

Blogger

Page 1 of 7

A blog is an easy to use website where you can quickly post information and have other people comment on that information. A prominent education blogger (Will Richardson - <http://www.weblogg-ed.com/>) refers to it as the “Read-Write Web” – which I think is a very good way to think about it for education.

From somewhere (I’ve lost the source)

Weblogs provide teachers and students with the opportunity to communicate and collaborate in new and exciting ways. A blog (short for weblog) is an interactive web page where individuals can post entries, articles, links, and pictures, and ask others to join into conversations. For educators, they are a way to expand the boundaries of learning. Teachers can post entries for students, parents, and for professional development purposes. Students can engage with others in their community or around the world. Work can be published to an authentic audience.

Blogs are easily adaptive into most curriculum areas. They are relatively simple to use, can be accessed by anyone, anywhere with an Internet connection, and content can be published online in a matter of minutes.

Educators around the country have started using blogs in a multitude of areas:

1. Information/Communication Tools:

Teachers can post student writing, artwork, information about homework, upcoming events. Parents can have access to events and projects in your classroom.

2. Online Filing Cabinets:

Students and teachers can use a blog as a place to store assignments, links, plans, and handouts.

3. Collaborative Tools:

Students can extend conversations outside of the classroom, and collaborate with invited guests from around the world and from within the community.

4. Literature Circles:

Book clubs can involve students and parents, or students from other communities.

5. Online Discussions:

Blogs can work as a discussion group for students and staff in every discipline: Science to reflect on labs, Social Studies for current events, English for prewriting on central themes of novels, etc.

6. Professional Development:

Teachers can use blogs as portfolios or as an archived discussion of their practice, both formal and informal.

7. Writing tools:

Students can have interactive electronic journals or post completed works to an authentic audience.

There are lots of ways to create a blog. You can run blogging software on your own web server or have someone else host it. There are many free blogging sites on the web, we’ll just concentrate on Blogger.

Creating Your Blogger Blog

1. Go to <http://www.blogger.com>

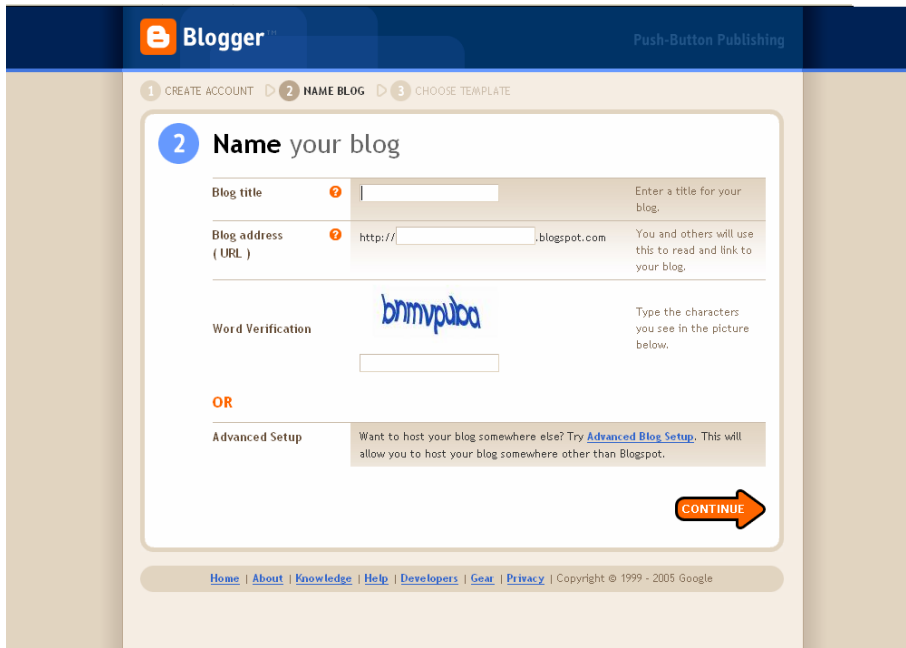


2. Click on Create Your Blog Now.



- a. Choose a User Name – this can be anything you want (as long as someone else doesn't already have it). It won't display anywhere. I would recommend picking a common login that you use and will remember.
- b. Enter a password – must be at least 6 characters. Again, I would recommend a common password that you use and will remember.
- c. Retype password – enter the same password as above.
- d. Display Name – think more carefully about this one. This is the name that will display on your blog posts and comments. For students, it's important to not use full names. We generally recommend first names or first names and last initials only – just enough to identify them to you.
- e. Email Address – you need to put a valid email address.
- f. Acceptance of Terms – you need to check this box, then click Continue.

3. Name Your Blog



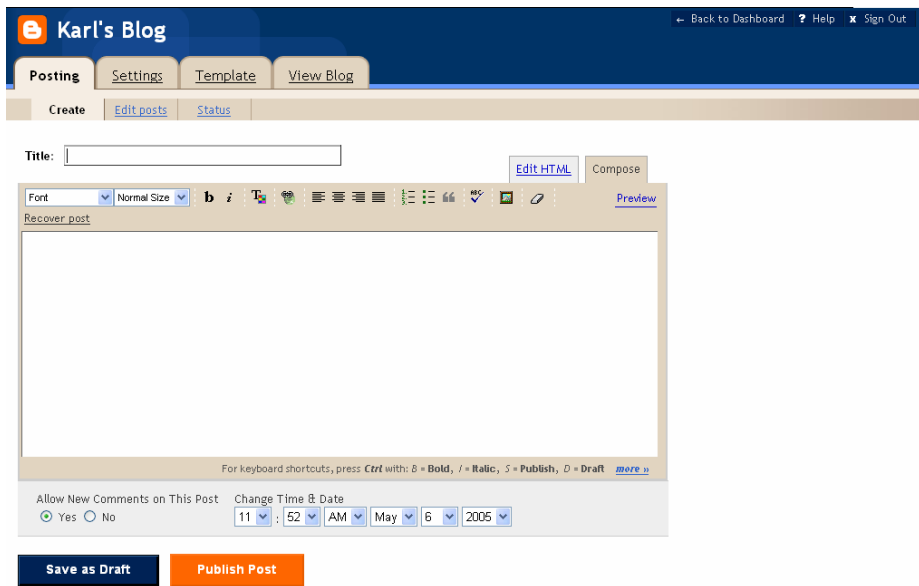
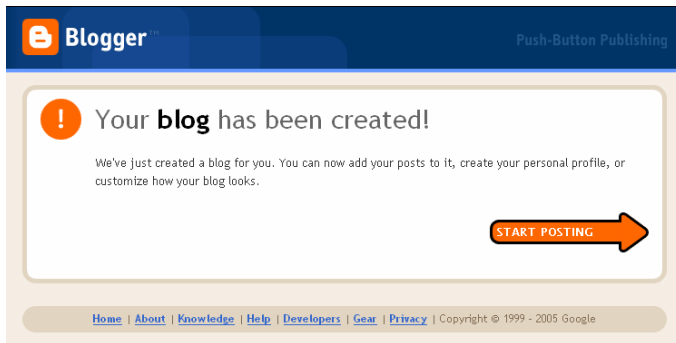
- Blog Title – Give your blog a title. This should be a descriptive title that means something.
- Blog Address – type in what you want the URL to be. All Blogger blogs have an address that looks like <http://whatyouwanthere.blogspot.com>. If somebody has already used your address, you'll have to think of another (it will tell you).
- Word Verification – this is a Turing Test to deter misuse. Type in the characters you see.
- Click Continue.

4. Choose a Template



- Blogger has a variety of templates to choose from. Scroll down and view them all (you can click on preview template to get a bigger view), then choose the one you want by clicking in the selection circle. (You can change the template later if you wish).
- Click Continue.

5. Your blog has been created. Click Start Posting.



6. Your blog won't "show up" until you have at least one post, so you might want to post something right away.

- a. Title – Give the post a descriptive title.
- b. Body – Type the body of the post in the box. If you're on a PC using Internet Explorer, you'll also have some "rich text" buttons for some formatting options. (You can also type html tags if you know them). There are also keyboard shortcuts that will work in some browsers:

Can I use keyboard shortcuts while posting?

Blogger has several keyboard shortcuts for use while editing posts. They definitely work in Internet Explorer 5.5+/Windows and the Mozilla family (1.6+ and Firefox 0.9+), and might work in other browsers. Here they are:

- control + b = Bold
- control + i = Italic
- control + l = Blockquote (when in HTML-mode only)
- control + z = Undo
- control + y = Redo
- control + shift + a = Link
- control + shift + p = Preview
- control + d = Save as Draft
- control + s = Publish Post

Blogger

Page 5 of 7

- c. Comments – decide whether you want to enable comments on this post (more on comments later).
- d. Time and Date – change the time and date of the post if you'd like.
- e. Choose to Save the post as a Draft, or Publish the Post.
- f. You should get a confirmation page.

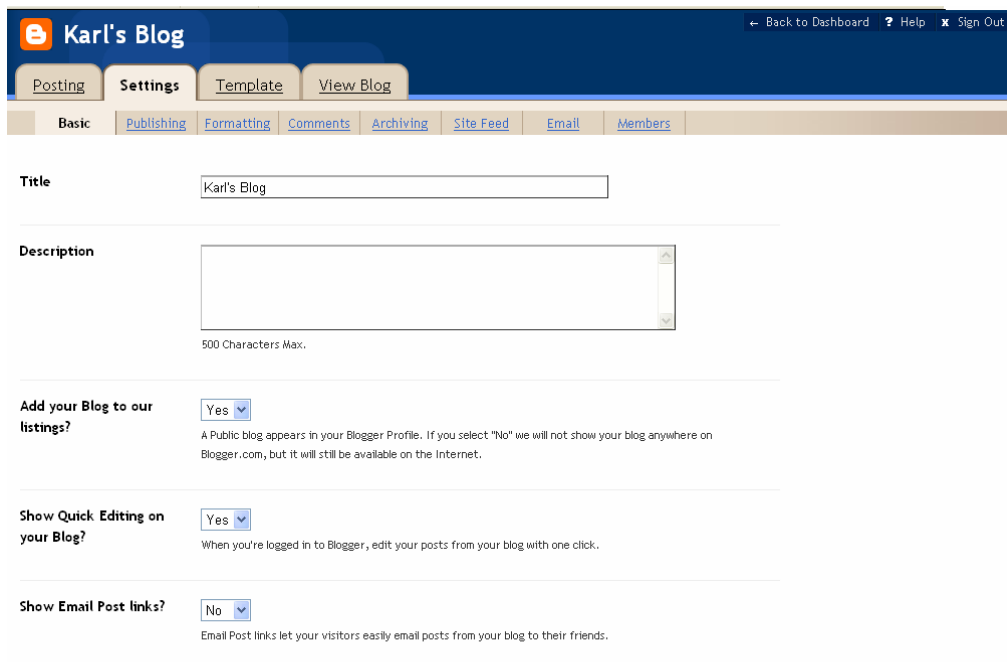


- g. You can view the blog now if you'd like (choose in a new window this time, as we're going to want to come back to this page in a minute).

Settings

You should now probably look at and possibly change some of your settings.

1. Click on the Settings Tab.



Global Settings (Applies to all of your blogs.)

Blogger

Page 6 of 7

2. There are 8 tabs within the Settings Tab. I'll just talk about the most important items on each tab.

a. Basic Tab

- The Title and Description show at the top or on the side (depending on your template) when people view your blog.
- If you add your blog to their listings, it will show up in more places. If you choose No, only people who know the direct URL will be able to get to it.

b. Publishing Tab

- BlogSpot Address – the URL for your blog.
- Notify Weblogs.com – if you say yes, the website will be notified anytime you have a new post (helps others know when new info is on your blog).

c. Formatting Tab

- Show – determines how many days or posts show on the first page of your blog.
- Time Zone – change to your time zone if you want your posts to accurately reflect the correct day and time that you posted.

d. Comments Tab

- Who Can Comment – determines who can leave comments – you can let anyone, only registered Blogger users, or only members of this blog.
- Default for Posts – whether all new posts will default to having comments turned on or off.
- Comment Notification Address – any new comments will be emailed to this address.
- Show Word Verification – you want to turn this on to prevent comment spam. In order to comment, users will have to type some characters that appear on the screen – this prevents computer-generated spam comments.

e. Site Feed

- Publish Site Feed – whether you want your blog to be able to be read by RSS Aggregators
- Descriptions – whether to send out the whole post or just the first paragraph to RSS Aggregators

f. Email

- BlogSend Address – all posts will be emailed to this address
- Mail-to-Blogger Address – you can create an email address that you can send posts to – they will then automatically get posted (in my experience, this can be slow to post).

g. Members

- You can invite other people to join the blog. If they join, they can then post items and comment (even if you restrict comments to members of this blog).

Dashboard

The Dashboard is where you control your Blogger account. You can edit your user profile and view all of your blogs (you can have more than one).

The image shows two screenshots from the Blogger interface. The left screenshot is the main Dashboard, and the right screenshot is the 'Edit User Profile' page.

Dashboard Screenshot:

- Header: Blogger logo, signed in as karlfisch, Sign out.
- Section: Dashboard
- Section: Blogs

BLOG NAME	NEW POST	CHANGE SETTINGS	LAST UPDATE
Karl's Blog			06 May 2005

CREATE A BLOG

Edit User Profile Screenshot:

Back To: Dashboard

Edit User Profile

Privacy

Share my profile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Show my real name	<input type="checkbox"/>	If checked, your first and last name will appear on your profile.
Show my email address	<input type="checkbox"/>	Currently set to kfish@ps.k12.co.us
Show my blogs	Select blogs to display	This list of blogs will only be displayed on your user profile.

Identity

Username	<input type="text" value="karlfisch"/>	Required
Email Address	<input type="text" value="kfish@ps.k12.co.us"/>	Required
Display Name	<input type="text" value="karl f"/>	Required: The name used to sign your blog posts.
First Name	<input type="text"/>	
Last Name	<input type="text"/>	

Things to think about

1. Do you allow comments on the blog? If so, do you limit it to Blogger users or members of the blog only?
2. Do you invite others to be members of the blog? This allows you to limit comments to them, but then they also can publish posts.
3. Do you want Blogger to automatically email you all posts and comments? If so, you might want to setup a rule in your email program so that all of these emails go into a special folder.
4. Do you want students to post on your blog (either via comments or via posts), or post in their own blogs? It depends on the task at hand – if you want a class “discussion,” then it needs to be all in your blog. If you want more individual writing, then it should be in their blogs.
5. What can you do with your students using Blogs that you couldn't do before?