



WRITING FOR BLOGS

Writing for a blog is a little bit different than writing standard academic prose. Because a blog is for online users, you want to *focus on the reader*. In doing so, think about:

- The blog's voice / format
- The blog's audience and its language
- Connections that can be made to other online resources
- Multimodal possibilities

The Voice of the Blog

Every blog has a voice or format that is unique, however most blogs can be categorized as:

- > Personal/reflective – such as an online diary
- > News-driven – such as one run by a journalist reporting on current events
- > Op-eds – journalistic commentary on various topics
- > Informative – designed to both entertain and provide opportunities for learning
- > Notebooks – collections of various facts or research

* Some blogs are a combination of these types, such as news-driven op-eds or personal reflections on research

When posting on a blog site, it is important to think about which style of blog you are writing for.

You do not need to follow the blog's format in *every* post (experimentation is encouraged on the internet). However, if you change the voice, be aware of the choices that you make in doing so.

The Blog's Audience and Language

According to Jackson and Wallin (2009, p. 375), the internet in the YouTube age encourages a style of rhetoric that is “bottom-up” and “participatory”. It thereby forms various “publics through the back and forth process of online exchange.”

Because a blog is meant to be seen by others than yourself, as Jackson and Wallin suggest, you want to think about how your writing will be viewed. Certainly there is no ‘correct’ way of writing for an online audience, but you want to be aware of how your writing might be read by viewers.

Questions you might ask are:

- > Is my post written in plain language or is it heavy prose?
 - If it’s heavy prose, then you likely expect your readers to take their time with reading your post, whereas if it’s light-hearted and witty, they might read it more quickly
 - There are obvious advantages to both styles: a quick read might get more viewers, but dense prose might convey a more serious image
- > How ‘polished’ should my prose be?
 - If you intend to convince your audience of something you are saying, you may desire to have your writing as polished as possible. That way you, the blogger, display an image of scholarly thought
 - If you want your post to be fun and entertaining, you can play with the style a bit more, experiment with your language, or incorporate humour
- > How personal should my post be?
 - If you are writing a diary-styled blog, your posts are likely highly self-reflective. However, since the blog is public, even these reflections will be seen by others – so keep in mind that your writing is never private

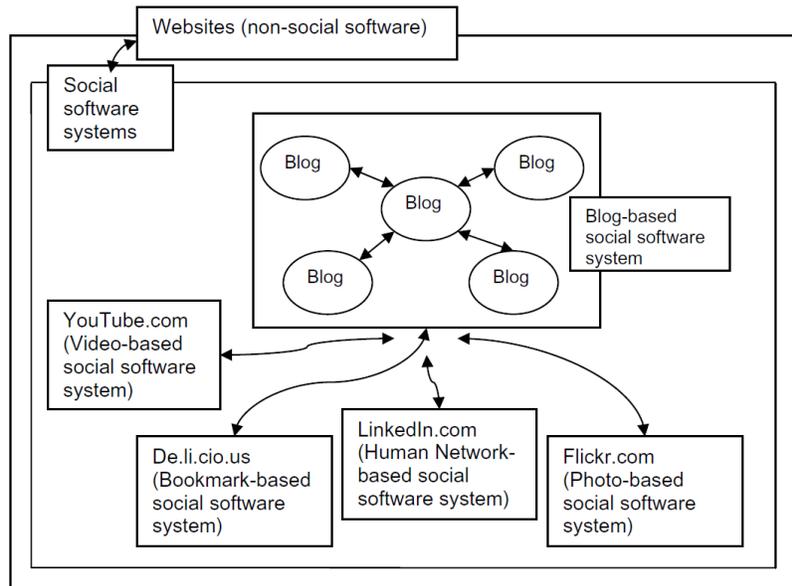
* Be sure to proofread your posts for typos and grammar mistakes before uploading your text...and then after it goes up, proof it again!

Connections to other Internet Resources

The internet features a wide array of platforms and sites that one can visit quickly. In blogs, it is common to refer to other websites in your text, often linking to them directly so that your reader can bounce in and out of your blog site, moving to other resources that you’ve recommended.

In your blog post, you may want to refer your reader to a newspaper article or send him or her to another blog you have looked at.

Consider the following model:



Source: Hyung Nam Kim, "The Phenomenon of blogs and theoretical model of blog use in educational contexts," *Computers and Education* 51 (2008): 1347.

As shown in the diagram, the possibilities for linking are endless. And by linking to other websites you encourage a pattern of internet use whereby they might also link to you!

Multimodal Presentation

Though the internet is text-driven, it is also highly multimodal – meaning, that it features anything from plain text to videos and images.

In your blog posts, you may want to offer similar forms.

- > Think about putting video directly into your post that a viewer might watch before moving on to the rest of your entry
- > Or, fill your posts with pictures that help you convey an idea or feeling related to your script

* Note that you want to be careful in your use of other modes. Follow the rule “nothing too much” – avoid putting in so many videos or pictures that your reader is lost in a sea of imagery.

Sources:

Brooks, Kevin et al. "Remediation, Genre, and Motivation: Key Concepts for Teaching with Weblogs." *Into the Blogosphere* (2004): 1-14.

Jackson, Brian and Jon Wallin. "Rediscovering the "Back-and-Forthness" of Rhetoric in the Age of YouTube." *College Composition and Communication* 61/2 (2009): 374-396.

Kim, Hyung Nam. "The Phenomenon of blogs and theoretical model of blog use in educational contexts." *Computers and Education*, 51 (2008): 1342-1352.