

Express Yourself Online

Bloggging.

dothisfirst

Pick which hosting platform your blog should live on. Joy Cho, author of *Blog Inc.: Blogging for Passion, Profit, and to Create Community*, breaks them down:

WordPress.com

BEST FOR: Techier types. If you don't know what <p> means, stay away. **PRO:** You have complete control over the look and functionality of your blog. **CON:** The endless options for add-ons and extras can be a tad overwhelming.

Blogger.com

BEST FOR: Essayists. Select this if you value content over visuals. **PRO:** It's foolproof to set up. **CON:** You're stuck with limited templates and customization options.

Tumblr.com

BEST FOR: The photo-obsessed. **PRO:** A wide network lets you reblog posts from other users. **CON:** Readers can't comment on your posts—lame.

theequation

1 new blog post x 2 or 3 days a week = a happy legion of faithful readers

If you can't commit to that, at least try to be consistent and post on the same day each week or month.

31

Estimated number, in millions, of bloggers in the U.S., per a 2012 Blogging.org survey

majormove: naming your blog

"A strong name will reflect your theme but should also feel fresh a year from now," says Elsie Larson, cofounder of the lifestyle blog *A Beautiful Mess* (great name, right?). Write a list of 25 words that describe what you'll be posting about—and riff off of any relevant, interesting references—until you find a unique name that you love.



WARNING!

Don't get dooced (blog-speak for *fired*) for what you put on your blog. Never bad-mouth your company, coworkers, or competitors; avoid posting inappropriate photos or videos; and stick to publishing your own original content. Better safe than sorry!

follow the leaders

WordPress alone sees 35 million new posts a month (ack!). Take a cue from what some stalwart sites are doing right:



DesignSponge.com

Six to eight new posts are published each day about crafty DIY design projects and affordable room makeovers.



ManRepeller.com

The success of this fashion blog lies in its devotion to high style, splashy images, and funny commentary.



TheBeautyDepartment.com

It features tons of step-by-step hair, makeup, and nail tutorials. But it's the chic, magazine-like design that really sets it apart.



cheat sheet get noticed now

Three ways to increase your readership (and credibility) from Jeff Bullas, author of *Blogging the Smart Way*:

- 1. Build subscribers.** Set up an e-mail list (using a paid site like MailChimp.com or ConstantContact.com) so readers can get new posts sent directly to their in-box.
- 2. Be social.** Share new content once on your Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and Instagram accounts, and four or five times (spaced throughout the day) on Twitter.
- 3. Use key words.** If you're a personal trainer, make sure industry words like *fitness*, *exercise*, *gym*, and *weight loss* are littered throughout your posts so your content will be more likely to pop up in search-engine results.

whoknew?

Your blog's colors matter. A study in the journal *Displays* found that orange makes readers linger (it's inviting), while gray doesn't (it's cold).