

How to Create a Blog

A Beginner's Guide to Blogging

Part I:

This tutorial reviews how to create a blog using Word Press or Blogger. This is for beginners and assumes little knowledge of website design/development.

About Blogs

From: <http://www.tokyoshoes.com/blogclass/>

A blog, short for weblog, is a website of frequently updated, date-based, chronologically ordered entries, often described as an online journal. When a new post is added, the existing posts are shifted down and older posts are archived.

The first (hand coded) blogs were literally link-driven logs of websites, with commentary and/or personal asides. They essentially filtered the web for readers, hence the term weblog. Created by web enthusiasts/programmers who linked to cool stuff they found on the web, bloggers began adding commentary, posting daily, and reading one another's blogs. A community culture developed.

As content management systems like Movable Type were developed, it allowed "non-techies" to blog. The focus then moved from filter-style weblogs to journal-style blogs.

Blogs can include text, images, a compilations of links, or any combination thereof.

For more information about blogs see:

- Rebecca Blood's history of weblogs
http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html
- Blogging101 - a short, sweet overview
<http://www.unc.edu/%7Ezuiker/blogging101/index.html>
- Is Blogging a Fad? - this article concludes NOT
<http://www.corante.com/bottomline/articles/20020621-875.shtml>
- Blogging goes mainstream - a CNN article on blogging
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/TECH/internet/03/10/bloggers.ap/index.html>

Some examples of blogs:

- Mixx n Mash Blog (my new blog)
<http://www.mixxn mash.blogspot.com/>
- Media Mix (Lowell Telecommunications' blog)
<http://mediamix.ltc.org/2004/08/blog-discussion-on-c-span.html>
- Steve Garfield's Video Blog (my former student)
<http://stevegarfield.blogs.com/videoblog/>

Part II:

Parts of a Blog

- Blog title: The name of your blog.
- Blog description or tagline: An optional subheading or description of your blog.
- Entry date: The date the post was uploaded.
- Entry title: The title for the post.
- Entry body: The content of the post which can include text, images, links or any combination thereof.
- Time stamp or permalink: The time the post was uploaded which often links to an individual post. This enables others to link to a specific post within your blog.
- Author's name: Important for multi-author blogs.
- Comments: This allows readers to leave their own comments and reactions to a post.
- Archives: Links to older entries.
- Links: Often a list of other bloggers but can be anything.
- Ads: Powered by MT, your host, etc.

The image shows a screenshot of a Blogger blog post. The browser address bar shows the URL <http://www.mixxnash.blogspot.com/>. The blog title is "Mixx and Mash" with the tagline "Explorations and explanations about the merging of art, media, and digital communication." The post is dated "Thursday, September 01, 2005" and titled "Absolut Art?". The main body of the post discusses the author's connection to graffiti and hip-hop, mentioning Futura 2000 and the East Village art scene. To the right of the main text are sections for "About Me" (Name: Nettrice, Location: Massachusetts, United States), "Links" (Digital Creativity, Media Lit Course, My Web Site, About Me, Culture Jamming, God's Little Toys, Graffiti, Hip Hop), "Previous Posts" (Absolut Art?, Car Companies, Media, Music & Technology, Welcome to Mixx and Mash), and "Archives" (August 2005, September 2005). At the bottom of the post, it says "posted by Nettrice @ Thursday, September 01, 2005 0 comments".

Annotations on the left side of the screenshot:

- blog title
- blog tagline
- entry date
- entry title
- entry body

Annotations on the right side of the screenshot:

- links
- archives

Annotations at the bottom of the screenshot:

- author's name
- time stamp
- comments

Part III:

Getting Started

Find a Host:

I recommend two free blog tools:

- Blogger
<http://www.blogger.com/start>
- Word Press
<http://wordpress.org/>

Blogger has a "Quick Tour" and easy-to-follow steps:

- Create An Account
- Name Your Blog
- Choose A Template
- Publish



WordPress is free but requires some knowledge of PHP and MySQL. You also have to host your blog on your own computer, or one you will have frequent access to.

Here's some info about it: <http://wordpress.org/docs/installation/5-minute/>.

For WordPress you need PHP and MySQL so you can build a database for the blog. Newbies may need to use a Web hosting service such as

- SBC Yahoo! Small Business
<http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/webhosting/wh2.php?d=1>

This service is not free. Another option is to work with someone who knows PHP and MySQL and can set up the administration for you, on your own computer.

Get up to speed on HTML Basics:

If you are not familiar with HTML and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), I recommend learning some of the basics. Here are some free online tutorials:

- Webmonkey
<http://webmonkey.wired.com/webmonkey/>
- W3Schools
<http://www.w3schools.com/>
- Atomic Learning
<http://www.atomiclearning.com/>