

5 Signs It's Time To Kill Your Blog

Bloggers discuss what to consider before you hit delete

By Kathleen Pierce - June 20, 2011



It seems every day a journo starts a blog. At first, it's like any relationship. You love it and spend lots of time trying to make everything perfect. Then, the reality of maintaining it sets in. A day off here turns into a week off there, and before you know it your blog ends up one of the many left to curl up and die in cyberspace. But, when is it really the right time to abandon your blog? That depends on your motive, says social media expert Jay Baer, whose widely read ConvinceandConvert.com has not suffered such a fate. While it's tempting to write your blog's obituary if it's collecting dust, ask yourself a few simple questions before pulling the trigger.

Figure Out Your Motive And Stick To It

There are three main reasons people decide to launch blogs: to create community, to generate business or to increase awareness. So, if you're a writer, you might blog to show off your writing chops or to attract paying assignments. Understanding your blog's DNA can help you stay on track, advises Baer. Focus too much on comments, and you'll go insane.

"That's where people get messed up," he explains. "If your goal is to build community, you need a personal touch. If that's not your goal, comments are nice to have, but not critical."

Graphic designer Josh Taylor launched his blog MakeSeriously.com to turn snippets of his life into a comic. In 2007, he started posting witticisms about work and the advertising world, hoping to entertain friends and strangers. Somewhere between getting married and buying a house, the daily-ness of life edged out blogging. "It's just so hard to find time," he says. "Isn't that the tenet of blogging, that it shouldn't take very long?"

Just as getting into shape and learning a language are time-consuming pursuits, blogging is no different. Baer updates his blog three times a week and has stuck to that schedule for three years. Blogging is a commitment, and if you want a dedicated audience, you have to "make the time to do it. The idea of 'I don't have the time' is a fallacy," says Baer.

"I'd get all excited in the beginning and then say 'you know this is boring. No one's reading this, why even bother to keep it?'"

The co-author of *The Now Revolution* is a frequent speaker at social media conferences across the country. During his weekly travel stints, he finds flying extremely conducive to blogging. He'll bang out four or five posts at a time in transit and schedule them to publish throughout the week. "When the writing flows, you have to stick with it."

When It's Time To Purge Or Concur

Beth Gootee has launched four blogs within the last two years. As of June 2011, two remain. Gootee's Forever Learning blog about "quirky life's lessons" was never meant for prime time. "It's about observations on the journey of life," she says.

But even personal blogs can die on the vine. Just as Taylor launched his blog with great gusto four years ago, Gootee says hers is "going downhill fast. I haven't written in a month or more."

In early May, after she was laid-off from her job as a project coordinator at an automotive company, the sudden change prompted her to launch blog number four, Admin4hire.wordpress.com. The idea was to attract future employers and give voice to the exhausting process of looking for a new job, she says. So far, she's made several posts and feels great. "My focus is more on the new one, because it's about a current life situation."

Gootee's decision to off her other blogs was instinctual and quick. "They were purely personal. I'd get all excited in the beginning and then say 'you know this is boring. No one's reading this, why even bother to keep it?'" she says.

She considers [Admin4hire](#) a reflection of her emerging personal brand and views it through a more professional lens. "It's a good way to capture attention, and hopefully a future employer will look at it and say, "We shouldn't be so hard on these folks. Look at what they're going through."

"There is an information annuity built into blogging. Even if you haven't updated in a while, it can still be found on Google."

How Bad Is It?

Before you blow up your blog, figure out if it's worth resuscitating. If it's a source of shame, that could be a sign it no longer serves you -- but it may just need a remake.

Taylor, a designer at an advertising agency in Indiana, decided to put [MakeSeriously.com](#) on hiatus until he was ready to give it more attention. He scratched it from his resume and didn't talk it up at social functions. "If any employer goes to it, it will be a dead site," he told us earlier this year. "But it's a physical portfolio of my work. I think of it as being in transit."

Since then, he's re-launched the blog with his wife, trading off duties every few days. Because creating comics is a time suck (an hour and a half to design, color, scan and upload), he's considering purchasing a tablet to shorten his blogging time from an hour-and-a-half to 15 minutes.

While it's tempting to hit the delete button if, like Taylor, you haven't posted in a year, Baer suggests holding your fire. "There is an information annuity built into blogging. Even if you haven't updated in a while, it can still be found on Google. The objective is to make sure people can find you."

The seduction of the 140-character ease of Twitter has turned many dedicated bloggers into micro messaging fiends. However, real-time social media is no substitute for an in-depth blog post, and even the pithiest tweet has a half-life of four minutes.

"You can interact with people on a blog," says Baer, whose posts generate 24 to 40 comments on average, "plus it's more searchable."

Streamline Your Tactics

Spending too much time designing and formatting a post could really be what's killing you and your blog. If you need help with software interface, hire someone. Google "Wordpress tech support" and you will find 5 million results. And don't wait until you have something to say to post; commit to blogging once a week. You can even hire a virtual assistant to set up your blog and upload your posts. If you're unsure that your blog is resonating with readers, track it. Services like [Postrank](#) and [Google Analytics](#) provide insight to blog traffic and post effectiveness. This makes you realize you are not alone and that your posts have merit. Oh, and remember that can-do spirit Gootee expressed earlier? Well, giving an upbeat voice to the unemployed through blogging seems to have helped her own situation. As of press time, she tells us she's secured a new position.

Keeping your blog afloat is easier than it sounds. If you can cope with the equivalent of living in a messy house that hasn't been picked up in six months, Baer says the rewards of keeping a dormant site far outweigh the alternative. "Don't kill it."

It's time to commit blogocide if:

1. Your goal is to create community, but no one's reading or commenting.
2. Your blog is a means to sell a service or create an action, and that hasn't happened.
3. You haven't updated it in over a year.
4. It causes more embarrassment than pride.
5. You can't remember the name of your blog.