

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE



Blogging

A Small Personal Agency With **BIG** Results



Blogging: Introduction to Blogging

A blog is an online journal. Today, blogs are a core focus of small business websites.

Why? Among other things, blogs help small businesses come up in Google searches. Debbie Weil, author of the Corporate Blogging Handbook, says the term "blog" stands for "Better Listings on Google" (though Wikipedia opts for the more [traditional definition](#)).

In this section, we'll take a look at how you can get started blogging.

What's Blogging?

The face of business is evolving, now it's just as important to be human as it is to create better widgets. A blog gives your company a way to showcase its personality and culture in a sort of online headquarters.

There are a lot of software platforms available for blogging, including Blogger, Posterous, Tumblr, Movable Type, and TypePad. We'll give you a quick lay of the land, but we're going to focus on one of the most popular blog platform choices: WordPress.

Why Blog? The Benefits of Blogging:

Demonstrate thought leadership: Share your smarts with the world and show that you're a leader in your field by continually sharing your insight on the things that matter most to your customers and prospects.

Improve SEO: Or "Search Engine Optimization". Remember, because you are sharing great content about topics related to your organization, you'll get higher rankings on Google and other search engines.

Build brand awareness: When people are searching for topics related to your business online, they are more likely to find you if you're blogging regularly, which means that more people will get to know your brand.

Build relationships: Be everywhere your customers and clients expect you to be - chances are they will be looking to your blog to bring a human element to your brand.

Provide customer support: Blogging provides a platform to resolve customer issues, address consistent problems, and highlight your solutions..

Build community: Build great content and an inviting forum, promote it, it and people will make your blog a destination.

Communicate news: Keep your customers and non-customers informed about the latest and greatest with your products and services.



According to a study by Hubspot of their customer base, the average company that blogs has 55% more website visitors, 97% more inbound links, and 434% more indexed pages than those that don't.

Know Your Options: Blogger

Blogger is the grandfather of the blogging world.

Pros: It's quick and easy for beginners to setup and get started. Blogger is owned by Google, so your content will live on their servers. Expect the blog to run near 100% of the time, and lots of integration with other Google applications.

Cons: Blogger only offers a hosted solution, which means that it will be harder for you to make customized changes. If you're serious about blogging, we recommend WordPress.



Know Your Options: Tumblr

Tumblr & Posterous are both a cross between a micro-blog (like Twitter) and a full-fledged blogging platform (like WordPress).

Pros: Tumblr & Posterous break posts up into content-specific categories like photos, quotes, music, etc. Part bookmark, part blog, they are both awesome ways to keep a live stream. Posterous is famous for their post by email feature, while Tumblr is a great service to build community around finding and sharing new ideas.

Cons: Both sites aren't the easiest to fully customize, and they can be confusing for beginners.



Know Your Options: WordPress

WordPress is one of the most popular blog platforms available today.

Pros: WordPress comes in two flavors, WordPress.com the hosted version, and WordPress.org the source code. This means that you can get started right away, and as your technical expertise grows, your blog can grow with it.

It's free, easy to customize, and supported by an incredible community of volunteers who work hard to improve the platform every day.

Cons: To fully customize the hosted version at WordPress.com, you might need to upgrade your account.

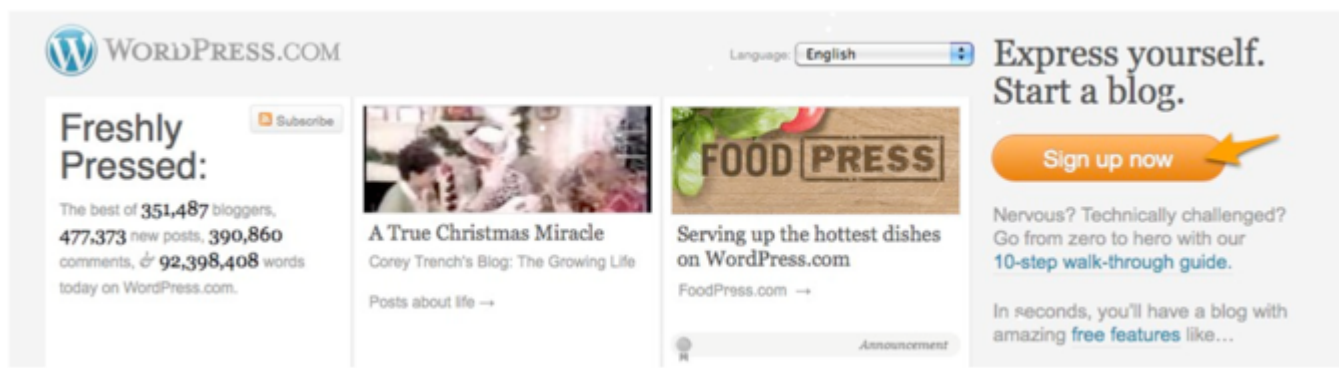


Blogging: Setup A WordPress Blog

Step 1

Go to <http://www.wordpress.com/>

Click Sign Up Now.



The screenshot shows the WordPress.com homepage. At the top left is the WordPress logo and 'WORDPRESS.COM'. To the right is a language dropdown menu set to 'English'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The first column, 'Freshly Pressed:', features a 'Subscribe' button and statistics: 'The best of 351,487 bloggers, 477,373 new posts, 390,860 comments, and 92,398,408 words today on WordPress.com.' The second column displays a featured post titled 'A True Christmas Miracle' by Corey Trench's Blog: The Growing Life, with a 'Posts about life →' link. The third column is a promotional banner for 'FOOD PRESS' with the text 'Serving up the hottest dishes on WordPress.com' and a link to 'FoodPress.com →'. On the right side of the page, there is a large orange 'Sign up now' button with a yellow arrow pointing to it. Below this button, text reads: 'Express yourself. Start a blog. Nervous? Technically challenged? Go from zero to hero with our 10-step walk-through guide. In seconds, you'll have a blog with amazing free features like...'

Step 2

Fill in your information, and Click Sign up.

Note: On WordPress.com, you can use a custom domain for your blog, such as example.com, instead of the default address you get when you sign up, like example.wordpress.com. This is called Domain Mapping, but keep in mind it's a paid upgrade.

Get your own WordPress.com account in seconds

Fill out this one-step form and you'll be blogging seconds later!

The registration form includes the following fields and instructions:

- Blog Address:** sinclairscafe.wordpress.com ✓. Instruction: "Choose a wordpress.com address or get your own URL with a custom domain name. (5) Sign up for just a username."
- Username:** sinclairscafe ✓. Instruction: "At least 4 characters. Lowercase letters and numbers only."
- Password:** [Redacted] ✓. Instruction: "Passwords must match! Use a mix of upper and lowercase characters to create a strong password." A "Strong" indicator is shown.
- Confirm:** [Redacted] ✓. Instruction: "If your password isn't strong enough, you won't be able to continue with signup."
- E-mail Address:** sinclairscafe@gmail.com ✓. Instruction: "We send important administration notices to this address."

At the bottom, there is a checkbox for "Subscribe to our blog to learn about new themes, features, and other news." and a "Sign up" button with a right-pointing arrow.

Step 3

Check your email for your activation link.

It might take a little while to arrive, so why not make the most of your wait? Use this chance to fill in your WordPress.com Profile.

Click Save Profile.

Check Your E-mail to Complete Registration

An e-mail has been sent to sinclairscafe@gmail.com to activate your account. Check your inbox and click the link in the message. It should arrive within 30 minutes. If you do not activate your account within two days, you will have to sign up again.

Update Your Profile!

If you haven't got your activation e-mail why not update your profile while you wait?

The profile update form includes the following fields:

- First Name:** Alexandra Catherine
- Last Name:** Sinclair
- About Yourself:** I run a small cafe in New Braunfels, TX. I enjoy ice skating, skiing, and reading historical fiction.

At the bottom, there is a "Save Profile" button with a right-pointing arrow.

Step 4

Confirm your email address, and your account's active. Let's take a look at our new blog by **clicking View your site**.

Your account is now active!

The page shows the following information:

- Username:** sinclairscafe
- Password:** [Redacted]

Below the login fields, there is a message: "Your account is now active. [View your site](#) or [Login](#)". An orange arrow points to the "View your site" link.

Welcome to Your New Site!



[Home](#) [About](#)

Hello world!

Posted on [December 9, 2010](#) by [sinclairscafe](#)

Welcome to [WordPress.com](#). This is your first post. Edit or delete it and start blogging!

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [1 Comment](#)

Recent Posts

- [Hello world!](#)

Archives

- [December 2010](#)



Blogging: Blogging Best Practices

You've set up a blog, now what?

This section will explore blogging best practices including:

- What you should blog about
- How often you should blog
- How to respond to comments

Let's get started.

How Often Should You Blog?

Like other Social Media platforms, **your blog will thrive with consistency.**

Try blogging at least once a week at a minimum, and more if you can. A lot of companies have built communities around their blog, inviting customers to engage with them on a daily basis.

Looking for more content? Ask a valued customer or vendor to do a guest post. Think of recurring features, like weekly interview series where you feature clients, industry leaders, and mentors.

But don't get overwhelmed. Blogging should be a priority, but it won't be the end of the world if you skip a week here and there.

Responding to Comments

With most blogging platforms you will have the option to **moderate comments**. This means that you can read and approve comments before they are posted. We recommend posting most comments, with the exception of spam or comments that include rude language.

From time to time you might get a commenter who is dissatisfied with your product, service, or even your blog post. **This is a great opportunity to show that you're not afraid of negative feedback** and that you'll do whatever it takes to make the situation right. You'd be surprised how often a negative commenter when handled correctly can turn into your most loyal customer.

Remember to respond to every comment that's posted, even if it's just to say thanks!

What to Blog About if You're B2B

- New Products/ Featured Products
- Featured Vendors
- Success Stories
- Product Promotions
- Works in Progress
- Industry Leaders - Highlight the good work of your competition!

What to Blog About if You're B2C

- New Products/ Featured Products
- Upcoming Events
- Success Stories
- Product Promotions
- Works in Progress
- The concerns of your top customers

What to Blog About if You're A Nonprofit

- Provide Information
- Recruit Volunteers
- Give constituents A Platform for sharing
- Ask for Donations
- Share success Stories
- Share Photos and updates from conferences, events and volunteer projects.