

Blogging 101: Why Blog?

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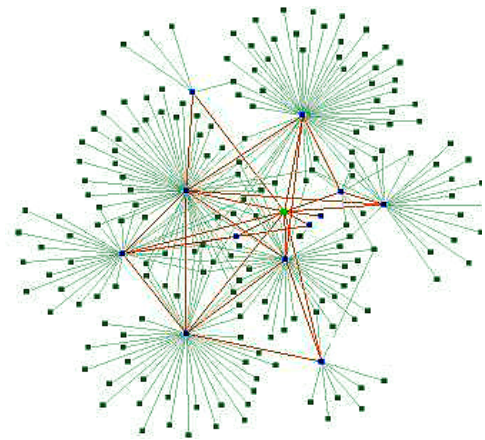
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You need to blog why? To get a job in today's market, to keep your job, to stay in touch, and to learn and to keep moving forward, to support a cause, make a difference, exercise your voice, stay intellectually alive. And there's always: I think, therefore I am.

Many positions advertised today require social media and blog skills, including much-desired positions in "green" companies and non-profits. Employers are finding employees through the Internet. A blog will give you visibility on the internet and, thus, in the job market.

A recent scan of 1,000 jobs listed on craigslist in the San Francisco Bay Area indicated:

- ✓ 1000 companies have social media as a requirement with 507 indicating "social networking" specifically) (That is up from 199 in 2009);
- ✓ More than 1000 companies include Web and a component of the job (up from 405 in 2009 for just Web 2.0);
- ✓ 294 include the word "blog;"
- ✓ 67 include "blogging" (up from 44 in 2009)



Understanding social networking (including blogging) has landed me interviews resulting in part-time and consultative job offers. Little else in my substantial background is opening doors. The Internet IS the way the world is doing business.

WHAT TO WRITE ON YOUR BLOG?

As you come across valuable information during searches for your job or business, type it into your blog. You will become knowledgeable and this could lead to job/income growth. Anyone researching today's job market, thinking about career changes, reading about "green" companies or nonprofits comes across new information daily . . . information that might help

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others or that is just worth sharing or storing in case you need to review it at another time.

If you have a cause you support; talk about that on your blog. You'll be learning and helping at the same time. Information herein is a quick overview. You might find it worthwhile to read just one book on Social Networking or Blogs.

This information may look like a lot, you probably will get frustrated, but just go step-by-step. It may take a couple of hours to set up, but it is worth it and it is fascinating once you get the mechanics out of the way.

Overview of setting up a WordPress blog . . .

WordPress seems to be the easiest to use and still holds its position as the top blogging platform. You do not need new software. Blogs are a perfect example of "cloud computing," which simply means using the internet to access software running on someone else's hardware.

Differences between WordPress.com and WordPress.org:

TIP: Do Not Use WordPress.com. While it is free, the url is clumsy, i.e. yourname.wordpress.com. Few will remember the WordPress portion of the name and will type in www.YourName.com -- they will not find you.

Wordpress.org requires that you have your own url (less than \$15 generally) and a hosted web site (less than \$10/month). If you are in business, you will ultimately need this, so I highly recommend setting this up now. Moving files and revising codes can be a nightmare. Here is a link to my favorite site or purchasing Web names and for hosting:



GoDaddy charges about \$10 per year for reserving your name and around \$5 per month economy hosting . . . they offer many add-ons for additional fees, but you probably don't need them. GoDaddy makes it easy to download WordPress from their site so that you have the appropriate paths and do not have to fuss around with codes (which are complicated to find and complicated to use).

Online textual Instructions: www.wordpress.org or www.wordpress.com

Click for a **How-to Video for a WordPress Blog**

Or, start here if you wish to do what I do to set up each blog . . .

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1. SITE NAME

- ✓ Decide on your site name. Relate it to your business or service. Anything with one word is generally gone, i.e. diamonds, books, health. Many two-word names are gone. If your name is "common," it is probably already reserved. Figure out how you would search for your company or services, i.e. "travel gear," "low cost insurance," "walking shoes." Write down several versions of your preferred Web name. Check if any of those names are available. Specific search terms are valuable and are considered "generic searches." This part may take you longer than it does to set up your blog.
 - **BIG TIP:** No "dots," "dashes," or "underscores" in your chosen name. No one remembers them and few people know where they are on the keyboard.
 - **BIGGER TIP:** As you go through these processes, get a binder where you will keep copies of ALL of your sign-on names, i.e. LogIn Names, Passwords, other. It will save your sanity down the road.

2. GO TO GODADDY.COM

These instructions are specifically for GoDaddy. I have been using their services for 12 years. No complaints. (Other hosting packages are different; some have free WordPress, some do not. Some have support, some do not. Check with your host company.)

- ✓ From GREEN bar on top, select Domains and Register from the drop down
- ✓ Begin your search by following instructions (Enter a domain name)
- ✓ When you find one that works for you (or several . . . they are about \$10 each to reserve and you only need to pay hosting for one site), register that name for at least one year. You don't need any extras. Just register the domain name for now and worry about extras later. An eMail account comes with each domain.

3. STILL ON GODADDY - RESERVE HOSTING (2-24 hours)

- ✓ Select Hosting from the control bar, then Web site hosting. Note, you can also use WordPress hosting, but I always go with the Web site hosting to reserve maximum flexibility. I use their defaults (i.e. Linux) and I generally pay for a year although GoDaddy will bill in three month increments.

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- ✓ Choose ECONOMY PLAN (if you grow beyond 10 GB, you can always add).
- ✓ Click 3 (or 12 months), select ADD. Best to register for a year if you have a company; Google's ranking engine pays attention to the length of time; they think you are serious if you have a long-term plan.
- ✓ If you want to find out everything about their services, read the rest, however, I go to bottom and hit the grey NO THANKS bar to go to checkout.
- ✓ You will receive eMail notification of your purchase.

4. STILL ON GODADDY - SET UP HOSTING (2-24 hours)

- ✓ Setup your account: GoDaddy is in Arizona, always there, and can help with this if you get confused (which is easy to do initially): 480 505 8877. (Note that they do not give specific support for blogs, but can help in a pinch.)
- ✓ Select Hosting/My Hosting Account
- ✓ Click on "Manage Account" to the right of your new account
- ✓ Click YOUR APPLICATIONS on top. Click on Blogs on the Left. Click on WordPress.
- ✓ Click INSTALL NOW orange button and follow instructions for name and password (again, keep track of these; write them down as you go). This automatically sets up WordPress on your site.

5. TO WORDPRESS

- ✓ Go to: **<http://YourSiteName.com/wordpress/wp-login.php>** (Image right. Type your Web name in place of YourSiteName above, i.e. <http://MarinEStudios.com/wordpress/wp-login.php>). Sign in with the Username and Password you selected when you downloaded your WordPress blog from GoDaddy.
- ✓ Note: I don't think there is a live person at WORDPRESS. You are pretty much on your own. GoDaddy's support staff can help, but you might as well dig around WordPress' interface and learn where most things are. If you get stuck anywhere, just type the



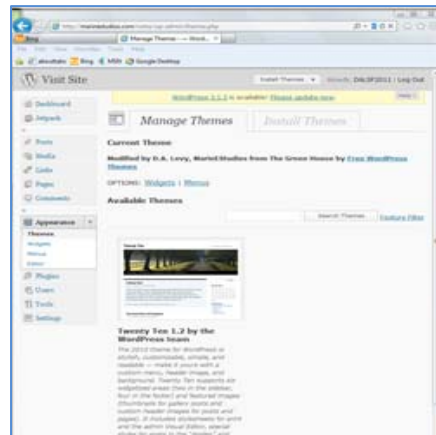
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issue or error code into google.com . . . I promise you that someone has posted the answer.

6. YOUR BLOG'S APPEARANCE

- ✓ The basic blog is, well, basic. You will probably want a new one. The easiest way is to select one from the hundreds of free well-designed Templates available through WordPress; it will be uploaded for you without having to use external software.
- ✓ Select Appearance on Left. Click Themes. Look above right for "Install Themes." You can pick colors, columns (I recommend two with the indexing on the top or right). Hundreds are available.
- ✓ Editor and Theme Files. I wouldn't touch these unless you are familiar with HTML. These completely control the appearance of the page(s). One missing bracket and the page will not display. If you DO wish to change, say, the Styles (style.css, which controls colors, layout, fonts, etc.), first copy those codes completely into a doc file and save the original. That way if you can't repair it, you can put the original back online.



7. YOUR WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

- ✓ Click each selection to become familiar with what's there. This gives you quite a bit of leeway in setting up your blog.
- ✓ Settings: Check each section for features. Here you will add your blog title and Tagline. You can also post via eMail (which I have not done as I like more control over the page than that allows)
- ✓ Links: You will probably want to delete all of the links there; most go back to some type of WordPress group/blog and there's no reason to divert your audience.
- ✓ Users: Set up your eMail address and title.
- ✓ Posts:
 - Basics

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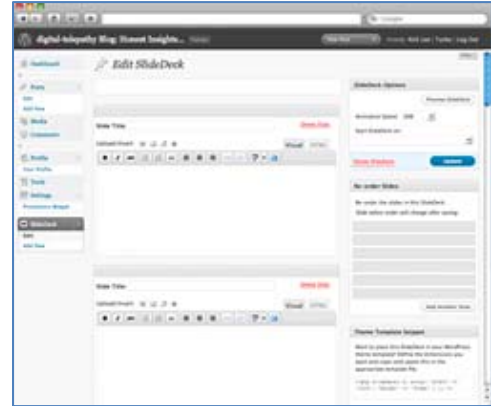
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- Sign in at: <http://YourWebName.com/wordpress/wp-login.php>
- Username: Your User Name
- Password: Your Password

- Blogging:
 - Add Categories to your Posts:
Posts/Categories/Add New Category
 - To Post: Click "posts" on the left. Click "Add New." Give it a headline at "Enter title here." Click "Visual."
 - If you know HTML, you can tweak your work; if you don't know HTML, I advise against touching the code.
 - Type away. Click "Save Draft" repeatedly as you go; you never want to risk losing your work. (An easy way to do this is to type in Word first, spell check, then move it to WordPress.) Click one or more of the Categories (that is the filing system).
 - To add photos, click on the TV looking icon next to Upload/Insert. This takes you to "add media files from your computer" (NOTE: If you are on the Flash uploader, switch to the Browser uploader.)
 - You may have to downsize photos as WordPress has a maximum size -- they need to be roughly 350-450 pixels wide depending on your blog layout (about 4-5 inches wide).
 - When you feel good about it, click Publish

- Post Tags: Include anything relevant to your post. If you are running a business from your blog, you will want to visit google.com/analytics and/or searchenginewatch.com to find the most searched words. These help with positioning and driving your market to you.

- Upload images. Find out how at http://codex.wordpress.org/Using_Images. This, of course, is extremely important as in "a picture is worth a thousand words." WordPress' interface makes this a quite easy point-and-click operation. Keep in mind that you should make your images smaller BEFORE uploading. Pictures taken directly from your camera are huge and may not upload. Resize them to something like 400 pixels wide; that will serve most purposes.



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8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There is a lot to wade through, but you can pick and choose to learn what is necessary for each step of the way. Just don't overwhelm yourself; it is easy to do.

- ✓ Worth reading: http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Lessons where you will find WordPress for Beginners. Again, it looks overwhelming, but you won't need to read all of it. Pick and choose a couple, such as Introduction to Blogging, First Steps with WordPress, Creating Individual Pages, etc. You don't need to know any of the complicated coding.

Mainly you will need to go to:

- ✓ http://codex.wordpress.org/First_Steps_With_WordPress for an overview of setting up your site. This page has everything you will need starting with a free Theme which you will download from: <http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/>
- ✓ http://codex.wordpress.org/Writing_Posts for information on writing posts and to write your first post.

REFERENCES

- GoDaddy
- www.WordPress.org:
http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Lessons
 - http://codex.wordpress.org/Using_Images
- www.w3.org: World Wide Web Consortium, the main international standards organization for the World Wide Web
- www.w3.org/2008/09/msnws/report.html: Overview of Social Networking
- www.eZine.com: Articles re the Web: www.Ezine.com
- Yale Style Guide Online

