ENC 3250 Module B:

Professional WordPress Blog
Project Description

Module A asked you to perform a backgrounder report on social media in a given industry. Your task was to research how social media is used by competing organizations in the industry and to inform your boss about the potential of social media for your given organization.

In Module B, you will be asked to actually perform social media duties, specifically blogging. Blogging (“web logging”) as an activity has served a wide range of purposes in digital environments. Blogging started out as a more public way to journal one’s thoughts, but then developed as a creative (both in terms of writing and aesthetics) platform through which people can connect and stay informed. People “follow” or read blogs usually about a given personal interest of theirs, be it an interest in cooking, literature, music, finance, photography, psychology, engineering, or politics. The blogs that receive the least “visits” are typically those that merely spout of personal beliefs without being tied to anything productive. Think: if you were to follow one’s blog, wouldn’t it be someone who you trusted or someone who held a professional position of some sort? Wouldn’t you want to get something out of it, other than the menial details of what is going on in their life? Think: if you followed a cooking blog, would you want the blog to be about what the cook did that day or to be about listing unique recipes with pictures? If you followed a blog about psychology, would you want to read about a man’s random musing about social behavior from a park bench or to read about a scholar’s interpretation and commentary on interesting up-to-date research in the field? Those blogs that succeed and that benefit those in professional capacities are those blogs that inform, entertain, and persuade on a given topic in meaningful ways.

This module asks you to create your own blog based upon a professional or scholarly interest you might have, with the main purpose of getting students to develop their online ethos. The one condition of the project is that it relates to a professional or scholarly position you hold. If you are a computer science major, do not write about the sport of lacrosse. If you are a business major, do not write about the most recent film you have seen. The reason you are completing this project is that by the end of it, you will be well on your way to developing something potentially very beneficial to your future employment: an online social media presence in your field of study or work. Employers have already long been in the practice to conducting informal “background checks” (read: Google) about potential employees on the internet. Being the author and owner of a professional blog that contributes meaningfully to your field of study or work is a good way to develop and maintain a professional online ethos, which is, whether we like it or not, becoming an integral of today’s, and not merely future’s, workplace.
**Deliverables: Overview**

- External Research Exercise (5%)
- Professional WordPress Blog (20%)

**Deliverables: Specifications**

*External Research Exercise*

Using the backgrounder research skills you honed in Module A, the first part of this project asks you to research three (3) blogs in your field that you might choose to model your own blog after. This research component should not prove too difficult; rather, the difficult task is in analyzing the three blogs and assessing them according to the following criteria:

- What does the visual design of the blogs look like? What would you change or keep?
- Who is/are the author(s) of the blogs? What is their purpose for creating this online space?
- Read the content of the last few blog posts. What type on content is covered? Is it interesting and/or engaging? Humorous? Informative? Persuasive? Briefly describe.
- What types of “widgets” are used and to what purposes are they put? Do you find them useful or extraneous?

This research exercise will be submitted in the form of a consultancy report (see readings). The report will consist of two sections: 1) assessment and analysis of the three blogs (500 words), and 2) a description of the nature of your own blog (500 words). In the second part, be sure to address the rationale behind the topic you have chosen, your plans for the content, and who you think your audience will be.

*Professional WordPress Blog*

Your blog will consist of 5 posts, each consisting 500 words (total of 2500 words). Your blog as an entity will be assessed holistically at the very end of the project duration. It will be assessed by the following criteria:

**Content**

- The blog has a clear purpose and it is clearly communicated to the reader
- The content of the posts is substantial and related to the field of interest
- The writing is professional, in tone and in presentation (this includes grammar), and reveals a strong grasp of the content knowledge being discussed
- Posts are broken up into clear, concise paragraphs
- The title of the blog is unique
**Visuals/Aesthetics**
- The visual component of the blog is appropriate given the subject-matter at hand
- The color-scheme and images (if any) are presented in a professional and not juvenile way
- The font, banner/header, and organization are inviting

**Usability**
- The blog uses widgets in appropriate ways suitable to the subject-matter and nature of the blog
- The blog is equipped with "pages," "categories," and/or "tags" to assist in the navigability of the site
- The chosen blog URL is appropriate and easy to remember to users
- Each post will contain hyperlinks that allow the reader to continue on further in their reading or to pursue your path of research if they so choose
- The blog must be through WordPress -- no exceptions.

**Project Tips**
- Spend some time to browse around and just look and read blogs at first to get a sense of what they are about
- Familiarize yourself with the appropriate terminology:
  - Widgets
  - Pages
  - Hyperlinks
  - Categories
  - URL
- Start following a blog or two (once you’ve created your WordPress account) in your field. Make some comments on their posts to get your voice out there.
- Gather a professional photograph of yourself to place somewhere on the blog (front page or “About” page)