



Fast Guide

Blogging



Surely you've heard of it by now?

Unless you've been secreted away on a remote desert island for the past 10 years, the chances are you'll at least have come across the term 'blog'. To say that blogs and blogging have become more popular is a touch of an understatement, a quick check on Google, reveals over 1.3 billion references and growing by the second! The term blog originates from the phrase 'web log' and these were the original online journals or diaries that were the forerunners of today's blogs. Blogging is now well established as a method of communicating with different audiences. It isn't all individuals either, many businesses are now blogging (with varying degrees of success) and there are even examples of full time bloggers employed by large companies.



EVEN THE OLD MEDIA ARE GETTING IN ON THE ACT WITH THE ONLINE VERSIONS OF THE TIMES AND THE GUARDIAN DEDICATING LOTS OF SPACE ON THEIR SITES TO BLOGGING



Popular Blogs

A quick online search reveals that there is pretty much a blog for every occasion. There are dedicated blog search engines such as Technorati and even the mighty Google now has a dedicated search facility for blogs. It can be a fascinating exercise to see what other people are writing about your sector or industry. The top 100 blogs in the world (ranked by popularity) are nearly all American in origin, but there are lots of UK bloggers who are



gaining in popularity. Even the "old" media are getting in on the act with the online versions of The Times and The Guardian dedicating lots of space on their sites to blogging.

Blogging for Business

The most commonly asked question is 'why should I bother having a blog for my business?'. The answer is quite simply, it's another opportunity to engage with your customers. The best business blogs are those that genuinely discuss topics of interest to your customers. Remember, you have to make your blog interesting and relevant enough for people to want to subscribe to it and keep coming back. If all you do is announce new products or offers on your blog, you will probably find that you don't get many visitors at all.

More Reading

In the foreword to what is probably one of the best books on the topic (Naked Conversations by Scoble & Israel) Tom Peters says "Business blogging works. It is of monumental importance". If you want to read more on the subject, this book is definitely worth a look. Alternatively, if you're looking for a book that will give you more practical instruction then "Blogging for Dummies" is an excellent introduction.

How To Get Started

There are lots of different ways to start blogging and hundreds of different packages to look at. The following are worth taking a look at:

- Typepad** – one of the leading blogging solutions for business and professionals. Small monthly fee. www.typepad.com
- WordPress** – another very popular package and it's free! www.wordpress.org
- Blogger** – another popular blogging solution, part of the Google group and also free. www.blogger.com



Watch out for the Stakeholder blog arriving soon! **S**