

Blogs

What: Blogs (short for 'weblogs') are often used by individuals as a kind of public diary or for commentary on current events. Many are politically-oriented for this reason. Often written with short articles of a single paragraph or half a page, blogs are usually updated frequently, sometimes even several times per day. Viewers of blogs can surf in the usual fashion to that webpage, but many receive the blog update in a 'subscription' format called RSS (such as Google Reader)

Where: <http://www.blogger.com> (aka, BlogSpot)

Why: Provide Internet links to current events of relevance to course content, pose timely questions about the reading material in the course, or offer provocative or controversial questions for discussion (students can comment with a single click on each blog post, and engage each other in dialogue in this fashion)

When: All class modalities; to engage students “outside” of the normal BlackBoard time.

How:

1. Visit Blogger.com and create a new account. Or, log in with your existing Gmail/Google account.
2. You will be taken to the Dashboard. Near the top-right is a text link to create a new blog.
3. Create a title. Spaces are fine here, but in the next field (Blog address) you must type a single word (that doesn't necessarily have to be the same word(s) as the previous field. Type in the Word Verification and click on Continue.
4. Choose a starter template, which will guide font size and color choices. You can always change this later. Click on Continue, and then Start Blogging on the next screen.
5. The Posting tab is self-explanatory and intuitive. Be sure to click the orange “Publish Post” button when done (the Save button is for “saving to finish it later.”
6. On the Settings tab, the “Basic” settings include if the blog is listed and part of search engines. The “Permissions” settings lets you restrict access to just people you invite (by email address) with a top number of 100 (you are also allowed to “add authors” to let students write their own posts in your blog). Under “Comments” you can restrict who is allowed to add comments. By default, the blog is public and searchable, anyone can read it, and anyone logged in can comment on posts.
7. Paste the blog URL to your syllabus (or email it to students). One option is to request/require students to use RSS to read updates (they click on the orange “speaker” icon in the address bar while at your blog). Google Reader is recommended; while logged in to Gmail, the “Reader” link is near the top-left of the page.

Uses of Blogs

1. Instructor can post ethical dilemmas and have students comment about how they would handle them.
2. WebQuests, or student-generated webquests (variations include asking them to post links related to a subject being discussed)
3. The instructor can post links to articles, video, etc. on current events related to the course and have students respond.
4. Students can write advice letters to future students in a public domain.
5. Role-play with other students in the class; different types of people relevant to your field (ie, as social worker who interacts with a mother, as politician talking with a constituent, as chemistry teacher talking to high school student, etc). Or individual role-plays, like pretending to blog as an influential person in your field.
6. Keeping an electronic journal vs. a paper one. Allows students to include direct links and share with other students.
7. As a reaction to current events. One instructor had students write their reactions to the shootings at Fort Hood in a blog after watching a live broadcast. The students were then asked to share what they wrote.
8. Blog about blogging. After students have completed several blogs over the semester, they reflect on what they have posted and write an additional blog or a midterm paper.
9. Journalism students keep a blog and learn about intellectual-property and copyright issues.
10. Posting quizzes via the blog and students answer questions in the comments. One instructor uses this to ensure that students have done their reading before class.
11. Ethical dilemmas can be posted and students can explain how they would handle the situation and respond to others' responses.
12. Students can comment with one-sentence summaries to the instructor's post. These techniques can also be applied in this format: "directed paraphrasing", "word journal", "application to major"
13. Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) such as: One minute papers, Muddiest Point, Movie Application, Student Pictures, Find the Company (students post the link and write about it instead of presenting in class), Double-entry journals, or Picture Prompt (the teacher posts the picture and the students reply in the comments).

Wikis

What: From the Hawaiian word for 'quick', Wikis may be summarized as a webpage that any user can update without logging in or needing special server access. If they can browse or surf to the page, then they can update it. The most famous example of a wiki is Wikipedia.org, the online encyclopedia created and updated by users.

Where: <http://www.wikispaces.com> or <http://sites.google.com/>

Why: Group projects, group essays, individual projects assembled on a class webpage, role plays, simulations (such as a company website), or amalgamated class notes.

When: Classes that want to display digital products/projects in a joint fashion, outside of BlackBoard.

Wikispaces:

1. For wikispaces.com, follow the prompts to create a site, paying close attention to permissions (do you want only members to update the site? If so, you'll need to grant access one at a time, or invite them manually). Alternative: allow students to create their own wikispaces site.

Google Sites:

1. For Google Sites, log in to Gmail and select MORE at the top left, then click on Sites.
2. Click on the button to Create New Site. Spaces are allowed in the "name" box, but will be automatically removed when you tab over to the URL box. Type the word verification code and click "Create Site"
3. You are taken to the site directly. The home page can be edited with the "edit page" button at the top-right. While editing, click the SAVE button in the top-right to return to viewing mode.
4. Click the "Create Page" button in the top-right. Give it a name (it's simplest to leave the default of "top level") and click Create Page. On the next screen, you are in the edit mode; click SAVE at the top-right to save your changes.
5. While in edit mode, hyperlinks can be inserted using the LINK button. Many types of objects (images, spreadsheets, video files, YouTube videos) can be added under the INSERT menu at the top-left. The Format, Table, and Layout options approximate functions familiar from MS-Word.
6. Permissions and logs of site activity can be seen under the "More Actions" button on the top-right and selecting "Manage Site."

Uses of Wikis

1. Group projects
2. Simulation of a fictional company's website
3. Collaborative class notes via a wiki. It's also possible to have students comb through the notes and come up with questions for the final exam
4. Students can write advice letters to future students in a public domain.
5. One group of students, sponsored by Penguin books, created a wiki novel. Other projects could be to create a mock textbook (or parts of one) in your field.
6. The instructor can provide empty outlines via the course wiki and have students collaboratively fill it in.
7. Students can goal-rank on the course wiki, and the instructor can review the material and align course goals.
8. Assess interest and preparation for the course, and adjust teaching agenda via the course wiki.
9. Students can post initial "truth statements" (what do they believe to be true about today's topic) to the course wiki. After the class lecture, students can then revise them.
10. Brainstorming and generating lists
11. Have students establish class norms for the syllabus
12. The instructor and students can explore a new or emerging area using a wiki. Everyone gathers information as a researcher.
13. Open access allows for guest instructors to visit or comment on the wiki.
14. Fold in more multimedia (pictures, video, hyperlinks) than traditional discussion board posts
15. Online e-Poster sessions
16. Create electronic portfolios of student work, presented in multimedia format rather than text documents

PowerPoint Alternatives

Prezi <http://prezi.com/>

- Graphically order/map concepts rather than use “slides”
- Can only insert pictures/animation from file and can draw freehand
- Can imbed YouTube and hyperlinks

SlideRocket <http://www.sliderocket.com/>

- Similar features to PowerPoint and Keynote
- Animations, effects, etc. are more accessible than PowerPoint
- Can only use flickr without having to save images to computer
- Can't directly imbed videos from YouTube
- Limited stock pictures, have to pay for others

Google Docs Presentations <http://www.google.com/google-d-s/presentations/>

Open Office Impress <http://www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html>

280 Slides <http://280slides.com/>

- Very similar to PowerPoint
- Pictures easy to use/search for
- Videos easy to imbed, can imbed YouTube videos
- Limited shapes, no animation, very limited abilities, but very easy to use

ThinkFree Show <http://member.thinkfree.com/member/goLandingPage.action>

- Basically free PowerPoint

Zoho Show <http://show.zoho.com/login.do>

- Basically free PowerPoint

PreZentIt <http://prezentit.com/>

- Can add a background image, but fill colors are only solid
- Text color will continually stop working, have to exit the program and re-enter
- Inserting a picture takes multiple steps
- Similar to PowerPoint, just takes longer to use

BrinkPad <http://www.brinkpad.com/>

- Mostly for drawing shapes (has a grid to make more complicated shapes)
- Limited in every other respect
- Might be good for drawing models and importing to a different slide show?

Screencasting: Jing

What: "Screencasting" refers to a digital recording of the action on a computer screen, and is sometimes called video screen capture. The programs visible on screen, the movement of the mouse, and the speaking voice of the presenter (captured by external microphone) are all part of the video. The overall effect is similar to imagining a video camera over the shoulder of a presenter sitting at the computer, with all on-screen action captured.

Where: <http://www.jingproject.com/>

Why: Augment or replace lecture; demonstrate a process on a website or particular piece of software.

When: Fully-online classes, possibly even F2F classes with a BlackBoard presence. Note that there is a five minute time limit – long videos would require expensive full-feature versions such as Camtasia and Captivate (usually \$150+ for the education license)

How:

1. Visit www.jingproject.com and download the appropriate version (PC or Mac).
2. Install and run Jing, which should open as a "sun" in the top-middle of your screen.
3. Verify you have a microphone plugged in and working (test it with Start/Programs/Accessories/Sound Recorder).
4. Click on the sun to see your options. Click on "capture"
5. Your mouse will turn into a target; go to the top-left of the program you wish to capture (or just the corner of your screen, if you want the whole screen), then "left click and hold" while you drag out the box to set the recording area. Let go when the rectangle is the desired shape and size.
6. A set of buttons will appear in the bottom-left of the recording zone. The leftmost button is for capturing just an image; it's the next one over (filmstrip icon) that will capture a movie when clicked.
7. After the countdown, all the action on screen (including mouse movement) will be captured in the movie, as well as the audio you speak into the microphone.
8. When you are ready to stop, click the STOP square in the bottom-left (be careful not to click the CANCEL icon in the bottom-right by accident). You will be taken to a preview, and from here you can save the file by clicking on the SAVE diskette icon.
9. The resulting file will be in the .swf format. Upload this to BlackBoard and link to it directly as a separate file. It will play natively in the browser. Note: since double-clicking on a .swf file in Windows will not play/work, it's usually best not to email it to students, but instead to link to it from inside BlackBoard.
10. Alternative: you can embed the .swf file within your HTML page if desired. The movie would then be a small window on part of a larger webpage in your course. This is best done from inside Dreamweaver: click Insert/Media/Shockwave and follow the prompts.

Screencasting: iSpring Free

What: "Screencasting" refers to a digital recording of the action on a computer screen, and is sometimes called video screen capture. AuthorPoint Lite is a free third-party program that lets you converted narrated PowerPoint presentations into a Flash video that works like screencasting, but without capturing mouse movements.

Where: <http://www.ispringfree.com/download.html>

Why: To replace or augment F2F lectures. If you can move content-delivery to online and make it all homework, you can "teach naked" of your technology while in the classroom and focus on discussions, case studies, practice, and group work.

When: Online classes, or for F2F classes looking to move lectures away from the classroom space/time.

How:

1. Visit ispringfree.com to download the software (be sure to choose a separate download if you have Office2010). Run the .msi file to install it on your computer.
2. Connect the microphone to the computer. Open desired presentation on PowerPoint.
3. Click on "Slideshow > Record Narration" to start the recording. Please note that you should not go backwards in slide progression during the recording.
4. Make sure the box next to "Link narrations to audio" does not have a check by it.
5. Click on "Set Microphone Levels". Speak into the microphone as you would use it normally, and the program will automatically adjust the volume levels. Once the volume is at a suitable level, click "OK" to return to the previous window.
6. Once you are ready to give your lecture, press "OK". Advance the slides normally, but leave 1-2 seconds before/after each click – do not talk over the slide transition. To finish recording, press the ESC key or just lick through to the end.
7. Click on "Save" when asked if you wish to save the slide timings as well. Save the presentation. You have finished recording your presentation.
8. Locate a new Tab across the top of PowerPoint labeled "iSpringFree". There are buttons here for quick-embed of a YouTube file, but this is not advisable for a voice-recorded lecture (it would be fine for a live-delivery PPT, however).
9. Click the Publish button. It's best to leave most fields at the default setting, though you should choose a save-to location such as the Desktop to find it easily, and you should rename the file at the top.
10. A new folder is created. Inside you will find three files. The SWF file is needed (the JS and HTML files can be ignored). Upload the SWF to BlackBoard and then create a link to it.
11. If you need to attach the SWF file to an email, also include the HTML and ask students to save both and double-click the HTML file to launch the movie.

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Where: <http://www.authorgen.com/authorpoint-lite-free>

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5. Once you are ready to give your lecture, press "OK". Advance the slides normally, but leave 1-2 seconds before/after each click – do not talk over the slide transition. To finish recording, press the ESC key or just lick through to the end.
6. Click on "Save" when asked if you wish to save the slide timings as well. Save the presentation. You have finished recording your presentation. Close PowerPoint.
7. Download and install AuthorPoint Lite. Open AuthorPoint Lite.
8. Click on the Import button on the upper left portion of the window. Click on "Select file" and select the presentation file you just saved.
9. Click on "Import Now". The program is converting your presentation to flash. The conversion is finished once you see a green checkmark next to your presentation (if there is no green checkmark, the conversion is not correct and you may need to re-record the presentation).
10. Go to your AuthorPoint Lite Projects Folder (usually in My Documents) and find the subfolder with the same name as your PowerPoint file.
11. Upload all the contents of this subfolder to BlackBoard (possibly by first zipping up the folder, uploading, then unzipping inside BlackBoard). Then, create a link inside BlackBoard to the .html file contained in the new folder you just uploaded. The net result is that when students click on this link, the video starts to play right there in BlackBoard.

YouTube: Advanced Uses for Teaching

What: YouTube can be a valuable source of videos to introduce topics, provide situations, role plays or case studies, and inject humor. True embedding in PowerPoint is complicated, but worthwhile. Additionally, advanced authoring tools can create “video quizzes” that are engaging ways to practice the material.

Where: <http://www.youtube.com/>

Why: Video quizzes add engagement and additional practice. Embedded videos into PPT inject engagement into a lecture.

When: Video quizzes should be done at home, while embedded YouTube is best done during F2F PPT lectures.

Video Quizzes

1. Sign in (or create account) at YouTube (note: since Google owns YouTube, linking a Gmail account to YouTube makes sense). Click on Upload near the top to upload your video (max 10 minutes, 2 GB)
2. After the video is uploaded (or at any point in the MyVideos list when you click on “edit”) you will see options for privacy.
3. Click on the tab for “Annotations”. On the right side, near the middle, are icons for adding new annotations. Hover over the icons to find “Add Note” and click on that one. Type your “message” in the box. You can move the box around or change colors.
4. Clicking on the chain icon opens the box to turn this note into a clickable button that links somewhere else. You will use the annotation-link to generate the buttons used to link videos to other videos.
5. Next, plan a “decision tree” of videos (and when they link to each other). Then, record the videos and upload them.
6. Carefully link the videos as described in your decision tree. You’ll need to pre-copy the “destination URL” for each link ahead of time (or else have multiple tabs open on your browser).

Embedded YouTube into PPT

1. Open PowerPoint and locate the desired slide. Find the Developer tab up top (if it’s not there, click the colorful Office icon [a circle] in the top-left and select “PowerPoint Options”, then click to display the Developer tab). In the “controls” box of the Developer tab, click on the tool icon (bottom-middle).
2. A new window pops up. Scroll to “Shockwave Flash Object”, highlight it, and click OK.
3. The window disappears and your cursor has changed. You are now supposed to draw a box where you want the video to go; left-click (and hold) for one corner of the box, and drag out the box until you find the right size, and then let go. You can resize the box later.
4. Find the URL of the YouTube video you wish to embed, and copy this URL.
5. On the PowerPoint slide, right-click on that box (now looking like an envelope) and select Properties.
6. The field labeled “Movie” has a blank spot next to it; paste the URL into that blank space. Use the arrow keys to move to the middle of the URL and replace the “/watch?v=” segment with simply “/v/”. An example would be <http://www.youtube.com/v/N7b0cLn-wHU>

Other Free Technologies

- PollEverywhere – students use texting from cell phones to “vote” silently from their seats; real-time updates on the screen allow for engagement, discussion (but not accountability)
- Twitter – microblogging (also possible from cell phones), useful for “reporting” in the field or for “backchannel” conversations in the lecture hall
- Facebook – social networking site ideal for community building (use privacy controls!) or for alternative to BlackBoard discussion boards
- GoogleAlerts – stay current on your research/teaching topic by being notified of new posts to the Internet (or just news organizations) on certain keywords
- iPhones/iPads – many apps (free and otherwise) turn these devices into powerful tools in the classroom. You may not want to “require” but to encourage. Useful to get them into buzz groups in large classes?
- Prezi – powerful and impactful alternative to PowerPoint. Integrates with YouTube.
- Stu’s Quiz Boxes – free, simple version of Jeopardy.
- Second Life – persistent (always-on) online world with character avatars. Looks like a game but there is no “objective”. Clear uses for synchronous distance interaction, but lacks easy to use (or free) tools for asynchronous educational purposes.

Web 2.0

For context of Web2.0, see “The machine is Us/ing us”:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gmP4nk0EOE

- Collaboration Tools - Skype; Google (text/talk, notebook, docs & sites)
- Social Networks - myspace; facebook; flickr (photo sharing)
- Social News Communities - Digg; Edtags; Scuttle; Jossle; NooZ; Wordsy
- Social Bookmarks - del.icio.us; furl; ma.gnolia; reddit; StumbleUpon
- Online whiteboards – dabbleboard; skrb|; scriblink; jotspac

Other Technologies That Cost Money

- Student response “clickers” – students “vote” electronically from their seats, adding engagement and accountability. Recommend iClicker (<http://www.iclicker.com/dnn/>).
- Flip cameras (or similar) – student-created videos can be hosted on YouTube or vimeo, then shared and discussed via network such as Facebook. Alternative: require students to use their own video devices, including webcam or iPhone video, for such low-stakes video production. Can be useful in online environments especially.