



**TypePad**  
Personal Weblogging Service

GET STARTED IN MINUTES

- 1 Create your account.
- 2 Create your blog.

Start Free Trial

TypePad

**Get started:** TypePad costs start at \$49.95 a year but include more controls and security. The learning curve is a little longer, though.

# How to get started creating your blog

## Products help with websites, too

By Jefferson Graham  
USA TODAY

LOS ANGELES — Ready to join the blogging revolution? Creating a personal website or a blog has never been easier:

**Technology** ▶ Google has upgraded its free Blogger program with enhancements that let you compose and design a blog, then publish it to the Internet within minutes.

▶ Apple Computer's revamped iLife software (included on new Macs; \$79 as an upgrade) includes iWeb, software tools to help whip out visually stunning websites. It has multimedia goodies that can't be found even on pricey Web-design programs such as Adobe's Dreamweaver (\$499) or Microsoft's FrontPage (\$99).

▶ Six Apart's TypePad program, which starts at \$49.95 yearly, offers more controls and security than free alternatives, making it a good choice for many businesses. Type-

Pad has a longer learning curve than Blogger and iWeb. But the site can be more tailored.

A website is full-featured, with many pages, and can offer multimedia features such as video and audio and e-commerce elements such as shopping carts. Creating a website usually requires at least a little knowledge of programming code and design skills.

Blogs, which don't require any of that knowledge, are simple pages with thoughts, pictures and comments from visitors. Because blogs are easier to create, there are now more than 27 million. And 75,000 new ones are created daily, says Technorati, which tracks the blogosphere.

The "get started" site tour at Blogger.com promises you can create a blog in "less than five minutes. Seriously."

And it's not lying.

Here's how three top blogging and website-creation programs stacked up in a USA TODAY review.

# Blogger: Ease of use may get easier

To make a Blogger page, sign up for an account, then choose a title and design from one of more than 30 layouts. Now, you're ready to compose your first post.

You can add pictures, and play with typeface and text positioning. Once you're set up, you can post new entries from your PC, via e-mail or even from a cellphone.

For all of the program's ease, "we still want to make it easier," says Jason Goldman, a Blogger product manager.

Still, there are problem areas: Blogger doesn't give you tools to post videos on your blog, unless you already know how to tweak Internet coding HTML, shorthand for "hyper text markup language."

You also need to know such coding to create links from your blog to other sites. Linking to favorite sites is a treasured pastime for bloggers. If you do know HTML, you go into the Blogger control panel to insert the code manually.

Goldman says the Blogger team is working on enhancements to make Blogger creation easier.

Google recently introduced a



## Blogger

- ▶ **Cost:** Free.
- ▶ **What you can post:** Photos, text and audio comments via logging onto the Blogger homepage, or with an e-mail or typing or speaking into a cellphone.
- ▶ **Can make money:** By inserting ads from Google's AdSense program.
- ▶ **Number of predetermined templates:** 31.
- ▶ **Famous Blogger account holders:** Who guitarist Pete Townshend, rapper MC Hammer and *Ren & Stimpy* creator John Kricfalusi.
- ▶ **Web address:** [yourname.blogspot.com](http://yourname.blogspot.com).

second service, Google Pages ([pages.google.com](http://pages.google.com)) to create free, instant Web pages. The pages are bare-bones, and don't look as pretty as Blogger.

# Apple iWeb: Easy podcasts, videos

The blogs and websites created with Apple's iWeb application are more visually impressive than competitors'. And if you're interested in easily posting audio podcasts or videos on your site, this is the program for you.

The iWeb program works best when combined with Apple's \$99 yearly .Mac program, which offers online storage, website hosting and a Mac e-mail address. The pages created in iWeb can be transferred to another website host. But then you lose the seamlessness of the Mac experience.

Apple offers a host of potential designs to choose from. The coolest feature is how easy it is to add home movies to a page or a blog. It's a simple drag-and-drop feature, as with photos, in far fewer steps than traditional website design programs.

To create a podcast, most Mac computers have excellent built-in microphones, making it possible to record a little audio show without extra equipment. You open up iLife's GarageBand program, hit "record," and your voice track is



## Apple iWeb

- ▶ **Cost:** Included with new Mac computers, or \$79 as part of Apple iLife software. Additional \$99 yearly charge for .Mac program, which hosts the sites.
- ▶ **What you can post:** Photos, videos, audio clips, podcasts and comments on blogs and websites.
- ▶ **Can make money?** No.
- ▶ **Number of pre-determined templates:** 12.
- ▶ **Web address:** [web.mac.com/yourname/iweb](http://web.mac.com/yourname/iweb).

being recorded for a podcast.

Once you're done, you save the file, click the "share" button and send it to Apple's iWeb program, where you're assigned a Web address so friends can find the site and listen to the podcast.

# TypePad: Getting a custom look

Many businesses and commercial blogs use TypePad, including MSNBC news anchors and USATODAY.com, because the overall blog design can be customized.

Why pay for TypePad when Blogger is free and iLife is free with new Macs?

"With Blogger, there is one service, and everyone gets the same service, whether you're a business, university or mommy," says Byrne Reese, a product manager for TypePad parent company Six Apart. By paying for TypePad, users are assured customer service, he says.

Like Blogger, TypePad can get you up and running in minutes. You register at the TypePad site, choose a title ([www.yourname.typepad.com](http://www.yourname.typepad.com)) and layout, compose a post and add a picture.

TypePad features more design choices than Blogger or Apple. But it will probably take you longer to figure them out. As with Blogger, if you know some HTML programming code and have Photoshop editing skills, you can reconfigure a page to look much snazzier than the TypePad computer-generated



## TypePad

- ▶ **Cost:** \$49.50 yearly for one blog.
- ▶ **What you can post:** Text, photos, comments and video notes from camcorder, cellphone or digital cameras. Mobile posting. Can also create and post podcasts.
- ▶ **Can make money:** By inserting online ads from Kanoodle.
- ▶ **Number of pre-determined templates:** 39, plus ability to customize your own.
- ▶ **Famous TypePad-ers:** Actor Zach Braff, author Malcolm Gladwell and Dilbert cartoonist Scott Adams.
- ▶ **Web address:** [yourname.typepad.com](http://yourname.typepad.com).

design.

The bottom line: For most folks, Blogger is going to be the easiest option. The blogs look terrific and take no time to master.