

Schools that blog – what's the attraction?

'Schools that Blog' is a highly popular page on the Scoilnet site and is home to the most up-to-date list of primary and post primary school blogs. It is one of the most accessed pages on Scoilnet, the web portal for Irish schools.

Why is 'Schools that Blog' so popular?

Quite simply, teachers, pupils and parents are interested to find out what's happening in their own schools and other schools. Blogging is one of the easiest ways to regularly showcase school work and to keep school communities up-to-date with class activities, school events, achievements and curriculum-related matters.

Why are schools blogging?

Blogging can make the curriculum exciting and this in turn motivates both the pupil and the teacher. It enables the curriculum to be communicated to a wider audience through various media such as text, audio, video and even animation.

Pupils can exhibit and gain global recognition for their artwork, photo-stories, dramatisations, speeches, experiments and school events in whatever format they choose. The learning process, therefore, becomes more engaging and interactive, bringing an element of choice to how pupils learn. Many teachers would agree that, unbeknownst to the pupil, key higher order skills such as proofing, assessment, collaboration, analysis and reflection are acquired through preparing work for blogs.

Primary teacher Emma Hallinan, from Culleens NS, Mayo, explains how "using a Scoilnet Blog in the classroom has added fun to learning and teaching." She also claims that "displaying pupils' artwork and photo-stories gives an added purpose to their learning and allows parents and the wider community to share in their successes."

Blogging projects

Blogs facilitate reader commentary, critique and interlinkage between schools and other blogs.

'Quadblogging', an increasingly popular collaborative

blogging concept, encourages these important aspects of blogging by creating opportunities to connect with other pupils globally. Quadblogging involves schools signing up to be part of a quad over a four week period. Each week one of the four schools is the focus for the other three. The onus is on each school to visit the focus blog leaving comments and feedback for pupils.

The Student Blogging Challenge is a similar type of project – it runs for ten weeks twice yearly and fosters excellent interaction between schools. This structured approach to blogging presents incentives for collaborative and project-based learning, in addition to fostering a sense of ownership of the school blog, making the learning experience more meaningful for pupils.

Using Scoilnet blogs

Many schools are using Scoilnet blogs as their preferred tool to create both blogs and school websites. It offers great flexibility in allowing teachers to post updates and add student work directly to their school blog/website. NCTE offers courses on Scoilnet Blogs for teachers.

Getting your school featured on the Schools that Blog list is simple. Submit your blog address to Scoilnet via the 'Contact Us' page. First, have a look at Ransboro NS, Our Lady of Mercy Primary and Gortskehy NS, which are wonderful examples of blogging and ICT integration on scoilnet.ie/schoolsthatblog.shtml

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Use these QR Codes to view the Scoilnet and Schools that Blog webpages.



<http://schoolsthatblog.shtml>



www.scoilnet.ie

NCTE courses on blogging

NCTE has two courses which cover blogging. 'Web 2.0 for Learning (Blogs, Podcasts & Wikis)' is suitable for all teachers with basic ICT skills and internet experience. If you only want to learn about blogs, the short module on blogs can be provided as a stand-alone course.

The second course, 'Creating your School's Website using Scoilnet Blogs' is suitable for teachers who are responsible for the set up and administration of a school blog.

Both courses can be made available free of charge via your education centre. The Web 2.0 for Learning course, or just the short module on blogs, can also be delivered as whole school training. See www.ncte.ie/courses or contact your local education centre.

Coming soon

NCTE's new online courses: Blogging for Learning; Podcasting for Learning; Wikis and more for Learning. Details: www.ncte.ie/onlinecourses.



Film Festival 2012

Interested in entering a film made by your school for the Fis festival for schools? Check out the website www.fisfilmfestival.com for the latest on how to enter. Deadline: 29 June, 2012.

