

Blogsphere

A blogsphere is a collection of individual weblogs connected to each other via hypertext links. A weblog is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular written entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as photos, videos, sounds and links. A weblog is more commonly known as a ‘blog’. The ability to comment on a blog offers the opportunity for other bloggers, a term for authors of blogs, to link to his/her own blog and so doing create a piece of conversation that moves from blog to blog. Bloggers can link to bloggers with similar interests or with opposing points of view to create a blogsphere.

The term ‘blogsphere’ has been related to the older word logosphere. In Greek, ‘logos’ means discourse, and we interpret sphere, as meaning global. Blogsphere can be defined as an online global discourse.

Blogspheres can be highly useful in maintaining networks, sharing information within and between culture groups and enabling people to communicate with each other irrespective of geographical barriers. Ideas are shared, questions are asked and answered, and social cohesion is developed. Bloggers can link to fellow bloggers, creating dynamic online communities. For example, George Siemens, a professor at Athabasca University and renowned expert on the learning theory “Connectivism”, links his blog <http://www.connectivism.ca/> to the blogs of prominent educational technology bloggers – [Will Richardson](#), [Terry Anderson](#), [Stephen Downes](#), [Grainne Conole](#) creating a blogsphere with his peers. Will Richards links back to Siemens in his log post <http://weblog-ed.com/2008/michael-weschs-presentation-to-library-of-congress/>.

Blogspheres in Education

A common educational use of blogs is for the learner to reflect in writing their experiences, like a personalized learning journal. A blog essentially becomes a student's personal online soapbox where he/she can try out new concepts. Learners link to fellow bloggers, creating dynamic online communities. Through these links, learners become readers as well as writers. As readers, learners get to hear the day-to-day thoughts of not only their peers, but content experts, community leaders, company executives, and magazine/newspaper writers. Connections to the

'real world' are made. Commenting on a blog offers the opportunity for others to provide feedback and therefore encourage the scaffolding of new concepts. Comments and feedback enables participants to socially construct knowledge. These links encourage revisiting and revising of learned concepts, enriching the learning experience.

This technology is altering how learners access information and how they interact with teachers and peers. It creates opportunities for learners to create, share and critique ideas and experiences. The discursive nature of knowledge construction is best addressed by the immediacy and commentary based system of blogging. Blogospheres are successful in utilizing interactivity that is conversational; a mode of interaction more conducive to improved student and teacher relationships, active learning, higher order thinking, and greater flexibility in teaching and learning more generally. With blogospheres we can make global connections that transcend space and time. It's about linking people.

You can learn more about how blogospheres are used in higher education at "[The Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins: Why Academics should blog](#)"