

“dispatches from blogistan” by Suzanne Stefanac Reviewed by Charles Kee of ORPCUG

I read this book as an experienced PC user and programmer with near total ignorance of blogs and blogging. Like me, you may have rejected the idea of maintaining a blog as being too much work, but maintaining a blog on your own PC for private access only could be useful at several levels. (Who hasn't wanted to do this since seeing Doogie Howser on TV with his electronic diary?) This book answers all those questions of how to get started, what software tools are available, and how to make it useful. It also provides questions like what area will my blog cover, what interaction do I want with readers, and what choices should be made in the look and feel of my blog.

The scope is readily visible from the table of contents. Chapters 3-7 discuss using blogs as linkfests, diaries, clubhouses, newsrooms, and soapboxes. The how-to portion begins with chapter 8 and includes the methods and tools of maintaining a blog, arranging a blog page, writing techniques, promoting your blog, and keeping within legal bounds. The book ends with a chapter on social networking on the rise.

The typical reader is likely to read chapters out of order, using the book much like a reference book. I chose to read the book straight through and found it to be an interesting read. I even found the historical comments in the early chapters to be interesting, but I realize readers interested in a quick start are likely to skip over these points.

One of the obvious questions is couldn't I find all this information on the internet rather than reading a book? Considering that the book itself provides many references to sources of more information on the internet, the answer is that all the information could probably be found on the internet, but the book provides a useful comprehensive guide to all that information. Considering the scope of information included, a user relying solely on the internet would always be left wondering what he had missed. Aside from the information it provides, the book indicates other areas one might explore.

I found the book to be very helpful and interesting even if I never get around to writing my own blog. I heartily recommend this book even though I have not read other books on blogging and have no way of comparing them.

This book was published by New Riders, and additional information is presented on the following web site: <http://www.dispatchesfromblogistan.com> .