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Getting Started with a Health Blog

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The Internet is full of blogs. They are multi-themed sites, self-managed by the authors and demonstrative of, and only limited by, the authors' level of creativity. They are potentially accessible to anyone and everyone. There are numerous health blogs, but the proportion of health professionals who are bloggers is low. Having a blog is a cost-effective option to share health information, to promote interaction between professionals and patients, and for global communication.

What is a Blog?

A blog is a website whose owner can edit and share the contents easily. The term 'blog' is a derivative of the original 'weblog', taken from 'web' (network) and 'log' (diary, daily account of events), whose publications are logged in chronological order. The owners of different blogs are known as bloggers.

Advantages

- Advanced computer know-how is not a requirement.
- It is the easiest way to have a digital presence.
- It can be run at minimum cost or even at no cost at all.
- Text, audio, video, attached files, presentations, and/or images can be shared.
- It allows interaction with readers through free comments or through the author's supervision.
- Readers can subscribe and receive information published in their email or via a content aggregator programme.

Before Starting a Health Blog

It is essential to work up a basic blog design before opening it, and to be able to answer the following questions:

- What is my reason for writing a blog about health issues?
- Who is my target audience?
- What information do I want to share?
- How often will I publish?
- How much of my time do I want to invest in this endeavour?
- Do I want to or can I provide this blog in other languages?

How to Start a Blog in a Minute

There are many tools to create a blog, both free and at a cost. At the present time, two tools stand out above the rest: Blogger and Wordpress
Blogger is perhaps the most widespread free tool. The owner doesn´t need to buy a web domain or hosting package. It has the advantage of integration with other services offered by google.
WordPress is constantly updated and very easy to use. It is chosen by many bloggers. It has a free version and has advanced options of payment also. There is an advanced platform that can be installed on private servers to which many services and applications can be added. It is very versatile.

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Living with a Blog

The first bit of advice: once you have it opened and running, you need to write or share content frequently and regularly. A blog that does not publish content on a regular basis fades away and dies from lack of followers. good quality content, interesting and reliable data ensure that your blog will be visited and endure over time.
If you want your blog to be known, you must share your posts on different social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, google+).
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Dealing with your Followers

You can decide whether to receive comments or not to your blog; whether they are published automatically as they reach you or supervised by you prior to publication. It may be advisable to establish a policy for publication of comments to orient the reader.

Good Reasons for Starting a Health Blog

Having a health blog benefits the health professional by allowing him/her to share and discuss health and medical issues with colleagues or patients.
Our professional visibility increases as we share content. By posting resources, quoting other websites, and referencing prestigious journals, we will be positioning ourselves higher in the rankings for the issues we discuss.
A good reputation on the Internet translates into greater confidence from patients and professionals. The confidence in the blog will increase as well, not to mention your reputation as an expert in your field.
A blog means connecting easily with other bloggers to exchange ideas, and to deepen your understanding on a specific topic, while providing a platform for the continuing education of its authors and readers alike.

Health Blogs Are Useful

- For professionals: as a training or educational tool, to share knowledge and experiences on different topics.
- For patients: a s a health education tool; to take health questions and advice out of the limits of the family doctor´s office, ambulances or hospitals.
- For government institutions: to disseminate health contents for the population.
- For networks of patients: to offer information and support to other patients, based on personal experience.

What Can Go Wrong With a Blog?

- Excessive time spent.
- Too much visibility.
- Errors and opinions are misinterpreted.

La consulta del Doctor Casado www.doctorcasado.es
In our opinion…
Having a blog is a personal choice. If you like to write, if you feel that your voice needs to be heard and you want to reach a lot of people (professionals, patients, family), do not hesitate: this is your tool! The authors of this article have become known thanks to our respective health blogs, t hree of t he most popular blogs in Spain. As a result, communication between the different levels of public healthcare in Spain has increased.

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Health Blogs We Read:
1. Kevin MD (English) www.kevinmd.com/blog
2. Open Innovation and Co-Creation in Health(Bilingual) https://healthcocreation.wordpress.com
3. Neuronas en crecimiento (Spanish)
http://neuropediatra.org
4. Enfermería basada en la evidencia (Spanish) http://ebevidencia.com
5. The BMJ blog (English) blogs.bmj.com/bmj
6. 33 Charts (English)
http://33charts.com

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