

design to sell

Resources for making design
your strategic marketing partner

Is there a blog in your future?

The line
separating
blogs and
websites is
disappearing

If you like the convenience of blogs, but have been frustrated by their limitations, read on!

Recent advances are making blogs a practical alternative to conventional websites.

Many websites fail to justify the time and money invested in them. Website success depends on frequently updated content, but few websites are consistently updated.

Typical website scenarios

Most web site fall into one of the following categories:

- *Hostage sites.* These are sites that business owners cannot update by themselves. Content is rarely updated because even simple changes involve costs and delays.
- *Hobby sites.* Some business owners master HTML programming or a web editing programs like Adobe Dreamweaver. These entrepreneurs can update their own sites, but the learning curve is long, there may be design limitations, and updating may not be the best use of the owner's time.

- *Investment sites.* Other business owners “bit the bullet” and purchased [content management systems](#) which allow easy, non-technical, site-updating. These can take months, and thousands of dollars, to set up. Free, “open source,” solutions are available, but their complexity often requires outside experts to implement them.

Blog-based websites

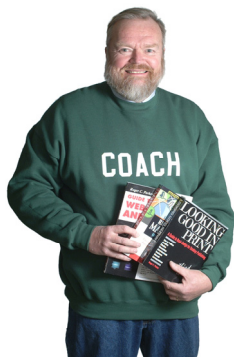
Blogs eliminate all of the above frustrations. Blogs can be set up without previous design or programming experience, and new posts can be added in minutes.

Anyone with basic “copy” and “paste” skills can easily create, edit, and publish a blog—and each post will always be correctly formatted.

The trade-off, however, was that—until now—blogs did not contain separate “pages.” Instead, each post appears in reverse chronological order—latest posts are always on top. Earlier posts are accessible, but likely to be out of sight.

How blogs are changing

WordPress 2.1, www.wordpress.com, a highly-respected, free, blogging software program, now allows you to add, edit, and delete individual pages.



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Example of a web page created with WordPress 2.1. New pages appear next to existing sidebar elements, i.e., links, calendar, recent posts, archives, and categories.

If you are comfortable adding new posts to your blog, you will be able to add new pages without incurring outside costs or mastering a long learning curve.

You will be able to replace your site's present complexity with a simple, easy-to-use blog interface. You'll be able to create a focused and continuously-updated website, like the one I [recently described](#).

Benefits

Adding content pages to your blog lets you add relevance and information depth to your site, and improve your site's search engine ranking. Here are some of the types of pages you might want to add:

- *Content.* You can update your website with information offered in articles, glossaries, tips, shortcuts, and pages containing annotated links to online resources.
- *Newsletters.* You can add separate pages containing the text of each issue of your

newsletter and include a link to download the formatted PDF version.

- *Table of contents.* You can create a detailed table of contents to help visitors access newsletters or articles. (See example)

- *Upcoming events.* You can create pages describing upcoming events, with links for advance registrations.

- *Landing pages.* You can create landing pages for those attending an event or to test the results of paid search engine advertising.

- *Testimonials.* You can create an updated page containing client and reader quotes.

- *Press and media.* You can make yourself more accessible to editors, reporters, and producers as a resource in your field.

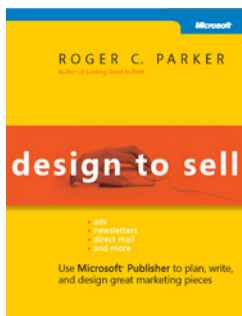
Limitations

Although the above just scratches the surface of what you can do, WordPress 2.1 is *not* a substitute for professional design, nor is it a competitor for design intensive or complex sites.

There are some limitations. While you can add graphics to pages, for example, each page appears next to the sidebar listing recent blog posts and archives.

Is it for you?

[E-mail me](#), or call 603-742-9673, to learn more about the pros and cons of creating a simple and efficient blog-based website. When you [sign up for my newsletter](#), you will also get advance news about upcoming *blog-based website* events.



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