

Web 2.0: Blogger

Winter 2008-2009, INFO 652 900

February 24, 2009

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1) URL of product : www.blogger.com

2) History of the product :

Blogger was started by a tiny company in San Francisco called Pyra Labs in August of 1999. This was in the midst of the dot-com boom. It started with three friends, funded by doing annoying contract web projects for big companies, trying to make their own grand entrance onto the Internet landscape. What they were originally trying to do doesn't matter so much now. "But while doing it, they created Blogger, more or less on a whim, and thought — Hmmm... that's kinda interesting" (Story of Blogger, n.d.).



(Image: <http://flickr.com/photos/megnut/111417621/>)

Blogger took off, in a small way, and eventually a bigger way, over a couple years. They raised a little money, but stayed small. Then they ran out of money.

Narrowly survived, but kept the service going the whole time and started building it back up.

Things were going well again in 2002. They had hundreds of thousands of users, though still just a few people. And then something no one expected happened: Google wanted to buy them. They liked Google a lot and Google liked blogs. Therefore, they were open to the idea, and it worked out nicely.

3) Creators and Maintainers

Evan Williams is the founder of Pyra. Evans and his company still maintain www.blogger.com. Now they are a small, “but slightly bigger than before” team in Google focusing on helping people have their own voice on the web and organizing the world's information from the personal perspective, which has pretty much always been the main idea (Story of Blogger, n.d.).

4) System Requirements for using the product:

By default, Blogger accounts are hosted on BlogSpot ([http:// www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com)] www.blogspot.com), a storage site owned by Blogger. Free accounts have ads on their pages. Upgraded accounts cost \$5 or \$10 per month for 25MB or 100MB of storage space and are ad-free. We would prefer to have seen a unified sign-up sheet that combines Blogger and BlogSpot.

When run as hosted services, Blogger requires virtually no installation. Just sign up for an account and go. One potential drawback to using hosting services is that you can not attach a preexisting domain name to your Weblog. Instead, you will be assigned a sub-domain URL, such as “yourname.blogspot.com.”

5) Advantages and Disadvantages of Blogger (Compared with WordPress):

Blogger exposes their pages in the CSS of their templates. The entire HTML page is exposed in the CSS. Users are able to have more control over pages than in WordPress, at least when both are free. This flexibility is welcome by tech-savvy users who want to gain more control over the design of their blogs. For example, many users have complained that there is no button to change font colors. This has to be done manually by inserting tags.

Blogger allows java scripts in widgets. WordPress does not allow the use of Java scripts in widgets. This advantage of Blogger allows Bloggers to have a comprehensive method of tracking visitors, for instance. Bloggers would be able to know how many visitors were on their pages, how long they stayed there, what they looked for, etc. For example, Blogger allows you to use Statcounter which uses Java scripts thus making it more comprehensive than SiteMeter offered by WordPress.

Backed by Google, searches appear to be better and faster. New blogs also show up in search engines faster than WordPress because of the power of Google. If you want your blog and your posts to be search-able faster, Blogger is the place to go.

Blogger is highly recommended for beginners who are blogging for fun and are not really tech-savvy. Meanwhile, WordPress is better for organizations or individuals who want to install and host their own installation of WordPress and also customize it.

Blogger is free with no strings attached. Meanwhile, WordPress is free only until you want to add features like AdSense ads or if you want to display your blog on your own domain.

Blogger is less technical intensive. Blogger's XML templates allow you to drag and drop widgets. You really do not need to know HTML to customize your blog. It is

good for someone who just wants to blog and nothing else.

Availability of third party Blogger templates makes it a good choice for someone who wants variety. If you don't want the templates that Blogger offers, you can find free templates created by the good Samaritans of the Internet.

Many users have admitted the fact that WordPress has better page design templates compared to Blogger. For the savvy designer, Blogger may not be the blog tool of choice.

Although Blogger gives users access to html code of the pages, WordPress has a wide array of tools including plug-ins than Blogger has.

Blogger is not flexible when it comes to the ability to file your posts in traditional categories, but WordPress offers this feature.

Another inflexibility is Blogger's inability to let posts show up on future dates. WordPress either offers this option or allows users who host WordPress on their own domain to do this.

Blogger does not allow users to Own or Brand their pages. You cannot install Blogger on your own domain. Neither can you brand Blogger to your own taste. Customization is limited.

Blogger allows your "enemies" to flag your blog to be blocked. You essentially don't own your blog and even if you want to own it, you cannot.

Because you do not own your Blogger, you have limited space to load files. You may not be able to load some types of files and the size of files you can load may be limited.

Because you do not own your blog, Google can decide to delete your blog and

you will not be able to do anything. If some technical problems arise which makes your blog disappear, you may not even get the support you need to restore your blog.

Many Blogger users have complained about the lack of plug-ins compared to WordPress.

While Blogger may show up quickly in Google searches, its format is not friendly to other search engines. Also, it does not allow automatic pinging. Essentially you need to ping each post manually by using a service like Pingomatic or Pingoat.

It may appear that Blogger has more disadvantages than advantages. However, depending on your reason for blogging and how tech-savvy you are, Blogger may be a good choice for you. Many reviewers recommend Blogger for beginners and also casual bloggers.

6) Blogger's features:

Blogger has a large quantity of features. Most of the feature details can be found from <http://www.Blogger.com/features> , but another site has several more laid out:

<http://www.weblogmatrix.org/show/Blogger> (although the information seems dated).

This table was adapted from both Blogger and Weblogmatrix).

Category	Feature	Comment
General Features	Zero Cost	
	Multi-User support— Team BLOG	(My library uses this feature. We have two BLOGs set up for posting important information and building teams)
	Supports 41 different languages	
Hosting features	Allows Ads	
	Has some topic restrictions	Particularly spam, Hate Speech or Commercial Pornography
AntiSpam	Allows for CAPTCHA	
	Comments can be	Viewing the entire BLOG can

	restricted to other Blogger users only	be restricted as seen fit by writer—all of these features are under the settings tab.
Support	Online help	www.help.blogger.com
	Issue tracker	www.knownissues.blogspot.com
	Support forum	www.groups.google.com
	Mailing list	www.groups.google.com
Blogging Features	Archiving	
	Autosave	There is a separate screen for managing items that have been previously saved but never posted. This separate place also allows one to edit previous posts.
	Labels	We use labels in our library to try and make previously posted communications easy to find.
	Link-Blogroll	
	Blog by Email	
	Blog by SMS/MMS	
	Blog API	Blogger Data API
Post Editing	Spell Checker	
	WYSIWYG Editor	“What you see is what you get”
	File Upload	
	HTML editor.	
Comment Features	Layout-flat	
Extended Features	Follower Gadget	
	Simple ID	Connect to G-mail, Google Docs, etc.
	Search Engine	
Interoperability	HTML via FTP/SFTP	
	Unicode Support	
	XHTML 1.0 Strict	
	Friendly URLs	
Administration	Optional E-mail Notifications	
	Themes and Skins are present	
	Web-based/template management	
	Comment administration	
Syndication	Supports RSS 2.0	
	Supports ATOM 0.3	
PodCasting/VideoCasting	Video hosted through	Videos from YouTube can be

	google video	posted—I've done it.
	Pictures are hosted through Picasa	Although one can post pictures from FLICKR

7) A BLOG's function in Library Settings:

The introduction of web 2.0 into society has challenged libraries to innovate ways to use these tools for a variety of purposes. Libraries must take tools like Blogger, Wordpress, Facebook and others and turn them from a popular social networking tool into a means to augment communication, service, project management, training, and marketing.

A Library BLOG can be a great way to communicate, both internally and externally. McIntyre and Noelle claim that internal communication can be improved amongst library faculty and staff when a BLOG is used (2008). Traditional modes of internal communication include: loose-leaf manuals, e-mail and the library's intranet. Locating and using information that is dispersed in so many different places makes it difficult to locate and use. A BLOG can serve as a means to combine these different modes of communication in one fell swoop. BLOGs also have the ability to "help librarians avoid e-mail overload" (Farkas, 2007, p.41).

BLOGs can also be developed for external communication. BLOGs of this nature help libraries inform users of upcoming events, changes in the library services and even show off new books and journals. Vogel & Goans also point out that BLOGs are an "appealing alternative for newsletters" (2005). These BLOGs can serve as a futuristic marketing tool, showcasing the goods and services the library has to offer. The best part is that Blogger is a relatively inexpensive tool. Patrons that enjoy the BLOG are able to use an RSS feed and be informed when a new update occurs. In order for external

BLOGs to be useful, however, they must be updated regularly (McIntyre & Nicolle, 2008). When creating BLOGs for communication purposes it is important for librarians to step to the forefront, helping library staff understand BLOG technology and its impact on internal communication as well as external communication with patrons (2008).

Reichert describes a BLOG as a journal, reading list, newspaper and address book all rolled into one. To this end, the BLOG can be used to manage teams and projects (2005). As it increases the ability for collective communication, BLOGs can also be helpful in collocating information for group projects as there is a time stamp, and a categorized thread of information. Auto-archiving is useful as it makes BLOGs searchable, browseable and easily reviewed at any time (2008).

The Golisano Library at Roberts Wesleyan College uses BLOGs to manage not only communication, but the 24/7 Computer Lab team. The BLOG, established through Blogger, helps student workers be aware of changes in the lab, or task assignments, schedules, computer problems, and many other issues. Each student has access to read and write BLOG entries as well as the ability to comment on posts. When well managed, it is an effective way to disseminate information. A small amount of training is necessary to get students logged in, and used to the procedure of adding posts, but well worth the effort (S. Shank, personal communications, February 24, 2009).

Farkas describes, in a section of her book “Social Software in Libraries”, that many librarians read BLOGs simply to ‘keep up’ (2007, p.43). BLOGs have the ability to display professional information about the library field. They can also present numerous how-to topics on the latest technology and revolutions in library services. Accessing information in this way provides a community of BLOGs and BLOGgers alike

as they interlink with one another. These BLOGs provide a great way to network with other librarians and to learn more tricks of the trade.

Communications, marketing, improving services and project management facilitated through the use of BLOGs bring a flexible palette to the library's table. Blogger is just one product available to create a functioning BLOG. Benefits of Blogger in the library arena are that it is relatively simple to establish an account, it is cost effective, and straight forward to use. It may not have as many add-on features as Wordpress, but it certainly has the capability to perform. Those who are more technologically advanced will also be able to personalize the BLOG to fit with their library site or organization. Librarians need to further their strides to use tools that more and more patrons are becoming dependent upon. Reaching out to patrons on their level will help increase the librarian's ability to pass along information.

Resources

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