Future Plans for Blogs@VT

DCSS, Fall 2021
Platform Purpose and Usage

- Launched in 2012 as a “general purpose” multi-site WordPress system with a focus on teaching & learning, but with limited account restrictions (users simply need an @vt.edu email address).
- We chose hosting partner Pressable (sole source) in 2011.
- Currently, the platform supports all sorts of usage: courses, departmental websites, organization sites, personal blogs for professors and students, etc…
- Peak usage in terms of active users/sites was in 2016.
System Statistics

As of October 2021:

- # users: 19,355 (many have graduated)
- # of sites: 13,570 (many are “Hello world!” type sites)
- Fall 2021 courses actively using Blogs@VT: fewer than 10
- # of themes: 110 (a few are paid subscriptions, many are outdated)
- # of plugins: 101 (many are outdated)
Reasons for a Fresh Start

▪ General clean-up: The system is now almost 10 years old, and the base WP installation has been updated from WordPress 3 to 4 to 5 (DB is very messy).
▪ Track users more effectively and secure the site with SSO/2FA.
▪ Tighter management of themes and plugins to avoid “sprawl.”
▪ Reduce hosting costs by eliminating unused legacy sites and setting clearer retention policies.
▪ Fix the URL: lt.vt.edu was retired in 2013.
▪ Leverage our partnership with a new hosting provider already under contract with University Libraries.
The Plan

**Overarching goal:** Refocus Blogs@VT on its original purpose as a platform to support teaching and learning.

1. Setup a clean, new multi-site WP instance at Reclaim Hosting before Spring 2022 semester (blogs.tlos.vt.edu).
2. Disable new user sign-ups on blogs.lt.vt.edu in January 2022; direct instructors to use the new platform.
3. Work with the campus to allow individuals to migrate appropriate sites to our new WP instance or Ensemble or private WP host or ...
4. Keep an “archive copy” of blogs.lt.vt.edu available/online using TLOS’ AWS account for 2 additional years.
Get in Touch with TLOS

- Please let us know about needs and concerns.
- The best way for individual instructors, students, or blog owners to contact TLOS with concerns is via ServiceNow incidents (4Help).
- Anyone with departmental or college-wide concerns can reach out directly to TLOS using tlos@vt.edu.