

21

QUESTIONS ABOUT BLOGGING

How to Build a Popular
and Profitable Blog

Don Crowther

Online Marketing and Social Media Expert

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
A Few Facts To Get Us Going	5
#1. Is it too late to start blogging?.....	7
#2. How can I earn money from my blog?.....	9
#3. Can you sell advertising in addition to having Google AdSense on your site?.....	12
#4. How much traffic do I need to have to actually earn money from my blog?.....	15
#5. How do I know how much traffic I'm getting to my blog?	18
#6. What is the best platform to use for blogging?.....	20
#7. Why should I bother with a domain name and my own WordPress blog when I can blog without the hassle of setting up my own domain at sites like <i>WordPress.com</i> or <i>Blogger.com</i> ?	21
#8. How often should I post to my blog?	23
#9. How long should my blog posts be?	27
#10. What tone should my blog posts take?	29
#11. What about names? Is it okay to use my own name or my kids' names on my blog?	31
#12. Do I need to write about one specific subject area or can I write about whatever I want to?.....	33



#13. What about curating other people's content on my blog?.....	36
# 14. I keep hearing people say that I should build a list. What is a list and why would I want to do that?.....	39
#15. How do I use social media to build my audience?.....	42
#16. Don't I need a professional to create a logo and a professional blog design so I can get started?.....	44
#17. How do I get started using video on my blog?.....	46
#18. How many and how big should pictures be on my blog?.....	48
#19. Where can I get free pictures to put on my blog post?	50
#20. How do I get people to comment on my posts?	54
#21. How do I get the search engines to find my posts?	56
#22. Do I really need to back up my blog?.....	57
About Don Crowther	59



Introduction



Do you have a blog and want it to be more successful?

Or have you been thinking of starting a blog and want to start it off correctly so you don't have to waste time making mistakes?

You've come to the right place!

This book, 21 Questions About Blogging is specifically designed to help you build a better blog in less time, create a huge audience of fans who will return to your blog frequently and to help you make money from your blog.

It's set up in question and answer style. But I encourage you to read even the questions to you think you already know the answer. I oftentimes present a different perspective than most thinkers, based upon the research I've done.

Plus, sometimes I wander and throw in some extra gems, making each post a potential goldmine for ideas!

Enjoy!

Don Crowther

A Few Facts To Get Us Going



To put blogging into context, here are a few facts you'll find interesting:

1. Businesses with blogs generate 120% more leads than those who don't
And that's not just for consumer sites. Business to Business (B2B) marketers using blogs generate

67% more leads!

2. 77% of all Internet users read blogs
3. 81% of US consumers trust advice and information from blogs
4. Companies that blog have 97% more leads than those who don't
5. Websites with blogs have 434% more pages appearing in the search engines
6. 61% of US consumers have made a purchase based on a blog post
7. 70% of consumers learn about a company through articles rather than ads

Interesting, isn't it!

Blogging is such a powerful medium, that I've decided to gather and answer many of the key questions that I get about blogging.

You should know before you read this that my business is helping you grow your business. So, most of these questions deal with the business side of blogging – how to build a blog that makes money.

But then again, most bloggers, even those to whom blogging is a labor of love, would love to make more money from their blog!

Without further ado – here are the 21 questions I am most frequently asked about blogging:



#1. *Is it too late to start blogging?*



Absolutely not, it is not too late to start blogging! There are a lot of people who are blogging, (and just getting started in blogging,) in fact there are millions of bloggers out there. But remember the average blog is someone talking to people about their dates, their late night bar visits or whatever. There is relatively a small amount of people who are actually doing blogging meaning for it to be their career or an

assistance in their career and it is not too late at all to be doing that.

In fact let's look at some of the areas that might be waning. Mommy blogs, still going up. Food blogs, still going up. There are a number of categories which people may think of as too crowded, there are too many people in this category already, which are absolutely incorrect. The searches are still there, people are still coming and there are a lot of people who read blogs without even recognizing they are reading blogs, they just think they are reading content on someone's website.

Long story short, it is absolutely not too late to start blogging. In fact if you look at the top bloggers today those are the people that made a commitment two years ago to start blogging every day. And the same thing is going to happen two years from now which is that those people who are making a commitment today plus those people who started two years ago are the people who are going to be showing up very, very well two years from now.

I strongly recommend if you are thinking about blogging that you get going, that you get blogging and that you become really converted and committed to it right now. Next question



#2. How can I earn money from my blog?



If you want to actually make money from your blog there are only two ways that you make that money. There are different variations of those two ways but there are really only two ways you can generate income.

The first one is by directly selling stuff. This can be your own stuff or it can be other people's stuff through some kind of an affiliate program where you get paid. This is where you directly sell something. For example, you can put up a post, you talk about the cool book you just wrote and then you give them the opportunity to buy that book.

Or, you put up a post and you say here's this link about this cool book I just read and then here's an affiliate link to Amazon where you can buy it and you get a percentage of that purchase. So the first blog business model is directly selling stuff.

Before I get to the second business model, let me make a point. The ONLY way anybody really earns money with a blog is if something gets sold. Those sales create the revenue that enable a blogger to put some cash in their bank account. You may not like the concept, but it's the truth. Keep that in mind, because until you recognize that, you'll never really earn money as a blogger.

The second blog business model is indirectly selling stuff. This is called advertising. Advertising is actually the process of selling something on behalf of someone else. When you see an ad for T-Mobile running on ABC they are indirectly selling T-Mobile. T-Mobile pays them, they run the ad and T-Mobile hopes they'll get more in revenue from that ad than they paid to run it.

That's the advertising model. To do this you can either use what are called advertising networks or you can sell your own ads. A typical advertising network is something like Google AdSense. You see Google AdSense all the time. You know you're seeing it in a blog because somewhere around the ad you'll see the words *Sponsored by Google*.

To get started with Google AdSense simply Google the term Google AdSense. That will bring you to a page where you can sign up.

Once you sign up you'll be given a number of lines of code that you'll paste into your blog. Google will then figure out what that page is about and it will show ads on the subject of your page. That's a great way of getting started because it's incredibly easy. Later you will probably want to consider doing things a little different when you become big.

The beauty of Google AdSense and other ad networks is you don't have to go out and find anybody to advertise on your site. You'll get some pretty cool ads that will show up on your sites without much effort at all. The disadvantage is you only get to collect a certain percentage of those ad revenues. There's an overall percentage but we are not allowed to by contract to tell you what that is.

In addition to Google AdSense there are other groups called advertising networks. Those are groups that have gone out and gathered a bunch of advertisers, and, like Google AdSense, they give you some code to place on your site, which then displays those ads.

The challenge of that is most of the blog advertising networks have not developed the programming that Google has to be able to serve up ads to your page that really are relevant to the subject matter of that particular post and to your target market. Oftentimes people start out with AdSense and then they go into blog advertising networks if they get kicked out of AdSense or they are not getting enough money from AdSense.

If you want to test them, there are many of them out there. Simply Google the term blog advertising network and you'll find a whole bunch of different ones. There are networks supplying ads for blogs for

teens, there's ones out there for mommy bloggers, there's all kinds of different things. So Google that term, you'll find a bunch of different ad networks and be able to go discover things there.

Here's my recommendation: I suggest you do NOTHING to add advertising to your blog until you get 500 or more visitors per week. Even that won't give you much revenue. The key here is to focus on building your audience rather than building revenue. That will create a better situation for you both short and long-term.

When you're ready, I recommend you start by adding Google AdSense ads and accepting sponsorship deals that make sense for your business that are offered to you. Then in addition to that you'll want to sell your own ads. Here, you'll be selling people the ability to sponsor the entire site, to sponsor a category within that site, to sponsor a page, many sponsor just your newsletter. Plus, one of the beauties of sponsorship is that when you start getting nice traffic, they'll start coming directly to you. That's cool!

#3. Can you sell advertising in addition to having Google AdSense on your site?



Absolutely you can. I recommend you put up a sales page on your site where you talk about the focus of your blog, your audience size, any kind of demographic, age and income information that you might have and your prices. Certainly you'll also want

to indicate how they should get in touch with you. Then that will begin to bring some people in then you have conversations with them. I guarantee it will start out slowly, but should grow as your audience gets bigger.

The next question is how much to charge. If you are already advertising through Google AdSense you'll be able to see your reports and recognize how much people are willing to pay to advertise on a blog like yours. You can also look at other blogs in your niche that are approximately your same size and see how much they are charging as a way to get started.

You can sell lots of different kinds of ad. You can sell the little boxes on the side of your blog, bigger ads, even a movie that shows up in your blog. Plus, you can have people basically pay for you to write a review about their product as a blog post on your site (remember that you need to disclose any payment or

free stuff offered in exchange for doing that.) You have many, many different options. As I said you can sell a sponsorship for your site, a category, a page, or just one issue of your newsletter. The key is to be able to really start selling advertising you need to get traffic.

The more traffic you've got the more interested advertisers tend to be and the more likely you are to be able to get their advertising onto your blog. We'll talk more about that in a moment.

Now, if you really want to monetize your blog I encourage you to think about creating and selling your own products.

Almost every category has information people are willing to pay money to know.

- Let's just imagine that you blog about dog training, so you may want to have something on how to have your dog not go nuts with barking every time the postal carrier comes to the door.
- If you've got a mommy blog, you may want to create a product on how to deal with sibling rivalry between a three year old and a one year old.

- If you have a blog on online marketing you may want to create a product on how to get more traffic to your site.

There's something in your category that people are willing to pay money to know. Figure out what it is and how to sell that to them!

You can also sell coaching and consulting. Because these enable you to sell your expertise without having to spend time writing a book or putting together a training program, these are both a great way to do things.

Selling coaching and consulting services can be as simple as offers to sell your time. You can say "you can talk to me privately for an hour or 10 hours," whatever you want people can pay you to sign up. You can just take PayPal set up a time for them to be able to speak with you. In that call or Skype conversation you can consult about anything including how to get kids to go to bed on time or how to set your camera up and so you can shoot while you are not on automatic mode to get better pictures, or how to do deal with that pesky bug issue they've got in their home.

Whatever your expertise is, you can sell consulting to do that. If you are a speaker, you can sell a speaking

gig with a pitch that says I'll speak to your audience for this amount of money, plus travel.

You can also sell electronic media like an eBook or a webinar or a series of videos. You can sell your print books or any other kind of products.

You also don't have to sell your own stuff. You can do affiliate marketing where you are selling other people's stuff by sending your visitor through your special affiliate link to someone else's site. Then when people buy through that link, you get credit for the sale and a percentage of the profits.

No matter what category you are in, you probably have some companies making affiliate marketing offers for products and services your people want.

Let's imagine you have a fashion blog. In it you talk about the latest fashions. All you have to do is to Google "affiliate marketing fashion" and you'll get some fashion brands that offer affiliate programs. No matter what category you participate, there are probably a number of different sites that offer you the ability to make money on sales made through your site. Simply Google "affiliate marketing +your category," and you will almost always see something that you can sell to your audience.

Once you find one you like, you'll sign up for it, and will give you a unique URL to their sales pages that codes the person who clicks on it to you, and you get paid a certain percentage of everything that comes in. Now, the next question is:

#4. How much traffic do I need to have to actually earn money from my blog?



The simple answer is “the more the better.”

But that does not mean that if you don't have a ton of visitors that you should just give up making money from your blog. You can make money from just a small number of visitors.

Let's say that your blog is the blog for a company and that you sell software. Your main mission on your blog is to sell this piece of software, let's say it's an app that helps people exercise. In this case, I would ask myself the question “are there other things that people who are interested in an app for exercising may also want to buy?”

Maybe it will be an elliptical trainer or another training machine for exercising. Maybe it will be exercise clothing, maybe it will be another product like a Fit Bit they wear on their belt that tracks their exercise that's not build into your app yet. All of these are other ways you can begin to monetize your blog. In that case you can go ahead and set up some affiliate programs with sites that sell those types of product and begin making offers for those products in addition to your own, enabling you to start making money even if you only have 10 visitors a week. Not much, but every little

bit helps (primarily emotionally) when you're building a business! You might as well start monetizing those visitors.

Another option is only try to sell your own stuff and so just start selling that app to your 10 visitors a week.

But what about the big advertising options like the advertising networks and taking ads directly.

AdSense starts to make sense at about 500 visitors a week.

Selling advertising to other people using something other than AdSense requires to you to be in the range of 7000 visitors a week.

So about 1000 visitors a day starts to open you up to sponsors where you'll be able to sell some of your traffic to others. Again, this all depends on how big your particular segment is. I worked with a person a while ago who sold software to people who have a certain high-end medical machine in their hospital or their office.

There are only about 2,000 offices in the world that might buy their kinds of machines, so their entire audience out there is 2,000 companies. They are never going to get 1000 visitors a day, it's not going to

happen. They'll be lucky to get 10 visitors a day. But, the people who buy those kinds of machines are attractive to many other companies, so they may be able to sell ads to those other companies even at that low traffic rate. If you've got a very tight the amount of traffic you have to get to make advertising profitable goes down to a much lower level because you can charge more to the right people for the privilege of advertising to those people.

However, if you have a blog that attracts a less specific audience then you probably need to be in the 1,000 to 3000 visitors a day before you'll be able to make some real money from blogging. Now, that doesn't mean you can't put up affiliate offers and start selling your own things. Sometimes it's really nice to get a check for something that one your visitors bought!

And so there's nothing wrong with starting at an early stage in your blogging to start monetizing it, just don't count on getting a lot of money from it. My personal recommendation is to not plan on actually getting over \$300 a month until you are three to six months out. The way I like to budget things is to say by six months into it, I'm looking for about \$300 a month and after a year, about \$1,000 a month.

In other words, after a year, I expect to be making more in 1-2 hours per day than I would working an \$8/hour full-time job.

If I'm not there in six months I'm going to look at where I am. If I'm at \$100 a month then I'm not doing something right. And so I need to change an action. I'll analyze what I'm doing, perhaps it's that I'm not blogging frequently enough. Perhaps it's that you are not writing the right kinds of content, perhaps it's because you're not reaching out and partnering with other bloggers, or perhaps it's that you are not doing a very good job of selling whatever it is that you are using to monetize your blog.

Whatever it is, those are all areas that you should look at changing. Once you make those changes continue down that path for another three months. If you then, after making that change, you are still not to that \$300 a month you may want to reconsider whether this is a useful thing for you to be doing.

That's the way I like to look at it, give it a six-month commitment to post every single day. Then work hard, recognizing that once you have a group of people visiting, giving you significant levels of traffic, that traffic can be an asset to you for years. So it's not just what you are getting this month, it's what you are getting for the next 60 months or 60 weeks or 60 years, we don't know.

That's a good set of criteria, commit wholeheartedly for six months. If you're hitting the numbers after six months, make changes, go another six months. You're targeting about \$1,000 a month. \$1,000 a month is a pretty good make or break number for a blog. But hey, if you are enjoying doing it yet only bringing in \$300/month then keep going at it. But no matter how much money you're making, keep refining your actions so that you get more and more traffic and a more and more converted audience.

The next logical question that comes out of this is,

#5. How do I know how much traffic I'm getting to my blog?



Many people have no idea. They see their friends and their family commenting but that's all they see. They really don't know how many visitors are coming.

Not long ago I was talking to somebody and they said "I don't think I have any visitors to my blog" to which I replied "let's go look." We actually looked at their Google Analytics and discovered that they were getting far more visitors than they thought they were getting. Just realize, there's only a small percentage of people who actually comment on blog posts. So never rate your success as a blogger based on how many comments you are getting.

What you really need to know is how much traffic you're actually getting. A great way to do that is to use what's called Google Analytics. Start by going to <http://google.com/analytics> and fill out the form to sign up. It's totally free and the process will take about 3 minutes.

Once you've done that, Google the term "Google Analytics WordPress" there'll be a number of plug-ins that will come up. You simply add a Google Analytics plug-in into your WordPress blog and set it up, by tying your analytics account to your plugin, and it will

immediately add Google Analytics into your entire blog.

Then ignore Analytics for a few days to let it gather some data. When you come back, and log into your analytics account at <http://google.com/analytics>, you'll be able to see how much traffic is coming, how many unique (non-repeat) visitors you're getting, where your visitors are coming from, how many pages they are seeing, how long they are spending on your site, what pages they are going to from each one of your sections and a lot more! If you hook it up with your eCommerce shopping cart (if you're selling your own stuff) you can actually see how much each person is worth to you. Lots of powerful information can come

from this that will help you to shape your blog's content and timing based upon what your visitors actually want.

I strongly recommend that you get Google Analytics, plug it into your blog and start gathering data. Some people say "I don't want Google to know this stuff." Well, guess what, Google already knows most of it, you might as well take advantage of the free information that they are giving you and use that to be able to track your traffic to your site. I use it, I have no problem with it, I encourage you to do that also. Next question:

#6. What is the best platform to use for blogging?



Now, for a while this was something debatable. At this point there's no longer a debate. The best platform is WordPress but the best way you do that is

WordPress.org. You should know that WordPress.org is different than WordPress.com. Wordpress.com is a place where they host your blog for you, you don't want that (see below.) At WordPress.org you are able to download WordPress for free to use it on your own site.

That is why I was so excited to hear that many of you were already blogging on your own site as opposed to one of the free sites out there. The best practice is to download WordPress, put it on your site. It's totally free, it's consistently being upgraded, it's got free plug-ins and it enables you to blog under your own domain name.

#7. Why should I bother with a domain name and my own WordPress blog when I can blog without the hassle of setting up my own domain at sites like WordPress.com or Blogger.com?



There's one very, very important reason for that: one

of the key things that the search engines use to determine who gets ranked at the top of the search engine rankings is how many links are coming to that particular page and that particular site.

Here's why this is important: if your blog is posted on WordPress.com or Blogger all of those links go to the benefit of WordPress.com and Blogger, not to you. Now, you do get credit for the ones that go to your specific page on WordPress.com. But all the links that come into your site don't accrue to your site, rather WordPress.com and Blogger's get the credit.

That's bad.

Plus, there's a huge risk that one of these could decide to go out of business or decide to suddenly charge you \$50 a month or gets hacked, and by the way these things happen quite frequently, where something that is free then goes paid and then they simply turn everybody off. All have you do to understand this is to think about Google Reader which went away not long ago and FeedBurner which is scheduled to go away at some point in the near future. These are all things that were free but then the company decided they didn't want to do that business model anymore, so they make it go away. That's why it's so important that you create your own WordPress blog on your own domain name and then you are totally in control of everything else.

When you host the blog on your own site you remove a lot of the risk of bad things that might happen to you. For example somebody may complain about one of your posts and WordPress.com or Blogger

simply decides to make that whole situation to just go away and so suddenly your blog is gone.

Or what if someone decides to do what's called a denial of service attack on WordPress.com or Blogger? Perhaps somebody was running a political or a highly controversial blog so someone who doesn't like the message causes millions of computers to access the site all at the same time and the whole site goes down. This happens all the time. You want to have your own blog and you want it to be on your own site. That's the best way to do it.

If you go to DonCrowther.com and look around there I have lots of posts and videos on how to actually set up your blog.

Let's go to the next question. Other than monetization, this is probably the most frequently asked question that I get. And that is;

#8. How often should I post to my blog?



The answer to this is very simple: more than you are right now. Actually, here's the real answer. I get a study of the top 25 bloggers in the entire world, on average, the top 25 post about three posts per day. And the top 10 post an average of 5 posts a day. Isn't that interesting?

So if you want to be one of the top bloggers in the world you should post more often. Now, I recognize

that if you are posting five times a day that's all you are doing. I'll give you a hint. The top bloggers that post five times a day aren't posting all from one person.

They are hiring a staff of people, maybe five bloggers who then each individually posting three to five times a day. And so for one person I would say the minimum is five times a week. Ideally, it's seven times a week. Realize you can schedule posts into the future. You don't have to actually sit down every day and do it.

In fact I have a good friend who makes over \$125,000 from his blog every year. What he does is to sit down one Saturday every month and write all of his posts for a month, scheduling them to come out each day of the month. So, one Saturday a week he does his entire month's work, then he spends the rest of the month watching movies, traveling, doing consulting work, doing other things that he just wants to do because he's got a base foundational income that comes from one day's work a month.

What you may want to do is get into the habit of saying to yourself “every day I am going to blog” for certain amount of time every day. And then once a week or once a month I’m going to write 10 blog posts so I’ve got something for those days when I’m vacationing, those days when I wake up and the kid just threw up and all of a sudden everything is going crazy and everything is going wrong.

Those days are why it’s good for you to have something already in the can, so all you have to do is log into your blog and post it for that particular day.

So, the ideal posting schedule is seven posts a week. Better than that, post two a day. Better than that, post three to five a day.

Most people can’t do that. So is there anything less than that?

The minimum is once a week, once every other week or once a month is never going to land you in the top blogs. It’s probably never going to get you a real audience and it’s probably never going to allow you to get to that \$1,000 a month or above in earnings. Recognize, I told you this friend of mine is doing \$125,000 (tech blog,) another friend is doing \$250,000 (business training blog,) I know a number of Mommy

bloggers who are doing tens of thousands a month, and these are all one-person operations off their home computer.

I can’t give you a bunch of additional data because most of my friends won’t tell me but I have another friend who earns \$6 million a year through his blog. Not bad! And yes, every one of these has a life because they are writing just a few hours each week. They absolutely have a life. Each one of them got there because they built themselves an amazing following.

That’s the key. The key is not all these questions that we are talking about tonight. The key is building a great following and most of that comes from building great content and building relationships with your audience and other bloggers. That’s why you need to get more and more content out there. That’s why I personally believe you should be making a commitment to writing every day for six months and then reevaluating at that particular point in time.

Some people are wondering how they can possibly do this every day. There are two keys. The first is to figure out where you can carve out an hour a day to literally change your life. It may cost you your favorite TV program. Would you give up the Bachelor for a significantly better life? I would! Would you give up the

hour you spend on Facebook and Pinterest for a huge increase in income and lifestyle flexibility? Would you even give up an extra hour of sleep? That's a decision you'll have to make, because succeeding in blogging is probably not going to happen unless you do so.

The second key is an \$8 purchase that will change your entire blogging life, in fact it's \$8 or less, it's one of these. It's a simple kitchen countdown timer. You can get it on Amazon you can get it in KMart or Target. Just walk over the kitchen center and they are probably \$6 to \$8 there.

Here's what I do. I sit down at my desk and set it to ring in a certain amount of time. I choose to set mine for 48 minutes. I press the start button and put it right in front of me so I can watch it start counting down. And then I write like crazy for 48 minutes. I don't answer my phone, I don't check my email, I don't watch YouTube videos. I don't do anything except write or create videos or whatever my key project is that I need to do to get stuff out.

And I do that straight for 48 minutes and then at the end of 48 minutes I get up and I walk around. I get a drink, I walk downstairs, I say hello to my wife, I check my email, whatever, for 12 minutes. Then I set the

clock again for 48 minutes and I do whatever it is that's got to get done for another 48 minutes.

I like doing this the very first thing in the day before I do anything else. Because what that does is it means that by the time that I've actually started my day I've got an hour and a half of uninterrupted work done. And that hour and a half is incredibly powerful and its become incredibly profitable to me.

So whatever it is that I really need to get done that day is what I do for that hour and a half right at the beginning of my work day. Sometimes it's writing, or creating videos, creating a course, doing taxes, whatever it is that's got to get done that you keep procrastinating.

This works wonders for writing blog posts! During just one 48 minute time you can write a bog post, create some great graphics to go with it, post it, and post it to your social media accounts. Boom, you're done for the day. And you still have another 48 minutes to do something else.

Some people say that they don't need the kitchen timer because they have a phone app that can do that. Nope, I strongly recommend you not use a phone app. The reason for that is that after a few

minutes your phone goes blank to save the battery. You want that thing in front of you counting down so every time you glance at it you think "argh, I've only got 23 minutes left" which causes you to work faster. There's literally a mental thing that happens here when you see the clock counting down.

There's another way you can do this and that's a free Google Chrome extension called "timer." You get this by clicking on the three horizontal bars in the upper right corner of Google Chrome, then click on tools, then extensions, then get more extensions. Look up timer in the extensions and install it.

I frequently the timer app up and put in a time of 48 minutes and click Countdown and there it goes. It's counting down. But only do that if you have two screens for your computer or can arrange your computer's screen to have it always be on your screen while you're working. You have to be able to always see the timer or you lose much of the power of

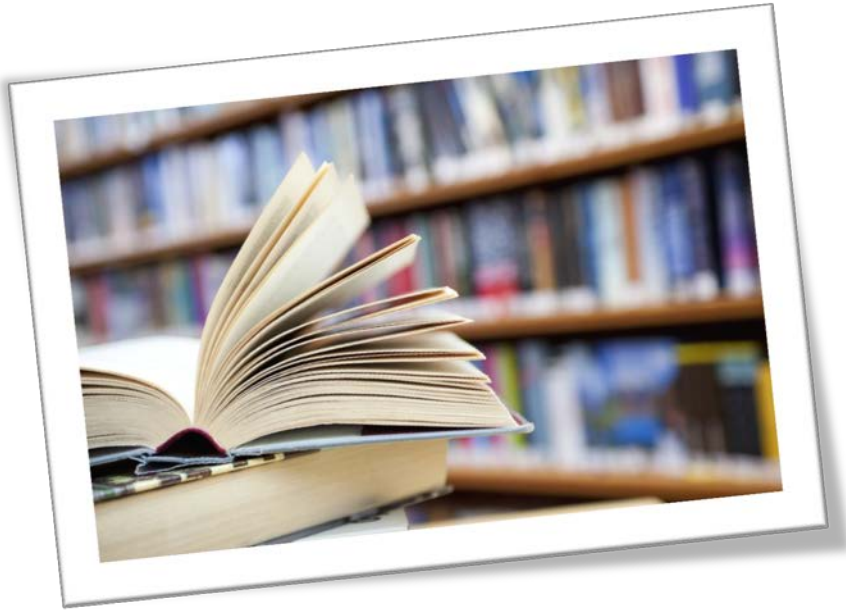
this technique. If you can't do that, skip your next cup of Starbucks and fork out the \$8 to get a timer.

Just to show that I walk my talk, right now I'm starting my day by editing this document. I have my kitchen timer running in front of me. Right now it says 20:35, 20:34... Wow, I've got so much more to edit before it runs out. Hurry, Don!

Now, let's say you're using this technique and you've set your timer for 20 minutes (note, you can set it for whatever period you want, I just really like 48 minutes for my mind and ability to focus) and you get done with your post with 5 minutes still to go. What do you do for the other five? I start writing the next day's post because I want to get ahead in case I have one of those days where I don't feel that well or the dog had to go to the vet or whatever it is.

Alright, so let's go on to the next question which is;

#9. How long should my blog posts be?



Which is the third most frequently asked question that I get, how long should my post blog posts be? Well, to quote Mrs. England, ironically the name of my high school, English teacher, "it should be exactly how long it needs to be, not a word more not a word less." Of course, we constantly objected "come on Mrs. England tell us how long you want this paper to be." "I told you," she replied, "exactly how long it needs to be, not a word more, not a word less."

"Is that 800 words, is it 1600, is it 4000 words?"

"Don, stop asking me."

If I wrote 500 words when she was thinking I really needed five pages to cover the subject, the paper would come back bleeding with red ink (they always came back bleeding with red ink...) ending with the words "you should have written more." And that is how it worked for the three years that I had, and loved learning from Mrs. England. (By the way, she was the person who encouraged me the most in my writing and scholarship by always pushing me to higher levels. The bleeding papers were always part of that. As I recall, I never got more than a C or even a D on a paper, because she'd say "Don, this is an A paper for an average high school student, but your capability is way more than average. For a writer, this is a C paper." But in spite of all those C's my report card always showed an A in English. She was a wonderful educator and motivator! We learned an incredible amount from her!)

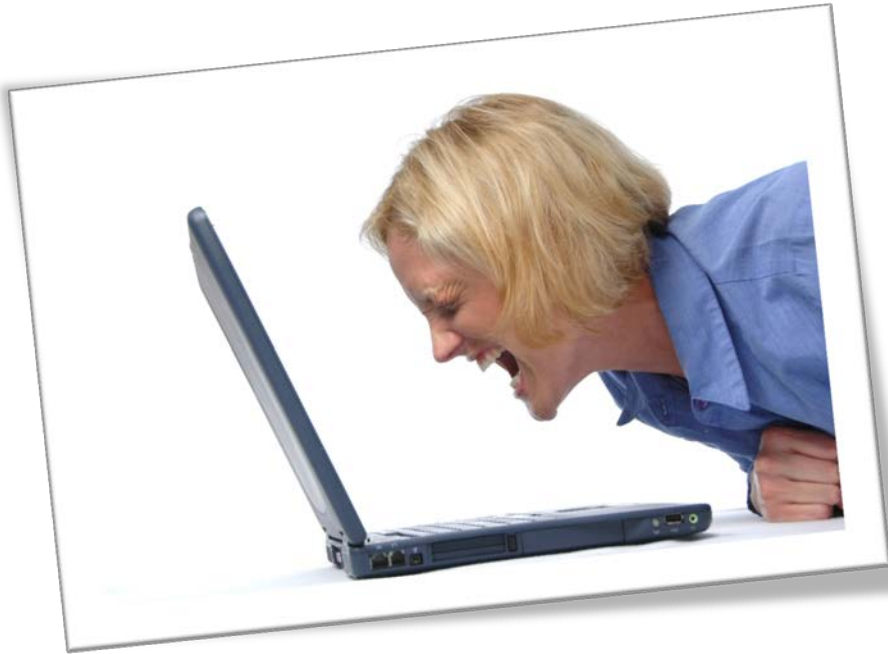
That's wonderful advice for bloggers – write your posts to be “exactly how long as they need to be, not a word less, not a word more.”

On average, I would say 500 – 800 words is the right length for a blog post that's conveying information. I actually have three levels of blog posts. I have 250-word posts which are just a quick comment about something, oftentimes a curation post, we'll talk more

about that. I have ones where I'm doing 500-800 word posts and I have 1,500 to 4,000-word blog posts.

All those are valuable lengths, and I suggest you vary the length of your posts, with some shorts, some mediums and some longs for different subjects and at different times. Next;

#10. What tone should my blog posts take?



Should your blog posts be clever and funny, should they be serious, should they be lighthearted? The answer: it all depends on who you are. If you are a clever and funny person then you may want to be clever and funny. If you are a serious person you may want to be much more serious.

I have the ability to occasionally say something is funny or clever, but I've never been known for having people rolling in the aisles with laughter. So most of the stuff I write is fairly serious. I'll occasionally throw in a little side quip to make people smile but that's me.

You already know who you are. Just be consistent with that. If you are trying to be somebody or something else, you will fail and you won't be anything.

In other words, stick to your knitting. Be in print who you really are in life. If you try to be anything different everyone will know you're not being authentic. Lack of authenticity does NOT create a huge audience!

There's nothing wrong with adding a serious post to a lighthearted blog or the other way around. And there's nothing wrong with injecting a few sentences/paragraphs of a different tone into a given blog post, just don't try to be unnatural to you all the time.

Remember, if all the other blogs in your topic area are lighthearted and you are the only serious one, you are going to attract the people in your particular market who are much more serious. So don't worry if you're not like everyone else.

Which brings up one more factor that's vital for every blogger to understand. By definition, you will look at other people's work and think "if I could only write just like them." To quote the late great Zig Ziglar, that's "stinkin thinkin." There's only damage that comes from that type of thought. Yes, you should always try to

become better, but don't start thinking negatively about yourself. I can guarantee that the person you're comparing yourself to looks at other blogs and thinks their writing reeks when compared to that person. It's all a mind game – don't allow yourself to lose it! Just write! If you're attracting a following, even a small one, it's working for you.

Work on getting better, just don't let your current level become a negative thought in your mind!

#11. What about names? Is it okay to use my own name or my kids' names on my blog?



Good question! This probably applies most for mommy bloggers, lifestyle or food bloggers. In the lifestyle blogging kind of space you often end up talking a lot about your kids. As a marketing and business blogger, I rarely talk about my kids other than telling a story that

bridges to some other topic that teaches a business principle.

[Http://SnapHappyMom.com](http://SnapHappyMom.com) is one of my favorite blogs. It is actually written by my daughter, it's fun to read and teaches great principles.

She puts up pictures of my amazing grandchildren constantly. They're both as cute as can be.

My incredible grandson's name on the blog is Dash, but that's not his real name. That's what my daughter has chosen to call him to protect him so that no one kidnaps him or equally as bad. He's named Dash because he's constantly dashing around, literally racing (complete with getting into the blocks and saying "ready, set, go") around the house.

My amazing granddaughter is called Brighton on the blog because she brightens up any room she enters,

especially the eyes of any of her “Gwanpas” and “Gwanmas.”

Unfortunately, in today’s world, it probably would be a good idea to give your kids a different “screen name” if you’re going to be writing about them on a public blog. It’s just safer.

Before we go on, I do encourage you to check out <http://snaphappymom.com>. There’s a lot of good stuff there. She’s learning, just like we all are and doing a pretty good job of walking the fine line between focusing on a topic and having other Mommy-blogging topics that humanize her on her blog.

Using your own name is just fine, unless you really want to have a pen name. I wouldn’t go with a pen name

unless you have a really compelling reason to do so like trying to not get fired from a job because of your blogging, addressing a very sensitive topic, or something like that. Otherwise, just use your real name.

I just realized there’s a really important question that isn’t in my list. Guess what, you are going to get 22 tips in this book called 21 Questions About Blogging. You can blame it on my liking Mrs. England more than my math teacher, or you can attribute it to the truth. Either way, here’s a bonus question.

I always like to over-deliver!

#12. Do I need to write about one specific subject area or can I write about whatever I want to?



This is a very, very common question. The answer to this question is quite specific and that is you will want to focus most of your blog content around a specific topic area because that's what tends to build audiences of people who are interested in that subject area.

Some people can pull off a pure personality-driven blog. But let's face it, there are few people in the world who have a force of personality that's so strong that tons of people will be willing to read a blog post every day just about what's happening in their lives. A few friends, maybe, but tens of thousands or more? Probably not.

This doesn't mean that your blog has to ONLY talk about that one subject. You also talk about other subjects that are of interest to people who are interested in your primary topic. But if all you do is to write about whatever is on your mind that day you're then relying on your sheer force of personality and the quality of your writing. For most people, that's not enough.

It's important that you choose a subject that you feel comfortable writing about every day and then occasionally throw some other things in there.

Don't get me wrong, your focus can be fairly broad – raising kids, business growth and travel are topics where you can write about a broad spectrum of subjects and still be on-topic for your audience. Just don't have your theme be “anything I wanted to talk about today.”

This does bring up another, much more important factor – the importance of focusing on your reader and how your content can improve their world.

The other day I talked with a blogger I've been working with who is getting started with her own blog. She has a wonderfully bubbly, positive outlook on life, which radiates through all of her posts. But, I had noticed that most of her posts were about her and her life, a common mistake among beginning bloggers.

For example, she made a post about her child's birthday and how much she appreciated that child, showing pictures of that child throughout his birthday. One of those was of the two of them sitting at Denny's eating a celebratory breakfast, wearing their traditional family birthday shirt with puff-balls glued all over it.

My comment to her was that because her posts were inward-focused (“congratulations my son on having

your birthday, I'm so proud of you,”) as opposed to outward focused (giving her audience things they can do to improve their world) she was limiting her potential audience.

I used the post about her son as a teaching example. I suggested that instead of just talking about how great her son is, that her post focuses on “here are some ways you can celebrate the birthdays of your children” using her family's traditions as an example.

It was like a light went on. She immediately shifted all of her posts from here's how we live our lives to giving ideas, advice and tips on how to have a happier home and family. Within weeks her traffic went from about 30 visitors a day to around 90 and she's set the stage for significantly more growth in the future.

Lesson learned: people read facebook to keep track of their friends. People read blogs to improve their world. Make sure your blog contains content that improves people's worlds in one way or another!

Let's look at my daughter's <http://SnapHappyMom.com> blog again as an example. Her focus is on helping moms shoot better pictures of their family. As such, she is able to share lots of cool things about her family, but most of her posts are about photography in one way

or another. There are posts on how to make sure you don't drop your camera, posing babies, taking shots in front of the holiday lights, buying guides for cameras, reviews of courses and tools, photo challenges and more.

She occasionally puts in posts that just focus on her family, and that's good because it rounds out her personality and builds on her positioning.

In short, I strongly recommend that you focus your blog on a specific subject area and then write about other subjects in relationship to that.

#13. What about curating other people's content on my blog?



Curating is the process of gathering good content from a number of sources, identifying which content is best, then sharing that with an audience. It's a great practice, but is frequently misused.

Let's imagine that I have a blog on how to take great pictures of your family (sound familiar?) I'm looking around at other sites that talk about this subject and I see one that does a great job of talking about

something I've wanted to share with my group too. What do I do?

Do I just copy and paste it into my blog? Nope, that's stealing and it's illegal and morally wrong.

Do I just create a post that says "here's a great article, I recommend you read it." You could, and making those collections is a good strategy to do sometimes (it's better to do a collection of them than just pointing them at one article because the collection of articles on that subject in itself adds value to the viewer by gathering the best articles on that subject into one place.) By the way, just linking out to one article is a great social media strategy, just not a great blogging one.

Do I just say what they said in my own words? You could do that, but there's a better way.

Here's what I recommend.

Create an article about that subject, let's say the article you're going to refer to is on getting kids to smile for you by promising them food if they will.

In your article say something like this "I was just reading a great article on "Should You Bribe Your Kids To Smile For Pictures By Promising Them Food?" [and link that title to their blog post] and..."

After the and, you start adding value by adding your take on the subject.

So you could say "and she left out one key thing which is" [continue with your own article.]

Or, "and I disagree with her when she says" [state what she said and why you disagree, going on to build your point.]

Or, "and I very strongly agree with everything she said. My experience is" [go on and provide examples of how it applies.

I'm sure you can see where I'm going here. You're using their article as a jumping off point for yours. In the meantime, you're giving them attribution, a link (which is valuable to them for search engine purposes,) traffic that they may see coming from you

in their analytics and want to build a relationship with you and more.

One of the most important factors is an invisible one that's still very important. By linking out to other blogs you set up an unconscious connection between your blog and the other one in the minds of your readers. That relationship can actually build your importance in their minds to a higher level. That opens their mind to your message, makes them more likely to come back in the future, and creates engagement with your posts, like commenting and linking through social media.

In short, with this strategy you are taking other people's content and using it as a jumping off point for your own blog post. You are never copying what they are writing. You are simply referring to them as another place that your audience can go to get additional information.

You can agree with them, you can disagree with them. You can add to them, you can simply reference them as another place they can go to get additional information. There's lots of things that you can do in this process and you do not need their permission in any way to do that in that level because all you're doing is saying is, "hey here's something great" or

“here’s I disagree with”, or “here’s something I agree with.”

You don’t need their permission to create those links. Simply point at their post as part of your blog post. It’s a great way to get ideas, it’s a great way to seed new concepts. If you are struggling with how to explain something, go find someone else who’s done it and build upon their message. Your audience gets your expertise on top of the other blogger’s expertise and they’re better off as a result.

This is also a great way to build relationships with other bloggers in your category and they might start doing the same thing back to you. It can help you get an opportunity to interview them for your audience, get them to interview you for theirs, create an opportunity to meet up with them at a conference, to hang out together, to maybe do a video with the two of you while you’re there, and lots of other things.

It’s a good strategy that I recommend.

14. *I keep hearing people say that I should build a list. What is a list and why would I want to do that?*



A "list" is a database of people who have given you their email address and permission for you to send them more information. You oftentimes (though not often enough) see forms on people's blogs and websites where people can input their email address

on people's blogs to get . So let's just go here for just a moment and we'll go to DonCrowther.com.

I've got a Subscribe box on all the pages, plus there are a number of different opt-ins that happen around the site where people are able to give me their email address in exchange for me giving them different pieces of content they want to receive.

I realize this involves extra work, so why would you want to do this for your blog?

Number one, it's one of the top three ways you can build your list. Here's one way to use your list. Let's imagine that you write a great post. You want to get a bunch of people to see it quickly. All you do is simply write a note to your list saying "hey I just wrote this really cool blog post about _____, here's why you should read it... I encourage you to go read it." You then send that out to your email list.

As a result, you get virtually instant traffic to your blog, your people get reminded that you're there and your blog is worth reading, and they're more likely to do other things like recommend it to their friends via social media.

You probably don't want to do that every single day, but it's a way for you to send out your best stuff, resulting in your consistently getting more people coming to your blog.

Secondly, it gives you a list of people who are interested in your blog's subject matter. If you want to make some money and either promote something you're selling or an affiliate program you've now got a list of people who are interested in information about your topic.

It's vitally important that you create a list even if you don't have anything to sell yet. Create the list so you have it when you need it.

Here's how NOT to do it. Don't just take all of your friends and start sending them emails.

You also can't just do it in Outlook or Gmail. That's a bad idea.

Here's how you do it. Go to

<http://safeautoresponders.com>. In the interest of full transparency, that is my affiliate link for a very cool service called AWeber. AWeber is one of the best sites and easiest ways to gather a list of people who want you to email them. All you have to do to email those people is to fill in a form and hit send and it goes out to all of them.

They handle all the Spam complaints, subscribing and unsubscribing, keeping up good relationships with the Googles, Yahoos and Hotmails of the world and lots of other vital things to running a successful mailing list. Their get started section shows how to do everything in about 15 minutes. It's also got information on things like how to build optin forms and get them on your blog, and other things that will help you in this process.

They also have a great service where you can create a blog broadcast where you can send them an email every day, every third day or whenever a post goes out that automatically lets them know a new post has gone out.

They are much better than Mail Chimp. I know that Mail Chimp is a company that does a lot of advertising out there and even has a free account. You need to know that Mail Chimp has a significantly

lower deliverability rate than AWeber, which means a large percentage of emails you send out never makes into anybody's email box. That's one reason why I really like AWeber's service because they do such a good job with deliverability.

I recommend you set up an autoresponder on your blog and that you use AWeber through my affiliate link at safeautoresponder.com.

#15. How do I use social media to build my audience?



Now this a subject of entire courses (I know, I teach several of them!) Here's the two-minute version covering the basics.

Number one, you should be posting all of your blog posts to your social media audience so that they get additional notification that there's something new. This will cause more people to come and read your post.

You should be consistently doing activities on your blog to build your social media audience. For example, have contests, have giveaways, have special incentives to get people to opt-in to your Facebook.

Third, post links on your blog to your social media to make it easy for people to follow you on social media.

Forth, make it easy for people to be able to share what you've written to via social media. Use plugins that put social media buttons on every post. And, use plugins for your pictures that enable to pin them. There's even plugins that make it so that whenever some hovers over your picture, some text pops down that enables people to post it to Facebook, tweet about it, put it on Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest or even Tumblr. You should institute some of these plugins so that you can have people be able to share your content with other people.

Those are the three key things to build your audience using social media. Realize that your blog is the

centerpiece of your social media. Everything else in your social media revolves around your blog, points to your blog and your blog points out back to them so that you integrate. Your social media and your blog become one and the same. You are simply moving people between the different places.

I have a bunch of different articles on my <http://doncrowther.com> blog that show how to effectively use social media together with your blog. I encourage you to frequent that site so you can keep up on the latest.



#16. Don't I need a professional to create a logo and a professional blog design so I can get started?



There are many people who said a year ago that they wanted to start a blog but they couldn't afford to hire a professional to set things up. But they will save up, and in a week or two, they should be ready.

Well it's now a year later they still don't have a blog yet because they are still waiting to get enough money to be able to pay a professional.

But if they would have just started a blog a year ago they'd probably have well more than enough money to be able to pay a professional to be able to come and work on their blog.

Never fall into the trap of waiting for things to be perfect before you do something. It will never be perfect.

WordPress is designed so anyone can do things without having to have a professional involved. For example, there are literally thousands of different professionally designed themes available. A theme is what creates the appearance of the blog. There is a new one that comes free with the latest versions of

WordPress it's called the [insert the current year] Theme.

In a theme you can add a header, your picture, adjust the colors of your text, and much more. You can let me change your navigation menu, your subtitle and taglines. You can easily change the name of the blog. You don't have to be a professional, nor do you have to hire one! Just play with awhile and you'll be able to get something that will enable you to get started. Later on you can pay some more and get a more personalized theme, but

JUST... GET... STARTED!

My favorite source for very attractive themes that have solid programming behind them (giving them lots more capability than just looking good) is [StudioPress](#). I use Studio Press all the time. These are not free but they're very affordable and you've got a

bunch of different theme options you can pick from there. They're attractive and do a great job of doing everything you need to do in terms of a blog.

Some people ask "why should I use a paid theme when I can get them for free. Other than the free themes that are included in WordPress, that's not a good idea! Most free themes come with baggage: viruses, bots, and unwanted links that turn your blog into a shell for their nefarious schemes. Don't go there!

I strongly encourage you to not spend more than 60 minutes making your blog look good right at the beginning. The important thing is not looking good, it's getting writing! You can play with the look after you've got posts being published every day get writing immediately! One more key thing, don't use free things.

#17. How do I get started using video on my blog?



Another great question because you definitely want to use video on your blog! The more video you use the better off your audience retention and attraction will be, the better off your traffic will be, the better off your

search engine ranking will be and the better off your communication to your audience will be.

So how do you get started? The best way to get started is to grab your cell phone. Point it at yourself, press the button that says Record and talk to it. Spend one to two minutes and talk to it. Yes, it's that easy!

But what do you say when you're talking to the cell phone?

The easiest way I've found is to answer the questions your audience most wants to know.

Here's the script that works for virtually everyone:

1. "Hi, this is" [introduce yourself]
2. "One of the questions I'm asked most frequently about [insert your subject here] is [state the question]"
3. [Answer the question]
4. [Give them a reason to come to your website by offering something free, more videos like this one, etc.]

That's it.

Think you can do that? Of course you can! You're simply introducing yourself, indicating a question, answering the question, and telling them how they can learn more.

When you're done, simply upload it to YouTube which most cell phones allow you to do directly then take embed that video into your blog.

No editing (if you make a mistake, start over), no need for fancy sets, costuming or makeup, just point your camera at yourself, talk, and upload it to YouTube.

And here you thought video costs \$10,000 or more.

Now, I know some of you say "but I don't want to see myself on video" or "I don't like the sound of my voice on video." I have one simple response: "get over it."

People don't watch your video because you look like a Hollywood star or sound like a radio announcer.

They watch your video because you give them great information that improves their life.

You've already had to get over your reluctance to write, carving out the time to write blog posts, and to some degree your privacy to be a blogger. Why not just get over your fear of video too.

Of course, you can ignore what I've just said and don't do video, and have a significantly lower income a year from now than you will have it you just get over it. It's up to you!

If you want some more information on how to do this, go to www.DonCrowther.com/quickvideo and I have a special course there that takes you through exactly how to do video with the tools you already have, you already own and how to be able to put video very, very quickly and easily embed it on your blog.

#18. How many and how big should pictures be on my blog?



First off, you definitely should be using pictures on your blog. There are many, many reasons for doing this. The biggest one is that most people really want to see pictures on blog posts. Pictures make posts easier for people to read and the more applicable pictures that you can put up, frankly, the better they tend to be.

Here's an example. Go to this post by The Pioneer Woman, Rhee Drummond
<http://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/2013/09/french-silk-pie-step-by-step/> (If that link is broken, just go to any of the recipe posts on <http://thepioneerwoman.com>, you'll get the same effect.) Rhee is a brilliant blogger and marketer and is doing some amazing things. She understands the power of pictures and so here is one.

Unlike traditional recipes she doesn't just show a picture of the finished product, she shows pictures of every single step of the process.

This post starts off with a picture of this luscious pie (mmm, lookin' good already)

Then we see the chocolate being melted. Then the curst being put into the pan, then the butter and sugar being mixed, etc. The recipe is explained by both the words and the pictures as you go along. In total there are 14 pictures. And this is a light one. I've seen posts go as high as 30 pictures, including 3 on precisely how to chop up strawberries!

Notice that by the time she's done, you are salivating. You want to eat this so badly that you jump in the car at midnight on a mad rush to the all-night grocery store to acquire the ingredients so you can make it right now!

Finally, way down at the bottom you actually get the traditional recipe the way everyone else does it.

This is a very powerful way of doing things I recommend that you consider. I recommend that whenever you are creating how-to information that you take a ton of pictures of the process and let them tell the story in your blog. You don't necessarily have to have 16 pictures

Rhee's not the only one doing this strategy. More and more people are figuring out that it works. It's already close to becoming the norm, and you're going to want to do the same yourself.

Obviously, including pictures makes everything more interesting. But that's not the only thing.

- They give you personality
- They make your content easier to read
- They explain things better

- They help draw people who skim the post actually into the story and gets them to stop and read!
- And, they look really good on your home page and in the sidebars of your blog!

That's why you want to use pictures.

How many should you put up in a post? Hey as many as you can get in there.

How big should they be? Hey as big as you can make them and still fit them into your blog layout? We are no longer worried about having big pictures. We used to be when people used to do things with dial-up modems, but in this broadband world, we are not all that worried about it now.

That's my message on pictures, take lots of them. Do they have to be perfect? Nope, but you should constantly be working, studying and possibly investing in a better camera than the one built into your cell phone to make them better.

You don't have to have drop-dead gorgeous pictures. You just have to have pictures. By all means put pictures on your blog posts.

#19. *Where can I get free pictures to put on my blog post?*



The best way to get free pictures is to take your cell phone, turn it on camera mode, press the button and take a picture. That's the best way to do it. You don't need to get pictures from anyplace else, just take the picture.

A huge part of this is to shift your mindset to one where you're actively seeking to acquire pictures. I recently pulled out my camera while walking through the

Milwaukee airport. In 10 minutes, I had 15 additional pictures I can use anywhere I want to.

Last night I was in the home of a blogger friend of mine giving her some tips. Her husband was in the basement with the job of keeping the kids from coming up the stairs, so mom could stay focused. Meanwhile he and the baby both needed a short nap. Being a resourceful guy, he solved the problem in a unique way. He stretched out across the bottom of the stairs with the baby on his chest. Viola! He gets a nap, and the kids can't get up the stairs without stepping on him. Mission accomplished.

When we saw it Mom could have reacted in two ways. She could have just chuckled, or, she could do what she did do: grabbing her camera so she could turn this moment into a picture-based blog post!

So if I want to talk about laptops, well there's my laptop I'm going to take a picture of it and post it. If I want to talk about my kids I take a picture of my kids. That is the best and most free way for you to get

pictures on your blog. And most cell phones now have cameras that we would have killed for to even have a camera at that level several years ago.

But there are times when you need a picture of something you don't happen to have handy right now, like a beach in Cancun or a Volcano in Hawaii.

Can you just go to Google images, grab an image and stick it in?

Unfortunately, that puts you at huge risk of lawsuit, because, unless someone specifically grants rights to you to use a given image, every picture taken in the United States (and in most other countries) is considered to be copyrighted the instant they snap the picture, and it is the legal property of the person who took that picture. (By the way, this includes pictures taken by professionals, so that class picture of you isn't yours, nor is your wedding picture – I know, something's really wrong there, but that's the law!)

Let me stress something here – this is serious, you really can get sued, and if the person has taken the right steps in registering the copyright for their picture, you could have to not only pay them a huge amount for stealing their image, you could also be charged

damages, which could be serious amounts of money, think millions!

How do you get around this? You could:

Laboriously negotiate payment for rights with the photographer

Go to sites that sell rights for pictures and pay them for the images that you use (like stock photography sites, my personal favorite, because they require much less work and record-keeping.)

Use creative commons-licensed content and follow the restrictions specifically placed on each particular image.

Of these three options, the cheapest is using creative-commons licensed images. Creative Commons is a non-profit system that offers an alternative to full copyright. Basically, it's a special licensing system that allows people to use content without the hassles of negotiation, licensing and fees. It's worth spending a few minutes studying the different options available through Creative Commons at <http://www.creativecommons.org>

One of my favorite places to find Creative Commons-licensed (CC) images is www.flickr.com because Flickr

has tons of CC images and they make it easy to find images that carry those licenses.

Here's how to find those images:

1. Start by going to Flickr's advanced search function
2. Fill in your search terms at the top then drop down on the page to the creative commons section and indicate what you plan to do with the image. You'll see three options there:

Checking the top box restricts your search to show only pictures that are creative-commons licensed. That's important, because you don't want to waste your time falling in love with images that you can't use because they aren't licensed.

The other two boxes are optional. If your blog earns you any money at all (whether through advertising, selling something, or even if it is just part of a money-making operation,) you should check the second box "find content to use commercially." Otherwise, you're still at risk of someone claiming your usage of their image was commercial, and you get caught in an argument that can get expensive.

If you plan to alter the image, by using it as a part of another image, putting a stripe across it with your url

inside, changing the colors, etc., you should also check the second box to "find content to modify, adapt, or build upon."

Boxes checked? Let's go to step 3, assuming that I'm looking for images of puppies. Cool! I see 29,780 results.

3. Find an image that you love and click on it to find out more about that image

Oh, there's a delightful little Maltese Shihtzu puppy that reaches out and grabs your heart. Let's check it out by clicking on the image

4. Once you get to the image page, you ignore everything else that it says about the image, and immediately drop down to the bottom right corner to the Additional Information section and check on the Some rights reserved link. Again, you want to know the facts before you fall in love with the picture.

Most of the pictures will show up as Attribution 2.0 Generic, which tells you (dropping down to the conditions of that picture) that you see that you are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work and to remix (adapt) it, provided that you give the rights owner attribution. That's good. That means that you

can basically do what you want with it, provided you give them credit.

So how do you give them credit? Simply link to the person's flickr page as part of your photo attribution statement. I like to write Photo Attribution, and paste the link there, actually linking it to the person's facebook page.

Just be careful to follow the rules associated with each individual image. By checking the boxes for commercial usage and modification, you're usually safe, with Flickr only showing you pictures that you can use.

The place where this can bite you is if you, over time, separate the picture from the attribution. So, avoid

creating a folder of favorite images to which you turn to grab pictures any time you need them, unless you devise some kind of system of attaching the attribution statement to each image in that folder.

That's it, simple, easy and quick. Just make sure you're disciplined, and you'll find generous people happily providing great images for you to use!

(To see a video and pictures of how to search for and properly research and attribute flickr images, go to <http://doncrowther.com/social-media/how-to-findpictures-online>)

#20. How do I get people to comment on my posts?



Commenting is important, but it's not the most important thing. Never gauge your success (or lack of it) by the number of comments you receive. You're getting lots more traffic than your comments would indicate! We have to face the facts, try as we like, most people will never comment!

That doesn't mean that you can't do things to get more people to comment, though!

The first thing is to blatantly ask them to comment. When you recognize that people do what you tell them to do, you'll see the value in ending each of your blog posts with an invitation to comment. The easiest way to do that is to ask them a question then ask them to share their answer by leaving a comment.

Here are some examples:

- "Do you agree or disagree with this? Let me know by leaving a comment below."
- "Have you tried doing this? Did it work for you or not? Let me know by leaving a comment below."
- "What's your favorite way of keeping kids quiet in the movie theatre? Let me know by leaving a comment below."

It's very simple – just ask people to comment.

Another way to invite comments is to Other ways to do it is to hold a giveaway where you take something

that people will want and say I'm going to give this to someone who has commented on my blog.

There are some legal ramifications if the thing you're giving away is valuable (\$500 or more), so I recommend you contact legal counsel, but giveaways can be a great way to incentivize comments from people.

Another great way to do it is to think of comments as a conversation with your readers. If they ask a question, answer it. If they make a point, you may want to comment on it or thank them for it. Just be sure you don't get in a situation where you comment stream is full of someone making a comment, you saying thank you, someone making a comment, you thanking them, etc.

Talk about what they talked about, give more feedback, give more information, disagree with them, agree with them, say that's a good point. Edit your blog post based on what they said.

Also don't feel afraid of changing your post in response to comments you've received. A great way to do this is to put a comment on your own post that basically says "Editor's Note: John Doe pointed out to me in a comment that there's another way of doing this, I've now included that post, thanks John!" Be participative and be engaging with your audience and they will be more engaging with you.

#21. How do I get the search engines to find my posts?



Another very, very important question, the answer to which is also simple: just create good stuff. The better your content (and in this I include your blog posts, your video and your pictures,) the more people are going

to link to you and the more search engines are going to come and find you. I would also strongly encourage that your titles include keywords that you want to be found in under the search engines.

Seriously, that's the foundation of search engine optimization in blogs.

There are other things that also help, like posting to social media and making sure that you make it easy for others to post your stuff to social media. If you would like some more information on it I suggest you go to DonCrowther.com/socialSEObootcamp which was a whole bootcamp we did just on using social media to improve your search engine rankings.

Finally (and note that I over-delivered here, giving you 22 answers instead of just the promised 21!)

#22. Do I really need to back up my blog?



The answer is, absolutely! If you are not backing up your blog you are asking, you are begging to lose everything that you have done. You absolutely have to be backing up your blog on a daily basis. So how do I do that? Well there's lots of ways to do it. There are hand methods you can use, but I don't recommend them because you're not going to do it on a daily basis, and over time, you'll do it less and less

frequently, which invites disaster. You NEED an automated solution!

What I do recommend is to get a plug-in that backs you up automatically. There are several of them, some are less expensive some are more expensive. The key is some of them don't work. They say they are backing you up but when disaster strikes and you actually try to access your backup, it's not there or it's flawed or it's only partially there.

I'm going to give you my favorite backup program. It is called Backup Buddy and [it's located here](#) It is not free, in fact it's not even incredibly cheap. But it is definitely worth it, it backs up everything.

It's also a great way to move your blog from one host to another. Simply backup using [Backup Buddy](#), open a domain on your new site and install your backup and your whole blog will be there in the exact same way it was before.

Of all the backup programs out there, Backup Buddy is the one that I have found to be the most reliable and long term, it's the best value because the last thing you want to be doing is struggling to try to recover a site. In your settings make sure you set it to backup every day and I suggest you send that

backup to someplace else like an S3 account, a different server you own, or even dropbox.

Just make sure that you have a backup constantly running. Someday you'll thank me!

About Don Crowther



Don's business is helping you build your business.

Stated differently: Don Crowther helps companies build their business online through amazing marketing techniques and strategies.

His focus is on teaching practical strategies and techniques that get results - but are also enjoyable and "doable" for most professionals.

He was recently listed in Forbes Magazine as one of the "Top 50 Social Media Power Influencers" and has been featured in multiple media sources, such as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Forbes, and The Chicago Sun Times.

His website at <http://www.doncrowther.com> is packed with articles, videos, how to's and resources to help you build your business both online and off!

But more importantly, his real passion is working with clients to help them get outstanding results for their business.

To get more information about Don Crowther visit and engage with him at:

<http://www.DonCrowther.com>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/doncrowthersocial>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/don_crowther

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/doncrowther/>

