

# Blogging Questions Answered



{ Answers to 10 common  
Blogging Questions }

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# Introduction

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Are you blogging yet?

Some script savvy people were blogging before blogging became a ‘cool’ activity. Some of us have been blogging steadily since mid 2004. Some picked up the habit in 2005, more joined up in 2006, and in 2009 more moms than ever discovered blogging. Now, in 2010 more than half of the online business owners you run into are blogging to some extent.

If you are one of those people that do not have a blog yet, this report is made especially for you.

But if you do blog, but know that you could be blogging more or blogging more effectively, you’ll get a lot from this report too.

We’re going to answer ten common questions that people still ask about blogging every day. Hopefully by doing so we’ll overcome any reticence you may have about becoming a blogger.

## Question #1: What is a Blog?

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The term blog comes from two words: ‘web log’.

The odd little word is used in a variety of ways.

- “I blogged today’ means that you posted to your web log.
- “I’m blogging” could mean that you’re actively working on a blog post or that you blog on a regular basis.
- “I’m a blogger” may be used to let someone else know that you run a blog.

Technically, a blog is an online journal driven by a script and a database. The blog script provides you with an online dashboard for typing in your journal entries and the database stores your words.

Don't worry about technologically intimidating terms like 'script' and 'database' – it's not as bad as it sounds. If you have ever used a web based email system like yahoo.com or gmail.com or if you've ever created an ebay auction or signed up for Facebook.com – you're technical enough for a blog.

If you've never done any of these things, you still mustn't worry! It's not hard to learn.

Let's leave the tech terms behind us. What is a blog really?

It's whatever you want it to be.

It can be an online journal. It can be your web based diary. It can be your monthly web article archive or weekly newsletter repository. A blog can include whatever you would like it to include: words, sound, video, pictures, etc.

It can be very personal or it can be quite businesslike.

Words like 'journal' and 'diary' have a private feel, yet a blog is public. This creates a unique culture among bloggers. People tend to be more personable on a blog, even if the topic is business.



## Question #2: What makes a Blog different from a 'regular website'?

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Assuming that a 'regular website' is referring to a static HTML site, it is the database driven content that really sets it apart.

There are many websites that have been built using a similar script/database (known as a Content Management System or CMS) and these sites have a lot in common with the blog since a blog script is essentially a CMS.

The lines between blogs and other types of websites are blurring as more business owners choose to build their site with a CMS. While many blogs are designed to look like a web journal, more and more are being designed to look like a regular website.

Because the content you enter into the blog is stored in a database, it can be distributed as a data feed. RSS is the feed that most blogs employ. (RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication.) With RSS, your content can be viewed through any RSS reader or aggregator on another website or on a computer or portable device.



Another benefit to being database driven is that the script can accept and display comments on specific posts and can detect when other sites link to one of your blog posts.

## Question #3: What kind of Blog should I use?

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There are several blog scripts available for use, including:

- [Blogger](#) – Free to use, can have a blog on their site (blogspot.com) or publish the content to your own hosting account.
- [WordPress](#) – Free to use, can have a blog on their site ([wordpress.com](#)) or grab the open source script ([wordpress.org](#)) for use on your own hosting account.
- [Typepad](#) – Paid service ([typepad.com](#))
- [Squarespace](#) - Paid service ([squarespace.com](#))

There are bloggers using every type of blog script who swear by their tool of choice and list off great features that keep them loyal. So your own choice will be a personal one.

For a business blog, a common choice is [WordPress](#).

WordPress is feature rich and is an Open Source script. This means that anyone can take the source code and edit it. A community of creative and talented people are constantly improving the code and releasing updates for free use.

WordPress is flexible. It works with a variety of ‘plug ins’ which are like hacks for the base code of the scrip. When uploaded and activated, they make the blog script work differently.

## Question #4: Where should I host my Blog?

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Optimally, you would have a blog on its own domain on a separate server so that when you blog and link to your projects they would count for maximum search engine optimization value. (There is evidence that Google gives higher value to a link from a website on a different server than a link from another site on the same server.)

If incoming links aren't of great importance to you, you could still grab a domain name and host the blog on your main hosting site. If you have an existing website, it is also totally appropriate to install the blog script into a sub-directory on that site.

Don't use Blogspot.com or Wordpress.com for a business blog. Your customization options are very limited and you won't get decent statistics on your blog activities. You can install secondary stat tools but why go to that extra effort?

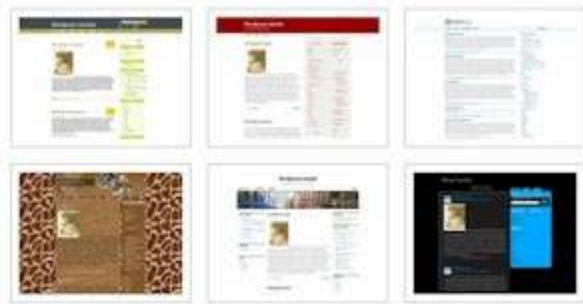
There are some hosting sites that don't work with Wordpress. Before you sign up for hosting, ask customer support if they are Wordpress friendly. I personally use and recommend, [Mom Webs](#), for my web hosting needs.

## Question #5: What should my Blog look like?

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First impressions are important. One thing you'll soon discover is that blogs wear designer duds and can sport major bling.

The 'look' of a blog is determined by its theme. A theme is a set of page templates and a CSS style sheet. (CSS stands for Cascading Style Sheet). Together the templates and the style sheet tell the database how to display its data.



This is what makes a blog so darn cool. At any time you can change the whole look of your website by simply changing the theme and there are hundreds of free themes and many paid themes available to choose from.

If you're familiar with php code and CSS you can tweak a theme to look a certain way. Change a color here and a width there. If you're not well versed with these codes you can hire a designer to do this for you. With the right expertise on your side you can make your blog look anyway you like.

The first customization task you can undertake is to have a custom header graphic created for the top of your blog. Some blogs don't use graphics at all, but you'll probably want to carry your logo/brand over to your blog and the header is a good place to do it.

Your 'blog bling' could include:

- A link to your RSS feed with instructions on how to use it.
- Mailing list sign up forum.
- About Me page with background info about you.
- Links to your favorite blogs.
- Widgets/Gadgets that promote Web 2.0 Social Networking sites that you belong to.
- Links that let readers submit you to Social Bookmarking sites.

## Question #6: What should I be blogging about?

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There are people who immediately take to blogging like a fish to water. They know just what to do write about every day. If that's not you – don't fret about it too much. You will get the feel for it as time goes by and if worse comes to worse, you can tap outsourcing strategies.

The best way to look at your blog is to see it as both a marketing tool and a relationship building activity, which a decided preference given to relationships first and marketing second.

You can be personal on your blog.

Blogging practices encourage glimpses into your personal life, even on a business blog. Share plans for an upcoming vacation. Let readers learn about what motivates you as a person. People like to do business with people who share their values and ethics.

Don't go overboard though. If you blog for business your blog is not a venue for venting about your personal problems. Potential clients and customers do not want to hear about how you're about to fall into bankruptcy.

You can promote your business on your blog. Your readers will be responsive to your offers when they believe that you have approached them as a compatriot, a fellow member of their community. If you set out to be a guru, you probably won't be received as one. But if you set out to share top notch resources and opinions naturally and consistently, you may soon be received as a thought leader. Let it come naturally.

## Question #7: How often should I blog?

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As often as you have something interesting to say! There really isn't a fast rule on this. Some very successful bloggers post several times a day and some post just a few times a week.

The more you blog, the more you'll bring yourself back to reader's minds so be sensitive to that. Don't come back to the forefront of their thoughts with a boring post or they'll think you're boring!

## Question #8: How can I make money with my Blog?

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Blogging can be used to build a stream of income through the promotion of affiliate programs.



Unless you have a very diverse blog, it isn't possible to provide everything your market needs directly. There will be opportunities to recommend other products and services. If you can find an appropriate vendor who offers a percentage or flat fee commission for referrals, go for it!

Post recommendations when you discover them and also create a page on your blog where you update a list of common recommendations. Blog experts encourage you be transparent about your affiliate links and let your readers know that you will earn a commission if they act on your recommendation.

## Question #9: How do I get people to interact on my Blog?

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When you have a blog, do you want to have a lot of interaction from readers? Well, yes! Comments show that you have readers who resonate with your message. Frequent comments suggest that your blog has a lot of readers and thus suggests that you are popular.

You can encourage blog comments by closing your blog posts with questions and requests for opinions. Make sure the link to make a comment is obvious. If you reach a market that isn't very online savvy, be sure to clearly display a 'How to Comment' tutorial on the blog.

When a reader does comment, be responsive even if you just post to say thanks for commenting. This encourages others to post as well.

## Question #10: What could I be missing about my Blog?

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Likely, the most common ‘missed aspect’ of blogging is what takes place elsewhere. In order to be a great blogger, you have to leave your blog on a regular basis and go out to visit other people’s blogs.

Search for blogs on similar topics and read recent posts. If you have something useful to add or you want to give them a quick kudos, leave a comment. In most cases you’ll be given space to share your own blog URL when you leave your remarks.

Add your favorite blogs to your blog roll which is a list of links on your sidebar. Some of these bloggers will return the favor.

You should take every opportunity to share the link to your blog. Add a link to your main page and include the URL in your email signature. If you’re active on Social Networking sites, many of them ask for your blog URL.

If you find a blogger that you find really interesting you could invite them to be a guest blogger on your blog. This means that they write a full post that you share in their name on your blog. They may invite you to be a guest blogger on their blog in return, but if they do not – be patient. The blog love will come back to you.

Another way to share readers is to initiate a cross blog conversation where you carry on a one on one conversation, almost as if you were emailing each other privately, only you post the letters on your blogs so that readers have to follow both blogs in order to catch both sides of the story.

Depending on your market and surrounding online community there are some other fun ways to cooperate with other bloggers through blog carnivals and cooperatives but there are many types of businesses that

would not be served well through participation in these projects so use your best judgment.

That's it. We've answered ten questions people still ask about blogging. Are you ready to finally join the esteemed ranks of business bloggers? If you still have questions, [I'm available to answer them](#).



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