

Why do People Blog: A Q Analysis of Perceptions for Blogging

Clark Callahan^{1*}, Tom Robinson¹, Kris Boyle¹, and Jason Freeman²

¹ School of Communications, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602

² Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Penn State University, College Park, PA, 16802

*Corresponding Author: clark_callahan@byu.edu, +1 801-422-1493

The purpose of this article is to understand user perceptions of new media formats, in this case blogging. While much of the blog research identifies blogging in terms of blog types, this research identifies user perceptions of why they like to blog. By applying Q-methodology to the blogging process, this research asked bloggers to rank subjective statements of blogging. Factor analyses were then applied to the rankings, which provided three

main user factors (perspectives) of blogging motivations: Memorians, Bonders, and Soap Boxers. These perspectives provide an alternative to traditional views of social media use and categories of subjective media experience.

Keywords: blogging, social media, culture, identity, intercultural

Social media are reshaping the way individuals view themselves and others (Johnson & Callahan, 2013; Ross Altarac, 2008; Khan & Khan, 2007). These media are creating new social contexts that provide alternative psychological outlets for communicative action (Lévy, 2000) and remake the communal identity of their users (Arnett, 2002). While traditional forms of social use are still viable, new media-scapes are emerging and creating unique communicative environments. Because new media are creating these cyber-environments, which in many ways replicate other types of cultural environments, there are now a variety of new communicative responses that can alter identity (Arnett, 2002).

One of the increasingly popular uses of social media is blogging. The number of individual blogs rose from around 35 million in 2006 to 173 million in 2011

(Statista.com, 2014). New technologies, including blogging, present people with more media choices, making motivation and satisfaction of use more important components of audience analysis (Ruggiero, 2000). Ha and James (1998) accurately forecasted that media would evolve from mass-produced and mass-consumed commodity to an endless feast of niches and specialties. Blogging in particular serves as a platform for virtually any interest.

The goal of this research study is to identify primary perceptions of blogging, understanding why people like to blog. This study attempts to avoid the traditional survey approach by using the Q methodology as a method for identifying groupings of bloggers. In doing so, we believe we identify nuances within blogging motivations that are not evident in current blogging literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Validation for this study is drawn from areas of literature surrounding the motivations that drive blogging including: (1) motivations for sharing and gathering information, (2) economics of blogging, (3) forming community relationships, (4) and uses and gratifications of blogging. These provide a background of the current blogging landscape relevant for this study.

Blogs serve a variety of audiences, but the content of the blog largely depends on the motivations of the writer. Goh and Wijaya (2008) observed that at the heart of blogging is the need for affiliation and that self-disclosure which leads to greater intimacy. Among the various types of blogs, the most common take the form of personal diaries, which include life stories that are recorded and shared. Ibrahim (2008) discusses how blogs act as an archive and help in keeping a record of important personal events and memories. Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, and Wright (2004, 2005) looked at a random sample of blogs and found that 70.4% served as personal journals, in which authors posted about their daily lives and inner feelings. Nardi, Schiano, and Gumbrecht (2004) argue that for many, blogging is an outlet for releasing emotional tension. Bloggers typically present themselves realistically in blogs and often disclose personal information about relationships and other intimate information (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005).

Blogs can facilitate education, such as being used as a teaching tool (Krishnaiyer, Raja Mushahar & Ahmad, 2012). Academic and scientific blogs are also relatively common. Terblanche and Goodwin-Davey (2013) argued that “academic blogs are an accessible source of information regarding higher education that have the potential to be successfully integrated into teaching and learning” (p. 375).

Other types of blogs include service blogs. Health and medical blogs, for example, serve as a way for individuals to find treatment information and connect with individuals facing similar health challenges or simply as prevention. Neubaum’s (2012) research on HIV blogs found that, “one-time exposure to health messages with a personal and emotional tone as they appear in patients' blogs might be an appropriate means to persuade non-diseased readers to show preventive health behavior” (p. 2). Other research into health blogs include studies focusing on information types (Buis & Carpenter, 2009), gender in the health blogosphere (Miller, Pole, & Bateman, 2011), and fertility blogs (Harrison, 2014). Blogs about coping with cancer are also popular in the health blogosphere. Chung and Kim (2007) tested cancer patients' and companions' uses and gratifications of blogs and the relationship between different types of blogging activities and gratification outcomes. Cancer patients who hosted their own blog were more likely to have higher levels of emotion management gratification.

More research has identified an economic motivation for blogging. Some bloggers are successful enough to make a full-time job out of their blog, creating a debate over whether bloggers should be considered professionals in the communication field. Petersen (2014) explored the way mom bloggers fit within the professional space of the communication field and argued that mommy bloggers do meet the definition of a professional. This was defined by having a relationship with a known audience, social responsibility, and ethical awareness.

An interesting branch of blog studies addresses the journalistic characteristics of blogs. Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2011) found that bloggers who believe their work to be a form of journalism tend to take a journalistic approach in informing their audience about public affairs and exhibiting behaviors of a traditional journalist. Hassid (2012) argued that, “blogs serve as a 'safety valve' on issues where the mainstream media set the agenda, and

a 'pressure cooker' on issues where bloggers get ahead of journalists” (p. 212). Huang, Shen, Lin, and Chang (2007) found five motives for blogging: to seek information, to provide commentary, to participate in community forums, to document daily life, and as a means for self-expression.

Public relations practices encourage bloggers to produce content in a variety of ways. For example, the study of Jin and Liu (2010) proposed a new conceptual model to help public relations professionals navigate the evolving blogosphere: the blog-mediated crisis communication model, which helps crisis managers monitor the blogosphere and respond to influential bloggers. Corporate blogs and CEO blogs are common as well. Vidgen, Sims, and Powell (2013) looked at the role CEO blogging plays in company community building, claiming that different efforts of CEO blogging may stimulate different levels of discussion. Entertainment and music blogs can provide effective advertising channels.

Bloggers leverage conversations and content from their findings around the web especially information that may be circulating or trending on social media. Chen (2015) found that social media use among women bloggers was based on three motivations: information, engagement, and recreation. Recreation was shown to be the more motivating factor of the three. Nardi et al. (2004) observed that “blogs create the audience, but the audience also creates the blog” (p. 224), and found that about 20% of the bloggers they studied started a blog because others asked them to.

Research has also addressed gender/sex differences in bloggers. Li (2007) found that men blog more about external topics while women prefer topics that are more personal and relate to their own lives. Fullwood et al. (2015) uncovered six motivations for writing blogs: “personal revelation, emotional outlet, creative outlet, selective disclosure, social networking and advertising.” They also found that men were more motivated to write blogs as a way to advertise and promote events, services or products. Women were more motivated by selective disclosure of themselves through their blogging.

Theoretical Background

As the above review explains, there are a variety of reasons why individuals choose to engage in blogging. Online blogs serve as a convenient channel for people gather news

and information and join communities with common interests. Writers of blogs are motivated to write as a way of self-documentation, improving writing, self-expression, medium appeal, information, passing time, socialization and so on (Li, 2005). These sorts of incentives for blogging can be examined through the uses and gratifications approach. Uses and gratifications theory has been used in various types of media analyses, including motivations of conventional media use such as radio (Herzog, 1940), television (Greenberg, 1974), newspapers (Berelson, 1949), books and magazines (Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld, 1984), VCR (Cohen, Levy, & Golden, 1988; Rubin & Bantz, 1989), telephone (Dimmick, Sikand, & Patterson, 1994), and Internet use (García Jiménez, Cruz López de Ayala Lopez, & Gaona Pisionero, 2012). Additionally, uses and gratifications has been used in studies investigating social media usage, social media marketing, and friend networking sites (Froget, Baghestan, & Asfaranjan, 2013). Li (2005) has looked specifically at the link between uses and gratifications theory and the motivations of blogging, filling in the blank by surveying bloggers to get the first-hand information on their motivations as well as the ways in which people blog. Li explained that in the context of blog writing, bloggers actively use blogs to satisfy their own needs. They have full control over the content and are persuasive to influence others, which closely responds to what Blumler (1979) mentioned about the four aspects of being an active audience: utility, intentionality, selectivity, and imperviousness to influence. Later, Li (2005) argued that blogging is different from traditional media use such as television watching or radio listening, because it is “effort-consuming and cannot be conducted as a ritualized activity.” Blogging is “purposive and planned” (Rubin & Perse, 1987) as intentional media use, and bloggers have to be with “higher cognitive consciousness of the expected gratifications and subjective intentionality to create content” (p. 61).

Internet technology has been expanded and multi-formed for blogs to serve a variety of ends for people in the digital context. Research suggests that those who blog can consciously satisfy their own motivations by making full use of features and functions available through blogging. According to Li, a brief review of the three studies regarding blogging motivations (Nardi et al., 2004; Papacharissi, 2004; Trammell, Tarkowski, Hofmohl, & Sapp, 2004) suggests direction for studies examining bloggers’ uses and

gratifications. Trammell et al. (2004) found that self-expression is the primary motivation for blog posts with entertainment and social interaction also serving as motivators. Based on the above research surrounding blogging and motivations for blogging, the following research questions emerged.

RQ1: What types of perceptual motivations do people have for blogging?

RQ2: Do different perceptual groups view blogging activity differently?

METHODS

Introduced by William Stephenson in 1953, Q methodology provides a “foundation for the systematic study of subjectivity” (Brown, 1993, p. 93). Q methodology is a behavioral research approach that utilizes factor analysis to measure and reveal the subjectivity of any situation. The process involves the use a research tool called a Q sort, which requires an individual to rank-order (e.g., “most agree” to “most disagree”) a group of statements that represent a particular domain of subjectivity called a concourse. The concourse is made up of actual statements that individuals have made, at one time or another, while expressing their opinions about a specific topic (Brown, 1980). The Q sorts are then factor-analyzed and groups of individuals who have sorted the statements in nearly the same way are clustered together into factors. Each factor represents a specific group of people who have common attitudes and are like-minded thinkers about the research topic. After the factors are formed the researcher interprets the factors and the beliefs of the individuals in each of the factors are explained in detail. As part of the Q methodology process a personal interview is conducted with each subject after completing the Q sort and the information from these interviews is used to add breadth and depth to the explanation of the factors.

For this study the concourse was a group of statements centered on the idea of “Why Do I Like to Blog.” These statements were gathered from a diverse group of sources that included research findings from media studies, blogs themselves, and blogging focus groups. The focus groups helped to validate, clarify, and edit the statements so that they would (1) represent the blogging experience and (2) be understandable to research participants. All statements were in English. A sample of 48 statements were selected from the population of opinions that best represented why individuals like to blog. It is

this sample of 48 statements that the subjects used to create a Q sort of their own attitudes about blogging.

The subjects for this project consisted of 47 young adults. Q methodology uses a small number of subjects because in Q technique, subjects are treated as variables rather than a sample of the population. Brown (1980) explains that when selecting respondents, “all that is required is enough subjects to establish the existence of a factor for the purposes of comparing one factor with another” (p. 192). He goes on to say:

It is rarely necessary in work of this kind to obtain large numbers of each type; five or six persons loaded significantly on a factor are normally sufficient to produce highly reliable factor scores, and it is in terms of the relationships among the factor scores that general statements about an attitude are made. Increasing the number of persons on a factor merely fills up factor space, but has very little impact on the scores. (p. 67)

To ensure the results of this study were representative of the typical blogger, care was taken during the sampling procedure to have both genders represented (25 males and 22 females) and subjects who were in the typical target market age range for bloggers (21-34) (Sysomos.inc, 2010). Because the purpose of the study was to determine the use of blogging, subjects were only selected for participation if they: 1) kept a consistent blog and 2) if they blogged within the last two weeks.

The next step was to have the subjects conduct their Q sorts by reading through each of the 48 statements and ranking them on an 11-point scale ranging from “most like my feelings” (+5) to “least like my feelings” (-5). After the Q sorts were completed, the researchers conducted individual interviews with each of the participants to probe further into the subjects’ decision-making process, to allow the subjects to express their thoughts and feelings about why they ranked some statements high and other statements low, and to let them express their thoughts and feelings about blogging. The interviews used a structured questionnaire with the following questions: (1) Why did you select (those) two statements as being most like your experience? (2) Why did you select (those) two statements as being least like your experience? The average time for each person to complete each Q sort and interview was approximately 45 minutes.

In the analysis, researchers used Principle Components Analysis to generate an unrotated factor matrix, which was then subjected to a varimax rotation. To qualify as a reportable factor, the criterion was at least two significant participant factor loadings at the 0.01 significance level. Once the factors were determined, the investigators compared the significant positive and negative z-scores for the statements that accompanied each factor. Those with a z-score greater than ± 1.0 were considered to be significant, and they represent the ‘most like’ and ‘least like’ statements for each factor.

Finally, the composite factor arrays for each factor we derived from the rank scores assigned to each statement by the participants significantly associated with each factor. Factor scores that differed by ± 3 for each statement on each factor were considered to be significantly different. Labels and interpretations determined by the investigators for the following factors were predicated on the z-scores calculated and the factor Q sort values provided by the participants in the study. They were also supplemented by the responses recorded from the interviews conducted with the participants.

RESULTS

Using the Q-methodology described above, researchers were able to identify perceptual groupings of motivations for blogging. The analyses found three factors representing the different types of blog writers. Findings indicate that the motivations for blogging varies widely among each group, but that some commonalities do exist among all groups.

This study found three factor loadings (or motivations) for writing blogs. These factors serve to answer RQ1: What types of motivations do people have for blogging?

Factor 1 - Memorians

The first factor was defined by 17 perceptual statements (both positive and negative) that were common among responses in the sample (see Table 1). Researchers labeled this perceptual factor “Memorians.” The factor loading for this group indicate that these subjects perceive blogging as a way to be remembered, and to remember. Blogging for Memorians is a way to serve their personal growth rather than as a means to connect with others or establish online relationships. The statement that these respondents agreed

with most was “For me, blogging is a type of diary or journal of my life” (z-score: 2.066). This journal-style writing provides a way to capture and preserve life moments that will be of future value to themselves and their readers.

Self-improvement is a gratification that Memorians seek from their writing. Blogging provides a way to reflect and learn from personal experiences causing improved self-awareness and understanding. Memorians agreed with the statement “Blogging allows me to reflect on the past to improve the future” (z-score: 1.910). This reflection is also connected to the next significant statement that Memorians agreed with, “I blog because it helps me understand myself better” (z-score: 1.834). In our follow up interviews, one blogger explained “Putting my thoughts in a blog makes me more aware of myself,” which sums up the general sentiment of this group.

Table 1

Factor 1 “Memorians” Significant Positive and Negative Media Statement z-Scores

No.	Statement	z-Scores
31	For me, blogging is a type of diary or journal of my life.	2.066
40	Blogging allows me to reflect on the past to improve the future.	1.910
20	I blog because it helps me understand myself better.	1.834
37	I blog as a form of family history—so my kids and family can refer back to it in the future.	1.800
24	Blogging has helped me identify meaning in my life.	1.365
33	Blogging is a way to speak, even if no one is listening.	1.356
1	I like to blog to express my thoughts and opinions.	1.329
18	I like to blog because it helps organize thoughts and ideas.	1.280
21	Through blogging I have become a better writer.	1.047
22	Blogging has helped me come a better thinker.	1.025
26	I feel that blogging has allowed me to meet new people online and form relationships.	-1.021
16	Blogging has caused me to talk less in face-to-face social situations.	-1.026
48	I blog to enhance communication with a larger organization or group.	-1.039
11	I blog to receive comments about experiences from other people.	-1.113
46	I like to rank in the search engines, so blogging for me is an ego thing.	-1.241
2	Marketing or promoting something is my favorite part of blogging.	-1.695
9	For me, the reason to blog is to make money.	-2.168

Factor 2 - Bonders

The second factor was defined by 19 statements (both positive and negative) that were common among individuals in the sample. Researchers labeled this factor “Bonders” because of this group’s emphasis on the social aspect of blogging. Bonders blog as a way to

stay connected and share knowledge and experiences with those they love. They are looking to stay connected, but they are selective in their connected audience. The statement that they agreed with most was, “I blog to stay connected with friends and family” (z-score: 1.754). The comments and feedback from family and friends provides a connection that is valuable and meaningful to Bonders. Blogging not only allows this group to connect with their home culture, but also provides a way for understanding a new culture.

Similar to Memorians, Bonders value their blog as a way to journal and share life experiences. The main distinction is that for Bonders, this type of sharing is done more as a means for connection than for self-reflection. Bonders seek a give and take relationship with their audience in which they can share experiences from their personal lives and pull from experiences that they readers share as well. They use their blog as a way to converse with family and friends. This two-way communication is valued as the main benefit of blogging for this group.

Table 2

Factor 2 “Bonders” Significant Positive and Negative Media Statement z-Scores

No.	Statement	z-Scores
8	I blog to stay connected with friends and family	1.754
31	For me, blogging is a type of diary of my life	1.670
19	I blog to be helpful - to provide information others may lack	1.403
1	I like to blog to express my thoughts and opinions	1.329
40	Blogging allows me to reflect on the past to improve the future	1.255
5	I like to blog to connect with people like me	1.212
35	blogging helps me connect with like-minded people	1.148
22	Blogging has helped me become a better thinker	1.094
18	I like to blog because it helps organize thoughts and ideas	1.081
12	Blogging is great because you can write about anything you like, know a lot about, or simply like to talk about	-1.008
30	I blog to pass time	-1.029
13	No extra good has come to me through my blogging experiences	-1.143
26	I feel that blogging has allowed me to meet new people online and form relationships	-1.166
16	Blogging has caused me to talk less in face-to-face social situations	-1.233
36	Blogging doesn't help me satisfy my creativity at all.	-1.307
46	I like to rank in the search engines, so blogging for me is an ego thing	-1.381
44	Getting positive comments on my blog doesn't matter to me	-1.677
41	I don't think blogging offers a sort of comfort, you're just writing information	-1.891
9	For me, the reason to blog is to make money	-2.004

Factor 3 - Soap Boxers

Labeled “Soap Boxers” by the researchers, the third and final factor group was defined by 16 statements that describe those who like to blog in order to inspire others. Soap Boxers, while superficially similar to Memorians, exude a strong sense of purpose. That purpose, however, is not to form relationships from or through the blog content. Soap Boxers enjoy sharing their opinions and blogging is a great vehicle for delivering their messages. The content and ideas are the most important aspect of blogging for this group. While blogging for this group is not seen as a means for fostering online relationships, they do recognize the importance of developing a level of trust with their readers.

This main motivation of inspiring others is expressed in some of the qualitative responses from participants. One participant noted that “inspiring others is what it is all about.” Others stated that “what other reason is there than showing passion,” and “blogging is about sharing thoughts and opinions.” This was the strongest response in common with those falling into this factor, “I blog because I want to inspire others, change the life of the reader” ($z=2.033$). Table 3 identifies the significant positive and negative z -scores for this group.

Table 3
Factor 3 “Soap Boxers” Significant Positive and Negative Media Statement z-Scores

No.	Statement	z - Scores
27	I blog because I want to inspire others, change the life of the reader	2.033
40	Blogging allows me to reflect on the past to improve the future	2.000
29	I like to blog to show my passion for the content	1.933
31	For me, blogging is a type of diary or journal of my life	1.634
1	I like to blog to express my thoughts and opinions	1.594
23	Blogging has not added any new purpose to my life	1.501
45	My blogging provides support for others in my same situation	1.247
43	I don't know why, I just like to blog	1.067
41	I don't think blogging offers any sort of comfort, you're just writing information	1.168
12	Blogging is great because you can write about anything you like, know a lot about, or simply like to talk about	-1.177
14	Blogging has not helped me improve my communication skills	-1.269
46	I like to rank in the search engines, so blogging for me is an ego thing	-1.285
30	I blog just to pass the time	-1.376
8	I blog to stay connected to friends and family	-1.378
38	Blogging helps me stay connected to online communities	-1.567
26	I feel that blogging has allowed me to meet new people online and form relationships	-1.723

DISCUSSION

Though this research found some of the same results as other blog studies, there were some significant differences in how the motivations were expressed across all the factors. The majority of blog research has focused on the main outcome goals of blogging (connection, information, and commerce), however, results of this study indicate underlying motivations. All of the above factors have sharing as a common element. It is the “why” behind the sharing that this research uncovers. The results of this study point to three main observations surrounding blog writing: (1) understanding the perceptions behind online consumer created content, (2) understanding of how blogs are being perceived, (3) and parsing out blogging motivations that ultimately create the types of available blogs.

Consumer-created Content

A main outcome of this study is a heightened awareness of the factors that motivate individuals to create and maintain blogs. User generated content is becoming increasingly common with the advent of social media and other online platforms. Through this study, researchers have uncovered some of the motivations behind the types of content that exist within the blogging space. These findings are important in understanding how blogging fits within the larger picture of online consumer created content. The majority of social media platforms either limit by design or by nature of the platform, the amount of self-information one discloses in a post. For example, by design Twitter users are limited by character count for presenting a message. This requires clear and concise clearly communication to an intended audience, whereas bloggers by nature of the medium can take as much space as needed to communicate their desired message. This perhaps is why some bloggers choose to use their blog as a journal, which would be an unnatural use on a platform like Twitter.

Perceptions of Blogs

The majority of research regarding blogging has been centered on consumers rather than producers of blogs. This current research approach is valuable in seeing why people choose to put their thoughts and ideas in blogs and their motivations for doing so. The

uses and gratifications of blog writing have been explored previously, but mainly by looking at the outcomes of content consumption. This research suggests that the motivations for publishing content on a blog vary widely among writers. A general assumption of blogging is that its main function as a social media platform is primarily to aid in social connection. This however is just one of several uses of blogging. Some individuals use blogs primarily to reflect upon and record life moments, others as a way to stay connected socially, and some as a way to share ideas and inspire others. Though blogging has features that can foster two-way communication, this study has found that back-and-forth communication between the writer and reader is not always a motivation.

Defining Content

The majority of research regarding blogging has been centered on consumers rather than producers of blogs. Prior researchers have looked at groups of blogs in categories that include health, sports, lifestyle, parenting, dating, etc. In this study, researchers were able to look at larger motivations behind content creation and categorize blogs under one of three blogger motivations. These findings are valuable in making sense of an online world that is becoming increasingly diverse and complex in the amount and types of content that exist. Determining the motivation behind content creation serves in gaining a greater understanding of the content itself.

While this research found some of the same results as other blog studies, there were some significant differences in how the motivations were expressed across all the factors. While the majority of blog research focuses on the main outcome goals of blogging (connection, information, and commerce), results of this study have teased out underlying motivations. All of the above factors have sharing as a common element. It is the “why” behind the sharing that this research uncovers.

For example, much of the research has focused on the commercial aspect of blogging. While this study did not find significant commercial motivations, it did identify a type of blogger that is most likely to use blogging for commercial reasons. Soap Boxers are most likely to create a commercial because their type of “sharing” is further removed from the personal and communal motivations of the Memorians and Bonders. While the Memorians simply want to remember and be remembered and the Bonders just want to

connect with their intimate audience, the Soap Boxers' desire to inspire spans beyond those two motivations. This could allow these bloggers to progress beyond a specific audience.

Future Research and Limitations

Future research could be done to correlate the types of writers and content based on the privacy and security settings of a blog. According to Nardi et al. (2004), blogging software allows for three levels of privacy. The more private blogs are password-protected. It would be interesting to research the correlation with privacy of blog and content type or author motivations for writing. Additionally, more work needs to be done to separate commercial blogging from personal blogging.

As with any exploratory study, there are limitations within this research. The current study is restricted to the 18- to 34-year-old demographic, as individuals in this age group are typically heavy users of social media and have the potential to use blogging differently than other groups. However, most subjects tested were college students with an even higher degree of blogging use. Furthermore, the sample was composed of mostly students at a large, private, university in the western United States, where students have free wireless Internet access while on campus and in the dormitories. This may differentiate them from other types of media users. Additionally, the current study grouped all blogging motivations together, and with few statement exceptions, asked respondents to do the same. Future research should break out this variable to test for differences between different types of blogging, both commercial and personal. Studies could also focus on demographics with varied levels of blogging to see if they might differ from the current sample. The current study could be easily repeated to other demographics to unveil attitudes about blogging and how they might compare to one another.

A last limitation of this study is the method itself. Although Q-methodology has been around for some time, it has not been used extensively in communication research, and many scholars are unfamiliar with it. Because of this, there is a tendency to evaluate it similarly to R-(or inferential) methodology. However, sampling, reliability, and validity all work differently within Q, and it is more in line with qualitative research than

quantitative. This method is essentially a way of understanding how people think. It is not appropriate for any type of cultural inference or predictions of any individual or group.

CONCLUSION

The evolving digital landscape has provided new communicative environments for connecting with friends, families, and strangers. This research has attempted to understand the motivations for blog writing. By using Q methodology, the factor analysis identified three groups of blog writers (Memorians, Bonders, and Soap Boxers). Past research has looked at users of blogs and other social content, but limited research has been conducted in regards to the uses and gratifications of blog writers themselves. Our findings help paint a better picture of the mutually beneficial relationship that exists between the writer and reader. Blogs can be written as personal diaries, political platforms, health and medical information, educational purposes, public relation, entertainment, sports, and the list keeps going. We have found that though the categories for blogging are endless, the motivations for writing blogs are not.

References

- Arnett, J. J. (2002). The psychology of globalization. *American Psychologist*, *57*, 774-783.
- Berelson, B. (1949). What "missing the newspaper" means. In P. F. Lazarsfeld, & F. N. Stanton (Eds.), *Communication research 1948-1949* (pp. 111-129). New York: Harper.
- Blumler, J. G. (1979). The role of theory in uses and gratifications studies. *Communication Research*, *6*, 9-36. doi: 10.1177/009365027900600102
- Buis, L. R., & Carpenter, S. (2009). Health and medical blog content and its relationships with blogger credentials and blog host. *Health Communication*, *24*(8), 703-710. doi:10.1080/10410230903264014
- Brown, S. R. (1980). *Political Subjectivity: Applications of Q Methodology in Political Science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Brown, S. R. (1993). A primer on Q methodology. *Operant Subjectivity*, *16*(3/4), 91-138.
- Chen, G. M. (2015). Why do women bloggers use social media? Recreation and information motivations outweigh engagement motivations. *New Media & Society*, *17*(1), 24-40. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813504269>
- Huang, C.-Y., Shen, Y.-Z., Lin, H.-X., & Chang, S.-S. (2007). Bloggers' motivations and behaviors: A model. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *47*(4), 472-484. doi: 10.2501/S0021849907070493
- Chung, D., & Kim, S. (2007). Blog use among cancer patients and their companions: Uses, gratifications, and predictors of outcomes. *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, 1-35. doi: 10.1002/asi.20751

- Chung, D. S., & Kim, S. (2008). Blogging activity among cancer patients and their companions: Uses, gratifications, and predictors of outcomes. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*, *59*(2), 297–306. Retrieved from <https://www.asist.org/>
- Cohen, A. A., Levy, M. R., & Golden, K. (1988). Children's uses and gratifications of home VCRs: Evolution or revolution. *Communication Research*, *15*(6), 772-780. doi: 10.1177/009365088015006006
- Dimmick, J. W., Sikand, J., & Patterson, S. J. (1994). The gratifications of the household telephone: Sociability, instrumentality, and reassurance. *Communication Research*, *21*(5), 643-663. doi: 10.1177/009365094021005005
- Faber, B. (2002). Professional identities what is professional about professional communication? *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *16*(3), 306–337. <http://doi.org/10.1177/105065190201600303>
- Froget, J. R. L., Baghestan, A. G., & Asfaranjan, Y. S. (2013). A uses and gratification perspective on social media usage and online marketing. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, *15*(1), 134-145. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/90424466/uses-gratification-perspective-social-media-usage-online-marketing>
- Fullwood, C., Nicholls, W., & Makichi, R. (2015). We've got something for everyone: How individual differences predict different blogging motivations. *New Media & Society*, *17*(9), 1583–1600. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814530248>
- Garía Jiménez, A., Cruz López de Ayala Lopez, M., & Gaona Pisionero, C. (2012). A vision of uses and gratifications applied to the study of Internet use by adolescents. *Comunicacio y Sociedad*, *25*(2), 231-254. Retrieved from http://www.unav.es/fcom/communication-society/es/articulo.php?art_id=427
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Lewis, S. C., Willard, A., Valenzuela, S., Lee, J. K., & Baresch, B. (2011). Blogging as a journalistic practice: A model linking perception, motivation, and behavior. *Journalism*, *12*(5), 586–606. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1464884910388230>
- Goh, H. Y., & Wijaya, M. (2008, September 10). Blogging and online friendships: the role of self-disclosure and perceived reciprocity. [Final Year Project (FYP)]. Retrieved October 18, 2015, from <http://repository.ntu.edu.sg/handle/10356/1181>
- Greenberg, B. S. (1974). Gratification of television viewing and their correlations for British children. In J. G. Blumler, & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 71-92). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ha, L., & James, E. L. (1998). Interactivity reexamined: A baseline analysis of early business web sites. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *42*(4), 457. doi: 10.1080/08838159809364462
- Harrison, K. (2014). Online negotiations of infertility: Knowledge production in (in)fertility blogs. *Convergence: The Journal of Research Into New Media Technologies*, *20*(3), 337-351. doi:10.1177/1354856514531400
- Hassid, J. (2012). Safety valve or pressure cooker? Blogs in Chinese political life. *Journal of Communication*, *62*(2), 212-230. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01634.x
- Herring, S. C., Scheidt, L. A., Bonus, S., & Wright, E. (2004). Bridging the gap: A genre analysis of weblogs. *Proceedings of the 37th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Press. doi: 10.1109/HICSS.2004.1265271

- Herring, S. C., Scheidt, L. A., Bonus, S., & Wright, E. (2005). Weblogs as a bridging genre. *Information, Technology, & People, 18*(2), 142–171. doi: 10.1108/09593840510601513
- Herzog, H. (1940). Professor quiz: A gratification study. In P. F. Lazarsfeld (Ed.), *Radio and the printed page* (pp. 64-93). New York: Duell, Solan & Pearce.
- Huang, C., Shen, Y., Lin, H., & Chang, S. (2007). Bloggers' motivations and behaviors: A model. *Journal of Advertising Research, 47*(4), 472–84. doi: 10.1177/1464884910388230
- Huffaker, D. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2005). Gender, identity, and language use in teenage blogs. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 10*(2), article 1. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00238.x
- Ibrahim, Y. (2008). Blogs as the people's archive: The phantom public and virtual presence. *Journal of New Communications Research, 3*(1), 65-73. Retrieved from http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/1446069/journal_of_new_communications_research_volume_iii
- Jin, Y., & Liu, B. (2010). The blog-mediated crisis communication model: Recommendations for responding to influential external blogs. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 22*(4), 429-455. doi:10.1080/10627261003801420
- Johnson, J. L., & Callahan, C. (2013). Minority cultures and social media: Magnifying Garifuna. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 42*(4), 319–339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2013.842608>
- Johnson, J., & Callahan, C. (2015). Media and identity in the margins: The Garifuna response to social media. *The Journal of Social Media in Society, 4*(2), 3-35.
- Khan, M. A., & Kahn, R. M. (2007). Relationship between demographic characteristics of international students and their mass media use in intercontextual adaptation. *Journal of Development Communication, 18*, 29–40.
- Kim, H. (2008). The phenomenon of blogs and theoretical model of blog use in educational contexts. *Computers & Education, 51*(3), 1342-1352. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2007.12.005
- Krishnaiyer, S. S., Raja Mushahar, R., & Ahmad, N. (2012). Using blogs as a tool to facilitate students' reflection. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies, 12*(3), 939-960. Retrieved from <http://ejournal.ukm.my/gema/article/view/1067>
- Lévy, P. (2000). *Kyberkultura*. Prague: Karolinum.
- Li, D. (2005). Why do you blog: A uses-and-gratifications inquiry into bloggers' motivations. In *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association* (pp. 1–1). International Communication Association. Retrieved from <https://www.lib.byu.edu/cgi-bin/remotearchive.pl?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=26951341&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Lichtenstein, A., & Rosenfeld, L. (1984). Normative expectations and individual decisions concerning media gratification choices. *Communication Research, 11*(3), 393-413.
- Miller, E., Pole, A., & Bateman, C. (2011). Variation in health blog features and elements by gender, occupation, and perspective. *Journal of Health Communication, 16*(7), 726-749. doi:10.1080/10810730.2011.551994
- Nardi, B., Schiano, D., & Gumbrecht, M. (2004). Blogging as social activity, or, would you let 900 million people read your diary? Proceedings of the 2004 ACM conference on

- Computer supported cooperative work, November 6-10, 2004, Chicago, Illinois, USA. Retrieved September 18, 2015. doi: 10.1145/1031607.1031643
- Neubaum, G. (2012). Let's blog about health! Exploring the persuasiveness of HIV blogs compared to informational HIV websites. *Health Communication, 30*, 872–883. doi:10.1080/10410236.2013.856742
- Papacharissi, Z., (2004). The blogger revolution? Audiences as media producers. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, New Orleans.
- Petersen, E. J. (2014). Redefining the workplace: The professionalization of motherhood through blogging. *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication, 44*(3), 277–296. doi: 10.2190/TW.44.3.d
- Ross Altarac, S. (2008). Globalization of media: What's adaptation got to do with it? Conference paper presented at the annual convention of the National Communication Association, San Diego, CA.
- Rubin, A., & Bantz, C. (1989). Uses and gratifications of videocassette recorders. In J. Salvaggio & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Media use in the information age: Emerging patterns of adoption and consumer use* (pp. 181-195). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rubin, A. M., & Perse, E. M. (1987). Audience activity and television news gratifications. *Communication Research, 14*(1), 58-84. doi: 10.1177/009365087014001004
- Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication and Society, 3*(1), 3–37. doi: 10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02
- Simpson, J. (2013). Identity alignment on an ESOL class blog. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 23*(2), 183-201. doi:10.1111/j.1473-4192.2012.00325.x
- Statista.com. (2014). *Number of blogs worldwide from 2006 to 2011 (in millions)*. Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/278527/number-of-blogs-worldwide/>
- Stavrositu, C., & Sundar, S. S. (2012). Does blogging empower women? Exploring the role of agency and community. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 17*(4), 369–386. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01587.x
- Stefanone, M. A., & Chyng-Yang, J. (2007). Writing for friends and family: The interpersonal nature of blogs. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13*(1), 123-140. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00389.x
- Sysomos.inc. (2010). *Inside blog demographics*. Retrieved from <http://www.sysomos.com/reports/bloggers/>
- Terblanche, L., & Goodwin-Davey, A. (2013). Academic blogs: A platform for sharing information and disseminating knowledge. *Southern African Linguistics & Applied Language Studies, 31*(3), 375-387. doi:10.2989/16073614.2013.837611
- Trammell, K. D., Tarkowski, A., Hofmohl, J., & Sapp, A. M. (2006). Rzeczpospolita blogów [Republic of Blog]: Examining Polish bloggers through content analysis. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 11*(3), 702–722. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00032.x
- Vidgen, R., Sims, J., & Powell, P. (2013). Do CEO bloggers build community?. *Journal of Communication Management, 17*(4), 364-385. doi:10.1108/JCOM-08-2012-0068

Funding and Acknowledgements

The authors declare no funding sources or conflicts of interest.

Online Connections

To follow Clark Callahan: clarkcallahan.com or on Twitter [@clarkcallahan](https://twitter.com/clarkcallahan)