

NTEN Webinar

A Beginner's Guide: How to Blog For Your Organization

Presented by
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Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Webinar Objectives
3. Blog what?: What is a blog and does one make sense for my organization?
4. Start at the beginning: software, strategy and following-through.
5. Planting a seed: Building your audience, growing your blog.
6. Questions

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Michaela Guerin Hackner
Senior Project Officer



Michaela is a Senior Project Officer for Forum One Communications, a web strategy and development firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, assisting nonprofit, foundation, government and commercial organizations in making a positive impact on today's most pressing issues including health, environment, and poverty. In her former life she was a web developer for the private sector, with a stint in humanitarian aid analysis, and a Congressional Hunger Fellow overseas working for a women's micro-finance program in Cambodia and Kenya.

2. WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Be able to determine whether blogging makes sense for their organizations
- Be familiar with the concept of blogging, blog features and functions, and the breadth of tools available
- Understand how to build an audience for their blogs and share their content with the world

3. BLOG WHAT?

What is a blog and does it make sense for my organization?

What is a Blog?

According to Wikipedia:

“A **blog** (a contraction of the term “**Web log**”) is a web site, usually maintained by an individual [or individuals], with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog.*”

Examples of Organizational Blogs

The all-around organizational blog:

- World Learning: <http://worldlearningnow.wordpress.com>

Blog banner



Event announcement



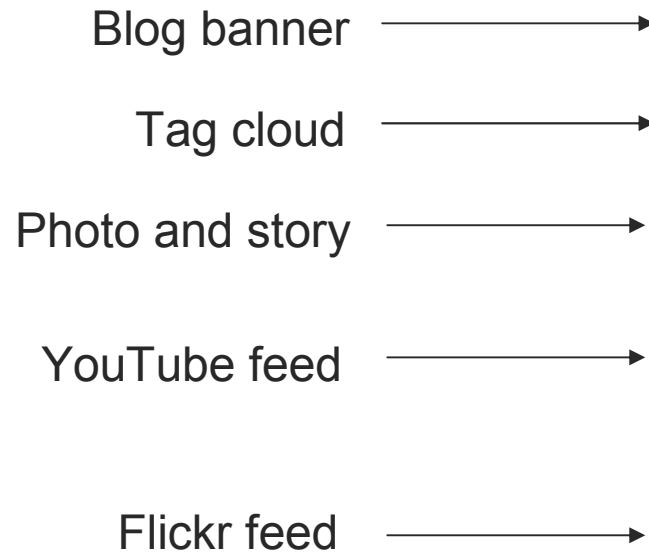
Integrated YouTube
Video and story from the field



Examples of Organizational Blogs

The Field Blog

- International Rescue Committee: <http://blog.theirc.org/>



Examples of Organizational Blogs

The Knowledge Leadership Blog

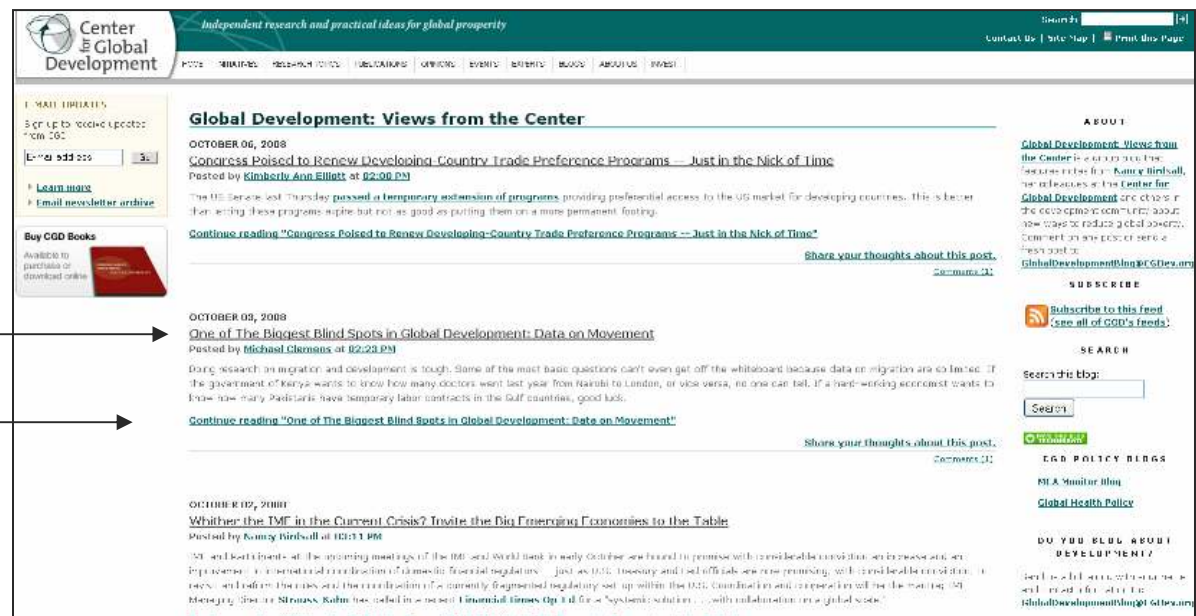
- The Center for Global Development:
<http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/>

Blog banner →

Sign-up for updates →

Knowledge post →

Continue reading... →



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Center for Global Development blog. At the top, there is a green banner with the Center for Global Development logo and the tagline "Independent research and practical ideas for global prosperity". Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for HOME, MISSION, RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, OFFICES, EVENTS, BLOGS, ABOUT US, and INVEST. On the left side, there is a "EMAIL UPDATES" section with a sign-up form and a "Buy CGD Books" section. The main content area features a post titled "Global Development: Views from the Center" dated October 06, 2008, by Kimberly Ann Elliott. Below it is another post titled "One of The Biggest Blind Spots in Global Development: Data on Movement" dated October 05, 2008, by Michael Clemens. At the bottom, there is a post titled "Whether the IMF in the Current Crisis? Invite the Big Emerging Economies to the Table" dated October 02, 2008, by Nancy Birdsall. On the right side, there is an "ABOUT" section, a "SUBSCRIBE" section with a "Subscribe to this feed" button, and a "SEARCH" section with a search box.

How Organizations Benefit From Blogs

- Blogs keep web site content fresh.
- They are great places to publicize events and share your latest news.
- Advocate for your cause and build community.
- Strong platform for hosting multimedia (Flickr, YouTube)
- Give your organizational communications a more personal touch.
- Make two-way communication possible.



<http://we.care.org/notes>

What Content Goes Into a Blog?

- Journal-type entries about organizational events and fieldwork
- Organizational news
- Success stories
- Calls to action
- Topics for discussion
- Photos and video
- Links to sections of your website you want to highlight
- Links to external web presences (Flickr, YouTube, Delicious, Facebook)



The Blogging Commitment and Other Organizational Considerations

A blog doesn't have to be a huge time commitment, but it IS a commitment. Consider these:

- Organization communications goals
- Time/resources
- Liabilities?
- Stream of available, compelling content
- Commitment by your organization to follow-through



Photo by Ed Schipul

4. START AT THE BEGINNING: Software, strategy and follow-through

Choosing Your Software

There are several free and inexpensive blogging platforms available. Look at reviews, play around in a few, and see what makes the most sense for your organization. Common choices:

- Wordpress.com or Wordpress installed
- Typepad.com or Movable Type installed
- Blogger
- Blogspot
- LiveJournal

Idealware has a great article:

http://www.idealware.org/blogging_software/2006/06/introduction.php



Most blog software has the same features and functions:

- Posting/authoring
- Assigning different publishing levels (Admin, Editor, Author, etc.)
- Commenting – moderated and un-moderated
- Categories
- Tags
- RSS Feeds
- Integration with sites like Flickr, YouTube, Delicious, Facebook

Determine Your Blogging Strategy

Blogging is an art – start off on the right foot by thinking through your blogging strategy:

- Determine your communications goal?
- Picking authors
- Frequency of posts – developing a publishing calendar
- Engaging audience – how will you get people to participate?
- Comments and moderation
 - Plan for how you will handle commenting – both positive and negative posts.

5. PLANTING A SEED: **Building your audience, growing your blog.**

Promoting Your Blog

Blogs are about creating a connection with your audience. Plan for how will you build and engage that audience:

On your blog...

- Create an ongoing conversation
- Use images to tell your story
- Encourage a dialogue in comments
- Become the go-to place for information
- Invite guest bloggers
- Hold virtual events/contests



Outside your blog...

- Highlight your new blog
- Provide multiple links from your main site
- Cross-post your blog entries on other sites
- Participate on other blogs
- Share links to blog posts on Twitter or Facebook



6. CONCLUSION: Final thoughts and blogging resources

Conclusion

- Blogs provide a great way to help your audience understand your organization better
- Make sure you have all your ducks in a row before you start
- There are many different types of software and blogging strategies – pick those that are best for your organization
- Creating a blog is just the beginning, to keep it going will require commitment and creativity to grow your audience and make your content relevant.

Blogging Resources

- Getting Started With Blogging Software:

http://www.idealware.org/blogging_software/2006/06/introduction.php

- 25 Basic Styles of Blogging:

<http://www.slideshare.net/rohitbhargava/the-25-basic-styles-of-blogging-and-when-to-use-each-one/>

- Non Profit Blog Exchange: <http://nonprofitblogexchange.blogspot.com>

- Beth Kanter Wikispaces on Organizational Blogging:

<http://bethkanter.wikispaces.com/Organizational+Blogs>

- Netsquared: 10 ways nonprofits can use blogs:

<http://www.netsquared.org/blog/britt-bravo/10-ways-nonprofits-can-use-blogs>

Questions?



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