



Internet Marketing Consultants

This is one of the 'Best of' articles written by Barry Welford. The current portfolio of these articles is to be found at <http://smmbc.ca/portfolio/>

When Should You Publish That Blog Post?

The original can be found at <http://www.dirjournal.com/articles/when-should-you-publish-that-blog-post/>

Introduction

The question of when it is best to publish a blog post has been asked many times. It has been answered by some very fine bloggers. In this article perhaps surprisingly we will not answer the question. The reason is that there is no answer that will always be right. The Internet changes at an explosive speed and the answers that may have been correct two years ago may not be correct now. In this article we will explore some of the current issues that influence the best time to publish a blog post.

Of course that assumes that the blog post is worthy of being published. You may like to consider the [ten questions](#) that **John Welsh** posed to anyone considering publishing a blog post.

1. Do you have the space and time to reflect deeply on your post?
2. Is your post easy to read or daunting to a first time reader?
3. Are all those words or even sentences necessary?
4. What combination of typography makes it easier to read?
5. What will the post actually look like when published?
6. Are you the only person in the world with perfect spelling?
7. Does this post need to be published right now?
8. Have you thought of the implication of every word you have written?
9. Do you know how to publish a post using your blog's timer?
10. Do you see your post as a one-off or part of that week's schedule?

Clearly if your blog post is put together with the deep consideration implied in that list of ten questions, then you certainly would want to publish it at the right time.

Some Expert Answers On When To Post

In 2006, **Lorelle VanFossen** of WordPress fame wrote her views on the [Best Time and Day to Post on Your Blog](#). Her preferred timing was to post it in the third or first week of the month

early in the week on a Monday or Tuesday before 8AM EST (1300 GMT). She added two updates to the post in 2007 and 2008 but did not change that view.

More recently, **Darren Rowse** of Probblogger.net has written on some [Timing Considerations re When to Publish Blog Posts](#). He posts from Australia but he also supports that 8AM EST time as better than others with Tuesday and Wednesday being his preferred days. Both posts are certainly worth reading as a background to the discussion here.

When Will Your Readers Be Expecting That Blog Post?

Clearly a blog post is not created like one might construct a fine sculpture. The sculpture will stand there to eternity for whoever chooses to pass by. A blog post on the other hand is intended for a certain audience of readers. Hopefully they visit from time to time because they like the quality of what they are seeing.

On this view, it is not the timing of any single blog post that counts but rather the cycle on which blog posts appear. **Seth Godin** expressed the following viewpoint on this question of [how often blog posts should appear](#):

When I look at my work, I think I'm in sync with my readers – one blog post a day feels right, while ten (which some bloggers pull off) wouldn't work for us.

When Will The Spiders Be Looking For That Blog Post?

Most bloggers hope that their blog posts will become visible to the search engines so that many visitors will find the blog posts by doing keyword searches. This imposes a certain minimum frequency of posting blog posts so that the search engine spiders will crawl the blog fairly frequently. By having a fairly regular cycle of posting blog posts, the search engine spiders' interest should be maintained.

When Will You Be Ready To Write That Blog Post?

Worthwhile blog posts do demand some effort and skill. If you are going to establish a certain cycle of posting blog posts, then you must have sufficient topics to blog about. **Leo Babauta** has some worthwhile advice on [How To Generate Great Content Week After Week](#).

He has the following 10 basic suggestions:

1. Keep an idea list.
2. Reflect on your life often.
3. Write from the heart.
4. Answer reader questions.
5. Look for inspiration.
6. Write when inspired.
7. Get others to contribute.
8. Take breaks to recharge.
9. Don't be afraid to write short posts.
10. Repurpose old content.

If you can generate great content on a regular basis, then you maximize your chance that your readers will subscribe to your RSS news feed and be aware when new posts are published.

Publishing Blog Posts Is Not Like Publishing A Magazine

The discussion up to this point seems to assume that your eager audience is waiting for your latest blog post. Just like the latest issue of your favorite magazine appearing on the bookstall shelf, the blog post is suddenly there to be grabbed. The magazine always appears on Mondays so you look out for it. The blog post usually appears on a Wednesday so you look out for it. Clearly this is not really what happens.

This you might say is the tipping point of this article. Most of what has been written and discussed to this point takes no account of the time dimension as it applies on the Internet. Blog posts once written are there essentially for ever. The timing of their posting may affect only slightly what happens in the early days. Thereafter they take their place in the great blogosphere as catalogued by Google.

The other important factor is that the Internet is international. Blog readers may be anywhere around the world. That means that they are living their lives in different time zones. You may publish your web post mid-morning for you and some of your readers are asleep. How should this be factored into the equation?

RSS News Feeds To The Rescue

For the moment we can ignore those who find your blog posts through search engines. Google now is incredibly fast in indexing blog posts, sometimes within an hour or two (although surprisingly it may take a day or two for them to appear in Google BlogSearch). However anyone arriving at your blog post via search is unaffected by when you chose to publish the blog post.

Let us assume for the moment that Twitter does not exist. Thinking back say two years, the only readers that should have influenced your thinking on when to publish your blog post were those who had subscribed to your RSS News Feed. They might have bookmarked this as was possible with Live Bookmarks in their Firefox browser, or the equivalent in some other browser. Or they might have subscribed via some News Feed aggregator such as Google Reader or Bloglines.

By either route, within an hour or so, there would be an indication that your blog had a new post. When they spotted that indication would of course depend on how frequently they were able to check, given the other competing claims on their time.

This probable delay in seeing that a RSS News Feed has been updated and the fact that readers may live in a number of time zones certainly weakens the importance of the precise time a blog post is published. Apart from avoiding weekends and public holidays, there is really little importance in the precise time you publish your post.

Of course the new phenomenon now is Twitter and all the other social media where you can show your status, such as Facebook or LinkedIn. Does the immediacy of these new channels make the post publishing time more important?

How Does Twitter Affect When You Publish That Blog Post?

In the pre-Twitter world, word-of-mouth had a very muted existence. Bloggers might always reblog some important post or friends could exchange their RSS News Feeds within websites such as FriendFeed. However these communications and discussions would take place almost independently of the original blog posting time. Social media such as Digg or Reddit helped people to share their likes and dislikes but again original blog posting time was not important.

In this Twitter world, perhaps the rules have changed. You can now automatically inform Twitter that a new blog post has been published. WordPress has a plugin that does exactly this. However most of the movers and shakers on Twitter have large numbers of followers. They are often following large numbers of people as well. In consequence what is happening at this precise moment is almost all that can be 'on the radar screen'. There is very little history. Even if you use some interface like Tweetdeck, your ability to see any volume of past activity is extremely limited.

Ideally you have some followers who pay more particular attention to your output and will Retweet your Tweet about your blog post. If the post is sufficiently 'buzz-worthy' then others may pick up the Retweets and Retweet again. Unfortunately if you happen to Tweet your blog post when no one is around, then it may be like dropping a pebble down a very deep well. You won't even hear the echo.

Given that, it is not surprising to see what **Pete Dimaio** says on [The Life and Times of A Twitter Link](#).

Twitter is a fast moving world and what you say can easily be missed by your loyal followers. But just how fast moving are your followers' twitter streams? Thanks to the URL shortening service bit.ly we now know the answer is just a brief five minutes.

A series of three tests were done promoting various funny videos or articles. What we found was surprising; nearly all traffic to those links was within five minutes of the tweet. After that... nothing.

In other words, if you hope to get extra exposure for your blog posts by having your friends Retweet your posts, you should assume that it all must happen very fast after the blog post goes live.

The Bottom Line

Possible answers to our question, When Should You Publish That Blog Post?, are therefore:

If you are not using Twitter in any way, then it is probably not very important when you publish your blog posts. Avoid weekends and public holidays, make your posts good and make them regularly and the RSS News Feed process will ensure they get the attention they deserve.

If you are using Twitter, then you can try to get the world's attention at the moment your blog post goes live. Given time zones, this probably means that you should focus on the time zone that represents your primary market place. For example if you blog from Vancouver in the Pacific Time Zone, you might still target the Eastern Time Zone which represents the heaviest population concentration in North America.

The best time of day may then be determined by looking at the time pattern of regular visitors to your blog. For many business blogs that may well be from 08:00 to 10:00 EST. Again good content and regular postings are the most important factor and weekends and public holidays are to be avoided

Since these suggested answers are somewhat controversial, why not give your views either for or against in the comments. Perhaps we will all be able to nail down the right answer.