

Four Kinds of Blogs  
Dr. E. Anthony Collins, Prof.

### **Personal Blog**

People create personal blogs for many different reasons. Some use them like an online diary with entries that chronicle the blogger's life. These are what I like to call the *what-I-did-today blogs*. Although some people may argue that this isn't really blogging, I think it is. The mere act of updating the content online makes it a blog.

A personal blog can also be a way for you to comment on issues or topics of importance to you.

You'll find personal blogs devoted to professional sports, children's sports, art, music, movies, fashion, collecting, pets, shopping, wedding planning, marriages, parenting, religion, and even cooking. If you've got a personal interest, then you've got a topic for a blog. For example, if you enjoy travel, a personal blog lets you become a travel writer as you share about the places you've been—even if it's just a trip to the grocery store! Personal blogs also give individuals a sense of pride; never before has being a published writer been so easy.

### **Business Blog**

Advertising a product is a really good reason to start a business blog, but there are other reasons to set one up. Think of all the ways you can use a blog to communicate with your customers. You can use a blog . . .

- To update your customers with company news.
- As a marketing tool to promote your next event or product, or to get your customers interested in what's to come.
- To let customers review and talk about your current events and products. (Of course, keep in mind that the reviews that customers post may not always be positive.)
- To use as a follow-up tool with product updates.
- To use as a planning tool for product improvements.
- To answer customers' frequently asked questions.

So if you're thinking about developing a business blog, give some careful consideration to the needs and desires of your customers.



**Note** Blogs are easy to get up and running, and they're inexpensive to develop. So it won't take lots of time, manpower, or money to get one off the ground. You will need to devote time to maintaining the blog, but in return, you get a useful tool you can use to support your marketing, branding, and public relations efforts!

While business blogs can be set up for the customer, they work for communicating with employees, too. You can use a blog internally to let employees or customers:

- Ask questions.
- Comment on a project or procedure. (This is easier than sending out an email message and asking everyone to reply. A business blog gets your information organized in one place.)
- Stay updated.
- Review the minutes from meetings and comment on them.
- Work on a group project or research. (For example, your employees can use a blog to collaborate on a publication, or a manager could use one in place of a presentation.)

### **Political Blogs and Blogs for a Cause**

The main reason for starting a political blog is to help a person get elected. This type of blog can work for local political candidates, school board members, senators, and the president of the United States. Blogs create a forum where candidates can share their views with the public as often as they wish. So, if you're looking to run in an election soon or you'd like to help someone else's campaign, a political blog may be in the works for you! It's a great low-cost way to get out a

message. It also works to keep the public aware of what's going on in a timely manner. And blogs mean we no longer have to send in a letter to the editor to respond to news coverage; we've got the power of online print.

Political blogs often promote candidates, but they can also be used to promote an agenda or cause, or to simply comment on events or issues of political interest. You'll find that some blogs work to promote conservation, reform health care, change laws, and raise awareness about a wide variety of causes. While these types of blogs may be personal blogs with a political slant, you'll find that organizations use blogs to promote their causes, too.

For example, Food and Water Watch use their blog as a platform to promote their cause. They blog often about the events in politics and beyond that have an effect on our water and food supply. At the Food and Water Watch blog, you'll find posts about everything from antibiotic-resistant bacteria called *super bugs* that come from livestock to the latest events taking place in regulating fracking.

### **Educational Blog**

You could use an educational blog in a number of ways. Consider some of the possibilities for teachers, students, and schools:

- Use a blog to engage students in the writing process, and ask students to publish their work online.
- Students can reflect on their learning, pose questions, and make comments or suggestions on topics of interest through a blog. In this way, a blog creates a running dialogue between students and teachers.
- Post resources for students.
- Let students use a blog to create a publication.
- Develop a class calendar students can conveniently access online.
- Start a class discussion.
- Establish an online classroom newsletter.
- Share your lesson plans.

- Provide student feedback, or even use it for peer reviews where students comment on each other's work.
- Use a blog in place of a school newsletter or newspaper.
- School clubs could use it as a way to meet and plan club projects.
- Students could use a blog as a way to post their work or to create a portfolio of their best work over time. Wouldn't it be great to have a student in elementary school start a blog of student work now and keep it through high school?
- Share your classroom tips and techniques with other teachers.