

BlogHer '08 UnConference

Session Notes: Rebranding Your Blog

Participating bloggers:

Kat, [KungFoodie](#)
Shuna, [Eggbeater](#)
Sarah, [Findableblogs.com](#)
Diana, [Of the Princess and the Pea](#)
Leah, [Califmom](#)
Claire, [Cookthink](#)
Susan, [Broadhumor Film Festival](#)
Jeannette, [Half of Me](#)
Shannon, [Walden University Alumni Blog](#)
Genie, [In A Bottle](#)
Kristen, [Lively Women](#)
Genie, [The Inadvertent Gardener](#)

- Diana: Bought a few new URLs -- domain name is copywritten by someone else. Started blog as mommyblog, didn't expect readers, now faced with issue of continuing to blog -- if wants to own/brand/recognizable, can't do it with what she's got. Has anyone switched? Is it necessary? If so, how to go about it?
- Shannon: Runs a blog for Walden University alumni association. Concerns: Overall branding of the blog -- making it yours in a corporate setting so your voice comes out -- not always pushing the corporate press release, but staying professional.
- Leah: Started out as mommyblogger, then son was diagnosed with Asperger's and Tourette's -- legal case running now -- The Rosa Parks of Invisible Disabilities. Therefore, the nature of the blog is shifting -- should she bring stories to same blog or move them to their own platform. Advocacy from a separate space?
- Jeannette: Has talked about weight loss a lot, kind of talked out -- would like to expand blog, talk more about her life. Some people will leave because they won't be interested in the content -- wants to be brave enough to just do it -- get different audience -- trying to figure out best way to do it. Redesign? Transition slowly?
- Claire: Still figuring out blog vs. the site (cookthink.com) -- once had a site, became corporate -- from group blog to a product to support. Also has a personal blog called I Dig Music -- wants to switch from Blogger to anything other than that platform. Also wants to get more personal without losing music focus.
- Kat: Also has multiple websites and domains. Does web development and Internet marketing for a living -- very into segmenting topics -- each website is a very specific topic. That freaks people out a little bit -- works for her. Playing with the ideas of how to cross-promote web sites without it being confusing.

- Shuna -- Eggbeater.com started primarily as food blog, last year has become voice of the professional cook, a little bit of a shitstarter, done a little muckraking in her own industry -- it's all passionate and angry and from her and personal. It has also become this thing -- people find her now. Fame and infamy, mixed. Trying to figure out where she is in her career being a little bit in limbo and realizing she is her brand, she is her business, what does she do with it.
- Susan -- Hears the message that tells her she needs to focus and that makes her think, "No I don't." Can she put all her blogs together or keep them separate, bring them all into one page, would like to know -- should she let people know she does all these things?
- Sarah -- Has a "cajillion" domain names, gathering them and not doing anything with them. Start a new blog when she gets a new hobby. Can't keep up with them all and blog gets abandoned. Trying to do the same things -- trying to figure out how to explore all these diff things, whether she wants to do it on one blog. Her current plan is to put something together almost like a magazine -- different areas -- can talk about on one site, sort of categories, but more like magazine departments.
- Leah: Trend is to move that way -- the magazine department approach.
- Sarah: DivineCaroline.com is more of a community site, but what she's shooting for. Or a women's site like iVillage. "If you think of any site, you can do something similar for yourself." Divided out by relationships, work, etc. -- large categories, separate feeds for separate categories. Pioneer Woman is another model -- she moved to that later in her blog history.
- Diana: If you can come up with one name to put up in all your things -- have separate blogs but they link together. Totally separate sites -- similar designs -- different channels. Sugar Network is an example of this.
- Kat: Not worried so much about sites being different -- in some ways that's a bonus -- some people attracted to a certain thing. One site just about gingerbread -- almost more like a directory -- cataloging different recipes and websites. There's one blog -- ZeFrank.com -- has a real directory feel -- can just jump in and start digging through categories as opposed to digging through standard blog. It's fun for her -- if don't have to have everything the same or all blogs that she write on every month, etc. Hasn't really linked across in the past. Should she start doing that?
- Shannon: Do you blog in the same voice for all different blogs? (No) Hearing a lot of multiple blogs -- all primary writers? (Mostly) Sometimes posts three times a day not shutting up, other times dry spells. During NaBloPoMo -- might have written two sentences, not because was a reader out there.
- Shuna: During BlogHer, it has become clear: every blog (every human being) has a different goal for their blog. Based on those goals, one may or may not feel the need

to x, whatever x is. When she started, had no goal because she knew nothing. No pressure, no one doing anything. One of the reasons posting every day is vernacular is because it's one of the ways Google finds you -- it's a means to this part of someone's goal. What if it's not your goal?

- Shannon: Updating corporate blog 2-3 times/week
- Leah: As a reader of corporate blogs, confirms she wants to see them updated often.
- Kat: Great corporate blog example: Microspotting by Ariel Stallings -- also does Offbeat Bride. Profiling people at Microsoft -- has done a really amazing job.
- Shannon: Online university -- this is the only blog they have -- because jumped out there three months ago -- now developing a corporate blog policy before having lawyers write guidelines. Folks in editorial dept look at Fast Company's blogs. Can't be speaking corporate crap -- alumni don't want to hear it. Will be polling readers in September to see what they want to hear. Jumped in and did the blog, when started, writing in her voice, but very professional. Started pulling stuff from corporate.
- Susan: Get away from corporate -- make it a channel for information coming in, answering questions, making people invested, asking people for stories, submit a 500-word story
- Claire: Knowing what you want to stay -- if the overarching subject is just your life, it's your life. For you it's the university -- because you're doing a corporate blog -- In Claire's case, "it is my voice, it is me saying something, but it has something to do with cookthink and cooking. It's a way of narrowing what I could potentially talk about."
- Diana: Back to question about voice -- how much is the brand itself?
- Sometimes if we're writing about two different things, we have to have two different voices. Your voice is yours -- don't share it unless you're getting paid very well.
- Sites that have done this successfully: eMom -- used to be eMoms at home. The bg: She was going to start a totally different site -- started that one to chronicle her process of creating an online biz while being a mom working at home. Other site bombed, that site took off. Dads coming to it were embarrassed, and blog was mostly about entrepreneurship and talked about being a parent, but when went to conferences, a lot of people dismissed site out of hand who would have been perfect readers because of the name. She struggled for year and a half -- had gotten so much traction that she really didn't want to. Couple months ago, bit the bullet, changed it SparkPlugging.com -- changed the domain name and everything -- she had so much traction and traffic and name recognition in a certain space. (Leah: Put her own glass ceiling in place with the name.) Also people who weren't parents who were very interested in the topics but felt they were excluded. She knew for a long time she

needed to change -- evaluated a lot of diff names. She looked at the options but decided to do something totally different -- search engine implications were hard. There was a process from the tech side of asking people to change link. She has done all the tech stuff on that side -- rebranding process was hard. She wishes she'd done it years ago.

- Brick and mortar store that rebrands – has a difficult time, as well.
- RookieMoms -- they were a first-year mom group but now they're not anymore. Good resource. They have a book and everything so it's more complicated. A lot invested in that brand. Have to find a way to expand it.
- Rebranding the name or rebranding the content -- how far can you go with people?
- Kat: There is a benefit in having that old website live -- has to be an ed process -- something you do to let people know this is an archive. Gets tons of traffic from posts done a few years ago -- the great thing about blogging is because we dig into topics that are so niche that there's always somebody looking for that information -- to just trash all that is a waste.
- Diana: Someone linked yesterday to a post from 2.5 years ago about chore chart. One of the most popular posts, but written in a dry spell moment.
- Shuna: TypePad now has static URLs -- had a post with a static URL, and it was linked all over -- they took that link that had disappeared and redirected it to the new URL -- likes the concept of the magazine, but also, that URL -- you don't have to get rid of it. The Tomato Era -- that's a category -- there's the URL on that.
- Kat: The other thing in terms of SEO -- the older a page is and web domain is, the more authority it has -- awesome to have old website pointing to new website -- you get all that authority.
- Shuna: Recently changed my header -- had made t-shirts -- just said she was going to do it, that could go back to old JPG. Hasn't changed much, feel like a lot of this is just taking the leap. Some of this is precarious, some of it is if Coca-Cola changed their typeface tomorrow, it would throw us all off.
- Leah: Change header every month because that's what she loves -- if you don't hang onto that with her, you're in the wrong place.
- Kat: It comes down to what your goals are again and what readership you have -- are you tied into what your readers want?
- Jeannette: Change the topic, not going to make as much money

- Shuna: But it also might make more money! This is such a brand new medium even for someone who's been doing it for a long time. Everything's changing. It's organic and we're sort of the pioneers of something that's really interesting. We think -- oh the traffic is tied to the person who's never been naked, then they're naked and it works.
- Califmom: On Twitter -- personality on Twitter is very much her and not cross-posting, doing no promoting, but people go see her blog. That's not necessarily voice on the blog, but it still works.
- Shuna: (To Shannon) "I have no idea who you are, but even in this few minutes I know you have a voice."
- Kat: Important even with a corporate blog that it has a face, that you feel like you're connecting with the university.
- Shannon: Very different from what you see on Twitter and personal blog. There's our public persona and there's you at home kickin' it under the covers.
- Shuna: æPeople started asking in last year -- aren't you worried that you're not going to get a job because of what you're writing about. It is worrisome, but started saying to people, in my industry, there's almost no such thing as an interview. We go into the kitchen, you see how someone works, you hire or don't based on that. I've always just been me. I'm strange and nerdy and quirky and have a weird sense of humor. Now what I say is in five minutes they're going to know who the fuck they're hiring. In my industry, people don't know how to open an attachment, but my name is is Googleable now. I already know what people say about me. I am me, I have always been me, they're going to find out pretty soon into it, whether they look at a computer ever again ever."
- Jeannette: Blog helped her get the current job. They liked her sense of humor. After reading everything, they decided she would fit in there. Was just making sure not crazy .
- Leah: You can have two voices, but they can be consistent. Would rather have people have that picture of her.
- If they would not hire me because of my blog, they would fire me anyway. I mean that. I blog about dealing with depression. If you're not going to hire me because I'm depressed, you're an asshole. I'm a freelancer -- I get to pick who I work for. If you're the type who is like that, I choose not to work with you. Get to do that, get to make those choices. It's kind of nice repercussions.
- Kat: Husband works in the entertainment industry, negotiates so he can blog and do other projects. No confusion about that. IP ownership issues. Wouldn't be surprised if that's more common in other types of industries.