

WHY BLOG? by Audrey Shaffer

What is a blog?

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: "A weblog (usually shortened to blog, but occasionally spelled web log or weblog) is a web-based publication consisting primarily of periodic articles, most often in reverse chronological order. Although most early weblogs were manually updated, tools to automate the maintenance of such sites made them accessible to a much larger population, and the use of some sort of browser-based software is now a typical aspect of "blogging". Blogs can be hosted by dedicated blog hosting services, or they can be run using blog software on regular web hosting services.

"Like other media, blogs often focus on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news. Some blogs function as online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic."

Basically, a blog is a place where you can let the world get to know you. Most are free. If you can't afford a website, a blog can fill in until you are ready for a real website.

Where can i get one?

There are lots of places to get a blog.

www.blogger.com (My favorite)

www.myspace.com

www.livejournal.com

<http://360.yahoo.com/>

www.ebloggy.com

www.blogdrive.com

www.blogtext.org

Setting up a blog is very easy, and can be done in 15 minutes. Just follow the directions.

What's it for?

A blog can be just about anything you want it to be. An online diary, a place to keep up with friends and family, share your writing, promote yourself or your business. A blog can give you a presence on the web, or expand your reach.

You do need to think about what you are posting on your blog. Whatever you post there is open for the public to read, so think twice before you post that rant about your boss! People have been fired from their jobs for posting derogatory statements about their boss, job, employer or coworkers. Remember that anyone in the world can read what you say, and you should be okay.

How do I promote it?

Blogs show up in search engines! Once your blog is established, Google will find it. Then you have another place where people can find you on the web.

Blogs also have their own search engines. You can quickly and easily register your blog with the search engines, widening your audience even more. If you wait until they find you, you can't control how you are listed. Get your listing in early, and you can slant it in the direction you want it to go.

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

www.blogsearchengine.com/

www.technorati.com/

www.feedster.com/

www.blogsearch.google.com/

www.daypop.com/

www.bloghub.com/

www.blogz.com/

What's all the fuss about?

People are more likely to buy your work if they know your name and/or something about you. Hypothetical story: You go into the book store. After browsing, you come up with two books that sound interesting. Both have great covers. Both back cover blurbs catch your attention. Flipping through, you want to read them both. How to decide? You can only afford one of them today.

You look at the author's names. One you've never heard of. The other sounds vaguely familiar. You wrack your brain. No, can't remember where you heard it, but you know you have. Now, which book suddenly seems to be the better value? Of course. The one written by someone you've heard of.

Branding your name is vital for writers. You need to be known, to increase your chance that people will choose YOUR book to take to the checkout counter. Spreading your name over the internet will give you that edge. A blog is one more place to brand your name.

If you have a full website, your blog can link to it, bringing you a whole new audience. Bloggers read blogs. And if they enjoy your blog, they will want to see what else you write.

Get a blog. Get listed. Get yourself known. Make friends and fans. Sell more of your work!

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Audrey Shaffer is a writer, writing coach, copywriter, website developer and accountant. You can find her all over the web, because she blogs! www.audreyshaffer.com for a general look at what she does, <http://audreyshaffer.blogspot.com> for book reviews, <http://audreysays.blogspot.com> for her opinions and life updates.