

Blogging II Infitum
KansasFest
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Why have a blog?

A blog is your personal brand: a place where you can develop your voice and ensure you're heard, free of social media's algorithms and filters. When playing in your own sandbox, you own your content and can back it up or export it whenever and wherever you need. It also serves as a hub to all your other online presences, making it easy for followers to find you. All your disk images, hardware schematics, GitHub repos, news reports, and brainstorming can be found all in one place!

What publishing platform should I choose?

I recommend [WordPress](#), which is a free content management system (CMS). Unlike Squarespace, Weebly, or Wix, WordPress is an open-source CMS, meaning no one corporation owns it, and you can modify and distribute it however you like. Its plugin architecture allows it to be expanded to support podcasting, event calendars, e-commerce, and more. (Full disclosure: I work for Automattic, the hosts of [WordPress.com](#).) A theme like [Retro Mac OS](#) demonstrates how to marry a site's theme and content—though if your theme isn't responsive, a plugin like [Jetpack](#) can make sure it looks good on mobile devices. Here are some of [my other favorite plugins](#). I recommend hosting your WordPress site on [WordPress.com](#), [DreamHost](#), or [WP Engine](#).

Where do I write my posts?

You can use WordPress's post editor—WordPress v5.0 and later includes a new visual composer called [Gutenberg](#). But if you want somewhere to write down ideas for later development into full-blown posts, I recommend [MarsEdit](#). Compose your posts offline in this Mac application, which will then upload them directly into WordPress, where you can apply any finishing touches.

How do I come up with ideas for blog posts about the Apple II?

Any interaction you have with the Apple II or its community can be a blog post. If you read a book, have an idea for a game, have a question about a card, or want to attend an event, adding your personal spin can make it into something original. You can also set Google alerts for common keywords of topics you like to blog about. Whatever your source, you'll be more creative in recognizing and exploiting these opportunities by following the exercise on the opposite page.

How do I get my content discovered?

One of the most common ways content is discovered on the Internet is through search engines. To take advantage of this trend, you want your website to have good search engine optimization (SEO), using a plugin like [Yoast](#) or [All-in-One SEO Pack](#). You should also think about social media optimization (SMO), which will make your content more attractive and shareable on Facebook and Twitter. Finally, submit your site to my [Retro Roundup](#) retrocomputing RSS aggregator!

How do I retain my audience?

The most direct relationship you can have with your audience isn't through search engines or social media; it's email. Use [MailChimp](#) to create an RSS-to-email "campaign" that your visitors can subscribe to and receive each new blog post via email.

Please follow all of these instructions below:

1. Go to at least two magazine or newsstands. Also, spend some time online viewing various online publications that publish columns or opinion pieces. Indicate on your assignment what two newsstands you went to.
2. Read through as many publications as possible to find out which ones you like, which ones run columns, and which ones you might want to write for.
3. Choose 6 magazines, newspapers, or online publications.
4. Write down the names of all of the publications you researched and write a short note about those you researched but decided not to develop ideas for and why.
5. For the 6 publications you choose, come up with 3 ideas for each. (That's a total of 18 ideas for this assignment.) For each idea you should list: name of the publication, your column idea (topic and theme), and why it would fit in this publication. (The latter will require that you spend some time studying the publication and even going back over past issues if available to determine if your column idea is a good fit and if the target publication accepts submissions from outside contributors.)
6. Make enough copies of your write-ups for me and everyone else in class.

You can choose online publications for your column ideas, but try to choose no more than 3 online publications for this assignment.

You needn't limit the columns you actually write for class to the ideas you generate for this assignment.

Please make an attempt to actually spend some time reading and examining the publications (print or online) for which you are developing ideas. Make sure the publications carry columns and that they accept outside contributions. Be specific on where in a publication your idea might fit and why. You can reposition the same idea for a different publication, but to make your ideas list as rich as possible, try to develop as many different ideas as possible.

This assignment should fit on two pages, single-spaced. Figure you will need to make at least 20 copies of your assignment to bring to class, unless otherwise instructed.