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Blogging for Libraries and Librarians

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Introduction

Marketing of library and information services is essential. Libraries have used marketing channels such as the traditional media: newspapers, corporate newsletters, radio, and TV. Many libraries produce brochures, pathfinders, and their own newsletters. It is not surprising to see libraries using blogs as marketing tools as well. A blog is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. They can provide commentary and information on a particular subject or act as a more personal online diary. Blogs combine text, images, and links to other related or interesting sites. Readers can leave comments, making blogs interactive. Most blogs are text, although there are also photoblogs, sketchblogs, video blogs (vlog), or audio blogs (podcasting). These are all part of the wider network of social media.

The term "weblog" (later shortened to blog) was coined by Jorn Barger in December 1997. The first weblog was built by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN, the European particle Physics Laboratory. Since Blogger, a free blogging site, was launched in 1999, blogs have had a profound impact on culture, politics, journalism, and personal connections. Blogs have developed from simply online journals to sophisticated content management systems that can be used as a platform for learning.

Definitions

- "A web application that contains periodic, reverse chronologically ordered posts on a common web page" ("Weblog")
- A website organized chronologically
- A journal that is available on the web
- An online dairy or frequently updated personal webpage
- A frequent chronological publication of personal thoughts and web links

Type of Blogs

There are various types of blogs, and each differs in the way content is delivered or written.

Media

A blog with videos is called a vlog, and one consisting of links is called a linklog. A site containing a portfolio of sketches is called a sketchblog, and one comprising photos is called a photoblog. Blogs with shorter posts and mixed media types are called sometimes called tumble logs. ("Weblog")

Device

A blog can be defined by the device used to compose it, including PC, mobile device, etc.

Genre

Many blogs focus on a particular subject, such as food, travel, politics, education, etc., and they may be classified this way.

Blogging and Libraries

There are many kinds of web-based blogging software and interfaces that are user-friendly. This has led to the proliferation of blogs for an array of purposes. There are many librarians who publish blogs on a number of LIS topics. One of the best-known is "The Shifted Librarian," by Jenny Levine of the Suburban Library System in Illinois . Another is Peter Scott's library Weblog, and dmoz.org. Other library blogs include:

- LISNews
- Library Stuff
- librarian.net
- The ResourceShelf
- Catalogablog
- Open Stacks
- Suburban Library System (IL)
- SJCPL Blog

Schwartz (2007)

Popularity

There are two measures of this: citations and affiliation (i.e., blogroll). While a blog to become popular through blogrolls, permanent links can boost popularity more quickly, and may be more reliable, since they denote that people are actually reading the blog content ("Weblog") Some personal blogs include sponsored posts for advertisers of new products and services.

Researchers at the MIT Media lab created the "blogdex" project, to gather data on thousands of blogs. Blogs are ranked by Technorati based on incoming links. Alexa Internet is based on hits by Alexa Toolbar users. Although there are thousands of blogs, many are started and eventually abandoned, leaving "dotsam" and "netsam" behind.

Blogging Consequences

Blogging may have legal liabilities and other consequences, including releasing proprietary or confidential information, defamation, and employees who write about their place of employment or personal lives, and who may face loss of employment or other consequences.

How to Start Blogging

There are a number of free blogging sites, including google's blogger.com, whose help screens are available at: http://www.google.com/support/blogger/?hl=en. Blogger and other sites, such as Word Press, LiveJournal, and many others, provide design templates and other tools for composition, editing, publishing, and connecting with others.

Blogs for Library and Information Professionals

Library and information professionals may enjoy the benefits of blogs for a wide variety of purposes. Those include publication records, annual progress report of the library, messages to the new college and university students, and many other messages, purposes, and audiences. The author has created a blog on blogger.com, which may be accessed at: mjt123.blogspot.com

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