

The Mommy Blogs

Seven things you didn't know.

by Kate Winn

There are tens of thousands of mommy bloggers on the world wide web. You may be a mommy blogger yourself or aspire to become one. You may follow one or more mommy blogs. Or you may not know a thing about blogging. No matter which category you fit into, you'll find the following information about mommy bloggers useful.

1. You can actually learn a lot from them.

Mommy bloggers are a great source of parenting information and support. While there are times you should go straight to your doctor or a textbook, there are moments when what you really want is to hear from someone in your situation (secondary infertility, single parenting, stay-at-home parenting, etc.) Bloggers are known for their honesty and willingness to pour their hearts out for perfect strangers, which may be just what you need.

How do you find mommy bloggers? Just do a Google search, and you'll find directories and individuals. Or visit some parenting sites – they often have their own mommy bloggers or will recommend some.

2. They come in all ages, cultures, and locations

The internet is a great equalizer. If you can access a computer with internet, you can become a blogger. Mommy bloggers range from teenage to menopausal, financially hurting to rich-and-famous, and can be found in the most remote rural locations, as well as the world's biggest cities. It can be a pleasure to find a blogger who shares your demographics, but other times it's eye-opening to read about how the other half lives.

3. They're not just mommies

Although women form the vast majority, there are many daddy bloggers out there, like CanaDad's Nick Cheeseman. He started his blog for many of the same reasons as his female counterparts, (some intellectual stimulation while at home with baby, a way to share pictures and milestones with family and friends). Whether written by a mom or dad, blogs provide "an outlet to vent, laugh, cry ... even if nobody reads it," says Cheeseman.

4. They don't just write about their cute kids

Many mommy blogs began as a way to chronicle and share the details of their children's lives, but have evolved from there. Some are more specific, such as parenting a child with special needs or raising multiples. Other parents write blogs that have little to do with their kids, and instead are business or interest related (e.g. recipes, crafts, charities, even blog design itself).

5. They're a force to be reckoned with in the public relations world

Although some bloggers prefer to limit their content to personal stories and information, many are now calling themselves "PR Friendly", and are willing to review products and host giveaways. For this reason, PR and marketing professionals are calling on these parents more and more often to get the word out about their products, and some blogs focus strictly on reviews and giveaways. It's also important to note that these moms aren't just blogging; they're incorporating other social media such as Facebook and Twitter into the package.

Laura Stratton of Stratco PR says, "Using mom bloggers gives my clients access to a completely new demographic of women who are hungry for knowledge about new products that will help save them time or reduce their environmental footprint, or simply products and ideas that are innovative and exciting."

It's quite cost-effective as well, since for the cost of a sample product, companies can get their word out to hundreds or even thousands of their target audience.

6. They can make (some) money

Bloggers can choose to place third-party ads on their blogs, or to write sponsored posts for companies (another PR option) in order to make some money. Affiliate programs are another popular option, where bloggers link to products, and get paid when one of their readers makes a purchase. While the average blogger may earn only \$10 - \$20 dollars a month with these techniques, the most successful bloggers go even further, developing and selling their own ebooks or products, and can actually make a living from their blog.

7. You could do it too!

Blogger is the most used blogging format for beginners; other options include Wordpress and TypePad. There are many resources to help you get started ... this writer started with the book *Google Blogger For Dummies* and went from there! Once you have a format, there are tons of online sites to help you with technical questions as well as tips for networking, growing your audience, improving your content, etc. With a little bit of computer know-how, you can do it all for free, but there are also many designers willing to take your money if you need the professional touch.

Kate Winn is a mother of two, teacher, freelance writer, and (yep!) mommy blogger. Check out her blog, This Mom Loves, at www.this-momloves.blogspot.com.

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