



Tumblr's

Tumblr picks up content across the web

It seems like every other person on the planet has a blog. And there are almost as many ways to get your blog online as there are blogs. **Tumblr.com** provides the tools to create a polished, professional looking blog for free.

You need to create an account if you want to use Tumblr to make your own blog. You don't need to sign up if you just want to view the blogs of others.

Building a site in Tumblr is similar to Wordpress. There are hundreds of free design themes you can choose from, as well as premium

themes you can purchase. The themes are templates that you can fill with your own content, including text, photos, artwork, videos and more. If you know how to edit HTML code you can customize themes, or even

build your own. While technically what you are building is a blog, many of the templates essentially allow you to build a simple website.

A bunch of blogs

According to Tumblr.com there are almost 34,000,000 blogs generated by users of the site. They cover a wide range of subjects including art, fashion, food, gaming, science and much more.

Because the sites are the work of individuals, the nature and quality of the content varies widely. Tumblr has policies against obscene, threatening or illegal content, but the language and images on some of the sites are not suitable for children.

To view the users' sites you have

to navigate past the home page, which is not as simple as it should be. The home page is set up to be a log-in page for bloggers as opposed to an obvious portal to the rest of the site. You need to click on the small links at the bottom of the page to get to an inside page. Once you're inside, there are clearly marked navigation links at the top of the page.

Just browsing

The "explore" tab takes you to a page with a list of blog categories. Clicking on a category will take you to pages full of related sites. Each site is represented by the user's profile image, a preview of the content and a link to the site.

Browsing through the blogs is an engaging experience and the best reason to visit the site if you're not a Tumblr blogger: I spent a good deal of time looking at the art sites and was quite impressed with the quality of some of the work displayed. The comments posted alongside the images by some of the artists gives added insight into their mindsets.

There's a "what's new" section on the site that features a blog created by Tumblr staff members. The "about us" section has very general information regarding the site, flattering quotes from the media and profile images of all the staff that link to their personal blogs. A counter at the top of the section tracks the total and daily number of posts and blogs on the site. Some of the site's main investors are listed (there are no ads on the site).

The "sign up" section has a link at the bottom to the "30 reasons you'll love Tumblr." This is actually a useful section that explains and links to all the features that can be incorpo-

rated into Tumblr blogs.

You can browse the themes from here and learn how to customize them. There's a link to the Tumblr iPhone app, which according to one of my coworkers is "awesome." Directions on how to email posts from your phone directly to your blog are available in this section. You can also phone-in an audio post using the phone number provided here. There's information on linking to Twitter, Facebook, RSS feeds, forming groups and more.

Displaying blogs

While the designs of the users' sites are all over the map, from sleek and polished to rough and raw, Tumblr's site is conservative and unified. I didn't register or set up a blog, so I can't comment on the design and functionality of that process, but I did spend a lot of time using the site to explore user blogs.

This part of the site doesn't have a lot of pages or a tremendous amount of content (except, of course, for the blogs). The color palette and typography have a nice look and are consistent throughout the site.

The navigation has some quirks that I wouldn't expect from such an established site. I already mentioned the roundabout way you have to take to get off the home page. I also encountered a few links that didn't work and some that worked differently from different pages. Also, the main navigation links are not available on all the pages.

Tumblr is worth a visit just to view the many interesting blogs.

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