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Using blogs as a marketing tool

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Blogs are growing in popularity among busnesses and individuals alike. They are no longer just a digital publishsing tool. Nowadyas blogs can be utilized in marketing activities and as means for communication with company's interest groups. Blogs can be a great platform for companies to establish closer connection with their costumer base, deliver company values and give more personable image of the company.

This research aims to give an overview of the use of blogs as a mareting tool for businesses and individuals. It looks into the common factors that contribute to the success of a blog, the technical features as well as the common mistakes bloggers do. As examples of successful blogs are viewed five blogs, all different in their field and topic. Among the examples are established international companies as well as individuals who have made their blogs successful due to their insight of how to use them.

The empirical part of the research also includes a guide for beginner bloggers, which focuses on a step-by step tutorial for creating a blog on Blogger.

This research provides general information on blogs and their use for marketing purposes. Its purpose is to give practical advice for beginner corporate and individual bloggers

Keywords
Blogs,Markting, Social media, Blogger platform

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1   Introduction

In this chapter will be provided background information regarding the choice of topic and its' relevance in the world of online marketing. Additionally will be outlined the objectives of the research, its boundaries and the methods used in conducting the research.

1.1   Background

In the rapidly developing world of Internet marketing and social media blogs have emerged and established themselves as an effective publishing tool for everyone with a point of view and passion to share it with the world.

With the growing popularity and use of the Internet blogs have been through a metamorphosis from simple pages for personal use to powerful tool of communication. They are used by individuals, communities, companies and governments. As an example, Israel was one of the first national governments to set up their own blog.

Blogs cover topics in all fields of life and are written by everyone- from everyday enthusiasts to renowned experts and celebrities.

Blogs and social media are tightly connected. Blogs are organized in special Blog directory websites (Bloglovin, Bloglines, Technorati,Blogpulse, Blogdiger) or are linked to websites that connect the reader with content of their interest (Pintrest, Tumbler, Stumbleupon etc). Large portion of bloggers utilize other social media tools- Youtube, Tweeter,Facebook and this only comes to show that blogging is a tool that has a lot of potential when reaching large audience is concerned. This is why marketing can benefit from blogs as a powerful tool for promotion and sales boost, communication with target audience and getting valuable feedback.

Blogging has been around for more than 10 years and in this period the term has grown and developed from personal web logs to one of the most cost-effective and fast growing publishing mechanisms. In only a decade blogs have changed from personal hobby to a type of media with an enormous readership base. The field of blogging provides with endless development opportunities as more and more people and companies turn rapidly from paper based format of publishing to the electronic media.

If we look at what blogs are at the present moment, we will understand why they have such a large following. Blogs are all about useful content: information, reviews, opinions, sharing tips. Blogs are written about wide variety topic and everyone can find a list of blogs according to their interest. This allows them an access to useful information completely free of charge. Essentially everyone with Internet connection and computer, phone or tablet can have an access to blogs' content anytime anywhere. People read blogs to get informed for the latest news in their field of interest or to read a review of a certain product. Blogs give information from a consumer's perspective which often forms a decision whether or not to make a purchase.

Blogs are very often written by specialists, professionals and people who have experience in their area. This is what makes their input and opinion more valuable to the reader than a standard advertisement.

Blogs are used by individuals and companies alike. Most companies nowadays include a blog on their website, which is written by an insider and provides the costumer with tips, news, updates and information of the company products and the industry in general. As blogs often offer the ability for the reader to leave a comment, this is an invaluable tool for every company to get feedback and interaction with their customer base.

Blogging has advantages such as large readership, expert opinions, low cost in publication. Due to those features blogs have become an incredibly useful marketing tool. Many companies rely on recommendations and favorable reviews from popular bloggers. Their input for generate interest in the products and this can result in growing sales. Bloggers have the credibility due to the fact that they write from the perspective of the consumers. Large amount of negative reviews of a product can affect the buyers' opinion. This is where blogs and business meet.

1.2 Thesis objectives

This work consists of both theoretical research and an empirical study. The main objective of the research is to provide with an answer to the following question

- How to use blogs as a marketing tool?

The research will focus also on the following sub-questions:

- What are the factors that make a successful and unsuccessful blog?

- How to create a successful blog?

The main objective of this work is to determine and give a broader understanding of how blogging can be utilized in marketing. Additionally the study will explore the following topics:

- the importance of blogs as a social media item
- the connection between blogging and marketing
- defining the main challenges that bloggers face while establishing a blog

The study will be focusing on how blogs can be used successfully in marketing by companies and individuals alike. It will study how to utilize a blog for serving as a marketing tool for promotion and interaction with the readers. Additionally it will show some successful examples of blogs and attempt to outline what are the features that makes them to be so popular.

The empirical part of the research will include a guide for creating a blog for beginners. It is aimed for everyone who wants to become a part of the blogosphere, regardless whether is for business purposes or merely as a hobby

1.3   Demarcation

The fields of social media and e-commerce are very broad and they are constantly growing. Due to the time limitations, the work will not focus on marketing strategies, marketing mix, promotion strategies, consumer behavior or product analysis or other types of social media marketing and promotion.

The research will focus closely on blogs and their usage for marketing purposes. The theoretical part will pay attention solely to blogs and will define their relevance in the world of e-commerce. In this work will be given examples of several popular blogs and will be discussed the features that make those particular blogs successful. The study will focus on company and personal blogs and will not include political or governmental blogs.

In the empirical part will be included a guide of how a blog is created. The guide can be useful to anyone wishing to start their own blog. The guide does not include technical instructions such as HTML coding, pinging etc.

The research will not provide a strategic plan for companies or individuals but will aim at creating an understanding how blogs can be used as a marketing tool.

1.4 Research method/Approach

This research consists of theoretical and empirical parts which complement and support each other in achieving the objective of this research and namely- determining how to successfully use blogs as a marketing tool.

The theoretical plan will outline the key concepts used in the research- defining what blogs are and how they can be incorporated and utilized in online marketing as well as a glance at the social media- what makes social media so popular and used by companies to connect with their audience and how blogs come into the scene.

This work will include not only theoretical examples of what are the features of a successful blog but will also present with some practical examples from the blogosphere. To understand better how blogs operate and what makes a blog to be a successful one, the research will take a close look to several examples of popular blogs- personal and company blogs alike and see what features in these blogs make them stand out and become so liked by the readers.

For the empirical part, the research will include a guide to creating a blog for beginners who would like to become a part of the blogosphere and create their own blog and experience and contribute to the social media from a new and closer perspective.

2 Blogging and their use in the marketing world

This part of the research focuses on the essence of blogs, their development through the years and their current outlook and functions. The chapter provides overview of the types of marketing in order to create a theoretical contexts and better understanding of the place of blogging on the marketing world. Lastly, the chapter discusses the use of blogs in the marketing communication of a company on an individual.

2.1 Blogs and blogging

Blogs are also known as 'web logs'- an informational site published on the World Wide Web. Blogs consists of blog posts or blog 'entries'- text written by the author of the blog, usually displayed in reverse chronological order from most recent posts to the oldest one. (Jett T. 2012)

Blogs can be owned and updated by a single individual or a group of people. Lately more and more companies and organizations have their own blog. Blogs are often thematic and cover a single or multiple topics such as travelling, business, marketing, cooking, lifestyle etc. Company blogs often include updates of the business, insight opinions, product development, expert opinions in the field of the company.(Gardner S., 2010)

Blogs grew popularity at the end of 1990s and have developed and covered more ground ever since. The majorities of the blogs are interactive and allowed their readers to comment and communicate with the author and other readers and this feature lacks in most of the static websites by that time. Blogging is a social network on its own as it allows bloggers not only to publish their opinion, but also to interact with their readers and socialize with other bloggers- hence the term 'blogosphere' was born. The term blogosphere refers to the community of all blogs (and respectively bloggers) in the In- ternet. (Hussey T., 2012)

Blogs can be divided into groups according to several criteria such as:

- gender- a blog can be written on numerous topics such as arts, music, photog- raphy, politics, technology, health, fashion, culinary etc.
- media format- apart from text, a blog can be built using different types of me- dia- common alternatives are the Vlogs (blog that uses videos instead of writ- ten text) or Photoblogs (blogs that consist of photographic pictures)
- author- a blog can be personal and corporative

Blogs can be registered into websites called Blog directories, which collect blogs and store them in categories so that readers can read various blogs on given topic. Popular examples of web directory sites are Technorati, BlogCatalog,Blogger etc. (Chan H., 2011)

Websites such as StumbleUpon, Pintrest and Tumbler allow the readers to selectively view content of various blogs according to the topic that interests them. Many Vlogers have their own vlog on Youtube or on a separate platform.

The blogging community continues to grow rapidly due accessibility and the ease of setting up a blog. By February 2011 there were over 156 million public blogs in existence. (Hussey T., 2012)

2.2 Marketing communication and types of marketing

Marketing is a way of delivering a message regarding value of a product or a service to the potential and existing customers. Even though marketing is often understood as means for selling a certain product, sales is just one of the uses of marketing. Marketing can be viewed as a strategy and function for promoting a product or service to the customer (Gardner S., 2010)

Marketing is nowadays looked not only as a way to sell certain products or services but also a way to create and maintain a relationship with the customer and build and develop a brand name and company image. One of the objectives of marketing is gaining costumer's trust in the company and its products.

Marketing is a broad field and it develops continuously with the trends and the changes in the global market and the business world. There are many types of marketing according to the means that they use and the objectives that they pursue. In the latest years Internet marketing has played and continues to pays a huge role. Some of the types of marketing are:

- Internet Marketing- this includes any marketing activities that take place online, also known as online marketing. This type of marketing may incorporate various media and sources such as video advertisements, email marketing, online promotional campaigns etc.

- Direct Marketing- this type of marketing aims to send a message directly to consumers, without the need to use third party. Examples of direct marketing include mail marketing, telemarketing and direct selling.

- Social Media Marketing- currently rapidly growing type of marketing. Social media campaigns provide an opportunity to for the companies to market their product or service on the Internet via various social networks. Additionally, the social media provides valuable feedback and interaction with the costumers.

Among the most commonly used means of social media marketing are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and company blogs.

- Viral Marketing-This type of marketing relies that the message being sent spread quickly through various social networks and Internet in order to increase brand awareness. It is mostly used to attract attention of large audience in short period of time

- B2B Marketing- This stands for business to business marketing. This involves creating partnership and connection between businesses.

- B2C Marketing- Stands for business to consumer marketing. It aims to reach consumers that will be likely to purchase their product or service. B2C marketing often includes various marketing techniques- promotion marketing, newspaper marketing, media and nowadays more and more the Internet

- Word of mouth- it is one of the most successful ways for a product to gain popularity and trust. With the growth of social media it has become fast and convenient for everyone to share stories, information and recommendations. It is studied that people share over 16,000 words per day and every hour there are held over a 100 million conversations related to different brands. (Berger J., 2013, Hussey T., 2012, Gardner S., 2010)

There are two key reasons for the large effectiveness of word of mouth. The first reason can be contributed to the fact that word of mouth is more persuasive in its nature. It often comes from trusted source and therefore has larger impact on the receiver of the message. The often too loud advertisement messages can get overlooked by the consumers. The second reason why word of mouth has great impact is because it is more targeted. While usual advertisements are delivered in various times of the day and reach a variety of people who have different interests, word of mouth is directed toward an interested audience. People give recommendations to someone who they know is interested in the given subject and is in possible need of buying the certain product. (Berger. J., 2013)

Word of mouth is connected with blogging simply by the fact that it is essentially a word of mouth advertising placed online and reaching a large audience. That audience is both interested in the subject of the blog and has made the initiative to go online and read the blog. This gives opportunity to bloggers in reaching a large group of people who could be potential customers for the products or services that the blog writes about.

Choosing the right type of marketing to use depends on various factors such as: the type of the company, the product or service it provides, how established is the company on the market, who are the costumers, what is the aim of the promotion etc.

2.3 Blogs and Marketing

Blogs are often looked at as a type of social media. They are an online based media and offers interaction between bloggers and readers, creating social relations, often referred to as blogosphere.
Blog marketing involves implementing a marketing strategy for the purpose of growing the impact of the blog. As a result, the blog becomes a more effective marketing asset.. Increasing the reach of the blog is one the most vital steps in blog marketing. This is one of the greatest challenges. It is also the most critical step in blog marketing.' (Vulghan P., 2012)

Bloggers use different online tools to promote their blogs- links to other social media (Facebook pages of the blog, Twitter account, StumbleUpon and Pintrest links). This gives a great opportunity for posts to spread around the Internet and social media with one click of the computer mouse. This way a post can reach wide audience via various channels very fast without the effort of the author. The readers will spread and share the content throughout the social media themselves. This makes blogs a powerful tool for sharing opinions, information, reviews on different products etc.
Readers often look for opinions on products from other users and one of the channels to find them is through blogs Since consumers tend to trust other consumer's opinions more than the traditional advertisement, blogs have become a preferable tool to help people decide if they should make a purchase. Often times a single search for

product reviews online can give us the needed information. Blogs contain various real-life images of the product, instead of the ones used in commercials and the true opinion of people who bought the product.

It is clear to see how blogs can be used by companies in an attempt to boost the popularity of a product or to reach a wider audience. Companies like to reach out to popular bloggers who write on topics relevant to their business. This gives them exposure to a targeted group of people interested in the type of product the company offers. It is a common practice for companies to send press samples to popular bloggers .However, companies do not have to rely solely on bloggers to write about their products. The company themselves can have a blog and interact with the costumers, ask for feedback and suggestions, give an insight or an industry expert tips and opinions.

Many CEO's of company or other company representatives and experts have their blog on the company page where they can advise the readers, give useful tips or discuss current trends and challenges in the industry. This type of interaction builds an image of the company that is not anymore faceless and people will have the chance to get to know the company from an inside perspective and feel that they are important to the company and their needs are addressed. (Hussey T., 2012)

The links between blogging and marketing are many constantly growing. The possibilities are yet to be explored and developed. Blogging is growing in popularity and more companies add blogs to their official websites in order to follow the quickly developing trends of the social media.

3   Scope- Features of a successful blog

Blogs have many layers of information within them. On one hand there are the visual messages that the readers conceive through the outlook and design of the blog. Everything from the colors chosen and the formatting, through the functions and readability of the blog, deliver a message. However, equally important is the message that the blog itself conveys. The topics discussed, the tone and language and most importantly- the message that the writer wants to deliver; all is an integral part of the blog. When creating a blog we need to keep in mind both the content and the technical aspect as they both complement each other and need to work to support one another.

3.1 Content related features

Since word of mouth is a strong and effective way of a product to gain popularity, it would be beneficial to determine what factors make certain products to be more preferred than others. In the book 'Contagious: why things catch on' the author Johan Berger has studied the effect of word of mouth and the what makes content of a message to be 'contagious'. This includes not only products but ideas, messages and videos, all of which can be used as a content in a blog. The purpose of those messages is to be spread around and shared throughout the web space or by the word of mouth. This is in a nutshell the objective of every blog post or message to the readers. The main six features of a catchy content can be summed up as:

- Currency

People build image through many ways, including interests, hobbies and topics they like to discuss. Talking about current and trendy topics add to the social image of a person. Adding a message with high social currency helps to grab the attention and is more likely to get shared. Creating socially current content can be achieved with following the latest trends and innovations and being on the pulse of things. Writing with a fresh new angle can add to the social currency by providing a different view point. Finding a remarkable stand or opinion can make a message stand out. Providing the latest and most attention catching content would provide the readers with topics to discuss and share the message we wish to deliver.

- Associations

Often we not only want to deliver a message but we also aim to remind the readers about our message. Creating content that prompt the readers can be achieved through emotional and memory triggers. These triggers can be images and ideas that are easily associable with one another. Often in people's memory one object brings up associations of another, talking about one topic could make readers think of something different. Using such triggers the readers are prompted to think about things that are related. People tend to discuss the things that they have in mind, therefore the more people keep in mind a product or idea, the more they are likely to talk about it. In order to create content that people think about, we need focus on creating content that evokes associations

'We need to design products and ideas that are frequently triggered by the environment and create new triggers by linking our products and ideas to prevalent cues in that environment. Top of mind leads to tip of tongue.' (Berger, J., 2013)

- Evoking feelings

People are likely to share content that evokes certain emotions in them, emotion is contagious. The spectrum of emotions that can be used is quite wide- from happiness, care, compaction to surprise shock etc. The share rate of emotional content is high. However the right kind of emotion needs to be chosen. This does not mean necessarily that only positive emotions may be used to create buzz, in certain cases negative emotions have their purpose also. The main thing to keep in mind is the purpose of the content and the type of emotion we wish to evoke in the reader.

- Getting noticed

In order for a product to be noticed and remembered it needs to be seen. People consume a lot of information with their eyes. Creating a product that can be seen in use or engaging the user is beneficial. As people tend to gain interest in things that are regarded as popular, getting exposure of a product increases its chances to become more popular. In order to achieve this we need to make products that are more accessible and public. When products are visible they advertise themselves as when something is repetitive it tends to be remembered.

- Functionality

Creating useful content that serves a practical purpose enables people not only to benefit by it but also to help others and hence spread the word. Focusing on content that provides some practical benefit is a great way to get our message stand out not only with its informational value bit also with its purpose. In order to achieve this, the focus needs to be placed on the particular uniqueness of the message, the strengths of the product and its uses and benefits for the reader. Not only the content is important but also the way it is formulated and delivered. In order for the message to be shared it needs to be delivered in an easy to convey way.

- Message

Having something to say is not enough to be delivered as information, it needs to tell a story. Creating an engaging story, something that delivers information and catches the

attention while is easy to retell. Some stories are successful that they become viral. The key is to inbed the message in the story in a way that it cannot be told without it. (Berger.2013)

3.2 Technical features of a successful blog

Most blogs utilize different technical features that enhance the functionality of the blog and make it more easy navigate by the readers. Below are presented some of the most commonly used technical features of a blog.

- Easy access to content

Unlike websites, blog are pages that constantly develop. They are growing as content is added to them regularly and this may cause difficulties in navigating a blog. When a reader is looking for information on a certain topic, it is important that they are able to find easily and it a timely manner. New readers, who are not familiar with the outlook of the blog or its structure, should be able to orientate themselves without having to spend lots of time and effort finding the subject they are looking for. There are several ways to organize content on a blog:

-Utilizing pages
-Search box
-Tags(labels)
-Widget displaying most popular posts

Depending on the amount of content of the blog and the topics discussed in it, a blogger may decide to utilize all methods or pick and choose the ones that are most suitable for their blog. Some testing may be required until finding what is most applicable for the certain blog and most favored by its readers.

- Formatting of the header

Special attention should be paid when creating the format of the blog's header. It is essential that it is formatted correctly. The header of a blog is the most recognizable part of a blog. It should reflect the way a blogger want to be presented and the topic that the blog discusses. If this is a company blog, it should contain company logo and using the same fonts and colors that the company website is using. In technical terms

the header should have the required measurements and contain sharp images. The text color of the headline should contrast to the background so that it is readable and clear for the readers. It is advisable that the font of the title significantly larger size than the body or sub-header on the page. The header of a blog is important as it makes a blog unique and recognizable in the wide blogosphere.

- Prominent post image display

The visual element is extremely important when creating online content. Well organized blogs have well organized visual elements. Images are used to enhance the text, to give visual explanation of the written content as well as to divide otherwise long blocks of written text. Pictures draw in the eye of the reader faster than text does and therefore is important to make sure the images are placed in an equal space. It allows the reader to take a break from reading rather than having to read a long text with no interruption. Images need to be complementary to the content and of good quality. Making sure that the pictures are in suitable size for the blog outlook is very essential. Incorrectly formatted pictures create unprofessional impression. A good blog is visual and easy to read. Images add meaning to the content and is advisable be incorporated whenever possible.

- Loading time

Reading online is specific. When people are looking for information, they want to receive it quickly and slowly loading pages may encourage a reader to leave a page and move onto another one. In order to avoid situations of this sort, the loading time of a blog should be tested. In ideal circumstances, the loading time of a page will be under two seconds. Image-heavy content may add to the loading time of a blog post.

- Well-structured sidebar

Sidebars are space where functionalities and visual effects can be added. With the wide choice of widgets and functions that can be incorporated, sidebars may become too busy. This may have the opposite effect and actually find it too overwhelming to navigate a blog. Widgets that are placed in a sidebar should serve a specific purpose. Additionally, the design of the widgets should correspond with the design of the blog as mismatching looks may lead to visually busy page.

Every blogger can easily choose what types of widgets are most useful for their content and readers. Making sure that all widgets are functioning properly is very important. All widgets that do not serve a purpose or are not functioning should be removed.

- Social media buttons

Blogs are a type of social media in their own right. Making sure that all social media channels that are utilized by a company or an individual is very important. This not only creates consistency but also enables readers to get connected with the blogger in all other social media channels and spread and share the blog's content. A blog is a great place to promote a business and social media is the first place where people will look to find that business. Having social media buttons on a blog is something that every blogger should consider. Adding them to an easily visible place on the blog is essential. Readers should be able to connect with the blogger on the chosen social media with one click and not having to scroll and search for the buttons on the page. Nowadays the choice for social media channels is quite wide. For bloggers' convenience are created widgets that would display buttons for all social media channels that are used by a blogger or a company. (Vaughan P. 2012)

4 Common blogging mistakes

Having outlined the features of a successful blog, this part of the research has as an objective to point out some of the mistakes bloggers do while creating a blog or during their blogging activities. Below are listed some common blogging mistakes concerning both technical and content issues.

- Separate domain for the blog and the company website

Hosting a blog which is on a separate platform than the company website can have potentially negative effect on the visibility of the blog. Even in cases in which the link to the blog is on the company's website, the readers are being transferred into an entirely different website. This new page may not be in line with the brand style and design elements of the main company website and this may lead to confusion in the reader. Additionally, relocating readers onto a new free platform may create the impression that the brand is not entirely professional or unreliable, which undermines the credibility as a whole.

Another aspect that should be considered is that having a blog on the same platform as the company website improves the visibility online. One of the best advantages of business blogging is the impact it has on search engine optimization. Publishing a blog post creates a new webpage which can be indexed in search engines and therefore im-

proves the chances of being found in search results. Linking the blog and the company's page will positively affect both sources of information as they will be interconnected.

- Excessive product-based content

Most companies are aiming to establish themselves as a trustworthy and competent source of information for the readers of their blog. Often mistake which can be made by companies is posting too much content focused on the company's products and services. Publishing product-based content is acceptable only if it is limited and supporting news or other information-based posts. If readers find too much information about the products of a business, it can be often viewed as an advertisement rather than educative purpose. (Vaughan P., 2012)

Content should be thought-out and well planned ahead. A content that is more likely to be viewed as impartial information and shared is informative, data-based and creates connection with the reader. It often addresses interesting for the reader matters and offers answers to possible questions readers may have. This type of content is much more likely to attract readers, be shared and hence reach wider audience. By including this type of content, the company has the chance to establish its' blog as a valuable resource in their industry or field of work. This reflects positively also on the image of the company. As a result, the brand will create an association in the customers as an expert and trusty partner. The improved credibility creates more trust in the company and the products or services it offers.

Good example for data-based content includes:

-News from the industry
-Best practices and advices
-Reports of made research
-Educational texts
-Analyses on current topics or problems
-Case studies

- Inconsistent publishing

The best results of blogging can be reached by companies or individuals who post frequently and consistently. Writing posts in an irregular manner or abandoning blogging for long periods not only will not generate positive effect but may also result in loss of readers' interest. Businesses who publish at least twenty posts in a month generate more than five times more traffic than those who blog less than four times per month. (Vaughan P., 2012)

A blogger should be committed to upkeep the blog, post frequently and be engaged with the audience. Best strategy is to start with posting once per week and growing the frequency of posting steadily.

- Off-topic content

Important point for every blogger is to define a clear purpose of the blog. As company blogs are often created with the expectation for creating a community of readers and customer, they content of the blog has to cater to the readers' needs and expectation. Having a specific topic and focus of the blog helps for the blog to be easily recognizable and to attract following that has genuine interest of the content posted. The chosen topic has to be kept in mind when the content of the posts is created in order to stay consistent to the main focus of the blog. Several points which could be helpful when defining blog topic are:

-What are the objectives of the blog? What is the company aiming to accomplish by publishing a blog?

-Creating a list of keywords that are relevant to the company's industry, products, or services

-Focusing on a specific strength of the company within the industry, something to distinguish the business.

-Keeping in mind the needs of the audience, the topics that the readers would be interested in.

- Insufficient variety

Having a clear focus on the topics of a blog is important. However, that may sometimes lead to creating too much content that lacks versatility. Offering relevant information is just as important as keeping the audience interested. An engaging blog would be able to offer content to their readers in a variety of ways. People are used to the dynamic of the internet publishing and like to assimilate information presented in different ways. Offering differently presented information allows reaching wider audience and catering to the needs of more readers Keeping the blog interesting will keep the readers engaged and more likely to become regular visitors. Content variety can be accomplished by utilizing different visual means, including videos, images etc.

- Failing to engage with the readers

Blogging is social activity and blogs are a platform for social two-way interaction. Important is not only to be able to deliver a good message but to be able also to maintain a conversation with the readers, answer their questions and engage and audience. A blog has no purpose without its readers and therefore it is crucial to keep it in mind when posting content on the blog. The readers of a blog are also a community of potential customers and it is in the interest of the company to be open towards hearing their opinion. The following points will help improving the two-ways communication:

-Allowing readers to comment. The comments option is essential for generating conversations regarding of the topics presented on the blog. It also allows the blogger to observe the trends among the readers in terms of opinions.

-Monitoring and replying to comments is important as it encourages readers to comment and interact. It shows that the company is interested in the opinions of the readers.

-Monitoring of the comments is a form of censure. Apart from spam comments, all opinions should be kept in their original form.

-Asking questions and feedback promotes discussions.

-Feedback is valuable and can be helpful for improving the blog according to the readers' needs and expectations.

- Poor visual design

A blog is created by content and visual elements. It is important that they both complement each other and are working to achieve the sent objective of the blog. They both need to deliver the same message. Even the most useful and expert content can be hindered by poor implementation of a blog's design. In the marketing world the content and the packaging are equally important. An appealing blog design can make reading of the blog more enjoyable. Catering to the readers' preferences is essential and therefore offering them well-presented content can make a drastic difference. A blog design also reflects on the way the company will be viewed and therefore is crucial to make sure that the design represents the values of the company and the way the brand is presented to the public.

5 Introduction of the empirical part of the research

The empirical part of the research consists of two parts. The first part is designed to support the previously presented theoretical framework and will include five examples of blogs which have become successful in their fields of expertise. This part of the research will take a closer look at the blogs individually and examine their technical, functional, visual and content related features. Special attention will be paid in the technical features of the blogs and their linkage to the theory. The blogs will be studied in a manner that looks into each case as an entity and describes the features that are unique to each blog. The aim is to present blogs that differ in their field of work, structure and audience base and look into their similarities and features that contribute to their success.

The second part of the empirical part consists of a practical guide for creating a blog on the Blogger platform. It is aimed to beginner bloggers and people who would like to practice blogging as their hobby. The guide can be used to create a well-rounded blog on Blogger, including layout customization, adding of practical features, including widgets to enhance the productivity and connecting to other social media channels.

The guide includes a part which describes how to add a blog to a blog directory and therefore reach wider audience. It is practically useful for people with no previous knowledge of blogging and creating a blog. The guide consists of step-by-step content that is visually supported by images of the actual Blogger platform. For achieving a better understanding of the steps in the guide, will be created a new blog. This way the reader will have the chances to follow the creating of a blog from scratch and all the steps involved in customizing the blog and making it unique.

The empirical part of the research has for its aim to deliver wider understanding of what are the features that make a blog a successful one and give real life examples of this. The outlined features of successful blog can then be transferred into practice by following the guide for creating a blog with unique content and features. This way the empirical part connects the real life examples to practical use that every beginner blogger can keep in mind in for benefit of their blogging activities.

6   Examples of successful blogs

In this section of the research will be discussed blogs that have managed to reach wide audience and become popular. They all have different focus and readership base. However, their common trait is the fact that they have established themselves as favored blogs and have stable readership. Regardless of the size of the business, the blogs have their own unique appeal. The study will present cases of blogs from different fields, company and individual blogs alike, and aim to point out factors that contributed for the success of the blog.
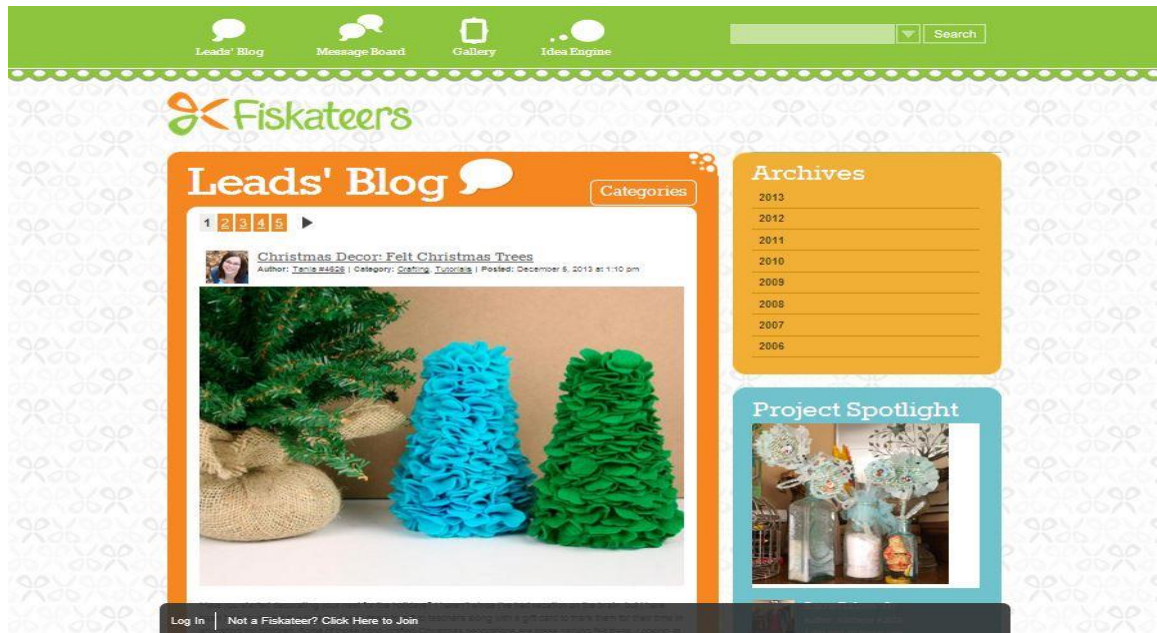
6.1 Fiskars

Figure1. Fiskateers blog, www.fiskateers.com

In the creating and developing of their blog Fiskars use a unique strategy. They endorse the creating of a community of enthusiasts, professionals and users alike, called 'Fiskateers'. Using this strategy the company makes every reader a contributor and a brand ambassador. The blog is used in a very well thought-out manner and focuses not on advertising of the product but rather on the use of the product. It does not put the spotlight on the company but on the clients.

The blog idea is born in 2005 when the company is looking for ways to communicate with the people who used their products on a daily basis. With organized campaigns for the search of creative brand ambassadors among handcrafting professional, the company choses four contributors for creating the community which will grow and develop on their blog. (Fiskars blog)

Through the years the blog has flourished and established as a platform for ideas and communication for crafting enthusiasts. With this innovative idea Fiskars has managed not only to create a unique community but also to boost the interest in the company through content that caters to the costumer. The content of the blog is entirely dedicated to the readers and engages them through practical content, easy to follow tutorials and tips as well as captivating images.

The blog highlights the content, which is conveniently divided into sections:

- Lead's blog- content created by the main blog contributors called The Leads
- Fiskars news- highlights inside news from the company
- Project spotlight- features a post that is chosen by the Leads on a weekly basis
- Message board- fellow Fiskateers are given the platform to share messages and ideas
- Calendar- lists important events within the community such as projects, competitions etc.
- Gallery- list images of creative ideas for inspiration divided into topics
- Idea engine- a place for readers to give ideas and suggestions on what content they would like to see on the blog.

Overall the content of the blog is created with the readers in mind. The communication with the reader and the openness to feedback is emphasized. Fiskars did not only create a blog for the users but has created an entire community, featuring profiles and usernames. The blog is truly dedicated to a creative sharing and communication and the readers are prompted to visit the site because of the benefit they get in the form of ideas and crafting tutorials. The creators of the blog engage the readers through challenges, events, poles and discussions. Every week a reader's idea is featured on the blog. This two-way connection is very important for engaging the audience.

In technical and styling terms the blog is executed in a scrapbook theme, which is entirely in line with the product of the company but gives more practical and creative approach. The outlook is very clean and using bright contrasting colors. The simplicity of the theme allows the images of the blog posts to stand out and be viewed easily. The overall look is very easy to follow and pleasant to read.

The blog has only one sidebar in which are positioned several sections of the blog. This way the content is kept clear and easy to follow. Every section has its own purpose and the links on the blog are kept to minimum. This contributes to a very user friendly outlook.
At the header of the blog are placed quick links to gallery and brainstorming platform as well as a search field for quick access to content. At the bottom of the page is placed

a pop-up window prompting new visitors to join the Fiskateers community and become a member.

The whole Fiskars blog is executed in a manner that caters entirely to the audience. Everything from the community to the content and visual execution is created with the readers in mind. The page not only delivers information but also an experience and creative source for crafting enthusiasts. The content of the blog can be read by anyone, regardless of whether they are using Fiskars products or not. This accessibility and openness is a big plus for the blog as it allows a wider audience to engage and become a regular reader and a Fiskateer.

6.2   Starbucks
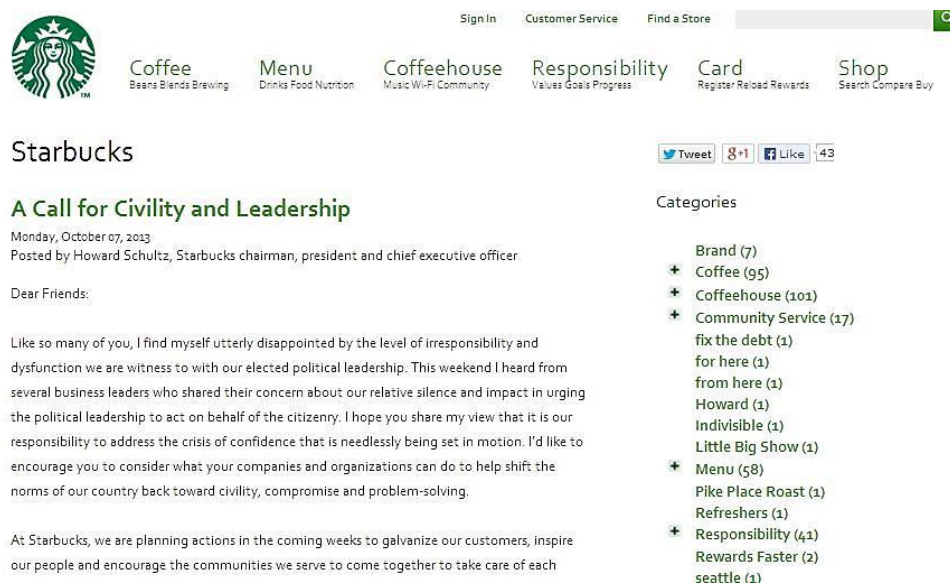
Figure2. Starbucks blog, www.starbucks.com/blog

Starbucks is one of the most popular chains of coffee shops in USA and it has many franchises internationally. Their brand is well established end they serve a large client base. The company is planning an extension of the brand, creating chain of tea houses around USA. This makes having a company blog a good idea and it has led to further popularity of Starbuck's website. The blog caters to the interest of the costumers and offers a large variety of information about coffee, ingredients and the products that Starbucks offers. This gives the readers a chance to learn more about the brand from inside and to get familiar with the brand policy and values.

The topics of the blog vary from open letters from the executives to informative and entertaining posts about coffee drinks and lifestyle. The variety of content caters to the needs of different readers segments and contributes to the overall view of official yet causal style of the blog. The blog features a brain-storming platform called My Starbucks idea. The readers are able to propose an idea for drinks, promotional activities and customer rewards. The ideas can be voted by 'like' and 'dislike' button by the other readers. The community can also comment on ideas and give suggestions. Engaging the audience in this way makes the costumer contributor and gives them the power to choose their products and services. Additionally, the platform creates active conversational activities and provides the company with useful feedback and fresh ideas. Visually the blog is well organized and offers a very clear front page. The structure of the blog is more complex that it seems at first glance. Selecting a category opens a drop-menu with many topics and sub-topics to choose from. This gives the opportunity to present a large amount of content and topics without creating too busy appearance which would make the page hard to navigate. Organizing the content this way, the reader is able to access many topics while still enjoying a clean and simple page. The blog has several sections:

- Coffee- providing information on various topics related to coffee, ingredients, techniques etc.
- Menu- focuses on all drinks from the large selection that Starbucks provides
- Coffeehouse- lists store locations and entertainment for the clients in the store
- Responsibility- discusses environmental issues and ideas for sustainability
- Card- information about the different client and gift cards that the brand offers
- Shop-link to the Starbucks online store

The blog uses clear background, bright images and videos which makes it visually appealing. The structure incorporates one sidebar in which the reader can browse the content by the year of publication. The footer contains large about of links and information about the company, contacts, careers, business partners and online community. The blog is utilized well to create an online community, deliver company values and messages as well as promote and inform about the products that Starbucks offers. The style and outlook is modern and dynamic, which corresponds to the overall image of the brand and the client base. Contributing factor the success of the blog is the popu-

larity of the brand in large scale. The blog on the other hand aims to retain the popularity and establish a two-ways connection between the costumers and the company

6.3 Marriott

Figure3. Marriott blog www.blogs.marriott.com/marriott-on-the-move/

The blog of Marriott hotels is a great example of a corporate blog that is written directly by the president of the company. This has enabled the blog to become the voice of the business and be more personable to the readers and partners. There has been measured a direct sales growth after the launch of the blog (12most.com)

The blog is written from the personal perspective of Bill Marriott and has his touch throughout the content.

In the 'About me' section the readers have the chance to learn more about the author. Mr. Marriot shares that he does not have good technical skills with blogging and would often write his posts by hand or have them dictated to his technical personnel. Facts like this add personal value to the blog. It creates closer connection between the company and the clients and partners. The author himself mentions that blogging has been a great learning experience for him (Marriot blog)

The visual presentation of the blog is very clean-cut and professional, with an old-school edge and has an aura of credibility. This is a suitable presentation for the personal blog of a well-established lodging company. The sections are clearly distinguishable and the reader can read more by clicking on each of them. The color scheme is simple and neutral. The structure includes one sidebar, which contain:

- RSS feeds

- Email alert function

- Link to Bill Marriott's book

- Popular posts widget

- Tag cloud

- Biography of the author

- Link to author's YouTube channel

The blog includes a search bar for faster browsing of content and added convenience for the readers. There is also a 'Find a hotel' link which transfers the reader to Marriott's reservations page where hotel reservations can be made. The footer contains a link to the company's main page. The blog posts are published every week. This is the average frequency for most corporate blogs and keeps the readers interested in the regularly updated content.

Marriott's blog has a classic look and structure of a corporate blog. It incorporates simplicity and functionality. The main purpose of the blog is to bring the clients and partners closer to the brand and be the voice of Marriot. The personalized writing style and simple formatting of the content is in line of the image the blog portrays. The blog is a great addition to the otherwise modern and dynamic view of Marriott's company website.

6.4   Cisco
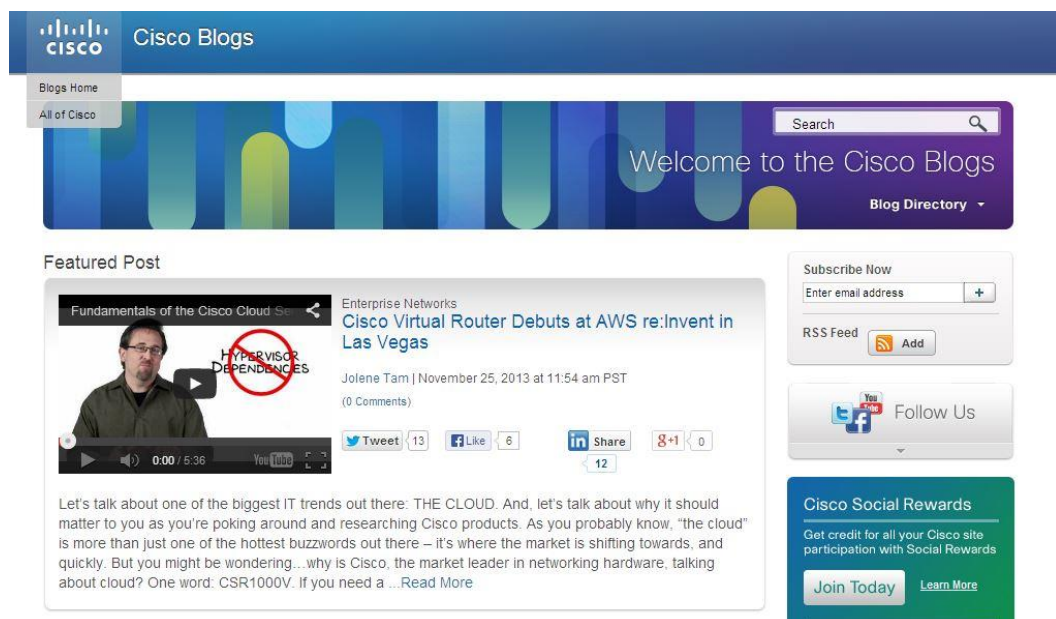
Figure5. Cisco blog, www.blogs.cisco.com

Cisco blogs incorporates large amount of content on variety of topics and fields. It has grown to be a social hub where professionals of all business aspects can receive relevant information and exchange opinions. The popularity of Cisco blogs have been escalating due to the large amount of relevant professional information and the established readers' community. The blog utilizes a rewarding system for its' readers called Social reward. It is designed to encourage the audience to be more active throughout social media and share the content of the blog or become a contributor. Depending to the level of activity, the users may gain badges such as: Broadcaster, Cisco blogger, Super reader, Contributor, Super visitor etc. This unique program is of reward not only to the readers but to the blog platform itself as it allows generating more viewers and popularity.

The blog platform has a current and dynamic look and feel. The color-scheme and choice of visual elements contributes to the overall look and supports the topics included in the blog. The header includes a Blog directory drop-menu which includes

- Technology-discusses topics in technology and mobile fields

- Industry- focuses on topics of variety of industries

- Support- links to a forum-based page where users get support on various issues

- Partners-weekly highlight of the most important Cisco partners' news

- More from Cisco-insight of the work of the company

- Corporate news- posts and updates from the executives of Cisco

- Countries and regions- variety of Cisco blogs by country

The blog is well organized as a structure and easy to follow and navigate. It utilizes a one-sidebar structure. The sidebar features functions RSS feed, social media links, preview of popular blogs and recommending websites that Cisco's team is reading. The blog also list featured bloggers, whose profiles can be read by selecting their image. The footer contains links to all categories as well as contact details and links to Cisco's official website. The blog utilizes variety of multimedia, which contributes to its modern design. The overall look and feel of the blog is well structured and easy to navigate. The strength and unique point of Cisco is the large amount of information that it offers to its' readers. Covering all topics across many industries, the page has become a source of information for many professionals across the globe. Moreover, the Cisco

blogs have managed to develop a community, which shares expertise and opinions, supporting each other's work and success, which is one of the core principles of Cisco
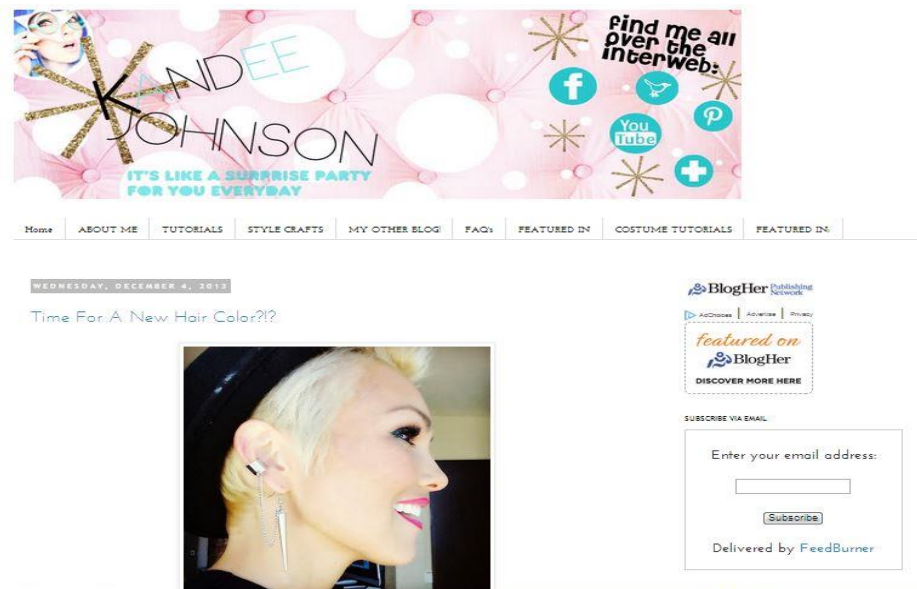
6.5 Kandee Johnson

Figure5. Kandee Johnson blog, www.kandeej.com

This blog is featured in the research as an example of a successful personal blog. It showcases the power of the social media in creating popularity online and resulting in profit.

Kandee Johnson is a makeup artist, blogger and a beauty guru from USA. She jumpstarted her carrier on YouTube and in the blogosphere and in short term became one of the most famous people in the beauty online community. She is nowadays writing a professional and a personal blog, has three channels on YouTube and thousands of followers in other social media such as Pinterest and Instagram. With her skillful use of social media Kandee Johnson has established her name among professionals and gathered over million subscribers on her main YouTube channel as well as over 50 000 followers on both her blogs. She is a good example of a self-made online celebrity. She organizes seminars and classes across USA which are visited by her fans and followers from the social media.

Her professional blog started in 2008 as and was focused mainly in beauty tips and lifestyle content. She uses simple and easy to follow techniques and very personable

style of writing which makes her readers relate to her. Her blog has over 33 000 registered followers and additionally her second blog, which is dedicated to her personal life, has over 15 000 registered followers.

The success of her blogging career is due to the fact that she writes in an engaging way, provides current and relevant content to her audience and always follows the trends.

As an experienced blogger, Kandee Johnson knows her reader base, their interest and the type of content they like to read about. Her blog always provides variety of topics and is accompanied with bright and uplifting images. Her upbeat personality has become a trade mark for her blog and YouTube channel and is what her audience has come to expect from her. She posts very regularly and keeps the readers informed for updates using all channels of social media. This keeps the readers interested and returning to the blog for new and fresh content.

The style of the blog corresponds well with the content. The header is often updated and changed using personally created header images that are relevant for each season. The visual elements of the blog are used to enhance the content. The color scheme has been kept neutral in order for the brightly colored images to be read clearly and not distract the viewer.

The blog contains high quality images and videos, which makes it overall visually appealing. The structure of the blog uses one sidebar in which is are positioned several widgets

- Chronology widget that divides the content by the year it was posted
- Follow widget that allows the reader to register as a follower
- Social media widget
- Email subscription

Bellow each post is embedded a widget that allows sharing the post in various social media. This helps the content to spread throughout the blogosphere and gather wider audience. The communication with the readers is promoted by regular commenting and responding to the readers' comments. This engages the reader and creates a blogger-reader connection as well as readers' interaction.

Kandee Johnson can be considered one of the first people from the beauty community who utilized social media to create a brand of her own personality. Her carrier online has grown rapidly in only several years, making her one of the most recognizable faces on YouTube and the blogosphere. This is due to her good creative and communication

skills as well as engaging the audience by delivering variable and current content in an entertaining way.

6.6   Summary and Conclusion

The chosen blog examples are representatives of five very different types of blogs. While some of them are written by individuals and are aimed to individuals, others are owned by international companies and address both individuals and stake holders alike. They all are different in structure and presentation and include different technical functions as well as visual features. They also differ by the frequency of posting. In the case of Marriott blog the posting is done once a week, while the blog of Kandee Johnson is updated daily. Another difference is the amount of authors that are contributing to the blog. In cases like Marriott and Kandee Johnson blogs the author is a single individual. In the case of Starbucks, Fiskars and Cisco the contributing authors are several different people. The advantage of a single author blog is the consistency of the text and language used as well as full content ownership. The advantage of multiple author blog is the variety of topics presented and the larger base of professional competency. Another way in which the blogs differ is their writing style and the audience that they are aimed to. While blogs like Kandee Johnson and Fiskars have laid back and visually rich content, blogs like Cisco and Marriott are aimed at professionals and have more classic look and feel. All of the blog examples are aiming for delivering expert and professional view on the current topics in their own field of work.

Although those five blogs seem very different at fits glance, what connects them and makes them similar is the fact that those blogs have reached thousands of readers and are enjoying the popularity and authority they have achieved in their respective fields. The blogs clearly know their audience and provide the right content in the appropriate writing style for their readership base. All examples of blogs are utilizing correctly the visual and technical features in order to enhance the functionality and stylistic impact of the blogs. All of the five blogs are aesthetically pleasing, have clear design and are easy to navigate. The content is scheduled in a regular basis and it is easy to access through tags and search functions. The ease of use of the blogs, combined with the expertly written content and visual elements contribute to the popularity of the blogs and their large readership base.

7 Creating a blog with Blogger -Guide

This part of the research will focus on creating a guide for anyone who would like to start a blog as a hobby or wants to experience being an active part of the blogosphere. Whether one wants to start a blog to write on a topic of their interest, share their knowledge in certain field or wants to have a platform to express their opinions, blogging is a great way to create your own space on the Internet. Nowadays blogging is an easily accessible and cost effective publishing tool. Literally anyone can become a blogger. Due to the fact that there are established platforms for blogging, one does not need to invest in hosting solutions to start a simple blog as a hobby. This has enabled millions of people to make their first steps in blogging without initial investments and dealing with complicated software. Basically all one needs to establish a blog is internet connection, a little spare time and a point of view. As the guide will focus on creating a blog on the Blogger platform, the tutorial will follow the Blogger Getting started guide, which can be found on www.Blogger.com.

7.1 Types of blog hosting

When talking about blogs, it is essential to mention the options one has when deciding to create their own blog. The first step of creating a blog is deciding on the type of hosting used for the blog. This relates to the type of software being used to create, operate and maintain the blog. Depending on the purpose of the blog, one may choose between hosted and independent blog solution.

Hosted blog solution is when the author of the blog produces the blog content and decides on the outlook of the blog to certain extent but all technical aspects of managing the blog are covered by an outside hosting provider.

Independent blog solution is when one purchases and installs a blogging software package to their own webserver and uses it to create blog posts and maintain the operation of the blog, including comments, security settings and the work of the blog as a whole. (Ta'eed C, 2010)

When choosing what type of hosting solution to choose, one may consider the pros and cons that each type has to offer. Independent hosting gives the freedom of choosing your own domain name and matching email address. This adds more professional and personalized touch to the blog, giving the impression of more authority and relia-

bility. One can have high level of customization of the design of the blog and giving it unique and recognizable look and feel. Most importantly, when using independent hosting one has full ownership of the blog content and is not dependent on the functioning of an external hosting company. This type of hosting is used when creating a blog with intent of business or marketing purposes or creating and enhancing their own image as a professional. Independent hosting requires some financial investment, research when choosing the right hosting provider and some technical abilities to deal with the software in order to create and operate the blog.

A hosted blog solution is a great option for starting in the blogging world and getting a good practice of their blogging skills before moving to a more professional level. It is a fast and easy way to set up a blog as a hobby. One of the best sides of using hosted blog solution is that it does not require large initial capital. Blogging can start without having to buy hosting and domain services. All technical details around maintaining the blog are covered by the blog solution provider. Hosted blog solutions are user friendly and one does not need any special technical skills to be able to create blog posts and maintain the daily operations of the blog. (Ta'eed C, 2010)

A downside of having a hosted blog can be the fact that one is dependent on the proper functioning of the hosting solution provider. An example of this type of issues is a server downtime during which the blog is not accessible to the readers. In general, hosted blog solution is a great way to begin one's blogging career and an easy and fast way to start blogging without additionally needed money investment and technical skills.

7.2   Blogger.com- Overview

Blogger (www.blogger.com) is one of the most popular and widely used free hosting solutions. Blogger started to operate in 1999 as a result of the growing use of internet and more people wanting to have their space on the web. Few years later, in 2002, Blogger was bought by Google, which automatically provided the service with stability and integrity among the users as a reliable service. This has enabled Blogger to constantly stay up to date with the trends in technology and the needs of the bloggers. The platform continuously launches new apps and widgets adding to the functions that

bloggers can incorporate in their blogs and thus enhancing the final look of the pages. Functionality and simplicity and accessibly are one of the strongest points of Blogger and makes it a great choice for beginner bloggers from any field. Some of the advantages of Blogger include:

- starting a blog is free
- every blogger receives their own unique web address
- there are many functions to choose from as a way to add functionality and personalization to the blog. One can choose from a variety of features to personalize your blog,
- Blogger supports the option for multiple authors to contribute to the same blog
- supports images, video and audio files within a blog post
- a good range and variety of basic templates for creating a blog

Bloggers allows its users to add advertisements to their blog through the service Adsense. The service allows bloggers to earn money when their readers click on the advertisement links. This gives bloggers the opportunity to monetize their blogs and in case the blog is popular and has good traffic, this may result in good earnings to the blog author and Blogger as a host providing service. (Gardner S.2010)

7.3 Choosing a topic of the blog and a domain name

First step when thinking of starting a blog is deciding what the blog will be about. Choosing a topic for the blog is one of the most important things to be considered. There are blogs in every topic and every blog has its readers. Ideas for topic of a blog can come from any fields of life. Ideas can come from one's professional experience, hobby and interests, travelling, technology, cooking etc. There are also many lifestyle blogs where bloggers describe their own life. Many blogs are dedicated to provide technical help to bloggers with tricks and tips for making their blogs even more functional and attractive.

There are two main strategies to follow when choosing a topic for a blog. The first one is choosing a wider field for the blog's topic which would allow the author to have variety of sub-categories to blog about. For example one may choose to write a culinary

blog in which they would discuss all types of food as opposed to someone who would blog only about preparing desserts. Other strategy is thinking about a topic that is less blogged about and creating your own niche. If we use the previous example, this can be a blog solely focusing on preparing solely different types of desserts and that can be the distinction of the blog. There are many blogs that are popular namely because they are focused on one thing. This allows the author to explore the topic in a very thorough manner and provide unique content which helps the blog stand out.

Second thing to consider before getting started with creating the blog is the blog's name. It is very important to think carefully for a catchy and easily memorable name. The name is the first step of creating the blog's brand and should speak about the intent of the blog. Through the name and layout a blogger gets a chance to make first impression to the reader who stumbles upon their blog.
It is recommended to aim at a name that is different and memorable as well as easy to spell because this will allow it to be found easier by search engines. Many choose to incorporate parts of their own name or the name of their company into the blog's name. This is a way to increase the familiarity a person or a company among the readers, a way of creating a brand for oneself

7.4 Getting started

As Blogger is owned by Google, it is required to own a Google account (Gmail account) before getting started.
First step of the process is locating the home page of Blogger by typing www.blogger.com. If you already own a Google account, just fill in your Google user name (Gmail address) and the password in the requited fields and then press the Sign in. Select New blog from the left hand side of the page.
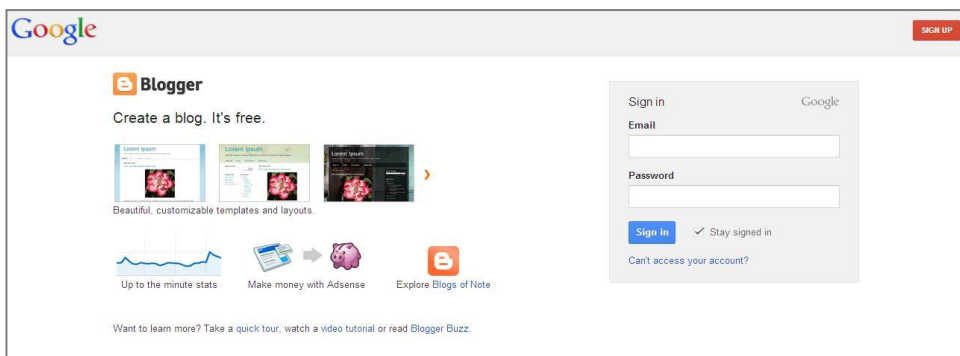
Figure6. Blogger Sign in page

If you do not own a Google account, simply click on Create Your Blog Now and fill in the requested fields. You can use any already existing email address of your own to sign up for a Google blogger account. After filling in the required information, click Continue.

Next step is selecting a name for the blog. Fill in the desired name of the blog in the Title field. Type the same name in the Address field. Blogger does an automatic check whether the name is free or if it has already been taken by another user. It may take few tries before one finds a blog name that has not already been occupied. The blog automatically gets an extension '.blogspot.com' as this is the universal domain of all blogs that are hosted by Blogger.

There is an option to purchase a custom domain for the blog, which costs around $10 per year. After choosing the name of the blog, choose a design template from the options presented in the Template field. This choice is not final and the template can always be changed from the settings at any point later on. When the name of the blog has been confirmed and the template has been chosen,

press Create blog.
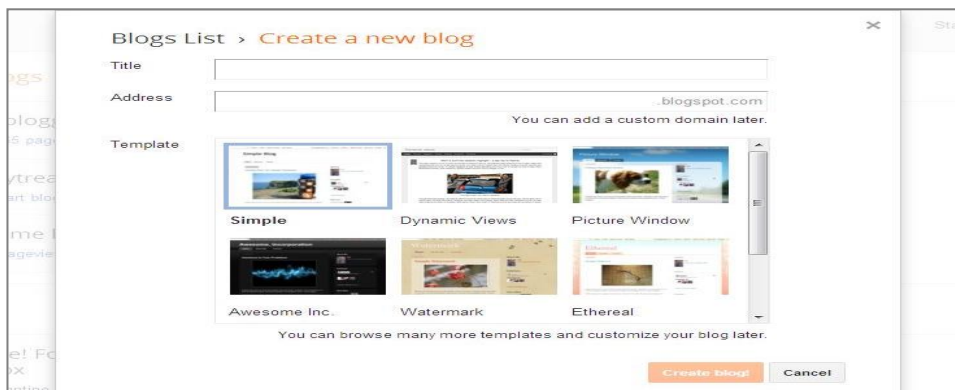
Figure7. Blogger Create a new blog page

For the purpose of the guide it was created a new blog by the name of Promoblog (promoblog.blogspot.fi) which functions for a fictional promotion company.

On every users' home page in blogger can be viewed all blogs that belong to that user. From here can be accessed the menu of each blog, allowing to view settings, statistics, posts etc.
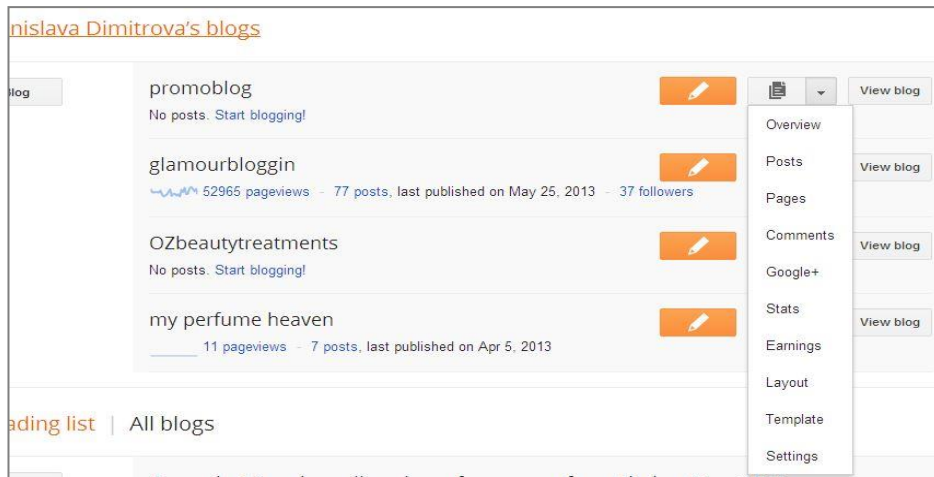
Figure8. Blogger Homepage

7.5   Layout

Choosing the layout of a blog determines how the blog would look as a structure and the positioning of the elements. This is an important step for creating the identity of the blog and also in terms of the blog's functionality. Customizing the layout of the blog is done by navigating to the drop-down menu shown in the Figure8. and choosing Layout.
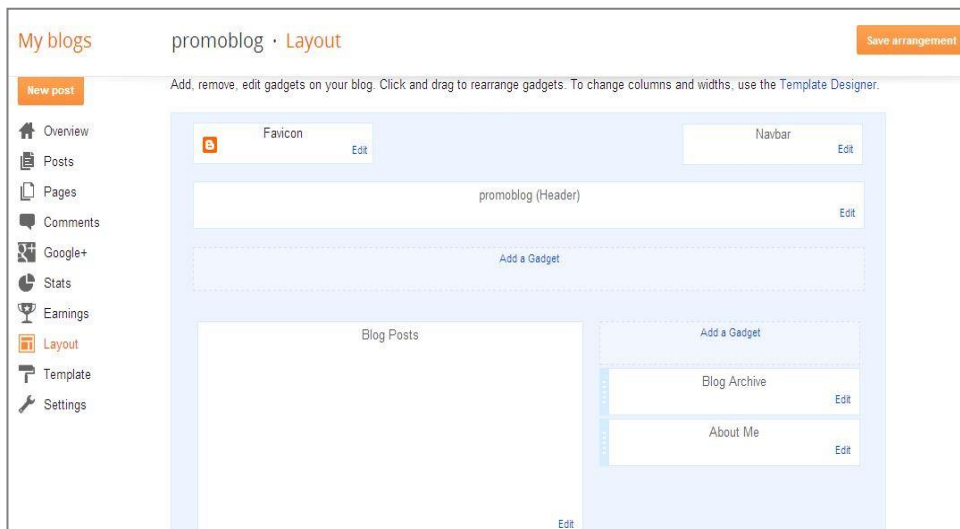

Figure9. Blogger Layout page

From this window can be customized the way the blog looks in terms of layout and function. At the moment Promoblog has header, one column on the right-hand side, Blog archive and About me gadgets. Using the Add a Gadget button can be added different functions to the blog. In most cases one would like to change the current layout

of the blog by adding an extra column, change the fonts or width of the blog etc. This can be done by pressing the Template Designer link in the upper right-hand corner.
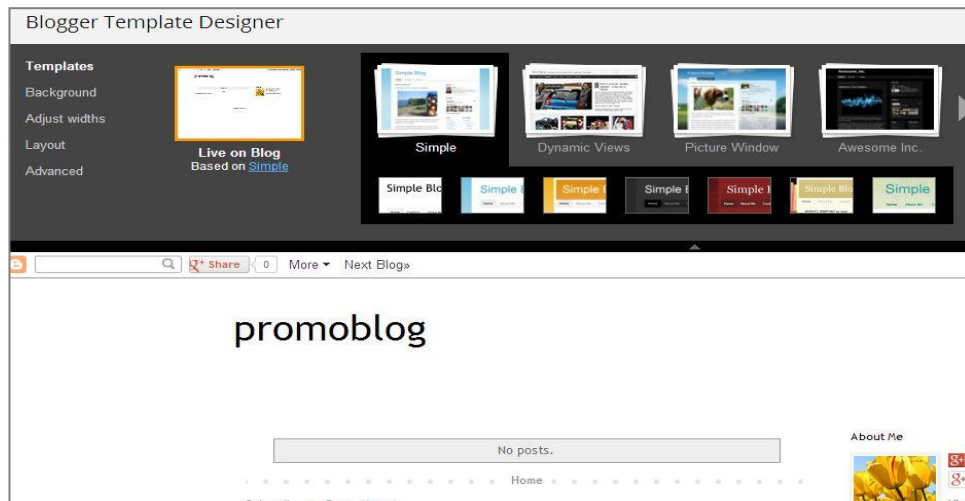
Figure10. Blogger Template designer page

From here one can choose a different template. There are several versions of each template, mostly differing from each other in color scheme. This provides a good variety of basic outlooks to choose from. With simple HTML coding each of these templates can be customized further to give truly custom look and feel of the blog. This would allow adding custom banner, blog background, different ornaments and decorations as well as social media buttons, which is crucial for any blog to get the word spread and gather readers.

Once the desired template is chosen, the outlook and structure of the blog can be changed from the Layout Menu, link on the left side of the screen.
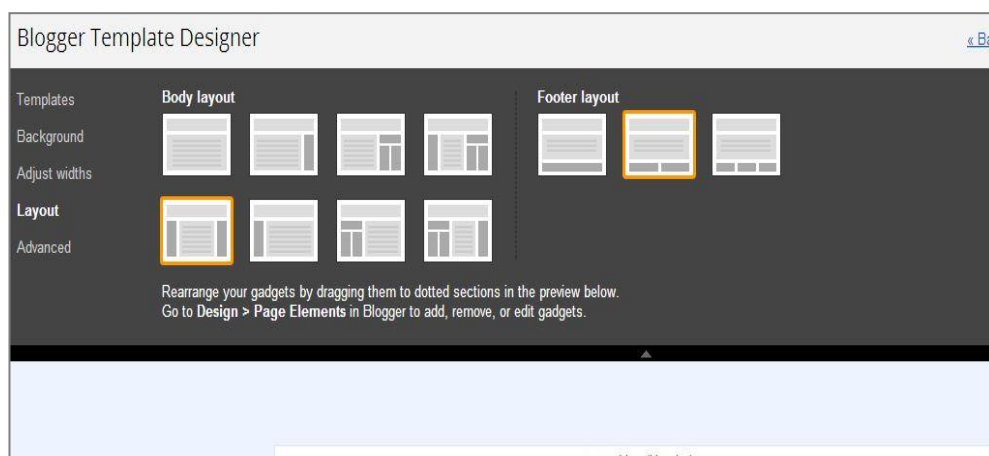
Figure11. Template designer, Layout menu

From the Layout menu can be chosen the amount of sidebars and their orientation, as well as the structure of the footer. The amount of sidebars effects of the width of the space for posts. Respectively the more sidebars are included in the blog, the narrower will be the blog post area. Sidebars are useful as they not only separate the blog space but in them can be included gadgets and different widgets that would add functionality to the blog. Sidebars are also the space where possible ads will appear. Ads can be added also to the blog post area as well as the header and footer of the blog.

Once the blog layout is chosen, the width of the sidebars and the entire blog can be changed and fine-tuned from the option Adjust widths. This allows changing the width of the blog as a whole and one or all sidebars. The maximum allowed width of a blog is 1500px and for a sidebar is 500px. When arranging the widths of the sidebars one has to keep in mind that if they are too narrow some widgets will not be viewed properly. If the sidebars are too wide that will not only be less aesthetically proportionate but will also result in less space for the blog post area. Standard sidebar width is 200-300px.

Once the width and structure is selected, more customization can be added by changing the default background of the template. This can be done by selecting the Background option.
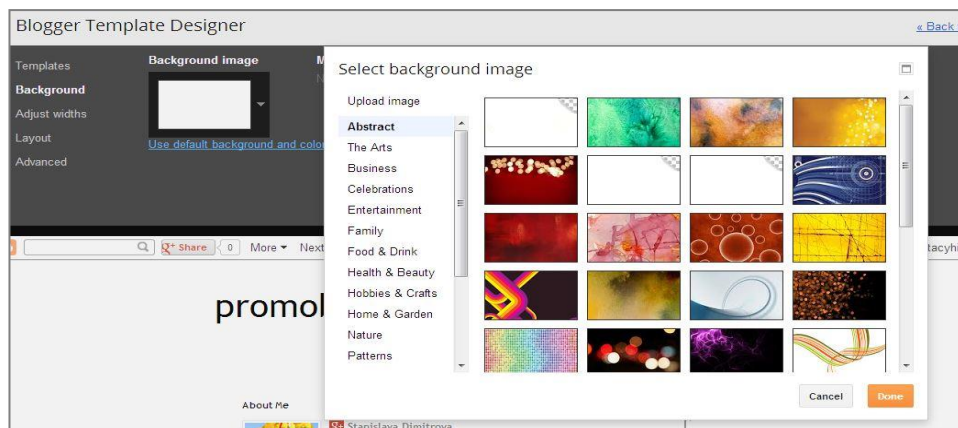
Figure12. Template designer, Background view

The Background menu provides with many options for different background images divided by subject. That helps in searching for images that match the topic of the blog. If none of those images appeals to the blog author, Blogger has provided the option of uploading your own image which is in suitable size to be used as a background. This

adds much higher level of customization as there are options to further choose the positioning of the image (right, center, left, tiled etc.).

After changing the background the whole color scheme of the template would look different and may not match to the new background. This can be fixed by selecting the Advanced settings option on the left.
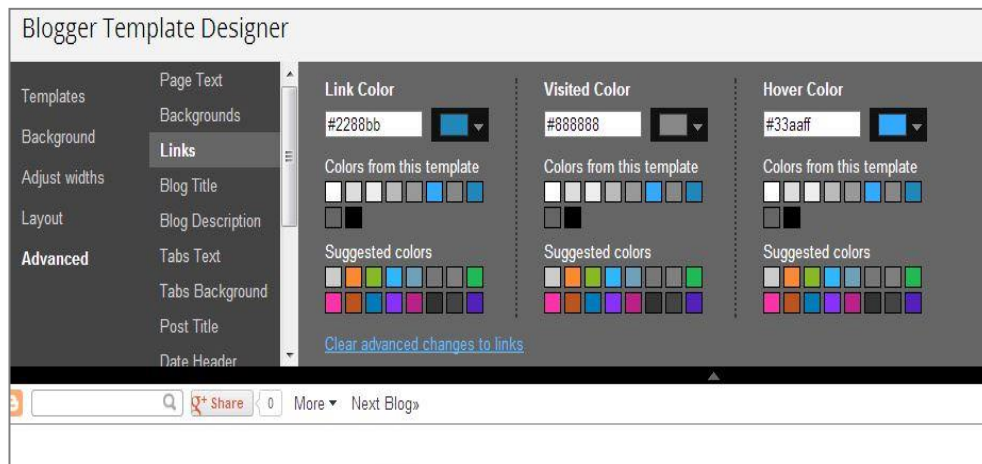

Figure13. Template designer, Advanced options

Advanced settings is the place where everything visual can be fine-tuned, such as text colors, sidebar outlines, links, picture outlines, fonts etc. As an additional assistance Blogger suggests colors that would match to the current template.

After the above mentioned changes are applied Promoblog contains two sidebars (width 150px each), blog width is 1150px and has a suitable background.
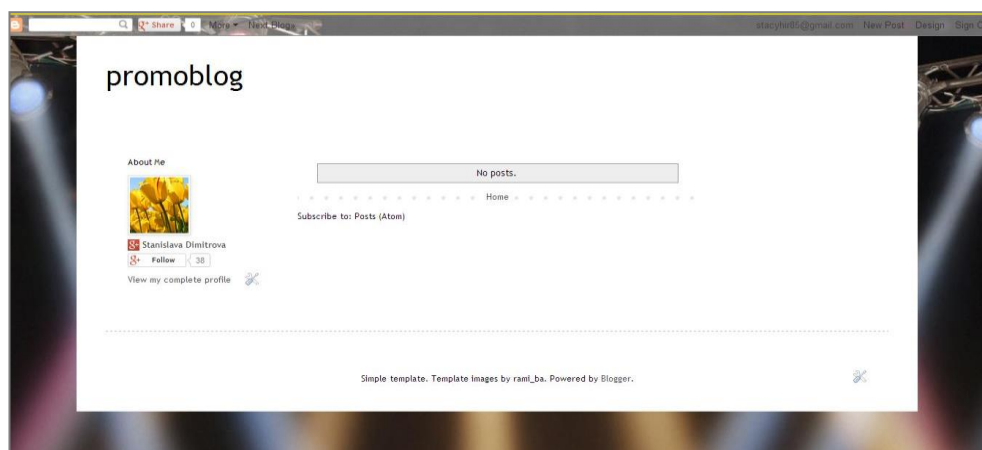
Figure14. Promoblog initial view, settings added

Now that those changes are applied is possible to add even more customization for a unique and recognizable look of the blog. That is achieved by creating a custom header for the blog. This is easily made with simple image editing program. For creating the Promoblog header will be used Microsoft PowerPoint. It is simple and effective way to put together image and text and add effects without the need and knowledge of image editing programs such as Photoshop.

After finding the desired image, it needs to be resized in suitable measures for the blog. In this case the blog width is 1150px and the image was resized to 1100px width in order cover the majority of the blog header width space. The height of the image is 350px. Once the image has been resized, the name of the blog can be added and desired styles applied. Next step is merging the text with the background image and saving the newly designed header to the computer.

Now that the header is ready, it is time for it to be uploaded to the blog. This is done by going to the basic menu and choosing the Layout option in the left-side menu. From that option can be easily spotted the header area which has the blog title written in it. We click Edit and a pop-up window appears.
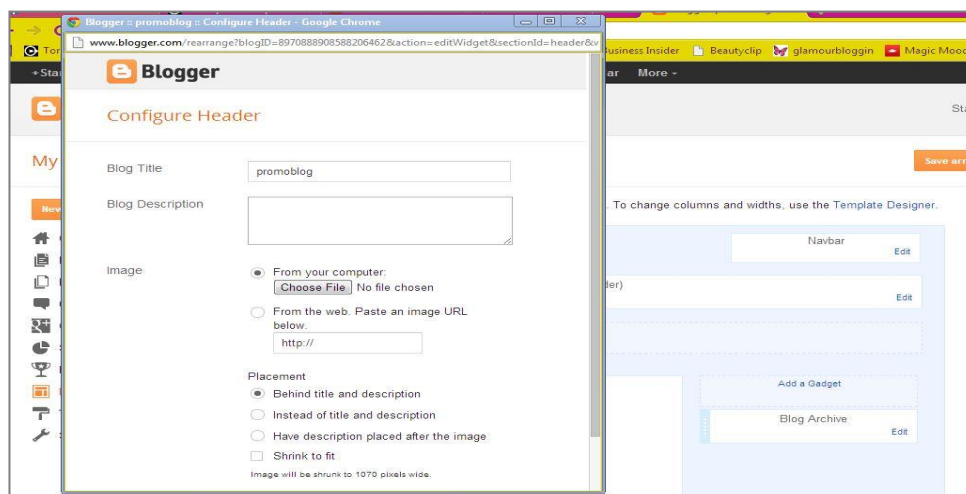

Figure15. Configuring header

From the button Choose file can be selected the previously designed header image, followed by pressing Save. The blogger will automatically save the changes but Save changes button can be used to save progress if needed. Changing the header image is not final and can be done multiple times. However, it is advisable to maintain a carefully designed header as it is the 'face' of a blog and reader associate the blog with it. Of-

ten change of header may cause confusion in readers and create the image of lack of identity. The look of the blog with the custom made header can be viewed from View blog option in the top the Blogger menu. After the changes Promoblog looks like this:
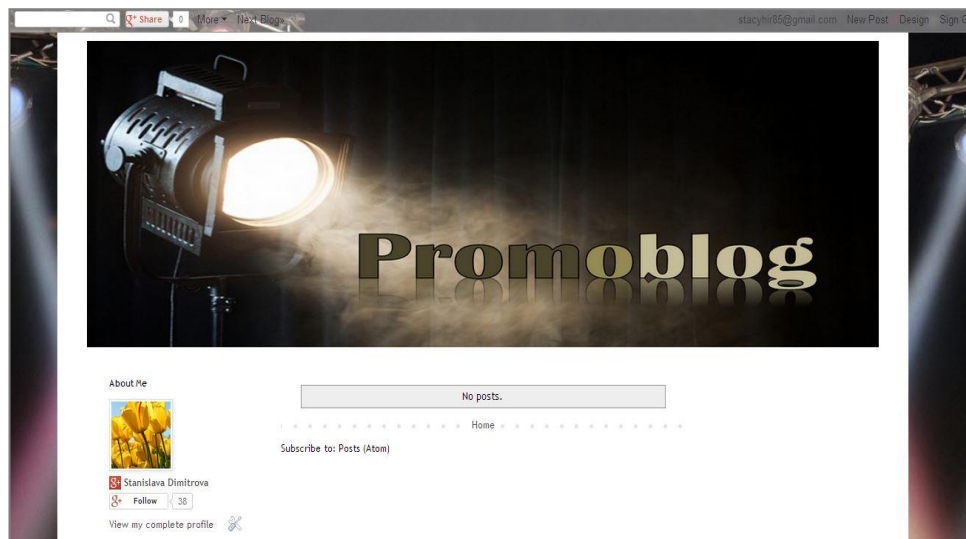

Figure16. Promoblog header added

7.6 Posting, labeling and scheduling

When the blog's design is complete, it is time to proceed with creating the first blog post. Blogger has a well-organized and easy to use interface to create blog entries. It is easy to navigate and writing a post is a straight-forward process.

- Posting

Proceeding with writing a blog post requires to be signed in to Blogger. To start with the posting we select the name of the blog from the home menu and then click on the button Create a new Post.
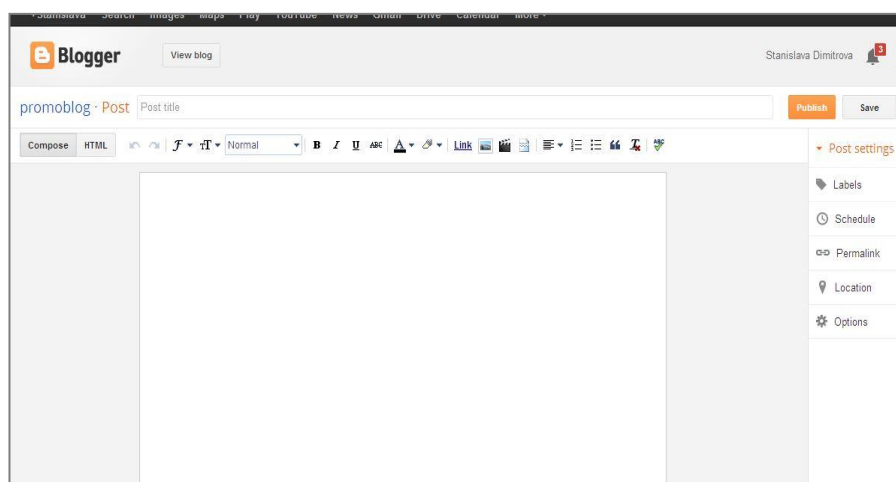
Figure17. Blog post writing area

In the upper area is located the Title bar where the title of the post can be typed in. The next row is reserved for the tools which are used for writing the post. There are options for two view types: Compose and HTML. Compose is the standard way of typing as one would use for example in Microsoft Word. The way the text looks in the screen while typing the post is the way it will appear on the blog. The HTML view is an option where the view of the page is HTML, this allows to copy/paste HTML codes for images or other items that can be imbedded in the blog post. By returning to Compose view is able to see how the page would look on the blog.

The rest of the buttons in the line are similar for options that most Microsoft Word users are familiar with. It includes fonts, text positioning, insert link button, insert image button, insert video button, spell check etc. Under the tools bar is the area where the text of the post is typed. Videos or images can be inserted in any blog post. After the text of the post is complete, it can be either published live on the blog or saved for later. Respectively the functions Publish, Save and Preview can be found on the right-hand side along the title bar. The function Preview opens a new window with a view of the blog post. It shows how the post will appear on the blog but it does not publish it. It is a very useful option to use before publishing a post as it allows to be viewed if the post appears correctly, for example if images are showing correctly.

- Labels and Schedule of a post

On the right-hand side of the window are located the Post settings. This includes Labels, Schedule, Permalink, Location and Options.

Labels is a very useful option and can serve as a tool for the reader in order to find posts on a certain topic easily. It is a way of filtering the blog posts. By clicking on the Labels button is opened a small box where can be typed labels that are relevant to the certain post. If the post is on a promotional event of a product, the labels may be Promotion, Events, Products etc. Blogger remembers previously used labels for user's convenience.

Using Labels will allow the reader to click on Events and automatically all posts labeled with Events will open.

Other options in Post settings menu is Schedule. It allows for the blog post to be posted in a desired of the author time. By clicking on Schedule is opened a dialog box with options Automatic and Set date and time. By clicking on Set date and time a calendar is opened with options to choose the date and the time when the blog entry will be posted. Blogger will automatically post the blog entry on that date and time.

Other very useful function from the Post Settings menu is the Options. This function allows the author to choose whether readers can comment on this particular blog post or not. Settings on comments of the entire blog can be regulated in the blog's main menu in Settings.

The first post in every blog is a great place to tell shortly what the blog is about, what are the aims of the blog, short introduction to the author or the company which is using the blog to communicate with their audience. This is a great way for readers to get familiar with the company or the blog author first hand. Below is presented the first post on Promoblog:
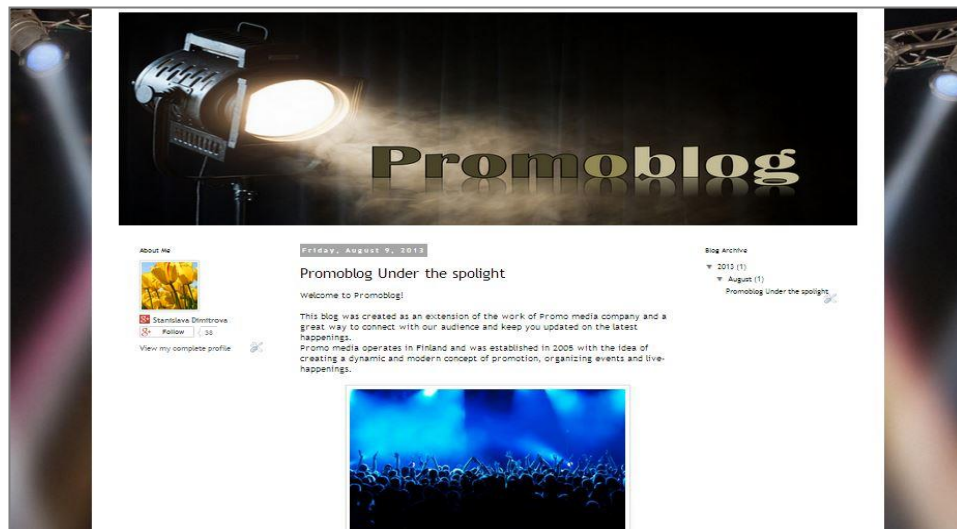

Figure18. Posted blog post

Now the blog has customized look but is lacking functional tools. By adding pages as well as gadgets and widgets can be increased posts readability, social media connections, ability to follow the blog, get email feeds etc.

7.7   Adding pages to the blog

Pages are useful as they allow separating the content of the blog and including several subjects within the blog. A blog can have different pages dedicated to different subjects, Contacts page, About page and many more.

Adding pages is simple and can be done from the Blogger Dashboard menu by choosing the Pages button on the left-hand side of the page.
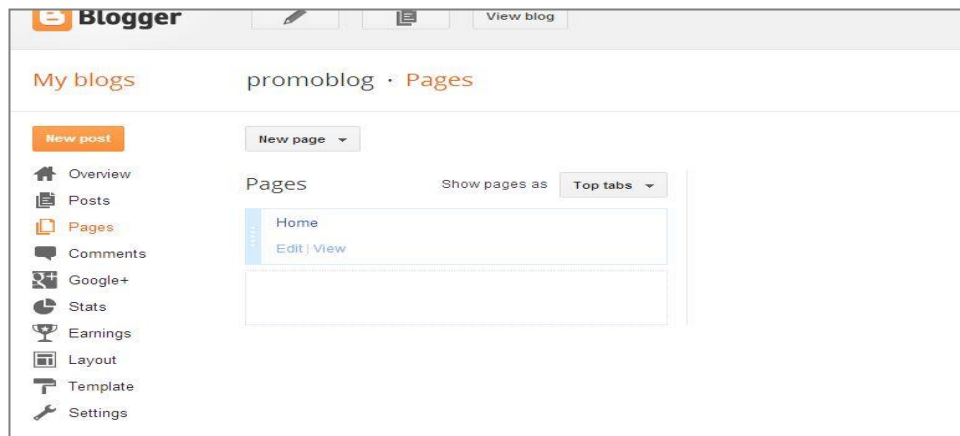

Figure19. Blogger Page menu

By selecting New page and clicking on Blank page we can create a page that is static. The content of this page does not update automatically but can be updated manually. Creating a blank page is very similar to writing a typical blog post. After writing the title and the content of the page it can be published by pressing Publish or saved for later by pressing Save.

The way pages appear on the screen can be modified from the menu Show pages as, which is on the right-hand site for the Pages main window.

The other option for creating pages is selecting New page, followed by choosing the option Web address. This option allows linking the page to another web address, which allows creating page that updates itself according to the content of the blog. Using this function can be created pages that are linked to certain labels from the blog. This allows for more separated content of the blog by topics. First step to do that is clicking on a label from the blog and open it in a new window, in the case of Promoblog that will be the label Events. After opening the page with label Events, we copy the URL of the page and paste it into the open in Blogger Web address pop-up wndow, followed by pressing Save.

Figure20. Page save pop-up window

After the added About and Events pages Promoblog looks like this:

Figure21. Promoblog with added pages

7.8 Gadgets and widgets

Gadgets and widgets are small software applications that are included to a blog or a web page in order to add function or customization. The terms gadgets and widgets are often interchangeable. Although they serve the same purpose there is a small difference between these two terms. Gadgets belong to a certain website and can be used only on that specific website, while widgets are an HTML code that can be used in every blog by simply adding it to the blog. (Gardner S.2010)

Widgets and gadgets are many and vary greatly in their function. Some are lists of blog posts or photos; others are more interactive, such as games or social plug-ins. Blogger offers a good number of different gadgets which allow the readers to follow the blog, like the blog's page on Facebook or other social media. While many of the gadgets are

aimed to serve the reader, some gadgets can be useful for the author, such as a gadget that counts the visitors and shows the location of the reader and what post did they view first.

That can help to get an idea of the readers' interests and would be useful for the author when wanting to target the content of the blog according to the readers' interest.

Gadgets are added to the blog easily and in only few steps.
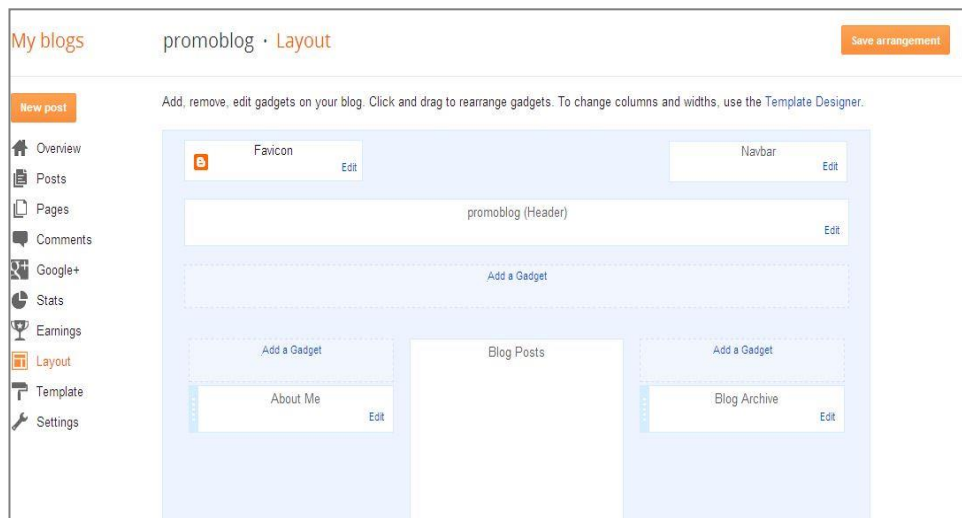
Adding gadgets happens from the main Layout menu.

Figure22. Blogger Layout menu

Under the Header bar, as well as on the top of each sidebar, is located the Add a Gadget button. By clicking on this button opens a Blogger pop-up window from which can be chosen various gadgets. For easier browsing, gadgets may be searched by name. Gadgets are generally divided into categories including Basic, More gadgets and Add your own gadget. Basic gadgets include 27 options. Among the most common ones are Popular posts, Pages, Search, Blog lists, Blog Archive, Labels, AdSense etc. The More gadget menu offers 25 options, which are developed by a third party. Those include Share it, Wikipedia etc. The Add your own gadget button allows adding the URL of a gadget which resides on an active website.
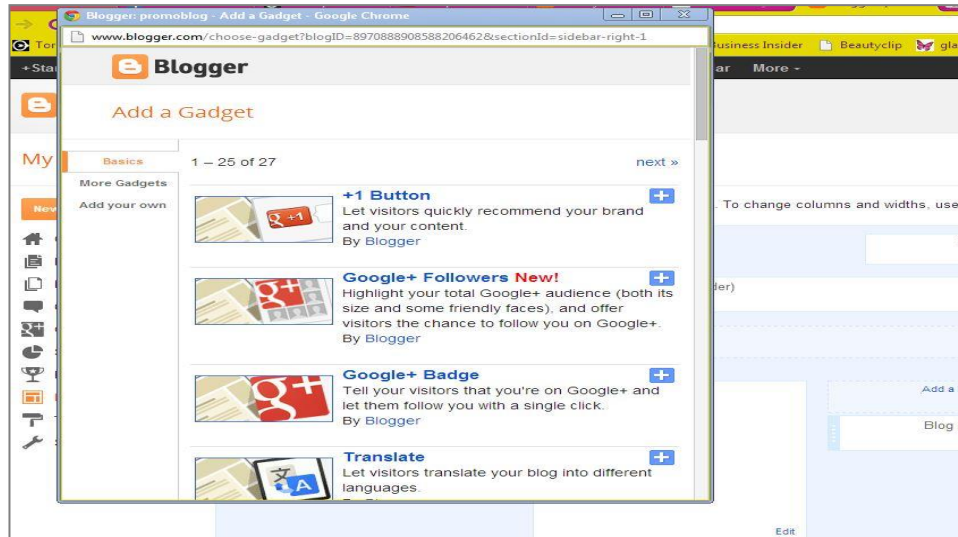
Figure23. Blogger Gadget menu

Once the desired gadget is selected, it can be added to the blog by clicking the blue plus sign on the right-hand corner of the menu, followed by pressing Save. The location of the gadgets and widgets within the blog can be changed by simply dragging them to the desired place in the Layout menu. Every newly added gadget is located on the top of the sidebar.

The gadget HTML/Java script gadget is probably one of the most useful ones as it allows adding gadgets, badges and other plug-ins from other websites by copy/paste of an HTML code.

Figure24. Promoblog with added Blogger gadgets

7.9 Social media and traffic feed widgets

Even though Blogger has a good choice of gadgets, sometimes they are not enough to create a really customized look and feel of the blog. In the Internet can be found plenty of websites that offer free of charge gadgets with many functions and in many styles. Those can be used effectively to enhance the appearance and functionality of the blog and create more appealing image as a whole. Social media websites and blog communities have buttons which can be added to a blog by using a provided HTML code. These buttons serve as a link for the readers to follow the blog on the respective blog community. It is an excellent choice to use one of those customized widgets for connecting the readers with all social media outlets that the blogger or the company has. Adding widgets is easy and does not require specific technical knowledge. After one gets familiar with using widgets, it is easier to use and modify them.

- Adding Social media widget

There are many ways to add and create social media widgets but using a readily generated HTML code is an option that does not require knowledge in HTML and is not time consuming. One can find many readily available for free use social media widget codes. In this guide will be used an easy and efficient way for adding social media widgets through the website www.topproducer.com. This website allows generating HTML code for a list of social media websites.

To begin the process, visit the website and locate Product support/Website/Social media widget creator from the left-hand side menu.

Figure25. Social media widget creator

To start creating the widget click on Create Widget button in the right bottom of the page. This leads to the Social Media Widget creator which allows choosing from a list of social media websites. Multiple websites can be chosen by pressing Add/Update. After selecting the desired social media websites, click Generate widget code button. Highlight the whole text of the generated code and save with right-click of the mouse.

Figure26. Widget HTML code generated

After the code has been copied, open the Blogger menu and locate the Layout view. In the already familiar manner of adding a Blogger widget, click Add widget and choose HTML/Java script. Paste the code in the open pop-up window and press save.
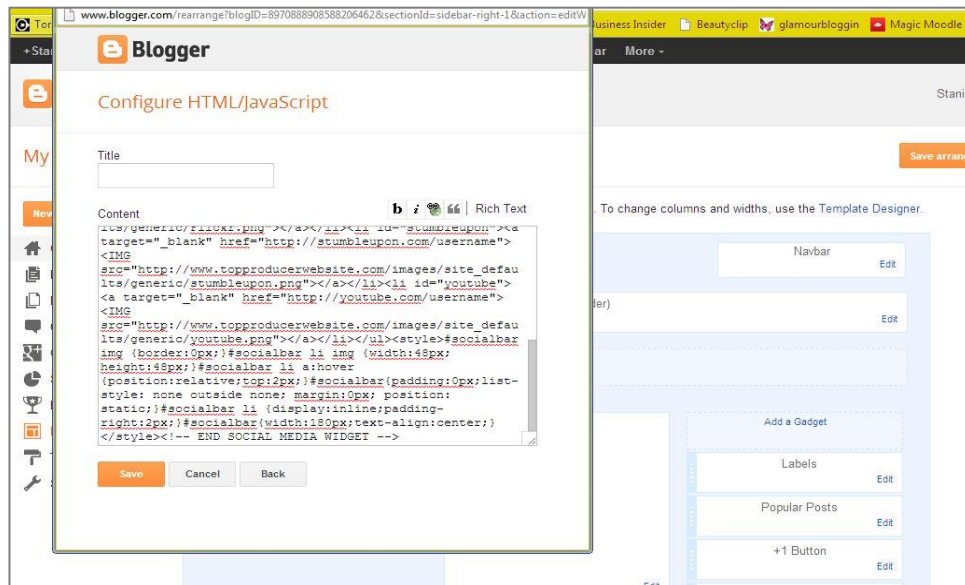
Figure27. HTML code

The social media websites shown in the widget can be updated and removed by delet-
ing their respective part of the HTML code or by creating and pasting a new code with
new content from the www.topproducer website. The widget can be removed by vising
Layout page, clicking Edit on the chosen widget and selecting Remove. Like every
widget, the location of the social media widget can be changed by dragging it to the
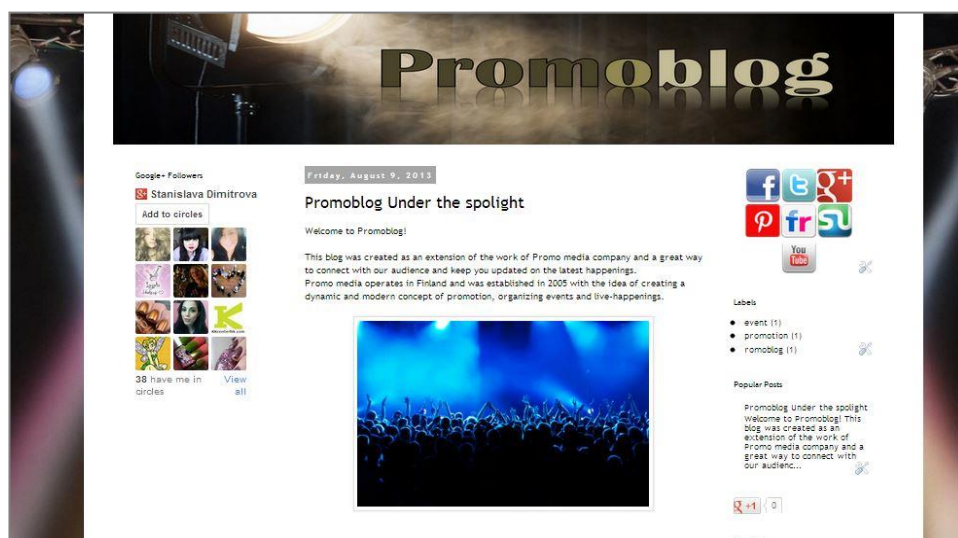desired location.

Figure28. Promoblog with added Social media widget

- Adding Traffic feed widget

Traffic feed is a useful tool for monitoring the readers of the blog. Its shows the location of the readers, as well as the website they came from and the post they viewed. This can give additional info about the kind of info the readers are interested in and show the way the readers found the blog. More detailed information on readers' statistics can be found from the Blogger dashboard in the Stats page, however having traffic feed widget is a fun and fast way for the blogger and the other readers to see who else has been visiting the blog.

Finding and adding such widgets is easy as many options are found on specially created websites that offer widgets or in blog tutorials. One simple and fast way to add a traffic widget is from Feedjit.com (www.feedjit.com). The site offers a free widget in only few clicks of the mouse.

Figure29. Freejit website

Adding the widget starts with pressing Choose your Feedjit button which leads to choosing from three options of widget with different level of customization. For trial purposes can be chosen the free option, which allows live free traffic and color and size customization of the widget. After choosing the free option is opened a window which provides the customization options of the widget in terms of color-scheme and size.

Figure30. Customizing widget on Frejit

There is option to choose the width of the widget; this should be chosen according to the width of the sidebar of the blog in order for the widget to look good on the blog. As the sidebars of Promoblog are 250pxl wide, the width chosen for the widget is 200. As color options are chosen, on the right side of the screen is a preview of the way the widget would appear on the blog. This makes it easy to coordinate the colors for creating a well-balanced widget. Under the color options bar is the option Show where visitors came, by ticking this box, the website from which the visitors came from will appear in the widget.

After the all customization is ready, the widget is made by selecting the type of hosting provider and pressing Go. This will open a window with button Click to open a new window and install on blogger. After clicking the button, a Blogger page for confirmation will be opened.

Figure31. Blogger confirmation pop-up wondow

In the Select a blog menu can be chosen the name of the blog to which the widget will be added, in case the blogger has multiple blogs. The process is finished by selecting Add widget button.
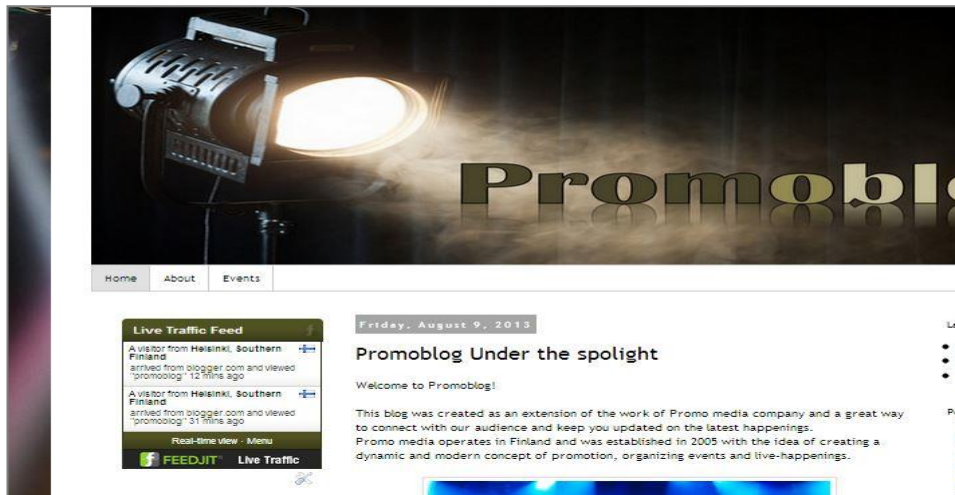

Figure32. Promoblog with added Traffic widget

7.10 Statistics and Monetizing in Blogger

The functions for overview of the statistics of the blog and the option to monetize the blog are both very useful and provide insight of how the blog is progressing. Both are easy to access and follow.

- Statistics

The dashboard of Blogger offers the option for viewing the statistics of the blog. This allows to be tracked the overall view history, the view history of the day, month or since the blog has been created. There is an option to track which post is most viewed and how many times it has been visited. The Traffic sources option allows view of the websites from which the blog has been found, as well as the search words that were entered when the viewer was browsing. This information can be useful for every blogger to learn more about their audience and decide how to make their blog more visible and searchable.

The Audience option allows viewing what countries from which the blog's readers come from as well as the search engine that was used.
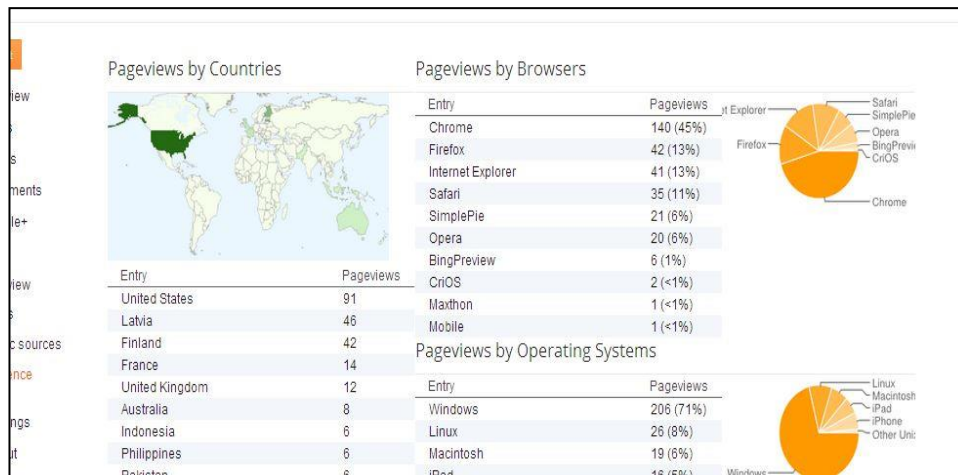
Figure33. Blogger Statistics menu

Overall the Statistics is a useful tool for a blogger to learn more about the audience that the blog reaches and to use that information in order to enhance the results of the blog in the desired direction

- Monetizing

Blogger gives the opportunities to bloggers to earn money by adding the function Ad-Sense, which is provided by Google. It enables bloggers to join AdSense and have advertisements displayed on their blogs. The advertisements generate earnings based on the amount of clicks an ad receives. AdSense displays advertisements based on the content of the specific blog. This increases the chance for visitors to click on the displayed ads as they would be on a topic of their interest. The amount of money earned from advertisements varies since different advertisers pay different prices for their ads. Google allows the colors, fonts and sizes of the advertisements to be customized by the bloggers to best match the layout of their blog. Signing up to AdSense is done from the main Blogger menu by choosing the option Earings. And selecting Sign up for Adsense to proceed with the process.
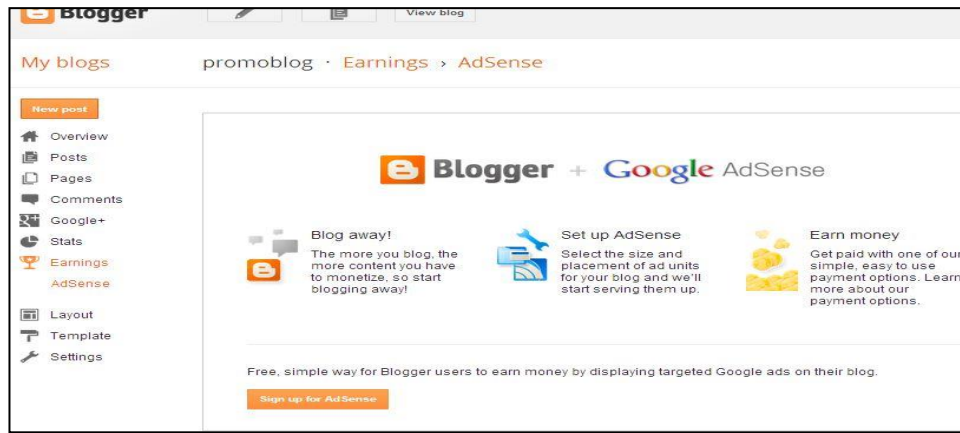
Figure34. AdSense page on Blogger

The newly opened page presents us with option to sign in by an existing Google account or to create a new Google account. After choosing the account follows a confirmation for association with AdSense and the process is complete. This allows advertisements to be posted on the blog in a placement chosen on the Layout page. There are options to choose from different sizes of advertisements to fit into the blog's template and content.

Once AdSense has been added, the earnings of the blog can be monitored from the main Blogger menu by choosing Earnings and selecting View Dashboard.
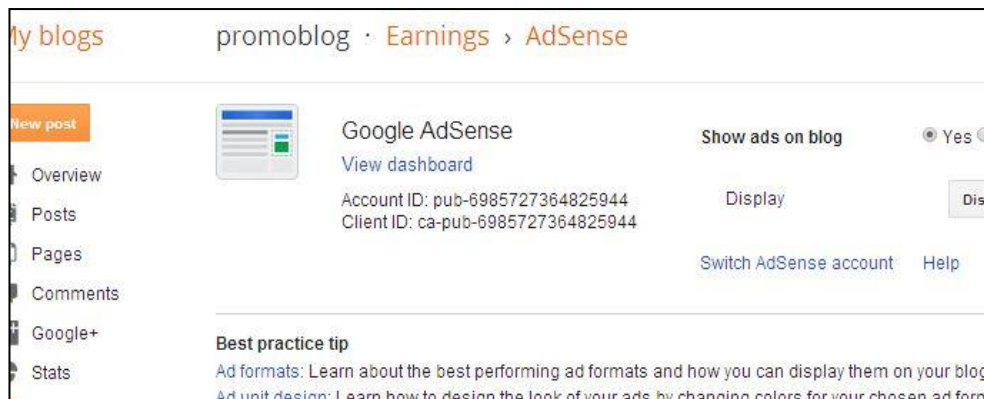

Figure35. AdSense Dashboard

From the dashboard can be viewed the current earnings as well as estimation on the earnings based on the blogs visiting frequency.

The main menu of AdSense allows also a performance report by day, by week and by month. It displays the overall activity of the blog, sources of visitors as well as their location and type
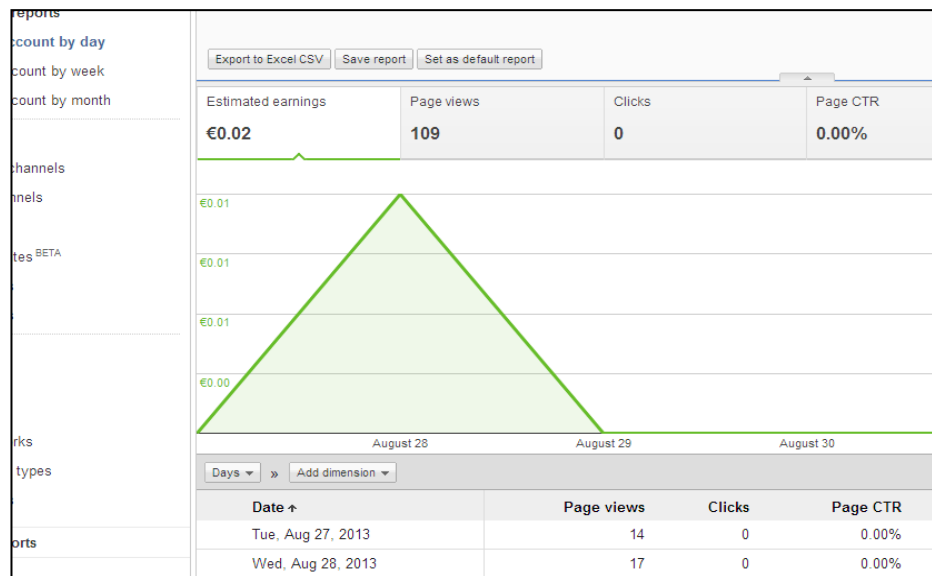
Figure36. AdSense report in graph

7.11 Blog directories

Blog directories are websites that allow the reader an access to a database of variety of blogs. This way the reader can browse between different blogs divided by topic. Blog directories are in a way a library of blogs, all conveniently available to the readers at their fingertips. There are many blog directory websites such as Best of the web blogs, Bloggeries, Tecnorati, Bloglovin, Blog Catalog etc. Having one's blog registered at a blog directory allows for a better exposure to target audience and receiving more traffic and readers who are actually searching for blogs in a given topic. Blog directories allow the reader to search by category or by typing a search word. This gives possibility to be discovered among other blogs and the content of the blog to be shared in the social media and therefore spread amonglarger reader base. In the long run this greatly increases readability and amount of followers and audience.

Adding one's blog to a blog directory undoubtedly has its benefits where promotion and reaching readers is concerned. Submitting a blog in some blog directories is free of charge (Technorati, Bloglovin, Blogorama), others may require a submission fee.

For the purpose of the guide Promoblog will be submitted to Technorati. After locating the home page of the website (www.technorati.com), we select the ``Join´´ button on the main tab located on the right side of the header. The newly opened page requires being filled personal information of the blogger, such as name, email, user name, password etc.

55

Figure37. Technocrati registration page

After the requested information is filled in, an email is sent for confirmation of the account. Once the account it activated, the newly created profile can be modified and the blog URL can be added. This is easily done by clicking on the account link on the right side of the header. That will open a page where all details can be filled. The options allow not only including the web address of the blog but also an existing Facebook and Twitter account, this enhances the ability to get more visibility also via the social media connections of the blog.

Figure38. Created profile on Technocrati

In the bottom of the form is given an option to upload a profile picture and to 'claim a blog'. In order to add a blog to the profile, simple needs to fill in the URL of the blog and select 'Claim'. This leads to a form where more details of the blog are required, such as blog name, Facebook account, Twitter account, Google plus account etc. In

the lower part of the page is a multiple choice table with options to select three catego-
ries that apply to the blog.

Figure39. Site categories form

In the lower part of the form are free rows with option to fill in tags that relate to the
blog. Those tags will help for the blog to appear when readers are searching for related
material. It is advisable to use tags that are related to the topic of the blog, subtopics or
synonyms of words that are frequently used in the content of the blog. After filling up
the required date we proceed by selecting 'Proceed to the next step''. On the screen
appears a short message that the blog is being evaluated for authenticity of the author.
A unique code will be sent to the associated with the blog email. As stated in the mes-
sage, the token code should be included in a new blog post. After the post containing
the code has been published, the process can be finished by clicking on 'verify claim
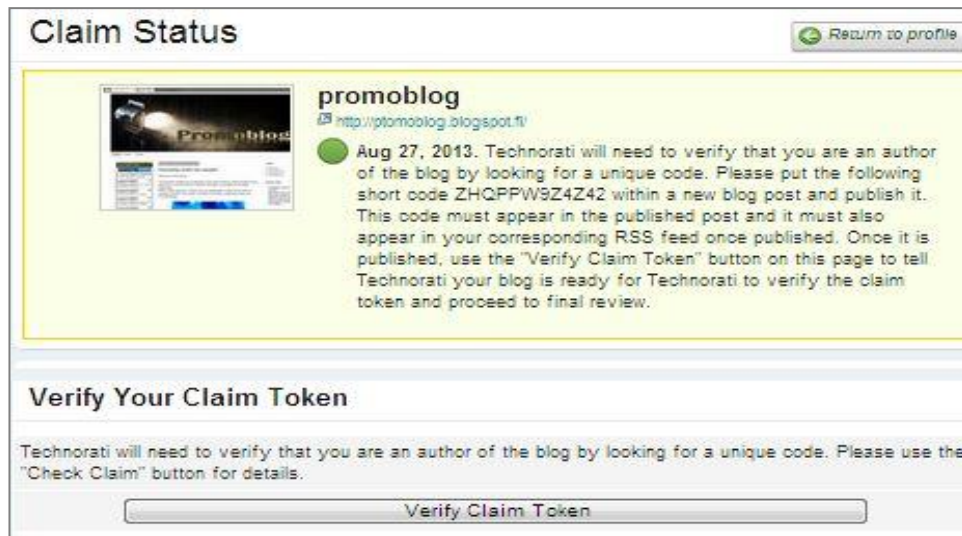token'.

Figure40. Varification

The website states that blog verifications usually take approximately 24 hours to be completed.

Another popular directory for lifestyle bloggers is Bloglovin. It is a free blog directory that offers a fast registration and own button to add to the blog so readers can follow the blog on the website.

Registration to the site begins with locating the home page (www.bloglovin.com) and selecting the 'Sign up' button in the bottom of the page. It opens a simple dialog box where username, email and password are requested. A verification email will be sent to the provided email in the signing in process. After the email has been verified, Bloglovining asks for the newly created account to follow five blogs that are already registered. When the chosen five blogs are being followed, the home page of the account it opened. Modifying the profile is done by the blue button on the upper right-hand side of the page. This opens a window where we can fill in information as well as adding the URL of the blog by selecting 'Add blog' After clicking on the button is opened a dialog box where can be filled the web address of the blog.
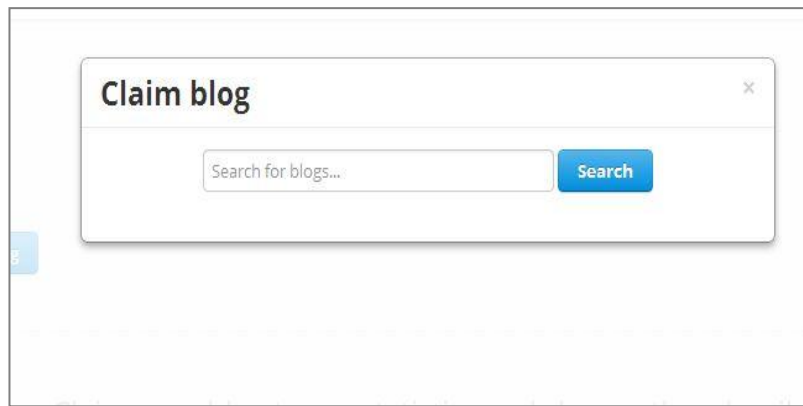
Figure41. Adding blog to Bloglovin

After entering the blog URL, the website provides a code that needs to be included in a new blog post on the blog. After the registration process is complete, this blog post can be removed from the blog by deleting it.

Figure 42. Generated HTML code

When the post has been published, the process is complete by selecting 'Claim blog'. The process is easy to follow and does not required verification period. Promoblog is now successfully added to Bloglovin.
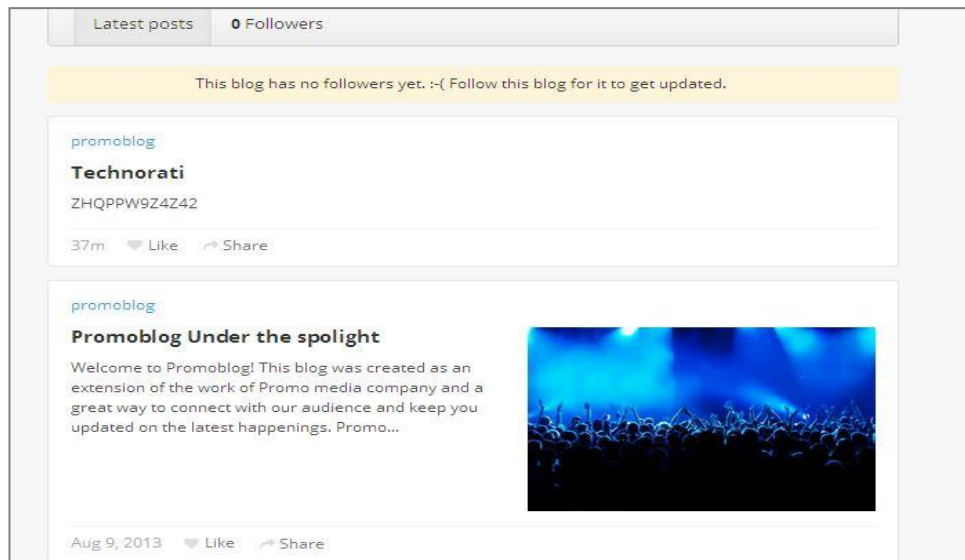
Figure43. Promoblog added

Bloglovin has a readily designed buttons that can be added to any blog as a widget and serve as a link to follow the blog. The buttons can be found by scrolling over the blue icon on the top right-hand side of the page. There are several options to choose from, depending on the theme of the blog and preference of the author.
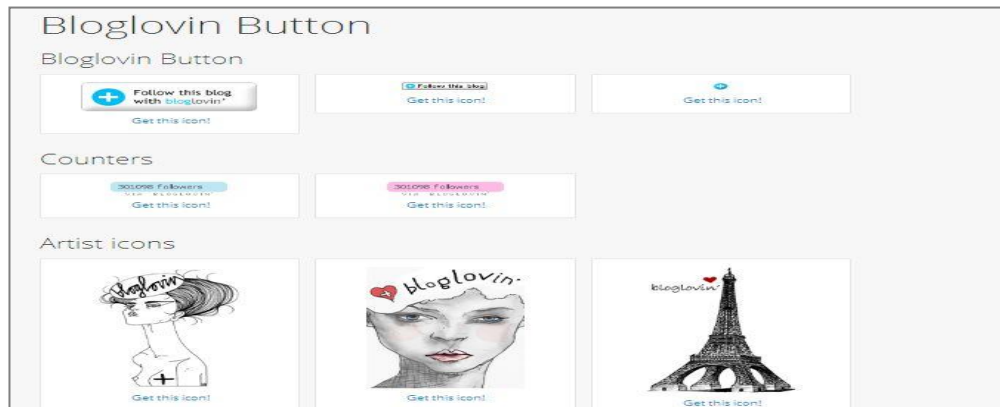

Figure44. Bloglovin link buttons

Adding a button is done simply by clicking 'get this icon' link. This generates a code that can be passed into a HTML/Java widget from the bloggers menu as described in the Widgets part of the guide.

Figure45. Button HTML code

Bloglovin is very user-friendly and simple to follow. Adding the Bloglovin button allows readers to follow the blog and add it to their favorite blogs to read. This is one efficient way to increase readership base. This is how the Bloglovin button looks when added to Promoblog.

Fifure46. Promoblog with added Bloglovin button

8   Summary and Consclusion

Creating a blog with Blogger is one of the most straight-forward and cost-effective methodsfor establishing a blog. The interface is easy to use and it offers enough choice of templates for a beginner to create a well-functioning blog without having to invest money in adding functionality features. Blogger is a great option for people who would like to experiment with blogging and are new to the field. It gives opportunity to transfer the blog to another hosting platform if the blogger wishes to do so. The Dashboard menu is well structured and offers a great functionality and diversity of op-

tions for creating a well-rounded blog while at the same time is not overwhelming for a beginner to work with it.

The functions as Labels or Most popular post let the readers search through the blog's content easily and fast. The most useful garget that Blogger has to offer is undoubtedly the HTML/Java script option as it allows for a variety of content to be imported to the blog. This adds great enhancement and functionality which is needed for a blog to function well in the dynamic blogosphere where the competition of attractive and interactive blogs is strong and constantly growing.

One of the most popular features of Blogger is AdSense. It allows a blogger to incorporate advertisements to their blog. The advertisements are provided by Google and the blogger has the option to choose the position and orientation of the ads on the blog. Readers' click on the advertisements result I militarization for the blogger and Blogger as a host. The earnings depend on the popularity of the blog. Respectively popular blogs earn much more than blogs that do not get enough views.

To increase the popularity of a blog is essential to utilize all available social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc. Most bloggers have several social media channels in order to spread the word and the content of the blog faster and reach maximum audience. Blogging, as well as other social media channels, rely on shares, comments and word of mouth. Therefore is very important to be interactive and communicate with the readers and other bloggers alike.

Blogging is fun, informative, interesting hobby and a great way to socialize and exchange information. Blogger offers a fast and free way for everyone interested, to enter the blogosphere and create a place to share their knowledge and passion. Blogger is a great option for people who want to try blogging as a hobby or companies who do not wish to invest in hosting and blogging software. It allows starting blogging here and now without additional investment. Being owned by Google gives various advantages, such as syncing with Google account and automatic sharing on Google+. Considering its great features and accessibility, Blogger is one of the preferred options for blogging enthusiasts from all ages around the world.

9   Discussion

The research focused on the objectives of studying topics such as blogs, blogging, the use of blogs in marketing communication and what features contribute for a successful blog. The research was executed according to the initially established structure and followed closely the outlined objectives. Researching a current topic such as blogging and social media is both informative and demanding. The sources of information are quite recent as the subject continues to develop. The majority of theoretical information is found among online publications such as blogs, websites and platforms that are designed to provide advice on social media marketing. The books on the subject are also recent and therefore provided relevant information on the topic. As the subject of blogging and social media marketing is covered widely online, a large number of the sources used were also in digital form. Although information on the topic is numerous, primary issue was selecting useful content which is both relevant and provides the needed information from marketing point of view. Often online articles are providing insufficient amount of information, covering the topic in too broad and general manner. Other sources provide the information in too technical way which is not applicable to the nature of this research.

Among the key results can be listed the theoretical principals for creating an effective continent specially designed for the use of social media. The points included are valid not only when creating content for the social media but also can be used when writing any type of marketing text. Since every text has a message, it is very important to be aware of the ways to structure the message and making it more relevant to the audience that it is designed for. The balance between an informative and emotion evoking texts is difficult to achieve and knowing the right ways to create effective message can be crucial for any future marketing activities. Those points are relevant not only for business blogging but also for personal blogging and marketing activities. The fact that they can be useful in a wider context and be applicable for many purposes adds value to them as a research result.

Other key finding of the research is the technical guidelines for blog posting as well as blog creating and the set up process. This includes both the information concerning the blog posting process and the insight on Blogger platform. It is important for a beginner blogger to be aware of the principals and technical process involved in creating

a blog from start to finish. The research is aimed to bloggers who are just starting out and would like to get familiar with the blogging process and the way the blogosphere functions. This is why is important for the information to cover all necessary aspects of the process but to not be presented in overly technical manner. For that reason HTML coding and related technical information was excluded of the research as the purpose of it is to present information that is easy to follow. This also reflects in the guide for building a blog. In order for the steps included to be easily executed by a beginner, the research is kept close to the interface of Blogger and explains the main functions of the platform. This would enable a person without deep technical knowledge to establish their own blog and customize them according to their needs.

Additionally, useful information for a beginner blogger or a corporate blog is the common mistakes that bloggers tend to do. The presented list of mistakes can be taken into consideration when a blogger evaluates or plans their blogging activity. The benefit of the information is its versatility as it can be applied to any blog regardless of its topic and purpose.

I started blogging in beginning of 2012 and since then I have been interested in the blogging community and followed closely other bloggers. I have met with the issues every beginner meets such as striving to gather following, generate useful content etc. This process has made me think about the factors that make a blog successful. The process of the research has been a very useful learning experience. It has provided theoretical background to my practical experience with blogging and has given me an insight of the experience of professionals who have used blogs for marketing for several years. Blogging is a topic that is mainly explained in the context of a tool for digital publishing and seeing it from marketing angle has been both engaging and insightful. I found it helpful to learn not only about the successful ways to use a blog but also to discover the common mistakes bloggers do and learn from them. As a blogger I will take them into consideration in my own blogging activity.

In practical point of view, creating the Blogger guide has helped me recollect my knowledge from previous experience and put it into a systemized text with order and practical steps. Creating an overview for the use of Blogger has made me more familiar with the interface of the platform. Combining the theory and putting it into practice made this research a wholesome learning experience also for me as a blogger.

Although the research has proceeded smoothly, there were several points that are worth mentioning. The theory on the topic of blogging can be often very technical which has proved challenging to adapt to the purpose and objectives of the research. The majority data provided online does not discuss the matter in detail. Often finding relevant material can be time consuming. This in itself has been a learning experience and has taught me to evaluate the relevance of the material and to pick out the information which is in line with the objective of the research.

Researching the topic of blogging and connecting it to its use in marketing has been informative and useful as it combines the theory behind blogs and transfers it into practice. Blogs as part of the internet world will keep developing and their role for businesses and individuals alike will grow in importance. Research on the topic of blogs and their use in marketing is useful for corporate bloggers and individuals who want to explore this field. With the increased use of blogs, the need for literature, theoretical and practical advice for their use will also grow. Knowledge in the field of online marketing and blogging is a valuable asset for every professional or individual who wants to join the millions of bloggers who already are exploring the global blogosphere.

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Appendices

Attachment1. Promoblog

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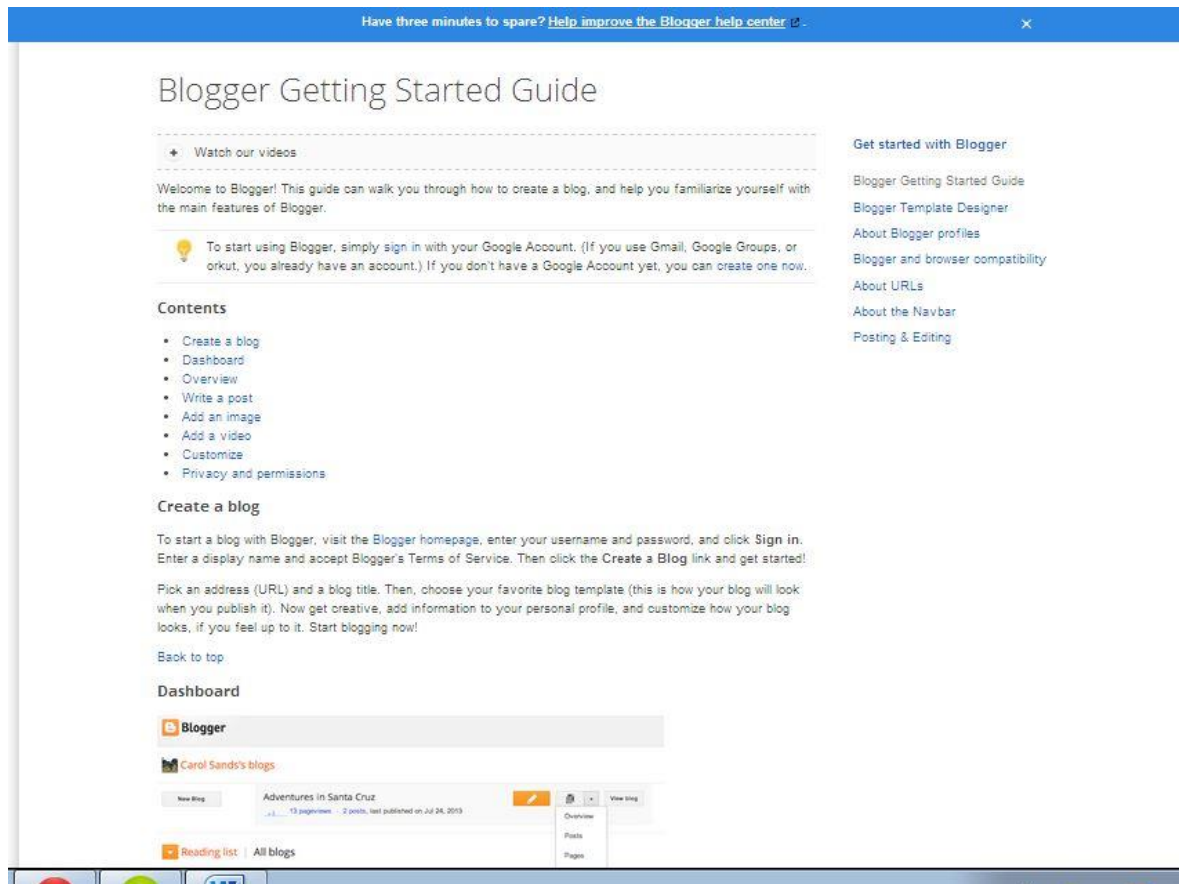
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