INTRODUCTION

What is a blog? According to a recent report from The Pew Internet & American Life Project, well over half of the American adult population do not know what a blog is (Rainie, 2005).

A blog can be simply defined in the following manner: “A blog is an easy-to-use content management tool. When you ‘blog,’ you are instantly adding new content to your site via a Web interface. No technical or programming skills are necessary.” (Weil, 2004, n.p.). In a nutshell, a blog is a “do-it-yourself” Website. Gone are the days (of say 2003) when one would have to be knowledgeable in html or xml programming or make use of complex, and often expensive, Web creation software to create or update a Website. With a blog, your Website can be constantly added to and updated, without having to do anything more than typing (or cutting and pasting) into a text box. Through posting links, you can link your blog to any other site on the Web. You can even add audio/visual material to your blog site by uploading them, much as you would add an attachment to an email. Others who find your site of interest can use RSS (really simple syndication) or sign-up for e-mail alerts to be notified when you post or add material to your blog.

Blogging—the act of creating and maintaining a blog—has been characterized in nothing less than laudatory terms, hailed as:

- “The ‘next big thing’ on the Internet” (Gallo, 2004)
- “The next killer app” (Weil, 2003),
- “The Web’s coup de grace, the heart of a personal publishing revolution to rival desktop publishing’ (Johnson, 2005),
- “The most profound revolution in publishing since the printing press” (Sullivan, 2005).

On the other hand, many people associate blogs as a phenomenon of teenagers and college students. When they do think about them, they think of either the folks who blog about their cats, dogs, or hamsters (Butler, 2006) or the “bad” news stories about blogs, such as when a blogger—the person creating and maintaining the blog—named his murderer in his last, dying entry in his blog (Wikipedia, 2006). Chris Anderson is the author
of The Long Tail, which speaks to the fragmenta-
tion of the marketplace and mass audiences with 
the advent of the Internet. He recently commented 
that blogs are an extension of this overall trend, 
as they are an excellent way of communicating 
with microaudiences, with blogs like his own 
being “exactly what four people want” (quoted 

Blogging may thus become one of the mega-
trends of the next decade. Writing in the presti-
gious journal, Foreign Policy, Drezner and Farrell 
(2004) commented that: “Although the blogosphere 
remains cluttered with the teenage angst of high 
school students, blogs increasingly serve as a 
conduit through which ordinary and not-so-ordi-
nary citizens express their views on international 
relations and influence a policymaker’s decision 
making”.

BACKGROUND

The roots of the phenomenon that is now referred 
to as ‘blogging’ can be traced back to Tim Berners 
Lee (the originator of the World Wide Web), who 
created a ‘What’s New’ page in 1992 (Dvorak, 
2005). In 1994, online personal diaries began to 
emerge on topics spanning areas such as diets, 
movies, politics, and sex (Sullivan, 2005). Jorn 
Barger, editor of one of the original sites, coined 
the term ‘Weblog’ in 1997, defining it as “a 
Webpage where a Weblogger ‘logs’ all the other 
Webpages she finds interesting.” The shorter 
version, “blog,” was coined by Peter Merholz in 
1999, when he broke the word “Weblog” into the 
phrase “we blog.” “Blog” then grew in acceptance 
as a shorter form of the noun (Weblog) and also 
for the first time as a verb, with to blog meaning 
“to edit one’s Weblog or a post to one’s Weblog” 
(Blood, 2004).

The key to the rapid rise of blogging is the 
ability of users to easily create content and to be 
able to instantly update their online Websites. 
Probably the seminal event in the growth of blog-
ging was the innovation made by Evan Williams. 
In 1999, Williams, then living in San Francisco, 
was seeking a way to more easily update his own 
Website. He created a simple software solution that 
eliminated the need to know how to use HTML 
to do so, allowing for Websites to be updated by 
simply typing text into a text box. This software 
became the foundation for blogger.com, one of the 
first blog creation and hosting sites (Ramos, 2004). 
In fact today, the vast majority of blogs are created 
and maintained by individuals making use of a 
variety of free or low-cost software and/or hosting 
services, such as those listed in Table 1.

Blogging reached its “tipping point” in 2002, 
when the blogosphere grew from a self-contained 
community to a wider, global marvel (Manjoo, 
observed, the blogosphere has become “a new 
medium” that has become “an elaborate network 
with agenda-setting power”

Undoubtedly however, blogging is fast-chang-
ing the way many of us interact with the Internet. 
Mortensen (2004) chronicled that blogging is now 
following the same development pattern as the 
Internet itself. Whereas in the early days of the 
Internet, access was difficult and limited to aca-
demicians, researchers, government officials, and 
other elites, the rise of the World Wide Web and 
the development of browser technologies enabled 
the Internet to widen its audience and reach, while 
greatly changing—and perhaps decreasing—the 
quality of the content and interactions online. With 
the wide availability of blog creation software tools 
and blog hosting services, one no longer needs 
specialized computer knowledge and resources 
to create content online. Indeed, blogs have been 
categorized as the rise of easily self-created Web

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