

Choosing a Blogging Tool

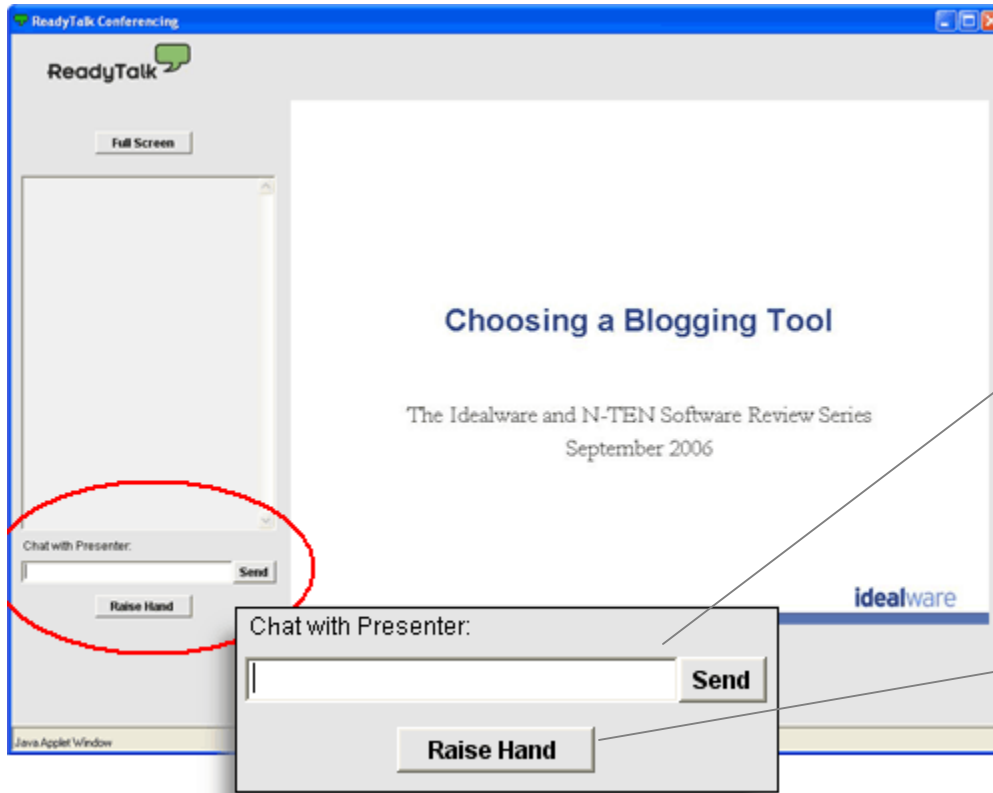
The Idealware and N-TEN Software Review Series
February 2006

What We'll Cover

- What is a Blog? Why a Blog?
- Blog Features and Functions
- Seven Blogging Tools
- Recommendations

Logistics

Ask questions! Otherwise I'm speaking to a black hole!

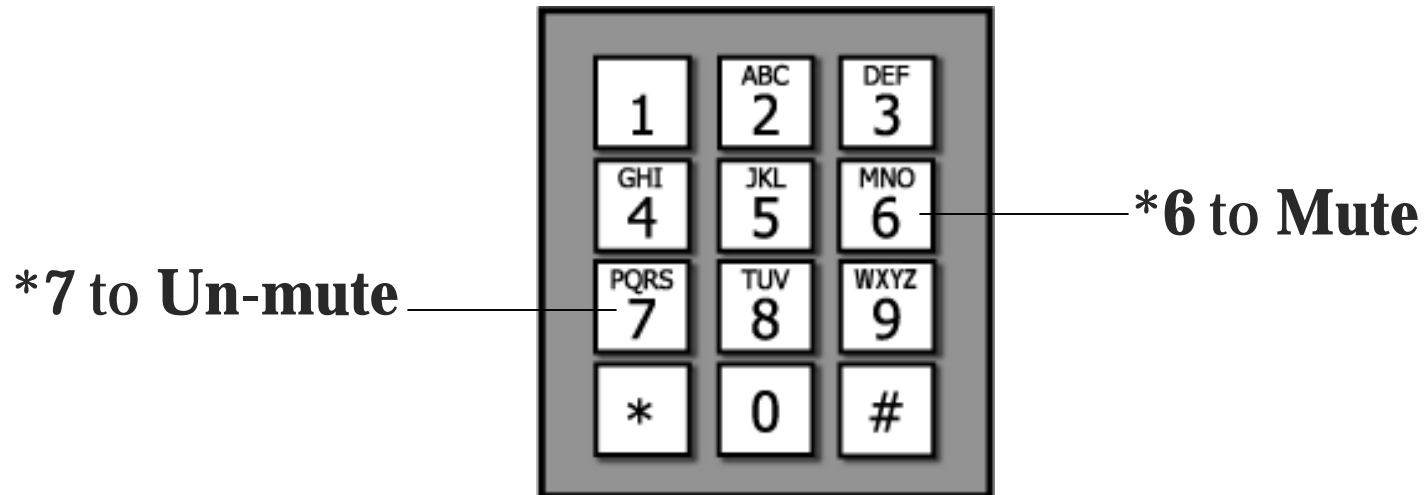


Enter questions into the **Chat with Presenter** box

Use the **Raise Hand** button

Logistics

I'll doing some wholesale muting and unmuting, but you can do it yourself as well.



Introductions



Me!

What is a Blog? Why a Blog?

What is a Blog?



Personal voice, a conversation



Frequent updates



Generally chronological

For instance...

So No Child Must Wait

A weblog for Interplast volunteer surgical trips and international partner surgeons around the world.



ABOUT

[Email Me](#)

[Call me!](#)

LINKS



Donate Now!

[Interplast](#)

[Join Interplast's Mailing List](#)

[Net Squared](#)

[InterAction](#)



PHOTOS

[Interplast Photos](#)

Francinaldo's new ear

Campo Grande, Brazil - Tom Moore, plastic surgeon: Here's a happy Francinaldo after his operation. His new ear is under the bandage. I will be coming back to Campo Grande, Brazil pretty soon, so check back soon for more reports.



[Francinaldo's new ear](#)
Originally uploaded by [interplast](#).

Posted on September 5, 2006 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) |  |  | [Donate Now!](#)

Second Stage Ear Reconstruction

Campo Grande, Brazil - Tom Moore, plastic surgeon: Third year resident Andre de Brito performing the second stage on Francinaldo. The reconstruction is complete except for the final stage which will be



[Second Stage Ear Reconstruction](#)
Originally uploaded by [interplast](#).

SITE EVALUATION BLOG

[Developing World Site Evaluation](#)

VISITING EDUCATOR WORKSHOP BLOGS

[Anesthesia Conference, Latin America](#)

[Loja, Ecuador Visiting Educator Workshop](#)

[Campo Grande, Brazil Visiting Educator Workshop](#)

[Colombo, Sri Lanka Visiting Educator Workshop](#)

[Lusaka, Zambia Visiting Educator Workshop](#)

SURGICAL TRIP BLOGS

[La Paz, Bolivia Blog 2006](#)

[Chau Doc, Vietnam Blog 2006](#)

[Ganzhou City, China Blog 2006](#)

[Cao Lanh, Vietnam Blog 2006](#)

[Acoques, Ecuador Blog 2006](#)

[My Tho, Vietnam Blog 2006](#)

[Cusco, Peru Blog 2006](#)

[Ingenio San Antonio, Nicaragua Blog, 2006](#)

[Loja, Ecuador Blog 2006](#)

[Dhaka, Bangladesh Blog 2006](#)

[Chengde, China Blog 2006](#)

<http://interplast.blogs.com/>

For instance...

Consumer Scribbler

BALANCING POWER IN THE MARKETPLACE

[cu scribblers](#) | [guidelines](#) | [rss](#)

Visit the Consumers Union **ACTION CENTER**
And find out what you can do to help!

[PAST]

Consumers Union
REPORTS

[PRESENT]

Consumers Union.org
Nonprofit Publisher of Consumer Reports

[FUTURE]

Consumers Union

CU PROJECTS
PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE
STOP HOSPITAL INFECTIONS
HEAR US NOW
NOT IN MY FOOD
FINANCIAL PRIVACY NOW
YOUR WALLET
SAFE CARS FOR KIDS
BEST BUY DRUGS
ECO-LABELS
CONSUMER WEBWATCH
NONPROFIT CONVERSIONS
ROLLOVER INFORMATION
GREENER CHOICES
HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY SCHOOLS

RECOMMENDED
ACLU

+ Another prestigious institution bans Pharma swag
Posted by Rob Schneider at 09/12/06 01:52 PM

In what the NY Times calls "a growing movement among academic institutions," Stanford University Medical Center will ban gifts -- even small ones like pens -- from pharma sales reps to physicians who work there. [MORE >](#)

comments (0)

+ Drug companies that manage the studies can manage the message
Posted by Rob Schneider at 08/24/06 01:08 PM

Merck released a portion of the study on the drug Arcoxia. It's a reminder of the power drug companies have to manage the news when they pay for the clinical trials. [MORE >](#)

comments (1)

🍴 Good News on Mad Cow is rare, but this one's well done
Posted by michaelhansen at 08/01/06 02:47 PM

On the mad cow front, it looks like the Department of Agriculture (USDA) had an unusual attack of common sense yesterday. This is not typical for USDA. Earlier in the week, USDA had announced that they were going to reduce testing for mad cow disease (also called BSE) by 90% (a "don't look, don't find" approach). [MORE >](#)

comments (0)

SEPTEMBER 2006

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

SEARCH

RECENT

- Another prestigious institution bans Pharma swag
- Drug companies that manage the studies can manage the message
- Good News on Mad Cow is rare, but this one's well done
- Congress is blocking your voice
- Canada's seventh mad cow

CATEGORIES

- food safety (9)
- health care (32)
- in-house-ad (3)
- money (13)
- other issues (5)
- phones & media (1)

ARCHIVES

- September 2006 (1)
- August 2006 (2)
- July 2006 (2)
- June 2006 (1)

<http://www.consumersunion.org/scribbler/>

For instance...

About NWF | Contact Us | Search

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
IN-DEPTH RESOURCES: OUR PROGRAMS / WHERE WE WORK / NEWSROOM

[Home](#) [Wildlife](#) [Your Yard](#) [Take Action](#) [Magazines](#) [Shop](#) [Donate Today](#)

NWF Earth Tomorrow Forum

Research, ideas and commentary on bringing needed cultural and racial diversity to America's wildlife and natural resource conservation movement.

Monday, March 20, 2006

Black NASCAR Driver Creates Big Media Stir

As you have seen in [recent posts](#) on this very blog, NASCAR is working hard to diversify its sport. The rainout yesterday of the race at the Atlanta Motor Speedway just gave the media more time to talk about the start of black Craftsman Truck Series veteran Bill Lester.

Potential sponsors filled voice mail boxes in the sports marketing group responsible for his start, which adds three to five NASCAR races to his already busy truck racing schedule.

Carrying on the legacy by '60s driver Wendell Scott and '80s driver Willie T. Ribbs, Lester is a man to root for. Now, if we could just get him to use biofuel....

Thanks to [NASCAR.com](#) for the story!

posted by [Kay LyBrand](#) @ 7:17 AM
[0 comments](#)

Banks Investing In Latinos

By 2010, Latinos will



About

Research, ideas and commentary on bringing needed cultural and racial diversity to America's wildlife and natural resource conservation movement.

Links

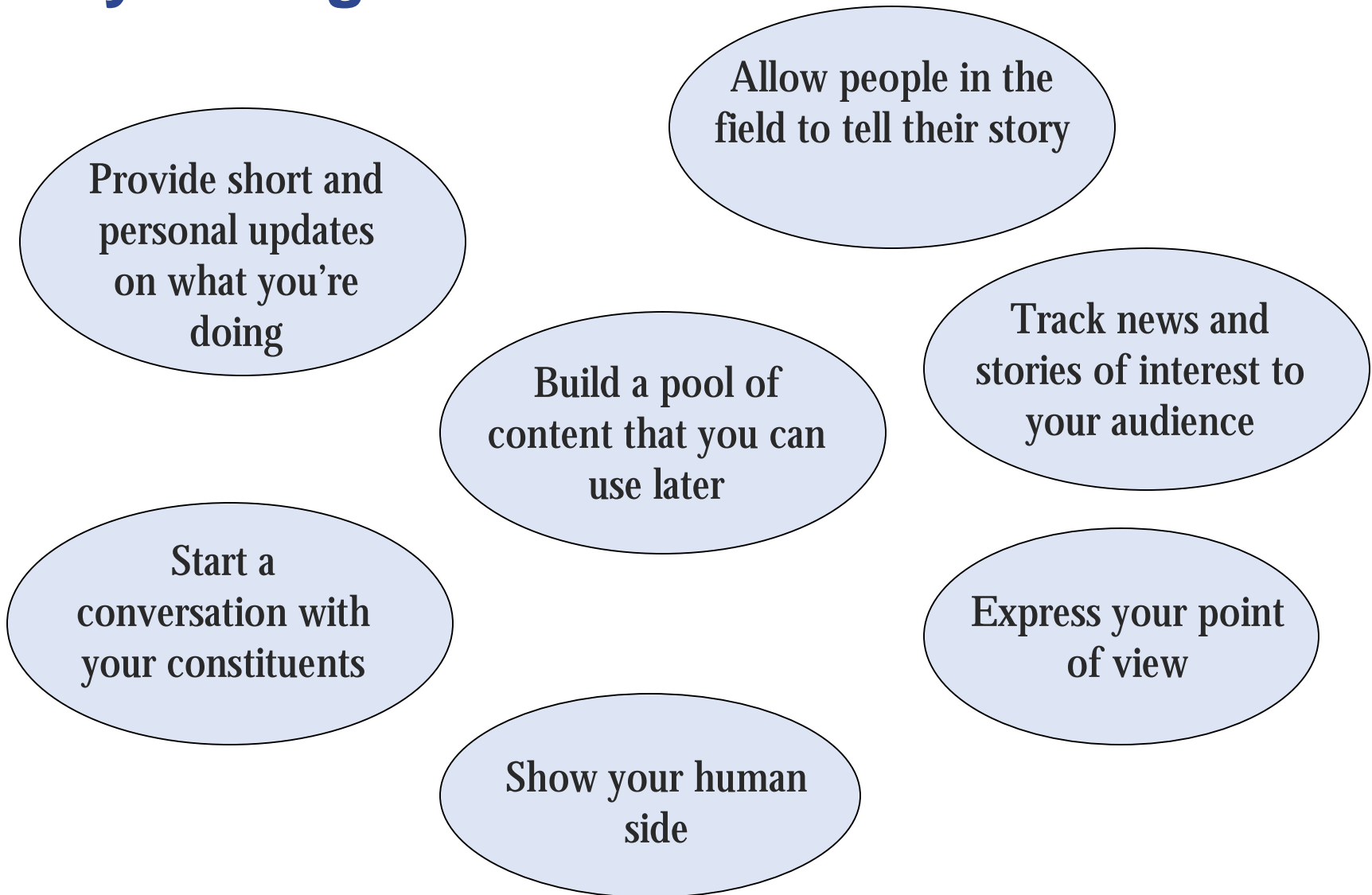
- [National Wildlife Federation](#)
- [Student Conservation Association](#)
- [Environmental Careers Organization](#)
- [NWF Education](#)
- NWF's [Alaska Youth For Environmental Action](#) blog
- NWF's [Green Hour Forum](#)
- NWF's [Campus Climate Campaign Forum](#)
- NWF's [Tribal Lands](#) program

Previous Posts

- [Black NASCAR Driver Creates Big Media Stir As you...](#)
- [Banks Investing In Latinos By 2010, Latinos will...](#)
- [Smart In Every Respect Traditional testing ha...](#)
- [Diversity In Iraqi Government May Be Solution to I...](#)
- [Racing Towards Diversity It's an obvious metaphor...](#)

<http://earthtomorrow.blogspot.com/>

Why a Blog?



Laying the Groundwork

There's a lot more to think about than just what tool to use...

- Who will be in charge of writing for it?
- How much time should they devote?
- What are the appropriate topics to cover?
- How will you encourage conversation?
- What will your policy be towards inappropriate comments?
- How will you get the word out that your blog exists?

...but our focus today is on the software

Quick Discussion

What are the main reasons your organization is blogging or is thinking about blogging? What will your blog provide to your community?

Blog Features and Functions

In Which We Talk About:

- Creating text posts
- Uploading images
- Multimedia
- Displaying posts to visitors
- Publishing RSS feeds
- Moderating
- Hosted or installed
- Configuring appearance without HTML
- Configuring appearance with HTML
- Visitor statistics
- Support

But First...

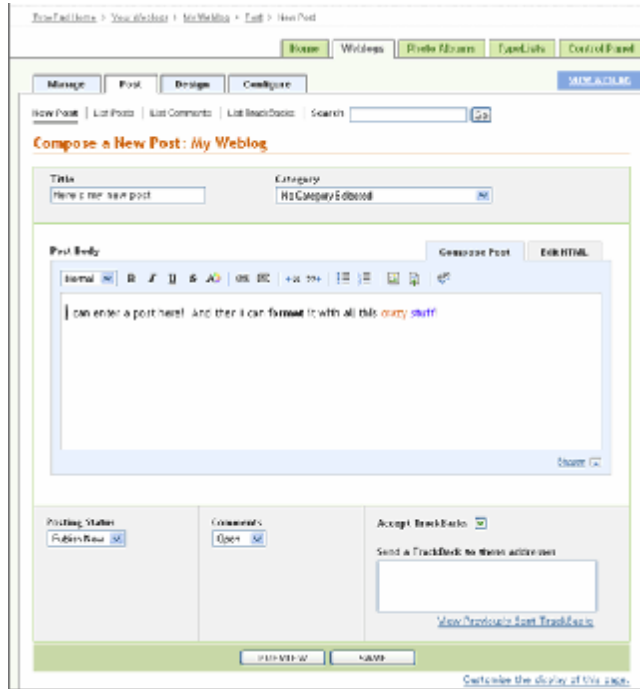
What won't we talk about?

We won't cover advanced blog tools and features, applicable if:

- You're managing more than two or three blogs
- An editor needs to approve blog posts
- Only a closed group can view and comment
- You want to combine a blog with a discussion forum
- The blog will be an integrated part of a new website

Bloggng Software in Brief

You write a blog post in an admin tool...

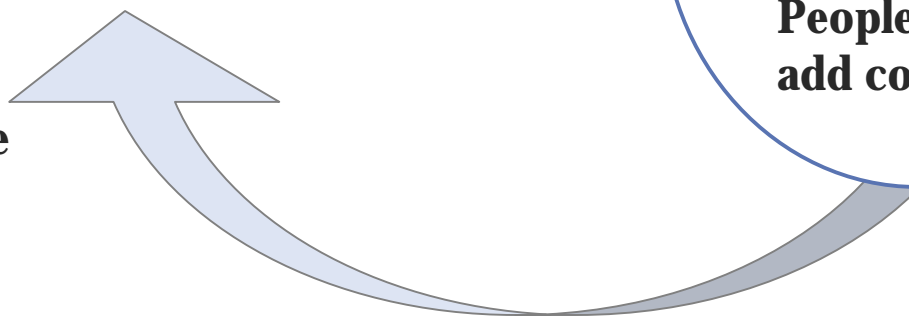


...which is shown on your blog

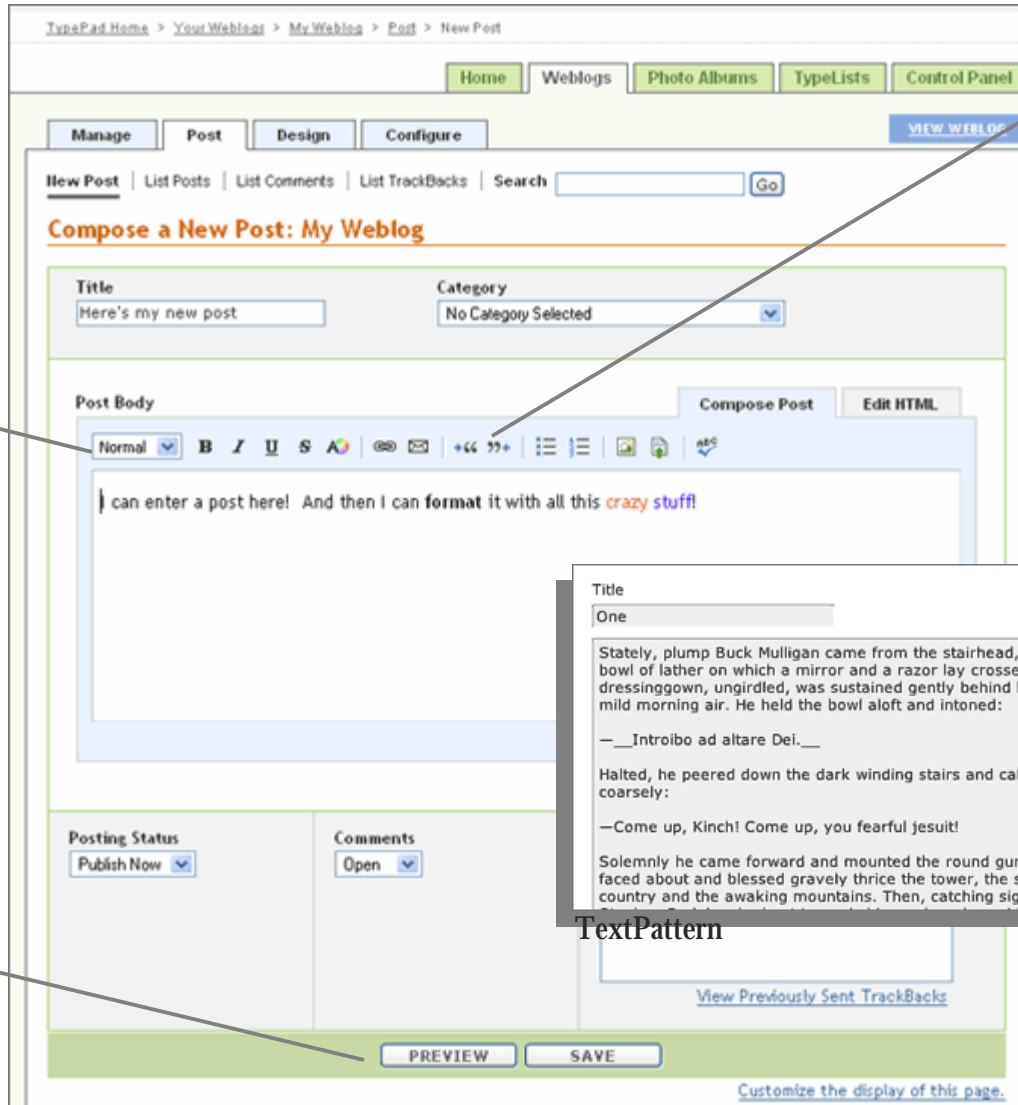


People can often add comments

Which you can moderate in the admin tool



Creating Text Posts

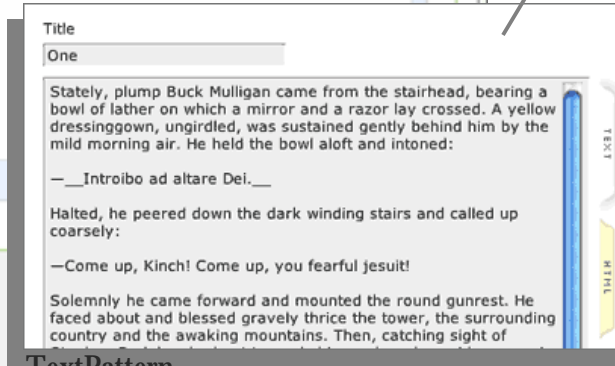


Can you choose from site styles? Do you have to?

Can you Preview? Save for later?

Do you format the text with a Word-like editor...

...or with a clean text/HTML based system?



TypePad

idealware

Uploading Images

The screenshot shows the Blogger image upload dialog box. It is divided into two main sections: 'Add an image from your computer' and 'Or add an image from the web'. The first section has a 'Browse...' button. The second section has a 'URL' input field and a link to 'Learn more about using web images'. Below these sections is a 'Choose a layout.' section with four radio button options: 'None', 'Left', 'Center', and 'Right'. The 'Left' option is selected. To the right of the layout options is an 'Image size:' section with three radio button options: 'Small', 'Medium', and 'Large'. The 'Medium' option is selected. Below the size options is a checked checkbox for 'Use this layout every time?'. At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: 'Upload Image' (blue) and 'Cancel' (orange).

Can you insert a picture in one step?

Can you specify the size and alignment

Does the tool automatically optimize the image?

Blogger

Multimedia

◦ **Netsquared Profile: Sam Bower**

Sam Bower is the Executive Director of the **Green Museum**, a virtual online virtual art museum. Sam talks about the inspiration and mission of the museum as well as some of the web technologies used to make the museum run.



This video is part of NetSquared's video profile series. You can subscribe to [this RSS feed](#) with your favorite video catcher, such as [iTunes](#), [Democracy](#) or [FireAnt](#).

Read the full post here: [Netsquared Profile: Sam Bower](#)
Submitted by [Eddie Codel](#) on June 24, 2006 - 7:59pm
Posted in [greenmuseum](#) | [Nonprofit](#) | [sambower](#) | [vlog](#)
[Eddie Codel's blog](#) | [add new comment](#) | [subscribe blog](#) | [unsubscribe post](#)

blogs.netsquared.org

Can always link an image to an external movie or audio file.

Can you embed the file through a partnership with a video service?

Via Javascript?

If you host the multimedia file yourself (why?) you'll need A LOT of bandwidth

idealware

Displaying Posts to Visitors

Can you divide your posts into categories?

Can you show an excerpt rather than the full post on the front page?

The screenshot shows a blog post layout with a dark blue sidebar on the left and a main content area. The sidebar contains a 'Categories' list with 25 items, a 'Blogs We Watch' list with 3 items, and a 'Powered by' section. The main content area features a post titled 'LegiStorm Brings More Transparency to Congress' with an excerpt and a full text view. Below it is a post titled 'FCC reports on Media Ownership Suppressed?' with an excerpt. Annotations with arrows point from the text on the left to the sidebar and the first post's excerpt.

Categories

- > Congress Blinded by that Black Gold
- > Checks and Balances
- > Congressional Oversight
- > Contract Oversight
- > Cronyism
- > Defense
- > Democracy
- > Energy & Environment
- > Ethics
- > Government Fraud
- > Health and Human Services
- > Homeland Security
- > Intelligence
- > Lobbying
- > Media Criticism
- > Miscellaneous
- > Nuclear Security
- > Open Government
- > Revolving Door
- > Science Policy
- > Waste
- > Watching the Watchdogs
- > Whistleblower Protection

Blogs We Watch

- > Able Danger Blog
- > American Federation of Government Employees Union

Powered by:
RSS-to-JavaScript.com

LegiStorm Brings More Transparency to Congress

Hill staffers' salaries are now available online at [LegiStorm.com](#). "I think this will add a health amount of transparency to how Congress spends taxpayer dollars," said Jock Friedly, a former Capitol Hill investigative reporter, who founded LegiStorm. [LegiStorm.com](#) is a creation of LegiStorm LLC, a company based on Capitol Hill. Its sister company, Storming Media LLC, is the leading provider of [Pentagon documents](#), including technical and military strategy papers. While the information has always been available in printed congressional books, this is the first time that lawmakers' aides salaries are available on the internet.

The Washington Post found that the limit on salaries is approximately [\\$162,000 a year](#). The highest-paid staff members work for the [House](#) and [Senate appropriations committees](#), where approximately one-fifth make more than \$150,000 a year.

First launched yesterday, [the site crashed by noon](#). Wonkette observed that the site should "revolutionize who-buys-who beers at Hill happy hours." Some of the lower salaries can be considered factors that might deter the country's best and brightest, while also making the revolving door more appealing for those who choose to [work as a Legislative Assistant for approximately \\$45,000 a year](#).

-- Mandy Smithberger

September 20, 2006 in [Open Government](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [Trackback \(0\)](#)

FCC reports on Media Ownership Suppressed?

What happened to these two reports? [From Broadcasting and Cable](#) (hat tip: reader A.M.):

As promised, FCC Chairman Kevin Martin is investigating two reports on media ownership--radio and TV--that were created at the FCC but never released.

In a letter to Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Martin said that he was making the second report available on the FCC Web site. He also said he would include that report, a 2003 study of radio ownership, as part of the open localism and media ownership proceedings. He did the same

<http://pogoblog.typepad.com/pogo/>

Can your visitors tell what to click to comment? To see a permanent URL?

RSS Feeds



All blogs can support RSS feeds, but can you set it up without HTML?

What formats are supported?

Moderating Comments

All tools will let you view, delete, and moderate comments



Can you search for particular comments?

Can you “whitelist” and “blacklist” commenters? By keyword?

Is there an automated spam filter? Is it any good?

Can you require a captcha -

Incblfv

to comment?

WordPress

idealware

Hosted vs. Installed

Hosted

You pay the vendor to host your blog on their server

Quicker to get started

Requires less technical expertise

Installed

You install the blog software on a server you already have

Allows more control over setup and configuration

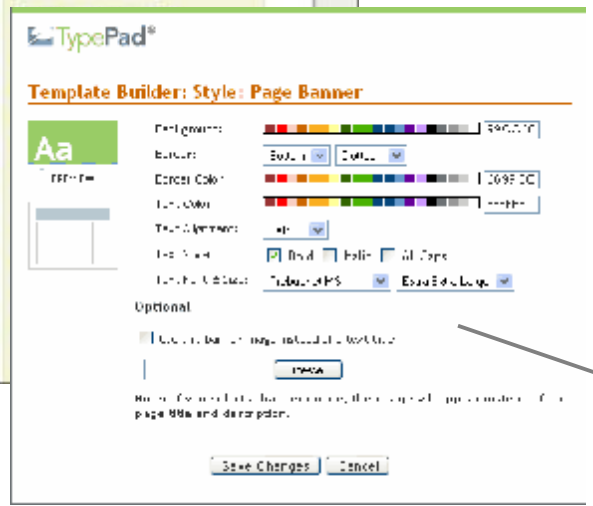
Allows you to create custom functionality or integrate more deeply with your website

Configuring Appearance – No HTML



www.benetech.org

- Can you add your own logo or header image?
- You'll need HTML to add your nav
- Can you change colors and fonts?
- Can you update your sidebar?

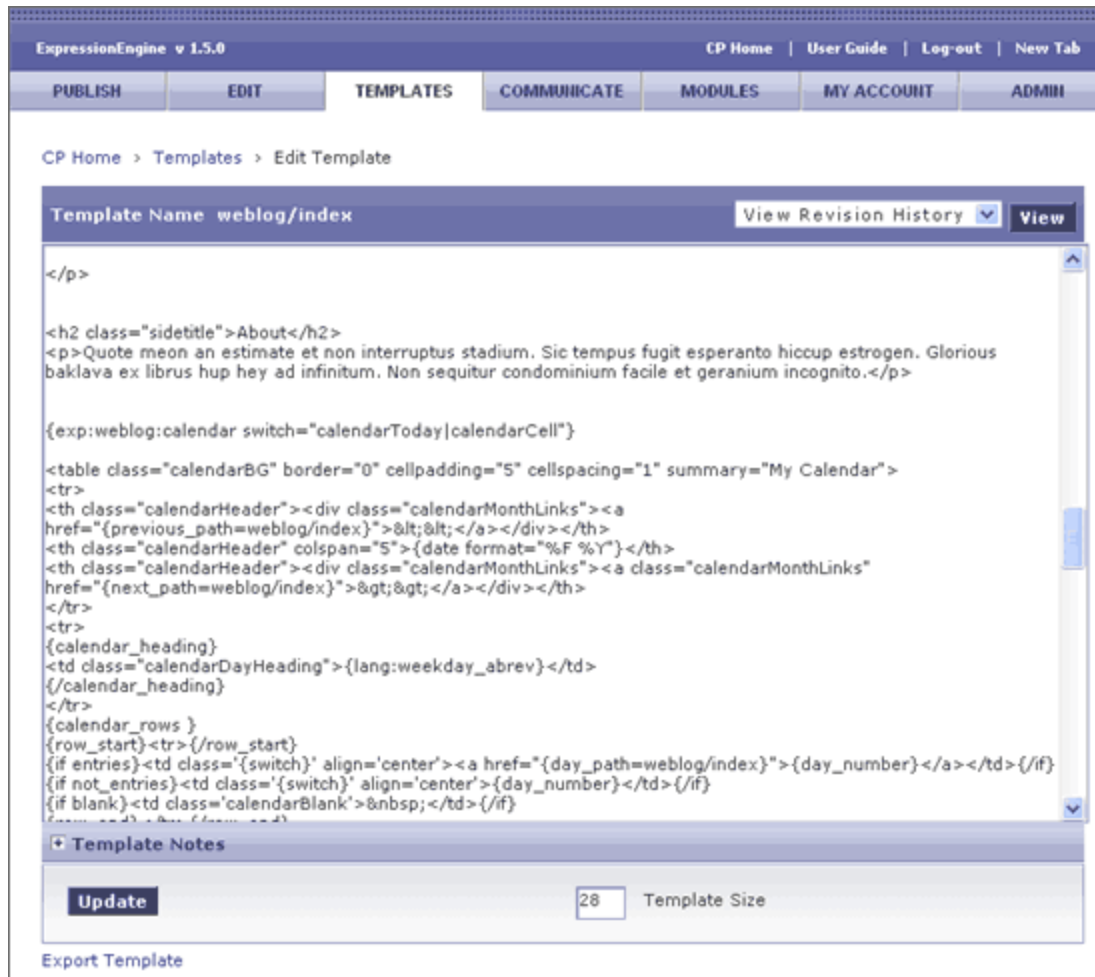


TypePad

- Can you change the layout of the page?
- Can you use your own domain?
- How understandable is the interface to do all this?

Configuring Appearance with HTML

Any tool that lets you get at the HTML will let you do most things – but how easily?



ExpressionEngine

Is it clear where to change what?

Do you need PHP, Perl, or another coding language?

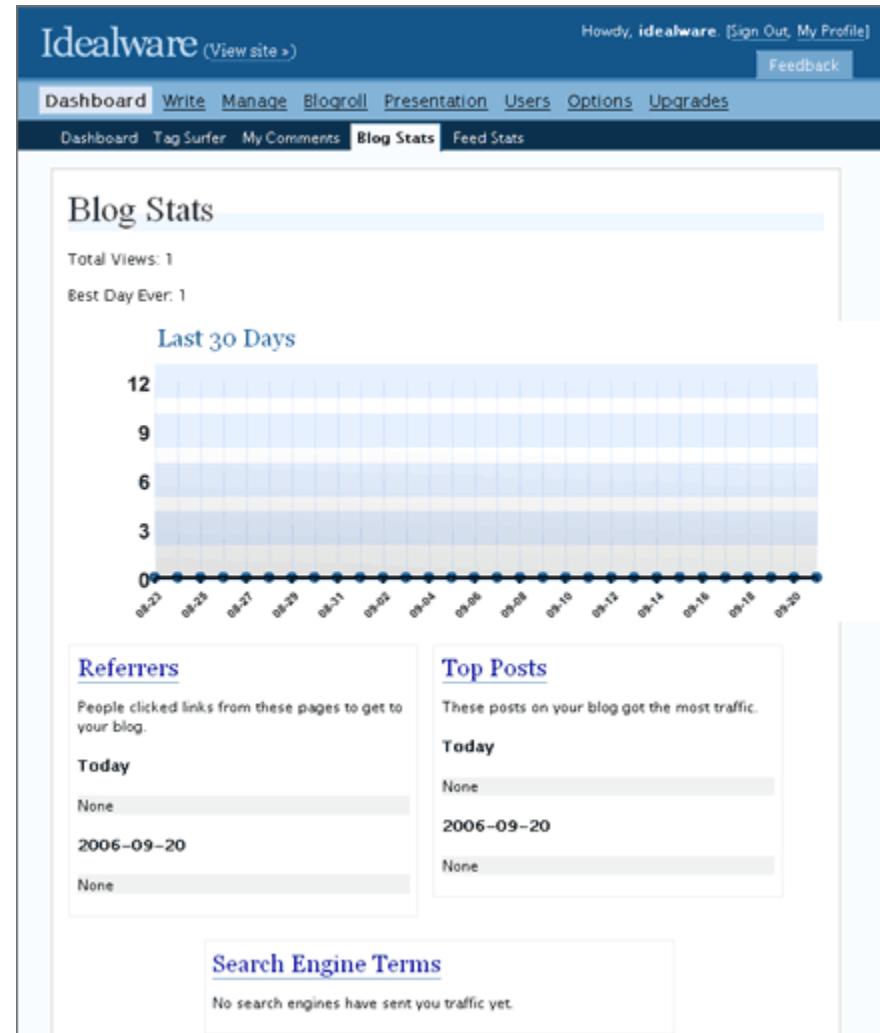
Do you have to learn their own crazy coding language?

Can you add Javascript, PHP, or other code if you want?

Visitor Statistics

Can you see how many people are coming, and what they're doing?

Or you may have to use another tool - like Google Analytics or Site Meter - for this



WordPress

Support

The screenshot shows the Blogger Help interface. At the top left is the Blogger logo and the text 'Blogger'. At the top right is 'Push-Button Publishing'. Below the logo is a breadcrumb trail: 'Google Help > Blogger Help > Blogger Basics > Posting and Editing'. The main content area is titled 'Picture Posting FAQ' and contains several FAQ items with links to detailed articles. Below the text is an image of the Blogger post editor interface, highlighting the 'Add Image' button. To the right of the main content are three sidebars: 'Article Search' with a search box, 'Suggested Reading' with a list of links, and 'Most Popular' with a numbered list of links. At the bottom right is a 'Group Help' section.

Picture Posting FAQ

- [How do I upload pictures?](#)
- [What are the limits on the size or number of pictures uploaded?](#)
- [What file types are supported?](#)
- [Can the images be included on other webpages?](#)
- [How does this work for FTP users?](#)
- [What does this cost?](#)

How do I upload pictures?

To upload pictures with Blogger Images just click the image icon on the posting form; you can choose multiple images from your computer or the web to add to your post. See [this article](#) for details on all the options.

What are the limits on the size or number of pictures uploaded?

When you upload an image, it is resampled and resized according to the size you choose in the upload form. This lets it take up less space on the server. You can fill up to 300 MB of server space with images.

What file types are supported?

You can upload images in JPG, GIF, PNG, TIF or BMP format.

Can the images be included on other webpages?

If you use Blogger to publish to an external site, we will FTP the images you

Article Search

Suggested Reading

- [Welcome to Blogger!](#)
- [Supported Browsers](#)
- [All about the Post Editor](#)
- [Login Difficulties?](#)
- [Known Issues](#)

Most Popular

1. [How do I edit my link list?](#)
2. [Can I use keyboard shortcuts while posting?](#)
3. [What is the "Flag" button?](#)
4. [I can't log in. What should I do?](#)
5. [How do I post pictures?](#)

[more...](#)

Group Help

Find answers, ask questions, and share your expertise with others in the [Blogger Help Group](#).

Blogger

How are the help files and other documentation?

Are there real live humans to email or call?

Is there an active community that can help?

Quick Discussion

Which features are the most important to your organization?
What are your priorities among all the things we just discussed?

Blogging Software Features

- Creating text posts
- Uploading images
- Multimedia
- Displaying posts to visitors
- Publishing RSS feeds
- Moderating
- Hosted or installed
- Configuring appearance without HTML
- Configuring appearance with HTML
- Visitor statistics
- Support

Seven Blogging Tools

Which? Why? Says Who?

- Based on Idealware's detailed review of eight blogging tools
- These are the eight most used tools, excluding ones that were part of a larger CMS
- Our research included detailed research and apples-to-apples comparison
- View the result at www.idealware.org/blogging_software/

TypePad



<http://www.interplast.org/>

www.typepad.com

**\$4.95/month for Basic,
\$8.95/month for Plus, or
\$14.95/month for Pro**

Hosted

Owned by Six Apart

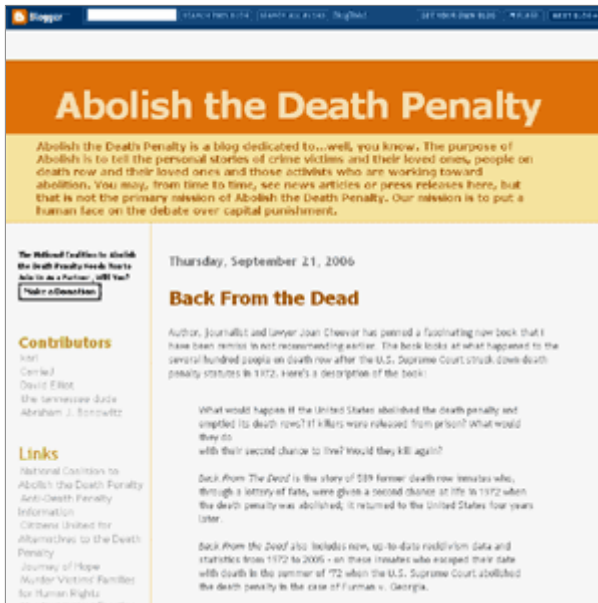
Strengths

- Very easy to get started
- Very easy to post, including images
- Powerful look and feel customization, including adding your logo, without HTML
- With HTML knowledge, can completely customize your look and feel
- High quality professional email support

Weakness

- More complex to do full HTML customization than with most other tools
- Most expensive of the hosted tools

Blogger



<http://deathpenaltyusa.blogspot.com/>

www.blogger.com

Free

Hosted

Owned by Google

Strengths

- Very easy to get started
- Very easy to post, including images
- Can easily show your blog at your own domain
- Easiest to tailor with HTML to completely customize the look and feel

Weaknesses

- Without HTML, must use a standard template and colors, and you can't change your sidebar
- Comes with the "blogger bar" which takes some technical skill to remove

LiveJournal



<http://unitedway.livejournal.com/>

www.livejournal.com

\$19.95/year

Hosted

Owned by Six Apart

Strengths

- Allows customization of colors and potentially the adding of a logo without HTML
- Outside the realm of our report, supports communities and collaboration beyond simple blogs

Weakness

- Setup is not very intuitive
- Templates for look and feel are less professional looking than with other tools
- Modifying the layout requires coding expertise and knowledge of a substantial proprietary language
- By default, has a LiveJournal bar at top – unclear if you can remove

WordPress Installed



<http://www.nonprofittechblog.org/>

www.wordpress.org

Free and open source

Installed

Supported by an open source community

Strengths

- Easiest to get up and running of the installed tools
- Many look and feel templates available for free from the community
- With HTML knowledge, can completely customize your look and feel
- Sophisticated comment moderation functionality
- Supports both categories and excerpts

Weakness

- Requires some PHP knowledge (as well as HTML knowledge) to create a custom look and feel
- Adding images requires two steps, and there's no way to size images except through HTML

Movable Type



<http://blog.nam.org/>

www.movabletype.org

Free, unsupported personal version, or \$50 (1-5 users), \$100 (10 users), \$130 (20 users)

Installed

Owned by SixApart

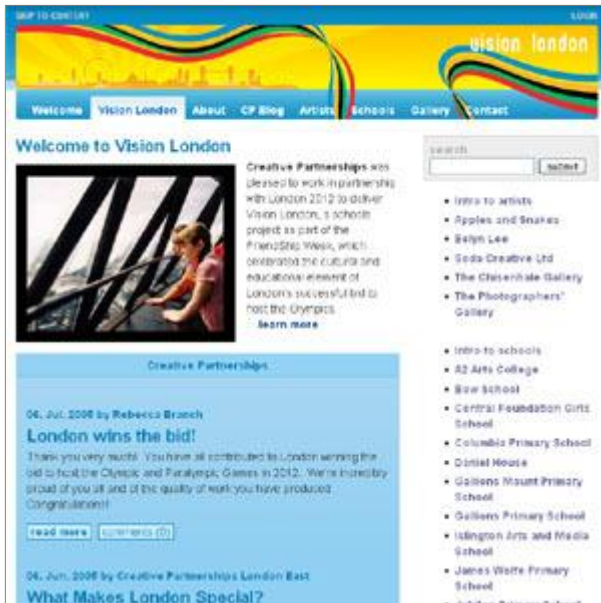
Strengths

- Sophisticated comment moderation functionality
- Excellent documentation and email support
- With HTML and some Perl knowledge, can completely customize the look and feel

Weakness

- It isn't free
- The most complex tool to install
- Interface to post is not as friendly as most others
- Without HTML, must use a standard template and colors, and you can't change your sidebar
- Customization requires some knowledge of Perl, and is not as intuitive as some other tools

ExpressionEngine



<http://www.visionlondon.co.uk>

www.pmachine.com

**Free for nonprofit use, \$99.95
+ 19.95/year for support plan**

Installed

Owned by pMachine

Strengths

- Powerful and intuitive features to completely customize the look and feel through HTML – and pretty much everything else
- Strong out-of-the-box usability for visitors
- Offers professional support

Weakness

- Those who don't know HTML will find the posting tools less intuitive than most.
- Without HTML, must use a standard template and colors, and you can't change your sidebar

TextPattern



<http://www.getm.org>

www.textpattern.org

Free and open source

Installed

Supported by an open source community

Strengths

- Powerful and intuitive features to completely customize the look and feel through HTML – and pretty much everything else
- The interface to post text uses a clean formatting syntax which is popular with programmers

Weakness

- Those who don't know HTML will find the posting tools less intuitive than most
- No formal support is available, and the support forums are less active than most
- The development community appears less active than most

Recommendations

So Which Should You Use?

We need to get up and running quickly, without technical skills, and the blog's appearance isn't important.

- WordPress Hosted
- TypePad

No one technical is available to help set up the tool, but we need to tailor the blog with organizational colors and logo.

- TypePad

So Which Should You Use?

We want to tailor the blog, and someone technical can help set it up, but non-tech-savvy folks will be posting.

- Blogger
- TypePad
- WordPress Installed

Our organization is pretty technical all around, and we want the most flexibility in a blogging tool.

- WordPress Installed
- TextPattern
- ExpressionEngine

Quick Discussion

Which tools on the list seem most applicable for your needs?
What questions do you have that will need to be answered to make a decision?

Questions?

Much More Online!

See much, much more at www.idealware.org/blogging_software/

- Charts of features
- Detailed reviews of all these tools

Contact Me

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