

Blogs: Unique Archives of Human Thought

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Weblogs are a popular form of Web publishing most commonly called 'blogs'. They are often referred to as online personal journals or diaries, though some are much more sophisticated than that. The personal journal is a well known method for individuals to engage in reflective thought, but blogging presents a way of taking it to another level. Blogging¹ is a way for individuals with an Internet connection to publish material for free on the Internet for anybody to read. When we talk about weblogs, we're talking about a way of organizing information, as what the blogger² writes about doesn't make him or her a blogger; it is that the person writes about a topic frequently and ad nauseam, while including lots of links, pictures or graphics. With a few exceptions, blogs are mostly personal diaries and as such are fascinating archives of human thought. They can provide useful insights to aid in dealing with humanity's psychological problems such as depression or addiction as well as providing a window into what the average person is thinking about.

Some of the reasons that people blog are for self development, to improve their writing skills, as a way of collecting information or developing an expertise on specific subjects, for making and extending relationships or for building a community with people who share similar interests. For others the blog serves a social need to share - information, advice or experience in the name of social responsibility or caring. The mothers who blog (see below), were a group that I found were particularly community minded in how they shared resources and information.

¹ The process of writing in the blog.

²The person who writes the blog.

It is also highly likely that for some people the process of blogging may serve as a form of ego gratification. Having strangers responding and commenting on a person's blog, may give some bloggers a feeling of importance, as they feel that in some way they are the centre of other people's attention, particularly if they end up with regular readers and regular comments. If the apologies from some bloggers for skipping a day of posting is anything to go by, some bloggers take this 'responsibility to their public' aspect quite seriously and actually appear to believe the Internet population relies on their daily blog posts so that much that readers may be disappointed if they do not post regularly. For some people, the process of publishing their views and thoughts may also help them feel good about themselves and their subject positions; particularly those who lack validation or who are feeling oppressed by economic, political or social circumstances.

The format of blogs allows for instant communication and dialog between writer and audience and for some people who feel lonely or disconnected this may provide an opportunity to feel part of the larger world and connected to others. The blog can also serve as a safety valve for the frustration of day to day living, as a lot of bloggers readily take the opportunity to vent and complain to the world about what is going on in their lives. For others the blog is a way of keeping in contact with family and friends, as their blogs are locked for viewing from the general public. A blog can also be a showcase and type of 'advertising space' for a person or a business in a less formal way than a web site.

I have just spent many days reading people's blogs and I am amazed by the amount of time and effort bloggers invest and how much 'self' people are willing to place in a public arena. While many of the blogs are to all intents and purposes 'anonymous' in that people do not give their real names or addresses, they post their photos and such a wealth of information that I would question the anonymity aspect in some cases. I noticed that many bloggers are involved in what they call an 'online game', where they request each other to truthfully list '5 weird habits'. If you only read blogs for these lists, there is much to learn. A random one I read catalogues: *I obsessively touch dog and cat noses, I'm obsessed with bleach and must bleach my kitchen every day, I cannot sleep with any doors open in the house, and I must get ready every day in exactly the same order.*

Blogs provide an unprecedented opportunity for anyone interested in studying the human condition to learn more about the lives of others. What makes it even more interesting is the depth and reflexivity employed by some bloggers in creating and maintaining their blogs. By this process they willingly provide a wealth of personal information to the world at large, information the average person up to now would never have the resources to access. In this regard I believe the blogging community are able to give mental health professionals a unique opportunity to learn more about how people think, live and feel.

Here are a sample of some of the blogs I visited:

<http://notsoordinarymom.blogspot.com/> Reflections of a not so ordinary mom: *I am a master Transformer fixer, professional finger painter, outdoor park connoisseur, a wife with pizzazz, spunky momma of a three-year-old boy, and aspiring writer. Oh yeah, I've got skills.*

<http://grumpymommy.blogspot.com/> Confessions of a GrumpyMommy. *Another day, another dollar. Oh wait, I'm a sahm(stay at home mom). I don't get paid. I forgot. Boy would I have looked foolish showing up at a job I don't have to receive an invisible check that I can't cash.* Grumpy Mommy has an amazing amount of links to other blogs as well as being a prolific and regular writer about the fine details of her life.

<http://recoveringstraightgirl.blogspot.com/> Written by a lesbian who was previously a wife and mother. She has written a very thoughtful '12 Steps to Becoming a Lesbian'.

<http://internetloves.blogspot.com/>. This blog is run by a single mother in New Zealand and is a beautifully written chronicle of day to day life, with a focus on her Internet relationships. with a Canadian man, who she has since met on several occasions. I have bookmarked this one, as I got quite involved in her story.

<http://www.mloap.blogspot.com/> 'my life on a plate ' is run by a Canadian artist who has also filmed himself working on a mural and made it available on his blog. He has a number of video links of his life that just require a click to view. He is also well versed in politics and many of postings take a political slant.

<http://daridonovan.net/blog/> Darina is an American woman who hates President Bush and has a son in the American military. Some things we learn about her when we go to her self-run blog include:

- 1.... I saw the dentist on Wednesday, all is well within the mouth, lol.
- 2....I have 2 sisters and there is 4.5 yrs between us all, I am the middle child.
- 3....I try my damndest to learn one new thing each and every day.
- 4....I have more degrees than I care to think about.
- 5....I am a breast cancer survivor going on 13 years now. Hooray!
- 6....I once filmed my own documentary on a true crime case.
- 7....My Mother and I are finally resolving our lifetime differences
- 8....My husband's snoring drives me up the wall at night, its why I am up now.
- 9....I was once Miss Kawasaki (motorcycle princess) years ago.
- 10..I have lived all over the US, Greece, and Spain.

<http://www.whitepage.com.au/libertas/>

A prolific writer who bills himself as 'looking at Australian politics from a libertarian/conservative perspective'.

<http://saudijeans.blogspot.com/> Ahmed, a 21 year old student in Saudi Arabia, writes about his daily life in Riyadh, from the hassles of being pulled over by

the local military to how his studies in pharmacy are progressing.

And one you just have to take a peek at, <http://twochineseboys.blogspot.com/>. Their motto is 'life is short, make fools of yourselves while you can". They make extensive use of video, with a multitude of links to them miming songs – I loved it!

To see how easy it was I set up my own blog at www.blogger.com , one of the best known sites hosting web logs at no charge. I got to decide what to name my blog, then I was able to add as much or as little as I wanted about myself, with fields for favourite movies, books, etc and the opportunity to add a picture. Each time I want to say something – this might be commenting on political news, the weather or what I feel like eating for dinner, I do what is known as 'making a post.' This is done by clicking the 'Blogthis' button on the website which brings up an area to type in, somewhat like an email. Anybody reading my blog is free to also comment on anything I have said - anonymously if they prefer. I will leave my blog active for awhile, so that if any ACA members would like to try posting a comment, they are more than welcome to test the process using mine at <http://aca-practice.blogspot.com/> .

Anyone can easily set up a blog on: www.blogger.com, www.blqosome.com, or at an Australian site, www.whitepage.com.au . The msn website also offers Australian blogging facilities in an area called 'my space', however it appears that Australia's teenagers are the heaviest users of it here - see <http://spaces.msn.com/> if you want to explore further. The difference between a blog and an Internet forum or newsgroup is that only the blog author can create new subjects for discussion on a blog. People that visit the blog are able to post or comment, but only the blog owner or editor will initiate and frame discussion. In a forum anyone that participates can initiate or change the discussions.

If you are interested in reading more blogs from around the world, Google now has a blog search located at <http://blogsearch.google.com/> .

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History of human thought spans across the history of humanity. It covers the history of philosophy, history of science and history of political thought, among others. The discipline studying it is called intellectual history. Merlin Donald has claimed that human thought has progressed through three historic stages: the episodic, the mimetic, and the mythic stages, before reaching the current stage of theoretic thinking or culture. According to him the final transition occurred with the invention of... EMBED (for wordpress.com hosted blogs and archive.org item tags).
Anticipations of the reaction of mechanical and scientific progress upon human life and thought. by. Wells, H. G. (Herbert George), 1866-1946. Human thought is an amazing thing. It has given us science, literature, morality, and last -- but certainly not least -- philosophy. Thought even has the power to create new realities. And it's not primarily thinking of literature and the arts or even of technology. It's thinking of the entire social world. So let's start at the beginning and ask just what thoughts are in the first place. When you ask the person in the street, like our roving philosophical reporter did, she or he is liable to tell you that thoughts are that little voice inside your head -- where that means inside the brain, if the person is a materialist and inside the mind, if person is a dualist. But we're trying to figure out what thoughts are, not where they are. What makes humans unique? Scientists have taken another step toward solving an enduring mystery with a new tool that may allow for more precise comparisons between the DNA of modern humans and that of our extinct ancestors. Just 7% of our genome is uniquely shared with other humans, and not shared by other early ancestors, according to a study published Friday in the journal Science Advances. "That's a pretty small percentage," said Nathan Schaefer, a University of California computational biologist and co-author of the new paper. "This kind of finding is why scientists are turning away from thinking that we humans are so vastly different from Neanderthals." Archives of Sexual Behavior. 13. After providing informed consent, participants completed a survey of being in a non-heterosexual relationship from the unique qualities of CNM relationships (i.e., having multiple concurrent sexual or emotional partners, regardless of sexual orientation) of human mating psychology. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66, 1081-1093.