

Introduction

A Blog can be used to write a diary or make a stream of notes on web pages in a series of chapters or sections, sometimes with the ability for others to make comments. Blogs use online editors, which often resemble word processors.

These allow users to make web pages without having any knowledge of how to develop web content. The user can make regular entries, which are dated and displayed in reverse chronological order to provide a commentary on a particular topic. The content in blogs can be made very accessible to all users, although there may be some additional elements in the web page that are harder to use such as built in calendars.

Considerations

- **The choice of Blog service is important.** The rich text editor used to add content to make the web pages may not be accessible. This means that not all the menu items can be reached using a keyboard or screen reader. Check this by tabbing around the menus and ensuring that all options can be reached.
- **Check to see if keyboard shortcuts are available.** Some rich text editors offer keyboard shortcuts similar to those used in Word or any other word processor. These can be very useful to keyboard and screen reader users. Examples such as **Ctrl+B** for bold are common place but ways of making lists and adding images via the keyboard may not be so easy.
- **Make sure it is possible to add alternative text to graphics** when they are added to a page. If the graphics have words embedded in the picture, please explain these in the content as you will be unlikely to be able to add a long description elsewhere when using a rich text editor.
- **Multimedia elements will require alternative formats.** Examples of alternative formats are transcripts of audio presentations, text descriptions for graphical representations, captions for video and flash animations etc. Once again these may have to be part of the blog content.
- **Make sure titles, headings and subheadings are clear.** Good titles help search engines and users, headings and subheadings making scanning text easier and help screen reader users. Rich text editors have the appropriate features to allow these settings.
- **Keep contrast levels and text sizes comfortable for all.** Good contrast levels between text and the background colour as well as font sizes 10/12 and above make reading content easier.
- **Use spell checkers and avoid overly complex language.** There may be a spell checker within the rich text editor, but if not the use of Google Toolbar checker (<http://tools.google.com>) or add-on /built in browser spell checkers can be helpful. Cutting and pasting from a desktop word processor is also an option or try downloading Windows Live Writer, which acts as a desktop application that links to the blog automatically. (<http://download.live.com/writer/>) ScribeFire, as a Mozilla Firefox add-in, offers a browser option for blog writing whilst surfing. <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1730>

Additional Resources

- Common Craft provide an online video about blogs and how they can be used.
<http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs>
- Successful Blogging – 8 steps and hints and tips.
<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Famous-Blog>
- Accessibility and Blogs. Useful links and guides from the University of Texas at Austin.
http://www.utexas.edu/disability/ai/research/summary/swat/swat_blogs.html
- American Foundation for the Blind tips on how to make blogs accessible for blind users.
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=4&TopicID=167&DocumentID=2757>
- All Access Blogging - How to make your Blog Accessible.
<http://www.allaccessblogging.com/make-your-blog-accessible.html>
- [Technorati.com](http://www.technorati.com) is one of the largest sites about blogs and Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>) or WordPress (<http://www.wordpress.org>) are just two of many free places to put up your blog.
- Web2Access can be used to help decide which blogging tool to use, by analysing the accessibility of each service.
<http://www.web2access.org.uk/activity/11/>