

Using Blogs in Teaching & Learning



12/27/08, 2:09pm by Jason Piatt

What is a blog?

A blog, or weblog, is a publishing platform (usually web-based) that allows anyone to share thoughts, ideas, and photos on a variety of topics. Many people use blogs as a daily journal or place to share professional and educational materials.

Technorati, the blog search engine, estimated in late 2007 that there were over *112 million* blogs on the world wide web.

Types of blogs

Although it would seem that many if not all blogs take the form of a journal, blogs have evolved rapidly in the past several years. Here's a short list of the different types of blogs that can currently be found online.

- Personal (family, home, personal goals)
- Educational (Terra Nova)
- News (Entertainment Weekly, CNN 360 with A. Cooper)
- Corporate (TheAppleBlog, Google Blog)
- Genre (Travel Blogs, Movie Blogs, Sports Blogs, News)
- Business (Selling products, services)
- Mobile/video (cell phone, Lifecasting, YouTube)

Resources

Blogging Hosts (free)

- Blogger - from Google
www.blogger.com
- LIVEJOURNAL
www.livejournal.com

Sample Blogs

- On the tip of my fingers...(personal)
chele76.blogspot.com
- Official Google Blog (corporate)
googleblog.blogspot.com
- OneBag (travel)
www.onebag.com
- A Difference (educational)
adifference.blogspot.com

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Usage and Benefits

The chart below summarizes some of the uses and benefits that can be gained by using blogs in the educational process. The list is not exhaustive, but does present most instructors with good starting points for ideas.

	Activity	Benefit(s)	Outcome(s)
Student	Writing - Journaling - Self-Reflections - Creative Writing - Peer Review	Students can publish work easily, make fast edits, and share information without using e-mail attachments or posting files. Blogs allow for simple editing with live hyperlinks and posted photos/images.	Students learn to give and accept critique and suggestions as well as sharpening discourse skills. In addition, students gain confidence in working with a web application.
	Course Discussions - Small/Large groups	Students or instructors can easily start and maintain discussions on multiple topics.	Provides an alternate location to host class discussions in a format somewhat different from regular threaded discussions.
Instructor	Personal Productivity - Journaling - Research Notes - Research Work and Collaboration - Information Repository	Instructors can use one web application rather than having a website, a research site, a collaborative space, etc.	Centralized web application is available 24 hours a day, providing flexibility in sharing information with students and colleagues.