



How to create and manage a blog

This guide has been created by Scotland's Urban Past (SUP), a five-year community-engagement project from Historic Environment Scotland.

We support communities to record, research and celebrate the history on their doorsteps.

Through our free training and resources, people of all ages can discover and share the fascinating stories of Scotland's towns and cities.

www.scotlandsurbanpast.org.uk



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How to create and manage a blog

A **blog** is a personal website or web page that is regularly updated, usually by an individual or small group. Most **blogs** are written in an informal or conversational style. People use blogs to share anything that interests them, spanning news articles, photographs, opinions, family history and more.

Setting up a blog

Anyone can register for a blog and have an online presence within minutes, without needing to know anything about web page design. By registering with a blog provider, you will have your own personal platform to share information about your group and project.

Blog providers:

Scotland's Urban Past blog

If you want to share your research about Scotland's towns and cities without establishing your own blog, you can become a guest blogger on [our website](#). Here, you can share resources and findings, promote your projects and events, and discuss topics that matter to you. For more information on how to get started, visit: <http://scotlandsurbanpast.org.uk>.

Blogger.com

Blogger is a trustworthy and reliable online publishing tool from Google. Getting started is easy thanks to the site's step-by-step introduction to creating your own blog – all you need is an email account with Google. It also offers options to customise your blog, with ready-made templates available to buy from other websites. <https://www.blogger.com>

Wordpress.com

With over 56 million users, WordPress is one of the most popular blogging platforms available. It is very flexible for different types of blog content and is widely used by writers, photographers, academics and more. Other WordPress users can see, comment on and share ('reblog') your posts, giving you the chance to gain more followers and readers. <https://en.wordpress.com>

Wix.com

Wix is ideal for blogs containing lots of images and photography. This platform is especially popular with musicians, photographers, entrepreneurs and other small business owners who are looking for a quick and easy website on small budgets. The website builder is simple, featuring a 'Drag and Drop' system and a limited number of pre-made templates. <http://www.wix.com>

Consider what your blog is about and what you hope to achieve from people visiting it. Is your blog a platform to promote your society and encourage people to get involved or perhaps to share your family history research and generate discussion? Aim to share content that matches these goals.

Managing your blog:

- [Update regularly](#)

While your blog should ideally be updated regularly, only you know how much time you have in your schedule to dedicate to writing, so don't try to post every day if you can't. Start out by posting weekly or monthly and take your time to create quality over quantity.



- [Respond to comments](#)

Blogs offer an easy platform for comments and discussion, where communities can share their own content and opinions. Make use of this opportunity to connect directly with people who are reading about your research, project or group and respond to comments when you receive them. Even just a 'thank you for reading' goes a long way.

- [Promote your blog](#)

If you use social media and email newsletters, use them to promote your blog posts. This will make it easier for potential new readers to find your blog and for existing readers to hear about your updates.

Creating content for your blog

- [Find inspiration from other organisation](#)

Many blogs feature recent news from related organisations. For example, if you run a family history blog, you could take advantage of new historical records becoming available, explaining to readers how to access these new documents and listing the types of information the records hold. Your blog might be the first place readers find out about new resources.

- [Share your good news stories](#)

When you reach milestones, share your success stories. Readers undertaking similar research may be interested in the lessons you learned along the way.

- [Ask your readers](#)

If you gain readers who regularly engage with your posts, invite them to make suggestions for future blog posts. This can be both inspiring and a challenge – be prepared for topics you might have not usually considered!



Nine tips for creating engaging blog content

1. [Be yourself](#)

Let your personality and voice in writing shine through. This can be as informal as you like – it's a blog, not a newspaper article. Let your readers get to know you.

2. [Share links to other websites in your posts](#)

Link to other blogs, your own previous posts and websites that contain great information or resources whenever you can. This will provide interesting content for your readers, help to promote other bloggers and organisations, and also help your blog to appear higher in search engine rankings.

3. [Include images](#)

Give your readers some visual stimulation. Not every post suits images, but take advantage of those that do.

If you do include images, be careful to check you have permission to use them. Images you could use include anything you have created, images in the public domain (where copyrights have expired, have been forfeited, or are inapplicable) or Creative Commons.

To find free images online that you can use in your blog (giving credit, if required), try these useful websites:

- **FreeDigitalPhotos.net** allows you to download free images (with an option to buy larger images) for business, personal and educational use. <http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/>
- The registration process to download images from **FreelImages.com** is a little longer than most websites, but with a large gallery containing over 410,000 free stock images, the extra time is worth it. <http://www.freeimages.com/>
- **Pixabay.com** publishes images under **Creative Commons** licences, meaning they are available for you to use for free – you can copy, modify, distribute and use the images, even for commercial purposes. <http://pixabay.com/>

4. Write as much as you need to

A common assumption is that blog posts need to be short. However, research has shown that both readers and search engines prefer blog posts of 300 words or more to make clicking through a worthwhile experience. Consider how in-depth you will be going into your subject matter and what your key goal of the post is. This information will help to inform you how long your post should be.

5. Proof read and spell check

People online are often more lenient about typos, but if there are grammatical mistakes in your blog post, correct them immediately. Proofread your work carefully and give your blog the professional quality it deserves.

6. Keep paragraphs short

Reading online, whether it's on a computer or a mobile phone, makes long blocks of text seem even longer. Break up your content into short paragraphs, bullet points and lists wherever possible to help your readers. Subheadings are also an effective way of dividing up content, making it easier to scan read.

7. Experiment

Let your blog and your writing style evolve over time. Whether it's writing more informally, adding infographics or inviting guest bloggers to write a post, we highly recommend experimenting to discover what your audience is interested in and to keep things varied. See the range of styles on the SUP blog from our guest bloggers – or join in and become a guest blogger yourself.

8. Keep writing, keep reading

The more you practise, the better you will become. Read lots of other blog posts and consider what it is about them that you like or dislike. Aim to emulate the styles that you enjoy reading and, as your confidence grows, the easier you will find it to create your own engaging blog content.

9. Give it time and give it a go

Over time, you will improve in your creation of blog content and become more and more successful at engaging the audience you want. Give your blog time to grow and gain a following – the web is a big, noisy place, but with some patience and investment you can stand out from the crowd.



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