



Blogging

Semantic Web Community Portal Project

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1 Executive Summary

This document provides a brief summary of weblogging, its roots and history, the current state as well as emerging trends and concepts. It also focuses on the relevance of weblogging and the resulting ecosystem dubbed ‘Blogosphere’ in context of the Semantic Web.

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2 Roots & Definition

2.1 Personal Publishing Systems

Weblogs are often-updated sites that point to articles elsewhere on the web, often with comments, and to on-site articles. A weblog is kind of a continual tour, with a human guide who you get to know. Example: A .Net developer links and comments interesting websites, articles etc he notices during his daily surfing. Hence the name: Web-log, chronic of the web, a personal, openly accesible readers digest. There are many guides to choose from, each develops an audience, and there's also comraderie and politics between the people who run weblogs, they point to each other, in all kinds of structures, graphs, loops, etc.

In 1999 maintaining a personal website meant cumbersome local editing with text editors, ftping and so on. About this time, companies like [Userland](#) Software started providing tools that enabled the editing of chronologically structured text directly in the browser. Due to the existance of this powerful personal publishing tools, the usage of weblogs exploded from there on.

New, formative elements where introduced rapidly: Every entry in a weblog can be commented by the audience, categories can be created and so on. For an excellent history of weblogging, i suggest Rebecca Bloods [Essay](#).

2.2 Status Quo

Today, there are hundreds of thousands of weblog sites, and the market for tools for managing such sites is growing quickly. Weblogs span the whole range of society, like economy (from research divisions incorporating them into products, eg [Microsofts Wallop](#), to marketing, eg [SAP's Executive Blogs](#)) or politics ([Howard Dean](#), [Overview](#) of british blogs by the guardian) and pretty much everything else. Note that 'professional' blogs are sometimes referred to as k-logs, k for knowledge, while blogs and blogging are just short forms for weblogs and weblogging.

List of Technoratis current Top 100: <http://www.technorati.com/cosmos/top100.html>.



2.2.1 Providers

Zillions. Here are some:

- [Pyra Labs](#) *Blogger is a web-based tool that helps you publish to the web instantly -- whenever the urge strikes. Blogger is the leading tool in the rapidly growing area of web publishing known as weblogs, or "blogs."* Acquired by Google. ASP model.
- [Six Apart](#) *Six Apart creates tools that enable tens of thousands of individuals, organizations, and corporations to participate in the web's full potential by publishing their ideas on the Internet with simple, yet powerful software and services.* Limited open source server and ASP.
- [Userland Software](#) *Weblogs have emerged as a powerful communication and knowledge management tool used by both corporations and academic institutions.* Commercial Server
- [antville.org](#) *Antville is an open source project aimed to the development of an "easy to maintain and use" weblog hosting system. It's not limited to just one weblog, it can easily host up to several hundred or thousand weblogs (the number of weblogs is rather limited by the site owners choice and server power than by the software).* Open Source Server, Limited ASP.

3 Blogosphere

3.1 Elements

The term Blogosphere describes the social and technological ecosystem of the weblogging world. Like any ecosystem, the Blogosphere has a life of its own, one that's more than the sum of its weblogs. Surfing the Blogosphere you can see evolutionary forces play out in real time, as weblogs vie for niche status, establish communities of like-minded sites, and jostle for links to their site. This segment gives an overview of the main technical elements.



3.1.1 Microcontent

Microcontent is modular content. Each item of microcontent is an unique, individually addressible chunk of content defined by metadata focused around a particular idea or small set of related ideas. In the weblogging world microcontent means: Date, Author, Category, Headline, Content, Comment, Commentator URL and so on. Nearly every weblog is composed of machine readable, mostly open accessible (RSS and RDF) fragments of content.

3.1.2 Meta Services

There are various meta-services ([Overview](#)) using RSS to offer services like aggregation, collection and/or visualization of content based clusters (neighborhoods, A links to B very often), for example the pretty new [Planet RDF](#), which collects entries from webloggers professionally working on or with RDF.

3.1.3 Annotation

Due to the ‘geeky’ background of weblogging, still alive today, various interesting initiatives are adopted early and widely. Here are two examples and a scenario for combining them:

GeoURL: ‘GeoURL is a location-to-URL reverse directory. This will allow you to find URLs by their proximity to a given location. Find your neighbor's blog, perhaps, or the web page of the restaurants near you.’ Webloggers use GeoURL to describe the geographical position of a Weblog by adding two meta tags to the whole weblog:

```
<meta name="ICBM" content="XX.XXXXX, XX.XXXXX">  
<meta name="DC.title" content="THE NAME OF YOUR SITE">
```

Some beta stage mobile weblogging systems already offer the possibility of tagging each individual entry with the corresponding location.



TrackBack: When linking from a post on weblog A to a post on weblog B, the author of A could automatically tell B that there is a reference to a post on his weblog. Sample RDF:

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
        xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/"

        xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trac
        kback/">
  <rdf:Description
    rdf:about="http://www.foo.com/archive.html#foo"
    dc:identifier="http://www.foo.com/archive.html#foo"
    dc:title="Foo Bar"
    trackback:ping="http://www.foo.com/tb.cgi/5" />
</rdf:RDF>
```

3.1.4 Sample Application

Combining the technologies described above, you could use the Blogosphere to create a service which lets you search who wrote something about a specific issue, 200 miles within your vicinity, within the last half year, and who else in the world referenced this writings, and what they had to say about it. This can and is being done today.

So the conclusion is that there is a growing bottom-up usage of semantic and web services technologies in the world of weblogs. This trend has been gaining pace fast in the past, and chances are that it will be even faster in the future.



4 Glossary

- Weblogging: To write/maintain a weblog (short form: blogging).
- Weblog: A personal journal, diary on the web (short form: blog).
- RSS: RDF Site Summary (RSS) is a lightweight multipurpose extensible metadata description and syndication format. RSS is an XML application, conforms to the W3C's RDF specification and is extensible via XML-namespace and/or RDF based modularization
- Blogosphere: The social and technological weblog ecosystem.