

Happy blugebrities

they come back for more even if his posts are about the most trivial events in his life.

Ben is not alone in this. Take, for example, local blog advertising company Nuffnang Sdn Bhd, which just celebrated its first anniversary.

The brains behind Nuffnang are Timothy Tiah Ewe Tiam, 24, and Cheo Ming Shen, 26, who co-founded the company to "bridge the relationship between advertisers and bloggers". Although coy about the exact

figure of their revenue, Tiah says the company owes its success to the blogging trend in the country.

"Blogging is no longer for a niche section of society. It used to be that bloggers comprised youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years," Tiah said.

"When we started a year ago, we expected only 300 bloggers for the first three months. But 3,000 bloggers registered!"

Nuffnang works by matching advertisers to bloggers who share

similar target audiences.

The advertisers pay a fee per project from which Nuffnang takes a cut from. The rest goes to the bloggers.

"We usually take a 30 per cent cut from the advertisement fees. This way everyone is happy," Tiah says.

Currently, there are 13,000 Malaysian and 9,000 Singaporean bloggers registered under Nuffnang and the numbers, says Tiah, grow by the day.

"Advertisers find this concept appealing as the blogs contain local content made by and for the locals."

Just about anyone can start a blog — at no cost at all. Free hosts such as Blogger.com, Xanga.com and MySpace are the among some of the most popular and fuss-free.

So, how much can one earn from a blogging? Quite a lot, says Tiah, provided that your blog is popular.

Bigtime bloggers such as our own Kenny Sia whose blog has earned a cult-like following can earn up to RM10,000 in a month.

Sia along with Singapore bloggers Dawn Yang and Wendy Cheng a.k.a. Xiaxue get an average of 15,000 to 18,000 hits on their blogs a day.

Such popularity and high monetary incentives offer an explanation on why some people have turned into full-time bloggers.

"Blogging is empowering. I mean come on, you have your very own media. I can write about whatever I want," says Cheng, 23.

Many blogs revolve solely on the bloggers' lives. Most posts are about mundane, daily tasks. Some talk about relationships. Then there are those who dedicate their blogs to a specific subject as an avenue to share and connect with others who have similar interests.

Personal bloggers make up a big chunk of Nuffnang community (23.95 per cent), followed by entertainment (11.99 per cent), humour (7.08 per cent) and food (6.19 per cent).

I asked Tiah whether the element of narcissism was the underlying factor that personal blogs were abundant.

"Blogging is a form of self-expression. Yes, it could pass off as being narcissistic," says Tiah.

Some say these bloggers risk



Nuffnang co-founder Timothy Tiah Ewe Tiam



Singaporean blogger Wendy Cheng aka Xiaxue has ventured into full time blogging

overexposure as every act, every experience, every move is published for the world to read.

"There is definitely a risk of overexposure. Then again, all bloggers are well aware that once you put a post up, it is for everyone's eyes so these are consequences one must bear.

"I know some bloggers who limit blog access to certain readers by setting up passwords. That could be one way to protect your privacy," says Tiah.

In addition to self-expression and networking, blogging is also about information sharing.

"There are many sides to a coin. Blogs are generally a credible source of information. However, there are some who are biased and write unfairly too," says Tiah.

But ultimately, says Tiah, bloggers have a code of ethics. It is up to each blogger to uphold it with integrity and sincerity.

sunpeople@nst.com.my