

Blogging with Authority | Syllabus

MIT HSSP Fall 2008

RM 14-0637

1-3PM 9/13; 9/20; 9/27; 10/4; 10/18; 10/25; 11/1; 11/8; 11/15

Instructor: Ben Henry

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Turn your interest in a subject or hobby—whatever it may be—into expertise with a topic-specific blog. You'll get a blog up and running, learn how to attract readers, and transform what you have to say (and how you say it) into a recognizable brand.

What you will need to know:

- How to navigate the Web

What you will learn:

- How to set up a blog & incorporate other Web 2.0 features
- How to choose topics and write so others will listen to what you have to say
- How to track and boost visitors and page views, including through online advertising

9/13: Introductions & First Steps

- What is a blog? What can I do with one?
- Your valuable opinion: What it means to be an expert
- Starting up a blog with Blogger
- Blog O' The Week

Assignments: Write your first 3 - 5 blog entries; read and comment on others; Find a Blog O' The Week

9/20: Making it Personal, Keeping it Professional

- Progress Reports
- Ben's Rules of Blogging
- Your Name: The difference between a Fan and an Expert
- Writing for an audience
- Continue building your blog

Assignments: Continue posting; read and comment on others; Find a Blog O' The Week

9/27: Getting Noticed & Tracking Site Statistics

- Progress Reports
- Vital Signs: Making sense of page views, unique visitors, and referrals
- Working with Google Adwords and Adsense
- Hey Buddy, Spare a Link?

Assignments: Email 5-10 others in your field; continue posting; experiment with Google Adwords; read and comment on others; Find a Blog O' The Week

10/4: What It Means to be an Expert: You Are Your Own Brand

- What it means to be a brand
- The Tools of the Expert

Assignments: Write your first major essay on a topic within your field, incorporating multimedia; read the work of others, and leave comments; Find a Blog O' The Week

10/11: No Class

10/18: Extending Your Brand

- Conducting and Giving Interviews
- Fielding Emails and Engaging Readers
- The value of Cross-promotion

Assignments: Create a flyer ad on Facebook and track the results; continue posting; read the work of others, and leave comments; Find a Blog O' The Week

10/25: Promoting Growth

- Traffic Check-Up
- Tweaking Adwords
- Time for an Event: Contests, polls, lists, and other interactions with readers

Assignments: Create an event for your readers; continue posting; continue emailing other writers for links; read the work of others, and leave comments; Find a Blog O' The Week

11/1: Courting Advertisers

- Advertisers = Growing your brand
- Writing a Press Release
- Courting Advertisers

Assignments: Target 3-5 potential advertisers who fit your field of expertise, email them inquiries; continue posting; continue emailing other writers for links; read the work of others, and leave comments; Find a Blog O' The Week

11/8: Tweaking the Engine

- Class Critique
- Why you need to keep every part of your site fresh, not just the content
- Expanding your knowledge base (and your fan base)
- Addressing other avenues to apply your knowledge

Assignments: Assess your blog: highlight weaknesses; continue posting; continue emailing other writers for links; read the work of others, and leave comments; Find a Blog O' The Week

11/15: A Room Full of Experts

- What are your goals for the blog?
- What a blog needs to succeed
- Looking to the future: Your expertise extends beyond the web
- **Keep Writing and Promoting Your Expertise!**