Due at the beginning of lecture on Tuesday, February 14, 2006.

In this week's lab, you'll take a look at a recent Internet phenomenon: blogging. Blogs (short for "web logs") are regularly updated web pages published in a diary-like format. The latest updates (called "posts" or "entries") generally appear at the top of the blog web page, followed by older ones. Usually readers are invited to leave comments about the posts, which become part of a public discussion.

This semester we're going to have a class blog for COS 116. You, the students, are the blog authors. (The staff will occasionally contribute too.) From time to time we'll ask you to write short blog posts about a variety of topics. Your posts will be visible to the rest of the class and to members of the public, and we hope to generate some interesting discussion. You are also expected to read other students' post and comment on them. Part of your course participation grade will come from these activities.

In this lab, you'll take a tour of the class blog, learn to use our blog writing software, and make your first blog entry. You'll also use the blog software to investigate HTML, the language of the web.

Shortly after the first lecture you should have received an email with your username and password for the course blog. You'll need this information to complete this lab. If you didn't receive it, please contact Alex Halderman (jhalderm@cs.princeton.edu).

This assignment is a take home lab. You should follow the instructions and write up your responses on your own. However, as in all the labs in this course, discussion with friends is encouraged. You can also email cos116@lists.cs.princeton.edu for help if you get stuck.

Part 1: Log in to the course blog and update your profile

1. **Visit the course blog: http://courseblog.cs.princeton.edu/spring06/cos116**

2. **Find the *Student Login* headline in the right column and click *Student Login*. Log in with the username and password you received by email.**
   You should see a page blue bar at the top. It says the name "WordPress," our blogging software.

3. **Follow the *Profile* link near the top of the screen to access you user profile.**

4. **Update your profile:**

- **Check that your name and email address are correct.**

- **Update your *Nickname* if you want to change the way your name appears on your posts.**
  Your nickname identifies your blog entries to other students and members of the public who read the blog. If you'd prefer not to write under your real name, enter a pen name instead. Remember to click *Update Profile* to save the changes.

- **Pick a new password and enter it twice.**
  Pick something you can remember but that would be difficult to guess. (One good technique is to think of a seven or eight word phrase that's personally meaningful and use the first letters of the words as your password. We'll talk more about password security in a later lecture.)

5. **Click Update Profile to save your changes.**

Part 2: Take a tour of the course blog and leave a comment

1. **Click *View Site* near the top of the screen to return to the course blog page.**
   Blog entries appear on this main page, with the most recent entries at the top.

2. **Read the first few posts.**
   These likely will have been written by students who have completed the lab.

3. **Read the introductory posts by Professor Sanjeev Arora and TA's Umar Syed and David Xiao.**
   You may need to scroll down or click *Next Entries* to reach these early posts.

4. **Pick a post you like and leave a comment with your reactions.**
   Click the post's title and scroll down until you see the *Leave a Reply* form.

5. **Find the links in the right column on the main blog page, and click the *Course Home Page* link to visit the course information web site.**
   This page will contain copies of the readings, handouts, and labs, as well as videos of the lectures. You might want to bookmark it.

Part 3: Post your first blog entry

1. **Log in to WordPress again and click *Write* at the top of the screen.**
   The "Write Post" page is where you compose a new blog entry. It is a simple text editor, similar to MS Word.

2. **Compose a blog post of 200-300 words. Introduce yourself to the class and say a little bit about your interests. Tell why you are taking the class and what you hope to learn.**
   If you prefer, you can compose the entry in another program, like Microsoft Word, and paste it into the blog editor when you are finished. To paste into the editor, click on it then press Ctrl-V on the keyboard.

3. **Enter a title for your post.**
   Try to pick something non-generic. "Jack's First Post" or "My Introduction" isn't very informative. Pretend you're choosing a newspaper headline.

4. **Click *Save and Continue Editing* button just under the post field.**
   This saves your work on the course blog server. It's a good idea to save periodically as you're composing your post. After you save you can scroll down to see a preview of how your post will look after it's published on the blog. Note that it hasn't been published yet—for now only you can see it.

5. **Click the *Save* button to practice saving a draft.**
   The titles of drafts you've saved will appear near the top of the Write Post screen. Your drafts are still unpublished and only visible to you.

6. **Click on the draft title to resume editing, then click *Publish* to make your post visible to the world.**

7. **Click *View Site* near the top of the screen to go back to the main blog page. Admire the post you just published, which should now appear on the blog.**
   Don't worry if you find a mistake in your post. You'll learn how to edit it in the next section.

Part 4: Edit your blog post

1. **Log in to WordPress again and click *Manage* at the top of the screen.**
   The Manage page allows you to View, Edit, and Delete posts you have already published on the blog.

2. **Click *View* next to title of the post you just wrote.**

This shows you the post as other readers see it, complete with any comments. (You'll receive an email whenever someone leaves a comment on one of your posts. If you receive an inappropriate comment, alert an instructor right away so that it can be removed.)

3. **Go back to the Manage screen and click *Edit* next to your post.**

This allows you to change your post after you publish it. When making substantial changes, blogging etiquette requires that you point out the changes so that readers who've already seen the page don't get confused. For example, you might add text like this at the bottom of the post: "**Update 5pm on 2/10/06:** I mistakenly wrote that … but I changed the post to correct it."

You're allowed to edit your posts at any time as long as you indicate what you changed as described above. However, the instructors can see the old versions you published, so this feature can't be used to skirt the post deadlines.

4. **Edit you post to tell the class what kind of computer you use most often (i.e., Windows, Macintosh, Linux, etc.). Don't forget to save your changes.**

Part 5: Investigate HTML, the language of the web

1. **Log in to WordPress once more and go to the *Write Post* screen.**

2. **Enter a title such as "Test Post" and type a few words in the post body.**
   Notice the small buttons above the post field. They behave just like the toolbar buttons in Microsoft Word. Use them to create some **bold**, *italics,* and ~~strikethrough~~ text.

3. **Use the toolbar buttons to add a link to another web page.**
   Every web page on the Internet is identified by a unique address (called a Uniform Resource Locator, or URL) such as "http://www.princeton.edu" or "http://courseblog.princeton.edu/spring06/cos116/". You can link to a page if you know its address. Select a few words of text and click the *Insert/Edit link* button ( ). Then enter the address into the *Link URL* field.

4. **Click the *HTML* toolbar icon above your post to display the HTML tags that represent the text you entered.**
   Web pages are written in a special format called HTML (HyperText Markup Language). HTML looks like regular text with special commands called markup tags interspersed. Your web browser interprets these tags to add formatting and links when it displays the page. For example,

   > Our campus newspaper, <u>The Daily Princetonian</u> ...

   would appear in a web browser as

   > Our campus newspaper, <u>The Daily Princetonian</u> ...

5. **Examine the HTML for your post and answer the following questions:**

   a. What tag tells the web browser to display text in bold? In italics? In strikethrough?

   b. What tag defines a link to another web page?

   c. How is the address of the link destination represented?

   Write your answers in the space provided at the bottom of the lab report.

6. **Do not save or publish your test post. Just leave the page to discard it.**

Part 6: More about blogs

Want to learn more about blogs or find some interesting blogs to read? These pages are a good place to start:

"The Blogging Phenomenon: Who? How? Why?"
http://www.digitaldivide.net/articles/view.php?ArticleID=86

Technorati's list of the top 100 blogs:
http://www.technorati.com/pop/blogs/

BlogStreet's top 100 blog list:
http://www.blogstreet.com/top100.html

Have a favorite blog? Tell the class. Write about it in another blog entry.

COS116 Spring 2006
Lab Report 1

Briefly fill out the following questionnaire and turn it in at the start of Tuesday's lecture.

Name:

Email:

Briefly describe your previous experience with computers.

Was any part of this week's lab particularly difficult or confusing?

How long did you spend on this week's lab:

Answers to questions from part 5: