BLOG WORKSHOP
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Anything happened in the blog?
You will have noticed some things that have happened in your blogs. There are now trackbacks and in some cases comments.
While blogs are personal research journals they are also networked. This means they participate in larger networks. Why you do this, or how you do this varies.

What do you think you'd like to be able to do
Just make a list of things that you think you'd like to be able to do.

NUTS & BOLTS

Logging in
To log in to your blog to make an entry you visit:
http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/~blogs/mt/mt.cgi
You log in to administer all of your blog stuff. This is to post, edit, redesign, and so on. This is NOT the public URL of your blog.

Blogroll
A blog roll is a list of regularly viewed blogs. You add it to your own blog. The usual way of maintaining a blog roll is to use http://www.blogrolling.com. You get yourself an account, add names and URLs and then embed a small piece of code into your blog. The advantage of this is that it is easy to them maintain your blogroll, but you can also now more easily track which blogs have been recently updated.
To add your own blog roll you can either create an account for yourself at http://www.blogrolling.com, or simply hand code it.
To place the code (whether your own or from blogrolling.com) you need to click the templates tab in the Movable Type window and then select the index.html template link.
This template controls the appearance of the homepage of your blog. You can copy and paste all of this into a text editor, be wary of WYSIWYG editors because they may do nasty things to the Movable Type tags that are required.
In the template you will see a heading called Links here. You can replace that with a title of your choice, and then under that you will see where URLs can be placed. This is where you would place the code from blogrolling.com or your own code. A link to my blog (as an example) would like:

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<a
href=http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/vog/vlog/>Adr
ian Miles' blog</a>
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Why blogroll?
Since blogs are networked communities your blogroll serves three major functions, it lets you keep an eye on the blogs relevant to you, it explicitly

locates (and advertises) you within a specific community, and it invites that community to you. This encourages readers, contributors and develops your network identity as a researcher (or whatever you want it to be).

The numbers are significant, Jean Burgess' blog, which is hosted here (http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/~burgess) receives over a thousand individual readers a week, this is considerably more readers than you would get for most academic publications in most international journals. Of course if you don't have anything to say, then this isn't going to be the medium for you, which is why they're particularly relevant to research — if you don't have anything to say, why are you doing research?

images
It is very easy to place images into your blog. There is specific software on the server that lets Movable Type 'know' that you're uploading an image, and this lets you automatically generate thumbnails and archive originals.

To place an image in a post then select the Upload File tab in the Movable Type menu window. In the popup window that appears locate the image (it needs to be a jpeg, png, or gif and should be appropriately named) and then wait for it to upload.

Once done a new window appears which is where you can produce a thumbnail of your image (if you wish).

The image will be embedded within the entry (not elsewhere, all you are adding an image to is an individual entry, if you want an image as part of your design for your home page then you need to edit your template).

Once the image has been uploaded the popup window closes and you are in the usual new entry edit screen. The appropriate HTML code is now included, this is the code that is about making the image appear in your entry.

The easiest way to control where the image appears in the entry is to add an alignment tag within the image tag. Simply add:

align="left" or align="right" to the image tag. The first places the image to the left and wraps text to the right, the other does the opposite. If you understand Cascading Style Sheets then you can do considerably more with the placement and alignment of images.

backups
The import/export tab in the Movable Type menu has an option where you can export all of your blog to a text file. It might not look like much but this text file can be easily imported into Movable Type. It is a good idea to do this once a week or so (depending on how busy your blog is), the database that contains your blog can get corrupted and all of your material will be gone.

style sheets
Cascading Style Sheets control how your blog appears. If you know CSS you can write your own stylesheet, just edit the CSS template found from the Template tag in the Movable Type window.

But you can also visit the Movable Type web site (click the Movable Type logo in the browser window) and get some prewritten alternative CSS.

You might not like any of them but we're going to replace the default CSS with a different one so that you can see how you can change the CSS. This is good to know because if you stuff this up then you can revisit the

Movable Type site and simply reinstall the default stylesheet. You can do exactly the same for the default index page, archive pages and so on.

who visits

Track backs help you see who is linking in to your blog posts. However this only really works for a small number of blog systems, and it does not tell you anything about readers and visitors. The easiest way to manage this is to put a site counter on your index page. At the moment the best free site counter is probably the one available at:

http://das.reinvigorate.net/

It is trivial to get an account (you just need an email address and a URL), and then you embed the code that the site generates into your blog homepage. You then visit the reinvigorate site, log in, and can view your statistics. This is useful because you can then keep an eye on who might be linking to you, which contributes to building your research network.

writing offline

Once upon a time you could only blog while you were online. This caused problems or was at best inconvenient. However there are now several blog clients available that you configure with your blog details and you can then write in them and publish the entries to your blog at your convenience. On OS X ecto is the standout client (just Google ecto), while on PC have a look at Zempt. These clients pretty much let you do everything you can do in Movable Type but you can write anytime on your computer.