

Creative Assignment:
Blog ideas

Blogs, an introduction

They were the first thing which allowed anyone to participate in the media.
Only 23 blogs in 1998.
Google buys Blogger in 2003.
Hopelessly out of date stats from Technorati says 112.8 million blogs in 2008.

Reasons why people have blogs

Blogs allow you to create a sense of community and express yourself.
They are a training ground for writers and editors, and others who express themselves verbally and visually.
They encourage the creation of unique content.
They allow immediacy.
It is self expression, but self expression for an audience.
People will read blogs if the writer has something to say.

Types of blogs

Those who reference old or someone else's content
Those that present new data or information
and those who create meaning through storytelling.

Reasons why you're doing this assignment

Primarily, it is because your final project will incorporate creative writing for a client. This is an exercise in creative writing for you, to get you warmed up for the web site, with you as your own client.
You are about to enter a concentrated html area of the class, and this will create content for you to work with your html assignments. If you need to learn about headings and styles, it will help if you are invested in the information you are formatting. This does not exempt you from the tutorials however.

Storytelling

A client has a story to tell in order to promote, sell or inform. That story is the primary differentiation between one client and another. Crackers are crackers unless you own a cracker factory, in which case, you think your crackers are the best, and you need a story to help you make them different. The best copy (another word for sales words) should have a point of view, a tone, and should feel like it's written by one person as an expression of that point of view - a real person writing about real stuff.
There's a practical value to storytelling, but there is also a large creative component. For your web client, you'll create a story to help sell the product. At the end of the class, you'll hopefully have a site that is content-rich, well organized, well built, nice looking, and most of all, one in which you have created yourself - from the words to the images.
If you are looking at this class purely for the end result, I believe you'll have a web site that is smart, interesting and super-functional. When you show it to someone, you are demonstrating more than your ability to produce a site, but more of your ability to solve a problem through web design.

The Assignment

For you to present a story about yourself (the client), you must create it, and to do so, you must try some things to see what fits for you. One way to do that is through lateral thinking; more about that later. But what it means to you is that you should try and do one thing different ways before you attempt to improve it. Classic brainstorming. Come up with ideas, review them, then pick some and move forward.

One way I'd like you to start is to write a four-sentence paragraph explaining why you should have a blog. Do you want to inform, educate, refer or create? The reasons are infinite, so I'm giving you some broad categories: Write a reason that's funny. In fact, write three of them. That's three four-sentence paragraphs explaining in a funny manner why you should have a blog, or what your blog would mean.

Write three more reasons, but this time, in terms of a social, timely or important context.

Lastly, write three which explain passions of yours - if you are a collector of things, a avid coffee drinker, or just a person who really likes to meet new people. Try to avoid hobbies, as they quickly turn into clichés.

So nine reasons, each with a four-sentence paragraph.

Next part of the assignment is to create an identity or name which represents the ideas you are trying to express. Suggest names for each of these nine reasons.

Lastly, each of these reasons and names could be accompanied by an image which helps visually validate the idea. Find or create images for two of your favorites in that category, so six images.

To recap.

Three four-sentence paragraphs for each of the three categories. Nine paragraphs total.

Three names per category, nine names total.

Pick your favorite two from each category, and find an image, six images total.

In Lab, you'll read some selections from these aloud, and show some image choices, so have all of that information ready.

To tie this back into the constant learning curve for Kompozer, you'll take all this information and format it in html. Save to a jump drive and bring that file to class.

If you feel that you are not a "creative person", I assure you that you are, but perhaps you haven't realized just how creative you are. If you can tell a joke to your friends, or figure out how to solve a problem by just thinking about it, you're creative. Design is making decisions which affect other things. Everyone is a designer. If you don't know what to write about, write from the point of view of someone who doesn't know what to write about. Keep it real and just try to tell a story.