



Tumble Into Blogging With Tumblr

Even beginners can share stories, photos, and multimedia effortlessly

Maybe you've got a great idea for a blog but can't find time to post. Or maybe you express yourself better through art, music, or spoken word than you do by paragraphs. If the traditional blog format just doesn't suit you, Tumblr may be the answer.

Tumblr (www.tumblr.com) is a social blogging site that lets you effortlessly create seven types of posts: text, photo, quote, link, chat, audio, and video. Instead of writing a ho-hum description of your toddler's first steps, you can post video directly from your webcam, write a description (Jasmine's walking — hide the remote!), and add quotes from family members ("My life as I know it is over." - Fluffy). You can even tweak your settings so that your Tumblr entries display automatically on your Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Tumblr makes it easy for social media beginners to create appealing blogs that attract followers. Users can dress up their pages with hundreds of attractive themes — many of them free. Content is automatically formatted into readable,

watchable, and playable posts. Best of all, Tumblr's unique social features encourage sharing and positive feedback, which allows you to help other users while building your following.

Social Networking's Rising Star

Since its founding in 2007, Tumblr has grown to over 120 million bloggers and racks up 15 billion pageviews per month. While that's still far short of Facebook's billion-plus registered users and Twitter's 500 million, Tumblr's popularity among social networkers continues to soar. A study by Clearspring (owners of the AddThis social media application) found that Internet sharing via Tumblr grew by a whopping 1299 percent in 2011 and even accelerated throughout the year.



According to founder David Karp, Tumblr users come in three nonexclusive categories:

1. Creators use the service to showcase their photos, writing, music, and other original content.
2. Curators aggregate and share material (funny ferret pictures, bootleg hip-hop tunes) from Tumblr and elsewhere around the Internet.
3. Consumers, who make up the largest group, use the service to keep up with their favorite topics and bloggers.

In an age of relentless and even invasive social networking pressure (really, how many more pet pictures and political rants can one person take?), Tumblr focuses on creating genuine communities around shared passions. To foster maximum creativity, the platform eschews some of the social Web's more gauche features like public commenting and follower counting. Instead, Tumblr community members are encouraged to show appreciation by favoriting or reblogging others' posts. This focus on positivity, as well as the site's aesthetic beauty and ease of use, may explain much of Tumblr's mass appeal.

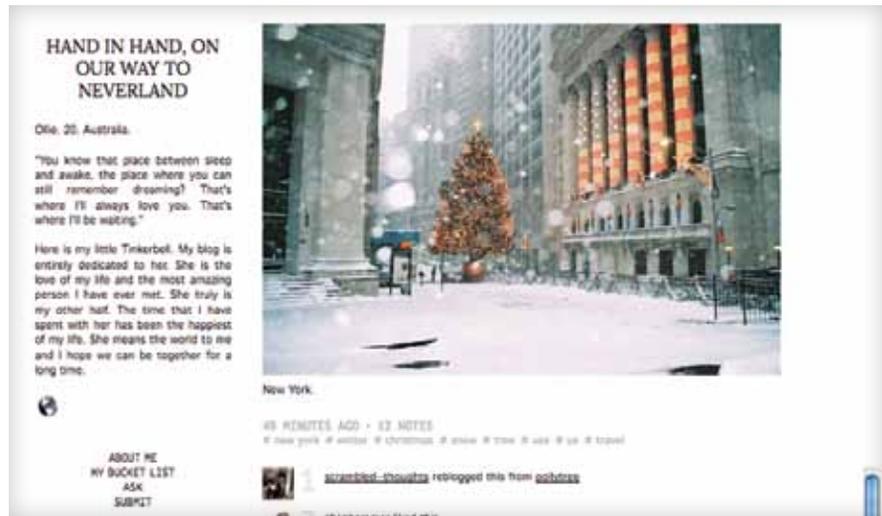


What Can I Do With Tumblr?

Tumblr blogs, also known as tumblogs, make it easy to connect with fellow creators, display your favorite media, support a cause, create a portfolio, and keep up with the news. Here are just a few ways you can use the service to enhance your online life:

Showcase your talents. Tumblr began as a place for artists, musicians, writers, and other content creators to display their work. For inspiration, follow Manhattan-based fashion photographer Jamie Beck (www.annstreetstudio.com) who specializes in cinemagraphs — still photos with subtle animation elements. A more light-hearted creator is Greg Szmurlo (www.selleckwaterfallsandwich.tumblr.com), who claims he began posting airbrushed fan art after meeting Tom Selleck's mustache in a dream.

Collect cool stuff. Much like its popular cousin Pinterest, Tumblr can be used to gather and display your favorite LOLcats, political cartoons, space photography, indie rock songs, decorating ideas, and other odds and ends. Posts can be linked back to the original site, giving the creator welcome exposure. Notable “curated” tumblogs include The Feature (thefeature.net), a thought-provoking collection of online articles



and essays, and the weirdly entertaining Kim Jong-Il Looking at Things (kimjongillookingatthings.tumblr.com).

Create a community. Many tumblogs accept and display submissions. Tumblr's largest group effort is EatSleepDraw (www.eatsleepdraw.com), a digital art gallery that publishes a follower-contributed work every hour. The site receives 1,000 entries per week, and with 500,000 monthly pageviews is considered excellent exposure by budding artists.

Follow the news. Tumblr's multimedia format makes it easy to keep up with the stories you care most about. Sources range from international conglomerates like *USA Today* (usatoday.tumblr.com) and NBC news (nbcnews.tumblr.com) to News

Flick (newsflick.net), an independent site based in London. You'll also find niche outlets like SaharaReporters (sahara-reporters.tumblr.com), a compendium of citizen journalism on government malfeasance in Africa.

Speak up. The Occupy Wall Street movement gained much of its momentum — not to mention its ubiquitous slogan — through its contributor-driven tumblog (wearthe99percent.tumblr.com). Current examples include “Who Needs Feminism?” (whoneedsfeminism.tumblr.com), which chronicles ongoing discrimination through personal stories, and “I Am Bradley Manning” (<http://iam.bradleymanning.org>), created in support of the Wikileaks whistleblower.



Teens Moving From Facebook to Tumblr

Teens loved Facebook — until their parents started joining in droves. In fact, 72.5 percent of American moms are now on Facebook, according to a 2012 Nielsen survey. When questioned about the trend by *Los Angeles Times* reporters, many teens said they'd taken their online sharing to Twitter and Tumblr. They liked that these newer platforms allowed them to post anonymously, converse in private, and discuss their interests in greater depth. To learn more, follow the tumblog “My Parents Joined Facebook” (MyParentsJoinedFacebook.com).



How to Get Started on Tumblr

Follow these simple steps to try tumblogging today:



1. Create an account.

Go to Tumblr.com and click the “Sign up” button in the upper right corner of the screen. Enter your email address and desired password. Tumblr will then ask you to enter a username, which will become your blog’s URL. (You can change this later.)



2. Follow others.

From your dashboard (the blue page that appears when you log in), click the “Find blogs” button on the right. This pulls up a screen that lets you browse content by category. Use the “People you know” tab at the top of the page to search for tumblogs by your Facebook and Gmail contacts.



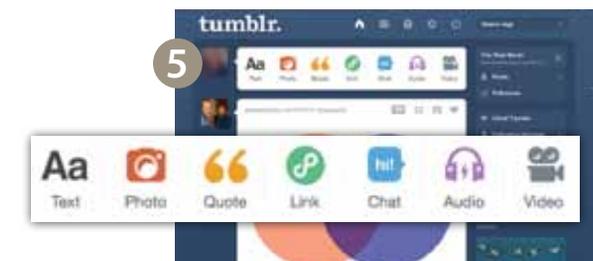
3. Customize.

To access your account settings, click the gear icon at the top of your dashboard, then choose your blog’s name from the list on the left. From this screen, you can upload an avatar, change your custom URL, and add a theme to your page. Scroll down to authorize automatic sharing of your posts to Facebook and Twitter.



4. Interact.

Posts by bloggers you follow display in chronological order on your dashboard. Like a post by clicking the heart icon in the top right corner, or share content to your own blog by clicking the double arrow. When you “reblog” a post, a dialog box appears where you can add your own commentary to the original.



5. Post.

To create your own content, click any of the seven multimedia buttons at the top of your dashboard (such as Text, Photo, etc.) and follow the directions on the popup screen. When reblogging anything from another site, enter its URL in the box at the right. A growing number of platforms (including YouTube and Spotify) let you share songs and videos to your tumblog with the touch of a button — look for Tumblr’s “T” logo, a Share button, or try right-clicking the item.