

Chapter 2 - Getting Your Blog On

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Blogging = defined in part by the tools you use to publish the words you write. = easy to set up, but does require work.

I. Choosing Your Blog Platform

All blogging tools have certain common characteristics

They work in your Web browser

They publish your written material on the Web

They enable site visitors to then write comments in response to your entries (called blog posts)

They include a way for visitors to subscribe to blog by using RSS feature

apart from these similarities the various blogging platforms differ widely. Here are the 4 most common:

A. Blogger and WordPress.com: Easy and Free

Blogger = owned by Google. sign up + publish posts in just a few minutes

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WordPress.com = hosted version of ubiquitous toolset

Hosted means it's on its own Web server, and

+ need to download anything

Offers helpful, pre-built solution, + easy to use

Strengths of both:

Easy to use

Don't require installation of software

Free

Plenty of pre-built designs

You're not responsible for maintaining code that powers the site

Upgrades happen automatically

Drawbacks:

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No customization

SEO weakness - because blog is part of site, + help you add useful content to your site

No quick updates - someone else maintains the code

But - they're helpful places to start

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TypePad - another hosted blogging solution with similar features. Not as popular. Not free

B. WordPress Installed: a sports car

= software program you can download: www.wordpress.org

Run it on your own server

Many web hosts will set it up for you

Looks + runs like WordPress.com, except:

- 1) You can customize it - built on php
- 2) You can take advantage of how others have customized it - hundreds of plug-ins exist
- 3) You can maximize SEO - using a few plug-ins
- 4) You can make it a part of your website - if hosted on the same server, will be www.norfe65.org/blog

Challenges:

- 1) You are totally responsible for the installation
- 2) You need to know a bit about installing software on a server
- 3) Basic installation can run only 1 blog

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Tips - it's like a popular sports car. Most often-used installed blogging platform. Huge community support
But is intended for Web novice

C. Movable Type: a racing car
(575) Find it at www.movabletype.com

1. Customizable blogging platform
2. Library of plug-ins to add capabilities
3. Extremely SEO friendly blogging platform
4. Handy template language so you can create custom design relatively easily
5. Capability to manage multiple blogs

576 ★ Trade-offs

1. Cost - personal edition is free, but for commercial use, you'll pay based on
 - a. # of blogs you'll write
 - b. # of authors to whom you'll provide access
2. Difficulty - challenging to install + customizing
3. More cost - upgrades cost more. 5.1 apart makes major improvements, but they'll charge you

D. Other blog options

1. Joomla! www.joomla.org = free, PHP-driven blogging and CMS content management system. offers amazing array of tools in a single package
2. ExpressionEngine www.expressionengine.com - CMS + blogging tool in 1.
3. Textpattern www.textpattern.com = flexible, textile-based content manager that's PHP + open source
4. LiveJournal www.livejournal.com - hosted blogging system
- ★ 5. Drupal www.drupal.org = broader, social "plumbing" system - CMS + comments, membership, accounts, IM, + blog

II. Setting Your Blog Set Up

577 First, set up account. Then design blog's look + feel, configure comments set up pingin, + create RSS feed.

A. Blogger account set up

1. Download required software + inst all it
2. Configure it for your server + website
3. Set up your login + password
4. Make short post + comment to ensure all = working

578 B. Picking your Blog look

1. Easy - use a preinstalled template

Most blogging systems have them, inc. installed platform

2. Intermediate - download a new template + install it

Hundreds of free ones dist - may have to upload to server

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Provide a credit line to author

3. Hard - download new template, install it + customize it

Most cases require knowledge of HTML + style sheets

4. Superhard - create your own

Requires HTML expertise + patience - excellent way to learn

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Many qualified professionals can help

C. Configuring comments - Key = moderation

1. Don't:

a. Let anyone publish comment w/o moderation

b. Refuse to allow anyone to comment.

Blog w/o comments + a blog

2. Do: a. Review all comments before publishing

b. Allow trusted commenters to publish

without approval - makes life easier!

D. Setting up ping

Ping = short message sent to major blogging search engines + directories that announces new blog posts

Timely ping sends basic info to Technorati + Weblog.com

Publish post title + short snippet

Ping can be effective traffic generator's + involve zero effort

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Blogging software probably includes ping configuration

^{place in} Place ping service addresses you want included

<http://rpc.pingomatic.com>

ping.bloggs.com

ping.feedburner.com

ping.syndic8.com/xmlrpc.php

ping.webloglot.com/rpc.php

rpc.blogrolling.com/pinger

rpc.technorati.com/rpc/ping

rpc.weblogs.com/RPC2

topicexchange.com/RPC2

rpc.icerocket.com: 1080

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If you don't have a ping tool built in, go to

www.pingomatic.com

E. Creating your RSS feed

RSS = Really Simple Syndication
+ a technology.

= a format - common way to publish

headlines,
summary,
complete post

Looks like nonsense when raw

seen in a reader, it makes sense

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Visitors can subscribe using 1 of 100's of RSS feed readers

inc. Google (www.google.com/reader) + Microsoft Outlook

Will see updated list of recent articles on blog

Helpful way for visitors to keep track of many at once

Can use blog's built in RSS-generation to provide feed

But Feedburner (by Google) takes it 1 step further

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Feedburner can turn feed in to a marketing tool

- 1) Add advertising to RSS feed
- 2) Deliver feed in multiple formats
- 3) Track subscriptions
- 4) Add nifty features, such as Email a Friend
- 5) Add email subscriptions

To burn a feed using Feedburner, follow these steps

1. Visit www.Feedburner.com
2. Create account + log in
3. Find blog's feed address
4. Paste address in to Burn a Feed Now + choose Nat
5. On blog, replace old feed address with new F. one

III. Writing Your First Post

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Can be difficult! Here are some tips

1. Don't aim for perfection - aim for from the heart writing
Just say what your aspirations are for blog!
 2. Don't write about how you don't know how to write
 3. Do create a time capsule. Write a first post you can look back on to get a sense of why you started this project in the 1st place
 4. Do publish it right away
- Most important thing about 1st post is getting it done.
Blogging is about practice + improvement.
Just do it!