

Being digital

Keeping up-to-date using blogs

1: Introduction

A blog is a website holding short pieces of writing, perhaps with images and links too, that provide information and opinion.

A blog may be written by an individual or a group of authors, and can consist of personal opinion or business content. Readers who subscribe to blogs automatically receive each new update.

Blogs can keep you up-to-date with specialist subjects or particular interests. They cover a wide range of subject matter, and many prove to be very informative. However, following more than one or two can up take too much time. It's often more productive to subscribe to a few **carefully chosen** blogs.

Learning outcome

By the end of this activity, you will be able to keep up-to-date with your specialist interests using blogs.

2: Finding blogs

There are a few good ways of finding blogs about things that you're interested in.

Blog directories like [Technorati](#) and [Google blog search](#) allow you to search for blogs in the same way as a search engine, using keywords related to your field of interest.

If you use **Facebook** and **Twitter**, the people you are connected to are likely to recommend blogs that they have come across.

[Paper.li](#), allows you to create your own 'newspaper' which collects the most popular links that have been shared by people you are connected to through Facebook and Twitter.

Schools, colleges and universities may host blog sites for students and academic staff. For example, the Open University features some interesting blogs on its **Platform** website.

Most blogs have a list of links to other bloggers with similar interests, so it is worth looking into some of these.

3: What makes a good blog?

Good blog authors encourage their readers to respond and comment, and this can help to create communities of like-minded people.

As a user, you have access to the thoughts of some of the specialist experts and commentators in your area of interest. You also have access to new connections, information and opinion.

When you're considering whether you want to follow a blog, it would be sensible to evaluate the information it provides.

Look online for a blog that might be of interest to you, and assess it using the following questions to guide you.

Ask yourself:

- What is the aim of the blog? Does it have a purpose, e.g. to promote something? How objective is it?
- How relevant is the information to you?
- How well is the information presented? Is it clear?
- Who is writing the blog, and how reliable are they?
- Does the author welcome comments, and do they respond to them?
- How often is the blog updated?

It's really up to you to decide on how appropriate or interesting the blog is to your interests. Think about what you're looking for. Are you looking for entertainment, comment or academic integrity?

4: Summary

Blogs can be very useful for keeping up-to-date subjects that interest you.

Subscribing to too many blogs may mean that you won't have time to read everything. It's better to pick a few carefully chosen blogs to follow.

When choosing blogs to subscribe to, assess them carefully to ensure that they meet your needs and expectations.

References

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