In-house Presentation

BLOG & ONLINE FORUM

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Blog Meaning

A blog is a type of website or part of a website. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. Blog can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other via widgets on the blogs and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites

Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art (Art blog), photographs (photoblog), videos (video blogging), music (MP3 blog), and audio (podcasting). Microblogging is another type of blogging, featuring very short posts.

Few famous blog sites:

1). www.**blog**ger.com

2). http://blog.com

3). bigb.bigadda.com

& many more…

Blog Types:
Personal, Organizational, By Media, By Device

❖ Personal blogs

The personal blog, an **ongoing diary** or commentary by an individual, is the traditional, most common blog. Personal bloggers usually take pride in their blog posts, even if their blog is never read. Blogs often become more than a way to just **communicate**; they become a way to reflect on life, or works of art. Blogging can have a sentimental quality. Few personal blogs rise to fame and the mainstream, but some personal blogs quickly garner an extensive following. One type of personal blog, referred to as a microblog, is extremely detailed and seeks to capture a moment in time. Some sites, such as Twitter, allow bloggers to share thoughts and feelings instantaneously with friends and family, and are much faster than emailing or writing.

❖ Corporate and organizational blogs

A blog can be private, as in most cases, or it can be for business purposes. Blogs used internally to enhance the communication and culture in a corporation or externally for marketing, branding or public relations purposes are called corporate blogs. Similar blogs for clubs and societies are called club blogs, group blogs, or by similar names; typical use is to inform members and other interested parties of club and member activities.

❖ By genre

- Some blogs focus on a particular subject, such as political blogs, travel blogs (also known as travelogs), house blogs, fashion blogs, project blogs, education blogs, niche blogs, classical music blogs, quizzing blogs and legal blogs (often referred to as a blawgs) or dreamlogs. Two common types of genre blogs are art blogs and music blogs.

❖ By media

- A blog comprising videos is called a vlog, one comprising links is called a linklog, a site containing a portfolio of sketches is called a sketchblog or one comprising photos is called a photoblog. Blogs with shorter posts and mixed media types are called tumblelogs. Blogs that are written on typewriters and then scanned are called typecast or typecast blogs; see typecasting (blogging).

Blog Types

❖By device

Blogs can also be defined by which type of device is used to compose it. A blog written by a mobile device like a mobile phone or PDA could be called a moblog. One early blog was Wearable Wireless Webcam, an online shared diary of a person's personal life combining text, video, and pictures transmitted live from a wearable computer and EyeTap device to a web site. This practice of semi-automated blogging with live video together with text was referred to as sousveillance. Such journals have been used as evidence in legal matters.

Blog Examples

Advantages of Blog

➢ **Blogs are easy to create & maintain.**
To set up a blog can take as little as 10 minutes and it involves just three simple steps (choose your blogging software, register your account and start blogging).After creating your blog, all you are required to do is to provide as many fresh contents as you can on a regularly basis.

➢ **Blogs are Search Engine Friendly.**
Your posts and pages are automatically linked by blogs and that enables search engines spiders to find, crawl and index the blog. With relevant keywords in your blog Title, Meta tags, and the URL pages you could have your pages ranking higher in search engines.

Blogs attract more traffic for it fresh contents
Readers are attracted to blogs because of it fresh regular contents and if as a blogger you are passionate about what you write about, and committed to providing fresh regular contents on it, thousands who are also passionate about that topic will on a regular basis visit your blog and if you keep updating it regularly with new contents, you will keep them coming.
 Blogs allows you to interact with your consument base.
Blogs allows you to interact you with your customers and to get their feedback. Since blog offers you the option of enabling a comment field to your posts where readers can give you their feedback.
 Blogs have built-in RSS Feed
RSS which means Really Simple Syndication syndicate recent posts and deliver them to various blog search engines and when your readers subscribe to your RSS Feed it automatically delivers your recent posts to their inbox.

Real Estate Blog

Real Estate Blogs can and should be one of the tools in your **marketing toolbox** , By creating a real estate blog about your area, happenings and commentary, you can begin to position yourself as an "**expert**" on the area and real estate trends there. Readers of your blog can then "subscribe", as in a magazine subscription, and have your real estate blog comments and articles delivered to them daily in their "news reader".

We can create a blog about "YourTown Real Estate" and post articles and comments regularly that will be of interest to residents and potential buyers for the area.

Meaning of a Forum

An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. They differ from chat rooms in that messages are at least temporarily archived. Also, depending on the access level of a user and/or the forum set-up, a posted message might need to be approved by a moderator before it becomes visible.

Forums have their own language; e.g. A single conversation is called a '**thread**'. A forum is hierarchical or tree-like in structure: **forum - sub forum - topic - thread - reply**.

- Depending on the forum set-up, users can be anonymous or have to register with the forum and then subsequently log in in order to post messages. Usually you do not have to log in to read existing messages.

- Forums are governed by a **set of individuals**, collectively referred to as staff, made up of administrators and moderators, which are responsible for the forums' conception, technical maintenance, and policies (creation and enforcing). Most forums have a list of rules detailing the wishes, aim and guidelines of the forums creators. Rules on forums usually apply to the entire user body and often have preset exceptions, most commonly designating a section as an exception. For example, in an IT forum any discussion regarding anything but computer programming languages may be against the rules, with the exception of a general chat section.

Forum Structure

A forum consists of a tree like directory structure containing at the lowest end topics (commonly called **threads**) and inside them posts. Logically forums are organized into a finite set of generic topics (usually with one main topic) driven and updated by a group known as members, and governed by a group known

as **moderators**. All message boards will use one of three possible display formats.

❖ User groups

Internally, Western-style forums organise visitors and logged in members into user groups. Privileges and rights are given based on these groups. A user of the forum can automatically be promoted to a more privileged user group based on criteria set by the administrator.

❖ Moderator

The moderators (short singular form: "mod") are users (or employees) of the forum who are granted access to the posts and threads of all members for the purpose of moderating discussion (similar to arbitration) and also keeping the forum clean (neutralizing spam and spambots etc.). Because they have access to all posts and threads in their area of responsibility, it is common for a friend of the site owner to be promoted to moderator for such a task.

❖ Administrator

- The administrators (short form: "admin") manage the technical details required for running the site. As such, they may promote (and demote) members to moderators, manage the rules, create sections and sub-sections, as well as perform any database operations (database backup etc.). Administrators often also act as moderators. Administrators may also make forum-wide announcements, or change the appearance (known as the skin) of a forum.

Forum Structure

❖ Post

A *post* is a user submitted message enclosed into a block containing the user's details and the date and time it was submitted. Members are usually allowed to edit or delete their own posts. Posts are contained in threads, where they appear as boxes one after another. The first post starts the thread; this may be called the TS (thread starter) or OP (original post). Posts that follow in the thread are meant to continue discussion about that post, or respond to other replies; it is not uncommon for discussions to be derailed.
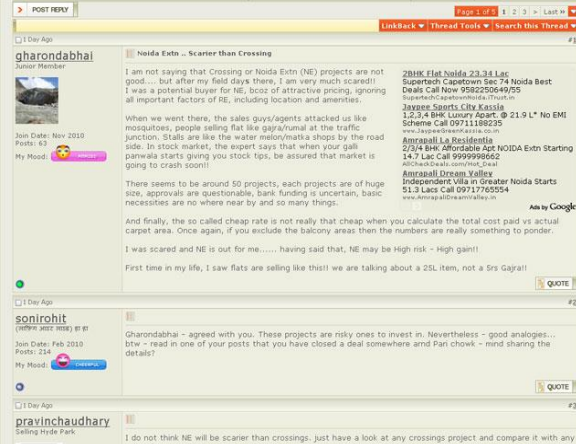
❖ Moderator

A thread (sometimes called a topic) is a collection of posts, usually displayed from oldest to latest, although this is typically configurable: options for newest to oldest and for a threaded view (a tree-like view applying logical reply structure before chronological order) can be available. A thread is defined by a title, an additional description that may summarize the intended discussion, and an opening or original post (common abbreviation 'OP', which can also mean *original poster*) which opens whatever dialogue or makes whatever announcement the poster wished. A thread can contain any number of posts, including multiple posts from the same members, even if they are one after the other.

Advantages of a forum

1. Having a medium to high traffic forum on a website will increase the value of it as members of forums are very knowledgeable about the topic at hand and they'll usually try to show this in their posts thus creating lots of information and tips which visitors to your site can use.

2. With lots of information and discussion being exchanged in your forums visitors will return again and again to see replies to their posts, read others posts and basically to see if anything has changed. This creates a sticky website which is what every webmaster wants, as new members join your forum your traffic will gradually grow week after week.

3. In most forums people who want to post have to register by giving their email address and names, this allows you to follow up and email them in the future with information about your product or service. They won't consider it as spam because they know who you are.
4. Forums allow you to gain creditability with your websites visitors as you can reply to posts that are looking for help and by doing this you're letting everyone know that you are an expert on the topic of your website. They're much more likely to buy from you if you know what you're talking about!
5. Building relationships with your visitors is easy with forums. If you post regularly and actively discuss different topics with your forum members then gradually you'll get to know them and more importantly they'll get to know you. People are much more likely to buy a product or service when someone they know sells or recommends it.

Blog vs Forum

➤ **A Blog is Yours, and A Forum is Not**

➤ **Blogs are like a keynote speech** where the speaker (blogger) is in control of the discussion, but allows questions and comments from the audience. Blogs are journals often authored by one individual, and sometimes teams. In the context of business communication, these are often used to talk with the marketplace and to join the conversation that existing external bloggers may be having.

➤ **Forums are like social mixers**, where everyone is at equal level, milling about and discussing with others. These many to many communication tools allow anyone to start a topic and anyone to respond to one. Members are often at equal level, and content is usually segmented by *topic*. (rather than by people).

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➢ Forums are created for **discussion between several people** while Blogs are mainly designed for a **single user input**, with possibility for other people to comment.

➢ So, Blogs are more like a simple homepage where other people may contribute with comments, but one person rules, **blog owner**, and blog owner can delete any comment he/she doesn't like. While, in forums, there could be thousands of people posting topic messages and also adding comments ...

It's important to know the many different tools in tool chest as every type of accessory fulfills a different need. Before we jump to tools, we should first understand who our community is, where they are, how they use social technologies, and most importantly, what they're talking about.