

# Measuring Blog Influence: Recognition, Activity Generation, and Novelty

*Shahizan Hassan, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia*

*Norshuhada Shiranuddin, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia*

*Mohd Fo'ad Saklan, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia*

*Nor Laily Hashim, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia*

*Mohd Samsu Sajat, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia*

---

## ABSTRACT

*Netizens around the world increasingly use blogs to share thoughts and opinions, create special interest groups, collaborate, and debate on issues. However, the social influence of blogs remains largely undetermined. This paper presents the outcomes of a study which investigates how the influence of blogs can be measured quantitatively. The purpose of the study was to determine how to assess the social influence of blogs and to develop two new tools for measuring blog influence: the Blog Influence Index (BII) and Blog Influence Analyzer (BLA). These tools were applied to identify top influential blogs in the blogosphere community of Malaysia. The results indicate that the top 10 most influential blogs in Malaysia fall under the categories of politics, entertainment, sports, lifestyle, and technology.*

*Keywords: Blog Influence, Blog Ranking, International Blogging, Malaysian Blogosphere, Public Opinion Mining, Social Media*

---

## INTRODUCTION

Netizens around the world increasingly use blogs to share thoughts and opinions, create special interest groups, collaborate, and debate on issues (Barlow, 2007; Kenix, 2009; Keren, 2006; Pole, 2010; Tremayne, 2007). Research has shown that blogging has become omnipresent and has turned into a global medium with vast readership (Davis, 2009; Dumova & Fiordo,

2012; Gillmore, 2006). Popular bloggers have become the blogosphere's opinion leaders, or the so-called 21st century "influentials" (Keller & Berry, 2003). Top ranked bloggers receive celebrity treatment from society as they can easily command an audience of hundreds of thousands (Haas, 2011).

After the adoption of blogging, Malaysia has developed a vibrant and diverse blogosphere (Ahmad, 2011; Iga, 2012; Smeltzer, 2008; Tan, & Ibrahim, 2008; Weiss, 2012). Results of an online survey of Malaysian bloggers performed

DOI: 10.4018/ijicst.2012010104

by Microsoft in 2006 revealed that 41% of Malaysians who went online also blogged. The Microsoft study (Bloggging Malaysia, 2006) found that the majority of bloggers in Malaysia (or 74%) were 25 years old or younger and more than half of them (64%) were women. Most of the participants (81%) were interested in reading blogs written by their friends or family members, while less than half (48%) indicated that they preferred contributing blog entries with their own thoughts or making comments about the world around them. Only few (3%) stated that they considered themselves citizen journalists. According to Microsoft's report, technology, travel, and music became the three most popular blog topics in Malaysia, as well as across Asia.

Another survey conducted by the Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission (SKMM, 2008) discovered that 63.5% of Internet home users in Malaysia were aware of blogs, and 9.5% maintained their own blogs. Interestingly enough, individual and collective blogs received more attention than media-sponsored blogs (p. 14). In June 2010, the Malaysian National News Agency quoted Dr. Rais Yatim, Malaysian Minister of Information, Communication and Culture, that there were close to two million bloggers in Malaysia ("Dewan Rakyat: 2 million bloggers," 2010).

Measuring blog influence is important for many reasons. For an Internet user, it can help decide which blog to follow among many others. For a blogger, it can pave the road to success and recognition. On a societal level, it can aid in public opinion mining for better governmental decisions (Stylios et al., 2010) and a harmoniously functioning society.

The blogging phenomenon constitutes mostly plausible development for countries where governments have created opportunities for citizens to utilize information technology, moving towards achieving a knowledge society; it is also well documented in research (Barlow, 2008; Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). However, there is a lack of research that investigates the impact of blogs and blogging on communi-

ties in countries that are undergoing technological modernization and rapidly expanding their public spheres. Some scholars even suggest that blogging can have a controversial impact on public life in countries where media systems are in transition by introducing elements of inflammatory rhetoric into public discourse (Wall & Kirdnark, 2012). A comprehensive analysis of social media influence, including blogging, can help build a scholarly understanding of the underlying social, political, and cultural processes and aid with the process of reshaping and realigning governmental policies related to Internet-based media.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the influence of blogs can be measured quantitatively. The specific objectives are to (a) identify criteria that can be used to measure a blog's influence; (b) develop a Blog Influence Index (BII) and Blog Influence Analyzer (BIA); and (c) apply BII and BIA tools to identify the most influential, most recognized, most active, and most novel blogs in the Malaysian blogosphere. The article is organized as follows. The authors first identify issues associated with measuring blog influence and review related studies. Next, the method and results of the study are presented. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the outcomes and offers directions for further research.

## RELATED WORK

The social influence of blogging should not be underestimated, as research has shown that it has the power to sway or affect (Gillmore, 2006; Keller & Berry, 2003). In the context of this study, "influence" is used to signify the ability of blogs, either individual or collective, to attract readership and affect people's opinions. Several methods can be used to assess blog influence; however, the existing tools have certain weaknesses, which sometimes include the use of inadequate measuring criteria. Furthermore, most of these tools are used to measure blog popularity or readership rather than blog influence.

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/article/measuring-blog-influence/68810?camid=4v1](http://www.igi-global.com/article/measuring-blog-influence/68810?camid=4v1)

## Related Content

---

### **ConnectTV: Share the Experience**

Erik Boertjes, Jente Klok, Omar Niamut and Martijn Staal (2009). *Social Interactive Television: Immersive Shared Experiences and Perspectives* (pp. 187-201).

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/connecttv-share-experience/29206?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/connecttv-share-experience/29206?camid=4v1a)

### **Illusions of Empowerment: Re-Interpreting the Blogger's Social Media Dream**

Corinne Weisgerber (2012). *International Journal of Interactive Communication Systems and Technologies* (pp. 36-51).

[www.igi-global.com/article/illusions-empowerment-interpreting-blogger-social/68809?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/article/illusions-empowerment-interpreting-blogger-social/68809?camid=4v1a)

### **Design and Evaluation of a Content-Based Image Retrieval System**

David Squire, Henning Muller, Wolfgang Muller, Stephane Marchand-Maillet and Thierry Pun (2002). *Interactive Multimedia Systems* (pp. 38-72).

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/design-evaluation-content-based-image/24566?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/design-evaluation-content-based-image/24566?camid=4v1a)

### **Cognition Research Basis for Instructional Multimedia**

Juhani E. Tuovinen (2002). *Interactive Multimedia Systems* (pp. 146-162).

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/cognition-research-basis-instructional-multimedia/24570?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/cognition-research-basis-instructional-multimedia/24570?camid=4v1a)