

# 1. Internet: Anytime, Anywhere

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” “We are all now connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain.”

*Stephen Hawking, theoretical physicist*

## CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 1 – GETTING CONNECTED

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Have you made sure that your Internet connection is secured by setting up an antivirus, a firewall and by setting a password for your Wi-Fi router?

Have you set up an acceptable use policy (sometimes called a responsible use policy) for anyone using/accessing the Internet through your network and devices?

Have you set up “guest” accounts on devices that are used by your children?

## CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 2 – ONLINE PRESENCE AND THE CLOUD

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Have you included contact details in your website or blog?

Have you taken steps to protect your online privacy?

Have you checked that the content that you are using for your website/blog is in accordance with copyright law?

## CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 3 – WEB 2.0, WEB 3.0 AND MORE

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Systematically seek permission from people featuring in the photos and videos you post online.

User recommendations on travel and product sites can be helpful, but are you sure they are real?

User-generated content fosters creativity and freedom of expression, but also places the onus on you if the Internet is to become a better place.

## CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 4 – BLOGS AND VLOGS

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Protect your privacy by using a pseudonym and hold back certain personal details.

Protect your blog or vlog from hackers by setting up appropriate security precautions and saving your content regularly.

Understand your blog goal and audience when posting content.

## CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 5 – INTERNET ON THE GO

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At what age can children safely begin to use mobile devices and which ones are most appropriate for very young children?

Do you understand geolocation and Bluetooth sufficiently to use your mobile devices comfortably and safely?

M-learning and mobile wallets are areas in which the use of mobile devices is changing the way we learn, work and shop. What do you know about these recent evolutions?

## Blogs and vlogs



**T**he online diary evolved into the modern day blog in the early 1990s. The word “blog”<sup>1</sup> is short for “weblog” and refers to an online journal created and published by groups and individuals. The term “weblog” was added to the Oxford dictionary in 2003. Although some politicians and celebrities have taken up blogging, blogs continue to be most closely associated with more ordinary people airing their views and talking about their daily lives.

— Blogs and vlogs (video blogs) have also become platforms for social change where bloggers and vloggers highlight challenges in their lives, thereby educating readers on issues such as parenting or living with autism, or raising political awareness on various issues.

— Because of the popularity of blogs, many websites have been created which offer software to help create and publish material. Each entry in a blog can be commented upon, which provides opportunities for discussion and can help generate new ideas.

— Blogs are hosted by dedicated blog hosting services or regular web-hosting services and today hosting service fees are considered reasonably priced.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>



## Moblogs

— Mobile blogs, known as moblogs, are a method of publishing onto a website or blog using a mobile phone or handheld device. Moblogging<sup>2</sup> emerged thanks to the development of e-mail features in mobile phones (see Fact sheet 5 on mobile technology).



## Vlogs

— A video blog or video log is the same as a blog, described above, but the postings are in video format. Vlogs were initially popular on YouTube, and now you can find vlogs on Vine, Instagram, Facebook and even Pinterest.



## RSS feeds

— RSS<sup>3</sup> or rich site summary is now being used to syndicate blogs. Those who wish to have their content published on other websites can make it available using an XML<sup>4</sup> or extensible mark-up language version for Web syndication.

— XML is a type of code similar to HTML and is also known as a “feed”. Basically it allows readers to “subscribe” to content and have blog updates delivered to them so that they do not have to visit the blog to get it.



## Educational importance of blogs and vlogs

- ▶ Blogs and vlogs provide their creators with a voice. Bloggers and vloggers are able to share their interests, exchange their thoughts, and inform their audience on issues that resonate for them. They are able to document life, to share adventures and to provide visual viewpoints on a platform easily accessible for all.
- ▶ Bloggers and vloggers can simultaneously be mobloggers as they use their smartphones to write, publish and upload content.
- ▶ As smartphones are widely available, a more diverse and often younger audience is able to blog and vlog, without the necessity of expensive computing hardware.
- ▶ Blogs and vlogs are also used by journalists, researchers and activists as an important means and source of information and expression.
- ▶ There has also been the development of blogs and vlogs focusing on disability and special needs to provide awareness and start discussion.



## Blogs in the educational environment

— Blogs give students a chance to take control of their learning and set up a public forum in which to publish their thoughts and feelings, and they can be used as a creative teaching tool for discussion and collaboration. For example, a modern literature class used blogging to study the novel *The secret life of bees*. The author wrote an introduction to the lesson and students and their parents were invited to write about their impressions of each day’s reading assignment. The author then commented on these (see <<http://techtraining.dpsk12.org/ilt/Bees/SLOBees.pdf>>).

— Experts note a three-step process involved when blogging: defining audience, purpose and scope. This is described on the website <<https://macln.wordpress.com/2011/01/12/three-step-process-for-blogging/>> . Bloggers must continually scour, filter and post material. By searching for material to comment on, the student becomes increasingly familiar with different theories and ideas and develops the skills needed to critically analyse content and to discern truthful content.

— Technology can be used as a motivating factor in education. Students are interested in blogs because of their creativity and possibilities for self-expression. This can be used as a vehicle to teach a wide variety of subject matter.

— Blogs give every student in the class a chance to participate in a discussion, which exposes children and young people to different perspectives.

2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile\\_blogging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_blogging)

3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS>

4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XML>



## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS

- Remind students that they should not give out personal information in public Internet spaces that they would not disclose in an offline forum. This is a particular problem with blogs, which are often personal by their very nature.
- Even anonymous blogging is not always completely anonymous and taking down a blog does not necessarily remove all contents from view.
- Think about your security offline and ask the question: how easy would it be for someone to find me based on the information I have provided?
- Consider the voice and personality that you are going to use as a blogger or vlogger. Would this be considered offensive to some? Would this be considered offensive to your school or future employer?
- Blogs and vlogs can also be used to disseminate hateful and discriminatory messages or to promote extreme, radical or disturbing content.



## HOW TO

— If you have the technical skills, you can create a blog from scratch. Most people use sites which offer tools for creating and publishing content as a blog. School Blogs at <http://www.schoolblogs.net/wordpress/>, Blogger (see below) and Wordpress are popular hosts which provide free services. They provide easy, step-by-step instructions, which help you create an account, name your blog and choose a template.

— Once your blog is up and running, you compose and edit entries from a central webpage. The interface for popular software is WYSIWYG<sup>5</sup> format and is extremely user-friendly. Visitors to your blog can comment on content by clicking on a comments link at the end of each entry.

— You can choose to moderate your comments before they are displayed on your webpage.

— Be sure to enrich your commentary with hyperlinks and images. Buttons for these features should be included on the toolbar above the text box where you enter your content.



## IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

- Have students divide into teams of two where one student is the blogger and the other student is the interviewee for the subject. The journalist blogger conducts an interview and then writes a blog for the interviewee to approve.
- Research the top blogs and vlogs dedicated to disability, special needs, social change or social awareness. Invite students to discuss how they can contribute by commentary or submitting a blog post.
- Have students consider what is the best method to convey their message: blog, vlog, a series of tweets, Vine videos or Periscope videos. The sky is the limit. If the students choose Twitter, Vine, Periscope or another app, remind them to include links to their blog.
- Ask the student to list 5-10 topics of interest. Then do some research to find out if blogs exist on their preferred subject matter.
- Research some of the top student and young people bloggers. What subjects do they address: the environment, politics, fashion, music, technology?

5. "What You See Is What You Get": <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WYSIWYG>



## GOOD PRACTICE

- A blog is a great opportunity to air your views but you may wish to protect your privacy by using a pseudonym and holding back certain personal details. Children and young people should be particularly careful about revealing personal information in a blog.
- Respect copyright laws and do not use other people's blog designs or photos within a blog without their permission. There are many websites that allow you to use their photos for free with or without attribution.
- Start your own blog to familiarise yourself with the practice before introducing it into the classroom. It might help to visit other blogs for ideas and inspiration. The School Blogs<sup>6</sup> website has more than 4 000 members and gives users the possibility to launch their own school blog.
- Spend time explaining the concept of blogging to your students. Tell them why it is done and give examples of good and bad blogs. Then give students a set of strict rules which might include length and frequency of posts, topics, number of hyperlinks/photos and so forth. Ask students to keep a blog, discuss their experiences and comment on others' blogs.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Blogger is a site providing tools for blogging and now moblogging:  [<www.blogger.com/start>](http://www.blogger.com/start).
- Legal and ethical tips for bloggers can be found at:  [<http://weblogs.about.com/od/bloggingethics/tp/Blogging-Best-Practices.htm>](http://weblogs.about.com/od/bloggingethics/tp/Blogging-Best-Practices.htm).
- Electronic Frontiers Foundation (EFF) offers a legal guide for bloggers:  [<http://www.eff.org/bloggers/lg/>](http://www.eff.org/bloggers/lg/).
- Weblogg-ed – this site follows current blogging trends in education:  [<www.weblogg-ed.com/>](http://www.weblogg-ed.com/).
- “Blogging and RSS – the ‘what’s it?’ and ‘how to’ of powerful new Web tools for educators”:  [<http://web.archive.org/web/20160413030845/http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/jan04/richardson.shtml>](http://web.archive.org/web/20160413030845/http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/jan04/richardson.shtml).
- “The educated blogger: using weblogs to promote literacy in the classroom”:  [<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1156/1076>](http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1156/1076).
- Tools to support K-12 student writing can found at  [<www.readwritethink.org/student\\_mat/index.asp>](http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp).
- Blogging resources for educators are available at  [<http://www.socialstudiescentral.com/>](http://www.socialstudiescentral.com/).
- Darren Rowse was one of the first bloggers to make a living entirely from blogging. He provides tips and resources on his website:  [<www.probblogger.net/>](http://www.probblogger.net/).
- Websites with free photos for use on blogs include  [<www.pixabay.com>](http://www.pixabay.com),  [<www.flickr.com/creativecommons/>](http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/), and  [<www.freedigitalphotos.net>](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net).
- “Learning together to be safe”, a toolkit developed for schools by the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families, provides resources for teachers on issues such as extremism and radicalisation:  [<www.preventforschools.org/download/file/mmu-learning-together-to-be-safe.pdf>](http://www.preventforschools.org/download/file/mmu-learning-together-to-be-safe.pdf).
- Relevant Council of Europe articles, including the European Convention on Human Rights  [<www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_ENG.pdf>](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf):  
**Article 8** – Right to respect for private and family life.  
**Article 10** – Freedom of expression.

6. <http://www.schoolblogs.net/>

- Relevant UN Convention on the Rights of the Child articles:

**Article 13** – Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

**Article 16** – Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

**Article 29** – Education should develop each child’s personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.