

# eAdvocacy: Basics, Best Practices and New Tools

## Blogging Basics

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**BETTER  
TOOLS  
FOR A  
BETTER  
WORLD**

# Learning Goals

- ▶ Define “blog” and “blogging”
- ▶ Enumerate key blog features
- ▶ Learn blogging best practices
- ▶ Understand RSS (“Real Simple Syndication”)
- ▶ Explain key concepts, including “blog rolls”, “permalinks” and “trackbacks”
- ▶ Appreciate the need for “proper” blog URLs
- ▶ Survey categories of blogging tools

# Blogging

## ► What is it?

- “Blog” is short for “web log”
- Blogging is a web publishing model
  - More of a writing/publishing style than a technology
- It is a personal conversation between you and your readers
  - An alternative to email for reaching your audience(s)
- Blogs generally have an area of focus/expertise
  - Identity of the author(s) matters

# Writing for Blogs

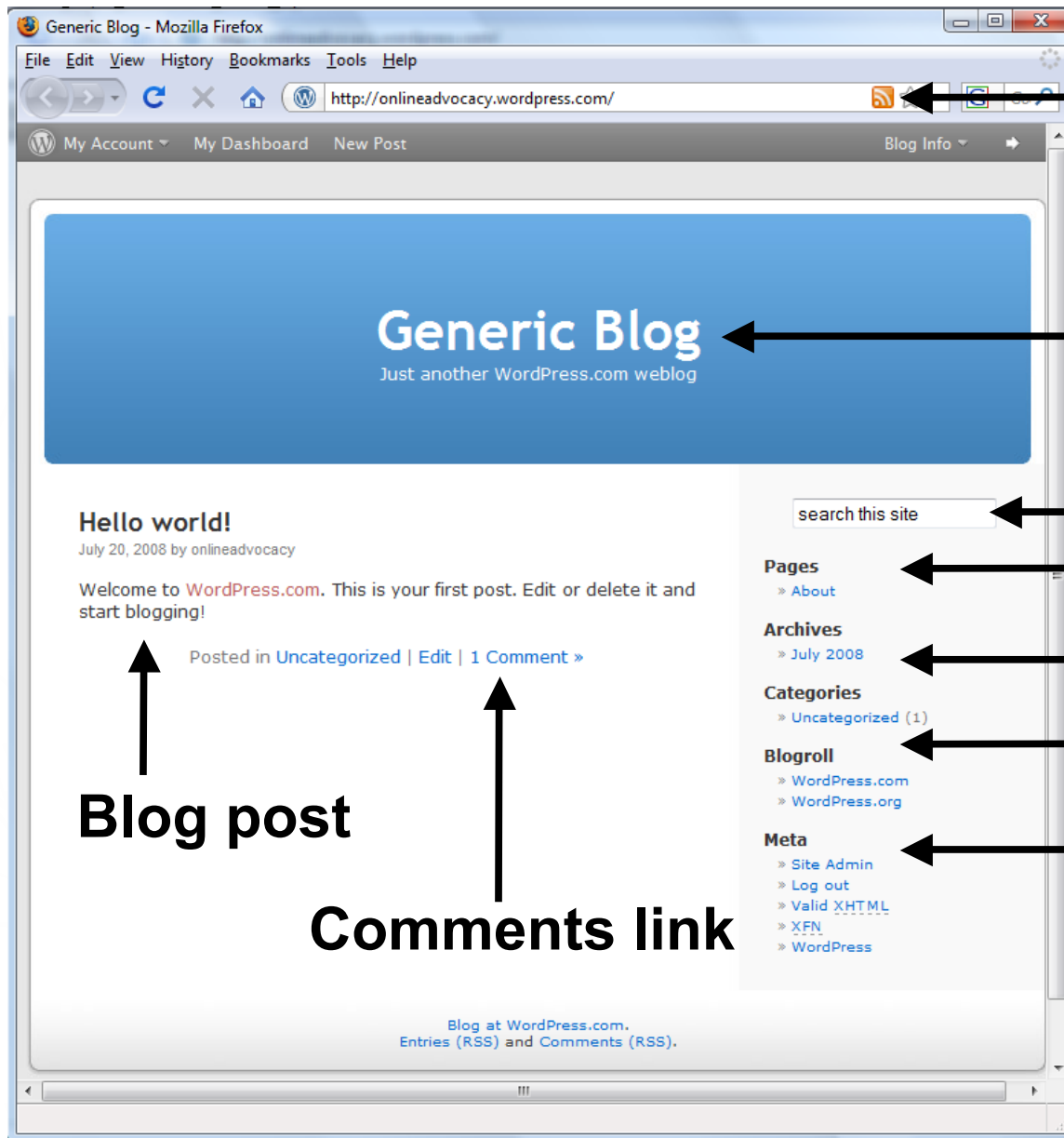
- ▶ Blogs have distinct editorial style
  - Show humanity and write in first person
  - Express opinions loud and often; passion matters
  - Share what you've been learning, reading, doing
  - Post more short entries, not fewer big ones
  - Re-post content from other blogs/sites
  - Take feedback via comments

# When Can a Blog Be Employed?

- ▶ Among other times, to:
  - Narrate organizational work and progress
  - Support a specific campaign
  - Comment on an issue or area of expertise
  - Sustain an online conversation with an audience
- ▶ But focus is key
  - A blog should have a specific reason for being

# Blog Features

- ▶ What makes up a basic blog?
  - Post editor, for writing and publishing blog posts
  - Admin tools, for managing users, settings, etc.
  - Blog roll, for maintaining links to other blogs
  - RSS feed(s), for letting others track new content
  - Category tagging and content archives
  - Easy template-based designs and customization



RSS Feed

Title/Tag Line

Search site

Static pages

Archives

Blog Roll

Site Admin

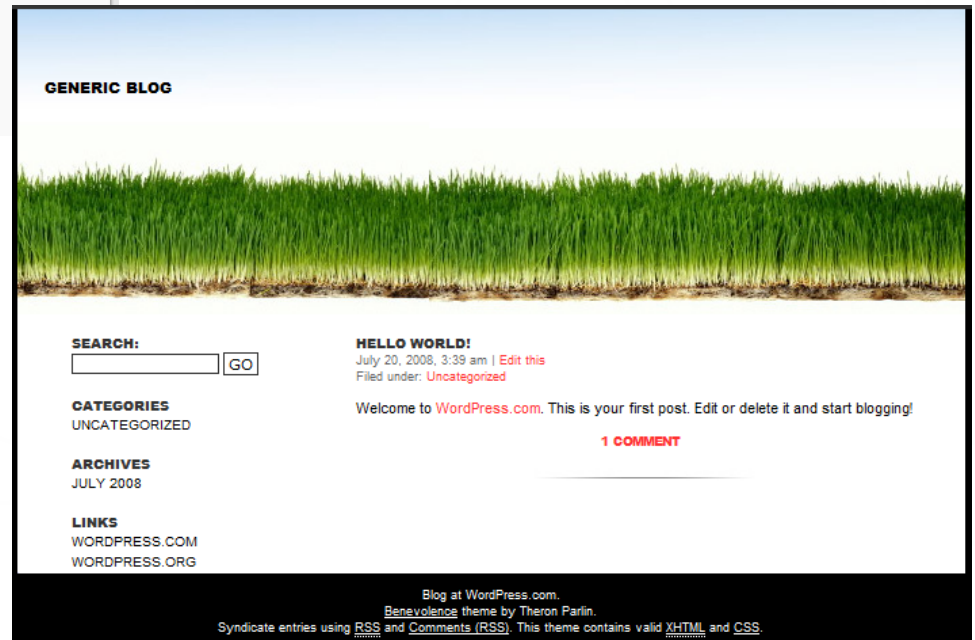
Blog post

Comments link



Blog using default template

Same blog using custom template





# Bloggging



- ▶ RSS: The killer blog technology
  - Blog content is “syndicated” using RSS
    - RSS is Real Simple Syndication (and variants)
  - RSS “feeds” allow interested users to see when there's new content on your blog or site
  - RSS “readers” which “aggregate” are used to track a collection of feeds
  - RSS is a **critical** outreach/publicity feature
  - Subject lines **matter**: readers skim RSS feeds

# Blogging

## ► Blogging best practices

- Post early and often
  - Fresh content is essential to engagement
- Allow readers to comment on your blog entries
  - Comments are important for credibility and user interaction
  - Shows that blog is read by passionate users
  - Discussion in comments can add quality content
  - But know that it's a garden you have to weed
    - Watch out for comment spam

# Blogging

## ► Blogging best practices

- Engage in the “blogosphere”
  - Link to other blogs
  - Post on other blogs and know what's going on
  - Commenting on other blogs can help your credibility
- Link, link, link to other sites
  - Allies, resources, coverage, etc
  - They'll hopefully link back to you

# Blogging

## ► Blogging best practices

- Get Involved in Blog Communities
  - Know where your audience hangs out
  - Get accounts early
  - Participate in commenting
- Target writings to “micro audiences”
  - Engage small passionate subgroups
- Distinguish between official vs unofficial blogs
  - Both have value, with **very** different control dynamics

# Blogging

- ▶ Have a “permanent” blog address
  - It's easy to get
    - your-org.wordpress.com
  - It's much more desirable to have
    - blog.your-org.org
    - This can point anywhere, including your-org.wordpress.com
  - When the address is under your domain, you control the long-term location/identity of the blog
    - When it's not you don't...

# Blogging

## ► Concepts

### ■ Permalinks

- Points to a specific blogging entry even after the entry has passed from the front page into the archives

### ■ Trackbacks

- Mechanism for communication between blogs
- When blogger refers to another blog, can notify the other blog with a "TrackBack ping"

# Blogging

## ▶ Tracking other blogs

- You use an “RSS Reader” or “Feed Aggregator” to track new content from other blogs
- Basic RSS readers are built into most browsers
- Use hosted readers for maximum flexibility
  - Bloglines, Google Reader, NewsGator
- Use a service like FeedBurner if you want to know who's tracking you

# Blogging

## ▶ Blogging tool survey

- Hosted/installable
  - Wordpress.com
  - Moveabletype.com
- Hosted
  - Blogger.com, Typepad.com, LiveJournal.com
  - MySpace.com, Facebook.com
- Most CMS have blogs: Drupal, Plone, etc



# Blogging

- ▶ Multimedia “Blogging”
  - Audio Blogs
    - Podcasts
    - iTunes integration
  - Video Blogs
    - AKA “vlogs”
- ▶ Your mileage will vary widely
  - Production costs may likely outweigh benefits

# Learning Goals

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- ▶ Enumerated key blog features
- ▶ Covered blogging best practices
- ▶ Defined RSS (“Real Simple Syndication”)
- ▶ Explained key concepts, including “permalinks” and “trackbacks”
- ▶ Conveyed need for “proper” blog URLs
- ▶ Surveyed categories of blogging tools

# End Of Section

- ▶ Questions?
- ▶ Comments?

## Thank You!

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