

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO 'ONLINE TOOLS FOR BLOGGERS': (PART 1)



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I originally wrote a blog post called [‘Essential Apps for Bloggers’](#) and had started a Pinterest Board so that I could help myself become a better blogger. This post is all about online tools or ‘Web 2.0’ tools that I discovered can make a blogger’s life a whole lot easier.

Using Pinterest to research your blog posts

Every time I’m researching a new topic, I first set up a board in Pinterest so that I can ‘pin’ ideas either via my iPad or via my laptop and this then makes writing the article much easier. If you don’t want people to see what you are researching, just set it up as a ‘secret’ board so that no-one can see what you are planning.

I have always loved being creative (not very good at drawing) but anything else that can add an artistic flair, I’ll add. This year, especially writing my [#30DayBlogChallenge](#), making sure that I was creating original material meant that I was researching what other people were using and doing research on Pinterest.

Quote Generators:

If I ever include any quotes, I use my own. It's much easier that way since I don't have to track down the original source. So here are my top three tools:

[Recite This:](#)

The options are endless when using this tool to create your quotes. As you start typing in the white box, your quote will be created, so you can just slide the options along and choose which one you are happy with. It offers the social media sharing options, such as to Pinterest, Tumblr, Facebook or download image, but often I just use 'Skitch' (see later in the blog post) to screenshot the image and capture it as I can then drag it into any blog post, and make adjustments if necessary.

[Pinstamatic:](#)

Pinstamatic has a few tools that are very handy, and the link will take you to the quote tool. There is also a 'sticky note' tool that you can use to add a quick message (such as a tip or something important for your readers to note).

[Quozio:](#)

The tagline for this website is to 'Make Beautiful Quotes' and there are definitely many options on how to do this. Just type in text, and then select your background. Like with all of these tools, there are your social media sharing icons so the quote can be directly posted there, or you can save it (or again use Skitch).

Not all the backgrounds on offer will suit the theme of your post. But using a combination of all these tools should help you find what you are looking for.

Tools to get the job done:

I am slowly realising it is better to take the time to brainstorm 30-40 topics for my blog in one go, than to sit there and ponder before each post...'Now, what am I going to write on today?'

These are my top three online ways to help:

Brainstorming/Mindmapping

I either use [Bubbl.U.s](#), [Popplet](#) or [Text2Mindmap](#), depending on how I feel at the time. All three are really useful tools. And again, most of the time I'll take a screenshot just for future reference.

Ideas for Blog Post Headings

[Content Idea Generator](#)

Thanks to Danielle Price from [Clever Mama](#), who shared this interesting way of coming up with headings. Content Idea Generator lets you just type in your subject heading and it will produce an interesting title. If you don't like that suggestion, keep pressing the arrow icon at the side to come up with another suggestion. Some of them won't be suitable, but it will definitely help you come up with something. (I often tweak their suggestions, just to suit the blog post.)

[Skitch \(Free\)](#)

Unfortunately you'll have to download Skitch to your computer (so it's not a Web 2.0 tool). However it will make your life so much easier when working on your blog. You'll also need to set up an [Evernote](#)

account and then download Skitch for either Mac or PC. From there, the process is easy. Just sign in to your account and use Skitch to take screenshots.

What's great about Skitch is that it's also an annotation tool, which means you can add arrows, text and boxes. And there's even a pixelate tool which is handy for removing faces and unwanted text. I find it best to re-name the file (down in the bottom left hand corner) as it will make finding the file much easier within the application.

Saving your screenshots this way means you'll never have to go hunting for that picture or quote you created. This is particularly useful if you ever have to prepare a presentation/speech. And once you've finished with your screenshot, choose your file format and just use the 'handle' at the bottom of the page to drag it to an email, keynote or blog post. (In wordpress, select 'Add Media' and then just drag and drop the image where you want it to go.)

In the next blog post, I'll focus on 'creative tools' that can help you create images and other material to add a more 'artistic' flair to your work.