

Introduction

With the increased popularity of the Internet, used by many on a daily or even near-constant basis, the World Wide Web has become the preferred source for information sharing between organizations and the audience with which they interact. However, a major downfall of business web sites is that there is not a good way to communicate up-to-date information with users who do not voluntarily visit the website. For instance, if a company has released a new add-on to their product, the user base will not be aware of this update unless the users themselves take the time to visit the company's website to learn more. Therefore, two common ways to drive current information to an organization's audience are web-logs, or blogs, and e-mail newsletters, which are often referred to as e-newsletters.

About E-mail Newsletters

It is not uncommon for companies, organizations and groups to use a formal electronic mail newsletter as a form of communication with their users. These are often branded and customized emails that are published and sent to a mass audience, with the intention of sharing several bits of news and information in one location. Publishing a professional e-newsletter helps establish businesses as an authority and leader in its field. It also improves name recognition and sets the company apart from the competition in the minds of readers. They have become an effective way to 'push' communications in a timely manner.

About Blogs

Originally termed as "weblog" by John Barger, (Wortham, 2007), the term began to be shortened to "blog", where Evan Williams at Pyra Labs began using the word "blog" as both a noun and a verb. (Wikipedia) Blogs continued to take on many forms on the internet, such as ongoing personal diaries, but also by organizations for business purposes to enhance the communication and culture amongst its customers for marketing, branding or public relations to help reach its organizational goals. In addition, a blog with current information and regular updates is subject to better rankings in the search engines than a plain business site with static data and contact information.

Blogging has become a popular opportunity for business executives and marketers, providing an opportunity distinct from other typical methods of sharing information with their audience. Because blogs can often times not rely on formality, be more interactive, and focus on specific industry issues, they provide a forum that is may be viewed differently by readers than a slow-to-update sources such as web pages, or static information that may appear on paper or electronic newsletters. Blogs are often seen as key sources of information rather than just promotion. (Pick, 2010)

Making the transition from using e-newsletters to blogs

With the need for constant information updates and the increased use of social media in engagement, blogs are beginning to increase in popularity to reach out to the intended demographic. One critic about using newsletters over blogs to reach an audience is the amount of time taken to develop a newsletter. Communicators may spend weeks or even months crafting news, visually organizing and then send out through a subscriber list – sometimes without having the ability to measure the response rate or other criteria, therefore unable to prove a return on their investment.

Some benefits that are widely recognized for blogs over crafted e-newsletters:

- Authors only have to publish one story at a time. With e-newsletters, they often carry several pieces of information. With a blog, each post is a new ‘story’ and therefore the author can focus on one topic at a time, rather than having to balance several stories in one setting.
- Blog posts can be available forever with very little effort. A specific system is required to create an archive of newsletters; however a blog is already designed to be searched and referenced for people who wish to read back in time as well as forward.
- E-newsletters are specifically designed to be one-way communication outward. With blogs, on the other hand, the dialogue is much better suited for multi-way. The blog format easily supports active public discussions, providing more flexibility for how, why, and when the business may

want to communicate. This often takes place in the form of comments on a blog post. It allows instant feedback for the person who reads the article.

- Blogs can more easily leverage off of social media through syndication. This is done using RSS feeds, which can be used by blog aggregators, news sites and other feed reading mechanisms to greater amplify the reach of the blog. On the other hand, e-newsletters are limited to the mailing list.

References

Pick, Tom. Five Benefits of Blogging. <http://webbiquity.com/business-blogging/five-benefits-of-blogging-for-business/>

Wortham, Jenna. After 10 Years of Blogs, the Future's Brighter Than Ever. http://www.wired.com/entertainment/theweb/news/2007/12/blog_anniversary

Blog. Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>

Thomler, Craig. How Blogs are More Useful Than Email Newsletters. <http://socialmediatoday.com/craigthomler/267296/ten-reasons-why-blogs-are-more-useful-email-newsletters>

- 1.) Diagram ANT with both
Diagram AT with both
- 2.) What is a newsletter
 - a. Describe what I am talking about when using it in this context
- 3.) What is a blog
 - a. Do I assume mult auths, the assumptions that it is participatory and that people can comment

For your final paper, you will be drawing heavily on and combining two of the theoretical perspectives we have studied this quarter in order to develop your own perspective. You will then apply this new perspective to an examination of an issue from your own workplace or professional experiences.

Before you begin writing, identify a combination of two perspectives that you believe would be particularly useful as a tool for understanding an issue in our field that you are familiar with based on your own experiences.

Your task in the paper is five-fold:

- 1) Construct a focused discussion of the perspectives you are combining. Develop your discussion in a manner that is appropriate for a competent, graduate-level reader in our field who is not yet familiar with the ideas/positions you are representing from the previously published work in our field.
- 2) Propose a combination of the perspectives you are working with. Justify your combination in terms of what the combined perspective will allow us to see that either of the perspectives alone would not.
- 3) Apply your combined perspective to a brief, illustrative example of a communication issue related to your own work. You will need to provide just enough background information for your readers to understand the context and issue. Prior to your application of the perspective, be sure to clearly and adequately define the issue you will be considering. A clear focus in the setup for this section of the paper will be key to your success.
- 4) Discuss how the perspective you have developed revealed something that might not otherwise have been evident to either the participants in the situation(s) or to a casual observer in your workplace.
- 5) Briefly suggest how the perspective might be used to examine other communication issues and the possible implications of this perspective for future research in the field (think specifically in terms of the work we have been reading this quarter).

The paper should be 6-7 pages long and double-spaced. Indent each new paragraph and use a font such as 11-point Times Roman. Use headings and subheadings in the paper to provide guideposts for the reader (making the organization of your ideas visible as in the best articles we have been reading this quarter). Add a cover sheet with your name, date, and title for your paper. Include a list of references at the end, following APA style.