

**Blogging in Libraries:
Finding, Reading & Creating Blogs**



LRL Professional Development Seminar
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Blogs

*A blog IS
a Web site*

But the structure is
slightly different than
a traditional website



As with any Web site. . .

- There are some really great blogs 
- There are some really rotten ones 
- And there are a lot of them in between



The Blogosphere

- There are 50 Million+ blogs
- Blogosphere doubles every 6 months
- On average, two new blogs are created every second

As of August 2006 from: Sifry's Alerts
<http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000436.html>



Blog Features

Brief informational posts in reverse chronological order (points to the top of the post)

Blawg = Law-related blog (points to the header)

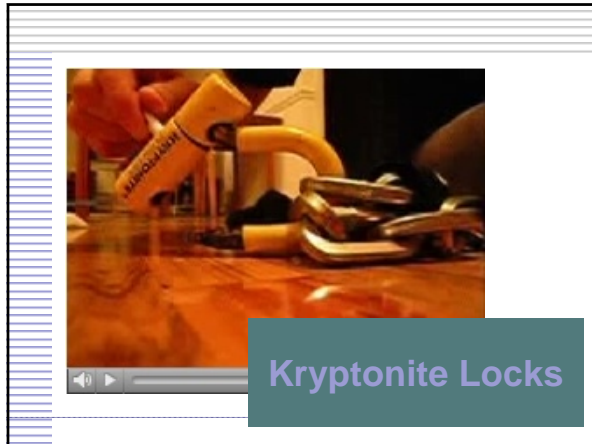
Comment feature offers interactivity (points to the comment section)

Archives of previously posted content; Subscription options (appear below) (points to the sidebar)

Why Care About Blogs?

- Continuing Education
 - Stay informed of new developments in your areas of interest
- Benchmarking & Networking
 - How are your colleagues handling difficult issues, what new projects are they developing
- Monitoring Public Opinion
 - What do people think about...?





Finding Blogs – Legal & Legislative

- NCSL State Legislators' Blogs - <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/blogs.htm>
- Blawg: Law & Legal Related Weblogs - <http://www.blawg.org/>




Finding Blogs – Legal & Legislative Library

- First Reading- Hawaii LRB Blog- <http://www.hawaii.gov/lrb/libblog/>
- WisBlawg – From the UW Law Library- <http://www.law.wisc.edu/blogs/wisblawg/>
- Law Library Blogs- <http://library.law.wisc.edu/wisblawg/blogslistpublic.htm>



Finding Blogs - General

- Google Blog Search - <http://blogsearch.google.com/>
- Feedster - <http://feedfinder.feedster.com/>






RSS Makes the Internet Subscribe-able

What does RSS mean?
"I'm Ready for Some Stories"

RSS is a way to get a quick list of the latest story headlines from all your favorite websites and blogs.

RSS makes it a lot easier and faster for you to get the stories you care about from around the web.



Your RSS list


- Fed Ex's Internet sales at \$ 2.27B
- Microsoft's 8th round of stock repurchase
- Fed's bull market - bug scam
- HP's 2005 revenue - new web browser
- Brazil & Argentina's 1st billion
- The 100th anniversary of the 1918 flu pandemic
- Sarah Jessica Parker in her pregnancy
- Lindsay Lohan goes to hospital, AGAIN
- The 100th anniversary of the 1918 flu pandemic

RSS Reader

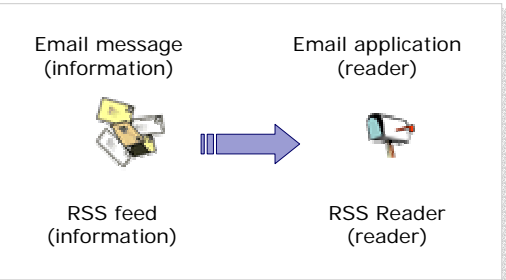
Look for an RSS symbol on a website, blog, or browser window to "subscribe" to their RSS list feed.

RSS & Blogs - Reading

- Good - As a Web page
 - Stay current but requires reader to visit multiple sites daily to check for updates
- Better - With a RSS Reader
 - All updates delivered to one location
 - Read multiple blogs with one application




RSS Readers



Email message (information) Email application (reader)

RSS feed (information) RSS Reader (reader)




RSS Readers

- RSS readers are also known as:
 - RSS aggregators
 - news readers
 - news aggregators



RSS Readers

- Web based readers
 - Accessible from anywhere
 - Ideal for users who rotate computers
- Installed software readers
 - Works well for staying on same computer
 - View feeds offline



Bloglines

- Free Web-based RSS reader
- Use to read:
 - RSS feeds
 - Email Listservs!
- Subscribe at <http://www.bloglines.com/>



Tutorial movie (UC Berkeley Library):
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BIOS/rss.html>



RSS Feeds – Legislative Tracking

- GovTrack – <http://www.govtrack.us>



RSS Feeds – Legal & Legislative

- NCSL RSS Feeds - <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalib/blogs.htm>
- Wisconsin LRB Feeds - <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/rss/>
- RSS News Feeds for Law, TVC Alert - http://www.virtualchase.com/resources/rss_law.html




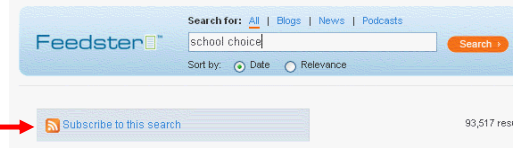
RSS Feeds - Media

- Media Drop- <http://www.themediadrop.com/archives/001588.php>



RSS Feeds – Search Engines

- Feedster - <http://feedfinder.feedster.com/>



RSS Feeds – Custom Blog Feeds

- Google Blog Search - <http://blogsearch.google.com/>

RSS Feeds – From Any Web Page


- FeedYes- <http://www.feedyes.com/>
- Ponyfish- <http://www.ponyfish.com/>

Creating A Library Blog

- Why?
 - To communicate with your users
 - To communicate with library staff


Communicating with Users

- Library & Topical News
- Announce New Services
- Recent Acquisitions List
- Book/Movie/Web Site Recommendations
- Book Discussions
- Local Events Calendar
- Recommended Research Sources



Communicating with Staff

- Announcements for Staff
- Knowledge Management
 - Frequently asked reference questions
 - Password archive
- Project Management
 - Forum for collaboration
 - Progress reports



Benefits of Library Blogs

- Inexpensive communication & marketing tool
- Easy – no HTML knowledge required
- May be seen as innovative
- Attracts tech-savvy users
- Allow user feedback through comments
- Can be career booster for bloggers



Drawbacks of Library Blogs

- Requires staff time commitment
 - Training
 - Set-up
 - Posting
- May need to educate people about blogs
 - Users
 - Staff



Is Blogging Worth Your Time?



- Weigh the cost of your time
- Assess skills & training time needed
- Consider other time-consuming projects
- Consider other blogs, etc. that offer similar information



Blogging Software

- Blog Software Comparison Chart - http://www.ojr.org/ojr/images/blog_software_comparison.cfm



 **Blogger** <http://www.blogger.com>

- Pros - Easy to get started, easy to use, software & hosting free
- Cons - Domain not well respected, target of "splogs" (spam blogs), limited features, lack of customization

Useful for practicing blog skills; OK for personal, informal blogs; may not be best for professional blog

 **TypePad** <http://www.typepad.com>

- Pros - Easy to get started, easy to use, some advanced features
- Cons - Some cost involved (starts at \$4.95/month) , customization can be difficult




Good, easy to use solution for most blogs; good for people who *don't* have their own server

WordPress <http://wordpress.org>

- Pros - Software free, easy to use, advanced features, powerful customization
- Cons - No hosting (requires own server), support


Good, free, easy to use solution for most blogs, especially for people who already have their own server

MOVABLETYPE <http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype/>

- Pros - Easy to use, advanced features, powerful customization, great support
- Cons - Start-up costs higher (starts at \$69), no hosting (requires own server)

Good, easy to use solution for most blogs, especially for people who already have their own server




Blogging Policies

- Good policy will:
 - Ensure that blog reflects well on your library
 - Offer guidance to bloggers on what is and is not appropriate


The Library Blogger's Personal Protocols
<http://www.tametheweb.com/twblog/archives/000568.html>

Sample Corporate Blogging Policy & Blogger Code of Ethics
http://forrester.typepad.com/charleneli/2004/11/blogging_policy.html




Staffing Issues

- Decide who will post to the blog
 - May be one person or team
- Train staff on blog software
- Allocate staff time for posting



Posting Content

- Follow blogging policy
- Develop a consistent style
- Develop a consistent frequency
- Use "your own voice" whenever possible
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors




"[A] blog. . . can be a waste of your brilliant ideas and information unless you can attract readers."

- Daniel Harmon,
The Lawyer's PC
(22 Law. PC 1)



Promoting Your Blog

- Include URL on library publications
- Seek links from other Web sites & blogs
- List with search engines and blog directories
- Create bookmarks, business cards, etc.
- Announce in library newsletter
- Ask other publications to announce
- Email users directly
- Share by word of mouth



Questions?

Contact – Bonnie Shucha
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Handouts available at
<http://library.law.wisc.edu/wisblawg/legislative/librarians.pdf>