The Blogosphere

Syndicating Your Ideas

Purpose

• Internet has allowed new forms of discourse which have challenged traditional media
• Blogs have created new opportunities for average people to broadly share ideas
• Participate in sharing ideas within society as citizens, artists, educators and learners

Outcomes

• Describe how to create a successful blog that attracts and engages a target audience
• Reflect on the uses and challenges of blogging in education

History of the Blogosphere

• Began in 1990s with manually updates sites
• Online journals -> "web logs" -> "weblogs" -> "blogs"
• Late 90s, online platforms allowed for more users to create blogs
• During 2000s, blogs became mainstream and popularized by traditional news, politicians, etc.

News 2.0

• Print news
  – Unidirectional, filtered by professional editors
  – Closed system, few voices
• Blogs
  – Multidirectional, filtered by people and tech
  – Open system, multiple voices and modalities
Types of Blogs

- Mainstream or online media
- Citizen journalism
- Institutional communications
- Personal journal
- Portfolio website

Blogging Best Practices

- Know the audience
- Engage audience and other blogs
- Keep material fresh
- Give people reasons to return
- Organize content for accessibility

Engaging the Audience

- Write catchy titles and first paragraphs
- Use casual and accessible tone
- Interact with and ask questions of readers
- Link to other blogs and articles
- Embed topical images
- Manage and answer comments

Building an Audience

- Syndication and subscription (RSS)
- Trackbacking with other blogs
- Self-promote on other blogs and social networks (Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter)
- Use analytics to measure
- Have a photo, byline and about me section

Getting Your Audience to Act

- Visit a website
- Share your article
- Comment, email or phone
- Answer questions, surveys or petitions

Ethics of Blogging

- Bloggers:
  - Correct themselves quickly
  - Don’t claim neutrality but practice transparency
  - Converse with their audience
  - Link to other articles and blogs for context
  - Track topics they write about over time
What Can You Recall?
• What can you recall about engaging and building a blog's audience?

Benefits to Education
• Develop writing, research and digital literacy
• Support identity formation and expression
• Discuss learning with broader audience
• Connect to and create learning communities
• Create ownership of learning products

Issues for Educators
• Cyber bullying
• Appropriateness of posts and comments
• Students blog with others their own age
• Passwords protected yet known to teacher
• Closely monitored

Your Tasks
• Begin designing and individualizing your WordPress blog
• Write your first blog article, paying particular attention to audience engagement