

# 3

## How, Where and When

In this chapter we consider six aspects of liblogs:

- How they're created (the blogging software used)
- Where they're written (country of origin)
- How visible they are (Google Page Rank)
- When they began
- How long they've lasted
- Currency—a timed snapshot of freshness of posts.

### How: Liblog Software

In 2008, 511 of 607 blogs studied used blogging software from one of five major sources. That year, WordPress was used by *slightly* more bloggers than Blogger, with those two far ahead of any others.

In 2009, WordPress had moved ahead, with 47% of the 521 liblogs as compared to just under 37% for Blogger and 9% for the next highest (Six Apart products, namely TypePad and MovableType). Earlier in 2009, another blogger checked blog software usage for a different universe of liblogs and concluded that Blogger was by far the platform of choice for the general population, followed distantly by WordPress and even more distantly by Typepad. Indeed, those results showed Blogger with more than twice as many blogs as WordPress.

I questioned the results in a rather ungracious comment. I've since apologized for the way I handled it—but not for

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questioning an assertion that, in essence, Blogger is twice as popular as WordPress among libloggers.

This broader survey yields *much* more interesting results—specifically because it clarifies to what extent the results depend on the question being asked.

### *The Total Universe: It's a Tie*

Table 3.1 shows the blogging software used for all liblogs in this year's study. "Six Apart" combines TypePad and MovableType and "Other" includes other known packages and handcrafted blogs.

Software	Blogs	Percent
Blogger	572	43.9%
Drupal	12	0.9%
LiveJournal	22	1.7%
Posterous	3	0.2%
Six Apart	75	5.8%
Tumblr	7	0.5%
WordPress	560	42.9%
Other	53	4.1%
Total	1,304	

Table 3.1: Blogging software for all liblogs

How can it be the case that WordPress was showing a substantial lead over Blogger in 2009, just shy of a majority of all blogs, when the two are essentially tied in 2010 (with Blogger 1% ahead)?

There are at least two good answers to be found by looking at types and groups.

### *Types: Book Bloggers Favor Blogger, Techies WordPress*

Software	Blogs	Percent
Blogger	61	53.0%
Drupal	1	0.9%
LiveJournal	2	1.7%

Posterous	1	0.9%
Six Apart	5	4.3%
Tumblr	2	1.7%
WordPress	41	35.7%
Other	2	1.7%
Total	115	

Table 3.2: Blogging software for book blogs

Table 3.2 shows part of the answer: Most book (and other review) blogs use Blogger. Quite a few book blogs use fairly fancy Blogger templates—including one that inserts a strict copyright claim and warning about plagiarism, interesting in a blog that (in earlier times) had included the full lyrics of a popular song without indication of permission.

Technology-oriented bloggers favor WordPress—a little more than book bloggers favor Blogger and for a much larger set of blogs.

Software	Blogs	Percent
Blogger	128	31.6%
Drupal	8	2.0%
LiveJournal	2	0.5%
Posterous	1	0.2%
Six Apart	23	5.7%
Tumblr	2	0.5%
WordPress	226	55.8%
Other	15	3.7%
Total	405	

Table 3.3: Blogging software for technology blogs

For other blogs, Blogger is ahead of WordPress (48.9% to 37.4%). In all cases, Six Apart (TypePad and MovableType) is a distant third, with other platforms even less visible. Note that the newish platforms Posterous and Tumblr have yet to make significant inroads among liblogs.

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##### Groups: Core Blogs Favor WordPress

Software	Blogs	Percent
Blogger	150	33.9%
Drupal	5	1.1%
LiveJournal	5	1.1%
Posterous	1	0.2%
Six Apart	34	7.7%
Tumblr	0	0.0%
WordPress	232	52.4%
Other	16	3.6%
Total	443	

Table 3.4: Blogging software for Group 1 (Core) blogs

Although not quite as striking as the figures for technology liblogs, the breakdown for core blogs (in Table 3.4 above) is distinct, and shows a shift toward WordPress from other platforms. A clear majority of all core blogs use WordPress; Blogger is a fairly distant second.

Now consider the other extreme—Group 4, blogs that are moribund or defunct. As shown in Table 3.5, nearly 60% of those blogs used Blogger, while just over a quarter used WordPress.

Software	Blogs	Percent
Blogger	171	59.0%
Drupal	1	0.3%
LiveJournal	8	2.8%
Posterous	0	0.0%
Six Apart	19	6.6%
Tumblr	0	0.0%
WordPress	76	26.2%
Other	15	5.2%
Total	290	

Table 3.5: Blogging software for Group 4 (Moribund) blogs

Other groups are somewhere in the middle—with Blogger leading WordPress slightly in Group 2, WordPress leading Blogger in Group 3. Taking all groups *except* Group 4, WordPress leads with just under 48% (but not quite a majority), while Blogger follows with just under 40%. In every group and type, it's a two-horse race: no other software accounts for even 10% of blogs.

### Where: Liblogs by Country

I was able to determine the country in which the blogger(s) resided (not necessarily the country of citizenship) for 1,216 of the 1,304 blogs. Table 3.6 shows this information in descending order by number of blogs.

Country	Blogs
United States	880
United Kingdom	109
Canada	91
Australia	79
Netherlands	6
New Zealand	6
Philippines	5
India	4
Iran	4
Italy	3
Norway	3
Singapore	3
Wales	3
China	2
Ireland	2
Scotland	2
Sweden	2
Thailand	2
Antigua	1

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Austria	1
Denmark	1
Egypt	1
Fiji	1
France	1
Germany	1
Mexico	1
Portugal	1
Spain	1

*Table 3.6. Liblogs by country*

Given that this study is limited to English-language liblogs, the results are scarcely surprising—that is, 97% or all but 32 of the blogs come from either the primary English-speaking nations or nations where English is an official language (Singapore, Philippines, Fiji, Hong Kong) or the dominant language (Antigua).

I used Scotland or Wales only when that was clear from the blogger's self-identification. Chances are, more of the blogs labeled United Kingdom come from Scotland and Wales.

Adjusted for population within the top five, Australia libloggers are very active (3.5 blogs per million people), with the United States and Canada roughly tied for second (2.8 and 2.7 blogs per million respectively)—and the United Kingdom (including Scotland and Wales) and New Zealand somewhat behind (1.8 and 1.4 blogs per million). As a liblog reader, I know Australian librarians are unusually active bloggers.

### *A Few of the Others*

What of the 32 blogs that come from countries where English is not an official (or the dominant) language and that aren't moribund? Several are by English-speaking librarians teaching or working abroad. Notes on most of the others:

Petter Næss has been writing *Knowbodies* since 2003, originating in Denmark but with a broad international set of

“news about websites, technology, resources, applications, trends and all manner of information that might be of interest to librarians and other information seekers.”

From France we get *Science Intelligence and InfoPros*, from a “Librarian at a big pharmaceutical company.” The relatively young blog includes selective, thoughtful commentaries by “hbasset” on items related to science and librarianship.

Chetan Hegde M writes *LISMysore* from Mysore, India—not a prolific blog but one with interesting posts. In New Delhi, Sukdhev Singh writes *Sukdhev in Web Land*, another blog that’s been around since 2005.

Iran appears to have a very active liblogging community, but with a lot of appearances and disappearances. Two Iranian blogs with many or most posts in English are still active, both since 2005: Yazdan Mansourian’s *The Invisible Web Weblog* and Ehsan Mohammadi’s *Virtual Ehsan Real Blog*.

I love the title of Mexico’s sole English-language liblog (of which I’m aware): *Stupendous Amazing Library*. It’s by Alejandro Garza at Monterrey Tech, it’s been around since 2007, and it’s what the banner says: “Library technical stuff, focused on Drupal, search, metasearch and the user experience.”

Half a dozen English liblogs come from the Netherlands. Lukas Koster writes *CommonPlace.Net* about “Library 2.0 and beyond.” *DigiCMB* (“The Web, Research, Virtual and Social Networks in Health and Medicine”) comes from “The ‘Infectious’ Librarian,” Guus van den Brekel. Another medical library blog exploring the “web 2.0 world,” *Laika’s MedLibLog*, comes from “Laika Spoetnik,” a pseudonym for someone named Jacqueline. “Driek” at the University of Amsterdam has been writing *Library spring* “on innovation for academic research libraries” since 2006 and Wouter Gerritsma has produced *WoW! Wouter on the Web* since 2007—but included quite a few English posts in his older blog. Then there’s ob-

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*noxious librarian from hades*: Dennie Heye, who’s turned three years of posts into a self-published book (or “blook”).

From Norway, Thomas Brevik’s *Librarian 1.5*, around since January 2006, gives its coverage as “Library 2.0 from a Scandinavian perspective.” *Plinius*, around since 2005, appears in two versions—one Norwegian, one English.

Mónica Mendes Pinheiro in Portugal has been writing the wide-ranging *Monica’s jeans* since 2003, with some posts in Portuguese, many in English and some a mix of the two.

Finally, there are two from Sweden. Åke Nygren’s *bibl.se*, described as “digital library bubbles,” just moved to Posterous (at [bibl.posterous.com](http://bibl.posterous.com)). Lars Iselid, *Librarian* at the Medical Library, Umeå University Library, Sweden, has been writing *Nowhere North* since September 2006, covering “Internet, search engines, information and library science (LIS), travellings, conferences, open source and free software (FOSS) etc.”

### Visibility: Google Page Rank

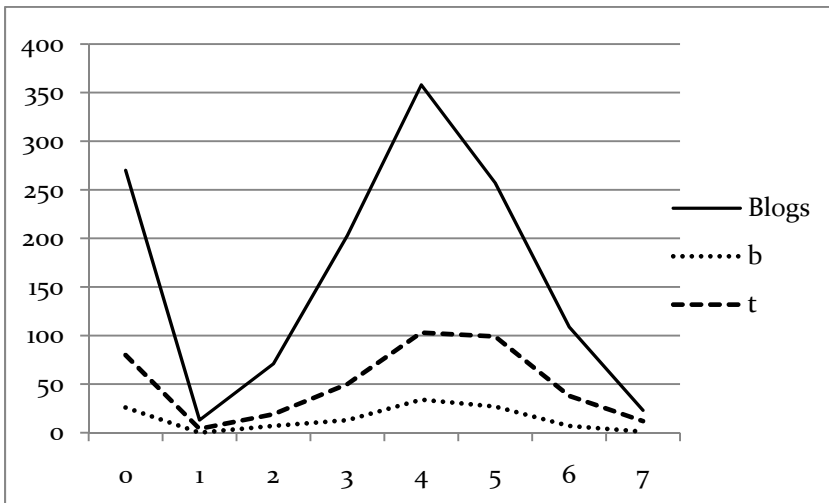


Figure 3.1: GPR for all blogs, book blogs and tech blogs



I use Google Page Rank (GPR) as a crude indicator of blog visibility with misgivings. It is unquestionably crude: There are only 11 possible values and no liblog has any of the three highest values. Older blogs generally do better because GPR values links and links accumulate over age. It can be confounded by several things, including changing platform or URL. But it's the only readily available measure I can find, and—with a few notable exceptions—it seems to be a reasonably good crude measure.

Figure 3.1 shows GPR counts for all liblogs and for book-blogs (b) and tech blogs (t). It's worth noting that, while the overall population has a sharp spike at GPR<sub>4</sub>, with somewhat lower values at 2 and 5, the book/review blogs have a strong showing at 5—and there are almost as many tech blogs with GPR<sub>5</sub> as with GPR<sub>4</sub> (99 and 103 respectively). Do note that the solid line *includes* blogs in the other two lines.

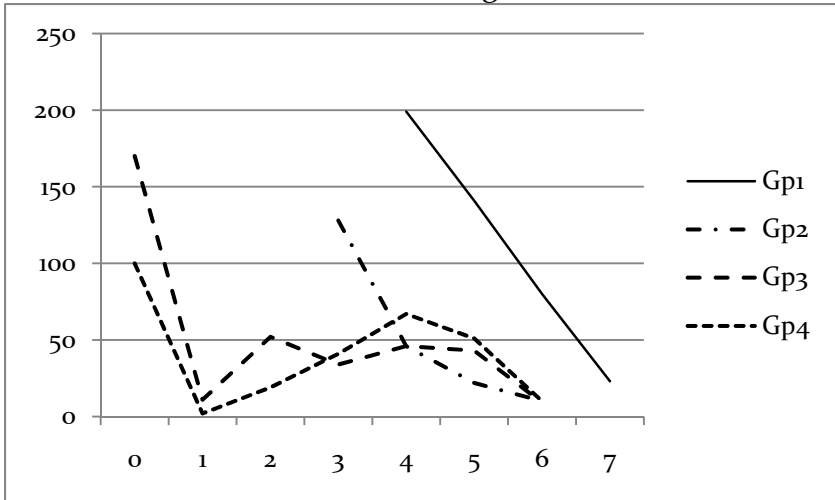


Figure 3.2: GPR for blogs by group

Figure 3.2 is mostly interesting to compare groups 3 and 4, where any GPR value is possible. By definition, Group 1 blogs start at GPR<sub>4</sub> and Group 2 blogs start at GPR<sub>3</sub>—with most of them having that value. Possibly noteworthy: All of

the most visible blogs (GPR7) are in Group 1, which means they're all still fairly active—as are roughly three-quarters of GPR6 blogs.

### When: Liblogs by Date of Origin

The broader universe of liblogs this time around shows a sharply different pattern by date of origin than earlier studies.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Blogs</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1998	1	0.1%
1999	2	0.2%
2000	4	0.3%
2001	12	0.9%
2002	29	2.2%
2003	91	7.0%
2004	124	9.5%
2005	237	18.2%
2006	224	17.2%
2007	263	20.2%
2008	165	12.7%
2009	117	9.0%
2010	35	2.7%

*Table 3.7: Blogs by Starting Year*

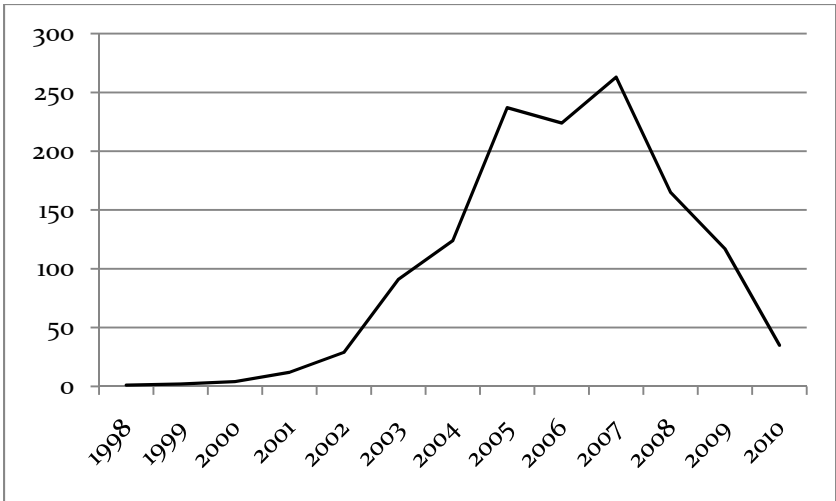


Figure 3.3: Blogs by starting year

Because I wanted to track longevity (see below), I recorded the month of origin separately from the year. You may find Figure 3.4 meaningful, or you may not. “Library folks are less likely to start blogs late in the year”—that’s what I come up with.

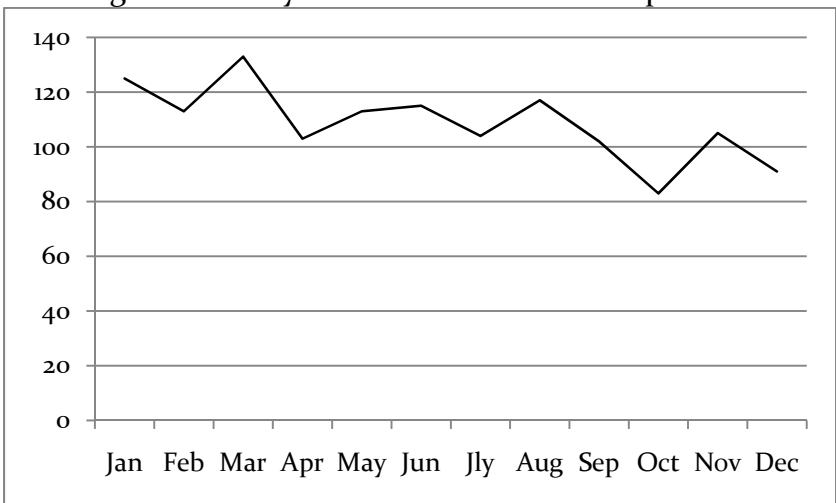


Figure 3.4: Blogs by starting month

### Pioneering Blogs

Here's a list of the oldest blogs—not the oldest quintile (that would include all blogs started in 2004 or before) but roughly the oldest tenth, those started in 2003 or before. In some cases these blogs began with different names but have continuity of archives. Blogs that currently appear to be moribund or defunct (having had no posts between June 1, 2009 and May 31, 2010) appear in italics.

**Blog** ..... **Month**

#### 1998

ResearchBuzz..... August

#### 1999

oss4lib ..... February

librarian.net ..... April

#### 2000

Search Engine Showdown Blog..... July

*Info Career Trends*..... September

Library Banter..... November

Librarisaurus Rex..... December

#### 2001

*LibraryPlanet.com* ..... January

ResourceShelf ..... January

The Handheld Librarian ..... January

mazar.ca ..... March

Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog..... June

AnthoBLOGy ..... July

*infoibre* ..... September

the cynic librarian..... September

librarygeek ..... October

The Rabid Librarian's Ravings in the Wind ..... October

*Kegliography* ..... December

rawbrick.net..... December

#### 2002

The Shifted Librarian ..... January

EngLib .....	February
BookBitchBlog.....	March
Catalogablog.....	March
ASC Online.....	April
Family Man Librarian.....	April
MaisonBisson.com .....	April
42short .....	May
Open Access News .....	May
eclectic librarian.....	June
Leah's Law Library Weblog .....	June
Old Fox's KM blotter .....	June
Raspoid Maunderings.....	June
Lady Crumpet's Armoire .....	July
beSpecific.....	August
Conan the Librarian.....	August
Confessions of a Bibliovore.....	August
etc. ....	August
The Aardvark Speaks.....	August
frontier librarian.....	September
Saving the world daily through information.....	September
the pod bay door .....	September
Confessions of a Science Librarian .....	October
Liberry Blooze .....	October
LoopyLibrarian .....	October
mamamusings .....	October
DrWeb's Domain.....	December
Observations from the front line.....	December
Union Librarian.....	December

### 2003

At Home He's a Tourist .....	January
Book Kitten.....	January
Diary of a Wandering Cataloger .....	January
Library Link of the Day .....	January
Library Stuff.....	January
Sites and Soundbytes .....	January
Archivalia.....	February
capital city desk.....	February
Citegeist .....	February
Pattern Recognition .....	February
Peter Scott's Library Blog .....	February
Redhaired Librarian .....	February

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The Misadventures of Super_Librarian.....	February
The world is my dinosaur.....	February
AFPL Watch.....	March
<i>Open Stacks</i> .....	March
<i>SciTech Library Question</i> .....	March
TangognaT.....	March
<i>The Laughing Librarian</i> .....	March
Creative Librarian.....	April
infosophy.....	April
j's scratchpad.....	April
Librarian Avengers.....	April
Libraryman.....	April
The Invisible Library.....	April
<i>The Playful Antiquarian</i> .....	April
<i>Threnody for the Public Domain</i> .....	April
Virtual Dave...Real Blog.....	April
Attempting Elegance.....	May
explodedlibrary.info.....	May
<i>JasonUnbound</i> .....	May
Library Monk.....	May
<i>Ref Grunt</i> .....	May
<i>Adventures of an InfoMage in Training</i> .....	June
DIY Librarian.....	June
Epistemographer.....	June
Librarian.....	June
Lupe's journal.....	June
Fairly Used.....	July
Free Range Librarian.....	July
Monica's jeans.....	July
<i>NAMA-RUPA</i> .....	July
The Days & Nights of the Lipstick Librarian!.....	July
The Information Literacy Land of Confusion.....	July
Tiny Little Librarian.....	July
Travelin' Librarian.....	July
zydeco fish.....	July
Dirty Librarian.....	August
Kids Lit.....	August
<i>Legal References</i> .....	August
<i>Librarian's Rant</i> .....	August
Public Libraries: fighting cynicism.....	August
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Cites & Insights	January 2011

<i>tblog - fling fling!</i> .....	August
<i>The Nonny Librarians</i> .....	August
Tillabooks: Will's Book Blog .....	August
<i>Young Librarian</i> .....	August
blogwithoutalibrary.net .....	September
David Lee King .....	September
Hip Librarians Book Blog.....	September
Information Takes Over .....	September
LibrariAnne .....	September
<i>Library Despot 3.0</i> .....	September
Knowbodies.....	October
LawLibTech .....	October
<i>libertarian Librarian</i> .....	October
Library Chronicles.....	October
Lorcan Dempsey's weblog .....	October
<i>On Christina's Radar</i> .....	October
Osten Ard .....	October
Overdue Ideas.....	October
The Hot Librarian.....	October
The In Season Christian Librarian .....	October
<i>The InfoMan's Blog</i> .....	October
<i>The Well Dressed Librarian</i> .....	October
Beyond the Job .....	November
Books to curl up with: a librarian's musings .....	November
Borderland Tales .....	November
Confessions of a Mad Librarian .....	November
LibrarianActivist.org.....	November
<i>Library Stories: Libraries &amp; Librarians in the News</i> .....	November
<i>The Illustrated Librarian</i> .....	November
The Librarydude!.....	November
The Loud Librarian .....	November
User Education Resources for Librarians .....	November
Dispatches from a Public Librarian .....	December
<i>Elementary School Blog</i> .....	December
Legal Marketing .....	December
<i>Librarian Way</i> .....	December
Open Reading Frame .....	December
<i>Professional-Lurker: Comments by an academic in cyberspace</i> .....	December

### Longevity

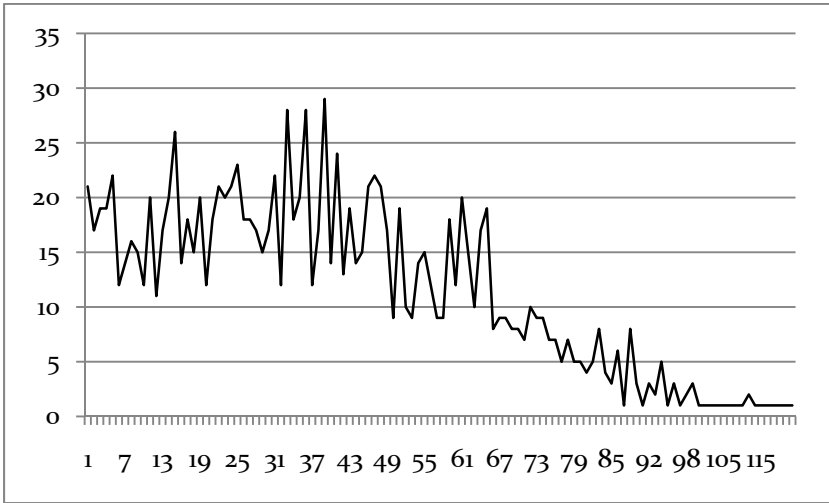


Figure 3.5: *Blog longevity by months*

I tracked the number of months between the first post in each blog and the last post before June 1, 2010. The average and median are surprisingly close in this case: 39.2 months on average, 36 months as the median. Figure 3.5 shows blog longevity by months.

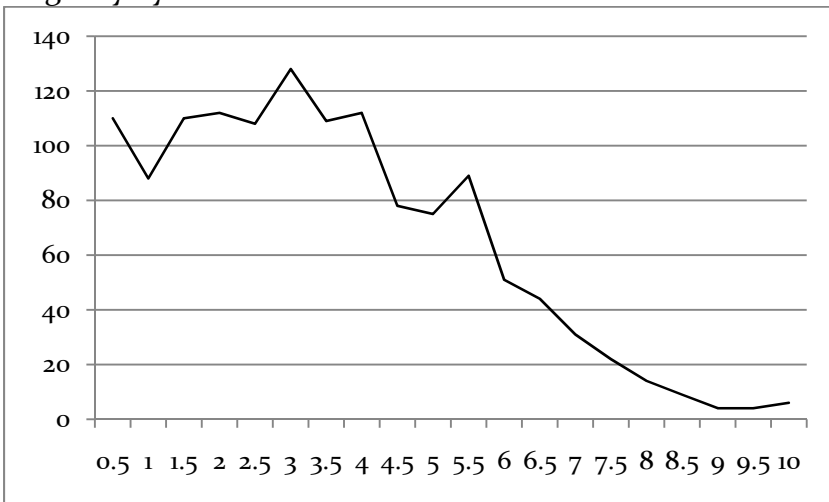


Figure 3.6: *Blog longevity by years*



Figure 3.6, which breaks longevity down into half-years, is easier to read—but I'm not sure how much either figure means. A blog that began in January 2008 can't have lasted more than 29 months by May 2010 (for example).

On the other hand, there are distinct differences between groups of blogs in terms of longevity. Core blogs (group 1) average 51 months with a median of 48 months. Group 2 blogs average 42 months with a median of 41 months. Group 3 blogs average 34 months with a median of 33 months—and group 4 blogs, blogs that are defunct or moribund, average 24 months with a median of 19 months. Look at the two extremes: In essence, core blogs that are still active have been around about twice as long as blogs that are abandoned. (There are no significant longevity differences between book/review, technology and other blogs.)

	<b>Blogs</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Moribund</b>
<b>All</b>	1,304	142	1	36	22%
<b>Q1</b>	254	142	62	73	7%
<b>Q2</b>	266	61	44	51	11%
<b>Q3</b>	256	43	31	36	16%
<b>Q4</b>	267	30	16	24	28%
<b>Q5</b>	261	15	1	8	48%

Table 3.8: Longevity quintiles

Table 3.8 breaks blog longevity down by quintiles—with slightly varying sizes to break at whole numbers. Since this is the first quintile table (of many), let's break it down a little—and note what may be the most interesting column, that is, what percentage of blogs in the quintile is in Group 4 (moribund or defunct as of May 31, 2010).

- The fifth of blogs that have been around the longest (from first post to most recent prior to June 2010) have been running from just over five years to more than 11 years, with a median of just over six years. Only 7% of these blogs are moribund.

- Blogs in the second quintile—above average but not in the top fifth—have been around from under four years to just over five, with a median of four years three months. 11% of these blogs are moribund, half the overall average.
- Blogs in the third quintile—“roughly average”—have been around from roughly 2.5 to roughly 3.5 years, with a median of three years. One-sixth of these blogs are apparently moribund, slightly below the overall average.
- For the fourth quintile, longevity ranges from one year four months to 2.5 years, with a median of two years—and more than a quarter of these blogs are moribund.
- Blogs with the shortest lifespan range from a single month to 1.25 years, with a median of just eight months—and nearly half of these blogs are moribund.

There’s a touch of obviousness about the overall conclusion here: Blogs tend to die young.

*Blogs with the most longevity (that began in 2004 or later)*

This list, arranged by decreasing longevity, shows those blogs in the first quintile that are *not* also pioneers—that is, those that began in 2004 and later.

<b>Blog</b>	<b>Months</b>
Connie Crosby	78
A Canuck Librarian	77
derivative work	77
GoddessLibrarian	77
Incoherent Scribblings	77
Informationoverlord	77
A Library Writer's Blog	76
Christina's LIS Rant	76
Daveman's Blog	76
Foxylibrarian.com	76
Loomware - Crafting New Libraries	76
ADHD Librarian	75

Bibliotherapy for obsessive/compulsive Readers.....	75
Fiddling Librarian 3.0.....	75
Library Web Chic .....	75
Tame the Web.....	75
walking paper .....	75
Carolyne's pages of interest .....	74
CogSci Librarian.....	74
Dojo of the Library Ninja.....	74
HappyGeek's CodeX.....	74
LibraryLaw Blog .....	74
Princess Cosine, the cunning librarian .....	74
The Liminal Librarian .....	74
It's all good.....	73
LibraryBytes.....	73
librarygrrrl.net.....	73
Matthew 2.0.....	73
Of Life, Education, E-bay, Travel & Books .....	73
The Distant Librarian.....	73
bookshelves of doom .....	72
Booktalks--Quick and Simple blog .....	72
Digital Reference .....	72
Duck Duck Book .....	72
Grumpator .....	72
Rambling Librarian :: Incidental Thoughts of a Singapore Liblogarian .....	72
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Baby Boomer Librarian .....	65
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Law Librarian Blog .....	65
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OA Librarian.....	65
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The Centered Librarian.....	65
The Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics .....	65
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habitually probing generalist.....	64
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**Currency**

Finally (for this overview chapter), consider currency: How recent the most recent post is, taking a fixed deadline. In this case, I use buckets dating back from June 1, 2010—one week, two weeks, four weeks, eight weeks, 13 weeks (the start of the measurement quarter), 17 weeks (essentially 120 days, the cutoff some analyses use for minimal blog activity), 26 weeks (half a year), 52 weeks (a year), and two special buckets: 99 (more than a year) and Ceased (explicitly ceased).

Table 3.9 shows currency for the liblog universe (missing seven blogs that, for one reason or another, were difficult to measure).

<b>Currency</b>	<b>Blogs</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
1	401	31%	31%
2	128	10%	41%
4	132	10%	51%
8	113	9%	60%
13	60	5%	64%
17	36	3%	67%
26	51	4%	71%

52	79	6%	77%
99	246	19%	96%
Ceased	51	4%	100%

Table 3.9: Currency for all blogs

Just under one-third of all blogs had a post within the last week of May 2010; just over half had a post sometime during the month of May; and just under two-thirds had a post *sometime* during the March-May 2010 study period. At the other extreme, roughly one-quarter of the blogs hadn't been updated within half a year, and roughly one out of five hadn't been updated in more than a year. Since groups are determined in part by currency, there's no point in showing currency for any given group.

Bookblogs	Blogs	Percentage	Cumulative
1	59	52%	52%
2	9	8%	60%
4	16	14%	74%
8	4	4%	78%
13	4	4%	81%
17	2	2%	83%
26	5	4%	88%
52	5	4%	92%
99	7	6%	98%
Ceased	2	2%	100%

Table 3.10: Currency for book/review blogs

Book and other review blogs tend to be updated frequently. More than half of these had a post in the last week of May and nearly three-quarters had a post sometime during May 2010. (Technology-oriented blogs show roughly the same distribution as all blogs.)

If you're reading this, you're reading Chapter 3 of *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010* as it appears in the January 2011 *Cites & Insights*. To see Chapter 1, for an index to blogs named in

this book and to help support future research, buy *The Liblog Landscape 2007-2010* in book form (or PDF download) at <http://www.lulu.com/content/9829119>.