

# CA115 Digital Innovation Management Enterprise

## Lecture 2: Communication #1 - Blogs

2022-01-17

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These notes will be posted to Loop.

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## Blogs

- Web + log = blog
  - From the late '90s onwards, initially often personal diaries.
  - A frequently updated site on the web, allowing frequent direct contact between author and audience.
  - Posts in reverse chronological order.
  - Personal or professionally edited multi-author (newspapers, universities, advocacy groups etc.).
  - Sometimes interactive with comments. Recent trend to disable comments on many sites.
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## Blogs

What do I mean by "blog" for the assignments?

I mean a short piece of personal writing that you submit once a week about the week's lecture or guest lecture.

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## Content

- Topics: commentary on specific topic, e.g. area of author's expertise; political opinion and activism; education; personal online diaries or reflections on events and news; humour; brand advertising etc.
  - Blogs are used by businesses for news updates and, internally, for communication.
  - Blog posts traditionally primarily text (HTML with links) but can contain any media.
- Most modern systems have nice GUIs with drag and drop. Commercial platforms have APIs for users to share media content easily - the user doesn't see the mechanics
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## Types of Blog

- There is a distinction between long-form writing, i.e. a traditional blog, and short-form, i.e. 280 characters.
  - These days, there's a blurring between long-form and short-form communication channels.
  - People talk about platforms.
  - Social media blurs the distinction between one-way delivery, like a book, and two-way communication, i.e. a conversation with friends or strangers.
  - Blogging, in the widest sense, spans traditional blogs, audio, photo and video platforms and, perhaps, even messaging, online forums and - for some dedicated contributors - comments.
  - You know all the most famous social platforms.
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## Categories, Platforms and Systems

- Blogs usually fall into a category, i.e. opinion, politics, education, science, humour etc.
- The most popular social media platforms are commercial, driven by advertising. Some, e.g. [Typepad](#), have a subscription system.

There is a lot of talk about this at the moment and a movement for non-commercial, or advertising-free business models, about which more later in the course.

- The most popular blog/website builder is [Wordpress](#), which is a free system (*free as in beer*).
  - Other pretty open systems include Wikis (built mostly with [Wikimedia](#)) and chat systems such as [Discord](#).
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## Bad Things and Good

- Advertising model leads to \*a lot\* of clickbait, although this may be changing.
  - Search results are often swamped by useless sites. You have to look hard for good sites.
  - The quality of blogs can vary, with a lot of bad information.
  - Nevertheless, there's a lot of great material online.
  - It's never been easier to put your ideas out into the world.
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## Some Trends

- Move away from pure advertising models; shift away from centralised platforms.
  - Some will move away from cloud services to locally rendered static sites that are uploaded in one go.
  - Perhaps a shift to local control rather than cloud control. This depends on viability of commercial models.
  - Continued cross-integration of platforms with APIs allowing seamless sharing etc.
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## Be Careful

- Remember that the internet doesn't forget, mostly. Things you post publicly, or privately, will likely remain online for a long time somewhere.
  - Law applies equally across all platforms. If you defame somebody, i.e. you say that they did something that's untrue, you can get into trouble. You ought to check copyright before using somebody else's media, especially large amounts. Small amounts of material, for example quotations, are usually fine once you acknowledge the source. This is called *fair use*.
  - Anonymity is hard nowadays unless you go to a lot of trouble.
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## Do Your Best

- Be nice and be honest.
  - The internet was built by people who mostly had a positive Star Trek TNG dream of the future. I believe it still is.
  - Bill Gates wrote a book called The Road Ahead in 1995; his vision for a constructive internet commons is a good one.
  - Try to make the discussion civil and constructive.
  - We all want a better world, right?
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## Sample Blogs

There are very many examples of good blog writing online! Try to develop your own style and pick a topic. Although our blogs will be written down, some podcasts and video channels are essentially blogs.

Some examples include:

[Eric Berger's writing on Ars Technica](#) and [Ars Technica](#) generally - Ars is a long-running tech magazine with articles written in a blog-type format. Eric Berger is Ars' space editor and his articles are well written. [Beth Mole](#) writes about health and her style is both entertaining and informative.

[Schneier on Security](#) - this is a long-running blog by Bruce Schneier, all about cybersecurity. It's very famous and is constantly updated.

Podcasts

[Revolutions](#) - this is a weekly podcast by Mike Duncan; he is well known for this and his epic [The History of Rome](#) podcast that ran weekly from 2007 until 2012. His show is scripted and very well written.

[Ghibliothèque](#) - this is a podcast about every Studio Ghibli movie and related things, including animation more generally. The tone is serious and well written.

[The Daily](#) - a daily news analysis by Michael Barbaro at the NY Times. This is a professional news podcast, produced to a daily deadline. The language is straightforward and explanations clear.

[XKCD](#), a webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math and language.

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End

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