

Episode 102: How should I start blogging?

I was converted to blogging about 7 years ago when I worked at Sun Microsystems. I had assumed that it was something only people with a huge ego would do. Instead I learned there is a great place for it but some rules you should follow.

1. Why should you blog?

The Social Media world is a mixture of community and conversation. To influence it you need to do more than just sitting on forums or lurking in news groups. You actually need to spar and contribute if you want to have some effect. Blogging is a very controlled way of doing this - you do it at your own pace and in your own time. Yes you need to get posts up semi-regularly, but you control when.

2. How should you start?

First you have to decide if you are going to blog from home or work. If it's work then there will be tools and rules – you need to find them and follow them. If it's from home then you need to sign up for a blogging site – like blogger.com or wordpress.com. These are reasonably easy to use but you may want to start with a practice site first. The two most important decisions are subject and title. When it comes to subject matter, if you make it too wide it will not influence anyone. My advice is always to pick a focus or 'bulls-eye' and stick to it. Always try to link what you are saying to your focus – think of it as an editorial policy. Then make sure you have a title that both reflects the subject and is catchy. Also, long titles can make for difficult URLs and you need to make it catchy. My advice is that you get the first 5 or more blogs written before you post the first.

3. What rules should you follow?

The most important rules for me are honesty, integrity and transparency. If you do not follow these guidelines you will be ignored or even made fun of. Check out episode 19 for more information. Always avoid confidential information or materials you do not own. You may want to post videos or music but if you don't own the right, avoid. While others do, it will be hard to claim your own rights when you ignore others.

Bottom-line: If you want to get involved in the social media world you need to have a voice and blogging is great way to get your ideas out there.

