



Multimedia and
Educational
Technologies in
Arts Centre

Arts & the Social Web

Tuesday 2 October 2007, 1-2 pm

Blogging in Academia

Transient Languages & Cultures: an example from <http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/>

Main components of a blog:

- entries in reverse chronological order
- comments
- categories
- archives
- search
- authors
- about the blog
- links

Use of blogs by Australian academics

Adventures in blog land, an article in *The Age* (3 July 2006), looks at the emerging importance of blogging in academia both in building research profiles and allowing academic voices to be heard outside of the ivory towers of the university.

(<http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/adventures-in-blog-land/2006/07/01/1151174437503.html?page=fullpage>)

Creation of a blog in Blogger

There are really five stages to this process, although Blogger only mentions the first three.

- Create a Google account + activate it
- Name your blog
- Choose a template
- Write your first post
- Fill in your profile

To get started, go to the Blogger website at <http://www.blogger.com>.

1. Create a Google account

Some of you may already have Google accounts, e.g. one you use to access a gmail account. If you already have a Google account, skip this step by logging in at the top of the page.

If you don't yet have a Google account, click on the arrow labelled "Create your blog now".

A. Email address

You need a valid email address to create a Google account. If you have multiple email addresses, it's best to select one you access regularly. Google doesn't send any spam.

NB: This email address will double as your login username, when you log back in to your blog at home.

B. Password

Choose a password you can easily remember. Google will automatically assess the security of your password.

You can make a password more secure by making sure it contains both letters and numbers.

Write down your user name and password
--

C. Display name

Enter your first name or full name here. This will be the name that appears at the bottom of your blog posts.

Remember: The display name is not your login username. (As we mentioned, you will login using the email address.)

D. Word verification

This is a security feature, designed to avoid the automatic creation of advertising blogs and other nasties. Just type the displayed letters as they appear, including capitals.

E. Accept terms and conditions

Finally, check the box to accept the terms and conditions and then click the arrow labeled "Continue".

<u>Additional Step: Verifying your email address</u>
--

Though Google allows you to move on to creating your blog at this point, there is in fact one more step required before you have a valid Google account.
--

When you next check you email, you'll find a message from Google, asking you to verify that it was indeed you that creating a Google account for yourself.

To complete the account-creation process, simply click on the link provided in that email, which will take you to a page confirming that your email address has been verified, and your account created.

Until you complete this additional step, you will not be able to log back in to your blog.

2. Name your blog

At this point, you're ready to start creating a blog. This involves giving it a name and a web address.

A. Blog title

This is the title that will appear at the top of your blog. Choose something short and **concise. This title can be changed later.**

B. Blog address (URL)

Blogger allows you to customize the web address (or URL) of your blog, within certain limits. You can select a prefix for your blog's web address, although every Blogger blog has the form <http://something.blogspot.com>.

You can change this prefix later, however, doing this will break any existing links to your blog, so choose carefully.

C. Word verification

You may or may not get asked to undergo another word verification test. Simply fill out the displayed test, including capitals, as before.

Ignore the Advanced Setup options, and click "Continue"

3. Choose a template

Blogger allows you to select from a range of pre-fabricated designs for your blog. For the moment, just select the first one that grabs your fancy (of just leave the default, "Minima"). **You can select a different template later.**

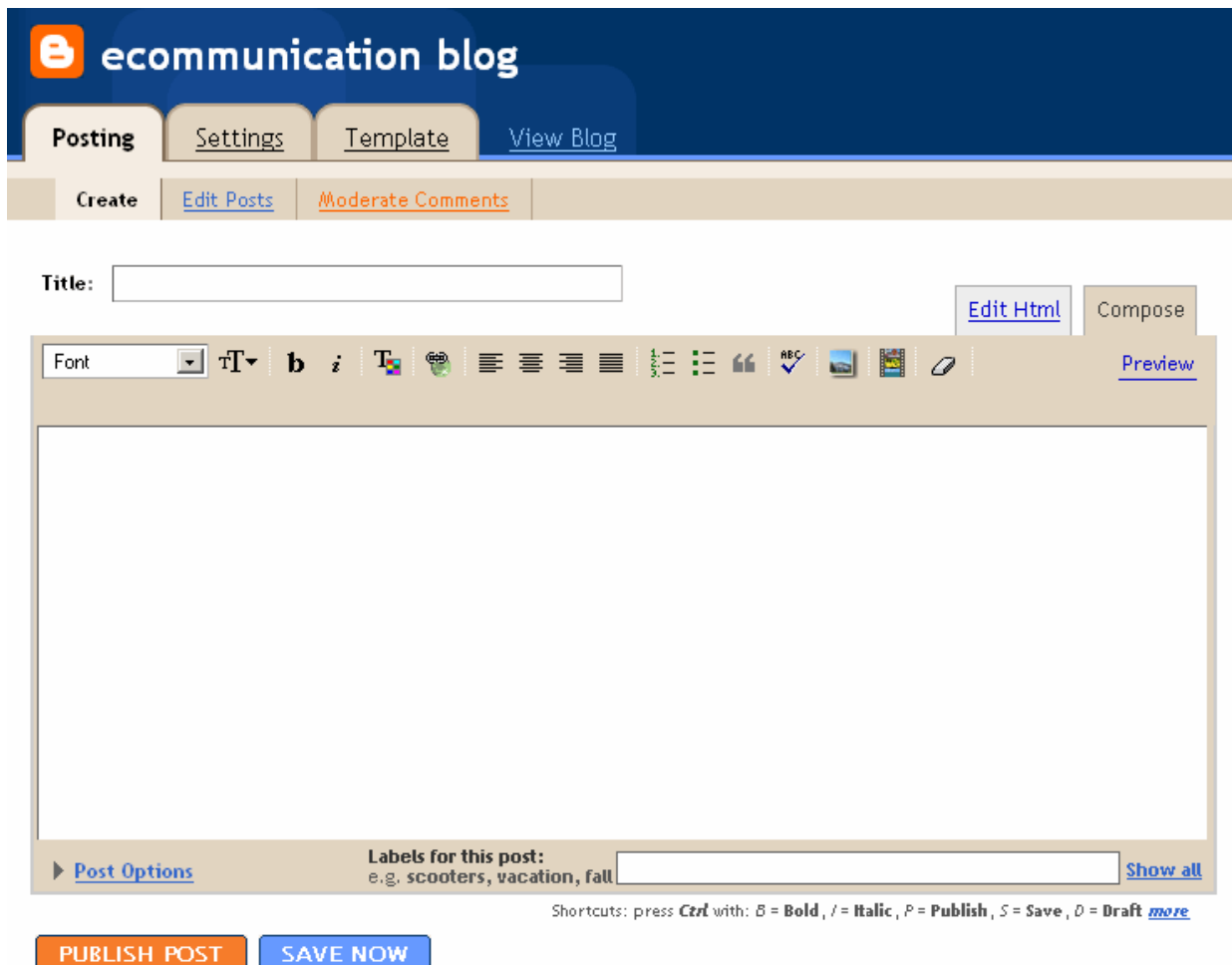
Once again, click "Continue".

Your blog has now been created!

Click the arrow labeled "Start posting" to do just that.

4. Create your first post

At this point, you'll be taken to a standard page for creating (and editing) blog posts, which should look a little like this:



The screenshot shows the 'ecomunication blog' post creation interface. At the top, there's a dark blue header with the blog name and a navigation menu with tabs for 'Posting', 'Settings', 'Template', and 'View Blog'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'Create', 'Edit Posts', and 'Moderate Comments'. The main area features a 'Title:' input field, an 'Edit Html' button, and a 'Compose' button. A rich text editor toolbar is visible, containing options for font, bold, italic, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, redo, undo, image, video, and link icon. A large text area is provided for writing the post. At the bottom, there's a 'Post Options' section with a 'Labels for this post:' field (example: 'scooters, vacation, fall') and a 'Show all' link. A footer note provides shortcuts: 'Shortcuts: press Ctrl with: B = Bold, I = Italic, P = Publish, S = Save, D = Draft more'. Two buttons, 'PUBLISH POST' and 'SAVE NOW', are located at the bottom.

The key things to notice are

- i) the space for a title, and
- ii) the editing or composing window, which looks like a mini version of Word, complete with formatting toolbar
- iii) the tabs at the top of the page (Posting, Settings, Template and View Blog) — we'll come back to these

Also, notice that there's a link on this page called "Edit Posts". You can actually modify your posts after they've been published, so don't worry ... you're not posting in indelible ink.

Add a title

First, you should give your post a title. For this first, experimental post, we'd like you to use the title "The social web and me".

Add some text

Not only does it look like a mini version of Word, it works like one too. To add text, simply type into the empty space below the toolbar.

For this post, we'd like you to write just a couple of sentences, outlining why you're interested in learning about the social web.

Add a link

Next, add a link to your post. First, find the hyperlink button on the toolbar (it looks like a globe with a chain link on top).

Next, highlight some of your text, click on the hyperlink button, and fill in the URL – e.g. put in <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au>. (You shouldn't need to change the link Type, which defaults to http.)

Add labels

Labels allow you to categorize your posts. Posts which have been given the same labels (sometimes called tags) can be viewed as a group.

At the bottom of the textbox, you'll see another box for labels.

Labels for this post:
e.g. scooters, vacation, fall

To add labels to your post, simply type in a few keywords or phrases, making sure you separate each of them with a comma.

Add a picture

Save & Publish your post

Saving and publishing your post is easy. At the bottom of the compose window, you'll find two big buttons, one to Save your post – highly recommended if you're writing a lengthy piece – and one to Publish it. (The Publish button also auto-saves your post.)

Click Publish to add your post to the visible part of your Blog.

View your blog

Click on the View Blog tab to witness your creation at last!

5. Fill in your profile

The final task is to update your profile, so that your blog includes some information about its author. (NB: you may need to verify your email address by responding to Google's message on your own email before you can do this.)

To get to your profile, click on the link called "View my complete profile".

Next, click "Edit Your Profile", and fill in (at least) your location – which probably isn't Afghanistan – and the About Me field, which automatically appears on your blog under your name.