**Blogs and Blogging**

A blog is a website in which items are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order. The term blog is a shortened form of weblog or web log. Authoring a blog, maintaining a blog or adding an article to an existing blog is called “blogging”. Individual articles on a blog are called “blog posts,” “posts” or “entries”. A person who posts these entries is called a “blogger”. A blog comprises text, hypertext, images, and links (to other web pages and to video, audio and other files). Blogs use a conversational style of documentation. Often blogs focus on a particular “area of interest”, such as Washington, D.C.’s political goings-on. Some blogs discuss personal experiences.’

Like an online dairy. This can be about and be used for anything at all, it can be used for news, reviews, products etc for a business, organization etc. This is great as it helps the user stay in touch with the website with new and up to date information. These are very popular these days online. Each weblog develops an audience, and there’s also camaraderie and politics between the people who run weblogs, they point to each other, in all kinds of structures, graphs, loops, etc. Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog. Postings on a blog are almost always arranged in chronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently. Popular blog software’s include Moveable Type, Blogger, or Word Press. Each blog is generally maintained by one to three people, usually one. Adding a blog to your web site makes it dynamic, drawing your visitors with return visits and encouraging their interaction. You can use blogs to build relationships. Blogs are quickly having a major cultural impact in politics, religion, business, and other areas. The blogging phenomenon is a grassroots movement that may sow the seeds for new forms of journalism, public discourse, interactivity and online community. Thousands of working journalists produce bogs on the internet. Web logging will drive a powerful new form of amateur journalism as millions of Net users — young people especially — take on the role of columnist, reporter, analyst and publisher while fashioning their own personal broadcasting networks. It won't happen overnight, and we're now seeing only version 1.0, but just wait a few years when broadband and multimedia arrive in a big way.

With the rise of the blogging, people don't need to be bounded by those traditional filters anymore." The role of the journalist is to ensure that the voice of the people should be exposed. "Now, thankfully, the protesters who want to get their story out can bypass the media by using live audio or a Webcam to offer raw feeds during a live protest or forum. If you're a guy with a video recorder filming an event in a certain neighborhood and streaming it on the Internet and reporting it on your Weblog, you're practicing a straightforward kind of amateur journalism." It’s instantaneous as "With a Weblog, you hit the send key and it's out there while in the print media if you are working for the weekly magazine or even daily, it seems like it takes time to see your work in print. It's the perfect throwaway journalism for our age."

Its interactive as it’s a kick to get feedback from people you've never heard of who stumble on your Weblog. You don't have to necessarily tailor your work for a certain readership or demographic or for other marketing constraints or you don't have an editor to pitch the story to. Here's a media form that lets you write at any length about any issue you care deeply about and find of sufficient significance.

**Definitions of Blog:**

1- Blog is an online Journal. It is a frequently updated journal or diary usually, often hosted by a third party.

2- Short for "Web log," a specialized site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences. Blogs with political or current-events themes have grown in popularity and allows for instant mass-audience commentary.

3- Web LOG is a journal kept on the Internet. This journal is often updated daily and contains all information that the person maintaining the BLOG (the blogger) wishes to share with the world.

4- A blog is information that is instantly published to a Web site. Blog scripting allows someone to automatically post information to a Web site. The information first goes to a blogger Web site. Then the information is automatically inserted into a template tailored for your Web site.

5- A BLOG is a publication of personal thoughts, experiences, and web links. It is updated frequently and is usually a mixture of what is happening in a person's life and what is happening on the web or in the media.

6- Blog is a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links. It offers readers the opportunity to reply to opinions and link to their own blogs.

7- It is a web-based publication consisting of periodic contributions, often in reverse chronological order.

8- Blog is a journal on the web, which may be pubic or private, individual or collaborative.

9- BLOG is short for Web log, and our Web pages that work as a journal that our normally updated daily. Blogging sites can provide excellent information on many topics, although content can be subjective.

10- Blog, short for web log, is an online diary written on a computer and posted on the World Wide Web.

11- A blog (short for weblog) is an online journal or diary of an individual’s opinions and latest news that is updated regularly, in chronological order. Many blogs allow visitors to make comments, or “postings” in response to the blogger, or ask questions.

12- A blog (short for "Web Log") is basically a journal or personal diary that is available on the web. Blogs are typically updated daily using content management software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain them.

13- It is an online diary where people can post messages and others may view and respond to the posts.

14- This is a term coming from the combination of the terms web log – it is a web page that serves as publicly accessible journal for the author. It can be formal or informal, is usually updated daily and reflects the personality of the author.

15- Blog is a web journal which is otherwise called as a "weblog". Entries are made on a regular or daily basis in a blog like an online diary. Some blogs have definite authors who disclose their names and some with anonymous authors who use a nickname.

16- Blogs have been identified as an increasingly popular source of online publication, especially regarding political information, opinion publication and alternative news coverage.

17- Weblog is a website with a series of postings. Blogs are easily written and published via a web form using free or low cost software. Many libraries use a blog format as their website.

18- A weblog is a hierarchy of text, images, media objects and data, arranged chronologically, that can be viewed in an HTML browser.

19- A blog is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.

**Components of Blogs:**

1- Subject or Header: Subject or header is the blog's title.

2- Content or Body: The text is typed or pasted into the body.

3- Comments: The comment feature allows others to take part in a discussion regarding the contents of your blog. When visitors add their own two cents regarding the subject matter, a lively discussion can proceed. Many bloggers and blog readers appreciate the sense of community blogs offer thanks to comments.

4- Time and Date Stamp: Because blogs are arranged in chronological order, it's important for visitors to note the time and date of each post.

5- Community:

The blog builds community around a common vision. Bloggers will often link to other blogs and websites as a way of illustrating a point or citing a source. This not only adds an air of credibility to the blog, but it also allows readers to visit blogs they might not have otherwise heard about. The blogger on the other end of the link is sure to appreciate the resulting boom in traffic. In fact a community made up of like-minded bloggers and commenters usually form as a result of the links. These bloggers will cite each other's blogs in their own and even discuss and analyze each other's topics.

6- Blogroll: A list of links to other blogs, often called a blogroll.

7- RSS feeds: that permits automatic notification of blog subscribers when new entries are posted.

8- An archive feature for older articles.

9- Blogs also focus on a particular topic such as a corporate vision, politics, religion, sports, or health.

**Types of Blogs:**

There are various types of blogs, and each differs in the way content is delivered or written.

**1- By media type**

A blog comprising videos is called a vlog, one comprising links is called a link log, 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 tumble logs. An Art log is a form of art sharing and publishing in the format of a blog, but differentiated by the predominant use of and focus on Art work rather than text. A rare type of blog hosted on the Gopher Protocol is known as a Phlog

**2- 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 is called a moblog.

**3- By Genre**

Some blogs focus on a particular subject, such as political blogs, travel blogs, fashion blogs, project blogs, niche blogs, classical music blogs, legal blogs (often referred to as a blawgs) or dreamlogs. While not a legitimate type of blog, one used for the sole purpose of spamming is known as a Splog. A Slog (Site or website log) is a section or 'slice' of a regular business website, which is seamlessly integrated within the regular website structure but is produced with blogging software.

**Legal status of publishers**

A blog can be private, as in most cases, or it can be for business purposes. Blogs either used internally to enhance the communication and culture in a corporation or externally for marketing, branding or PR purposes are called corporate blogs.

**Blog search engines**

Several blog search engines are used to search blog contents (also known as the blogosphere), such as blogdigger, Feedster, and Technorati. Technorati provides current information on both popular searches and tags used to categorize blog postings.

**Blogging Communities and Directories**

Several online communities exist that connect people to blogs and bloggers to other bloggers, including BlogCatalog and MyBlogLog. A collection of local blogs is sometimes referred to as a Bloghood.

**Advantages and disadvantages of blogs:**

Bloggers are people with attitude. They say there’s a book inside everybody. The Web and blogs have let the book out! There has literally been an explosion of opinion. Now, we can hear all sorts of voices on the subject. It’s true democracy at work. Talk of blogs is everywhere. Corporations, authors, and experts of every stripe are finding that blogs can be valuable marketing and PR tools. But blogs aren't for everyone. So before you join the blogosphere, consider both the advantages and the caveats.

The major advantage of blogs is that they are interactive and require no knowledge of coding by the content creators. The major disadvantage is that maintaining a successful blog requires skillful research, professional writing skills and a huge commitment of time and effort. There simply is no such thing as a perfect marketing tool, or an effortless way to build traffic to any site, including blogs. The 2004 Presidential race inaugurated the blog into the realm of serious marketing tool. From in-house communication, file sharing, and sheer speed of creation to interactivity with an audience, blogs are the cheapest, most effective content management tool yet created. There are more advantages than disadvantages to blogging, but the disadvantages will definitely cause your blog's failure and could even put you in the midst of controversy or see you mocked by other bloggers.

**Advantages of blogs:**

1- The consumer and citizen are potentially better informed and this can only be good for the long-term health of our societies and economies.

2- Blogs are an excellent way to share knowledge with others on both a personal and business level.

3- Blogging permits team communication in a group that is scattered geographically, with many advantages over traditional email.

4- Blogs have potential to help the organization develop stronger relationships and brand loyalty with its customers, as they interact with the ‘human face’ of the organization through blogs.

5- Blogs, in an intranet environment, can be an excellent way of sharing knowledge within the organization.

6- Blogs can be used to provide feedback, ideas, and concepts. They can be a positive way of getting feedback, and keeping your finger on the pulse, as readers react to certain pieces, suggest story ideas, etc. 7- Blogs can build the profile of the writer, showcasing the organization as having talent and expertise.

8- Blog software is often free and easy to use. A non-technical person can use a blog. Blog pages can be created quickly and updated easily by a non-technical person. Blog software is so user friendly that it frees you from the tyranny of the IT department. Even a technical clunk head can post content, images, photos, articles and more to the Internet instantly.

9- Journalists troll blogs for source material because bloggers often break stories before traditional media. Posts in your blog can lead to coverage in mainstream, traditional media. Key people in the media search the blogs for information. We often get news from blogs well before the same information is seen in CNN. FOX, traditional networks, or other news services.

10- Blogs are a perfect way to organize large amounts of information because posts are automatically archived and searchable.

11- Blogs generate traffic. Search engines love blogs, so a good blog will drive traffic to you and your web site. Blog page listings are updated frequently in the search engines because they are strong on content and changed often. As a result, blogs can drive high-quality listings for a web site.

12- Blogging is a very inexpensive form of advertising and there is a high click through rate for advertising on the better blogs. Its good advertising and marketing. Click-through rates on blog ads can reach 5%, and blog advertising is particularly good for niche marketing. Banner ads are nowhere near that. Some bloggers are getting 6-figure incomes from their support advertising in their blogs.

13- Blogs establish you as an authority on the subject of your blog, increasing your credibility.

14- Several blogs reach over 100,000 unique visitors a day. In other words, if you do it right you have a very large audience.

**Disadvantages of blogs:**

1. Like practically everything else on the Web, blogs are easy to start and hard to maintain. Writing coherently is one of the most difficult and time-consuming tasks for a human being to undertake. So, far from blogs being a cheap strategy, they are a very expensive one, in that they eat up time. As a result, many blogs are not updated, thus damaging rather than enhancing the reputation of the organization.
2. Most people don’t have very much to say that’s interesting, and/or are unable to write down their ideas in a compelling and clear manner. People who have most time to write have least to say, and the people who have most to say don’t have enough time to write it.
3. It is easy for a non-technical person to maintain a blog. This is both a plus and a minus. The fact that updating is easy makes it possible for a non-technical person to update the blog. At the same time, this means you can find a large number of blogs out there that add nothing to the blogosphere but garbage and mis-information.
4. Blogs are time intensive. You need to do research to find and verify information. You have to keep up with many other blogs. You have to keep your blog updated, or you lose your readers. It also takes time and effort to build your audience. Once the audience is built, however, it is a loyal audience. Of the over
5. Million blogs out there, only about 4 million are active. People quit keeping the blogs up for a variety of reasons. Most of these relate to the difficulty and time required to author quality content and the research required to keep it accurate.

**Blogging requirements:**

* Blogs are writing intensive. Most people would rather have root canal than write something coherent, pithy and provocative every day. It takes talent, skill and training to write down ideas clearly and make them interesting to read.
* Maintaining a blog is hard work. Searching and writing is a complex and extremely time-consuming task. A blog that isn't kept up to date quickly loses its luster and its audience.
* Blog software is cheap and easily configured. However, you need to have a designer customize the appearance and navigation of your blog and set up templates to make using it easy for you.
* It takes time, effort, and skillful promotion to build an audience for a blog. Just like a newsletter, report, Website or e-book, driving traffic to a blog requires marketing.
* You have to register your blog in blog search engines, and use subtle PR to push traffic to your blog. Blogs are no more of a "build it and they will come" medium than Web sites. Beyond time and consistently good content, you need to think about sending out press releases and media alerts about your blog's scoops. (And of course you need to have scoops to do that.)
* A blog that isn't well-written and frequently updated will simply be ignored.
* A blog that is an obvious attempt at self promotion may be mocked by other bloggers. You could be a laughing stock of the blogosphere.

**The Pros and Cons of Blog Comments**

Blogs are an excellent way of sharing information on any subject under the sun. Blogs allow you to build a global following of readers that may be based around a common interest. As well as sharing your identity with readers, you also get to hear the inner workings of like-minded folks. Blogs help create a more interactive and socially aware universal community. One of the most exciting features of the blogging experience is that it is not just about putting your thoughts on the World Wide Web but getting feedback or comments from and connecting with others of similar interests. Blog comments let readers of your blog from around the blogosphere give a piece of their minds on what you share on your blog. Receiving comments from readers is one great way to learn and widen your perspectives about things Blogs are akin to conversations. One of the key characteristics of a blog is the ability of readers to leave comments on what you have posted. This ability paves the way for two-way communication that creates the feel of a true conversation and in many cases help builds meaningful relationships. Blog comments can be also used to facilitate another conversation. They can serve as catalysts that will let readers set the agenda for your next posting and in the process generate even worthwhile and longer conversations. Blog comments provide you with a topic for a new post. Bloggers do run out of things to write about. Blog comments provide you with ideas for new posts. Instead of conversations waning fast as the post gets old, the conversation stimulates new excitement and can proceed to another level when you draw your readers’ attentions back to the conversation. Some comments can even change your opinion on a topic or present another point of view. You can give ample acknowledgement to your readers for contributions and the effect will be significant – a worldwide following of loyal readers. On some blogs, comments are threaded so that readers can also comment on other comments.

However, some bloggers especially those with heavy traffic or massive readership are reluctant to allow blog comments. A highly trafficked blog would need a staff to manage the influx of comments. Comments can be lots of work and if not managed properly can reflect poorly on a company blog or a celebrity blog. Some comments even need to be edited, moderated and sometimes out rightly deleted. A comment is said to be moderated when the blogger controls the comments on the different article posts. This helps tackle comment spam and delete unwanted comments. Comment spam is one reason why some bloggers do not allow blog comments.

Comment spam refers to useless comments to posts on a blog. They usually contain links to other blogs or websites. Spammers use comment spam to obtain high ranking in search results. Spammers can be quite relentless thus bloggers sometimes get overwhelmed and just decide to shut off blog comments. Nevertheless, there are anti- spam and spam combating tools to control comment spam. The Internet community is constantly working on more and better ways to combat these annoying blog comments. Comment spam can be minimized thus there is absolutely no reason to totally turn off blog comments.

There are times too when an influential blogger writes something controversial and ends up with hundreds of comments. Since some of them are not direct links, it is hard to conduct a real conversation in blog comments especially if you get a deluge of comments. These comments can sometimes be rude, off-topic and offensive. For a blogger who doesn’t have the time or doesn’t want to make time, comments may not be worth it. Sometimes it takes so much of time to even think about them. A good solution is to scan the comments and respond in summary in a second posting. It is all a question of handling blog comments you receive.

It is common etiquette to respond to comments. You want to build relationships effectively so if readers leave comments, then make an effort to reply. Definitely, there will be times when comments will not be favorable. This is to be expected. This is what sharing and learning is all about. You should still try to respond and present your side in a professional way. In the end you will gain respect and credibility in the blogosphere plus more readers. Common etiquette also expects you to respond to comments in a post. Take time to acknowledge commenter. Assure your readers that their comments do influence your thought process. Comments and the communication they bring are key elements that make a blog effective.

For a blog to be effective, comments should add value not only to specific blog post but to the whole blog itself. Some bloggers speak out that blog comments have been reduced to the point where they add no significance. There are comments that are not well-thought of, others are even rubbish. In situations like this, bloggers cannot be held at fault if they disable their blog comments. Comments should refine or challenge your thinking and educate you, the commenter and the readers.

Another advantage of blog comments is that they help increase your blog’s ranking in the all powerful search engines. When you post a comment, Yahoo and MSN will count the link within comments as a backlink to your blog. This can help search engine ranking if done right. For the vast majority of bloggers, blog comments will be a most welcome feature. But in defense of bloggers who do not allow comments, it is their prerogative. The general opinion seems to be that a blog is not a blog without comments. According to Wikipedia, a blog entry typically consists of the title, body, and permalink and post date. A blog entry optionally includes comments, categories and trackbacks.

There are basically two choices when it comes to your blog. You can set it up so you can post entries and visitors will just read your post or you can allow your readers to comment on your posts and engage them

in dialogues. Anyway, blogs are not just about comments. They are about trackbacks, pingbacks and tagging. All these will also pave the way for more dynamic conversations. Track back helps you notify another blogger that you wrote something related to what he had posted on his blog. A pingback lets you inform a blogger if you link to his article. With pingback and trackback, blogs are interconnected. Tagging is simply assigning keywords to blog posts. It is a means of remembering links and discovering other blog entries. So, not allowing blog comments does not mean that the blog author fails to participate in the conversation. A conversation need not carry on from its originating blog. Anyone can continue the conversation anywhere, anytime.