

# All about Blogs, blogger.com and RSS feeds

This document explains blogs and how they might be used within your business. There is also a guide to various costs.

## What is a blog?

A blog is an on-line 'journal' that can be personalised and maintained on a regular basis through various methods. The most slick and feature packed of these systems is [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) (a Google company), which allows you to create your new blog in a very short time. They give you a domain name URL with which you access your blog site. You could buy a domain name and point it to the blog to disguise this "blogspot" URL.

Here is my example blog: <http://ferrarimodels.blogspot.com/>

This entire screen can be customised - either from pre-selected styles or a template of your own can be designed and uploaded. Additionally a personal photo can be added - as well as a series of other pages such as personal biography.

It is ideal for people wishing to have a central source of information that various staff or the visitors to their blog can add to, read and exchange thoughts.

## How does blogger.com work?

When fully configured, you can update the items via your "Blog Dashboard" or by sending to an email address that is given to you when you set up the blog. You can also allow text messages to be processed and added to the items, and you can allow people to reply to your posts, thus creating a mini message board.

The items are all automatically output as RSS feeds if the option is switched on.

Your RSS feed can then be picked up by any number of other websites and readers, making your information instantly globally available, however, people DO need to subscribe to your Blog, which means submitting it via a service or advertising it as an option on your website.

## What is an RSS feed?

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a new format standard of XML designed to contain and deliver news feeds from various sources. These feeds can be picked up by software (RSS Readers) that can be download and installed on end-users PC's, if they subscribe to your feed.

A more advanced option would be to have your blogs (and others YOU have subscribed to) appear in an area of your existing company website, with links going back to your Blog site or other relevant articles.

## Including an RSS area on your website

Dependant on the design of the site and the position you want the blog area to have, it would be a fairly simple process to add an RSS area to your site. This could be programmed to refresh every minute so if the user leaves their browser open for a long time, they still get to see new information as it happens.

You can then also subscribe to other relevant RSS feeds from various sources (such as ZD Net or your favourite publications) to be merged and included amongst your own blogs.

Alternatively if this is not appropriate (and you would like something much simpler) you can just have a graphical button link across, which does not change.

## Likely costs

|  |      |
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| To create a basic blog                     | £120 |
| To customise the blog graphics etc.        | £475 |
| To include RSS output to your site         | £475 |
| To incorporate other RSS feed to your site | £350 |

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