

# 5 Minute Guide ...

## Blogs

### What is a blog?

A blog is a website where someone can easily upload their thoughts so that family, friends or anyone interested can keep up to date. There are many different kinds of blogs, from personal to commercial, with all stops in between. A form of self-publishing, blogs let their authors (called "bloggers") to build community and share stories. A blog usually consists of one main page that places new stories (or posts) at the top of the page and pushes previous posts underneath. Blogs often have monthly archives to keep the list of postings relatively short and often allow readers to comment on blog posts. Blogs can focus on current events, news, or anything that interests the author!

### How do blogs work?

Blogging software makes it simple to create and update blogs (see the "Do More" section at the end of this guide). The blogger logs into their blog, types out a post and clicks a button to 'publish' it. There are no rules as to what you can publish in your blog. The website will often list other blogs that contain similar or complimentary topics or ideas. This network of blogs make up what is called the blogosphere.

### Why are blogs useful?

People read blogs for many reasons, to catch up with loved ones, keep track of new products or issues or even just to get a new perspective on a subject. They are one way people can share items of interest with others without having to contact everyone individually. If your blog is of a personal nature, it is a handy way to keep people up to date with your thoughts, interests and activities. If it is more subject based, it can be a way of bringing together a group with the same interests, keeping everyone aware of new information.

### Do blogs have drawbacks?

As with any form of self-publishing, blogging can have its drawbacks. Each blogger must determine where to draw the line, so to speak. Respect for other people's privacy is a must! Understand that what you write online could have an impact on your 'real' life - there have been cases where bloggers have lost their jobs due to their blogs! Remember not to post anything that you don't want to become public.

For readers the drawbacks are a little different. Because blogs are only as accurate as the people who write them choose to be, there can be factual errors and biases that can quickly spread over the web. Blog readers should be aware of the trustworthiness of the author and be mindful of the content provided.

### Who writes blogs?

From scientists to students, ordinary people to professionals, anyone can blog! Some bloggers use their blogs as an online diary; others use them to create community for a specific subject. For others, it is simply a way to keep track of things that interest them and it may remain completely private.

### How can libraries use blogs?

It is becoming common to find blogs on libraries' websites. They offer an easy way to keep your community up to date with what's going on at the library - some libraries even create their website around a blog. Library blogs can cover many different topics, including book clubs, favourite books, authors, or programming. The flexibility of blogs allows their format to be adapted for many purposes.



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**did you know?**

"Blog" is a contraction  
of web and log.

## Explore More

### Library Blogs

Tame the Web  
[www.tametheweb.com](http://www.tametheweb.com)

Days and Nights of the Lipstick Librarian  
[www.lipsticklibrarian.com/blog](http://www.lipsticklibrarian.com/blog)

Library Stuff  
[www.librarystuff.net](http://www.librarystuff.net)

### Check out award winning blogs

Canadian Blog Awards  
<http://cdnba.wordpress.com>

Blogger's Choice Awards  
<http://bloggerschoiceawards.com>

Weblog awards  
<http://weblogawards.org>

## Do More

### Start your own blog

Blogger  
<https://www.blogger.com/start>

Live Journal  
[www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)

Wordpress  
<http://wordpress.org>

Finding it hard to keep track? Bloglines can keep all your blogs in one place.  
[www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com)

Have “blogger’s block”? Plinky! asks you questions that you can use as the topic of a blog entry.  
[www.plinky.com](http://www.plinky.com)

Want to be a “ProBlogger”? ProBlogger.net is a blog about blogging that covers everything from how to get readers, publish appealing content and make money.  
[www.problogger.net](http://www.problogger.net)