

Blog

By 1997 a new kind of website was emerging which was not a standard “home page.” It was a sort of an annotated bookmarks list available for public viewing, a “log” of journeys around the fledging web with links and commentaries. Barger decided it should be called a “weblog” (web + log = “weblog,” or “blog” for short; Barger, 1999). As with any relatively new term, there remains some disagreement about precisely what is and what is not a blog. Barger offered this definition:

A weblog (sometimes called a blog or a newpage or a filter) is a webpage where a weblogger (sometimes called a blogger, or a pre-surfer) 'logs' all the other webpages she finds interesting. The format is normally to add the newest entry at the top of the page, so that repeat visitors can catch up by simply reading down the page until they reach a link they saw on their last visit (Barger, 1999).

Winer, another blogging pioneer, provides another definition:

Weblogs are often-updated sites that point to articles elsewhere on the web, often with comments, and to on-site articles. A weblog is kind of a continual tour, with a human guide who you get to know. There are many guides to choose from, each develops an audience, and there's also comraderie and politics between the people who run weblogs, they point to each other, in all kinds of structures, graphs, loops, etc. (Winer, 2002).

Winer argues that in retrospect the very first blog was the web's first site (Berners-Lee, 1992). He traces the early history of the blog from Berners-Lee's site through NCSA's “What's New” (NCSA, 1993) page to Netscape's “What's New” page (Netscape, 1995).

It was not until 1997 that a group of individuals emerged as a “personal web publishing community” which identified its own work as separate from other types of web publishing. Garret (2000) provides a list which contains links to the 23 weblogs known to be in existence at the beginning of 1999.

The meaning of the term blog broadened somewhat during 1999, as Eatonweb began creating a comprehensive index of weblogs. The only criterion for listing in the index was that the candidate site contain dated entries. This allowed online diary and journal type of sites into the Eaton index, resulting in dispersion of the broader definition of blog currently in use in 2002.

With the introduction of technology which allows people without HTML expertise or Unix server accounts to be bloggers, the popularity of this type of website has increased dramatically since 1997. Paguet (2002) reports that there were approximately 1000 blogs in 2000, but that number has grown to an estimated 500,000 or more in 2002. Users of Blogger.com, a popular system providing free and easy-to-use blog management tools and storage, create a new blog approximately every 40 seconds. Slashdot (Malda, 2002),

one of the web's most popular blogs, has over 350,000 registered users who posted 967,573 comments on the blog's official 4088 entries in the first half of 2002.

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