CLASS BLOGMEISTER

Definition: Class BlogMeister is a blogging tool developed for teachers as an authentic publishing environment to promote the development of effective communication skills in students. Teachers establish a blogging account, which they can publish their own articles. Teachers can then set up blogging accounts for their students, which the teacher maintains publishing control.

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Establishing a ClassBlogMeister Account

Step 1 <u>Before</u> the teacher goes to the BlogMeister web site **http://classblogmeister.com**and clicks the **Register** button in the right panel, <u>the teacher need a school pass code.</u>

This school pass code will have been announced at a staff development or speaking event involving David Warlick, BlogMeister's author.
If you have not received such a pass code, then contact David Warlick at:
http://classblogmeister.com/?blog=rethink
or
david@landmark-project.com

School Pass Code is_____ **for** _____ **School**

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Step 2

Now go to the BlogMeister web site
(http://classblogmeister.com)
and click the **Register** button in the right panel, the teacher
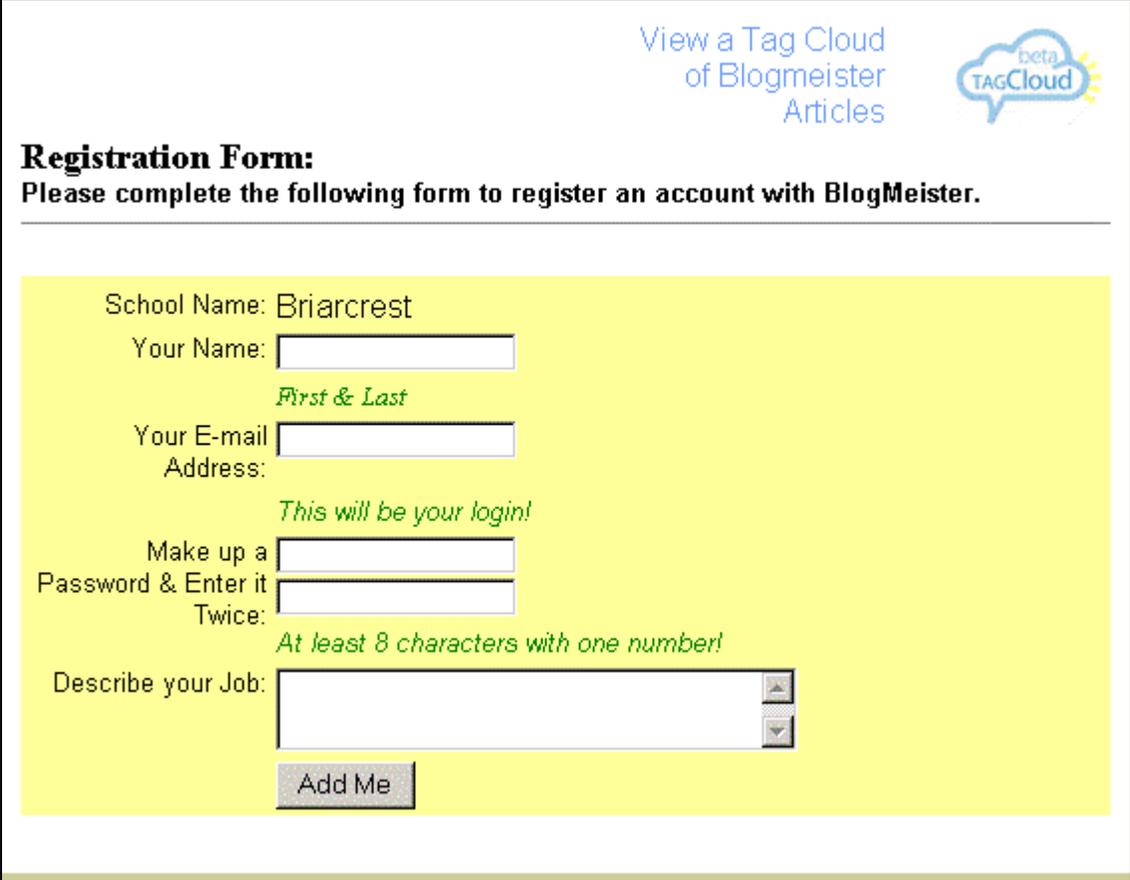will then be asked to enter a school pass code.

Step 3

After successfully entering a school pass code, you will be asked to fill in the following
information: first name, last name, e-mail address, and a unique password for your re-
entry into the web site, and a brief description of your job. When this is complete, click
the **Add Me** button at the bottom.

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Step 3
After submitting your registration information, you will be returned to the BlogMeister opening page. To login, enter either your full name (first & last names) or your e-mail address in the *Login* box and your password in the *Password* box. Then click the Enter button.
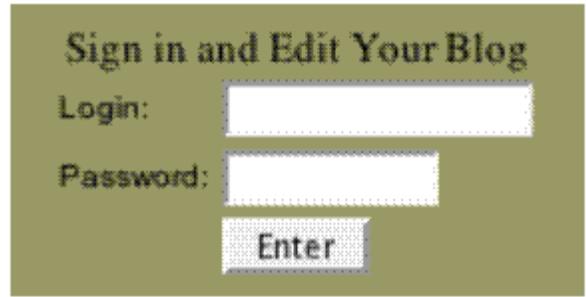
Step 4
On your first login, you will be asked to register a classroom. Because some should are now practicing team teaching, you may be sharing a classroom with another teacher who may have already registered your room. So use the drop down menu for *Select an Existing Class* section to

Customizing & Publishing to Your Blog Page

Step 1 When you initially login, you will be delivered to your blog edit page. From this page you will be able to customize the look of your blog page, add and edit articles, and work with your students' blog articles.

Your first task is to select a visual style for your page. BlogMeister features a Number of blog styles to chose from. Just click the right and left arrow buttons at the top of the screen cycle through the styles. When you find a look that appeals to you, then click the *select* button. You will be able to change your style at any time from the blog edit page.

Step 2 When you have selected a style, it is time to name your blog. Blog names must be cryptic, and self-effacing. The title should have almost nothing to do with the topic at hand. But basically, anything goes. Find a title that seems appropriate for you and that has a good rhythm, and know that you can change it at any time.

In the blog edit window, just enter or edit your title and click the *Save Title* button.

Step 3 The next logical step is to customize the content that will be displayed on

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all of your blog articles. This will include your class description (already entered but editable), a description of yourself, class and personal images, and your favorite web links. Since you have already entered a class description, you should devise a brief but useful personal description. This should be a statement that identifies you, and your authority in relation to the type of articles you will be writing.

When you have completed your personal description and performed any desired editing of the classroom name or description, then click the *Submit Descriptions* button.

Step 4 You can now upload two images to your blog pages. The first type is the class image. This image will appear in the upper left corner of the blog pages of all of your articles, and the blog pages of your students. The second type is a personal image that will appear in the upper right corner of all of your blog pages, but not your students'. Each image should be approximately 2 ½ inches square. The Blog page will automatically size the image to about 160 pixels, but to avoid slow loading, it is best to size your images accordingly. Images can be gif or jpegs, and should be saved in the format that produces the smallest disk file, again to facilitate rapid loading.

Step 5 To add an image to your blog page, you must first have the image on your hard drive, and it must conform to the specifications listed in step 3. When you have added the image to your hard drive, click the *Browse* button *(see below)*.

A standard Windows or Mac OS file dialog box will appear. Use the box to identify and select the image you wish to upload. When you have done this, the page of the image will appear in the text box. Click the <i>Upload button to move the file from your hard drive to the web page. The image should appear in the upper right of your blog page.

Follow the same process for uploading a person picture.
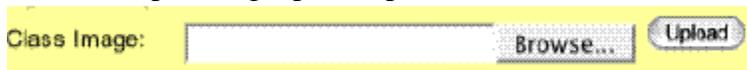
Step 6 Adding web links to your blog pages can be an opportunities to point people toward information resources that are important to you and that you think will be important to your blogging students.

To add a new web link, simple type or paste the title into the *Add Link title* text box and the URL in the *Add Link URL* text box. Then click *Save*. You can delete a link from your list by clicking the X to the right of the title.

Adding & Editing Blog Articles
Step 1 When you are ready to start a new blog article or edit an existing article, go to the edit blog page (login from the main BlogMeister page), and click the *Articles* tab. The article form will appear enabling you to start a new blog or continue work on an existing one.

To begin to write a new blog article, simply type a title for the article in the textbox labeled *Title*, and begin typing the article into the larger scrolling textbox. It may be a good practice to write your original blog articles use a text or word processor so that you will have

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access to the spell and grammar checks and thesaurus. Then when the article is finished, copy the text from the word processor and paste it into the blog textbox to the right.

To edit an existing article, click the article title in the listing below the textboxes. The title and text of the article will appear in the textboxes so that you can begin editing. Again, editing with a word or text processor will assure fewer spelling and grammar errors.

Step 2 You can process blog articles in a number of ways.

If you have begun editing your blog article, but must leave your work to finish later, simply clicking the *save* button without clicking the *Publish* checkbox will save the article under your account, without its being published to the public.

When you are finally ready for the article to go public, then check the **Publish** checkbox and click **Save**.

The existing articles listing also includes three columns of indicators.
- The first, *Pub* will display an asterisk (*) for articles that are published and public.
- The *Cmmt* column displays the number of comments that have been posted to the article and approved for public viewing by you.
- The *Cmmt Pndng* column indicates the number of comments that have been posted to the article but have not been approved for public viewing.

Step 3 Dealing with comments is easy with BlogMeister. When someone comments on one of your blog articles, you will receive an e-mail message indicating that the comment has been made. The e-mail message will include the text of the reader's comment and a hyper link to a page where you will be able to read and *show, delete*, or keep *hidden* the comment.

Step 4 To review your comments, go to the edit page and click the **Articles** tab.

In the listing of existing blog articles, click the *triangular twisty* icon to the left of the title you wish to review. All comments posted to that article will appear.

To the right of each article are links labeled *Show* and *Delete*.
- If the comment will not be appropriate for public viewing, click *Delete*. This will completely remove the comment from the database.
- If the comment is appropriate, then click

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Show. If you wish to continue considering the article, then leave it alone for the time being.

Using BlogMeister with Students

Explanation The principal purpose of BlogMeister is to enable teachers to provide authentic publishing opportunities for their students. One of the barriers for using most general blogging tools is that of assuring the quality and appropriateness of student publications.

With BlogMeister, Students can work on their writings over a period of time, understanding that their writing will not go public until the teachers has reviewed and approved the article. In addition to the articles, all comments posted to articles are filtered through the teacher for consideration before they are made available to students.

Here are some instructions for setting up student accounts and assisting students in their writing and publications.

Setting up Student Accounts

Step 1 Enter the edit page of your teacher blog by going to the BlogMeister web site (http://classblogmeister.com) and logging in with your e-mail address (or full name) and password.

Click the *Class Panel* tab at the top of the article section.

Step 2 To add a student account, simply type the student's **full name** and a **password** into the appropriate boxes.

If your class will be utilizing e-mail, then enter the students e-mail address in the third textbox.

When finished, click the *add* button. The students name will be entered into the list below the add text boxes.

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Step 3 Students can access their blog accounts for writing and editing by logging in to BlogMeister with their full name or e-mail address and password two ways.

1. From the BlogMeister web site (http://classblogmeister.com), they can go over to the right and type in the name you entered above and their password.
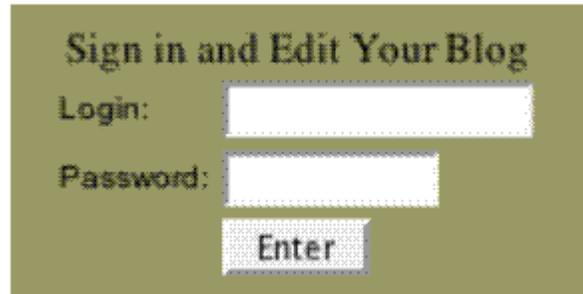
2. Also they can go to the teacher's blog.
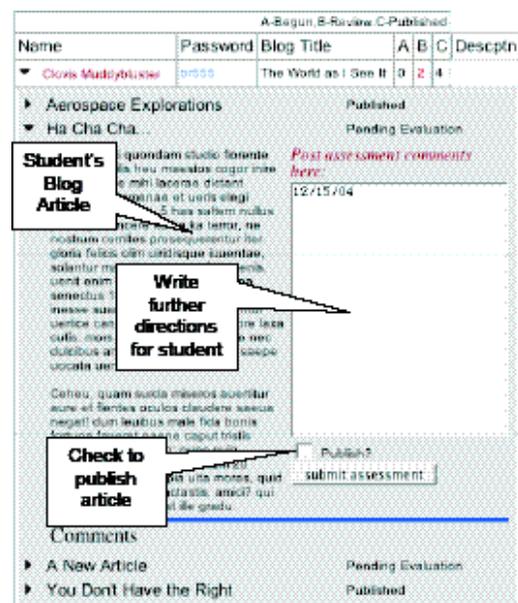Find their name on the right side.
Click on their name.
This will open their page.
Scroll to the bottom left. Click on LOGIN and the same sign-in box will appear.
They will have the same ability to write, edit, and publish blog articles.

There are a number of important differences.

- Students cannot directly publish their work. When students check the publish checkbox, it will not be publish. Instead, you will receive an e-mail notification that a student has finished their article. The message will include a link that will take you to a page where you can review the student's work. You can approve the message for publication, in which case it will then become public through your Blog page, or you can write a comment with further directions for the student and send it back for revision.
- The comments that you write suggesting further revision will become a permanent part of the article. Students will be able to continue reading them, and they will remain available and editable to you.
- You will be notified as comments are posted to student writings, not the student. You will receive an e-mail notification with a link to the comment. You can either approve the comment to be part of the student's article, delete the comment, or leave it alone for later consideration.

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An Appendix of information after the formal Documentation from…The B*log*M*eister*

Adding Images to your Blogs   **03-29-05**

I just received an e-mail question from a BlogMeister user, and figured that many more could benefit from my answer. She wanted to know how to include images in your blogging articles. Here's my answer.

In order to add an image to your blog, you will have to do two things.

1.   Get the picture onto the Internet
2.   Do a little bit of HTML coding.

Believe me, number one may be harder to do. If you have a web master at your school who is putting pictures up, then your problem is solved. Have that person upload the picture(s) for you and then give you the URL of the picture.

If there is no easy way to get the pictures up, then use a web site called Image Shack (http://imageshack.us). Click the browse button and find the image on your hard drive that you want as part of your blog. When you have found and selected the image, click "Host It!"

After a moment, a list of URL will appear. You will want to copy the last one, labeled "Direct link to image".

Then type the following code into your blog article pasting the image URL where indicated:

<img src=(paste here) align=right>

Do not include the parentheses. Here is the code for a test image I just uploaded:

<img src=http://img95.exs.cx/img95/7082/dave6zk.gif align=right>

The image will be flush to the right with text wrapping around the left. To have a left justified image, then substitute "align=right" with "align=left".

The B*log*M*eister*
Practice Student Accounts   **03-23-05**

A number of people have gotten into trouble when they tried to add a make-believe student account to their class, in order to experiment, and used their true e-mail address for the student and their teacher password. This prevented them from logging in as a teacher.

First of all, the system will no longer allow two accounts using the same e-mail address. This is cool, because student e-mail addresses are optional, so I would simply leave that blank for your test student. Also, you should use a different password for your test student. This is just safer.

Also, while we're on the subject of student names, **it is probably best to enter your students' full names** when you add them to your class. You can later configure BlogMeister to list their full names on their blog page, or the first name and last initial, or first and last initials.
[David Warlick] or [David W] or [DW]

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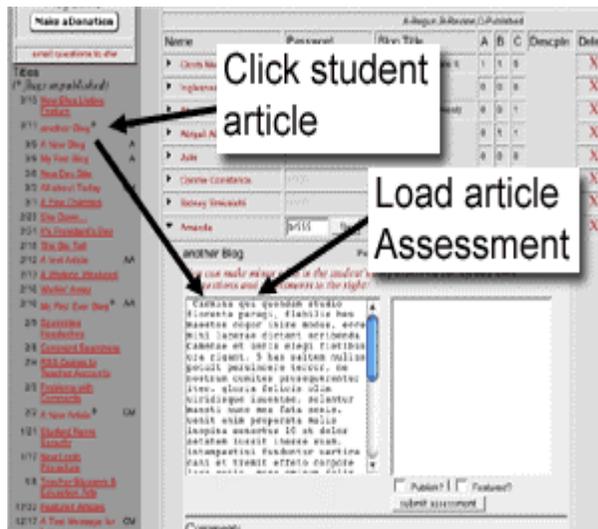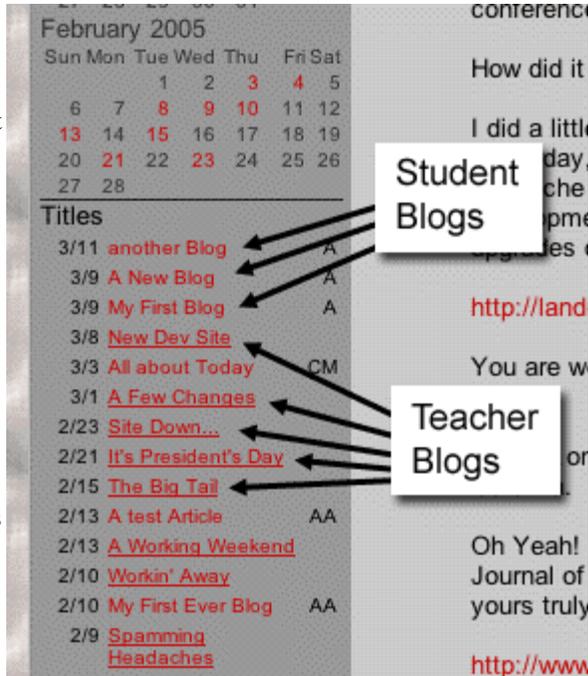## New Blog Listing Feature

03-13-05

6:33 AM

Here is a new element to the upgrade. When a teachers goes into edit mode (logged in), a listing of teacher articles and all student articles will appear to the left, sorted chronologically. This listing, unlike the one that appears when not in edit mode, includes both published and unpublished student writings.

To view, edit, or assess any student writing, click it here. You will be taken directly into the "Class Panel" and the student and article selected will be expanded for immediate assessment.

5:37 AM

I just made a fairly major change in the articles listing at the left of your blog pages. This comes as a suggestion from one of the major BlogMeister users based on making it easier for you to access student blogs.

Now, as you, a teacher, view your blog page, not only will your blogs in the listing just below the calendars, but you will also be able to see and access

your students' blogs. It is all sorted chronologically, with the two mixed together. Teacher blogs will be underlined. Student blogs will not, and the student's initials will also be included in the listing. See the image to the right.

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The BlogMeister

■ A Working Weekend   02-13-05

Comment Approval Status. 1:20 PM
I have implemented the changes in comments now. To change the comment options, just log in to your blogging account, click **Class Panel**, and then go to the box labeled, **Comment Approval Status**. You can select the appropriate level of approval for comments posted to your students' blogs. The first option should be your default. Here is how they run:

First: *Comments posted with correct class password and teacher approval*. If a person reads a student's blog article and chooses to post a comment, they will need to correctly enter your class password. Also, when the comment is posted, you (teacher) will be notified, and you will be able to approve, delete, or link to the comment from the e-mail message.

Second: *Comments posted with correct class password*. In order to post a comment, the read, again, must know the classroom password. However, when the password is entered, the comment gets posted automatically. This feature is intended for classes that are using the comments feature for peer review.

Third: *Comments posted with teacher approval*. No classroom password is required, but when a comment is posted, the teacher receives an e-mail notification, through which they can delete, approve, or view the comment. This is for classes that want to provide open access to their articles for commenting by the community.

I may add a fourth option for no comments at all. But I'll have to rest on that one.

Feature a Blog
When approving a student blog to publish, a teacher may also click on **Feature.**

That Blog will then appear on the **Feature page**. Which can be accessed on the opening page of www.classblogmeister.com

What a great self esteem building tool!!

Teacher May Have More Than One Class
    Also Students May be moved from One Class to another.

To Stay Current http://groups.yahoo.com/group/classblogmeist
Subscribe to: classblogmeister-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
There is some decent documentation on how to set everything up. Check out
http://classblogmeister.com/blogmeister_instructions.pdf   for some good printable information (it is a pdf). David has also started a wiki at http://classblogmeister.jot.com/WikiHome that gives a ton of information.

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