

Aging Lifestyles - Look who's blogging now

by Joe Volz and Kate Bird

Increasing numbers of older Americans are creating their own blogs on the Internet these days.

A blog is an online journal. You can write your thoughts, your feelings, your opinions on politics - really, anything you choose.

One Internet-trend observer notes that out of 54 million bloggers, at least 160,000 are older people, and more sign on each year.

OK, so blogging has not quite become the mania of the Social Security set - nearly 60 percent of blogs are written by teenagers.

But the older generations - including elder boomers, of course - are turning to their computers more and more, and not only to read, but to write.

The best thing about blogging is the price: It's free, just as long as you have a computer and Internet service. And blog services make it easy for you to set one up. So who blogs these days?

Our friend, Nancy Pace, 50, of Frederick, Md., for one. She set up her blog at www.epharmy.com one year ago. She spends her time composing messages several times a week to send out into cyberspace.

She reads voraciously, and this is obvious from looking at the list of topics on her blog.

Gardening is one of her favorite topics. Here is Nancy's take on digging up the dirt: "You turn to your garden to create, not to consume. Your work is sensuous and sensual, and you find joy in its direct experience. You are close to the soil and fully connected to the earth."

Personally, our favorite blog site is www.myspace.com, where several of our grandchildren have set up profiles of themselves with spaces for viewers to comment. It's fun, actually.

We also logged onto ThirdAge blog recently. ThirdAge is an online news and features services for elder bloggers (those in their "third age" of life) that updates its articles regularly. The company maintains its own blog for readers to use.

Here are a few of the categories found on ThirdAge: life's lessons, love and abandonment, elder care, health, joints and bone health and "uncategorized," which includes several different topics. You can check it out at <http://blog.thirdage.com>.

We suspect one reason blogs are appealing to older folks is because they open up a whole new world. Without leaving your home and using just a few strokes of the keys, you are in touch with people from all over - England, Australia, Asia and even the United States.

You never know what you'll find in a blog. One person met up with a former sweetheart while blogging. It didn't last, but what the heck. It was a start in dating. It offered a diversion and was fulfilling for six months or so.

From checking our grandkids' MySpace entries, we get a teenager's view of the world.

Our granddaughter Valerie, 15, loves to blog onto our son Chris Volz's rock band Web site at www.fiveboltmain.com. Chris is her hero.

Sometimes, of course, you find out more than you want to know. We signed onto one grandson's blog and scrolled through the photos he had posted. Most of them were of girls, who were often hanging all over him.

He's old enough for girls already?

Grandson Alex, at 14, is a handsome redhead with lots of friends. His blog lists his favorite bands and singers, as well as comments about his feelings.

One caution though: Sometimes people become absorbed in blogs, spending several hours each day investigating anything and everything that sparks their interest.

Remember to continue living your ordinary life.

We're trying hard to follow that advice ourselves. Sometimes it isn't easy.

Resources:

One Web site, www.postsecrets.com, contains postcards that people have decorated with secrets, hopes, regrets, humiliations and other interesting revelations.

Another blogging site, www.thediary.org, allows users to create a free blog or diary and post their pictures online. Bloggers will find users from a variety of locations around the world.

