

## IT'S A BLOGGER'S WORLD

Fashion is a living art that shows movement, depth and perspective. As part of our everyday life we create our own art through what we wear. Jane Smith explores the online world of fashion blogs and the unique bloggers behind the screens. (para 1)

Some people consider them unemployed, while others call them important and valuable. Either way fashion bloggers have become a huge part of the fashion industry and with their limitless opportunities and their endless ways of communicating information they have developed a unique way to show fashion to the world. (para 2)

The term blog comes from the original title of web log which became weblog and then simply, blog. It is estimated that more than 30 million blogs have been established worldwide. This means a lot of opinions have been expressed since the start of blogging 20 years ago. Blogs have been around since the start of the internet and were originally used as journals or diaries where people talked about their personal lives and then posted them online. A blog is characterised by the way the posts are ordered and the ability to go back through archives, as well as the informal way they are written. Since 1999 the numbers of people blogging has jumped considerably because of the availability of websites where you can set-up and run a blog without having to know how the technology behind it works. (para 3)

Fashion bloggers started out as tiny voices in a sea of opinions but in recent years they have become a bridge between fashion and internet users. The most determined of the early bloggers could be found sneaking into runway shows and paying for their chance to snag an autograph. Life has changed drastically for the lucky few who have made it to the big time. At Paris fashion week bloggers were seated in the front row beside some of the biggest names known to fashion. Fashion journalist Cathrin Schaer reported, "They're writing books, making clothes, designing shoes and handbags, helping to launch new fashion ventures and generally being celebrated." Being a blogger has never sounded like a better job to hold and their popularity is still rising with opportunities to star in advertisements and lucrative appearances becoming the latest ways to make money. (para 4)

A blog has a specific layout that is simple and therefore this makes it easy to get around the site. The posts are ordered in reverse chronological order- the newest posts appear first on the site. An archive is a history of previous posts that is usually ordered by month and year so that you can search through the bloggers previous entries. It's a handy feature because you can link back to a specific post rather than just the blog, which means you can find a particular image or quote and always be able to find it. Another defining aspect of blogs is the bloggers ability to link and share anything that's on the internet and reveal it to all their followers. This capability to introduce audience's to brands and products has sky rocketed bloggers to fame because they are able to influence buyers. Bloggers are taking their power to new heights. (para 5)

While there are some bloggers that write to become famous there are also many that do not mind how many followers they have, they simply to want to be unique and express themselves through a creative outlet. In an interview, designer and model Terzann Elliot said, "It is a way of getting noticed, and making a statement." They believe they can impact society and change the world's view on fashion. They are no longer on the perimeter of the fashion world. They have become an invaluable part of the industry. (para 6)

Although it takes time to find blogs that appeal to your own sense of style and that you enjoy reading, once you have found them it is possible to draw inspiration and further your aesthetic into a look as unique as you. "I get inspiration from blogs because they are instant to what's in fashion. I don't want to wait for it to be globally known," said Ann Brown fashion student. Many northern hemisphere blogs show trends from the following season making it possible to see what will be coming into stores in 6 months time. While following blogs can be useful, it can also be discouraging because some bloggers stick to the trends and

follow them to the letter instead of putting their personality into their looks. Heather McDiarmid owner of the label *The Rational Dress Company* said, “I believe this medium is too unstable and more designed for the young.” She draws her inspiration from around her and sees no need to be influenced by what bloggers are posting. However she also said she thinks blogs have become popular because they are written by “ordinary people” who we trust and value. A huge advantage bloggers possess is the ability they have to relate to their audience. Pictures can communicate in a very different way to text and many people interested in fashion find an image can hold more meaning and show further emotion than words. (para 7)

Everyone has their own personal style and unique ways of expressing themselves. Some blogs have found a way to attract thousands of readers using these characteristics to pull people in. One such blogger is Scott Schuman who runs *The Sartorialist*. His blog has become world renowned since 2005 because of his use of street style photographs - he photographs unique people he meets in the street. In fact the fashion industry has turned to his riveting images for inspiration. Ironically he is not interested in fame and fortune, or even reporting the latest trends. He simply shares the interesting people and their unique fashion choices, that catch his eye and stand out from the crowd. Other blogs that have made an impact on the industry include *The Coveteur*, *On the Runway*, *Streetpeeper* and *Fashiontoast*. Each blogger has their own take on trends and how to make the most of the latest ‘in’ style. If you’re looking for a Kiwi take on fashion, check out *Ponyhunter*, which is run by an Auckland model or *Greer and Rose* whose owner shows new ways of doing the feminine and romantic look. When finding worthwhile blogs Terzann Elliot knows what she wants, “I like to see things I’ve never seen before, that inspires me to make things I’ve never seen before.” Heather McDiarmid shared a similar opinion, “I would rather follow someone who is unique, as their fashion ideas are not determined by the markets.” (para 8)

A question that is being asked is, have bloggers started to influence what is becoming fashion? Some people say that bloggers just follow fashion and then share it with a wider audience. However because bloggers are collaborating with designers, does this not mean they are creating fashion trends? To many people it doesn’t matter who thinks of the clothes, it is simply enough that new ideas and thoughts are being expressed in unique and interesting ways. “Any way of adding to the industry is positive, any avenue to promote and expand the knowledge of a brand or person is of course a plus,” said Terzann Elliot. She later went on to say, “I think people have become more curious in general, and are always looking for the next new undiscovered amazing thing.” She believes as long as fresh designs are being produced then fashion will continue to grow and transform into the next season of clothes. It seems the fashion world has already welcomed bloggers into the folds of the industry with open arms. Heather McDiarmid said, “as a designer I believe that if blogs and bloggers open a new market for fashion this has to be advantageous to the industry.” Bloggers presence in the industry has been accepted and people are now looking into the future. “As the industry changes, designers must adapt accordingly,” McDiarmid concluded. (para 9)

Blogging has adapted and changed to meet the needs of the reader. The industry has finally come to accept them as a valuable resource. Bloggers are becoming the future of fashion. Their influence is extending past the fashion industry into the world of consumers.

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