

Blog v8.3.0

User Guide
March 11, 2008

Contents

Blog

Accessing the My Blog page

Searching for a Blog Entry

Viewing blogs

Viewing public blog entries and comments

Viewing private blog entries

Viewing Blogs Externally

Viewing Blogs Externally using an Internet
Browser

Viewing Blogs Externally using an RSS
Aggregator

Printing a Blog Entry

Blog Watch

Adding to a blog

Adding a blog entry

Adding a comment to a blog entry

Editing a Blog Entry

Deleting a Blog Entry

Deleting a Comment from a Blog Entry

Blog Settings

Index

Blog

Blogs are useful communication tools that allow users to interact by posting questions, engaging in discussions, and sharing opinions and comments. Use the Blog tool to post information (“entries”) that can be viewed and commented on by others, as well as to view others’ entries and comment on them.

Note Your access to certain Blog actions and functions depends on the permissions set up for you.

This Guide assumes that you have the full permissions required to perform each of the tasks. See your administration if you require additional permissions.

The Blog tool consists of a number of related areas that allow you to view your own and other users’ blogs.

Use the **My Blog** area in the Blog tool to view your own blog. To view blogs created by other users, use the **Blog Watch** and **Blog List** areas. **Blog List** shows a list of all the users whose blogs you may choose to watch. When you select one of these users, the entries from their blog appear in your **Blog Watch** window.

Accessing the My Blog page

Blog entries are managed using the My Blog page. The My Blog page allows you to view blog entries, add new ones, add comments, delete entries and modify your settings, as well as view other users’ blogs.

Blog entries can either be Public (visible to all users) or Private (visible only to the user who entered them). Set the blog entry as Public or Private when you add it.

The My Blog page displays all blog entries in the **All Entries** tab. The **Public Entries** tab displays all the blog entries that were made public. The **Private Entries** tab displays all those that were kept private and hence can only be viewed by the person who added them.

► **To access the My Blog page**

- 1 Go to **My Home** or a course homepage.
- 2 Click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.

Note Depending on your permissions, clicking the **Blog** link may only display the Blog List page, or the My Blog page with private entries only. Contact your system administration if you need further permissions.

► **To search for a blog entry**

Enter a value into the **Search For** field and click the **Search** button. Refer to the *Finding a Blog Entry* section for more details.


▶ **To display a different number of blog entries on the My Blog page**

Change the value in the drop-down list box next to the **per page** label.


▶ **To add a comment to a blog entry**

Click the **Add Comment** link below the blog entry. Refer to the *Adding a comment to a blog entry* section for more details.


▶ **To edit a blog entry**

Click the  **Edit Entry** icon next to the title of the blog entry. Refer to the *Editing a Blog Entry* section for more details.


▶ **To delete a blog entry**

Select the check box next to the blog entry that you wish to delete, then click the  **Delete selected Blog entries** icon at the top of the page. You can also select multiple blog entries for deletion. Refer to the *Deleting a Blog Entry* section for more details.

▶ **To print a blog entry**

Select the check box next to the blog entry that you wish to print, then click the  **View printable version of selected Blog entries in a new window** icon at the top of the page. You can also select multiple blog entries for printing. Refer to the *Printing a Blog Entry* section for more details.

▶ **To preview your blog**

Click the  **Preview Blog** icon at the top of the page. All your blog entries will be displayed in a pop-up.

Searching for a Blog Entry

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the My Blog page, to find a particular blog entry, enter a value in the **Search For** field (on the **All Entries**, **Public Entries** or **Private Entries** tab) and click the **Search** button. You may search on a word or several words in the **Title** or **Content** fields.

To specify further search criteria or narrow down the default ones, click the **Show Search Options** link. The My Blog page displays additional search options.

You can opt to search only in the **Title** or the **Content** field and before or after specified dates. After specifying your new criteria, click the **Search** button again. The My Blog page displays your new search results.

To clear your search and see all the blog entries again, click the **Clear Search** button.

Viewing blogs

Viewing public blog entries and comments

Public blog entries are visible to all users who are viewing the blog in which the entries appear.

► **To view your Public blog entries**

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, click the **Public Entries** tab. All the public blog entries are displayed. The most recent entries are at the top.

You can search for, edit, delete and print blog entries in the **Public Entries** tab in the same way as in the **All Entries** tab.

- 3 To view a specific blog entry, click its title. The View Entry page is displayed, showing the blog entry and all the comments that were added to it. The most recent comment is shown at the bottom of the page.

Viewing private blog entries

Private blog entries are visible only to the user who adds them.

► **To view your Private blog entries**

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, click the **Private Entries** tab. All your private blog entries are displayed. The most recent entries are displayed at the top.

You can search for, edit, delete and print blog entries in the **Private Entries** tab in the same way as in the **All Entries** tab.


The Private Entries page is identical to the Public Entries page, except that you cannot add a comment to a blog entry in the Private Entries page.

Viewing Blogs Externally

Blogs can be viewed externally (from outside the Desire2Learn platform) using one of the methods below.

Note You can only view publicly visible blog entries from outside of Desire2Learn. No authentication is required to view these blogs. To add comments to blog entries when you are not logged in to Desire2Learn, however, you must enter your name.

Viewing Blogs Externally using an Internet Browser

The **External URL** field on the My Blog - Settings page provides a link that enables users to view a blog from outside Desire2Learn, using any internet browser. The **Permalink** field, available by clicking the  **Preview Blog** link, also provides the same ability.

▶ To allow users to view your blog externally (from outside Desire2Learn) using an internet browser

- 1 Copy the contents of the **External URL** field from the My Blog - Settings page.
- 2 Send the contents of the **External URL** field to the users whom you wish to view your blog from outside Desire2Learn.
- 3 The users can then paste the contents of the **External URL** field into any internet browser, press **<Enter>** and your blog will be displayed.

Or

Click the  **Preview Blog** link in the My Blog page and copy the contents of the **Permalink** field.

- 4 Send the contents of the **Permalink** field to the users whom you wish to view your blog from outside Desire2Learn.
- 5 The users can then paste the contents of the **Permalink** field into any internet browser, press **<Enter>** and your blog will be displayed.

▶ To view another user's blog externally (from outside Desire2Learn) using an internet browser

In order to view another user's blog from outside Desire2Learn using an internet browser, you must have the link to that blog sent to you by the user, either from the **External URL** field or from the **Permalink** field, as outlined in the steps above. You can then paste this link into an external browser and view that user's blog. (To add comments, however, you must provide your name.)

Viewing Blogs Externally using an RSS Aggregator

The blog tool provides a means to publish a user's blog as an RSS feed, which can be read by any external RSS aggregator.

Note RSS is a file format which provides summaries of web content on a Web site together with links to the full version of the content. This information is delivered as an XML file known as an RSS feed. A program known as an RSS aggregator then reads this RSS feed and displays any new (updated) content that it finds on the Web site.

This mechanism is very useful for a Web site's frequent readers to track updates on the site. For the blog tool, it is very useful to track new entries and comments to a blog without logging in to Desire2Learn and accessing the blog tool.

▶ To allow users to view your blog externally (from outside Desire2Learn) using an RSS aggregator

- 1 Select the **Publish your Blog as an RSS feed** checkbox on the My Blog - Settings page – refer to the *Blog Settings* section for more details.

2 On the My Blog page, click the  **Daily RSS Feed** link to view the XML file needed for the RSS feed.

3 To provide a user with the RSS feed for your blog, copy and paste the URL of the RSS Feed pop-up and send it to the user. It will be similar to the following:

```
http://v81.qa.d2l/d2l/lms/blog/view_feed.d2l?ou=344&ownerId=20979
```


4 The user can then paste the URL into any RSS aggregator to view your blog.

Note In order to do this, the user must have the appropriate permissions. Contact your administration if the user does not have the permissions to view your links.

► **To view another user's blog externally (from outside Desire2Learn) using an RSS aggregator**

In order to view another user's blog from outside Desire2Learn using an RSS aggregator, you must have the link to the RSS feed file sent to you by that user as outlined in the steps above. You can then paste this link into an RSS aggregator and view any updates to that user's blog.

Printing a Blog Entry

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 From any blog entry list in the Blog tool, select the check box next to the blog entry that you wish to print, then click the  **View printable version of selected Blog entries in a new window** icon at the top of the page. To select all blog entries, select the check box at the top of the list.
- 3 Click **Print** to print the blog entries that are displayed in the pop-up window, or **Close** to close the pop-up window and return to the My Blog or Blog Watch page.


Blog Watch


You may be interested in keeping track of other users' blogs and following new blog entries or comments as they are added to these blogs. The **Blog Watch** area allows you to do this. Using the Blog List page, you can select the users whose blogs you want to "watch" and add them to your **Blog Watch** list. Subsequently, all blog entries and comments from these users' blogs are displayed in your **Blog Watch** window.

The **Blog Watch** list is empty by default. You must first add blogs to watch from the **Blog List** in order to populate your **Blog Watch**.



Note You must have the necessary permissions in order to see users in the Blog List page. Contact your system administration if you need further permissions.

► **To access the Blog Watch page**

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, click the  **Blog Watch** icon. The Blog Watch page displays.

- 3 The Blog Watch page shows all of the new blog entries in each of the blogs that you are watching, with the most recent blog entry at the top. Click any author's name in the **Author** field to view the blog of that author, or click any of the blog entry titles in the **Title** field to view that blog entry.
- 4 If the author of the blog has enabled readers to see his/her profile (e.g. he/she has the setting **Show a link to your user profile from your Blog** enabled – refer to the *Blog Settings* section for more details), the  **Profile** icon will appear underneath the author's name. Click this icon to view the profile for the author, which shows their personal details.
- 5 If you have the appropriate permissions, you can also add a comment to any of the blog entries by clicking the **Add Comment** link.

► **To add a blog to your Blog Watch**


- 1 On the **My Blog or Blog Watch** page, click the  **Blog List** icon. The Blog List page is displayed. The **Blog List** is a list of users in the entire organization with permission to create blogs and whose blogs you can view.
- 2 Select the check box next to the blog that you would like to add to your **Blog Watch** list and click the  **Add selected users to Blog Watch** icon. You may select more than one blog for addition at the same time. To select all blogs, select the check box at the top of the list.


Note To help you locate a blog, you can sort the table by any of the columns categories by clicking on the column name. Click again to sort in the opposite direction (ascending/descending).



To search for a specific blog, enter a value in the **Search For** field and click the **Search** button. To specify further search criteria or narrow down the default ones, click the **Show Search Options** link. The Blog List page displays additional search options. (To return the page to its previous form, click the **Hide Search Options** link).

You can search by first name, last name, users, date of creation, total number of entries and total number of comments.

- 3 You can also click a user's name in the Blog List page to display his/her blog.
- 4 Click the  **Add <user name> to your Blog Watch** link to add this user to your Blog Watch.


You can also click the  **View User Profile for <user name>** link to view the profile for this user, which shows their personal information. This option is only available if the user has selected the **Show a link to your user profile from your Blog** option in their **Settings** (refer to the *Blog Settings* section for more details).



In addition, you can click the  **Daily RSS Feed** link to view the XML file needed for the RSS feed (this is only available if the user has selected the **Publish your Blog as an RSS feed** option on the My Blog - Settings page, which allows readers of a blog to link to its **Feed URL** and view updates to the blog on another website – refer to the *Blog Settings* section for more details).

- 5 When you return to the Blog Watch page, the blog that you just added will be displayed in the list if it has any new blog entries within the period specified by you in the My Blog - Settings page (refer to the *Blog Settings* section for more details).
- **To remove a blog from your Blog Watch**
- 1 On the **Blog Watch** or Blog List page, select the check box next to the blog that you would like to remove from your Blog Watch list and click the  **Remove selected users from Blog Watch** icon. You may select more than one blog for removal at the same time. To select all blogs, select the check box at the top of the list.
 - 2 Click **OK** in the confirmation message. The blog is removed from the Blog Watch page.
- Or
- On the View Entry page, click the  **Remove <user name> from your Blog Watch** link.

Adding to a blog

Adding a blog entry

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, click the  **Add Entry** icon. The **Add Entry** page displays.
- 3 Enter a **Title**. This title will appear in the blog entries list, and other users will click the title to read or respond to your entry. The title should be something descriptive and easy to identify.
- 4 Enter the **Content** of the blog entry. The content appears in the blog entries list below the title.

The additional icons,  **Spell Check** and  **Preview**, allow you to check the spelling of your content and preview it before posting.
- 5 The **Make Public** and **Allow Comments** properties allow others to see your blog entry and add comments to it. Doing so encourages collaborative participation and feedback from others and utilizes the Blog tool as an effective means of communication.

If you do not want others to add comments, unselect the “Allow Comments” check box. If you want to keep your blog entry private, unselect the “Make Public” check box. Keeping your blog entry private prevents others from seeing it or adding any comments to it (the **Allow Comments** field becomes unavailable).
- 6 The **Entry Date** for this blog entry is set to the current date and time by default. You can change these values by selecting the date and time drop-down lists. To revert to the default values, click the **Now** button.

Blog entries are always displayed with the newest ones (those with the highest date) first. Thus, the Entry Date is important for organizing your entries. If you set the date to further in the future, that entry will be displayed at the top of the blog entries list.

- 7 Click the **Save** button to save the blog entry. You may continue to make changes to the blog entry as needed and save it.

Or

Click the **Save and New** button to save the blog entry and add a new one.
- 8 To cancel the blog entry or return to the **My Blog** page, click the **Cancel** button.

Adding a comment to a blog entry

You can add comments to your own or to others' blog entries. Comments can only be added to Public blog entries and only if the user who created the entry allowed comments to be added to it.



► To add a comment to your own blog entry



- 1 On the My Blog page, click the **Add Comment** link for a blog entry.

Or

On the View Entry page, click the **Add Comment** link.

- 2 Enter a comment for the blog entry.

The additional icons,  **Spell Check** and  **Preview**, allow you to check the spelling of your comment text and preview it.

- 3 Click **Save Comment** to save your comment or **cancel** to cancel your comment and hide the comment field. After saving your comment, it will be displayed at the bottom of the View Entry page. You can then either click the  **Add Comment to this entry** link to add another comment, or click the  **Entry List** icon at the top of the page to return to the All Entries page.


► To add a comment to another user's blog entry

- 1 On the Blog Watch page, click the **Add Comment** link for a blog entry.






Or

On the Blog List page, click a user's name to view their blog, and then click the **Add Comment** link in the <User's> Blog page.


Or


On the Blog List page, click a value in the **Latest Entry** or **Latest Comment** fields, and then click the  **Add a comment to this entry** link in the View Entry for <user> page.

Note The **Add Comment** link is only available for a blog entry if the user who created that entry allowed comments to be added to it.

- 2 Enter a comment for the blog entry.
The additional icons,  **Spell Check** and  **Preview**, allow you to check the spelling of your comment text and preview it.
- 3 Click **Save Comment** to save your comment or **Cancel** to cancel your comment and hide the comment field. After saving your comment, it will be displayed at the bottom of the View Entry for <user> page. You can then either click the  **Add a comment to this entry** link to add another comment, or click the  **Go Back to Blog Watch** or  **Go Back to Blog List** icons at the top of the page to return to the Blog Watch or Blog List page.


Editing a Blog Entry

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, click the  **Edit Entry** icon next to the title of the blog entry. The **Edit Entry** page is displayed.


On this page, you can edit the fields of the blog entry including **Title**, **Content**, **Properties** and **Entry Date**. You can also delete any comments in the blog entry by clicking on the  **Delete Comment** icon next to the comment.

If you unselect the **Allow Comments** option, old comments remain visible but no new comments can be added by users.

Similarly, if you unselect the **Make Public** option after a blog entry is initially created as public, the blog entry is no longer visible to users.

- 3 After making the required changes, click the **Save** button to save the blog entry, or click **Save and New** to save the blog entry and add another one. To return to the **My Blog** page, click the **Cancel** button or click the  **Entry List** icon at the top of the page.

Deleting a Blog Entry

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, select the check box next to the blog entry that you wish to delete, then click the  **Delete selected Blog entries** icon at the top of the page. To select all blog entries, select the check box at the top of the list.
- 3 Click **OK** in the confirmation message.


Deleting a Comment from a Blog Entry

Deleting a comment from a blog entry is done on the Edit Entry page. Refer to the *Editing a Blog Entry* section for details.

Blog Settings

The My Blog - Settings page allows you to configure the default options for your blog entries as well as publish your blog externally.

► To access the My Blog - Settings page

- 1 From **My Home** or your course homepage, click the **Blog** link in the navigation bar.
- 2 On the **My Blog** page, click the  **Settings** icon. The My Blog – Settings page displays.
- 3 If you select the **Show a link to your user profile from your Blog** option, users who are viewing your blog will be able to also view your profile.

To view your profile and make changes to it, click the **Edit Profile** link. Enter your details in the profile page and click the **Save Changes** button, or click the **Back** button to return to the My Blog - Settings page.

- 4 Select the **Make entries public by default** option to make any new blog entries public by default (the **Make Public** option will be checked by default on the Add Entry page – refer to the *Adding a blog entry* section for details).
- 5 Select the **Allow comments by default** option to allow comments to blog entries by default (the **Allow Comments** option will be checked by default on the Add Entry page – refer to the *Adding a blog entry* section for details).

Note The Allow comments by default option is only available if the Make entries public by default option is selected

- 6 Select the **Receive email when comments are added** option if you want to receive an email whenever a comment is added to one of your blog entries. This email will notify you of the comment and provide a link to view your blog entry that the comment was added to.

The email can be sent to your external email address or to an internal one if Desire2Learn Email is enabled and you can receive messages through it.

- 7 Select the **Allow Blog to be seen external to Desire2Learn** option if you want to allow your blog to be seen from outside Desire2Learn.
- 8 The **External URL** field contains the URL to view your blog from outside Desire2Learn. You can send this URL to users without Desire2Learn accounts and they can still view your blog in any internet browser and participate in the blog by adding comments (if you have allowed comments.)

Note Private blog entries are not accessible by URL to any user other than the author.

- 9 Select the **Publish your Blog as an RSS feed** option to allow readers of your blog to link to your **Feed URL** and view your blog using an external RSS aggregator. To publish your blog in this way, you must enter a title and description for it in the **Feed Title** and **Feed Description** fields.
- 10 Enter a value in the **Persistence** field to determine how long blog entries will stay in your **Blog Watch** list. For example, if you enter **1** for the number of days, then each blog entry that appears in the **Blog Watch** will be visible there for one day and will not be visible 24 hours after the entry date. Increasing this value, i.e. entering **10**, will show you older blog entries in your **Blog Watch**. Setting the value to 0 will never remove the blog entry from the **Blog Watch** list.

Index

A

- access
 - blogs watch, 7
 - my blog page, 2
- add
 - blog entry, 8
 - blogs watch, 7
 - comment, 3
 - comments, 9

B

- blog
 - settings, 11

C

- comments
 - add, 9

D

- delete
 - blog entry, 3, 11
 - blogs watch, 8
 - comment, 11
- display
 - blog entries, 3

E

- edit

- blog entry, 3, 10

O

- overview
 - blog, 2
 - blog watch, 6

P

- preview
 - blog, 3
- print
 - blog entry, 3, 6

S

- search
 - blog entry, 2, 3

V

- view
 - blogs, 4
 - blogs using an RSS aggregator, 5
 - comments, 4
- view blogs
 - blog entries, 4
 - externally, 4
 - private blog entries, 4
 - public blog entries, 4
 - using an internet browser, 5