

The Benefits of Blogging



By Adrienne Smith

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What is Blogging

There are many different types of blogs, differing not only in the type of content, but also in the way that content is delivered or written.

Blogging started out to be popular with personal blogs. The most common and traditional blogs consisted mostly of diary entries or commentaries by an individual. Blogs often become more than a way to just communicate; they become a way to reflect on life or works of art. Some personal blogs have been known to quickly garner an extensive following. A type of personal blog is referred to as "microblogging," which is extremely detailed blogging as it seeks to capture a moment in time. Sites such as Twitter, allow bloggers to share thoughts and feelings instantaneously with friends and family and it's much faster than e-mailing or writing. This form of social media is great for an online generation already too busy to keep in touch.

A blog can also be for business purposes. Blogs can be used for marketing, branding or public relation purposes. A lot of people online today have blogs instead of a website still supplying the necessary content as far as introducing you to the world, capturing potential prospects information as well as keeping them up to date with good content through writing, audios and videos.

You want to be sure to write blog posts people want to read. This basically means that you need to speak to your reader honestly and openly about a subject you're passionate about. The more you promote your blog, the more people will find it. The more people find it, the greater likelihood that some of those people will read what you have to say, enjoy it, comment and return often. Be sure to make your blog posts dynamic, interesting and enjoyable.

Blogging Programs

There are numerous free options for creating your blog.

Blogger:

Google offers their free blog program through [Blogger](#). With this free blogging program, the site name will remain in your link. (Example: <http://www.blogspot.yourname.com>) You can purchase your own domain name and forward that to this site as well. You can also find much nicer templates by going online and searching for “themes for Blogger”. All you really need to do is just copy the HTML code and add it to your new blog theme. Just go to the help menu and you can find the answers on whatever it is you want to do.

So how do you make sure people see your blog! You achieve that through what is called "pinging". If you have ever heard the term "ping your blog" this is where it came from. What pinging does is it tells the search engines that you've just updated your blog. Since search engines and people enjoy reading fresh new content, it's a good chance they will wander over to your blog and take a look around. This can mean not only more traffic to your blog, but also get you listed in the search engines faster.

If you have your blog through Blogger, they have their own pinging tool built into their site. That saves you a lot of time because it automatically pings your blog for you as soon as you have published your post.

In Blogger go to settings, basic and make sure the "Let the Search Engine find your blog" dropdown is set to yes.

Tumblr:

[Tumblr](#) is another free blogging program. Like Blogger, it is also hosted for you and the site is free to use. Their site name will also remain in your link unless you purchase your own domain name and forward it to your blog. It's a free easy service to use and they have a lot of great templates to chose from. I have never used this service before but do hear rave reviews on how easy it is.

WordPress:

The most popular blog program is WordPress. The search engines just love WordPress. There are two different options with WordPress though. Let me explain the differences between the two.

[WordPress.com](#)

WordPress.com is another free blogging platform. The hosting and managing of the software is taken care of for you, but you don't have as much freedom with your blog. You can't upload any plugins and although WordPress does offer some really great themes you can chose from you are limited to how many themes you can use. When you use WordPress.com, your URL will also have their name in your link unless you purchase your own domain name and map it to your blog.

[WordPress.org](#)

WordPress.org is still a free blogging platform but with this route you actually own your content. You can install themes and plugins, run advertisements, edit the database and even modify the PHP source code. Anyone can download the software for free but it must be installed on a web server before it will work. Hosting your own WordPress software can be fun and rewarding. You can direct your own link to your blog so that it will stand out like a website. You also have the freedom to customize

your own themes. This is the most popular route to use.

As mentioned above, WordPress also has their own pinging tool built into their site. You would go to your admin panel to “Settings” and then “Writing”. At the bottom of that page you will find “Update Services” and a pinging service is usually already listed. If not, add one.

One thing I want to share with you though about their built in pinging options. Although Blogger and WordPress will automatically ping your blog out to services once you have updated or created a new post, they only ping your site to a few services. In order to be sure and get your information out to numerous sites, you will still want to ping your blog each time you create a new post.

Here are a few programs you can use that will ping your blog for you for free. The three most popular sites are [Pingomatic](#), [Pingoat](#) and [Pingmyblog](#). Only choose one program because they all do the same thing. Be sure to ping your blog right after you finish a post.

Plugins:

Another benefit to using WordPress is they have literally hundreds of different plugins you can use. Plugins are tools that extend the functionality of WordPress. Below I will share with you my favorite WordPress plugins.

1. [MaxBlogPress Ping Optimizer](#) ~ This is a plugin that will actually help your blog from being marked as spam. Did you know your WordPress blog pings unnecessarily every time you edit a post? Think how many times you click on “Save and Continue Editing” or the “Save” button. Your blog will ping unnecessarily that many times you click on those buttons. Save your blog from getting tagged as ping spammer by installing this

plugin. It seems that all the WordPress versions, even the latest has this problem.

2. [All in One SEO Pack](#) ~ This plugin lets you put in the title, description and keywords to your post so that they will be picked up easier in the search engines.

3. [ShareThis](#) ~ This is the plugin that is at the bottom of every post that let's your visitors share a post/page with others. It also supports e-mail and posting to social bookmarking sites as well.

4. [Tweetmeme](#) ~ This is the Twitter icon you see on this post. It helps visitors 'Re-tweet' (share your post on Twitter) your content and it also tracks it nicely, so you have great social proof on your blog!

5. [What Would Seth Godin Do](#) ~ This is a plugin that actually cookies visitors and tracks who's new and who's returning. You can then craft welcome messages accordingly... See the welcome message at the beginning of this post for an example.

6. [Video Sidebar](#) ~ This is a plug in that displays videos such as Vimeo, YouTube, MySpace Videos, etc. It now includes Random Video Sidebar Widget to randomly display 1 out of 5 preset video.

7. [WP Super Cache](#) ~ This is a plugin that helps speed up the load time of your blog. The more plugins you install, the slower your blog load time will get...

8. [Wickett Twitter](#) ~ This is the plugin where you can display your Tweets in the sidebar of your blog.

9. [CommentLuv](#) ~ Plugin to show a link to the last post from the commenters blog by parsing the feed at their given URL when they leave a comment. Rewards your readers and encourage more comments.

10. [Missed Scheduled](#) ~ You can schedule your posts ahead of time but every so often they just don't post. This plugin will bring missed scheduled posts back to life.

11. [WordPress Database Backup](#) ~ This plugin is just in case your computer crashes or something happens to your blog, all of your files will be backed up so all you have to do is download back to your server.

12. [Akismet](#) ~ Akismet checks your comments against the Akismet web service to

see if they look like spam or not. You need an API key to use it. This can be obtained by going to WordPress.com. You can review the spam it catches under "Comments." This plugin is instantly installed with each new blog.

To avoid having your blog marked as spam, it's best to get the #1 plugin listed in my post to save the heartache of being slapped. All of these are free to use.

I hope the information within this report has been helpful and beneficial to understanding more about the benefits of blogging. It's a great way to introduce people to who you are, what you have to offer and how you can help them. You can soon have a huge following where people will come back time after time just to read your posts.

To your success!

Adrienne Smith

Resources Mentioned

[Blogger](#) - Google's free tool for creating blogs.

[Tumblr](#) - Free tool for creating blogs.

[WordPress.com](#) - is a blog publishing application and content management system.

[WordPress.org](#) - is an open source blogging software.

[Pingomatic](#) - is a service to update different search engines that your blog has updated.

[Pingoat](#) - is a web service that pings around sixty blog ping servers.

[Pingmyblog](#) - is a service that notifies all the major blog directories in one go so that everyone knows about your latest blogs.

WordPress Pugins:

[MaxBlogPress Ping Optimizer](#)

[All in One SEO Pack](#)

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