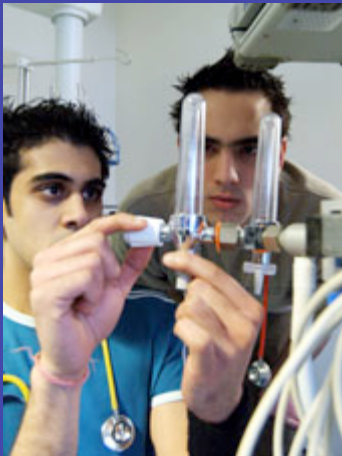


Blogs and RSS: RSM 20 January 2005



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I shall cover...

- The evolution of blogs
- The demography of blogging
- How to blog: a practical exercise

My education in blogging

- Professional:
 - current awareness service for medical educators using blog to deliver:
<http://minnesota.ncl.ac.uk/medicaleducation/>
 - METRO project: <http://metro2.blogspot.com/>
- Personal: desire to inflict myself on the world:
<http://tomroper.typepad.com/>
 - Blogger
 - iBlog
 - TypePad/MarsEdit/NetNewsWire

Background

New medical schools in England:

- Bradford
- BSMS
- Derby
- Durham
- HYMS
- Keele
- LWMS
- Peninsula
- UEA

New medical school developments

Birmingham review: Evaluation of the
National Expansion of Medical Schools
(NEMS)

Medical Schools: Delivering the Doctors of
the Future (DoH and GMC)

Intake in 2005 will have risen by 57%
against 1998 baseline

The need

- New medical school, many new to undergraduate teaching
- 200 teaching staff in Phase 1 alone
- Both medicine and education in state of permanent revolution

Coverage

- current news on medical education
- news on ICT applications, including the use of
- PDAs in medical education (“Project Handful”)
- new resources to support teaching, learning and research, both print and electronic
- links to other news feeds
- details of media coverage of BSMS
- events of interest to medical educators
- customised updates from PubMed

How's it done

- MovableType (was iBlog)
- Regular scanning of BMJ, THES, LTSN-01, databases, relevant listservs, newsgroups, other blogs...

Where next

- Review of use at end of pilot stage
- Taxonomy: METRO
- LTSN-01?
- Collaboration: LTSN-01, other medical schools, CHMS, BMA etc etc

Blogging

- Blog=weblog (first used December 1997)
- In its purest form, a log of sites visited
- A definition: “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence” (Herring 2004)

The OED says...

Oxford English Dictionary weblog, n. - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media

Address http://athens.oed.com/cgi/entry/00319399?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=weblog&edition=3e&first=1&max_to_show=10 Go

Google Search Web 277 blocked AutoFill Options

Links Customize Links Free Hotmail Windows Windows Media Add + Continue Add + Edit Cancel TypePad QuickPost

Oxford English Dictionary [FIND WORD](#)

weblog, n. NEW EDITION: draft entry Mar. 2003

Computing.

[PRONUNCIATION](#) [ETYMOLOGY](#) [QUOTATIONS](#) [DATE CHART](#)

1. A file storing a detailed record of requests handled (and sometimes also errors generated) by a web server.

1993 *comp.infosystems.www* (Usenet newsgroup) 4 Nov. (*title of posting*) Announcing getsites 1.5, a Web log analyzer. 1995 *Computer Technol. Rev.* July 10/2 The Key creates a log—the WebLog—listing everyone who has accessed software from a particular Web site. 1998 *Boston Globe* (Electronic ed.) 19 Oct., The server Web logs...indicated...which computers were hitting his site, the number of visitors, and the time they retrieved his page. 2002 *Network Computing* 21 Jan. 60/3 We were interested in seeing the most viewed products... Was chicken-wing sauce viewed more often than steak sauce...? We got a good, diverse group of actual Web log data.

2. A frequently updated web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person, and usually with hyperlinks to other sites; an online journal or diary.

1997 J. BARGER *Lively New Webpage* in *alt.culture.www* (Usenet newsgroup) 23 Dec., I decided to start my own webpage logging the best stuff I find as I surf, on a daily basis... www.mcs.net/~jorn/html/weblog.html. This will cover any and everything that interests me, from net culture to politics to literature etc. 1998 *Village Voice* (N.Y.) 8 Sept. 33/3 Jorn Barger's Robot Wisdom WebLog...might not be pretty, but it's one of the best collections of news and musings culled from the Web—and updated daily. 2000 *Independent* 23 Oct. II. 9/1 A weblog is simply a site where you post your thoughts whenever the muse strikes. 2002 *Times* (Electronic ed.) 14 Jan., There is a way to be stupendously well informed... Scour the highlights in...weblogs.

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[SIMPLE SEARCH](#) [ADVANCED SEARCH](#) SUBSCRIBER: Stanford University

Discussions Subscribe... Discussions not available on <http://athens.oed.com/>

Done Internet

Some landmarks

- First blog: 1996?
- Hosted blogging 2000:
 - Pitas
 - Blogger
 - Groksoup
- 9/11, Iraq war, 2004 election, Asian catastrophe...

More hosted services

- Livejournal: <http://www.livejournal.com/>
- Opera journal:
<http://my.opera.com/community/journals/>
- Diaryland: <http://www.diaryland.com/>
- Other factors:
 - better faster more powerful internet access
 - RSS and aggregators/newsreaders
 - convergence with the world of social software:
bookmarks, photos, FOAF

Demographics

- 8 million US Internet users have created a blog
- 27% of Internet users have read blogs or diaries of other Internet users
 - (Pew Internet & American Life Project)
- 4 million blogs listed on [Technorati](#)
- One forecast: 10.3 million by end of 2004
- Churn: 2/3 of blogs not currently maintained (Perseus Blog Survey)

Demographics (2)

- Early bias towards people employed in computing and allied sectors
- Young: 92.4% in Perseus survey aged < 30 years (n=4,120,000)
- And 44% male, 56% female authorship
- Audiences: nano-audience

What are blogs (1)?

- Herring et al:
 - Journalism
 - Filter
 - Knowledge blogs
 - Self-expression

What are blogs (2)?

- Possible analogies:
 - Diaries
 - Commonplace books
 - Pamphlets
 - Letters
 - Posters
 - All of the above and more
- “All human life is there”

Taxonomy of blogs (Amy Gahran)

- Link-only
- Link-blurb
- Brief remarks
- List-style postings
- Short articles
- Long articles
- Series

To illustrate...

- <http://www.pepysdiary.com/>
- <http://tomroper.typepad.com/>
- Paul Hollands:
 - <http://minnesota.ncl.ac.uk/fuzzybuckets/>
 - <http://minnesota.ncl.ac.uk/smalladventures/>
 - <http://minnesota.ncl.ac.uk/paulhasmostlybeen/>
- <http://tscott.typepad.com/tsp/>

How easy is it?

- Let's make one now
 - <http://www.blogger.com>

RSS

- Rich site summary
- Or Really Simple Syndication
- Or RDF Site Syndication
 - RSS 0.9, 1.0, 2.0, RDF, Atom....
- Some RSS [in its natural habitat](#)

Aggregators

- Desktop:
 - NetNewsWire
- Web-based:
 - <http://www.bloglines.com>

Anonymity/pseudonymity/provenance/authority

- All blogs are by definition public, expect those protected by technical barriers
- Anonymity/pseudonymity
 - <http://belledejour-uk.blogspot.com/>
- Authority: fake presidential sites

Archiving and preservation

- How useful will blogs be to students of the future?
- How to preserve them?
- Crash of weblogs.com
- Particular challenges:
 - Comments/trackback
 - Link rot

The blogger's world view (by Hugh at gapingvoid.com)

