

Introduction to blogging

The purpose of this document is to provide background information on what is a blog and why blog for those new to blogging.

We've also included an anatomy of a blog and blogging vocabulary with links to helpful resources — the idea is for you to use this information as quick reference guides.

Contents

What is a Blog?	1
Examples of educational blogs	1
The Basic Structure of a Blog	2
1. Dashboard	2
2. Theme	2
3. Theme layout.....	3
4. Header	3
5. Posts.....	3
6. Comments	4
7. Pages	4
8. Sidebar	5
9. Widget	5
10. RSS	5

What is a Blog?

The term blog originated from the blend of the term “web log”.

Nowadays blogs compete with mainstream media in delivering news and information. Important events, war coverage and celebrity deaths are often reported quicker and more accurately on blogs and Twitter than traditional news service.

Why? Because any one can easily set up their own blog and share their thoughts (known as their voice) online.

Blogs are written on just about any subject and for a wide range of purposes, including personal, business, work and sharing news stories.



Examples of educational blogs

1. Teachers Personal blogs:

- Free Technology for Teachers - <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/>
- Larry Ferlazzo's Websites Of The Day - <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/>
- Langwitches - <http://langwitches.org/blog/>
- Integrating Technology in the Primary Classroom - <http://primarytech.globalteacher.org.au/>

2. Class blogs:

- 2KM@ Leopold Primary School - <http://2kmblog.globalstudent.org.au/>
- Blog, Blog Blog Blog, Blog Some More - <http://msvrburton.edublogs.org/>
- Mr. Salsich's Class - <http://jmsalsich.edublogs.org/>
- Mrs. Yollis' Class Blog! - <http://yollisclassblog.blogspot.com/>
- The Ins and Outs - <http://theinsandouts.co.nz/>

3. Student blogs:

- Rhiannon's Blog – <http://rhiannonb.globalstudent.org.au/> Grade 2
- Millie's Marvellous Blog – <http://ameliasblog.globalstudent.org.au/> Grade 2
- BB's awesome blog – <http://biancasblog.globalstudent.org.au/> Grade 2
- Grace's Blog – <http://gracelog09.edublogs.org/> Grade 7
- Chemistry: It's "Element"-ary!! – <http://www.hcchrisp.blogspot.com/> Grade 10

4. Other useful sites

- The Edublog Awards website - <http://edublogawards.com/>
- International Edublogs Directory - <http://edublogs.org/community/#directory>
- Education blogs listed on PostRank - <http://www.postrank.com/topic/Education>

The Basic Structure of a Blog

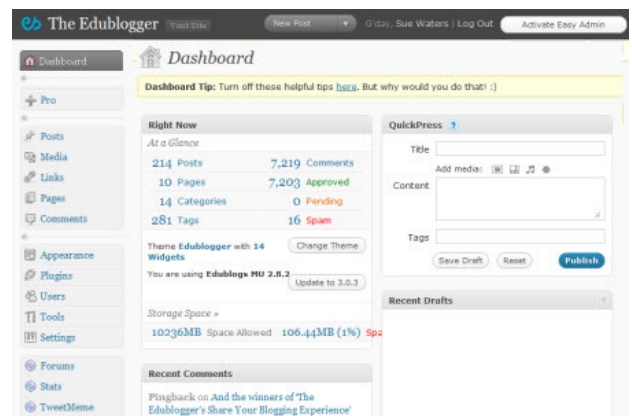
Blogs are normally made up of the following main elements:

1. Dashboard

This is the back-end area of your blog where you make changes and edits. This area is only accessible to logged in blog administrators, editors, authors, contributors or subscribers.

Here's where you'll find more information on:

1. Logging into your blog - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/29/logging-into-your-blog-dashboard/>
2. Using your blog dashboard - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/29/using-your-dashboard/>



2. Theme

Usually one of the first things bloggers do is pick out a theme. This is the template or look of the blog that people see when they visit your blog.

This is what gives it your personal touch.

Here's where you'll find more information on:

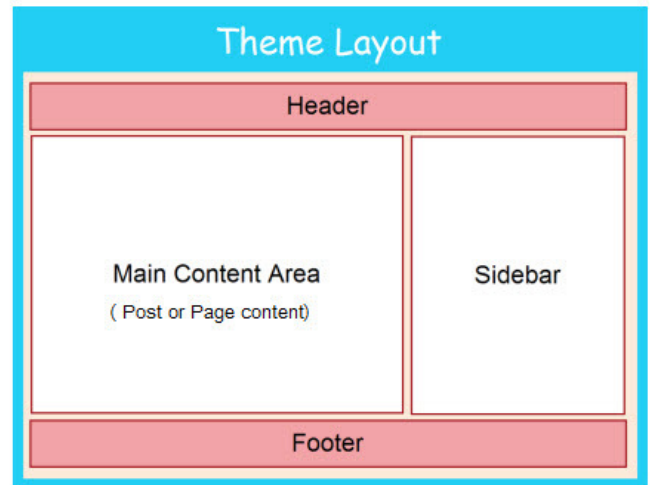
- Changing your blog look - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/29/changing-your-blogs-look/>
- What to consider when choosing your blog theme - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/04/what-to-consider-when-choosing-your-blogs-theme/>
- Changing your blog's theme - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/04/changing-your-blog-theme/>



3. Theme layout

Blog themes normally include a header, a content area (for your posts), sidebar area (for your widgets) and come in several standard layouts:

- **Single column** with no sidebar (widgets are located at the bottom of the blog)
- **Two Column** – normally a wide column for content and narrower sidebar
- **Three Column** – with sidebars side-by-side on one side of the blog or either side of the wider content column
- **Four Column** – one content column and three sidebars. The content column is often the same width as the other columns. This type of layout tends to be cluttered looking and less suited to reading lengthy content.



Here's where you'll find more information on:

- What to consider when choosing your blog theme - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/04/what-to-consider-when-choosing-your-blogs-theme>
- The 137 Edublogs Themes Separated Into Categories To Make Choosing Your Next Theme Easier - <http://theedublogger.com/2010/05/13/the-137-edublogs-themes-separated-into-categories-to-make-choosing-your-next-theme-easier/>

4. Header

The header is the area at the top of a blog where the blog title, graphics, and possibly navigational links appear.

Using your own custom image header means you can obtain a much more customized look and feel adding your "own personal touch" to your blog.



Here's where you'll find more information on:

- Uploading your custom image header - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/04/uploading-your-custom-image-header/>

5. Posts

Posts are where you normally publish the latest update or new article on a blog. They are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order with the most recent post at the top of the page.

Most of the content published on a blog is normally written as Posts. E.g, information on what's happening in your classroom, assignment instructions, homework and discussion topics are normally published as Posts and not on Pages.

Blogs are designed to have only one Post page which normally displays

Main Features of a Post

The screenshot shows a blog post titled 'What advice would you give?' by Sue Waters. The post content includes a list of four questions about online education. Below the content is a 'Subscribe For Free!' button and a 'Tagged in: Internet Safety' section. A '24 Comments' button is also visible. Red lines and numbers 1 through 6 point to specific features: 1. Title, 2. Date posted, 3. Categories, 4. Comments, 5. Content - the info you want to share, and 6. Tags.

on the homepage of the blog.

Check out 'The Edublogger' (<http://theedublogger.com/>) to see how posts are displayed in reverse chronological order on the home page (<http://theedublogger.com/>).

Here's where you'll find more information on:

- The Differences between Pages and Posts – <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/01/the-differences-between-posts-and-pages/>
- Writing your first post - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/29/writing-your-first-post/>
- Adding Categories and Tags into your Posts - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/29/adding-tags-and-categories-to-a-post/>
- Editing Posts - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/30/editing-posts/>

6. Comments

Posts commonly allow readers to publish comments on the posts they read. This is where the reader can share their thoughts, connect with the blogger and interact with other readers.

Here's where you'll find more information on:

- Engaging Readers through comments - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/30/editing-posts/>
- Controlling who can comment on posts - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/07/31/controlling-who-can-comment-on-posts/>
- Managing, editing and approving comments - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/01/managing-and-approving-comments/>
- Enabling threaded comments - <http://help.edublogs.org/2010/09/07/activating-threaded-comments/>
- Writing links in Comments - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/01/writing-links-in-comments/>



7. Pages

You normally use pages for information that you want to share with your readers but don't expect to update frequently. Not all blogging software includes the ability to add Pages.

The most common type of page you'll find on a blog is an About Page.

Here's where you'll find more information on:

- The Differences between Pages and Posts - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/01/the-differences-between-posts-and-pages/>
- What is An About Page - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/01/writing-yourabout-page/>

Example of an About Page



8. Sidebar

The location and even existence of sidebars depend on your theme. Some themes even have 3 or more sidebars. You can add and rearrange widgets in your sidebars using your blog dashboard.

The most common theme layout is two columns with one sidebar and one content area.



Sidebar with widgets

9. Widget

These are the blocks that make up sidebars. Popular widgets include the ability to subscribe to a blog, user statistics, and suggested links.

Here's where you'll find more information on:

- Changing your sidebar widgets - <http://help.edublogs.org/2009/08/01/writing-your-about-page/>
- Top widgets for the sidebar of your class or student blog - <http://theedublogger.com/2010/10/21/top-widgets-for-the-sidebar-of-your-class-or-student-blog/>



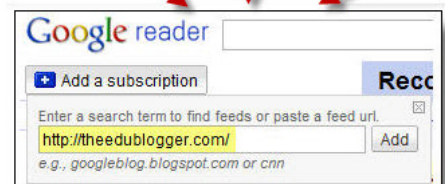
10. RSS

RSS is an acronym which stands for Really Simple Syndication.

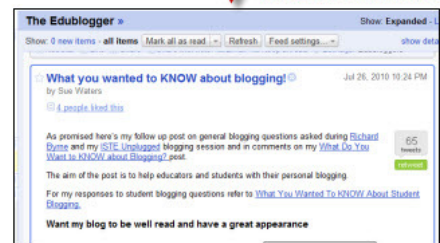
In simple terms, RSS is a simple and effective way of keeping in touch when new information is added to a website without having to visit the website to check for new updates.

How it works is you subscribe to your favorite website using the RSS feed in a RSS feed reader such as Google Reader (<http://www.google.com/reader/>). Whenever new information is added to the website it is automatically sent to your RSS feed reader where you can read it at your convenience.

For example, whenever your favorite blogger publishes a new post it is automatically sent to your Feed reader. Sites with RSS feeds are normally indicated with the word RSS and/or the orange RSS icon.



Reading latest updates using a Feed Reader



For more information:

1. Watch RSS in Plain English - http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english
2. Follow these instructions to subscribe to blogs using Google Reader - <http://theedublogger.com/2010/02/19/week-7-add-your-student-blogs-to-a-folder-in-google-reader/> — just replace the student blogs with your favorite blogs and news services

Please note :

- Blogs on all standard blogging platforms automatically include RSS feeds and don't necessarily use words or an icon to indicate the presence of the RSS feed. For all Edublogs, the rss feed is found by going to yourblog.edublogs.org/feed.
- RSS lets you do lots of cool stuff including adding latest updates from your favorite blog(s) or news website(s) to your own site using RSS widgets like FeedWind's RSS widget (<http://feed.mikle.com/en/>)