

website as the world's 15th-most-popular blog.

MacManus quit his IT consulting job in 2005 to blog fulltime and the site now employs five other writers. MacManus puts his success down to owning a niche and exploiting the globalised nature of the world wide web – only one percent of his readers are from New Zealand.

Although making money off blogs is a hard slog (it took MacManus two years for the site to begin contributing to his mortgage), blogs set up freely and quickly on sites like **Blogspot** or **WordPress** can serve other purposes.

MacManus's wife blogs, he says, but not professionally. "She's interested in fashion and graphic design and she's created a blog where she has met a lot of people interested in that."

A community of New Zealand bloggers – most notably **Kiwiblog** and **NoRight-Turn** – has grown out of a desire to debate and discuss politics. Even **Stephen Fry** has got in on the act – the British actor writes regular and informative posts about his love for technology.

Blog standard

- Own a niche. With the internet awash in blogs, you'll need to stand out and offer a unique perspective or topic.
- Post regularly, ideally at least once a day. People will not visit your site if it appears moribund, and return traffic is essential for building an audience.
- Link to and comment on other blogs. Online communities boost traffic to one another and you should try to involve yourself in one.



How to ...

Make compost that doesn't stink

It's the dilemma of composting: recycling your food waste inevitably leads to foul odours. Fortunately, says garden expert Maggie Barry, the Japanese – known for hyper-efficient and environmentally friendly cars – have cut through this green Gordian knot with a hyper-efficient and environment-friendly way of disposing of food waste.

"There's this new method," says Barry. "Actually it's not new – it's ancient – a type of composting you do in a bucket with a tight-fitting lid. It's called bokashi."

Instead of relying on waste putrefying to generate compost, bokashi relies on fermenting – and since the process is anaerobic (not relying on oxygen), whiffy smells are eliminated entirely.

The process requires two buckets, one inserted into another with holes drilled in the bottom, and an inoculation mixture made of wheat bran, molasses and various micro-organisms. (The inoculation, and pre-engineered buckets are available from www.bokashi.co.nz.)

Simply put your food scraps into the bucket (no liquids, paper or

bones or shells), sprinkle the mixture on top, and compress the waste to remove air. Repeat until the bucket is full, then seal and let the fermentation process work its magic over two weeks.

"It's not quite the cheat's way," says Barry, "but it is an easy way to compost."

The remaining solid waste, smelling slightly of pickles, can be buried in the garden and the resulting liquid, poured off and heavily diluted in water, makes excellent plant food.

Even if you're not green-thumbed, the liquid can be poured down the sink ... it makes an excellent drain-cleaner.



Maggie Barry

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