EXPRESS YOURSELF

A blog—shorthand for web log—can be viewed as an online journal in which you make regular entries and to which you can invite readers to respond. Use your blog to express your opinions, share links or documents, promote dialogue in your field, and provide ongoing support to your clients beyond face-to-face classes.

Posting an entry is as easy as composing an e-mail. You can add formatting, images, or other multimedia elements. The simplicity of creating and maintaining a blog means you can rapidly share information with clients that, if you choose, can lead to open discussions. Unlike a discussion forum, you retain control of the posts and the discussion in a blog.

BENEFITS OF A BLOG

• Blogs engage people in knowledge-sharing, reflection, and discussion. Your blog can attract a large and dedicated readership that can be directed to other relevant resources such as courses, publications, or other blogs.

• A blog author can distribute content to clients more immediately than publishing a book or bulletin.

• Many bloggers solicit feedback on their posts, fostering two-way communication between readers and authors. Clients can leave comments on the blog page itself or post a response on their own blogs and link back to your original post.

• In contrast to most listserv environments, blog administrators control the topics on a blog and can moderate (i.e., approve, delete, or edit) comments from readers.

• RSS feeds allow clients and others the option to “subscribe” automatically to new blog posts.

• A blog can easily integrate relevant content—such as stories, media, and e-learning modules—from a host of other online sources including other blogs, YouTube, Slideshare, and more.

THE BASICS

HOW MUCH LEAD TIME IS NEEDED?

Once requested, allow at least one week for your blog and account to be set up.

IS THERE A FEE?

No. School of Government blogs currently have no associated fees for their creation or use. You may, however, feature resources on your blog (e.g., publications, courses, webinars) that may have costs associated with them.
BEST PRACTICES | WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- A blog is most useful to clients when it is regularly updated. You may set up a single-author blog and be the sole author on a fairly narrow topic, or you can setup a multi-author blog, which will allow you to share the responsibility of posting regularly and post on a wider range of topics.
- Consider carefully what your blog will be about and how much you’ll have to say on the topic(s).
- Consider the length and level of formality of your blog posts before you begin blogging.

THE PROCESS

1. INITIAL CONSULTATION
   a. Verify that a blog is appropriate for your goals
   b. Determine the purpose of your blog
   c. Determine what type of blog will best suit your needs
   d. Choose a name for your blog
   e. Identify your target audience
   f. Select the blog administrator and author(s)
   g. Discuss a release date and review the blog welcome packet

2. SUBMIT A REQUEST TO CREATE YOUR BLOG (see “Getting Started” below)

3. INFORM MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OF BLOG REQUEST AND DISCUSS RELEASE OPTIONS

4. DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS
   a. Review blog features and faculty administration responsibilities
   b. Review author, posting, and commenting policies
   c. Review statistics

5. TRAINING
   a. Blog authors become trained on posting mechanics and best practices including posting schedules
   b. Create initial blog posts, author bios, and “About this Blog” page

6. PUBLICIZE AND LAUNCH THE BLOG

7. POST REGULARLY!

GETTING STARTED
For more information or to request a blog, contact the Instructional Support team at InstructionalSupport@sog.unc.edu.

SAMPLES AND ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Visit these School of Government blogs to get an idea of content, frequency of posting, and varying styles:

- Coates Canons: NC Local Government Law blog: http://canons.sog.unc.edu
- North Carolina Criminal Law blog: http://nccriminallaw.sog.unc.edu