

BLOG WILD!

A GUIDE FOR
**SMALL
BUSINESS
BLOGGING**



1. **Get Online**
2. **Create Your Blog**
3. **Grow Your Business**

Andy Wibbels

Wild for BLOGWILD!

"Don't just sit there! **It's time to start blogging.**"

Entrepreneur magazine

"At no time does the book bog down in stilted or tedious explanations. It's a lively work that **plays up the new importance of blogs in today's business world.**"

Steve Powers, *Houston Chronicle*

"Just received Andy's book and by far, his book is **the best on the market today** - for an overview and introduction to blogging. **Read this one FIRST** - before you pick up any others. You'll be years ahead of your peers."

Yvonne Divita, author of *Smart Marketing to Women Online*

"Blogwild! is a splendid bridge for people who have heard about this 'blogging thing' but are unsure how to proceed. It's not a Big Topic book, just **an accessible introduction to the concepts and jargon of us bloggers.** Well worth reading."

Dave Taylor, blogger at Ask Dave Taylor



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Introduction

Five thousand hits in one day. I was stunned.

In the midst of the 2004 U.S. Presidential Elections, I started thinking to myself, “John Kerry looks really tired. You’d think that his army of stylists would be able to make him look a little warmer, a little less worn-out.” Mind you, this was before the Botox injections. So I went to Google and searched for the phrase ‘John Kerry looks like’ to see what other people thought the Democratic candidate for President looked like. A slew of opinions came back – mostly from bloggers and message boards. But one of them stuck out to me: he looked like the Herman Munster character from the 1960’s sitcom *The Munsters*.

To confirm my suspicions, I grabbed images of both Kerry and Munster and cooked up a little animation of John Kerry morphing into Herman Munster and posted it to my blog.¹

A couple friends and fellow bloggers saw it and laughed.

Over the next three weeks more and more people started linking to my little cartoon. Gradually, more and more people found the link, and more and more people started visiting my blog. Then some high-traffic political blogs caught on,

¹ To see what I’m talking about go to <http://www.goblogwild.com/johnkerry/>

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and my Web site was blitzed with traffic for five days solid. I was getting thousands of hits from people searching Google for "John Kerry Herman Munster." I received comments from all over the country, with people from all around the world laughing at the cartoon (or ranting about it).

That's when I started to investigate how entrepreneurs and businesses could leverage blogs to market their products and reach an audience hungry for information and entertainment. I started the *Easy Bake Weblogs* seminar and began sharing what I knew with individuals and companies all over the world. This book is based on that seminar.

Blogwild is for businesses and entrepreneurs who have heard about blogs, know that there's something special going on, but aren't quite sure what the big deal is. We'll go step-by-step through the blog creation process, how they work and how they can help your business. Then, you'll create and publish your first blog and begin experimenting with how to use this technology to build trust and visibility with your clients.

You'll learn:

- What blogs are, how they work and where to find ones to read.
- How blogs help businesses and how they differ from Web sites, newsletters and discussion forums.

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- How to create and publish your first blog.
- Advanced blogging techniques for further control and flexibility to communicate your message.
- How to promote your blog and use it to reach out to prospective clients and communicate with them in a voice that is personal and friendly.

So let's get started!

More Wild for BLOGWILD!

"Andy Wibbels taught me everything I needed to know about business blogging. Now you can access his amazing expertise in *Blogwild!* – a tiny book jam-packed with all the critical blogging know-how and none of the filler. This is **the essential lowdown on how to accelerate your creativity and connectivity today.**"

Kim George, author of *Coaching Into Greatness*

"Blogwild! is about the future - your future. If you're a small business owner and want to stay competitive start blogging now. It's going to be **the definitive book on blogging.**"

MICHAEL PORT, author of *Book Yourself Solid*

"**Andy Wibbels is a genius!** His book walked me step-by-step through the mysterious world of blogging. He took away all my excuses and resistance."

MARK ROSENBERGER, author of *Splaty*

"**Blog Wild is a brilliantly simple guide** to understanding the world of blogging and getting your own unique blog up in no time. I highly recommended it."

MITCH MEYERSON, author of *Online Marketing Supertars*



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What Is a Blog?

For the elegant simplicity and beauty that blogs create, they certainly have an ugly, ungainly name. *Blawg* sounds like some kind of gurgling sound your cat makes prior to coughing up a giant hairball.

A blog, short for *web-log*, is often described as an online diary. The most recent entries (called *posts*) appear on the homepage of the blog with links to archives of older posts. Archives are organized by date and can be categorized by topic.

Often, each post will have a form for readers to add their own comments and to give opinions or reactions to the post content.

But that's just what a blog looks like. It doesn't really tell you *why* a blog is different from a conventional Web site.

The real genius in blogs shows itself in *how* they are written. You can update your blog instantly from any internet connection on any computer anywhere in the world - even from your summer home in the Bahamas as you sip an ice-cold island cocktail. Blogs are designed for people who don't want to learn (or don't have the time to learn) HTML or web design. You use a special type of blogging software (called a *blog platform*) to create and update your blog. You type your post into a simple online form, click "Publish" and it's instantly available online for the whole world to see. It's super easy. If you can send an email, you can publish a blog.

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So here is my updated description of a blog:

A blog is an easy, instantly and frequently updated Web site, focused around a topic, industry or personality.

Where Do I Find Blogs to Read?

Knowing the definition of a blog is one thing, but the easiest way to get acquainted with the conventions of the blog format is to start reading them. The more blogs you read, the more you'll get a feel for the depth and breadth of style and subject matter they have to offer. Here are a few sources:

Blog Ecosystems

The collective 'hive' of blogs is called the *blogosphere*. Links to high-visibility things and breaking news bubble up in the blogosphere first, before they ever reach your evening television news program. Blog *ecosystems* are sites that monitor those millions of blogs every minute of every day, searching for the top key words being mentioned in blog posts or the most popular links, books, movies and people. Visiting these sites is like being in a huge convention hall eavesdropping on millions of conversations at the same time. This is a fantastic way to do market research and to see what everybody is buzzing about.

Technorati (www.technorati.com)

BlogPulse (www.blogpulse.com)

Ice Rocket (www.icerocket.com)

Blogdex (www.blogdex.net)

Blog Search Engines and Directories

Just as they do for Web sites, there are also directories devoted to cataloging the ever-growing global network of blogs. Try searching by topic or geographic location.

Blogwise (www.blogwise.com)

Blogarama (www.blogarama.com)

Globe of Blogs (www.globeofblogs.com)

Search Engines

The popular sites below are the more traditional, more widely known search engines, and a great place to start searching for blogs. You can type in a topic followed by the word 'blogs' and see what results come up. The more specific the keyword, the more likely you are to find bloggers talking about what you're interested in.

Google (www.google.com)

Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com)

A9 (www.a9.com)

Blogrolls

Most blogs have a *blogroll*, which is a list of that blogger's favorite blogs and Web sites. If you find a blog you like, try checking out other Web sites that

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particular blogger enjoys. You might find other valuable, complimentary sites and blogs to read.

Yet More Wild for BLOGWILD!

"The **ABC's of beginning** your blog."

Karen E. Klein, *Business Week*

"A great step-by-step guide - and a fun read - for those who need and want the nitty gritty of launching an effective blog. **Highly recommended for your blogging bookshelf!**"

Debbie Weil, author of
The Corporate Blogging Book

"**Andy is the real deal**, a helluva guy and he's the guy I'm using to help set up my first blog! The book is a quick yet informative read and explains techie things like blogging, but written for the Un-Geek. Grab the book and go *BlogWild!*"

Scott Stratten, Un-Marketing.com

"How blogging can provide a great way to market yourself and/or your company for minimal cost and effort, **this is a very good place to start.**"

Richard Pachter, *The Miami Herald*



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How a Blog Works

Let's take a closer look at exactly how a blog works. The example below illustrates how the blog platform TypePad can be used to publish your blog.

1. Login to the TypePad site from any internet connection on any computer anywhere in the world.
2. Fill out a simple web form with your latest post and click publish.
3. TypePad does the rest. It adds this new post to your database of posts. It then grabs the posts and pours them into the blog's template, generating the blog's structure.
4. Next, TypePad then publishes those blog pages to the internet.
5. Your updates are available online, instantly, for anyone in the world to read.

Let's review what happened: Login, write, post, publish. And you did all this without having to contract with a web designer or contact an IT department.

Some blog platforms, like TypePad, provide the platform and the hosting for the blog. Others allow you to send the blog's files over to be hosted by your own server. There are blog platforms that can be installed on your own Web site's server to give you complete control of the look and feel of your blog. In part three, we'll talk about factors that go into picking a blog platform.

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To get started using TypePad immediately, check out my course **Easy Bake Weblogs** (www.EasyBakeWeblogs.com). You'll be up and blogging in no time.

Blogs and Business

Now that you have a basic understanding of the ins and outs of blogs, and some options available, you're probably wondering "how can blogs help *my* business? How do they help *me* to stand out?

Blogger and web designer Angie McKaig (www.angiemckaig.com) nailed it when she outlined these three ways that blogs can enrich any business:

- They offer fresh content on a daily or at least on a very regular basis.
- They present an informal voice that visitors can respond to and get to know.
- They provide useful information via links.

These three points are the foundation for how blogs can help companies. Here are some other ways that blogs can be used for marketing and building a business.

Communicate with Your Team. Use an internal blog to communicate project status to stakeholders and managers. It beats clogging everyone's email with multiple mailings and it allows these missives to be archived, indexed and easily searched. Blogs are perfect for knowledge management.

Enrich Your Clients' Understanding of Your Business. You can easily link to white papers, articles and resources relevant to your readers and their needs. You can more easily attract experts to provide value-added content to your audience

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by hosting interviews or webinars to educate clients about trends affecting their industry.

Reach Out to Your Customer. Nobody buys from someone they don't know. Blogging allows you to demonstrate your expertise and point-of-view quickly and easily. In addition, blogs allow the customers to receive your updates in the format they choose: email alert, online or through feed technology (more on feeds later). You can even launch a 'faux blog' and have your company's mascot or branded character report their experiences working with your company.

Buzz Building. You can create your own marketing buzz to drive attention and buyers to your products and services. Courting influential bloggers in your industry to review your latest product or service is a great way to generate attention before a product launch. Companies like BzzAgent (www.bzzagent.com) and Marqui (www.marqui.com) have used bloggers as prime movers in their clients' marketing campaigns.

Test Drive New Ideas. Blogs are the perfect forum to test out new ideas and receive instant feedback. General Motors does this with their Fastlane Blog (fastlane.gmblogs.com). You can allow others to see how you develop your products and services, and at the same time, they can tell you how best to serve them.

Go Global. Blogs, like other online media, allow you to take your business and

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ideas to a global market. Translation services are getting better every day, allowing more people to read online content in different languages. I've helped bloggers from New York to New Zealand, from Indiana to India.

Backdoor to the Press. Journalists are busier than ever and blogs provide a virtual directory of pundits on any topic. You and your company might be the content expert they're looking for. Further, if your company is talked about in the blogosphere, it could lead to exposure in the mainstream press.

Write your book. Blogs can not only give a publisher a taste of your writing style, but also allows them to assess your level of expertise. Let your readers help you write your next book or article. Post chapters or ideas, then let readers help you in researching, testing and suggesting ideas. Or, use a blog after your book is published to update the material or to answer questions from readers.

Highlight Success Stories. Invite clients to blog about their successes with your products and services – it's like a living, never-ending testimonial that never ends. As clients share their experiences, your prospects can see, first-hand, how you can help them, too.

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Communicate in a Crisis. When companies are in a PR-pinch and need to get accurate, timely information to the press and don't have time to wait for the IT department to work through the tiresome change control process, a blog might just be what is needed. A blog provides an instant way to get updates out (internally or externally) to the people that need it most

For an extensive look at the in's and out's of blogs and business, check out my course with blog designer Peter Flaschner, **Business Blog Basics** (www.BusinessBlogBasics.com).

Still More Wild for BLOGWILD!

"**Quick, relatively low-tech guide to blogging** for small companies."

Alex L. Goldfayn, The Chicago Tribune

"You're crazy if you don't pick up Blogwild! It's **a great starting point for small business professionals** who want to become bloggers."

CHRIS PIRILLO, Lockergnome.com

"Blogs are revolutionizing all kinds of industries but perhaps none more so than small business marketing. Andy Wibbels gives you **everything you need at your finger tips to launch a successful small business blog.**"

STEVE RUBEL, Micropersuasion.com

"Andy cuts to the chase. You get **the facts on business blogging**, and some good recipes to boot, in a great easy-to-read format. The book is worth keeping next to your desk filled with page flags to remind you of the great tips he has in there. **Any business book that makes you laugh is more than worth its weight in gold!**"

Tris Hussey, Qumana Software Company



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Fire Your Web Designer

One reason businesses, especially small businesses and solo professionals, flock to blogs is because they reduce dependency on a web design team to get ideas and announcements online.

Developing a Web site for your business can take weeks, sometimes months, from shopping for a designer and negotiating a solution, to finally getting the site launched. Developing a Web site can not only be costly, but also time consuming.

Using a blog, you can create a Web site in less than fifteen minutes, for less than \$10, with hosting and software included. All this, without having to know anything about web design. With a blog there are far fewer decisions to make and you can be online and publishing in the time it takes to watch a sitcom.

My clients have found that blogs are a simple and inexpensive way to start out online while they are building their business, with the eventual goal to develop towards a more robust web design solution. I work with others who love the blog format so much they have abandoned their Web sites for it, vowing to never look back.

But wait!

And in the immortal words of [Ron Popeil](#): **“But wait – there’s more!”**

- A brief history of blogs.
- How companies use blogs to market and promote their business.
- Examples of companies using blogs in concert with Web sites.
- Comparisons of blogs to discussion forums and email newsletters.
- How blogs make money – often thousands of dollars.
- Using feed technology for spam-free, virus-proof publishing.
- How podcasting works so you can start your own internet radio show.
- How to monitor your blog traffic to see where visitors are coming from and what they're looking for.
- The considerations that go into selecting a blog platform.
- How to set up and create your first blog.
- Managing your blog’s comments, posts and categories.
- And tons more!

Grab the Book!

Blogwild! A Guide for Small Business Blogging hit bookshelves on April 6th and quickly climbed Amazon.com's top-seller charts, dominating in the several marketing, business and technology categories. You can order the book right now on Amazon.com:

[Order on Amazon.com](#)

You can also find *Blogwild!* at your local bookstores including

Barnes & Noble and **Borders**.

Let's Keep In Touch

Stay current with the latest trends, tutorials and tips in business blogging with my blogging tips newsletter.



You can also receive blog updates through the following services:



Grab the Podcast!

You can also subscribe to the *Go Blogwild! Podcast* through the following services:

[Apple's iTunes](#)

[Odeo](#)

[Podnova](#)

[Yahoo! Podcasts](#)

Remember: you **don't** have to have an iPod to enjoy podcasts!

About the Author

Andy Wibbels is a professional blogger, speaker, consultant and generally creative malcontent. Find his award-winning professional blog at www.andywibbels.com, while his ranty personal blog, Andymatic, is at www.andymatic.com. He was a contributing author to *Success Secrets of the Online Marketing Superstars* as well as the creator of the *Easy Bake Weblogs*, *RSS Essentials*, *Six Figure Blogging* (co-creator), *Business Blog Basics* (co-creator), *Blog Your Way to a Bestseller* (co-creator), *WordPress Essentials* and *Podcasting Bootcamp* seminars. He currently lives in Chicago, Illinois USA.

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Chili recipe: Brown 1 lb ground turkey. Add 2 cans crushed tomatoes, packet of chili seasonings. Chop/add 1 onion, 2 green peppers, one clove of garlic, 1 bay leaf and 6 stalks celery. Toss in beans if desired. Add cinnamon to taste. Cook all day. Serve over pasta or rice. Add in chopped cooked Italian sausage for extra meaty goodness. Toffee recipe is in the book.

What Else Ya Got?

Along with the *Blogwild!* book I have an entire curriculum of course in blogging and related technologies.

Business Blog Basics

If you're still not sure if a blog is right for you, come join blog designer Peter Flaschner and I for a guided tour through the in's and out's of blogs and business. By the end of this course, you'll have a clear understanding of **if your business needs a blog and what to do next**. Check out my course at [Business Blog Basics \(www.BusinessBlogBasics.com\)](http://www.BusinessBlogBasics.com).

Easy Bake Weblogs

If you know that blogs are in your future and you are rip-roarin' ready to go, check out [Easy Bake Weblogs](http://www.EasyBakeWeblogs.com). This course gives you an excellent overview on how to use the blog platform TypePad to **create your first business blog**. You'll be up and blogging in no time. [Easy Bake Weblogs](http://www.EasyBakeWeblogs.com). (www.EasyBakeWeblogs.com).

Six Figure Blogging

Show me the money! That's the question that professional blogger Darren Rowse and I answer in this info-packed, **comprehensive blueprint for blogging profits** and success. We'll cover how to use Google AdSense to start making cash as well as advanced strategies for affiliate-based commissions and other

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techniques to maximize your moolah. **Six Figure Blogging**
(www.SixFigureBlogging.com).

RSS Essentials

You may have heard of RSS technology as the number one way to spy on your competition, spam-proof your newsletter and provide your updates to your customers in the format of their choice. This set of tutorials gets behind the hype of this **powerful, laser-guided direct channel** to your readers. **RSS Essentials** (www.RSSEssentials.com).