

## 12 Reasons to Start a Blog

Writing and updating a blog or website is an excellent hobby for many people, including truck drivers. With the programs now available, you don't have to be a web designer or programmer to get started in it. Most hosting accounts now have blogging software which comes with each account. (Web hosting is what makes your blog or website live on the Internet.) For years, I would pull into a truck stop at night and grab a book to relax with a while before going to bed. I still do that at times, but after getting into blogging and creating websites a few years ago, I have found a really enjoyable way to spend my spare time on the road. In fact, blogging can be addictive. It doesn't take long to learn how to do it and there are plenty of free informational resources on the Internet to help you get started. I will post some links at the end of this article to help you.

If you have ever wondered if blogging is for you, here are twelve reasons you might want to consider in answering the question for yourself. With blogging, you can:

- Keep in touch with friends and family. You can let them know about your travels and experiences on the road. By posting a blog post, you can keep friends and family updated on what is going on without having to write separate emails to each person.
- Use it as a witnessing tool. Start a blog on a topic of interest to you and have a Christian testimony page. Non-Christians will be more likely to visit your blog if it is about something which they find of interest. While they are on your blog or website, you can have testimony page they can view and also work it into some of your articles.
- Use it as a point of contact for other truckers you meet. Build a network; you never know when someone might be able to help you in the future such as finding employment opportunities.
- Use it to relax and relieve stress after a hard day on the road. Using a blog to express your feelings, helps relieve tension. It also gives you something to focus on in a creative sort of way which is not only a great stress reliever, but also gives you a sense of accomplishment.
- Express your thoughts and opinions. Do you feel strongly about something? Tell others. Express yourself and your ideas and opinions. Its your blog; write about whatever it is which you enjoy discussing with others.
- Help people going through similar experiences. Blogging is a great way to help others with problems by telling them of your own experiences with the same or similar problems.
- Connect with people with similar interests to yours. Being on the road can make you feel isolated at times. By meeting and conversing with others online through their comments and feedback, you can develop a sense of community with other people who have similar interests. And by having your own blog or website, you have more control over the subject matter than if you are visiting and posting comments on someone else's blog, website, or forum.
- Inspire others. Tell inspirational stories-either your own or those of other people you know. I recently set up a website and gallery for my second cousin who is in his seventies. He is an artist and shows his artwork on his website , but he also has a lot of personal stories from his years of living and being a pastor which are inspiring to others. Another benefit of using your blog to help others is when you get an email or comment from someone who tells you that your article has helped them. Those warm fuzzy feelings you get can be quite exciting.
- To make money (it can be done). Although it is hard to make money on the web these days, since everyone seems to be trying to do it, it is still possible to make money on the web selling your own items or those of other companies through affiliate programs . Don't count on getting rich, however, unless you are willing to develop the skills of an Internet marketing guru.
- Use it for a creative outlet. Maintaining a blog or website is an excellent outlet for developing your creativity. You

don't have to be an expert writer. Blogging is a medium which allows everyday people to publish their own thoughts and writing without having to worry about convincing publishers to publish their work. Blogging is simply communicating your ideas to others. If you can carry on a conversation, you can blog. Just think of it as writing to a group of friends.

- Share photos from the road. Do you take photos or videos of your travels? Share them online with others. Many people are stuck in jobs where they rarely ever seen any place other than their own city. Viewing pictures online, especially with stories about the places is of interest to many people.

- Learn to organize your thoughts. Writing helps you to understand a problem or develop your understanding of a subject. Writing about a topic helps you formulate your ideas and understanding of it. Writing also helps you learn to express yourself better.

## Creating a Blog The Easy Way

A blog or website is simply a bunch of computer files which is placed on a server through a hosting company. A server is a computer which is connected to the Internet 24/7, 365 days a year. This is what make the blog or website live on the Internet. When someone types in the web address of your website, this server "serves" the webpage files to the visitor; thus the name. When you sign up for a hosting account, you can register a domain name which is the web address of your site or blog. Many hosting companies also have software already installed on the hosting accounts which create the blog or website software for you. Many are automated to "create" the site when you sign up. An example is Raintree Hosting.Net .

## Set Up A Blog Or Website With 3 Clicks of Your Mouse

When you sign up for a hosting account, you can select a "Pre-installed Script" on the sign up form, such as a blog, website, forum, or any other of more than 30 software packages. These software packages are free and come with each hosting account. The company automatically installs the script you select when the account is set up. The company then sends you several emails with your account and login information and also the address and login information of your blog or website. The most popular software available for blogging is WordPress. For websites which offer more functionality, a script like Joomla 1.5.x is the most popular. With Raintree Hosting.Net's Business plan, you can have up to three complete blogs or websites. That means you could develop a main website, blog, and forum or any other type of site you might want to in the future. You could even have some for other members of your family. You can also delete the script and add others later. For instance, if you start out with a WordPress blog and later decide you really want a full-blown website like a Joomla website, you can delete the blog and install Joomla or another software package such as a forum using the Installer in your hosting control panel.

This website was set up using the Joomla software script and a design template purchased from Rocket Theme several years ago. Although I have added a lot of content to it over the years, you can see the possibilities. The blog on this site uses the WordPress script and was set up on a subdomain of the Christian Truckers Network domain name. The scripts come with a few basic templates, but you will probably want to upload one suited to your own preferences. For free templates you can add, see the section below.

## Change Out The Design of Your Blog or Website Easily Whenever You Want

These software scripts such as WordPress and Joomla also have template and theme uploaders so you can change out the design of your blog or site quickly and easily. There are also thousands of free web designs on the Internet you can download for free and then upload to you site to change out the look. (Two such websites where you can download free design templates are Joomla24.com and Wordpress.org.)

## Free Documentation and User's Manuals

Free Documentation and Users Manuals are available online at Wordpress.org and Joomla.org. This documentation also gives instructions to install the programs, but with the automated installing procedure of the hosting company, you don't have to worry about this. Here are the links to the online documentation and manuals for WordPress and Joomla:

[WordPress](#)

[Joomla Main site](#)

[Joomla Manuals](#)

[Joomla's Absolute Beginner's Guide](#)

[Joomla's Quick Start Guide](#)

[Online Video and Animated Tutorials for Joomla](#)

Free video tutorials are also available for Joomla at [Joomla Tutorials](#) .

With all of these manuals you will want to skip over the installation sections if you use a hosting company which automatically installs the software on your new hosting account.

[Other Manuals](#)

There are also some good printed manuals for WordPress and Joomla in bookstores such as Barnes and Nobles. These are sometimes easier to use for beginners, especially if you are using WordPress for blogging. (Joomla also comes with blogging software build in along with the website software.)

Once you login to your new blog or website, poke around and get familiar with the navigation buttons in the menu. This is the best way to get a feel for the Administrator's Control Panel. You will probably feel confused at first. Don't worry, like any software, there is a learning curve to learn what the buttons are for. That is where a manual comes in handy. It will take you step by step through learning to create new pages and articles.

#### Tip:

When creating a new webpage, article, or blog post, type it in a text editor like Windows NotePad which comes with Windows. Then save your article or page. Once you are ready to publish it, simply login to your blog control panel, create a new page or post and copy and paste the text from your saved NotePad article into the editing window of your blog or website. Then save the page. You can write your article directly into your blog or website, but I have learned from experience that it is best to have a copy of the article in a NotePad file. That way, if you loose your Internet connection in the middle of adding an article to your site, you won't loose your work too. Better safe than sorry, I always say.

With today's blogging and website scripts (software) anyone with basic computer skills can create and maintain a blog or website. If you can create and send email, you can manage a blog or website. Of course, as you learn more, you will be able to do more things like uploading photos and graphics and customizing your website.

Blogging and creating websites can be an experience and lifelong hobby which can give you a lot of enjoyable and fulfilling hours. It can also be the means of helping others through sharing your knowledge and experience.

**Advertising Your Blog or Website** There are a number of ways to optimize your blog or website for the search engines. Keywords (called "tags" in blogs) are words and phrases related to the content of your pages and articles which search engines like Google use to categorize your site and articles. Blogging and website software like WordPress and Joomla have places in the page editors where you type in your text, which allow you to easily insert your keywords with having to know coding or HTML.

You can also advertise your site by printing off small business card size pieces of paper advertising your web address and leave them in Trucker lounges and for handing out to truckers you meet on the road. After that, word of mouth will spread the word about your site if you have content which is interesting to your visitors.

#### Make Your Driving Time Interesting

As a truck driver, you spend many hours staring out the windshield. One way to put that time to use is to brainstorm ideas for your blog and website articles. You will find yourself coming up with numerous ideas for articles and posts for your site. It can be a really enjoyable way to spend those hours. Then when you park for the night, you will be able to start writing immediately instead of wasting time trying to come up with a new article for your site.

#### Try It Out Today

Raintree Hosting.Net also has a 30 day money back guarantee. Sign up for an account and give it a try. I personally

know that they stand behind the money back guarantee, so you have nothing to loose. If you find blogging and websites are not for you, just contact them for your money back. I think once you try it, though, you will be hooked on it like me.

## Other Resources

### Christian Blogging

Information on using blogging as an evangelistic tool.

### ProBlogger.Net

Resources on blogging and monetizing your blog.

### Read other blogs

One of the best ways to come up with ideas for your blog is to read other blogs related to your own blog and interests. This will not only let you see how others write their content, but also will help generate fresh ideas in your mind for your own blog. Reading other blogs will also trigger reactions in your own mind both pro and con about the opinions of the other bloggers. This will help you to always have fresh ideas for articles. You can find blog directories at:

### Technorati.com

### Google Blogs