

WordPress or Blogger – Which is Right for Me?

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Successful online marketing requires making the best use of all that interactive Web 2.0 offers. At the heart of this effort is a blog. It allows you to post updates frequently, which attracts repeat viewers and provides a way for you to dialogue with your target audience. There are several different formats of blogs that we will cover here so you can choose the one that's right for your needs.

Blogger is now owned by Google and is a free blogging site that provides templates you can customize to suit your design theme. You can also use third-party themes. Blogger themes are very easy to customize and optimize. Multiple widgets are offered directly from Blogger that can be integrated into its framework, meaning that they are simple to install. A widget, also called a gadget or plug-in, is a tool that generates the necessary code to provide some type of function like an archive list of blog posts, graphics with text, RSS feed links, and more. The widgets are usually found in the sidebar area of the blog. You can use the widgets Blogger provides or insert third-party widgets from other providers. More are being created every day.

One other bonus aspect of Blogger is that the site can be used commercially, meaning that it can be monetized. You can use AdSense type ads on Blogger or links to your product or affiliate products.

Blogger is an ideal platform for book and product reviewers where the focus is on the constantly changing information and less on the author. Multiple authors can post to the site, making it ideal for small book clubs.

Blogger does have a couple of limitations. It does not provide static pages, like an ordinary website, that contain additional information about you or your product. However, there are ways to create virtual pages with links to that information. Also, it does not offer storage space, so you cannot upload a file for viewers to download.

Blogger offers one big advantage to those who already have a website. Posts on Blogger can easily be integrated into a static site by using RSS feeds. ([See an example.](#)) This can be a wonderful addition, since your blog posts will automatically be indexed by Google, giving you a bigger footprint on the Internet and better rankings with search engines.

You may have heard advice not to use Blogger because they could remove your site at any time or because the top header has links for "Next Blog", which would take traffic away from your site. Have no fear. You would have to do something pretty severe to get your blog censored. And, if you are providing interesting posts, folks are not likely to click away just to visit some random blog. Keep in mind that millions of people use Blogger. It's not in their best interest to deny use of the service.

WordPress offers a blog as well as static pages integrated into one site. There are two types of WordPress sites. The first is offered by WordPress.com. It is much like Blogger in that it is free and offers templates and integrated widgets. However, you can only use the templates they provide and they are not as easy to customize as Blogger templates. To make changes to the Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) that drive the look of many elements on the site, you will have to pay for an upgrade. Another limitation is that you can only use the widgets they provide. No third-party widgets are allowed.

WordPress.com sites cannot be monetized with ads from providers like AdSense, but that may change in the future. You also cannot include links to sponsored or paid posts including PayPerPost, affiliate or referral links to domains such as usercash or clickbank or any type of click tracker service. You cannot post a site that is strictly an affiliate marketing scheme. WordPress.com does reserve the right to place their own ads on your blog at any time. You can have them removed for a small monthly fee. WordPress.com has a very low tolerance for blogs created purely for search engine optimization or commercial purposes and they will be removed without notice.

You can place a PayPal button on the site, but only for donations. The Terms of Service on WordPress.com are rather vague about whether you can sell a product you created directly from the site. This may include an e-book or other digital media that you have uploaded to the site. Advice on the Support and Forum pages state that some sites have been removed for including affiliate links to their own products on Etsy and Amazon.

Besides the static pages, a big advantage that WordPress.com offers over Blogger is that you can upload text files, pictures, and video to a Media Library where they can be easily accessed. This means that you can find and reuse them, saving your precious 3 GB of storage space.

WordPress.org is the driving code behind WordPress.com sites and is available as a free download. To use it, you will need to pay for hosting. There are several links on the WordPress.org site listing recommended hosting services that are rather inexpensive.

There are multiple sites on the Internet that offer themes, also known as templates or skins, for WordPress.org. Many of them are free or offered at reasonable costs. However, if you want a fully customized theme, you will need to hire a designer who is fluent in the PHP coding language and can create Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).

With a WordPress.org site on your own host you can fully customize the site, monetize it any way you like, and use it as you please.

You can use your own domain, like www.mysite.com on Blogger or WordPress.com, if you like, but it is not necessary. There is a fee for using your own domain on WordPress.com in addition to the fee you pay to register the domain. You must have your own domain to use a WordPress.org site.

Blogger and WordPress.com are the best resources for establishing an online presence quickly and on a budget. The great news is, all of the posts you make on these sites can easily be transferred to a WordPress.org site later. In fact, there's a widget to do it for you.