

Blog Inspection for Michael Martin at ProBlogDesign.com

by Easton Ellsworth at [Visionary Blogging](#) on October 25, 2008

Introduction

Michael, I've gone through your blog in depth and rated 130 aspects of it on a scale from 1 to 5:

- 1 = Desperately needs improvement
- 3 = Okay, could be better but no cause for concern
- 5 = Perfect or near-perfect

ProBlogDesign.com Overall Score: 79.5 out of 100

- Blog content: **79.3**
- Blog design: **89.8**
- Blog community: **50.0**
- Blog traffic: **65.0**
- Blog feed/email subscriber count: **80.0**
- Blog search engine optimization (SEO): **83.3**
- Blog social media optimization (SMO): **41.8**
- Blog monetization: **93.3**
- Blog value / return on investment (ROI): **82.5**

79.5 is excellent, but there are certainly things you can do to improve Pro Blog Design quickly and get better results with it.

Attention Items

The following items received a score of 1 out of 5 and deserve immediate attention (but not necessarily immediate action; see below for planning suggestions).

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- Visible policies
- Useful policies
- Visible social media sharing options
- Relevant social media sharing options
- Appealing social media sharing options
- Visible author information
- Compelling author information
- BlogCatalog.com presence
- Mixx.com presence
- LinkedIn.com presence
- Propeller.com presence
- Yahoo! Buzz presence
- YouTube presence

Blog Improvement Recommendations

- **Overall:** Keep asking your readers what they want - especially, what problems and burning questions they have. And just keep doing what you're doing - maybe publishing more often to satisfy your expanding readership.
- **Blog content:** Publish more audio/video content. Show off your work process a bit more. Maybe offer readers a free case study showing what you did for a client and how it impacted their business.
- **Blog design:** Consider making it more clear when each post was published. Also maybe offer a full archives page.
- **Blog community:** Put your face and/or voice somewhere where people can easily find out what you look/sound like.
- **Blog search engine optimization (SEO):** Not strictly an SEO tip, but you may want a bit [more privacy](#) on your WHOIS records.
- **Blog social media optimization (SMO):** Register at Technorati and claim your blog. Same at BlogCatalog.
- **Blog monetization:** You might want to tweak your services page to make it a bit easier for people to contact you. Offer as many ways to contact you as possible - email, phone, Skype, Twitter, IM, snail mail, message in a bottle, etc. Consider offering multiple service packages for different types of clients. Consider also offering ongoing design touch-up services on a revolving basis to some folks.

Section-by-Section Blog Inspection

(Hey, that rhymed!)

Blog Content: 79.3 out of 100

1. 3 Number of published articles (posts + pages)
2. 3 Age of first published article
3. 4 Age of latest published article
4. 3 Posts published per month
5. 3 Comments by blog visitors per month
6. 3 Trackbacks/pingbacks per month
7. 5 Words per article
8. 5 Images/audio/videos per article
9. 2 Internal links per article
10. 4 External links per article
11. 5 Compelling headlines
12. 5 Descriptive headlines
13. 5 Concise headlines
14. 5 Appropriate writing style
15. 4 Useful content
16. 4 Remarkable content
17. 5 Targeted content
18. 5 Accurate content
19. 4 Unique content

20. 3 Viral content
21. 3 Effective use of multiple media formats
22. 5 Appropriate anchor text in hyperlinks
23. 5 Appropriate number of hyperlinks
24. 5 Relevant hyperlinks
25. 5 Descriptive use of categories/tags
26. 5 Concise use of categories/tags
27. 5 Relevant use of categories/tags
28. 1 Visible policies
29. 1 Useful policies

Blog Design: 4.5 out of 5

1. 5 Eye-pleasing
2. 4 Unique
3. 4 Simple
4. 4 Organized
5. 5 Appropriate
6. 4 Easy to read
7. 4 Easy to navigate
8. 5 Easy to distinguish links from text
9. 5 Looks same in various browsers
10. 5 Looks same at different resolutions
11. 5 Mobile version looks good
12. 5 No broken links
13. 5 No code errors
14. 5 No missing alt text/placeholders
15. 5 Memorable favicon
16. 5 Appropriately-sized masthead
17. 5 Eye-pleasing masthead
18. 5 Relevant masthead
19. 5 Appropriately-sized logo
20. 5 Resizable logo
21. 5 Eye-pleasing logo
22. 5 Relevant logo
23. 5 Logo works without color
24. 5 Blog works without images
25. 5 Blog works without CSS
26. 5 Appropriately-sized blog title
27. 5 Memorable blog title
28. 5 Descriptive blog title
29. 4 Memorable tagline
30. 5 Descriptive tagline
31. 2 Visible search box
32. 5 Obvious search box
33. 4 Useful search box
34. 5 Visible feed/email subscription options
35. 5 Visible article headlines
36. 5 Appropriate number/size of article excerpts on homepage
37. 5 Appropriate number/size of article excerpts on archive pages
38. 1 Visible social media sharing options
39. 1 Relevant social media sharing options

40. 1 Appealing social media sharing options
41. 5 Visible blog comment area
42. 5 Easy to publish a comment
43. 5 Easy to browse comments/trackbacks/pingbacks
44. 4 Organized sidebar(s)
45. 5 Useful sidebar elements
46. 5 Organized footer
47. 5 Useful footer elements
48. 5 Feed displays correctly
49. 3 Useful feed elements

Blog Community: 2.5 out of 5

1. 1 Visible author information
2. 1 Compelling author information
3. 3 Visible contact information
4. 3 Compelling contact information
5. 3 Blog comments encouraged
6. 4 Useful blog comments

Blog Traffic: 3.25 out of 5

1. 3 Monthly visitors
2. 3 Monthly unique visits
3. 3 Monthly page views
4. 4 Average visit duration

Blog Feed/Email Subscriber Count: 4 out of 5

1. 4 Feed subscribers
2. n/a Email subscribers
3. n/a Newsletter subscribers
4. n/a Autoresponder subscribers

Blog Search Engine Optimization (SEO) 4.2 out of 5

1. 4 Number of backlinks
2. 4 Quality of backlinks
3. 4 Search engine rankings/SERPs
4. 4 Google PageRank
5. 3 Domain age
6. 3 Pages indexed in search engines
7. 3 Page load time
8. 5 Homepage URL memorability
9. 5 Homepage URL relevance
10. 5 URL structure
11. 5 Descriptive blog title/tagline

12. 5 Descriptive article headlines/subheadings

Blog Social Media Optimization (SMO) 2.1 out of 5

1. n/a Social media referral traffic as percentage of all referral traffic
2. 1 BlogCatalog.com presence
3. 4 Delicious.com presence
4. 3 Digg.com presence
5. 1 Mixx.com presence
6. 1 LinkedIn.com presence
7. 1 Propeller.com presence
8. 3 StumbleUpon.com presence
9. 4 Technorati.com presence
10. 3 Twitter.com presence
11. 1 Yahoo! Buzz presence
12. 1 YouTube presence

Blog Monetization 4.7 out of 5

1. 5 Appropriate amount of advertising/sales copy
2. 5 Appropriate placement of advertising/sales copy
3. 5 Relevant advertising/sales copy
4. 5 Compelling advertising/sales copy
5. 4 Appropriately-priced products/services
6. 4 Valuable products/services

Blog Value / Return On Investment (ROI) 4.1 out of 5

1. 5 Discernible purpose
2. 5 Discernible target audience
3. 4 Addictive
4. 4 Remarkable
5. 4 Irresistible
6. 3 Irreplaceable
7. 4 Valuable
8. 4 Makes a difference

What to Do Next

Michael, here are some ideas on how to use the data and advice above to speed up your blog improvement process (adapted from my [Blog Improvement Checklist](#)).

Plan

For each checklist item, rate on a scale from 1 to 5:

1. How *important* it is to improve (1 = not important; 5 = extremely important)

2. How *urgent* it is to improve (1 = not urgent; 5 = extremely urgent)
3. How *easy* it is to improve (1 = not easy; 5 = extremely easy)
4. How *quick* it is to improve (1 = extremely time-consuming; 5 = extremely quick)
5. How *inexpensive* it is to improve (1 = extremely expensive; 5 = extremely inexpensive)

Add the scores together and divide by 5 to get a priority score for each item.

e.g. *eye-pleasing logo* = $1 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 5 = 15/5 = 3.00$

Sort the items in descending order of priority.

You may wish to ignore items below a certain priority score (such as 2.00).

For each item, write a specific goal to improve your checklist score over the next month.

e.g. *I will publish at least one blog post per weekday in the month of October.*

You may also wish to set section-specific goals (e.g. a general blog content improvement goal) or overall blog goals.

Act

This part's easy. Just force yourself to carry out your plan. 😊

Review

Daily: Keep track of how much time, energy and/or money you spend trying to improve each aspect of your blog. Evaluate yourself as an improver. Ask, "What could I do to speed up my blog improvement efforts and make them more effective?"

Monthly: Repeat steps 1-3 to track the improvement of your blog and review/set blog improvement goals. Some things may improve or worsen without your intervention (for example, the number and quality of blog comments may fluctuate without any effort on your part).

I would love to follow up in 1-3 months to give you a new Blog Inspection so you can see where your scores stand.

Best wishes going forward at Pro Blog Design, Michael! - [Easton](#)