


Ten years in an open-necked shirt: blogging for fun and profit, 1997-2007



Tom Roper

LfN, Sheffield, 15 June 2007

I shall cover...

- ✓ What are blogs and RSS feeds?
- ✓ Their history and evolution
- ✓ Why blog?
- ✓ Why read blogs?
- ✓ How library and information services might use blogs and RSS?
- ✓ Let's blog now

My education in blogging



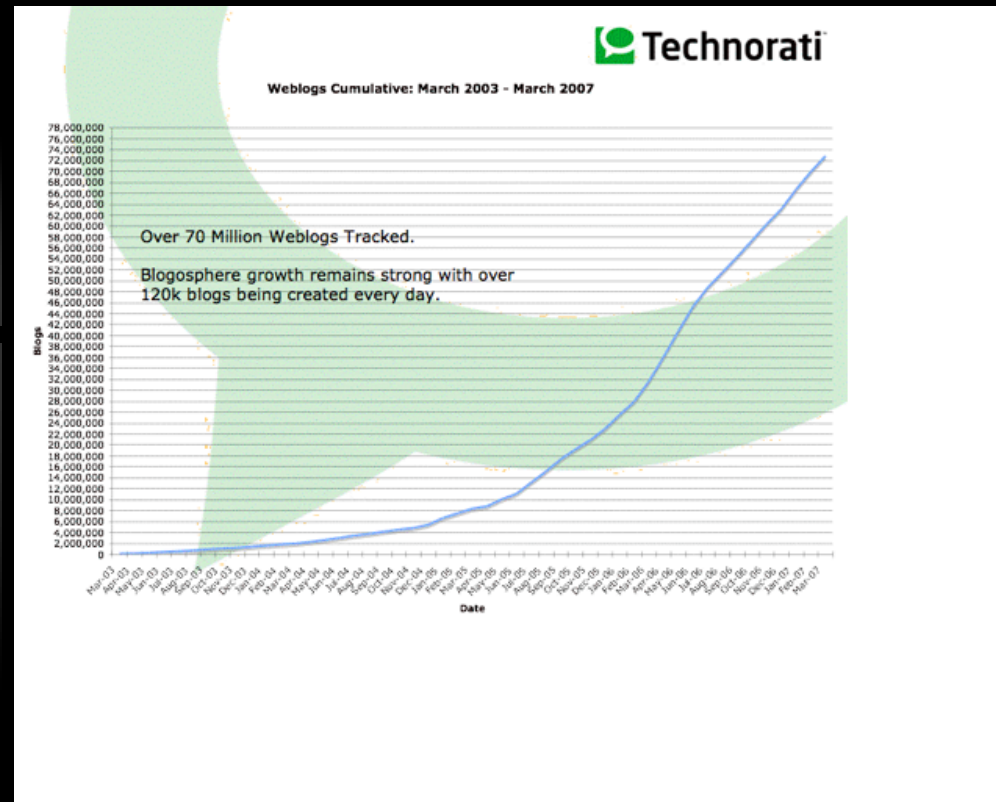
- ✓ Professional:
 - ✓ current awareness service for medical educators using blog to deliver: <http://www.medev.ac.uk/blogs/medicaleducation/>
 - ✓ METRO project: <http://metro2.blogspot.com>
 - ✓ Medical humanities: <http://medhums.blogspot.com>
 - ✓ Language learning: <http://languagelearningcentre.wordpress.com>
- ✓ Personal:
 - ✓ <http://tomroper.typepad.com>
 - ✓ <http://tomroper.typepad.com/marathon2005/>

Hosts and tools



- ✓ Hosts: Blogger, TypePad, WordPress
- ✓ Desktop editors: iBlog, MarsEdit, ecto
- ✓ RSS reader: NetNewsWire

The growth of blogging: Technorati state of the world live web March 2007



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State of the world live web March 2007

- ✓ 70 million weblogs
- ✓ About 120,000 new weblogs each day, or...
- ✓ 1.4 new blogs every second
- ✓ 3000-7000 new splogs (fake, or spam blogs) created every day
- ✓ 1.5 million posts per day, or...
- ✓ 17 posts per second
- ✓ Growing from 35 to 75 million blogs took 320 days

State of the world live web March 2007 (2)

- ✓ Japanese the most used blogging language at 37%
- ✓ English second at 33%
- ✓ Chinese third at 8%
- ✓ Italian fourth at 3%
- ✓ Farsi a newcomer in the top 10 at 1%
- ✓ Technorati tracked 230 million posts with tags or categories
- ✓ 35% of all February 2007 posts used tags
- ✓ 2.5 million blogs posted at least one tagged post in February

The OED says...

Oxford English Dictionary weblog, n. - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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

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.

TOP

LIST BY ENTRY LIST BY DATE ENTRY MAP PRINT MAIL HELP SIGN OUT

SIMPLE SEARCH ADVANCED SEARCH SUBSCRIBER: Stanford University

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

Done Internet

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)

What are blogs?



- ✓ Posts in reverse chronological order
- ✓ Comments
- ✓ Searchable archives by date and subject
- ✓ Blogroll
- ✓ Ease of use
- ✓ RSS feed
- ✓ Possible analogies:
 - ✓ Diaries
 - ✓ Commonplace books
 - ✓ Pamphlets
 - ✓ Letters
 - ✓ Posters
 - ✓ All of the above and more
- ✓ “All human life is there”

What are blogs (2)?



✓ Herring et al:

- ✓ Journalism
- ✓ Filter
- ✓ Knowledge blogs
- ✓ Self-expression

✓ Gahrn's taxonomy

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

Some landmarks



- ✓ First blog: 1996?
- ✓ Hosted blogging 2000:
 - ✓ Pitas
 - ✓ Blogger
 - ✓ Groksoup
- ✓ US: 9/11, Iraq war, 2004 US presidential election
- ✓ Britain: 2005 election, 7/7, newspapers (Guardian)

What is RSS?

- ✓ Really Simple Syndication (RSS 2.0)
- ✓ RDF Site Summary (RSS 1.0 and RSS 0.90)
- ✓ Rich Site Summary (RSS 0.91)
- ✓ Atom

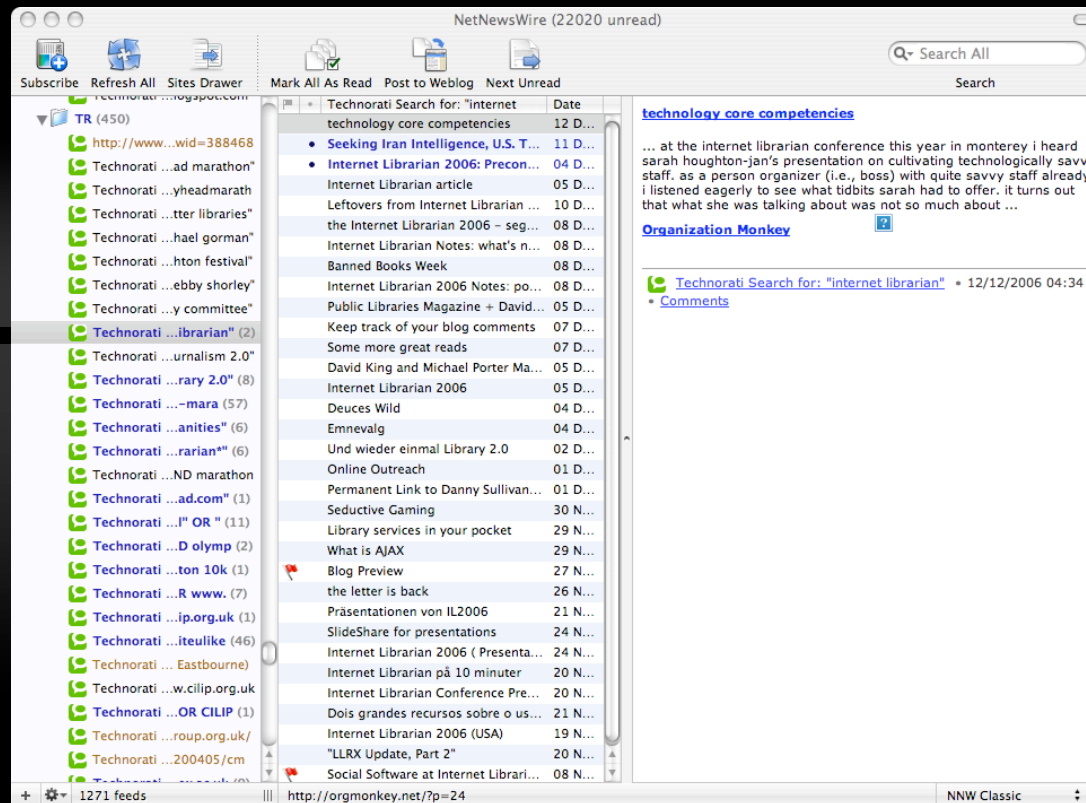
RSS in the raw

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//
//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0
Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/
xhtml1-transitional.dtd"> <html
xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xht
ml" dir="ltr" lang="en"> <head
profile="http://gmpg.org/xfn/11">
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type"
content="text/html; charset=UTF-8"
/> <title>Off-message cake &laquo;
Language Learning Resources</title>
<meta name="generator"
content="WordPress.com" /> <!--
leave this for stats -> <meta
name="author" content="Ainslie
Johnson / Original design by Andreas
Viklund - http://andreasviklund.com"
/> <link rel="stylesheet"
```

What is RSS (2)?

- ✓ XML-based
- ✓ Machine readable but not human readable
 - ✓ Hence newsreaders:
 - online: eg [Bloglines](#), Google Reader, Newsgator online
 - offline: NetNewsWire

NetNewsWire



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To illustrate...

- ✓ <http://www.pepysdiary.com/>
- ✓ <http://tomroper.typepad.com/>
- ✓ <http://tscott.typepad.com/tsp/>

Why should libraries use them?



- ✓ Effective information dissemination
- ✓ Human face of lis services
- ✓ Create trust and community
- ✓ Become leaders

Why blog/read blogs?



- ✓ Self-expression
- ✓ Obtain feedback
- ✓ Repository for information/links
- ✓ Share experience
- ✓ Build a community
- ✓ Niche interests
- ✓ Participate
- ✓ Diverse views/bypass MSM
- ✓ Instant comment
- ✓ Aggregate
- ✓ Community

Some library applications

- ✓ Current awareness
- ✓ Projects/plans
- ✓ RSS feeds from OPACs, commercial databases, ToCs etc
- ✓ Podcasts
- ✓ Book reviews/journal clubs
- ✓ Integrate other social software tools

Dos and don'ts (an arbitrary list)



Do...

- ✓ Use own voice
- ✓ Link
- ✓ Answer questions
- ✓ Act on feedback
- ✓ Post regularly
- ✓ Be brief
- ✓ Be human
- ✓ Be interesting

But don't...

- ✓ Self-promote
- ✓ Lie
- ✓ Talk like marketing
- ✓ Post erratically
- ✓ Be dull

Let's build one



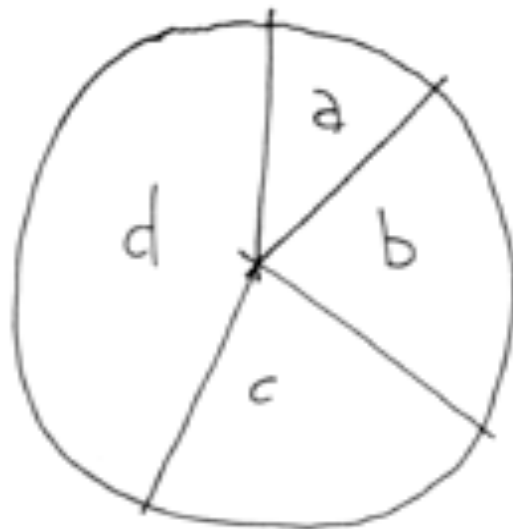
✓ <http://www.blogger.com>

Find blogs



- ✓ Technorati: <http://www.technorati.com>
- ✓ Mainstream search engines

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



a: Iraq
b: pet photos
c: incoherent
rants
d: I really
need to get
laid