Web Sites For Advocacy and Community Organizing:
Basics, Essentials, and Best Practices

Blogging Basics

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration in partnership with Radical Designs

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Learning Goals

► Define “blog” and “blogging”
► Learn blogging best practices
► Appreciate the need for “proper” blog URLs
► Explain key concepts, including “blog rolls”, “permalinks” and “trackbacks”
► Understand RSS (“Real Simple Syndication”)
► Survey categories of blogging tools
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
  - Show humanity and write in first person
  - Express opinions loud and often; passion matters
- A small dedicated blog audience can be more important than high traffic
Blogging

Blogging best practices

- Post early and often
- 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
- Have RSS and Atom feeds
  - Titles matter: Skimming nature of RSS readers
- Link, link, link to other sites
  - Allies, resources, coverage, etc
Blogging

► Blogging best practices

- Allow readers to comment on your blog entries
  - But know that it's a garden you have to weed
- Comments are important for credibility and user interaction
  - Shows that blog is read
  - Discussion in comments can add quality content
- Watch out for comment spam
  - Capcha technology helps, but hinders visually impaired readers
Blogging

► Have a “proper” blog address
  ▪ It's easy to get
    ▫ yourorg.wordpress.com
  ▪ It's much more desirable to have
    ▫ blog.yourorg.org
    ▫ This can point anywhere, including
      yourorg.wordpress.com
  ▪ When the address is under your domain, you control the long-term direction of the blog
    ▪ When it's not you don't...
Blogging

Concepts (definitions from Wikipedia)

- Blog rolls
  - Collection of links to other blogs
- 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

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
Blogging tool survey

- Hosted
  - Blogger.com
  - LiveJournal.com
  - MySpace.com

- Hosted/installable
  - Wordpress.com
  - Typepad.com

- Most CMS: Drupal, Plone etc
End Of Section

► Questions?
► Comments?

Thank You!

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