

READY NET GO ... NEWS

November 2007

<http://www.readynetgo.net>

610-856-0990

Tip of the Month

When you visit a website, have you seen links for “del.icio.us”, “Digg This” or “Slashdot it”? Ever wonder what they are but haven’t had time to figure it out?

del.icio.us – social bookmarking site
<http://del.icio.us/>

del.icio.us enables you to keep track of your Internet Favorites for use on any computer. If you travel a lot and don’t have a laptop, this system can work really well if you frequently visit the same sites. Create or login to your account and then add or view bookmarked pages. If other parties allow it, you can also have access to their bookmarks.

Digg – information sharing site
<http://www.digg.com/>

By joining Digg, you can discover and share web articles with others. By voting on and/or submitting articles, you can share the information you find useful while researching online. The more “diggs” an article receives, the more prominent it is displayed. Searching Digg may reveal a perfect article that did not appear after using a search engine.

Slashdot – information sharing site
<http://slashdot.org/>

Similar to Digg, you can submit articles for review by the Slashdot staff as well as read about current news that others have found interesting. The site leans more towards those that are tech savvy. Sections include: Science, IT, Hardware, Linux, Games and more.

Should You Start a Blog?

Do you enjoy writing and sharing ideas with others? Are you comfortable sending email and consider yourself to be computer oriented? If so, blogging may be just for you.

What is a blog?

A blog is a **chronological web journal** that conveys thoughts, ideas, and facts (often in an unedited medium). Common topics associated with blogs include business products/services, personal hobbies, tutorials, political opinions, media reviews, technology and more. You can start your own blog on any topic you choose by creating an account on one of many “blogging” websites which will help you get started. No need to know special code anymore – if you can send email, you can post an entry to a blog.

There are **two important concepts** to blogs:

- 1) Blogs convey information and encourage discussion around a topic.

There are many experts in the world and thanks to the Web the possibilities of interacting with far greater numbers of people have increased exponentially. Since nearly all blogs include a comments section that allows individuals who read the post to respond and share their own thoughts, blogs can be considered a round table discussion in cyberspace.

- 2) The best blogs are updated regularly with new entries.

Just like websites, if there isn’t any new information on the site, people are less likely to come back. Weekly or daily blogs on a specific topic encourage people to read your entries and join the discussion.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.thesavvyboomer.com – informative, current blog geared for those over 50 but enjoyable for any age.
2. www.thegreenguide.com – click on **Blogs** for some funny and very useful info on “green living”.

Who uses blogs?

Individuals – Do you enjoy interacting with others online? Do you want your ideas to be heard? Becoming a member of the blogosphere (the network of bloggers around the world), will enable you to interact with countless others who may or may not share your same opinions.

Businesses – Blogs enable companies to explain and showcase products or services alerting loyal customers or interested individuals to explore what they have to offer. Blogs also allow employees to get acquainted with each other, discuss projects that different departments are working on, and highlight upcoming events, news and organizational memos.

Educational institutions/Non-profits – Professors use blogs to keep students informed of new coursework or revisions to current assignments. They also use blogs as a way for students to read and critique each other's work. Non-profits use blogs to inform the public about events and action items.

How do I set up a blog?

There are two types of blogs: hosted and self-hosted. **Hosted blogs** are maintained by a third party company such as www.blogger.com or www.livejournal.com. They allow you to create blog entries without needing to know one or several programming languages or taking on any of the associated maintenance of web hosting. For those who want to start blogging immediately, this is a great option.

If you prefer to **self-host your blog** on your website, you can have greater control over the design, function and implementation. To self-host a blog it's necessary to have an understanding of web servers/databases as well as FTP and CSS/HTML. If you're interested in self-hosting, two options to consider are www.wordpress.org or www.moveabletype.org. [Note: Read the installation guides on these sites to see if a self-hosted option will work for you. Both offer hosted options as well.]

For learning the steps involved in blogging, there are many resources available on the Web. The following site provides **excellent tips on getting started**: <http://www.problogger.com/> then search articles on starting a blog.

If you're unsure of the steps involved, you may want to get your feet wet by first submitting a comment on someone else's blog. Here are some examples: <http://blogsofnote.blogspot.com/> (click on any of the blogs and then under any of the entries click the link for comments to post a comment). Most blogs in newspapers and magazines will allow you to submit a comment as well. Just look for the link Comments at the end of the article to submit an entry. [Note: most sites require you to create an account to leave a comment]

Final Thoughts

If you enjoy writing and interacting with others online, blogging can be a satisfying and rewarding activity for businesses and individuals. Due to the open nature of blogs, if you write a tutorial or commentary people can respond to your writings. In this situation, **immediate feedback can improve tutorials** and provide further clarification if needed; something you can't get from a book or magazine article. Likewise, if you read a blog and have questions, you can post a comment as well as read other's comments. Again, feedback can clarify questions, provide new insights and enhance the discussion overall.

One thing to remember though is that **what people write on a blog may not always be fact** (even step by step instructions can be filled with mistakes). And even though blog entries are similar to books and magazine articles, there are **usually no editors to cross check the information**. Personal opinions are at the root of most blogs so as you peruse the plethora of information on the Internet, seek out multiple opinions from different sources.