

# The Effects of Reading Habit on Blog Adoption

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**Abstract:** This paper investigated how one's reading habit contributes to his/her blog adoption. A survey was conducted for understanding the relationship between individual's reading habit, in terms of the reading attitude and reading behavioral pattern, and the adoption of blogs. Eighty respondents were enrolled in the study. The result suggested that reading habit is a significant predictor to blog adoption. A subsequent analysis showed that people with a stronger reading habit tended to become an early blog adopter. Discussions and implications are presented in this paper. This study hopes to give insights for instructors on adopting blogs for educational purposes.

**Keywords:** Reading habit, Blog adoption, Adoption of innovations

## Introduction

Weblogs (or blogs) had its current form around 1997. Since then, there has been a steadily growing body of bloggers and blog readers around the globe. Blogs are regularly updated web pages which include journal-like text entries, pictures as well as other multimedia content, and hyper texts linking to other web sites.

There have been a number of studies attempting to understand what motivates people to use blog and why. Regarding blogging as a social activity, for example, Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz [1] found five major motivations for blogging, including documenting one's life, providing commentary and opinions, expressing deeply felt emotions, articulating ideas through writing, and forming and maintaining community forums. There could be numerous reasons for people to blog or read blogs. However, because both blogging and reading blogs are isomorphic to conventional writing and reading in their cognitive dimension of self-reflection [2], there should exist some intrinsic factors which motivate one to adopt blogs. From the viewpoint of diffusion of innovations [3], blogging and reading blogs have apparent relative advantages over conventional writing and reading [e.g., 4], and are compatible with the cognitive aspects of writing and reading practices [2]. Current blogging tools are user-friendly, simple to use, and have observable results. Such qualities of blogs, may have promoted the adoption of blogs as an extension of one's habitual reading practices. In other words, reading blogs can be simply a result of one's reading habit. This article presents a preliminary finding on the effect of reading habit on blog adoption. Relevant discussions, implications will be addressed.

## 1. Literature review

### 1.1 Blog adoption

Adoption is “a decision to make full use of an innovation as the best course of action available” [3, p. 21]. It contains a psychological process leading up to one’s decision to accept an innovation [5]. Blog adoption, therefore, can be defined as one’s decision to accept and engage in the continual use of blogs.

There have been several studies investigating why people blog. Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz [1] conducted an ethnographical study on 23 bloggers. From in-depth interview, they found their informants typically found blogs through other blogs they were reading, through their friends or colleagues, or through the link included in instant messages or web pages.

Guadagno, Okdie, and Eno [6] suggested that personality factors may contribute to the likelihood of being a blogger and predict who blogs. They investigated how the five measures of personality in the Big Five personality inventory [7] contribute to blogging. Their findings suggested that people who are high in the openness to new experience and high in neuroticism are likely to be bloggers.

Deng and Yuen [2] proposed a framework to structure three major blogging behaviors: blog writing, reading, and commenting. As shown in Figure 1, three blogging behaviors were considered in both the social/psychological and cognitive dimensions along the continuum between individual and community. In this framework, writing blogs allows self-expression of personal feelings and thoughts, which foster self-reflection. Reading blogs allows the reader to interact with the content and connect to the community for self-reflection and inspiration. Commenting on blogs is a way to converse with the blog author as well as the community for reflective dialogue and social support.

From the perspective of diffusion of innovations [3], blog writing, reading, and commenting are not only compatible with conventional writing, reading, and commenting practices in the cognitive dimension, but also have relative advantages of social expression, social connection, and social interaction. Because nowadays blogging tools are user-friendly, easy to use, and with observable and modifiable outcome, the adoption of blogs should not be difficult. As Rogers (2003) pointed out, one needs to perceive at least some of the relative advantages of blogging and is willing to cope with the uncertainty of this new media before he or she can make the decision of adopting it. We claimed that there is still some factor that drove one to adopt blogs and sustained the continual usage of blogging. And one’s writing and reading habits are the very factors from within.

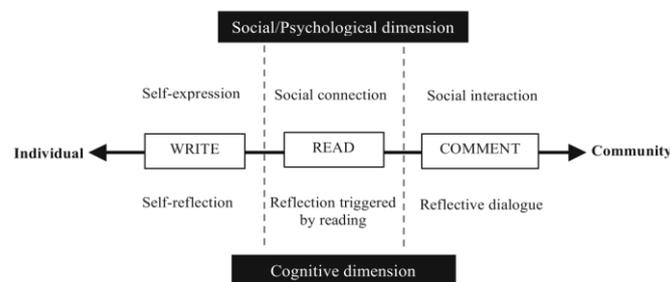


Fig. 1 Deng & Yuen’s (2011) framework for the educational affordances of blogs

## 1.2 Reading habit and reading blogs

A habit, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, refers to “a behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition or physiologic exposure that shows itself in regularity or increased facility of performance”. Reading habit, in this study, was defined by one’s attitude toward reading [8] and his/her behavioral pattern [9] with respect to the frequency and regularity of reading. One who has the reading habit holds positive attitude to it, and

reads mostly for pleasure and enjoyment [10, 11]; this reading behavior is habitual, which occurs constantly and regularly.

Liu [12] conducted a survey to understand how the burgeoning of digital media impacts reading behaviors. He found that people spend more time on reading due to information explosion and digital technology, and there is an increasing amount of people developing screen-based reading. He characterized screen-based reading behaviors by “more time on browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and more selective reading; while less time is spent on in-depth reading and concentrated reading, and sustained attention is decreasing” (p. 705).

Apart from the social/psychological aspects of blogging [2], to a reader, who keeps a reading habit, blogging may differ from reading conventional print materials in the form the content was structured and manifested. Therefore, the adoption of blogs can be regarded as an inclusion of a new medium (i.e., the web) into the habitual reading practices.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to survey people’s reading habit and blog adoption. Based on earlier studies investigating students’ reading habit [10, 11, 13], both the reading habit and blog adoption were identified and measured by people’s attitude toward them and the behavioral pattern they own. Ten question items were developed for identifying one’s reading habit, and nine items were used for characterizing blog adoption. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To obtain a bigger sample size, the questionnaire was distributed in six popular social and blog websites (including Facebook, Twitter etc.) for a month. These websites were chosen because they contained varieties of reading materials such as journals, articles, books, newspapers, magazines, and freelance reading materials. Reading on these websites was most likely for personal enjoyment, satisfaction, and pleasure, but not for school work.

### 2.2 Participants

There were 80 respondents participated in this study. There were 68 (85%) males and 12 (15%) females. Sixty-six of them (82.5%) were older than 35 years old. Sixty respondents (75%) were graduate students, 20 of them (25%) were undergraduates.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 The effect of reading habit on blog adoption

The measures of one’s reading habit and blog adoption were the average rating of the associated question items. The descriptive statistics of the measures of reading habit and blog adoption are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the measures of reading habit and blog adoption

	N	Mean	S.D.
Blog Adoption	80	3.49	.66
Reading Habit	80	4.01	.65

A simple linear regression was used, with the measure of reading habit the independent variable and that of blog adoption the dependent variable. The result of the regression is presented in Table 2. Reading habit is a significant predictor to the adoption of blogs ( $F [1, 78] = 19.81, p < .01$ ).

Table 2. The result of simple linear regression

Model	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	7.02	1	7.02	19.81	.00
Residual	27.62	78	.35		
Total	34.64	79			

### 3.2 Reading habit and early/late blog adoption

Rogers [3] categorized individuals into five types of adopters according to the time they adopted an innovation. The previous analysis showed that reading habit contributes to blog adoption. A further analysis was taken to explore if the heaviness of individual's reading habit may have influence on him or her to become an early or late adopter. Respondents' reading habit was categorized into two groups – heavy and light – by their average rating on the question items of reading habit. Those who have a mean rating above 4.0 were labeled heavy readers, and those below 4.0 were light readers. Similarly, respondents were grouped into early and late adopters by the year 2007. The year was so selected because it had been 10 years since 1997 when blogs have its current form, and it had been a matured tool of web 2.0 at 2007. The descriptive statistics of the grouping were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the grouping

			Blog adoption		
			Early	Late	Total
Reading habit	Heavy	Mean	3.72	3.85	3.76
		S.D.	.58	.51	.55
		N	27	13	40
	Light	Mean	3.08	3.28	3.23
		S.D.	.71	.65	.66
		N	11	29	40
Total	Mean	3.53	3.46	3.49	
	S.D.	.68	.66	.66	
	N	38	42	80	

The heavy reader group had a significantly higher score on the measure of blog adoption than the light reader group ( $F [1, 78] = 15.14, p < .01$ ). Also, it is interesting in Table 3 that two-thirds of heavy readers were categorized as early adopters, whereas more than two-thirds of light readers were late adopters. A logistic regression was applied to examine if the heaviness of reading habit influences people to become an early or late blog adopter. The dependent variable is the grouping of blog adoption (1 for early adopter, 2 for late adopter) and the independent variable the grouping of reading habit (1 for heavy reader, 2 for light reader). The result of the logistic regression is presented in Table 4. In Table 4, the Exp (B) is 5.48, which is larger than 1.0, means that heavy reading habit contributes to becoming an early blog adopter. The heaviness of reading habit is a significant predictor to early or late blog adoption ( $B = 1.70, Wald = 12.08, p < .01$ ).

Table 4. The logistic regression

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Reading habit group	1.70	.49	12.08	1	.001	5.48
Constant	-2.43	.76	10.17	1	.001	.09

The Chi-square of this model was 13.20 ( $p < .01$ ), which showed that this is a significant model for predicting blog adoption.

#### 4 Discussions and conclusion

This study presented the theoretical framework of how one's reading habit may have impacts on his or her blog adoption, and reported the preliminary results on the analysis of this hypothesis. It was shown that reading habit plays a significant role in predicting one's blog adoption. A further analysis was conducted on exploring the relationship between the heaviness of one's reading habit and the time of being early or late blog adoption. The finding showed that heavy readers tend to be early blog adopters, and light readers late adopters. Instructors may apply this finding for designing pedagogical meaningful learning activities while using blogs in education. However, it is not clear what caused this phenomenon. More studies will need to be taken to understand how reading habit, along with other kinds of habit, may influence one to adopt blogs, or other innovative technology. Also, it is necessary to reach a broader bloggers and blog readers to have a bigger and more heterogeneous sample in blogging behaviors, so that how one's habit may have influence on the adoption of blogs can be more clear.

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