

Blogging For Ministry

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Background

- Started officially blogging in July 2006
- ChurchCommunicationsPro.com
- Forum for ideas
- Help churches and pastors with church communications

What Is a Blog?

- Short for weblog
- **Technorati says:** A blog, or weblog, is a regularly updated journal published on the web. Some blogs are intended for a small audience; others vie for readership with national newspapers. Blogs are influential, personal, or both, and they reflect as many topics and opinions as there are people writing them.
- Blogs are powerful because they allow millions of people to easily publish and share their ideas, and millions more to read and respond. They engage the writer and reader in an open conversation, and are shifting the Internet paradigm as we know it.

Blogs ...

- Lowered the bar for what it meant to create and publish Internet websites for millions of people ...
- Have an idea? Blog it.
- Have a beef? Blog it.
- Have pics of your cat? Blog it.
- If you can run Microsoft Word, you can maintain a blog ...

The Blogosphere

- Technorati: Currently tracking 75.2 million blogs
- Christian blogs ... no telling ... but we did an informal survey and got around 380 responses
- More Senior Pastors are blogging!
- More Christians should redeem this technology for ministry & Gospel witness

Blogging Platforms

Three Most Popular Blogging Platforms:

- Blogger
- TypePad
- WordPress

- *WordPress is THE Best!*

Costs

- With WordPress, you could buy a year of hosting and a domain name for around \$50 a year!

Examples Uses of Blogs

- Spread vision
- Share ideas
- Share news and feature stories
- Internal brainstorming
- Run smaller websites

- There's good and ... ugly uses too.

6 Benefits of Blogging

- Connect with people
- Organize your thoughts
- Reach the world
- Simple and easy to use
- Search engines love them!
- Exposure

So You Want
To Start a Blog

Domain Names & Hosting

- I suggest buying a domain name and website hosting ... (\$50 a year)
- Own versus rent
- Sometimes I will suggest starting a Blogger.com or WordPress.com blog and try it out for 3 weeks or so ...

What To Blog About

- Blog your passion ... first and foremost
- Can be a spiritual journal ...
- But if you want to develop a readership, pick a topic and “own” it

- Blog your passion and what you know most about ... I chose church communications and marketing

Make a Posting Schedule

- To develop regular readers, you must have a consistent posting schedule
- I suggest starting with 1-2 posts a week
- See how that goes after a couple of weeks ... then increase by one or two and see how that goes

Blog Writing

- Conversational & personal in tone
- Takes time to develop voice & rhythm
- More like writing an email to a friend
- Typically, short, concise, scannable is best

Blog Writing

- But write what you want ... from your heart and passion and interests
- Lists posts are the most popular posts by far
- The best way to learn to write blog posts ... is to read good blogs

Writing Good Headlines

- Headlines are the hook
- They're the sizzle. They're the salesperson's irresistible pitch.
- Keep to 10 words or less
- Make them relevant to your subject
- Think in terms of keywords

Writing Good Headlines

- Keep it simple
- Grab attention
- Meet a need
- Describe
- Use key words
- Take your time

ProBlogger.net's Darren Rowse

Handling Blog Comments

- I recommend turning “off” the comments function of your blog to begin with ...
- Only recently did I turn mine off ... and LOVE IT!
- Often they are distracting
- But if you want to generate community and interactivity, leave them “on” and get a tough skin

Feeds & Email Newsletter

- One defining characteristic of most blogs is the FEED
- Really Simple Syndication
- One way to read a lot of blogs fast
- Email newsletters ... highly suggest offering your readers a way to get regular updates
- Some people still want an email ...

Statistics

- If you are interested in developing your readership, you'll want to track your site statistics
- Google Analytics
- Who is "referring" people to you (links)
- Where people are reading from ...
- How many visitors and pageviews
- Warning: Don't get obsessed!

Warnings

- Blog insomnia
- Traffic stats addiction
- The Web has a long, long memory
- Be careful what you say, how you say it
- Present & future employers plus your enemies will read you too

Helpful Tools

- Bloglines.com
- [Google Analytics](https://www.google.com/analytics/)
- WordPress.org
- [Gmail](https://mail.google.com/)
- Feedburner.com

Helpful Blog Sites

- ProBlogger.net
- CopyBlogger.com
- DailyBlogTips.com
- ChurchCommunicationsPro.com

