

the *smart* planner™

Basic Blogging Tips

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Basic Blogging Tips

If your blog is hard to read or navigate, people will skip it and move on to the next one. The quality of your blog also reflects on your professionalism. This may not be fair, but it is what it is. Here are some simple ways to make your blog more user friendly and retain readership:

Text Alignment

Your text in the posts should be left justified, like it is in magazines and books. This makes it easier to read because that is the way most of our eyes in the Western world have been trained. Centering your text should be used very rarely.

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Text Size

The text in the body of your writing should be at a normal viewing size. Large, bold, colorful letters don't make up for poor writing and are usually not a good design tool in an article. They are just annoying.

No Snapshots

Snapshots is a tool that allows a reader to hover over a link and see a microscopic view of the linked website. They seem cool at first, but they get in the way when people are reading and accidentally hover over a word for a split-second too long. They

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also don't serve any real useful purpose other than being another widget cluttering your page.

Authenticity

There's a new trend in blogging to feature real weddings that readers send in. This is great for inspiration and is an awesome way to honor the people reading your blog. If the wedding is not one that you worked on, however, make sure it is clear in the post. Also, if your services are multi-disciplinary (e.g.: you offer several services including planning, invitation design, floral design, etc) and you post about a wedding, let your readers know which part of the wedding you were involved with. If you simply designed the stationery pieces, don't imply credit for

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planning the wedding by conveniently leaving that information out.

Spell Out Acronyms

You are not an acronym and your blog is not an instant message chat board, so skip the laziness when you are writing and spell out your company name or other acronyms you may be using. There is one blog I read frequently and the author always abbreviates her company name. Unfortunately, while she may be referring to her company while using those initials, my mind instantly associates them with the church I grew up in because it is the same acronym. Your company name is memorable, initials

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are not. I'll talk more about acronyms in another post, but for blogging, take the couple extra seconds and spell out words.

Spell Check

Blogger has a spell check feature installed. So do Typepad and Wordpress. Use it. Being a good speller may not necessarily be reflective of your IQ, but it is reflective of your professionalism and attention to detail.

When?

Nothing is more frustrating than reading a blog and not knowing when a specific post was written because the author has disabled the date from displaying. Some people don't display it

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because they want it to seem like they are blogging more frequently than they really are. It doesn't achieve that purpose and it just frustrates readers. You can get away with not including timestamps, but the date should always be on there.

Holding Your Blog Hostage

I lied. There is actually something more frustrating than not displaying the date on your posts, and that is by forcing people to click through to your blog from their reader service in order to read your full post. People use Google Reader or other services because it is convenient for them. If you are going to offer the ability to subscribe to your posts, then don't hold your posts hostage by not allowing the full feed to show. I rarely read the

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full posts of blogs who do this because it requires extra steps that I don't have the time for or simply just don't want to take. If I signed up to read your blog in a reader, then I should be able to read it in a reader. Make it easier for people to get information from you, not more difficult.