Blogging in Libraries: Finding, Reading & Creating Blogs

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
- Comment feature offers interactivity
- Archives of previously posted content
- Subscription options (appear below)

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 -

- 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

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Finding Blogs - General

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

RSS Makes the Internet Subscribe-able

RSS is a way to get a quick list of the latest story headlines from all your favorite websites and blogs. RSS makes it easy and fast for you to get the stories you care about from around the web.
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

RSS feed (information) → RSS Reader (reader) → Email application (reader) → Email message (information)

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 Listserv!
- 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

Heading related to Immigration

Subject Area: Immigration

Below are the bills that are related to the "Immigration" subject term.

Immigration is a list of current pending legislation in Congress. This list may not have had any action taken on them or their jargon terms added in their bills.

Available in the Clerk’s Print of Immigration Act: 2006-2007

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**RSS Feeds – Legal & Legislative**

- Wisconsin LRB Feeds - http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/rss/

**RSS Feeds - Media**


**RSS Feeds – Search Engines**

- Feedster - http://feedfinder.feedster.com/
**Blogging in Libraries - LRL Professional Develop. Sem.**

### RSS Feeds – Custom Blog Feeds


### RSS Feeds – From Any Web Page

- **FeedYes** - [http://www.feedyes.com/](http://www.feedyes.com/)
- **Ponyfish** - [http://www.ponyfish.com/](http://www.ponyfish.com/)

### Creating A Library Blog

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

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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


WordPress

TypePad

Blogger

**Blogger** [http://www.blogger.com](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](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](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

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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

Sample Corporate Blogging Policy & Blogger Code of Ethics

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