Blogs

Short for web log, a website where posts are displayed in reverse chronological order (ie. newest posts first)

Around 150 million blogs worldwide on a range of topics from personal to political

Range of uses for a blog:
- Personal, eg. Ian Watson's blog
- Provide commentary on an issue; eg. Kiwiblog
- Keep followers up to date, eg. Office blog

Today's lecture

Blogs
Wikis
Social issues around online publishing
**Blogs - advantages**

- Blogs can also be sources of news (e.g., TMZ, Gizmodo)
- Blogs gave people a voice during political unrest
  - Eg. blogs were an important means of communication during the Arab Spring
  - Can be difficult for governments to censor bloggers. Some governments have even gone as far as shutting down their country’s Internet access

**Microblogging**

- A form of broadcast communication that is similar to blogging
- The key difference is that smaller portions of content are shared on microblogs
- Well-known microblogging platforms include:
  - Twitter
  - Tumblr
  - Pinterest
  - Instagram

**Blogs - disadvantages**

- Can provide too much information about yourself
  - Extremely difficult to erase any information that has been placed on the Internet because information is easily duplicated
- Blogs can contain incorrect information or personal opinion, so can be unreliable sources of information
- Some people use blogs or the comments section on blog posts to harass or insult other people

**Wikis**

- A set of public webpages that can be edited by anyone, which encourages collaboration
  - Can also have private wikis that can only be edited by authorised people
- Wiki pages are written in plain text, with wiki markup used to add formatting (italicise text, add links etc.)
Wikipedia

Wikipedia is the best known wiki. Launched in 2001 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger.

Today, it has over 5.3 million English articles with around 20,000 articles added each month.

Funded by grants and public donations.

Wikipedia runs on the MediaWiki software platform and is hosted on around 400 servers.

Wikipedia - vandalism

Wikipedia has a number of automated and manual systems for addressing vandalism.

Bots: vandalism is automatically detected and reverted by a bot called ClueBot NG.

Recent change patrol: a group of people monitor the Recent Changes page to modify or remove vandalism.
  ◦ Can also modify or remove edits that don’t meet Wikipedia’s standards.

Wikipedia

Advantages:
  ◦ Everyone can access and contribute to Wikipedia
  ◦ Easy to use
  ◦ Quick to develop material
  ◦ Enormous amount of topics and information available

Disadvantages:
  ◦ No direct quality control
  ◦ Bias in some articles
  ◦ Information changes rapidly
  ◦ Vandalism is a real problem

Wikipedia - vandalism

Watchlists: registered users can watch a page that they have created/edited or are interested in, allowing them to watch for vandalism.

Reader-reported vandalism: readers can address vandalism by:
  ◦ Reverting to an older version of the page
  ◦ Warning the vandal that their actions have been noted
  ◦ Report the vandal to Wikipedia administration
Wikipedia’s reliability

2005 study in Nature: experts analysed 42 articles, found the articles had the same error rate as Encyclopedia Britannica

- A summary of other studies can be found on Wikipedia

Generally, Wikipedia articles on academic topics are more accurate than articles on pop culture and politics

- Maybe because these articles are more subjective or opinion-based?

Wikipedia should be a starting point for research rather than a definitive source of information

Other wikis

- WikiVoyage
  - Travel guide with entries for countries, cities, areas, sights

- Wiki
  - Collection of Wikis, anybody can create wiki on any topic
  - Focus on gaming and entertainment topics
  - ~10 million entries altogether

- WikiMapia
  - Combination of Google Maps and an extra layer of polygons that mark interesting areas, buildings etc.
  - ~13 million entries

- WikiHow
  - Extensive collection of how-to guides
  - Articles often include media such as photos and videos

Encyclopedia Britannica

This popular printed encyclopedia now only exists online

Articles have generally been checked for accuracy and correctness

- Users can’t directly edit the articles but can suggest changes

Britannica runs a Publishing Program, which allows people with expertise in their field to publish articles on Britannica

Computer Science wiki

The CS Department hosts a number of Wikis, which use the MediaWiki software

Anyone can read the wiki but only CS students can edit the wiki when the log in

You’ll get to contribute to the Stage One Wiki in the labs
Computer Science wiki

Wiki markup
A special language used to format wiki pages
Some wikis accept wiki markup and HTML tags (which we’ll see later in the course)
Chapter 4 of the online reference manual contains a helpful guide to wiki markup

Wiki markup - paragraphs
A new line is ignored while a blank line creates a new paragraph
Wiki markup - headings

Four levels of headings:

1. Main heading=
2. ===Section heading===
3. ====Subsection heading====

Wiki markup - formatting

Emphasis

''Emphasised Text''

Strong

''''Strong text''''

Very Strong

''''''Emphasised and strong'''''''

Wiki markup - links

Two kinds of links:

- Internal links: used to link to other pages in the wiki
- External links: used to link to other webpages

Internal link:

- [[name of page]]
- [[User:Dazh001]]

External link:

- URL
  - http://www.auckland.ac.nz
Wiki markup - links

External links
- [URL label] [http://www.auckland.ac.nz UoA]

- Note only one pair of square brackets and a space instead of a bar character

Wiki markup - lists

Ordered lists:
- Uses the # character in front of each list item
- Use multiple # to create sub-lists

1. Act One
   1. First scene
   2. Second scene
2. Act Two
3. Act Three

Summary

Blogs
- Overview, uses
- Advantages and disadvantages

Wikis
- An overview of Wikipedia
- Wiki markup: paragraphs, headings, formatting, links, lists