

Listening (Script)

Listening. Part 1.

Recording script

You will hear an expert giving a talk about blogs and blogging. First, you have some time to look at Questions 1-5.

Pause

Now listen to Part 1 and answer Questions 1-5.

OK. I'm going to talk today about blogs and blogging. Though I'm assuming you're all familiar with what a blog is, let's just start with a definition. Perhaps the simplest definition is that a blog is a type of website in the form of a journal of one sort or another. It consists of posts - new material, or entries - that are arranged in chronological order, with the most recent post at the top of the page.

Now, what are the typical characteristics of a blog? Well, blogs are usually written by one person, they are usually updated regularly and they are often, though by no means always, about one particular topic. That topic might be the blogger's own life, as many blogs are personal diaries. But there are blogs on just about any topic you could think of - there are political blogs, news blogs, blogs about a particular hobby, etc., etc.

Now, most blogs are not monologues, because they allow readers to make their own comments on what appears in the blog, or to add their own information to it. In this way, people get into contact with each other, learning from each other, sharing ideas, perhaps making friends or even doing business with each other, wherever they are in the world.

Although blogs are very much part of modern life and there are literally millions of blogs on the web, the history of blogging is a pretty short one. There is some disagreement over what the first blog was, but many people reckon it was an online diary started by a student called Justin Hall in 1994. His site was called *Justin's Home Page*, and he later called it *Links From The Underground*.

At that point, the word 'blog' didn't exist. More websites like his started to spring up in the form of regularly updated online journals on various subjects, with links to other websites and forums for people to contribute their personal opinions.

In 1997, someone called Jorn Barger first used the term 'web log' to categorise this kind of website, when he launched his own website *Robot Wisdom*. In 1999, a blogger called Peter Merholz jokingly broke this word up into 'we blog' and therefore invented the term 'blog'. Pretty soon, everyone called the sites 'blogs' and the people writing them 'bloggers'.

You will hear Part 1 again.

[Text repeated]

Now you have some time to look at Questions 6-10.

Pause

Listen to Part 2 and answer Questions 6-10.

OK, now let's move on to how to run a blog, and what I'm going to do now is to tell you what I think is the best approach to workflow with a blog. First of all, you need to decide on the frequency of your blog posts. Some people do several a day, which is great if you can keep it up, others one a day. Once a week might be enough, but the key question is what the readers of your blog expect. They need to know when they can expect to see a new post on the blog, so whatever schedule you decide on, it's important to stick to it.

When you're going to do a post, start by reading material to find out what's being discussed in friends' blogs, or in other blogs related to the topic of yours. That way you can take these things into account to ensure that your blog is bang up to date.

Then start composing your blog post. If you're doing one that involves research and links, open a file for storing the sources of your information and the links you're going to put in the post. Also consider using pictures. These can make your blog much more attractive than one that's just text. If you use photos from the web, make sure you cite the source in your blog.

When you've completed the post, add some tags. If you don't have the kind of software that enables you to build them into the post, add them at the bottom. Tags are really important for searchability - they can get you new readers who find your blog via the tags.

If you think this is a particularly good post and you're really proud of it, announce it by sending links to it on social networking sites, together with a very brief summary of what it's about.

Then check your blog statistics to see how many people are reading and responding to your blog. Find out who's blogged about your post and reply to them, and give them a proper reply rather than just saying thanks.

After you've done all that, get off your own blog and comment elsewhere. Remember that you're not the only person blogging and putting out new material - there are lots of others doing the same and you should show them some respect by giving them comments and feedback on their posts where you feel it's appropriate.

Well, that's just some advice on being a good blogger. Blogging's obviously a major thing now in the world of electronic media and it's anybody's guess how it will develop in the future.

Now you will hear Part 2 again.

[Text repeated]

This is the end of the task.