

Blogging in the Classroom

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November 7, 2006

What is a Blog?

A blog (sometimes referred to as a weblog) is a Web publishing tool that allows authors to quickly and easily self-publish text, artwork, links to other blogs or Web sites, and other content.

Blogs are organized like mainstreamed Web sites, with navigation links, and other basic Web site features. Blogs have one specific characteristic, however: the posting. Blog postings are text entries, similar to a diary or journal, which include a posting date and may include comments by people other than the author, photos, links, or other digital media.

Postings are often short and frequently updated. They appear in reverse chronological order and can include archived entries. Blogs are surprisingly easy to use. They require minimum technical knowledge and are quickly and easily created and maintained.

Why Blogs in the Classroom?

Blogs work well for students because they can be worked on at any time and any place with a computer with Internet access. Blogs can be utilized and integrated by computer savvy teachers to create a classroom that extends beyond the boundaries of the school. Students will find these blogs convenient and easily accessible.

In addition to providing teachers with an excellent tool for communicating with students, here are some other benefits and uses of blogs in the classroom:

Blog Ideas

- post short current events articles to invite students thoughts, reactions, and possible solutions
- post photos and ask students to create captions
- book discussions in the form of an online book club
- curriculum web sites and have them read and make responses
- communicate with another classroom
- react to teacher entries about what students are learning
- students make connections to how learning is relevant to them
- invite one student a day to post a summary of and their reflections on the day's learning
- observe the growth of plants or animals or keep records of science experiments
- record student kindnesses or good deeds
- let student write short reviews of books they are enjoying reading
- post a daily/weekly summary of the curriculum taught
- homework assignments
- a view of the class for parents
- list relevant class information
- provide a day-by-day description of a specific teaching unit
- time out of the classroom day to share with family and friends
- thoughts from the students in their classroom on any number of ideas
- how-to's on using specific technology programs in the curriculum
- create an ongoing portfolio of samples of student writing
- students express their opinions on topics you are studying in class
- ask parents to respond to what is being posted on the blog over the weekends

Classroom Management

- Blogs are highly motivating to students, especially those who otherwise might not become participants in classrooms
- Excellent opportunities for students to read and write.
- Community of learners.
- Easy to create and update efficiently,
- Post class requirements, post handouts, notices, and homework assignments, or act as a question and answer board.

Collaboration

- Teachers and students can work to further develop writing or other

skills with the advantage of an instant audience.

- Teachers can offer instructional tips, and students can practice and benefit from peer review.
- Online mentoring- a class of older students can help a class of younger students develop more confidence in their writing skills.
- Students can also participate in cooperative learning activities that require them to relay research findings, ideas, or suggestions.
- Equal opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. Students have time to be reactive to one another and reflective.
- Teachers can also bring together a group of knowledgeable individuals for a given unit of study for students to network and conference with on a blog.

Student Portfolios

- Blogs present, organize, and protect student work as digital portfolios
- Shows developing skills and progress may be analyzed more conveniently.
- Students realize their efforts will be published; they are typically more motivated to produce better writing.

"Blog-Jargon"

Blogroll: A collection or list of links to other blogs and websites commonly featured on blogs. Sometimes referred to as link lists or bookmark

Blogger: A person who keeps and/ or writes a blog.

Blogosphere: Used to describe the world or community of blogs and blogging

Post: Term used to refer to an individual story or article on a blog, literally to post to a blog is to write an article or contribution, and a blog consists of multiple posts

Feed: A page, written in XML (scripting language used most commonly for blog feeds) that is read using Aggregators that provide an alternative means in which to read blogs.

Aggregator: A program or webpage, which enables users to read the content of blogs using RSS or Atom Feeds examples: <http://www.bloglines.com> ****

RSS: Rich Site Summary, or Really Simple Syndication: a form of XML used in the delivery of blog feeds

Blogs to Note

<http://elemenous.typepad.com/weblog/>

<http://educatingeducators.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.techlearning.com/blog/main/>

<http://weblogg-ed.com/>

<http://www.assortedstuff.com/top101/>

<http://www.edutopia.org/community/spiralnotebook/?p=182>

<http://www.infinitethinking.org/>

<http://www.quotationspage.com/qotd.html>

<http://www.snopes.com/info/whatsnew.asp>



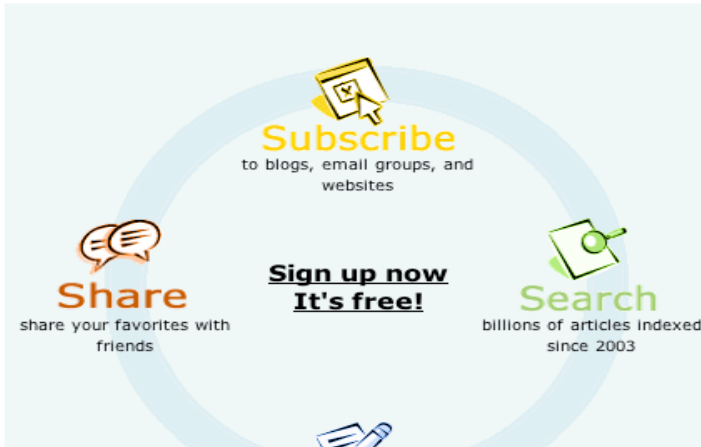
<http://www.teachersfirst.com/content/blog/blogbasics.cfm?CFID=1201803&CFTOKEN=98363643>

Bloglines

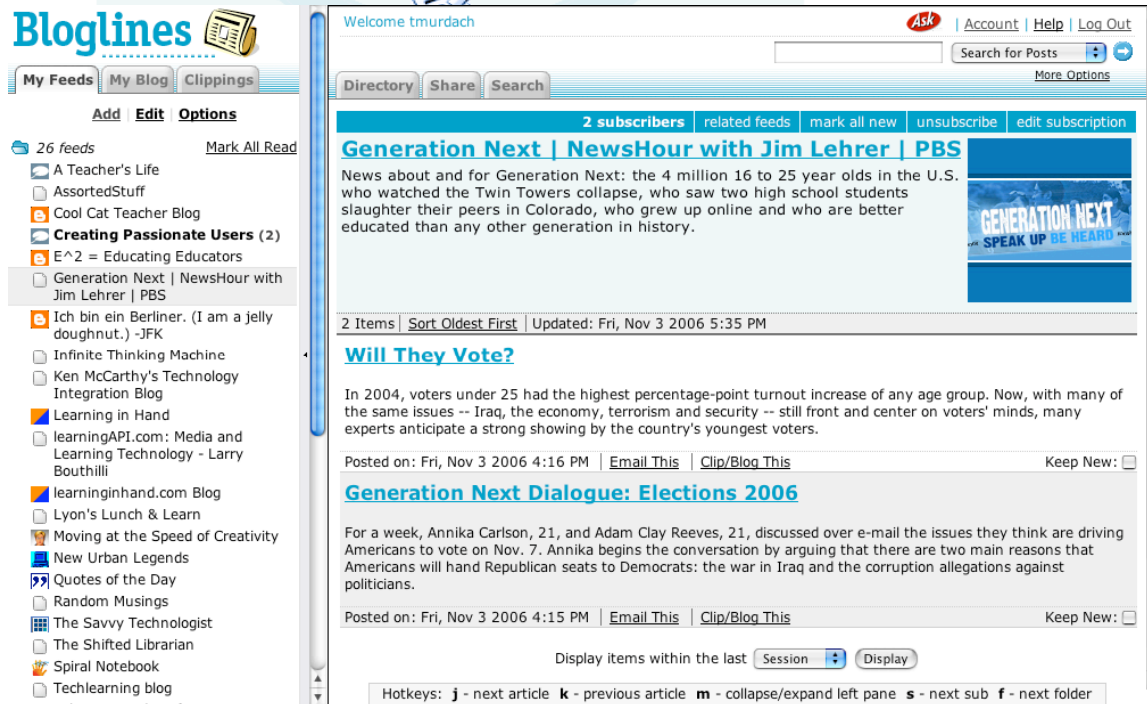
Create a personal Bloglines page loaded with the freshest news about the things you love.

How to subscribe to a feed through Bloglines

<http://www.bloglines.com/>



Bloglines is a free service that makes it easy to keep up with your favorite blogs and news feeds. With Bloglines, you can subscribe to the RSS feeds of your favorite blogs, and Bloglines will monitor updates to those sites. You can read the latest entries easily within Bloglines.



The screenshot shows the Bloglines website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "My Feeds", "My Blog", and "Clippings". Below that, a list of feeds is shown, including "A Teacher's Life", "AssortedStuff", "Cool Cat Teacher Blog", "Creating Passionate Users (2)", "E^2 = Educating Educators", "Generation Next | NewsHour with Jim Lehrer | PBS", "Ich bin ein Berliner. (I am a jelly doughnut.) -JFK", "Infinite Thinking Machine", "Ken McCarthy's Technology Integration Blog", "Learning in Hand", "learningAPI.com: Media and Learning Technology - Larry Bouthilli", "learninginhand.com Blog", "Lyon's Lunch & Learn", "Moving at the Speed of Creativity", "New Urban Legends", "Quotes of the Day", "Random Musings", "The Savvy Technologist", "The Shifted Librarian", "Spiral Notebook", and "Techlearning blog".

The main content area shows a feed for "Generation Next | NewsHour with Jim Lehrer | PBS". It includes a title, a description, and two articles. The first article is "Will They Vote?" and the second is "Generation Next Dialogue: Elections 2006".

At the bottom of the page, there are hotkeys: **j** - next article, **k** - previous article, **m** - collapse/expand left pane, **s** - next sub, **f** - next folder.

Web credits for session

<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml/print/47>

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/content/blog/blogbasics.cfm>

<http://www.bloglines.com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

<http://anvil.gsu.edu/NECC2004/>

<http://learnerblogs.org/>

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/index.cfm>

