Is blogging dead?

This past Saturday, I attended WordCamp Philly. There were four tracks: User, Power User, Designer and Developer. With sessions in the User/Power User tracks such as "BuddyPress: An Enterprise Solution" and "How I Spent the Last 5 years playing with WordPress and building PewResearch.org" you can tell something is up. It's not really new, but more and more organizations, from nonprofits to multinationals like Coca-Cola, are using WordPress not as a blogging platform, but as a Content Management System (CMS).

W for WordPress Philly Pretzels

A few weeks ago, a well known social media marketing guy posted on Twitter that the effort involved in blogging was too large in relation to the return on investment (ROI).

Many organizations have BINOs: blogs in name only. They don't update them frequently or haven't even posted in the last couple of years.

So is blogging dead? Should you give up your blog and just use WordPress to be your website platform?

No!!!!

Blogging is not dead. Blogging still provides many many

benefits, not the least of which is making it easier for people to find your organization when they don't even know it exists.

How many people don't know Coca-Cola? Coke doesn't have to do much to be known. But a small organization that works on historical restoration or a business that helps people in a specific area get organized has to work a lot harder. Small businesses or nonprofits have to provide information that their potential customers or supporters need and want. One of the best ways to provide a constant stream of information is blogging.

Call it content marketing if you must, but blogs are an easy and flexible way to provide opinions, analysis, information, graphics or even podcasts to your audience.

Blogs are social. Blogs let your audience share content easily. And blogs are a way to interact with your audience through the comments. And you can extend your blog's reach by enlisting guest bloggers.

Even though WordPress is a powerful CMS and even though **consistent, quality** blogging does take a lot of effort, blogging is still worthwhile.

Are you still blogging? If you have given up, please tell me why in the comments. If you have seen value, give me an example.

All I learned about WordPress I learned at camp

This blog is hosted on a website built on WordPress. Lots of blogs, and many websites, are built using WordPress because it is easy to use and easy to customize. Because WordPress makes it so easy to update your content, there are more organizations using WordPress as a content management system (CMS). If you use software such as Dreamweaver to build a website, you probably have to call your "web person" to ask him/her to make updates.

WordPress has built quite a large community of users and developers, many of whom have regular meet ups and discussion groups. A very popular (and fun) way to get a large group of WordPress enthusiasts together is WordPress "camp." These camps happen year round in cities worldwide. All are volunteer run.

This past weekend I attended Word Camp Philadelphia, and last month I went to Word Camp in Baltimore. I am trying to learn all I can about WordPress since I don't have an IT department or anybody handling my website (which is a long story).

I learned a lot at Word Camp Philadelphia (and kudos to the organizers who made this volunteer run event run smoothly and professionally). Here are some main takeaways:

Make security a priority

All websites are vulnerable to hacking. There are several steps you can take to minimize the risk. Among them:

- Do not use admin as your log on name
- Have a strong password
- Always update to the newest version of WordPress

- Be sure your plugins are compatible and updated

Backup often

We heard this time and time again—make your back ups happen automatically. There are many plugins (free and paid) that make this easy. The one mentioned by many presenters was BackupBuddy.

Plugins are cool

Plugins are little programs that add functionality to your WordPress site. There are thousands of plugins available for download from WordPress.org, providing the ability to share posts, create backups, and add lots of bells and whistles. You should keep plugins updated, and you should remove any you aren't using. Too many plugins can slow a website down, and create issues.

A few that were mentioned repeatedly were:

- All in One SEO pack
- AntispamBee
- Akismet
- Yet Another Related Post (YARPP) (running on this site)
- Digg Digg (for social sharing)

Content is crucial

If you don't have interesting and relevant content on your blog/website, why would anybody want to visit? Keep in mind that people don't like to read long chunks of text (as Jess Ostroff from Don't Panic Management put it: **TL;DR**, which stands for too long; didn't read). Also, to avoid long uninterrupted text is why we break up content using headings, bullets and images. To organize your content, you should use some sort of content management system. Jess Ostroff

recommended DivvyHQ.com (paid) or the WordPress Editorial Calendar (free).

Websites should be accessible

There is such a thing as making your website "handicapped accessible." For example, blind people use web readers to visit websites. If you have images on your website, you should make sure to add alt text so that these readers can include a description of these images.

Another type of accessibility is for mobile devices. The newest version of the simple WordPress theme (Twenty Twelve) adjusts the dimensions of your website to make it fit to a mobile phone screen.

WordPress: it's not just for blogging anymore!

The most important takeaway is that WordPress is not just for blogging. Large organizations have already migrated their websites to a WordPress platform.

Go to camp already!

If you are interested in learning more about WordPress, I highly recommend going to Word Camp. However, not all camps are created equal and it may be worth it to travel to a camp that is well organized.