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How To Write Better Blogs

17 April 2007

Free websites have made blogging available to anybody of any age in any country where freedom of speech is the norm. As a result all sorts of blogs have emerged, from "*How to install a P54 laser output 5467 microtransm*" to "*Why are my parents so dumb?*"

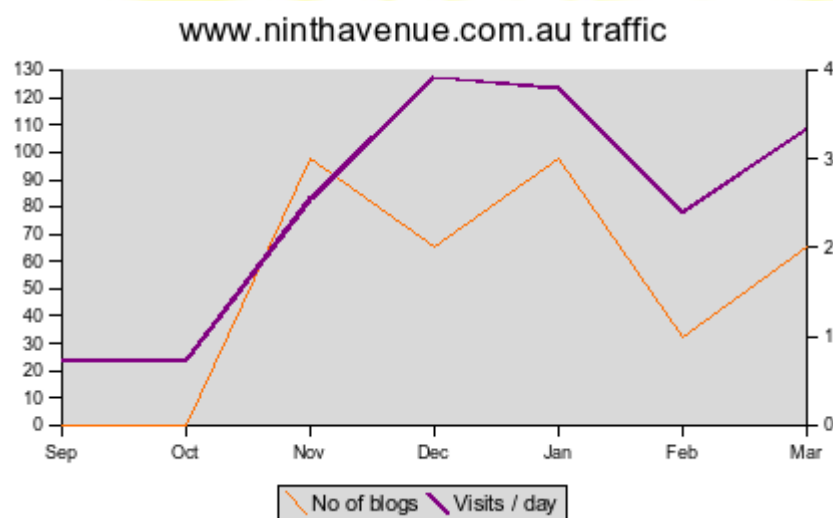
Blog your way to the top

The word *blog* comes from *web log* when the style of publishing was identified on the Internet. A blogger can perhaps be compared to a traditional newspaper columnist. She (or he) writes about topics which are on her mind and solicits feedback from the community by allowing them to post comments on the articles.

Why Blogging?

There are two good reasons to start a blog. The first is to make your business more visible in an already very crowded climate, and the second is to improve your standing with search engines.

Search engines eat blogs for breakfast. Actually, they'll eat any content, but a blog, served with some RSS syndication, is just *irresistable*. Let's have a look at some sample data for the traffic to www.ninthavenue.com.au, which we added a blog last December. The graph shows traffic from both search engines and links to the blog articles posted on popular news sites.



Blogging on this site has increased traffic by five times.

How To Blog Like A Pro

- Be specific. Pick a single topic and blog about it in depth. This will attract more interest and bookmarks, it means your blog will be shorter. Also try to choose topics that are frequently asked questions.
- Blog regularly. Set yourself a weekly or monthly goal for the number of blogs you'd like to write. If you don't blog frequently enough you will lose subscribers (although if you frequently write rubbish, you'll also lose subscribers).
- Syndicate your blog. Tech Tips 5 includes a whole range of tips for increasing your readership using RSS. You almost certainly want to implement these, as most people who read blogs do so via RSS.
- Share your articles. Once you've finished writing a blog, let your friends and colleagues know about the article. Email and newsgroups are useful tools for doing this, but be careful not to make your posts sound like spam.
- Keep a list of blog ideas. You'll never be short of topics to write about if you write down your ideas as you go along.
- Have a comment deletion policy. Negative comments are to be expected sooner or later. Our general policy is to resist knee jerk reactions, and always thank the poster and agree with him or her instead. You may want to adopt a policy of deleting comments according to a certain criteria. If you do delete comments, you should add a note where they have been deleted.
- Allow some HTML formatting in comments. At least allow your visitors to separate their comments into paragraphs. If your software allows it, let them use basic styles and allow them to insert links. Be sure to disallow <script/> and <iframe/> tags which can compromise your site.
- Delete comment spam. Delete comment spam as soon as it appears.

We've swallowed some of our own medicine here and started up a [blog on our own site](#), so you can see how it works for us. Our new blog, being all about web design, is targetted to a different audience than our Tech Tips newsletter. It discusses some of the most common and difficult aspects of design and we expect it to attract a good deal of traffic and earn high page ranks. If you are interested, you can subscribe to the new blog [via RSS](#), or [email](#).

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