

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2008 13:12:50 -0400  
Reply-To: American Dialect Society <[log in to unmask]>  
Sender: American Dialect Society Mailing List <[log in to unmask]>  
Comments: cc: [log in to unmask]  
From: "Baker, John" <[log in to unmask]>  
Subject: Origins of "Blog" and "Blogger"  
Comments: To: [log in to unmask]  
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

"Blog" is of course a contraction of "weblog," generally agreed to have been invented by Jorn Barger as a name for his Robot Wisdom web site in December 1997. The earliest use seems to have been by Peter Merholz, who wrote in a sidebar on the home page of his weblog, Peterme.com, "For What It's Worth: I've decided to pronounce the word "weblog" as wee'-blog. Or "blog" for short." An archive of his historic mot juste is at <http://peterme.com/index.html>.

Current historical records do not permit an exact dating, but it clearly was not before April 28, 1999, when the Wayback Machine shows that the sidebar was not yet present, and not after May 23, 1999, when there was a reference to it on Bradlands.com.

Merholz's passing remark probably would have produced few ripples, but for Pyra Labs, which chose to refer to weblogs as "blogs" and to name their own product "blogger." The domain name blogger.com was registered on June 22, 1999, probably the first public use of the word. According to Meg Hourihan, an insider at Pyra Labs whose email is reproduced below, it was Evan Williams who devised the name "blogger."

John Baker

-----Original Message-----

From: Meg Hourihan [mailto:[log in to unmask]]  
Sent: Friday, April 18, 2008 3:26 PM  
To: Baker, John  
Subject: Re: Origin of the Word "Blogger"

John,

Yikes! Sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you about this, hopefully it's not too late. The use of "blog" came from Peter. We were friends with him in San Francisco and so know about his joke to change the pronunciation of "weblog." At the time everyone said "weblog" and "weblogger" so picking up his pronunciation, Evan Williams came up with the name "Blogger" for our product. When we set about to write the copy for the site, we used the word "blog" for every instance of "weblog." There was no other service at the time that used that term. When we added hosting, we named it "Blogspot" because it was a spot for one's blog.

I think it's fair to say that the popularity of our service led to the popularization of the term "blog" and its now ubiquitous use.

Let me know if you have any other questions, I promise a prompt reply next time!  
-meg

-----  
The American Dialect Society - <http://www.americandialect.org>