

Bloggers

The internet's new storytellers (17/07/07)

Introduction:

Blogging is bringing new voices to the online world. Some blog to exercise their creative muscles, others want to motivate or influence others.

“A blog (short for web log) is a website where entries are written in chronological order and displayed in reverse chronological order.

Blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject such as food, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries.

A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.”
 (Wikipedia)

But why do people blog? Short AnswerTo be heard....

But In our view, bloggers' aspirations roughly follow three regimes: One, Few, Many.

One – Diaries. Some people keep their diary on-line, and don't mind if others read it.

Few – Socializing, chatting. The intended audience is close friends, and events only of interest to that circle.

Many – Punditry. The goal is to reach as many people as possible with your ideas.

Of course these categories aren't strict walls, but usually just general aims, and in this document we will look into the 'who, what, where and how' of the blogging phenomenon.

The blogging population is young, evenly split between women and men, and racially diverse.

According to random-digit dial surveys conducted in the spring of 2006:

- 8% of internet users age 18 and older, report keeping a blog.
- 39% of Internet users, aged over 18, reported reading blogs.

More than half (54%) of bloggers are under the age of 30, and about another third (30%) are between 30 and 50. Just 14% of bloggers fall in the 50 to 64 age group and a tiny 2% are 65 or older. In comparison, only 24% of internet users are age 18–29.

Nearly half of internet users (45%) are age 30 to 49 and another quarter (24%) are age 50 to 64. About 7% of internet users are 65 or older.

Bloggers vs. Internet Users in General		
Demographic Groups	Bloggers	All Internet Users
Sex	%	%
Men	54	49
Women	46	51
Age		
18-29	54	24
30-49	30	45
50-64	14	24
65+	2	7
Race/Ethnicity		
White (non-Hispanic)	60	74
Black (non-Hispanic)	11	9
Hispanic (English-speaking)	19	11
Other	10	6
Location		
Suburban	51	54
Urban	36	30
Rural	13	16
Access Speed		
Dial-up	20	34
Broadband	79	62

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Tracking Surveys, November – December 2005 and February – April 2006. For sample based on bloggers, N=308. Margin of error is ±7%. For sample based on internet users, n=4,753, margin of error is ±2%.

A combination of broadband, youth, and interest in content creation translates into heavy media consumption among bloggers.

- Bloggers are avid consumers and creators of online content. They are also heavy users of the internet in general.
- 64% of bloggers say they go online several times each day from home, compared with 27% of all internet users.
- 77% of bloggers have shared their own artwork, photos, stories, or videos online, compared with 26% of all internet users.
- Avid online news readers, particularly political news, 95% of bloggers get news from the internet.

Fully 79% of bloggers have a broadband connection at home, compared with 62% of all internet users. This high-speed access translates into heavy media consumption and creation.

While many well-publicized blogs focus on politics, the most popular topic among bloggers is their life and experiences.

- 37% of bloggers cite “my life and experiences” as a primary topic of their blog. Politics and government ran a very distant second with 11%.
- Entertainment-related topics were the next most popular blog-type, with 7% of bloggers, followed by sports (6%), general news and current events (5%), business (5%), technology (4%), religion, spirituality or faith (2%), a specific hobby or a health problem or illness (each comprising 1% of bloggers)

Relatively small groups of bloggers view blogging as a public endeavor.

- 55% of bloggers blog under a pseudonym, and 46% blog under their own name.
- 84% of bloggers describe their blog as either a “hobby” or just “something I do, but not something I spend a lot of time on.”
- 59% of bloggers spend just one or two hours per week tending their blog. One in ten bloggers spend ten or more hours per week on their blog.
- 52% of bloggers say they blog mostly for themselves, not for an audience. About one-third of bloggers (32%) say they blog mostly for their audience.

Bloggers often use blog features that enhance community and usability

- 87% of bloggers allow comments on their blog.
- 41% of bloggers say they have a blogroll or friends list on their blog.
- 18% of bloggers offer an RSS feed of their blog’s content

Community-focused blogging sites LiveJournal and MySpace top the list of blogging sites used in our sample, together garnering close to a quarter (22%) of all bloggers. Features such as comments, blogrolls, friends lists, and RSS feeds on these and other blogging sites facilitate a sense of community and offer readers additional ways to receive and interact with the blog’s content.

The main reasons for keeping a blog are creative expression and sharing personal experiences.

More Blog to Share Experiences Than to Earn Money			
Please tell me if this is a reason you personally blog, or not:	Major reason	Minor reason	Not a reason
To express yourself creatively	52%	25%	23%
To document your personal experiences or share them with others	50	26	24
To stay in touch with friends and family	37	22	40
To share practical knowledge or skills with others	34	30	35
To motivate other people to action	29	32	38
To entertain people	28	33	39
To store resources or information that is important to you	28	21	52
To influence the way other people think	27	24	49
To network or to meet new people	16	34	50
To make money	7	8	85

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. N=233. Margin of error is ±7%.

Bloggers: Summary of Findings at a Glance
Blogging is bringing new voices to the online world.
Telephone surveys capture the most accurate snapshot possible of a small and moving target.
Contrary to the impression created by the press attention on political blogging, just 11% of bloggers say they focus mainly on government or politics.
The blogging population is young, evenly split between women and men, and racially diverse.
Relatively small groups of bloggers view blogging as a public endeavor.
The main reasons for keeping a blog are creative expression and sharing personal experiences.
Only one-third of bloggers see blogging as a form of journalism. Yet many check facts and cite original sources.
Bloggers are avid consumers and creators of online content. They are also heavy users of the internet in general.
Bloggers are major consumers of political news and about half prefer sources without a particular political viewpoint.
Bloggers often utilize community and readership-enhancing features available on their blogs.

Viral Marketers must consider the influence potential audience that bloggers exercise

Bloggers may use their blog as a way of documenting ideas and events and storing them for later retrieval, while others view it as a way to share, to entertain, and even to earn a living. Some observers have suggested that blogging is nothing more than the next step in a burgeoning culture of narcissism and exhibitionism spurred by reality TV and other elements of the modern media environment.

Blogging promises a democratization of voices that can now bypass the institutional gatekeepers of mainstream media. This democratization is thought to have implications for the practice and business of journalism as well as the future of civic and political discourse.