Overview

A blog is a website that allows writers to easily post text, images, videos, links, and other materials. The use of blogs has grown from just one author writing a personal diary online to multiple authors contributing to one blog themed on similar subjects. Most blogs are interactive, allowing for comments.

Terms that are helpful to know

- **Post**: A single blog entry is a post. Each blog post is time-stamped, and typically these posts appear in reverse chronological order on the blog home page.
- **Category**: Each blog post can be categorized into a broad grouping of post topics. These categories help with the organization of the posts.
- **Tags**: Tags are similar to categories, but they are more specific. Each blog post can be “tagged” based upon the content within the post. These tags help readers identify what the post is about and find content quickly. Tagging posts is optional.
- **Subscribe**: When you subscribe to a blog, all posts on that site appear in a reader application. You can view all of the latest posts from all of the blogs you follow. An example of this would be using Google Reader (google.com/reader).

Blogging as a tool for teaching

- Have your students blog as a way to reflect on class discussions.
- Encourage interaction between students by having them read each other’s blogs and post comments.
- Open the course blog to the world so students write for a real, public audience.
- Start a conversation before class. Get your students thinking prior to class by posting a question or something thought provoking.
- Continue a conversation from class. Keep your students engaged after class by posting a question or something thought provoking.
- Hear how Elon instructor Victoria Shropshire uses blogs in her writing course. Visit [http://youtu.be/owOiXl8wa0s](http://youtu.be/owOiXl8wa0s) to view the video.
Anatomy of a blog

This is a screenshot of a recent blog post on Elon’s Technology blog. Take note of a few things:

- **Name:** The name of the blog is “Elon Technology Blog.”
- **Order:** The blog posts are listed in reverse chronological order and each post indicates the author and date published.
- **Categories:** Each blog post is categorized. Those categories are labeled at the bottom of each post. A reader could also navigate to a particular category by using the navigation on the right side of the window.
- **Tags:** Each blog post is tagged. Those tags are labeled at the bottom of each post. A reader could also navigate to a particular tag by using the tag cloud.

Ok... Ready to get started?

1. **Decide on your blogging platform:** Popular blogging platforms include WordPress ([wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)) and Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)). Elon University has its own instance of WordPress that is used for academic blogs. Contact Teaching and Learning Technologies at x5006 for assistance in creating a blog and to discuss ways to use a blog in your courses.
2. Create an account.
3. Customize your profile.
4. Start blogging.
5. Visit [http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/7-things-you-should-know-about-wordpress](http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/7-things-you-should-know-about-wordpress) for more info.