**Blogging – Where Web Logs Came From**

According to Brandon Gaille, there are over 152 million blogs on the Internet today with a new blog being added every half second. So what is a blog exactly? Over 32 million Americans currently read blogs every week yet most people cannot explain what a blog actually is.

At their inception, the first ‘blogs’ were limited to chronicling a single person’s life. These early blogs were an online diary or forum of hosted public journals. Today, blogs cover a vast cross section of topics, from personal blogs, niche hobbies, news, health advice, dating advice, parenting advocates, business coaching, social issues and financial guidance; anything you can imagine, there is already a blog about it.

Darren Rowse, founder of Problogger, defines a blog as a frequent and chronological online publication. A blog is a personal or commercial website or web page which is regularly updated with opinions, reviews, articles and links to other websites. While a website or online store may remain unchanged for years, a blog is frequently updated, current and chronological.

**The Origins of the Blog?**

Blogs, as we know them today, were born from online forum software. In the 1990’s Internet forum software companies such as WebEx started to develop running conversation threads through online software. As the forums grew larger, these threads of conversations where then organised and connected through topical connections. They were then sorted via an online, metaphorical cork board.

According to Rebecca Blood from the long standing blog Rebecca’s Pocket, these threads slowly developed into online diaries around 1994. Justin Hall is credited as begin one of the first bloggers, beginning his blog Justin’s Links from the Underground, in 1994. Hall blogged for 11 years during his years at Swarthmore College and over time the blog begun to focus heavily on the intimate details of his life.

Jorn Barger is credited with coining the word weblog (A Web Log) in December 1997, but it was not until two years later that Peter Merholz jokingly split the word into the phrase *we blog* in the side bar of his personal blog in May 1999.

The growth of blogs in the late 1990’s coincided with developments in Web publishing tools that were allowed more non-technical users to post content onto their own blogs. Since this point, a knowledge and literacy of HTML and FTP was necessary to publish content. In August 1999 Evan Williams and Meg Hourihan launched Blogger[dot]com, a free blog hosting Content Management System.

The Content Management System (CMS) WordPress was released in May 2003. Before 2003, the program, widely known as Cafe Log, hosted approximately 2 000 blogs. Since the release of more user friendly and intuitive software over the last 11 years, making free blogging software available to more people, there are over 14.4 billion blog pages hosted on WordPress.

**The Authorship of Blogs**

When looking at the history of blogging it is interesting to look at the history of blogging authorship and how that has changed over the last 20 years. The history of Blogging has been directly shaped by those with in ability and access to the language, software and platforms that are used to create blogs.

When blogging was first ‘invented’ the authorship of Blogging was limited to those who were were able to writing HTML and FTP, therefore the dialogue and trajectory of blogs was limited to a particular voice and a certain audience. The voice of blogging, in the beginning was very limited and singular, read only by those who were able to find them.

As the software and knowledge needed to create and maintain a blog became less technical, this resulted in the distinct class of online publishing that produces blogs we recognise today. For instance, the use of some sort of browser-based software is now a typical aspect of “blogging”. Blogs now may be hosted online by a dedicated Blog Hosting Company, or run through free and paid online blog software such as WordPress, Movable Type, Blogger or Live Journal.

**The Future of Blogging**

Where the world of blogging goes next is anyone’s guess… Everyone from unknown writers in small country towns to large multinational companies run their own blogs today and it’s impossible to know where they’re going to take it next.

As the popularity of Blogging continues to rise, a number of blogging awards, Blogging programs and even Blogging courses are now widely accepted and enrolled in. The Australian Writers Centre, in conjunction with Random house Australia, award annual prizes the the best Australian Blogs Each year. The finalists for the best Australian blogs of 2014, can be seen here.

In the last few years blogging as a writing platform has received a lot of criticism from many writing industry professionals. As a non-regulated publishing profession, blog articles are more likely to have spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, factual biased and a poorly structured argument. Some may say that Blogging will be the down fall of the English Language. You only need to look closely at this article, to see that they may be correct.

While there are many that openly criticise blogging, there are many who must be praised for their efforts. Through Blogging, a direct dialogue between author and audience may be achieved, allowing for a more intimate connection, and current communication exchange. Blogs provide decentralised information dissemination over a wide range of opinions.

Praised for providing voices and documenting stories of the marginalised, blogs have been credited with preserving and nurturing minor and diminishing small language groups; bringing together survivors of rare illness and providing unsolicited advice and support to anyone who is seeking it.

Blogs have also been criticised for the very same reasons stated above, as in 2006, Prison Blogging rose in popularity. Prison Blogging is a mean by which offenders and overseas criminals are given a platform to speak to the world and express themselves. Prison Blogging is highly controversial and touches at the very heart of what Blogging is all about. Blogging continues to struggle between the lines of providing a platform for free speech, and giving a voice to those who should not or may not want to be heard by a wider community.

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