Blogophobia Conquered
Overcome the 7 Most Common Fears
And Create an Amazing Blog

By Laura Christianson

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Published by Blogging Bistro, LLC
Snohomish, Washington 98291

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Chapter 1
Technophobia

Fear #1: I'm technologically-challenged

I began my career as a high school journalism and English teacher in the early 1980s, during the infancy of the personal computer revolution. My classroom was equipped with one Apple computer and one TRS-80, neither of which had hard drives.

In today's mega-gigabyte world, it seems inconceivable that those user-unfriendly dinosaurs didn't even possess hard drives. For a person like me—who had zippo background in computer programming—deciphering the mysteries of those perplexing machines was truly frightening.

But I put on a brave face and confidently—on the outside, anyway—informed my students: "You are in charge of your computer. It doesn't tell you what to do. You tell it what to do."

That same advice holds true today. And, wonder of wonders, our computers obey us—most of the time. Yes, the darned things seem to crash at the most inopportune times. They work more sluggishly than we want. Our e-mails sometimes disappear into the black hole of cyberspace. And it's way too easy to delete hours of work, simply by pressing the wrong button (I've done that more often than I like to admit). But by-and-large, our computers comply with our orders.

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The first fear you must overcome before starting a blog is the suspicion that your computer is going to take on a life of its own and control you. It ain't gonna happen.

"But… but," you stutter. "…I don't have any technological know-how. I don't know anything about programming."

It doesn't matter.

You may have heard the acronym HTML bandied about in conversations about blogging, and assumed HTML is some personalized license plate version of the phrase "hot meal."

In reality, HTML stands for HyperText Markup Language. Did I just see a bead of sweat appear on your forehead? Fear not, dear almost-blogger. You do not have to have a close, personal relationship with HTML in order to create a blog. You do not have to know any programming languages to be an effective blogger. You do not have to know a lick of HTML; you'll get by just fine without worrying about what HTML is or what it does.

Blogging purists may scoff, sneering that HTML is a required skill. I beg to differ. I've been successfully blogging for years with only a rudimentary knowledge of HTML (it's the language used to create Web pages). If you know how to copy and paste, you'll be fine.

"That's it?" you say. "All I have to do is copy and paste?"

Yep, pretty much. And I'll show you exactly what to copy and where to paste further into the book.

I'm supremely grateful for the programmers who write the HTML code for us non-coders, so when we want to add text or a photo to our blog, we simply push a button, and presto, it appears.

So, let's review exactly what technological capabilities you must possess in order to blog. Take this short assessment:

☐ **Are you good at clicking buttons that say, "Click here to publish"?**

☐ **Are you willing to stop and ask for directions? (men, you can just skip this question)**

☐ **Are you proficient at copying and pasting?**

☐ **Are you willing to experiment?**

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, you passed with flying colors.

Easy as Pie

Okay, so now you know you *can* do it. But *how* do you do it?

You use the Ready-Made Pie Crust Method.

Huh?

Let me explain.

Homemade pies happen to be my husband's favorite treat. But during the first 25 years of our marriage, I baked him a total of two pies. Why? I was afraid I wouldn't be able to make a

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flaky pie crust. I grew up in a family where my mom made everything from scratch. If it wasn't made from scratch, it was deemed "unacceptable."

During my teenage years, I produced several hard-as-a-rock pie crusts. When I got married, I avoided the shame and disgrace of replicating those gut bombs (which would likely have sent my dear husband to the dentist… or to his death). Convinced I'd never be able to create a tender crust, I gave up pie baking altogether.

But recently, a friend introduced me to a nifty invention called ready-made pie crusts. You simply purchase a two-pack of the little buggers—already in tins—from the supermarket's frozen foods section. You thaw the crusts, dump in your pie filling, stick the whole thing in the oven, and presto—you've got a delicious, semi-homemade pie!

Since I discovered ready-made pie crusts, I've baked marionberry pies, strawberry pies, and apple pies. And I've earned many, many brownie points with my husband.

How do ready-made pie crusts relate to blogging?

Consider this: Most blogs are hosted by a blog hosting service (Typepad, Blogger, and WordPress.com are three services you may have heard of). A blog hosting service is like a

ready-made pie crust. Someone (not you) does the dirty work and prepares a handy, simple-to-use container to house your creation. All you do is add your unique ingredients and bake to perfection.

Blog hosting services:

☐ Are free or low-cost (we're talking $0.00 to $30.00 per month).

☐ Provide you a variety of ready-made templates.

☐ Include a user-friendly text editor and one-click publishing.

☐ Give you the flexibility to customize colors and type fonts, all with a few clicks of a button.

☐ Archive all your articles.

☐ …and much, much more!

Even if you're the ultimate technophobe, it'll take you only an hour to get your blog up and running with a hosting service. If you have some computer savvy, you can launch your blog in 30 minutes. Honestly, it's as easy as pie. And I'm going to give you the recipe. Stick around.

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About the author

Laura Christianson – The Blogging Barista

Laura's career includes stints as a high school Journalism/English teacher, corporate communications director, freelance journalist, award-winning blogger, and business owner. She's authored three non-fiction books and contributed to several others.

Mentoring emerging writers and pre-adoptive parents energizes Laura, as does swimming, rollerblading, walking, photography, and camping with her family. She lives in Snohomish, Washington with her husband and their two sons.

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