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How to Start a Travel Blog: 4 Easy Tips

Keeping a travel journal will never go out of style, but starting a travel blog is an easy way to document your trip and share highlights with friends and family. Here are four tips to get you started.

By Chris Gray Faust
Chris Around the World
 October 11, 2011

If you're heading on an extended trip, sharing a few photos and status updates on Facebook might not be enough. A blog might be a good way to document your travels, especially if you're the creative type.

Many of the web's most popular travel blogs started from a simple desire to share impressions from lengthy vacations or round-the-world trips.

"When we made the decision to sell our belongings and travel indefinitely, we set up a blog to keep in touch with our friends and family," says Dalene Heck, one half of **HeckticTravels** (www.hecktictravels.com). "We thought it would be better than telling the same stories over and over."

Their family enjoyed the twice-weekly updates: At the end of their lengthy South American trip, the Hecks received their blog bound in a hardcover book. "It has become a treasured keepsake," Heck says.

Building your own blog may sound complicated, but it doesn't have to be. If you're considering putting one together before you leave, here are a few things to think about as you start:

1. How technical are you? Many casual bloggers start out with **WordPress** (<http://wordpress.org>) or **Blogger** (www.blogger.com) accounts, which let you start an account on their platform for free. These types of blogs allow you to choose a simple template that they host, meaning that your blog web address (URL) will contain the company's name in it (such as yourname.blogger.com). You can get this type of blog up and running in a matter of hours.

If you have grander plans for your blog, then you'll want to self-host, meaning that you'll need to choose a server to host all your content. You'll also need to buy your domain name (your web address) through a service such as **GoDaddy.com** (www.godaddy.com). Putting it all together takes some time -- and in my case, some technical assistance -- but if you want your blog to grow beyond your friends and family, it's the best choice.

"Setting up WordPress was challenging, but in the grand scheme of things, it only took an afternoon," says Alex Berger, who started **VirtualWayfarer** (<http://virtualwayfarer.com>) in 2007 to document his post-graduate European travels. "Anyone with an afternoon to invest should be able to get a functional site up."

2. How much do you want to spend? It's free to set up a blog hosted by Blogger or WordPress. A blog with your own URL (such as my blog, www.caroundtheworld.com) costs a little more. Registering a domain with GoDaddy runs about \$12 to \$20 a year, and a hosting package is about \$7 or so per month.

Now comes the fun part: Making your blog look good. WordPress has many free themes available that are easy to use. If you want more customization, be prepared to pay for a premium theme; you can get a nice one for \$35 to \$100. When I started my travel blog, I also hired a designer since I planned to use Chris Around The World as a professional site. You won't need a web designer for a casual vacation blog.

3. How much time do you have? Blogging can become very time-consuming if you let it. Berger, who traveled solo for two months through Europe, wrote his posts when he was at an Internet café checking e-mail and Facebook. "The online time filled downtime I had and gave me a chance to relax a bit without feeling like I had to be out wandering the city," Berger says.

4. How much do you want to say? If a full-fledged blog sounds like too much work (and it can be), then a **Tumblr** (www.tumblr.com) account may be a better alternative. A cross between Twitter and a blog, Tumblr is a free service that lets you create an account where you

can share photos, videos, posts, and more.

"Tumblr has a great, simple, and easy-to-use setup," says Katrina Stovold, who now blogs at **TourAbsurd** (www.tourabsurd.com). "If you are a first-time blogger, it's a really nice way to start out."

It's OK if your blog goes dead when you aren't traveling, Berger says. "The next time you decide to take a trip, it will still be there and you can pick up where you left off," he says. "Blog for yourself and your friends. If a few random readers find it and get enjoyment out of it? Well, that's a pretty cool feeling as well!"

Travel journalist Chris Gray Faust dishes up travel tips on her award-winning blog, [Chris Around The World](#). She's also a member of the [Value Luxury Network](#). Follow her on Twitter at [@CAroundTheWorld](#).

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