

WHO'S DOING WHAT IN BLOGGING

In conversation with a 24 year old who makes money serving ads on blogs (Cheo Ming Shen, co-founder of Nuffnang.com); a guy who makes a living talking blog-shop with communities (Kurt Messersmith, enthusiasts lead, Microsoft); and a scientist who writes a blog which helps others make money (Bernard Leong, co-founder, SgEntrepreneurs.com).



Cheo, Messersmith and Leong 'head' the web-log debate

What do you do (wrt. blogging)?

Cheo: Nuffnang.com is Asia's first blog advertising community, a local enterprise that allows bloggers to monetise their online space by serving them graphic advertisements from local advertisers.

Messersmith: Microsoft is interested in supporting bloggers and the medium in general. It's proven to be a vital source for information sharing and collaboration.

Leong: I blog on entrepreneurship and venture capital in Singapore, mainly to educate my students in tertiary institutions and the public.

What do people love or hate most about blogs?

Cheo: Most people love blogs that are unadulterated and truthful. Xiaxue.blogspot.com, is Singapore's most popular blog, because it embraces the essence of a blog - personal character.

Messersmith: Blogs that are well written, insightful, fresh and provocative. Blogs that are less compelling tend to be updated infrequently or not offer a new perspective.

Leong: They like the informal engagement between the blogger and the readers, and hate the part about poison pens and unfair commentaries.

Is blogging a fad or will it morph and last forever?

Cheo: It will continue to grow. Blogs will be-

come a lot more interactive and the content more mature. With Twitter, a new blogging widget, we now are able to follow our bloggers' footsteps.

Messersmith: While certain types of blogging techniques or technologies may come and go, it's really an extension of communication and self expression which will always be around.

Leong: It has morphed into a new state with the introduction of podcasts and videocasts. One possible trend is the integration of mobile and web services with virtual worlds.

How can people use the blogs creatively to achieve more?

Cheo: Focus on one particular group - companies and firms. Mainstream media is losing out to online content, and the fastest growing segment? Blogs. There are PR campaigns to handle mainstream media. Soon there will be a need for PR campaigns to engage blogs as well.

Messersmith: There will be even greater empowerment as content providers push more digital content out to the web and enable bloggers to utilise them. Bloggers using rich media will differentiate themselves from the better ones.

Leong: They can use the blogs to implement new ideas of collaboration and discuss best practices within their own professions. For example, entrepreneurs use blogging to

share their experiences or new products/services launched by their companies.

Have you succeeded in the blogosphere?

Cheo: Our original aim of signing up 300 bloggers in three months was far exceeded. In the three months we have been in Malaysia and the one month in Singapore, we have signed up 4,000 blogs. Nuffnang has aims of raising the profile of blog advertising in general, and forging a vibrant blogosphere through our community initiatives.

Messersmith: We've had very successful bloggers share 'insider' scoops on things like product development and software engineering. Our MSN Spaces has many millions actively posting. Like many large multinationals that recognise limitations with traditional marketing, we will get better at having citizen journalists and marketers tell the software and service story.

Leong: Yes. I have interacted with many bloggers out there, and worked together on several initiatives and ideas. The team has made the blog sustainable based on Google ad revenues and that can be channelled to pay our writers and do small sponsorships for student entrepreneurial initiatives.

What's the next big thing after blogging?

Cheo: E-commerce. Online shopping is so prevalent in the UK and Europe, ultimately, it has got to grow here too.

Messersmith: The digital media experience (online, TV, theater, mobile etc.) will converge, the amount of content people can access and store will grow. So, when you are using your phone or watching 'traditional' TV, you will always be online and connected to the content you like or keep. Personally I hope to be watching a lot of archived sports as the major sports leagues push vintage content out to the public.

Leong: I believe that it's either checking email or watching online TV with the emergence of Joost.com - an online TV viewing software.

- Faith Yong