

Blogging has become very popular recently. Every news personality will direct you to their blog for more information on what they have reported, or to get your opinion on any topic. There probably is not one Internet user these days that does not have a blog. Whether personal or business related, everyone has something to say to the world.

Some people might still use old fashioned diaries, but most have turned to the Internet. The best part of maintaining a blog is feedback. You can see if anyone is reading your thoughts, and what they think about what you have written. Popular blogs can generate hits for the host site, and in turn, revenue for the site owner. Or in the case of an eClub, more visitors reading more great Rotary information about the actions and efforts of Rotarians, thus increasing Rotary's reach and perhaps leading to collaboration, contributions, or just good old fellowship.

Are There Rules to Blogging?

Proper Internet etiquette should be observed on all public writings, whether a website or a blog, you should always remember your manners. Some sites do not have any restrictions and will mark "explicit content" or NSFW (Not Safe For Work) on blogs that might not be suitable for all audiences. Some site owners will kick you out if they don't like your style. It is wholly at the discretion of the host.

Writing in your blog can get all those thoughts running around in your head out and relieve a lot of stress. It can connect you with others with similar interests, but most of all, it can be a lot of fun! So, if you don't already have one, go and start a blog. Let the world know what you think and have some fun. You can try it out by using an account right here at Recswusa and we promise there will be no ridicule.

A year ago, MediaPost published some information under the title 'Boomers are not Bloggers.'

http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=86925

I actually blogged about that – and haven't blogged since. Many of us, while verbose in speech or even prolific in writing, are not big 'bloggers.' This is unfortunate, especially if you are reading this now, because it means you communicate to some level on the Internet, and blogging is a great tool found in the digital world.

Why Blogging Is Important

From the earthquakes in Missouri and California, to the recent landing of flight 1549 on the Hudson River, users of social networking sites and blogs are breaking the news even before the MSM. And they are doing it in an immediate, compelling, first-hand, and conversational way that traditional media outlets can't due to inherent business and bureaucracy concerns. In fact, three of the top five sites on the web today are social networking sites. Why is social media and blogging dominating the web, and why is it important?

While the technology that supports blogging is new, the concept of blogging isn't a novel one. The defining components of Web 2.0's new media staples (blogs and social networking sites) are high interactivity with the content producer, as well as online community building. According to a 2006 study and article [by media scholar Daniel Glover](#), the majority of bloggers and blog readers are the opinion leaders in their communities.

A study of politics and voting patterns in the early 60's showed that opinion leaders have always shaped the flow of information and ideas in their communities through conversations at local pubs and community gathering places. The soapbox is just getting larger, and the reach is going further for these opinion leaders with the streamlining, ease and low cost of online self-publishing. Basically people are looking towards the internet and blogosphere to replace the local Elk's Lodge to distill the news for them and to get insight from the people they trust. Though traditional media outlets are moving into the online space and attempting to build user generated content and social media tools into their business strategy, it is not natural for MSM to replicate or replace the "opinion leader" function that social media is playing. Social media and MSM play two very different roles and audience expectations are different for them both.

While many in traditional media criticize the lack of "gatekeeping" on blogs and other user generated content sites (wikipedia for example) this is the precise advantage that these sites have and why they are growing. People are developing a personal connection with news, events and political processes by finding content and personalities online that align with their values and beliefs. These personal connections are the reason that social media is so important and relevant, and why it will always be different from traditional media. As people become more engaged with the world through social media they are becoming more active and aware offline, reversing the "[narcotizing](#)" effect of the American public that media scholars discovered as a result of mass communications and information bombardment.

Blogging and new media will continue to grow in importance and prestige because it gives people a larger marketplace of ideas to shop from, a larger platform to affect change in the world and because it is so important in promoting engagement and thoughtfulness.

(St. Louis Bloggers Guild "We exist to promote and protect the work of St. Louis bloggers"} <http://stlouisbloggersguild.wordpress.com/>

In short, finding a spot on the Internet and sharing in the form of a blog is not just easy; it's a great way to communicate. It's a means of reaching many people at once while inviting feedback which can provide a forum for education, personal growth and fellowship.

So here is a parting tip; *don't try to eat an elephant in one bite*. A blog can be as brief and whimsical as posting a favorite quote with a little commentary. You need not write a best-selling novel. Just type out a paragraph or less. Then try it again tomorrow. Then,

when you have something you really wish to share, you'll have a place to do so and it won't seem the least bit intimidating.

How to Blog successfully.

Here are a few links to tips on blogging. If and when you decide that blogging might be for you (and I hope it's right after reading this) follow a couple of these links for some tips.

Seventy (yes, 70!) tips on blogging:

<http://www.problogger.net/archives/2007/08/08/how-to-blog-successfully-70-reader-blogging-tips/>

Six steps to blogging:

http://www.ehow.com/how_4447575_blog-successfully.html

An excellent collection of blogging links and information:

http://sandro.groganz.com/wiki/Successful_Blogging

If you have some tips of your own, please share them in our forum.

Good luck, and happy blogging!