High Impact eAdvocacy

Blogging Basics

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration in partnership with Radical Designs
Funded by the Community Technology Foundation of California
These materials are distributed under a Creative Commons license: Attribution-ShareAlike 2.5
Learning Goals

► Define “blog” and “blogging”
► Learn blogging best practices
► Appreciate the need for “proper” blog URLs
► Explain key concepts, including “blog rolls”, “permalink” and “trackbacks”
► Understand RSS (“Real Simple Syndication”)
► 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
  - 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
  - Captcha technology helps, but hinders visually impaired readers
Blogging

Blogging best practices

- Get Involved in Blog Communities
  - Get accounts early
  - Participate in commenting
  - Know where your audience hangs out

- Official vs unofficial blogs
  - Both have value, with very different control dynamics

- Blogs can be for micro audiences
  - Engage small passionate subgroup
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

Blogging tool survey

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

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

- Most CMS: Drupal, Plone etc
Blogging

► Multimedia “Blogging”
  ▪ Audio Blogs
    ▪ Podcasts
    ▪ iTunes integration
  ▪ Video Blogs

► Your mileage will vary widely
  ▪ Production costs may likely outweigh benefits
End Of Section

► Questions?
► Comments?

Thank You!

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration in partnership with Radical Designs
Funded by the Community Technology Foundation of California

These materials are distributed under a Creative Commons license: Attribution-ShareAlike

ASPIRATION

BETTER TOOLS FOR A BETTER WORLD