

**Which use are having new web applications  
like blogs and moblogs for a project such as media-net-works?**

A study report by Karsten Kneese

This report is written in hypertext to extend the possibilities of text and to provide the reader with the opportunity to get to know the meaning or the idea behind a word or phrase on demand.

“A blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger." Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog. Postings on a blog are almost always arranged in cronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently.”

(<http://www.zitig.de/blogs.htm>)

During my internship at the Department of Modern Languages at the [University of Umea](#) I spent some time looking for new web applications and technologies which could be useful for such an international and virtual project such as media-net-works. Thereby I focussed on the [Travelogue](#), a written online-report of the experiences of the participants and the events during the face-to-face seminar in Ireland.

The format of the Travelogue could easily be transferred to a weblog or [blog](#). Blogs run from individual diaries to arms of political campaigns, media programs and corporations, and from one occasional author to having large communities of writers. Some are maintained by single authors, while others have multiple authors. Many weblogs allow visitors to leave public comments, which can lead to a community of readers centered around the blog; others are non-interactive. The totality of weblogs or blog-related websites is usually called the [blogosphere](#).

Since their introduction, a number of software packages have appeared to allow people to create their own weblog. Blog hosting sites and Web services to provide editing via the Web have proliferated. Common examples include [Pitas](#), [Blog.com](#), [Blogger](#), [LiveJournal](#), [Bloglines](#), [MSN Spaces](#) and [Xanga](#). Those services enable a

wide range of people to run their own blog without the need of knowing anything about HTML or technical prerequisites.

Once I've started to become interested in blogs I discovered a whole new world of information, lingo, possibilities and even societies and social structures. I wanted to know everything about it and spent hours and hours with learning the basics about different systems, ways of writing and figuring out what is important and what is just 'nice to know'. At that point I wasn't even really aware that I was already running my own kind of blog. Before I came to Umea I started a [webpage](#) to stay in contact with my family and friends in Germany and I posted news, pictures and stories on a more or less regular basis. But there were still some features missing that divides a 'normal' webpage from a blog.

A blog is usually much more interactive and allows the readers to comment on postings or to follow the blog using an [RSS-feed](#). This is a special site which is created by the blog-system and can be read by [RSS-readers](#).

RSS files provide news updates from a website in a simple form for your computer. You read these files in a program called an aggregator (or reader), which can collect news from various blogs (or websites) and provides it to you in a simple form.

What pulled me even deeper into the blogosphere was my meeting with [Howard Rheingold](#) during a Seminar he gave at the [HumLab](#) at the University of Umea and my participation in a [BlogWalk](#), a "series of face-to-face meetings aimed to bring together weblog researchers and practitioners for in-depth conversations about their work, possible trends, and visions. The format we strive for is an intellectual *Salon* where minds can meet and inspire each other in direct conversation."

I was invited to this meeting by [Stephanie Hendricks](#), one of the PhD-Students who is doing research about blogging.

After that meeting I started my first 'real' blog with all the features a blog is supposed to have, and I decided to use a system called '[plog](#)'. This is an open-source-system which requires quite a bit of knowledge about servers and php-sourcecodes but can be edited and customized in a way that hosting sites can't provide.

It soon became clear for me that I would need too much time to design my 'perfect' blog, so I decided to postpone it until I'll have enough time for it.

I also experimented with [moblog](#) sites and systems like '[easymoblog](#)' and '[busythumbs](#)'.

The word moblog is a [portmanteau](#) of mobile and [weblog](#). A mobile weblog, or moblog, consists of content posted to the Internet from a mobile or portable device, such as a cellular phone or [PDA](#). Moblogs generally involve technology which allowed publishing from a mobile device.

A moblog itself can be quite boring, since you usually only find pictures with very short or no descriptions on it, but as an addition to a 'normal' blog or travelogue it can be a very good way to expand your possibilities. It is possible to report 'live' from events, workshops, congresses or whatever without using a laptop or needing an internet connection.

We decided to have one 'moblog-day' in Irekand to try this new feature and see if it works for us or not. I'm going to work out a concept for that day and to figure out what service to use and how to integrate it into the travelogue. I think it is a really good idea to have the opportunity to report live from e.g. a school visit, a meeting with some local people or even a night at the pub.

Examples of good practice:

The blogosphere itself is changing so quickly that I decided not to give some examples of good practice. Everyone who'll get into it will figure out own his own which sites are the 'must-sees' or which are their personal choice.

A good page to start is the [Wikipedia](#). You should read the entries about [blogs](#) and [moblogs](#). They will make a lot of things much clearer and easier to understand and you'll also find a lot of good links there.