

Starting and promoting a blog | A crash course by Fola Daniel Adelesi, ASM, ACL, WCC

If this is your first time of reading about blogging then I suggest you visit a few blogs to really grasp what these tips are all about. When you visit these blogs it will be easier to understand what is being discussed or suggested for your use. I believe you will find this very useful just as I have used my knowledge of blogging in the last few years to help others discover themselves or to help them publicize the valuable information that they have to pass across to the whole world.

You may find it interesting to note that blogs are also free and easy to use so you may no longer be paying so much for a site if you put up a blog and realize that it serves all the purpose that you want the site to serve. There are provisions for you to pay for some blogs and the reason you may be required to pay is because you may not want the address of the host to show when you give out your site address. For instance, I started by running www.foladaniel.wordpress.com but I decided to have www.foladaniel.com. The difference is that the one that carries wordpress is free and the one that does not carry wordpress is not free but it gives you the opportunity to have customized emails. Some of the people who told you that they are running a site for you have only registered a blog for you and they collect so much to maintain it yearly. If you have fallen victim before now, this material can help you come to the knowledge of the truth but if you have not then you better devour this material right away.

A few blogs I suggest you visit

- 1.) www.foladaniel.wordpress.com
- 2.) www.speakerslaboratory.wordpress.com
- 3.) www.teenagersclass.wordpress.com
- 4.) www.oyinkansolaalabi.wordpress.com

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5.) www.debater5.blogspot.com

6.) www.moabudu.blogspot.com

7.) www.deoluakinyemi.com

Brief introduction to blogging

- 1.) A blog is an interactive online forum that started around the year 1997 probably as a tool to make journalism easier. It is also a type of website according to wikipedia where you can have a personal page and regular discussions with some of your friends, fans or followers from around the world. (an example is www.foladaniel.wordpress.com)
- 2.) When you create your page you can invite people to respond to issues on your page because there are columns where people can pass comments on the articles that you have written or the documents that you have uploaded. The blog has been made so easy for users because you do not have to bother your head about graphics or linking pages together. It has different templates – backgrounds – from which you can choose. If you don't like the background or design on the site at the time you opened it, you can enter the dashboard to change it to a template you like. It has also been designed such that you can upload pdf (adobe reader) files on your site for people to download and this means you can e-books on your on page just as I have some of my books and speeches on my site under a page I call 'Free Download.' The blog also allows you to upload other media files like pictures, audio and even videos but be informed that the uploading of these things will in most cases the depend on the reliability of your internet service provider (ISP).
- 3.) Having a blog makes you available on search engines like **google, ask, mama** or any other one. Your works on the internet will pop up whenever anybody types your name into the search engine and that will lead them to your webpage. At some other times, someone may be looking for a material that you have written so much about and the tags on your posts will make your materials come up in search engines when people type words related to what you have in your tags. The tag

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is simply a way of putting your articles in some categories where they can be easily found. If for instance you have just written an article that has political contents, when you get to the tag column you have to put words like ‘politics, governance, leadership’ or other related words. When anybody types these words in the search engines, it is easier for your articles or uploaded media materials to pop up.

- 4.) You can use the blog to promote whatever you do on the internet. Most blogs have what they call the ‘RSS feeds’ and it is used by some other bloggers to follow up what is going on as far as your page is concerned. Some blogs also allow for subscription and what means is that subscribers are notified when there are new materials on your page so that they can visit immediately.
- 5.) If your blog is very active you may not need another website because your blog is accessible anywhere in the world like any other website. I know of bloggers that have thousands of visitors on their pages on daily basis and the comments or contributions of these visitors also make the blogs very active. What you also need to do is to ensure that you have catchy materials or contents of interest for the readers. When a blog is boring it will not generate the desired feedback from the readers or visitors.
- 6.) If you really want to use your blog for serious business you have to work on driving traffic – inviting people – to your webpage. Your blog only comes alive when it has visitors. You can drive your blog up unto that level where it becomes as popular as a favourite TV show or the phone line of a national TV programme. I will tell you how to do that in subsequent pages.

Deciding your blog’s name

- 1.) You may want to keep your username or name of your blog (eg. www.foladaniel.wordpress.com) simple and short because your blog already carries the name of the site upon which it is hosted and your visitors will find it easy to remember – long web addresses will discourage people who do not know about ‘url shortners’

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(like www.tinyurl.com or is.gd) from visiting your blog again. In case you have made the mistake of using a very long name for your blog then you have one way out, at least for now. What you can do is to visit to a link or url shortners to make your link shorter. I have been using www.tinyurl.com and I think it will help. There is a column where you can paste your very long link and there is another column where you can put the new short and simple name that you want to use. For instance you may have www.leadershippurposeandproductivityunlimited.wordpress.com as your link but when you use a url shortner you can just put 'ediblepen' in the new column so that www.tinyurl.com will now compress the long link to something like www.tinyurl.com/ediblepen. This is shorter and easier to remember. Don't forget to use short and simple names but incase you forget you can always fall back on link or url shortners.

2.) You may want to be creative about the name of your blog or use something very unique. There are times when names can magically drive traffic to your site. If you are a celebrity that's going to be very easy but if you are not yet one, you can work on something people will easily remember. It could be a popular slogan or pet's name or a kind of business that will just help people remember your blog. It could be like:

- www.smartlawyer.blogspot.com
- www.millionairespage.money.com
- www.sweettalker.wordpress.com
- www.howtodebate.blogspot.com
- www.debater5.blogspot.com
- www.beautifuldogs.blogpot.com
- www.howtowrite.wordpress.com
- www.choirmaster.sing.com

3.) I always advise you use your real name in the blog addresses so that people can find it easy to search your blog if they do not remember any other name you have decided to use.

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Creating a blog for yourself

- 1.) You can enter any search engine and type the word 'blog' to get a list of different blogs and choose which one you would like to use. Before that I can easily tell you that 'taking it global (www.takingitglobal.com),' 'wordpress (www.wordpress.com)' and 'blogspot (www.blogspot.com)' are some of the most popular blogs. I use all these three and I also use netlog. You may want to see www.netlog.com/foladaniel.
- 2.) For the purpose of this brief introduction I will suggest you go for 'wordpress' (www.wordpress.com). To start blogging please enter the link into your browser.
- 3.) The last step takes you to the home page of wordpress. From there you will find a 'sign up' button. Click the sign up button to commence registration of your blog.
- 4.) Please note that if you have a slow link the sign up button may not be displayed so you may have to refresh the page or look for 'register a new blog.'
- 5.) You will be required to enter usernames. I always suggest you use your name (www.foladaniel.wordpress.com) so that it will be easy for people to remember your web address
- 6.) You will also be required to use passwords. Passwords on wordpress could be a combination of letters and figures to make it very strong and difficult to break or bypass. If you want to use letters alone then you should use slightly long words. You will be told the password strength after entering the word. If it's low then you will need to use another word.
- 7.) When you are done with the registration page a mail will be sent to the email address you would have provided and you will be required to open it to click a link which completes the registration process. Once you get a message that your blog is now active then you can commence blogging.

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- 8.) To visit your new page, enter the new name you provided during registration. (eg. www.foladaniel.wordpress.com)
- 9.) To start uploading on your site enter the admin page by typing the new link and add 'wp-admin.' (eg. To enter my admin page I will type www.foladaniel.wordpress.com/wp-admin)
- 10.) The last step takes you to a login page where you provide username and password. Your username is the same as the name of the site (eg. foladaniel is the username for www.foladaniel.wordpress.com)
- 11.) When usernames and passwords are entered correctly the next page you will see is your dashboard (same as admin page). This is where you edit what you need to edit or add whatever you need to add.

To upload texts

(articles, marketing materials, type in an information)

- 1.) You will usually find two columns on the right side of this dashboard. A small and a big one. On top of the small one you will see 'title.' Enter the title of whatever you want to upload and you will see content on top of the big column. Copy and paste the content of whatever you are uploading into the big column.
- 2.) The next column you will see is for 'tags' – this is to put your articles or content in categories. For instance if your article is on leadership you will type leadership into the column for tags. This will make it easy for users of search engines to find your article when they are looking for anything under leadership.

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- 3.) After putting the articles in categories you will find a '**publish**' button. Click on the publish button to make the new article available on your webpage. You will repeat this process anytime you want to upload a new article.
- 4.) When you want to see the new article on your page you can look for the 'visit page' button and click on it to see your article. If this is not displayed then you may just type your new blog address (eg. www.foladaniel.wordpress.com) to see your new article on the blog.
- 5.) To create additional pages on your blog remember to enter the dashboard by typing (eg www.foladaniel.wordpress.com/wp-admin) the only thing that will change is that you have to put your name and not my name. When you have supplied username and password you will be back on the dashboard. Look to the left side of the dashboard to locate some bars. You will find the bars for pages, links, appearances and others. Click on pages to create and name additional pages. Follow the instruction on uploading articles to put content on the new page.
- 6.) To choose a new template or new theme you will click on appearance. This will show you several appearances available on the wordpress site that you can click on activate to have that theme running on your webpage.

To promote or drive traffic to your webpage

- 1.) You have to tell people about your site and do it in different ways.
- 2.) Make your new link a signature on your email accounts and for text message from your phone
- 3.) When you type documents you have to put your new link in footnotes or may choose to make it a header.
- 4.) If you have presentations to make you can have your link displayed on your slides.

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- 5.) Where there is an internet connection during a presentation, you can deliberately teach from your site so that the participants will be forced to visit your site to see more or learn more.
- 6.) You can use facebook or other social utilities to promote your blog. In the same line where you upload pictures on facebook, you can click on link to always type your link and make sure people visit.
- 7.) Put our new link on notice boards for people to know about it and visit it as well
- 8.) Don't forget to put the new link on your complimentary cards whenever you are printing .
- 9.) If you are delivering a lecture or speech in any gathering you can take advantage of that gathering to notify people and as well paint a good picture of interesting things they can find on it.
- 10.)Have the new web address stuck on your wall such that everyone who comes in can see
- 11.)Make sure the new link is a part of your letter head.
- 12.)You can have your new address printed on T-Shirts or polos that you wear for presentations

Sustaining the traffic

- 1.) Keep your site new by putting something new from time to time
- 2.) Sometimes all you may do to the site is to change the appearance by adding pictures or changing the theme you are using.
- 3.) Make your content very engaging and respond to people's comments on your blog.

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- 4.) Having free downloads can encourage people to come back. I have at least one of my books and my blog and some of the speeches or articles I have written and people can download at no cost. This is one way to keep them coming back to the page because they will want to come for more.
- 5.) In some cases where you have to show people some important information and you can't afford to make a copy of the paper available to all the participants, especially where you have a crowd, referring them to your site will be a good idea.
- 6.) If you are running a news blog, you will have to ensure that you break some news first or that you practically have details of different things happening in your area or around the world. If people know you will give them what they don't know, they will always come back.
- 7.) When you hand out seminar packages to people, if you ever organize seminars, you must make sure that your blog address is conspicuous on the folders or whatever brand package that you have.
- 8.) Branding your laptop is another idea. Since you will always have to use it in public places, you may decide to have a printer print the name of your blog on your laptop.
- 9.) If you have the money I guess you may have to go for caller tunes as well. This means that when anybody calls you, the person will hear about your blog and a few interesting things on it before you pick the call. Invariably it means that you will always let your phone ring for a few seconds so that they can get the message. You may also have all your members of staff subscribe to this caller tune so that when people call your members of staff, they will hear the caller tune telling them about the company's blog.
- 10.) In this days, wrist bands and becoming more popular than they have always been so you cannot rule out the fact that wrist bands will be very useful in giving you some publicity. You can have wristbands produced and hand them out in some public places like seminar halls or shopping malls.

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Benefits that I have seen in blogging

- 1.) You stand a chance of spreading your works faster.
- 2.) It helps reduce the cost of publishing.
- 3.) The stress that comes with printing a book is taken away.
- 4.) It makes it easier to have your books online.
- 5.) You can register a blog at no cost and you can pay for one if you so choose.
- 6.) It is a strong tool for personal or corporate branding.
- 7.) It makes publicity easier for bloggers.
- 8.) Blogs help you, in a way, to back up all your intellectual properties. As far as some of my articles are concerned, I have no worries about losing any storage device because I can go back to my blog to get the articles.
- 9.) If you use your blog as a professional – writing materials that have to do with your field – it can boost your rating in that profession.
- 10.)Blogs take away the mystique that web designers present to you when they need to create a site for you.
- 11.)Blogs are easy to run and you don't need any technical knowledge to run them as an end user.
- 12.)For lawyers, blogs have become instrumental to handling cases.
- 13.)Journalists can now do their jobs faster and effectively without having to wait for several hours or even days before seeing their works published.
- 14.)Where there are errors as serious as defamation, blogs can be edited immediately unlike papers that would have been printed and sold
- 15.)Lecturers can also use blogs as notes they give to their students. If for whatever reason a student misses a class, the student can always visit the lecturer's blog to retrieve notes and I believe this will aid the students' learning.
- 16.)For some other people, blogging is a good way to keep a diary and it will consequently become useful for biographers.

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