliate Handbook](#)'. I had contacted her about promoting my newly released '[33 Blog Profit Ideas](#)' ebook and she wrote back:

"I'm afraid you're going to have to educate me first. In a very short sentence, please explain what a blog is and how it works..."

That's the test to see if you know what you're talking about. **Can you explain it - in a very short sentence - to someone who doesn't know anything about it?**

Here's my reply:

"A 'blog' is short form for 'web log', a sort of online personal diary where *anyone* can reveal his/her innermost thoughts, feelings, desires, dreams, ambitions, hopes, fears... you get the point.

Yes, it's a website. With one small difference. It lists posts ordered by date, in a personal journal format, and is easier to create than a website - just involves typing into a form and hitting the PUBLISH button."

To which Rosalind replied:

"Thanks for the perfect-length description of a blog. I had an idea, but you've made it perfectly clear."

The Chicago Tribune explains it more concisely.

"A Weblog is a Web site that maintains a constantly updated list of links to other sites; those links can deal with any subject or focus on a particular one. Webloggers typically offer pithy, sarcastic commentary about the links."

And that, in essence, is what a blog is!

2. WHAT CAN I PUT ON MY BLOG?

Anything.

Many beginning bloggers are intimidated by 2 questions:

"Do I really have anything to say?"

and

"Why should anyone want to read what I write?"

Define your own objectives.

Most weblog tools provide a ready-to-hand design framework. All the author has to do is add 'water' - their content. This ease-of-entry ensures that just about anyone can put their drivel on the Internet without a second thought.

On the other hand, weblogs are not just a vehicle for navel-gazing by their authors. Even that is permitted - just generally ignored by readers!

3. WHY ARE BLOGS HOT?

Weblogs do not represent something brand new in human communication. Diaries closely resemble weblogs and be traced back as far as ancient Greece.

Blogs can be succinctly described in 4 words...

Personal Web Publishing Communities

It's Personal -- it's done by a person, not an organization. The individual's personality shines through the blog posts. Not a sanitized, corporatized, acceptable form of collective thinking and feeling -- but the unique, rough edged, even sometimes bizarre individualism of the blog owner.

It's on the Web -- So it can be updated frequently, is not expensive to maintain, and can be accessed through a web browser by anyone you choose to permit.

It's Published -- There are outlines or templates into which each post is 'streamed' by an automated process. The result is an electronic publication. One that can be distributed to many others, even syndicated, through technology called RSS feeds.

It's part of a vast online Community. Each blog links to several others, connecting people together through common interests.

And as any eMarketer knows, building interactive online communities around an area of interest is the Holy Grail of online success.

THAT'S why they're hot!

4. WHY SHOULD I BLOG?

Because EVERYONE is!

Well, ok, if that isn't good enough for you, here's one more reason. Or two.

Blogs let you **REACH and RELATE**.

Reach...

Who?

Your audience. Customers, subscribers, prospects, readers. Anyone whom you could earlier reach by email.

Have you looked at your email delivery stats lately? Notice how fewer messages are getting through to your list.

Blame it on the deluge of spam email. Or the use of increasingly aggressive filters, by ISPs and end users.

Fact is, email is getting less effective as a communication tool simply because it often fails to reach the intended recipient.

Enter the blog - where a message is on the Web for anyone to see.

There's still the issue of getting the word out when you update the blog - but I'll come to that later.

The next good reason... Relate.

How?

By revealing your true personality, by letting your individuality shine through. It's easier to establish rapport with audiences through a blog post that's an unpolished form of your thought processes - than through a corporate bulletin or edited newsletter.

Reach and Relate - through your Blog.

5. WHAT PROGRAMMING AND TECHNICAL SKILLS DO I NEED TO BLOG?

Most weblog tools provide an easy-to-use publishing interface. Indeed, blogging software was designed to allow non-techies to publish professional quality weblogs.

With most blog software available today, all the author has to do is create content. The mental barrier to webpage design that holds many back from building websites is almost completely destroyed when it comes to blogging.

It's "fall-off-a-log" easy!

Installing blog software on your server requires some basic knowledge about scripts and CGI. But if you hate doing this stuff, there are several services that offer 'ready-to-go' blogs.

Just register - and start blogging!

6. WHAT ARE THE BLOG PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TODAY?

There are many commercial and free software (free not only as in free beer, but also as in freedom - you can change the source code if you want - Open Source).

They'll get you started blogging - fast and easy. Popular among them.

a. **Blogger** (commercial) - from Pyra labs (recently bought out by Google, they're getting the excitement about blogging up to fever-pitch)

<http://www.blogger.com/>

b. **Radio Userland** (commercial) from Userland software (Dave Winer's creation. Dave's one of the earliest bloggers and his Scripting News is the longest running blog on the Internet - launched 1996)

<http://www.userland.com/>

c. **Movable Type** (free & commercial) from SixApart. This feature-rich program is the one I use on my own blog, "remarkably purple spots..."

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

d. **Grey Matter** (free + opensource)

<http://www.noahgrey.com/greysft/>

e. **Open Journal** (free)

<http://www.grohol.com/downloads/oj/>

f. **pMachine** (commercial) I'm hearing many good things about this one.

<http://www.pmachine.com>

Where the software runs and how you update your weblog :

Blogger - Blogger runs on a remote server. You log in to that server, then make your new entries and publish it to your server with the click of a button. There's also a free hosting option on their servers at blogspot.com

Radio Userland - Radio software runs on your desktop. You do the editing on your own system and Radio publishes it to your site.

Movable type - Set of perl/CGI scripts that you can install into your webserver's CGI-bin directory. The editing and publishing all takes place on your webserver. You access the clean and simple user interface through a regular internet browser like MS Internet Explorer or Netscape.

Grey matter and Open Journal are both like movable type.

7. WHAT ARE THE PROS / CONS OF REMOTE HOSTED BLOGS?

Benefits: No problems or hassles related to installing software or scripts on your server and troubleshooting problems. You don't even need to have your own domain name or web hosting service if you plan to host the blog on the remote service itself.

Disadvantages: The remote hosting service might get taken down for maintenance or other issues at an inconvenient time. Or if traffic is very heavy on the service, you may face delays or periods of inaccessibility to your blog for updating it. This is more likely if you host it on a free service.

If you're hosting your blog on your own domain, you have to disclose administrative details about your website (like your FTP account username and password) in order that your blog posts can be uploaded to your server.

8. IS IT BETTER TO HAVE BLOG SOFTWARE RUN ON YOUR OWN SERVER?

Benefits: More security. You don't have to give out your FTP details or password. Your blog's accessibility is dependent only on your server, not the remote hosting service's.

Disadvantages: You need to have some basic knowledge about installing blogging software and scripts on your own server and troubleshooting problems. It requires some knowledge of changing directory access permissions, and other basic script installation techniques. Most of the blog software creators run helpful online forums and discussion groups to help out with problems.

9. WHAT SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT ON MY BLOG?

There are many kinds of content you can put on your blog.

Stories.

You could use descriptions of things you've done, thought threads, streams of consciousness, idea feeds. Longer articles or short snippets. If you're using a long story, you could display a short summary on the homepage and link to the full post in an archive.

Pictures.

One of them is worth a thousand words. Good weblog software lets you store and display pictures and also combines them into sequences for display to readers in attractively packaged format.

Presentations.

You could have any type of data including media objects like Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents, Macromedia or Apple movies, PDFs, Audio feeds, downloadable applications - whatever.

10. HOW OFTEN SHOULD I WRITE OR UPDATE MY BLOG?

A good weblog is updated often, with pointers to interesting events, pages, stories and happenings elsewhere on the Web. New stuff piles on top of the page; older stuff sinks to the bottom.

Suit Yourself

A calendar can be intimidating. Is there any point to a weblog - a website - that is only updated once a week?

Once a month? Once a year?

That depends on many factors that go to the heart of why you wish to create a blog in the first place. The good news is that no one's going to punish you if you post material infrequently!

So relax. Enjoy blogging.

11. CAN I GET OTHERS TO WRITE FOR MY BLOG?

Yes, there are several ways you can have content added to your blog - **by others**.

If you have a **team of content providers**, you can create several user accounts using your blogging software. Each member of your team then logs in and writes for your blog, adding their content. You can even assign different levels of permissions for each user in some types of blog software.

Another way to get contributed content is to **invite your blog readers to enter comments and feedback**. Clicking on a link at the end of a post will bring up a popup window in which a reader can add comments. And the author can respond.

A third way to include content on your blog is by **publishing syndicated content** from others on your blog using some XML programming.

12. HOW CAN I GET PEOPLE TO FIND MY BLOG AND VISIT IT?

In essence, this is very similar to promoting a new website.

And the answer is very simple –

Mention your blog EVERYWHERE, to *EVERYONE*

Note, I said 'simple', not 'easy' :)

Here are some quick ways to get started:

1. List it on **Search Engines**, especially Google which will soon boast a new tab specifically for blogs on its search interface. Blog content is usually SE friendly, so you can rank high for specific terms by sticking to a theme as you blog.

2. You **visit other blogs** and comment on their articles. Leave links back to your blog. Even write about them on *your* blog. Then tell them about what you've written. They'll respond. This way, readers of both blogs can find them. It is a mutually productive form of link exchanging.

Blogs have a feature called **Trackback**. When your post links to a post on another weblog that supports Trackback, it can ping (send an electronic message) to the other weblog notifying it that it has been referred to. In this way each blog post will serve as a collection point for content on a given topic.

3. **Blogrolls** - Weblogs often have a blogroll, linking to sites that the author thinks are interesting, informative, or useful. Keep your own blogroll growing. Try and get your blog listed on as many blogrolls as possible.

13. HOW CAN I GET READERS TO COME BACK OFTEN TO MY BLOG?

Fresh content.

Keep it updated with new messages. By their very nature, blogs are constantly evolving. By making your blog a frequently updated resource for breaking news or information on your topic, you'll make it a 'must-see' destination and attract targeted readers who'll keep coming back for more.

Bulletins.

Invite your blog readers to sign up for reminders whenever you update it. Many blogging software programs have a feature that allows editors to send bulletins via email to members who have chosen to receive them.

Third-party programs also plug into blogs and offer this service. Bloglet - at <http://www.bloglet.com> - offers a similar feature where you host a sign up form on your blog. Bloglet sends subscribers an email every time you add a post to your blog.

Syndication.

An RSS feed is available for weblogs. People who use news aggregators can subscribe to the weblog. In a convergence of push and pull technologies, services like Klip offer a way to 'subscribe' to regularly updated data feeds from a blog.

14. WHAT SHOULD I NOT DO WITH MY BLOG?

Don't post false information!

In the blogosphere, word spreads fast.

Amazingly, blindingly fast - sometimes.

You could be very popular - or very red faced - with equal ease.

It all depends on what you post on your blog!

15. WHAT WILL MY BLOG COST ME (IN TIME, MONEY, EFFORT)?

Few minutes a day might be enough.

Or 26 hours in a day may not be quite enough.

It depends upon how much you want to do, and how fast you want it done.

If all you wish to do is post a few messages every day on your blog, it won't take long at all. Just a few seconds to log on, write your message into an online form, and click a button to publish it to your blog!

You could even host it remotely on a free service - all it'll cost is the time you take to log in and post.

To be a true member of the blogosphere, though, you have to work a bit harder. You'll need to spend time looking for, and visiting other blogs. You'll have to link to them - and get linked back in return.

You'll have to host your blog on its own domain, on your server. If your blog is commercial in purpose, you'll need to purchase commercial licenses from the software developer. Then you'll have to install it - or get it done.

It'll cost a bit, though not too much.

Look at it this way. You could either publish in a flash for free and hope for luck to guide you to glory. Or you could do it step by step, investing in your blog, **knowing** you'll reap rich rewards in the future.

16. CAN I MAKE MONEY FROM MY BLOG?

But of course!

How?

Well, for starters you can read my article about **Profit Blogging** at <http://www.EzineMarketingCenter.com/ezine-articles/>

In it I've listed three simple ways to make your blog turn profitable.

And if this article whets your appetite for more, you could buy my bestselling blogBook

"GET BLUCKZ'ed 33 Blog Profit Ideas You Can Use Today"

<http://www.BlogProfits.com>

It's a short, concise, no-fluff compilation of powerful ideas to make money from your blog.

Just one of those ideas helped me raise over \$9,000 in less than a week recently to sponsor my "**Heart Kids Blogathon**" - see my website for details on how you too can help save a child's life and make a difference...

<http://www.EzineMarketingCenter.com/blogathon/sponsorty.htm>

WANT TO STAY AHEAD OF THE BLOGGING CURVE?

I'm absolutely convinced that blogs are the future of eMarketing – and I'm putting my money where my mouth is.

For the next year, I'll be focusing my attention on blogging – more specifically **PROFIT blogging**.

Just two years ago, the phrase would be an oxymoron – you could either profit, or you could blog. How fast things change!

Anyway...

I'm inviting you to join me and experience the

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Content-rich Blogging!

How to Legally Use OTHER Peoples' High Quality Information On Your Blog - And Profit From It!

Blogities

The Three Letter Word That Never Fails To Make Me Money – Or How I made \$9,263 over the weekend with my blog.

Run A Blogathon

Ten Things Every Sponsor Secretly Wants To Hear From You Before Handing Over Cash

Blog Marts

Create Money Out Of Thin Air. You Too Can Suck Up HUGE Profits Fast - With Little More Than a Blog

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How To Use 'Secret' Tactics to Build Ad Friendly Blogs Fast!

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