

Making money online

Blogging is no longer a casual writing hobby as a person can make it a lucrative profession and rake in significant online revenue

Amit Bhawani

BLGGING in India has now become a profession from a casual writing hobby and this is mainly because of the money involved. There are hundreds of professional bloggers from India who are now into full-time Web logging, wherein their main job is to write reviews, compare product features, analyse them thoroughly and publish these reviews on their blogs.

There has been a continuous growth of around 10% in the number of blogs and bloggers in India every year, with a majority hailing from urban community. Most of these blogs are powered by the Google's free blogging service called Blogger, followed by Wordpress, another blogging platform with no permissions for advertisements. There is a very small percentage of blogs which are self-hosted and powered with the Wordpress script, which allows bloggers to have the full control over their blog and the advertisements space.

In order to get started with blogging, you need to have good writing skills along with a lot of patience. One needs to work professionally in the sphere the way newspaper editors work in their domain. A blogger has to publish articles on a daily basis which have to be written on any niche area in which they are experts. And different ways have to be chosen to promote the blogs.

The areas are:

- Search engine optimisation (SEO)

- Social media optimisation
- Social networking

Of these three methods, SEO is a technique wherein one has to optimise the blog for search engines, after which it would start ranking better in Google, Yahoo and Live.com which would ultimately send huge number of free visitors to the blog.

This is a step-by-step procedure which has to be implemented in a planned manner beginning with on-page SEO wherein one has to optimise the website-based meta tags, creating a sitemap, followed by the off-page SEO through which back links to the website are built. Simply put, other websites have to be made to link back to the website for which back links are sought. If the SEO process is implemented in the right way, the blog will start getting visitors through which one can easily make money using different monetisation methods.

How to find content and topics in order to write a good blog post? If you are a techie, then you should always keep yourself updated with the best available tool — Google Alerts where a few keywords related to your blog like Apple, Apple iPhone, Macbook, Fess Softwares and download applications could be monitored. Whenever there is some news or Web for any of these keywords, one gets an instant email with links to the website which has the information. Articles can be written on these and make sure that the topic title is quite different and the content is also based on own review and is not just a

copy-paste job. You can also check out tech blogs and websites like TUAW, techfaq.org, Slashdot, Gizmodo and Engadget, which have serious killer news and content, which are quite helpful in getting content ideas.

Improve current content quality: You need to make sure that you can write a few pillar articles for your blog that are helpful in the long run, along with some articles which normally have very little competition to keep your blog unique. You should also make sure that the blog posts you generally write are at least 250 words each and at times you can write mini-posts but this should not be a daily habit because detailed articles are always liked by the visitors.

Increasing visitors count: In order to increase blog readers, you need to continuously blog on a daily schedule and make sure you don't miss a day. Promote your blog through social media and social networking websites like Twitter, Facebook, Digg, Propeller, Mixx, Delicious, Rambhai and Jumptags, and get one-way links to your blog posts along with some excellent traffic. Also, join a few technology or webmaster related forums and ask the members with suggestions related to your blog. Submit a few articles to different article directories and also submit your blog to a few quality Web directories in the most relevant category. Avoid installing a forum or any extra stuff on your website unless you have got a good amount of content on them, because blank pages are in no way useful.

How to find topics for writing on your blog: Here are a few tips which can help you in finding topics. For this you need to be a smart person and try to cater stuff which is not already

available on the Web and which can have demand. Here are few ways to find blog topics.

Social bookmarking websites: You need to spend some time reading the most voted and shared topics on the best social bookmarking websites like Digg, Propeller, StumbleUpon and Delicious, and click

are the most visited topics which have got the highest page views. These can give you the idea that if you write more on these topics, you can get better traffic since your website has ranking for these topics already.

Ask readers and subscribers: You can also start a poll, ask in the comments section or ask through an email newsletter all your blog readers and subscribers on what topics

you should write next and then proceed writing on them. These can be a hit because these are user selected topics and they are for sure going to be read. Moreover you can expect good amount of comments on them.

News buzz: If you check out all these sources — Google News, Topix, Yahoo News, Bloglines, Technorati and Blog Pulse — then you can find out the list of topics which are currently in real high demand and can get you a high number of visitors. You need to continuously track these sources and keep yourself updated with different pieces of news to get different topic ideas.

On an average, if a blog has around one lakh visitors per month, it can easily generate Rs 50,000 while working from home and there is no limit on this kind of legal income. The above figures can be taken as an example in order to find out the total scope of online revenue a person can make when he opts for blogging as a full-time career. The blogger has to implement all these steps in a planned manner and with utmost dedication in order to make money online.

I had started blogging from 2007 at www.amitbhawani.com with the aim to reach a million visitors every month who are mainly looking for technology-related content. At the end of 2009, I achieved this target along with a huge amount of regular monthly revenue. As mentioned earlier, if a website has a good number of visitors reading the content, then you can make a lot of legal money through different advertisements.

In 2009, I crossed a total income of more than \$1,00,000, a six-figure legal income which can be made from your home. I currently handle around 50 different blogs which are on different niche topics and are edited by different freelance writers who contribute content to these. We also offer professional blogging training sessions to upcoming bloggers who have a passion for writing and making money through it.

The writer is chief blogger, Amitbhawani.com



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on the category which is relevant to your niche. Then find out what is the most read stuff which can still have a great demand and create a list of topics from this.

Reading forums: Forums are discussion boards where members gather up and discuss different topics. You can find many forums for each niche with thousands of threads and replies. Most of the forums have sorting features with the option to sort the threads by replies count and also views count. This way, you can find all the topics which have got the maximum replies and views. These can become topics for you to blog on since they are in demand and have been in demand from a long period.

Website logs and stats: Instead of roaming around outside stuff, why not first focus on the things you own, that is, the logs which you have got for your website? You need to merge all your stats for a complete year and then find out what

Towards a smarter globalised research

The scale and complexity of today's challenges make it harder for a handful of researchers to find solutions

Gopal Pingali

IF RESEARCH can be described as an endeavour to understand phenomena, invent new solutions or enhance existing ones to improve our lives, then it is as ancient as human civilisation. We can associate this spirit of research to whoever invented the wheel or discovered the use of fire or made the first weapons for hunting. The universal availability of these inventions also suggests a spirit of collaboration and sharing that fuelled the growth of civilisation.

However, the highly organised and funded research that we see today became prevalent only in recent centuries and was primarily driven by the state through its various agencies, including defence organisations and educational institutions. Later, corporate houses started research initiatives as they strived to secure competitive advantage

through new product development, faster go-to-market and reduced cost.

Research, especially in business organisations, became a highly secretive and guarded affair. Most research & development centres were typically based close to corporate headquarters. Companies were extremely cautious and vigilant in disclosing their activities as they did not want leakage of strategic information and thereby incur potential business loss. Competition and the race to capture business or strategic advantage, rather than collaboration, have been the bigger drivers of organised research activity in recent times.

Since the advancement of information technology, especially the invention of the Internet, things have started changing significantly. The Internet has shrunk the world, breaking the geographical boundaries. It has not only created the largest source of easily ac-



cessible information but has also dramatically changed our approach to communication, work, business and life at large. More importantly, it has made the world more interconnected and integrated, enabling an unprecedented level of collaboration in every sphere of life—be it finding medical advice, getting reviews while shopping, sharing pictures and videos, or creating the world's largest encyclo-

It is imperative that organised research becomes truly collaborative. Open source products and technologies are the finest examples of collaborative research

pedia. There are also other factors that have led to this integration—issues that are global like security, global warming, water scarcity, and diseases such as the H1N1 flu. These challenges cut across almost all geographical and cultural boundaries.

The global financial meltdown is an unfortunate testimony to this interconnect-

edness. It impacted the entire world in a short timespan. Fortunately, the signs

of recovery are getting brighter and hopefully, the world economy will stabilise soon. This faster recovery has been accelerated by collaborative and synchronised efforts of governments and industries globally.

Today, it is imperative that organised research takes a smarter approach and becomes truly collaborative. Open source products and technologies are perhaps the finest examples of collaborative research. Organisations and individuals from even remote places of this planet come together to design and develop products and technologies that are not proprietary and can be accessed and used by all. The open source movement started in the field of software development and is gradually gaining ground in other industries like biotechnology and healthcare.

The closed approach of corporations to R&D is slowly but surely changing. There is an increased realisation that numerous perspectives are needed to even identify and certainly to attack the complex problems of today in a meaningful way. Companies have started conducting 'global innovation jams' using the Internet to bring together literally hundreds of thousands of minds from various companies, educational institutions and even individuals for a few days for focused collaboration on problems in areas such as transportation, energy, and healthcare. Another

big step is the opening up of a portfolio of environmentally beneficial patents by a coalition of international businesses comprising the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, IBM, Nokia, Pitney Bowes and Sony. These patents, available on the web site of the council, are expected to encourage researchers, entrepreneurs, companies and government agencies to create, apply or further develop their products and services.

The scale and complexity of today's challenges make it impossible for a handful of researchers to find solutions to these challenges on their own. It requires collaboration from the entire eco-system—industry, government, academia, and other organisations—to work together. If we are dealing with massive, global issues, we cannot take a narrow view of research. We have to open our minds, literally, and embrace a collaborative way of working. As the world continues to become smaller, flatter and smarter, and as we are drawn deeper into the age of the globally integrated and intelligent economy and society, it is critical that research becomes multidisciplinary, global, and collaborative. This is the way forward for research and innovation at large.

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With Sun, Oracle has all the pieces

Ashlee Vance

ORACLE, having spent the last nine months fighting rivals and regulators in order to own Sun Microsystems, has pushed itself into the middle of the scrum of technology heavyweights all jostling for the same corporate customers. The \$7.4 billion deal, which gives Oracle a vast hardware business for the first time, pits it against Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Dell and Cisco Systems, all of which have made a flurry of acquisitions and alliances. Many of these moves broadened the companies' products and services from their traditional specialties, like databases, computers or networking equipment. Each company wants to be able to claim to prospective customers that it, and it alone, has more of the parts to be an end-to-end service provider.

"The cost isn't in buying the pieces," Lawrence J Ellison, chief executive of Oracle, said in a phone interview. "The cost is in the labour of assembling them and making them work."

Ellison said that in the next few months, Oracle planned to lay off fewer than 2,000 people, while hiring more than 2,000 people in engineering, sales and other roles. He did not rule out that additional layoffs might occur later.

Oracle's purchase of Sun, which European regulators approved last week after months of scrutiny, stands out as the most game-changing corporate technology play made during the economic downturn, according to industry analysts. "It's the most significant deal of the decade," said Dan Olds, an Oracle's purchase of Sun is clearly the game-changing corporate technology play made during the economic downturn

analyst with Gabriel Consulting. "Oracle has a shot here to change the rules of the industry and usher in a new era."

As analysts like Olds point out, the era is new only in relative terms. The corporate computing market began decades ago with IBM selling customers systems that included most of the hardware and software they would need in a single package. As time went on, a host of minicomputer makers rose to prominence with a similar strategy, in which they would build all of the crucial pieces of a large system, including its chips, main software and networking technology.

The older model of selling corporate systems was then disrupted by the rise of powerful, more standardised computers based on readily available chips from Intel and an innovative software market. Customers could suddenly choose the technology they preferred from a variety of suppliers and assemble those products in their own data centers.

Prices of hardware and software declined under this competitive pressure. Oracle, for one, wants to revert to the more traditional model. The company plans to offer customers databases, business software, servers, storage systems and networking equipment from one place. In addition, Oracle will do the hard engineering work to make sure all this technology works well together, Ellison said.

"It is odd that the computer industry ships all these separate parts and expects customers to assemble them," Ellison said. "You will now be buying this complete system, and don't have to hire IBM or someone else to assemble it for you."

While Oracle has long battled IBM in the database market, its push into computer hardware places the company in direct competition with longtime partners like HP and Dell.

NYT

Cyberwar: US finds no easy deterrent

John Markoff, David E Sanger & Thom Shanker

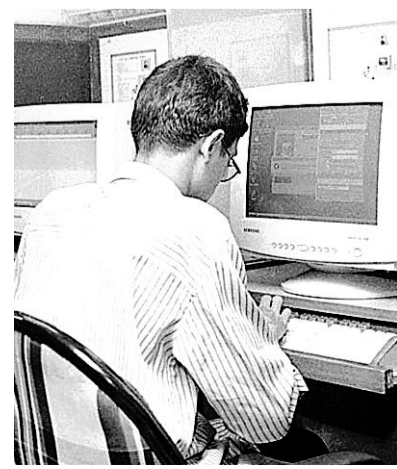
ON A Monday morning earlier this month, top Pentagon leaders gathered to simulate how they would respond to a sophisticated cyberattack aimed at paralysing the nation's power grids, its communications systems or its financial networks.

The results were dispiriting. The enemy had all the advantages: stealth, anonymity and unpredictability. No one could pinpoint the country from which the attack came, so there was no effective way to deter further damage by threatening retaliation. What's more, the military commanders noted that they even lacked the legal authority to respond—especially because it was never clear if the attack was an act of vandalism, an attempt at commercial theft or a state-sponsored effort to cripple the United States, perhaps as a prelude to a conventional war.

What some participants in the simulation knew—and others did not—was that a version of their nightmare had just played out in real life, not at the Pentagon where they were meeting, but in the far less formal war rooms at Google Inc. Computers at Google and more than 30 other companies had

been penetrated, and Google's software engineers quickly tracked, the source of the attack to seven servers in Taiwan, with footprints back to the Chinese mainland.

After that, the trail disappeared into a cloud of angry Chinese government denials, and then an ugly exchange of accusations between Washington and Beijing. That continued on Monday, with Chinese assertions that critics were trying to 'denigrate China' and that the United States was pursuing 'hegemonic domination' in cyberspace.



These recent events demonstrate how quickly the nation's escalating cyberbattles have outpaced the rush to find a deterrent, something equivalent to the Cold War-era strategy of threatening nuclear retaliation.

So far, despite millions of dollars spent on studies, that quest has failed. Last week, secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton made the most comprehensive effort yet to warn potential adversaries that cyberattacks would not be ignored, drawing on the language of nuclear deterrence.

Inside the National Security Agency, which secretly scours overseas computer networks, officials have debated whether evidence of an imminent cyberattack on the US would justify a preemptive American cyberattack—something the President would have to authorise. In an extreme case—evidence that an adversary was about to launch an attack intended to shut down power stations across America—some officials argue that the right response might be a military strike.

"We are now in the phase that we found ourselves in during the early 1950s, after the Soviets got the bomb," said Joseph Nye, a professor at the Kennedy School at Harvard.

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