



# Attitude and Social Influence Predicting the Intention to Blog in Thailand

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the contribution of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, social influence, and attitude toward blogging in predicting the intention to blog. Two hundred sixty-eight individuals participated in this study. Overall, the findings showed that attitude toward using a blog and social influence predicted the intention to blog. There was a high likelihood that people would use or return to using a blog more often in the future when their attitudes toward blogging were positive, and when their significant others, family, and friends encouraged them to do so.*

**Keywords:** Blogs, Attitude toward Blog Use, Social Influence, Blog Use

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# ก้าวบนคติฯและอิทธิพลทางสังคม ตัวบ่งชี้ความตั้งใจ ในการใช้บล็อกในประเทศไทย

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## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายในการศึกษา ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการใช้บล็อก (blog) ตัวแปรที่ศึกษา ได้แก่ ทัศนคติต่างๆต่อการใช้บล็อก เช่น ประโยชน์และคุณค่าในการใช้บล็อก ความคิดเห็นว่าบล็อกเป็นเครื่องมือที่ใช้ง่าย ความสนุกสนานจากการได้ใช้บล็อก และอิทธิพลจากสังคมและคนใกล้ชิด การวิจัยนี้ได้เก็บข้อมูลจากนักศึกษาในประเทศไทย ประมาณ 268 ตัวอย่าง ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ทัศนคติต่อการใช้บล็อก รวมไปถึงอิทธิพลจากสังคมและคนใกล้ชิดเป็นส่วนประกอบสำคัญต่อการตัดสินใจและความตั้งใจที่จะใช้บล็อก ผลโดยรวมสรุปว่า ทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการใช้บล็อก อิทธิพลของคนใกล้ชิด ครอบครัว และเพื่อน จะมีผลอย่างมากที่สุดต่อความตั้งใจในการใช้บล็อก หรือการกลับมาใช้บล็อกบ่อยมากขึ้นในอนาคต

**คำสำคัญ:** บล็อก ทัศนคติต่อการใช้บล็อก อิทธิพลทางสังคม การใช้บล็อก

## Introduction

Weblogs or blogs refer to “periodically updated journals, providing online commentary with minimal or no external editing” (Drezner & Farrel, 2004, p. 32). Generally, a blog allows users to read and create the contents, and interact with other blog users by commenting on their contents, stories, and pictures (Madden & Fox, 2006).

The remarkable growth and use of a social networking website such as *Facebook*, *Hi5*, *MySpace*, and *Friendster* among college students and teenagers have challenged scholars and media practitioners to investigate the extent to which a new media channel will affect people’s lives, relationships, and well-being, how and why it is used, and who is using it. The latest evidence shows that approximately 42% of Americans have read online journals or blogs (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2008). In Thailand, Internet user numbers jumped from 6.9 million users in 2004 to 13.4 million users in 2007 (National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, 2007). Some of the most popular Internet websites among Thais are social networking websites such as *Hi5* and *Facebook*. About 47.5% of Thai Internet users have a profile on *Hi5* (National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, 2008).

Despite the dramatic growth of social networking websites, little is known about how and why people participate in blogs and what influences Internet users to participate in blogging activities. Research on blog usage behaviors is still limited in the academic field. Past research has examined blog motivation (e.g., Huang, Chou, & Lin, 2008; Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007), self-presentation and impression management on blogs (e.g., Jung, Youn, & McClung, 2007; Walther, Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008), the formation and maintenance of social capital on blogs (e.g., Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), and the credibility of blogs (e.g., Johnson & Key, 2004; Yang, 2006).

In Thailand, the evidence on the use of new media technologies such as the Internet, the mobile Internet, the mobile phone, and SMS is at a preliminary stage (e.g., Dumrongsiri & Pornsakulvanich, 2008; Phuangthong & Malisuwon, 2008; Pornsakulvanich, 2007; Pornsakulvanich & Dumrongsiri, 2008; Wangpipatwong,

Chutimaskul, & Papasratorn, 2008). For example, Pornsakulvanich (2007) studied Internet motives in Thailand and found that the most important reasons why Thai people used the Internet were to find information, relax, seek new friends, and to communicate and become involved. Phuangthong and Malisuwon (2008) have investigated the acceptance of the mobile Internet and found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, compatibility, and demonstration predicted intention to use it.

Nevertheless, up to this point, academic research on the acceptance and intention to use blogs and/or social networking websites has not been published in Thailand. As evidence, blogging is one of the fast growing Internet activities in Thailand. Almost half of the Internet users in Thailand have a profile on *Hi5*, which has been the most popular social networking site in Thailand (National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, 2008). With the significance of the topic, it is noteworthy to explore what influences Thai people to use blogs and/or social networking websites. Therefore, this study attempted to apply the theory of reasoned action and the technology acceptance model to the understanding of people's intention to use blogs. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing the intention to blog. More specifically, we examined the influence of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude toward blogging, and social influence on the intention to blog.

Academically, the result of this study will help extend the body of knowledge of theory of reasoned action and the technological acceptance model in understanding blog acceptance and bloggers' usage patterns. Moreover, it will expand the knowledge of new media technologies, interpersonal communication, and business. Practically, this research will provide fruitful information for media practitioners, marketers, and advertisers so that they can understand bloggers' attitudes and intentions and thus to create personalized messages and effective campaigns for their target groups.

In the next sections, the theory of reasoned action and the technology acceptance model will be discussed. Hypotheses will be proposed. Then, we present the method and main results of the study. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications and future areas of the study.

## The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

This study applied the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the technology acceptance model (TAM) to the understanding of people's intention to blog. The TRA and TAM have been widely used to explain people's intention to adopt and use the new media, such as the Internet, instant messaging, and the mobile phone (e.g., Davis, 1989; Hsu & Lin, 2008; Muk, 2007; Yaubin, Tao, & Bin, 2009). The main premise of theory of reasoned action is that a person's behavioral intention is the determinant of his/her behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The greater a person's intention, the greater the likelihood a person will perform the behaviors (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). According to the TRA, people's decisions to perform or not to perform a particular behavior depend upon two factors: attitude toward the behavior and subjective norm. Attitude toward the behavior is defined as a person's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior. Subjective norm is defined as a person's perception of significant others' opinions concerning whether they should or should not perform a behavior.

Later, Davis (1989) introduced the technology acceptance model (TAM), an adaptation of the TRA, to explain the determinants of the acceptance of the new technologies. Davis explained that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were two important variables in understanding intention to use a new system. Perceived usefulness (U) refers to the degree to which using the new technology will increase users' performance. Perceived ease of use (EOU) refers to the degree to which users expect the use of the new technology to be easy (Davis, 1989). Davis explained that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and attitude toward using the new media are the determinants of behavioral intention.

### Predicting Attitude toward Blog Use

Based on the TRA and TAM, we proposed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, and social influence would affect attitude toward blog use. In this study, perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which using a blog can enhance users' work and learning performance.

Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person feels that operating a blog is easy. Perceived enjoyment is defined as the extent to which blogging is enjoyable. Social influence is defined as the extent to which a person believes their significant others' opinions to participate in blogging. Attitude toward blog use refers to a person's positive or negative evaluation of participating in a blog.

The empirical evidence shows that perceived usefulness and ease of use influence people's attitude toward using the new technology and blogs (Hsu & Lin, 2008; Venkatesh, Speier, & Morris, 2002). Several studies also included perceived enjoyment as a determinant of attitude toward using the new technology and behavioral intention. Past research found that enjoyment influenced people's attitude toward using the new computer system and instant messaging (Vellerand, 1997; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003; Yaubin et al., 2009). Even though the TRA and TAM did not include social influence as a determinant of attitude toward using a computer system, and the TAM also did not include social influence as a determinant of behavioral intention, the evidence shows that social influence such as friends and loved ones play a crucial role in encouraging users to participate in an online social community website. They usually send an online invitation letter and/or discuss blogging activities offline (Ellison et al., 2007; Madden & Fox, 2006; Walther et al., 2008). Hence, it is assumed that social influence may affect attitude toward blog use and intention to blog. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, and social influence positively predict attitude toward using a blog.

### **Predicting Intention to Blog**

According to the TRA, attitude toward behavior and subjective norms are the determinants of behavioral intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this study, the intention to blog is defined as the extent to which a person will return to using a blog. Several studies have found that social influence is an important determinant of intention to use this new computer system in organizations (Mathieson, 1991; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Some also found that attitude toward using new media significantly influenced intention to blog

(Hsu & Lin, 2008), to use instant messaging (Yaubin et al., 2009), and to use the Internet and mobile Internet (Kripanont & Tatnall, 2009; Phuangthong & Malisuan, 2008). Thus, we postulated that intention to blog would be affected by social influence and attitude toward using blogs. This leads to the next hypotheses:

H2: Attitude toward blog use and social influence positively predict intention to blog.

H3: Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude toward blog use, and social influence contribute to intention to blog.

## Method

### Sample and Procedure

This study employed a cross-sectional design to collect data from college students. College student samples have been used in several studies relating to the study of new technologies, such as Internet use (e.g., Bonebrake, 2002; Charney & Greenberg, 2002; LaRose, Lin, & Eastin, 2003; Pornsakulvanich, 2008; Pornsakulvanich, Haridakis, & Rubin, 2008). These studies suggest that college students are appropriate samples for the study of blog usage because they have Internet experience and access to the Internet on campus and elsewhere.

In this study, a purposive sampling was used to collect the data from Internet users that used blog and social networking websites regularly. Participants ( $N = 268$ ) were undergraduates enrolled in classes at a large university in Thailand. They were 171 females (63.8%) and 97 males (36.2%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 28 years of age ( $M = 21$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ). They studied Business Administration (58.9%) and Communication Arts (41.0%). There were freshmen (21.4%), sophomores (37.2%), juniors (17.3%), and seniors (24.0%). The majority of them (42.5%) had an income range between 5,001 and 10,000 Baht, followed by 10,001-15,000 Baht (25%), less than 5,000 Baht (17.2%), and more than 15,000 Baht (14.2%).

Participants completed a self-administered questionnaire measuring their blog usage. They were ensured about the confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaire contained three main sections: blog usage, perceptions of blog use, and demographics.

## Measurement

### Blog Usage

A blog usage scale was developed to examine general blog usage behaviors. Participants responded to several questions relating to their blog use, including their favorite blog sites, the duration and amount of blog use, blog activities (e.g., editing information, seeing others' pictures, and the Interact with others). In this study, *Hi5* was the most popular site (78.7%), followed by *Facebook* (12.3%), and *YouTube* (3.7%). The most popular blogging activities were seeing others' pictures (68.7%), followed by posting/seeing their own pictures (64.9%), and checking incoming messages-mails (63.1%). They spent approximately 70 minutes per day on blogging. Females spent approximately 78 minutes, whereas males spent 56 minutes per day on blogging. The average duration of blog use was 18 months.

### Perceptions of Blog Use

The scale was adapted from Hsu and Lin's (2008) scale. Participants indicated their agreement ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). The statements represented their perceptions of blog use, including perceived usefulness (e.g., "Using a blog helps me accomplish my work/ learning/ life more quickly"), perceived ease of use (e.g., "Learning to use a blog is easy"), perceived enjoyment (e.g., "I have fun using a blog"), attitude toward using a blog (e.g., "I like participating in a blog"), social influence (e.g., "People who are important to me think that I should participate in blogs"), and intention to blog (e.g., "I will often return to the blogs that I participate in the future").

Cronbach's alphas for the scales in this study were perceived usefulness ( $\alpha = .91$ , 3 items), perceived ease of use ( $\alpha = .86$ , 3 items), perceived enjoyment ( $\alpha = .80$ , 3 items), attitude toward using a blog ( $\alpha = .83$ , 3 items), social influence ( $\alpha = .80$ , 2 items), and intention to blog ( $\alpha = .68$ , 2 items).

## Demographics

Participants responded to general demographic information, including gender, age, income, and year of study.

## Statistical Analysis

For Hypothesis 1 and 2, a separate multiple regression analysis with a stepwise method was employed to examine the contribution of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and social influence to attitude toward blogging, and the contribution of attitude to blogging and social influence to intention to blog. For Hypothesis 3, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed to investigate the predictive relationships of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, social influence, and attitude toward blogging with intention to blog.

## Results

Hypothesis 1 posed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, and social influence positively predicted attitude toward using a blog. A multiple regression analysis indicated that three predictors, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and social influence, accounted for 53.4% of the variance in attitude toward blog use,  $R = .73$ ,  $R^2 = .53$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .53$ ,  $F(3, 264) = 103.05$ ,  $p < .001$ . Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. The findings revealed that the strongest predictor was perceived enjoyment ( $\beta = .55$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed by social influence ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived usefulness ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Three factors positively predicted attitude toward blog use (see Table 1). The results indicated that those that enjoyed using a blog, perceived that using a blog was useful for their learning and working, and used it because of the influence of significant others feel positive toward using a blog.

**Table 1:** Multiple Regression Analysis for Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Enjoyment, and Social Influence Predicting Attitude toward Using a Blog (N = 267)

Dependent Variable	Predictors <i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	$\beta$
			$R^2 = .53***$
Attitude toward Using a Blog	Perceived Enjoyment	.60	.05
	Social Influence	.18	.04
	Perceived Usefulness	.11	.04

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Hypothesis 2 posed the idea that attitude toward blog use and social influence would positively predict intention to blog. A multiple regression analysis indicated that attitude toward blog use and social influence accounted for 49% of the variance in intention to blog,  $R = .70$ ,  $R^2 = .50$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .49$ ,  $F(2, 265) = 127.98$ ,  $p < .001$ . Hypothesis 2 was supported. The results indicated that attitude ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was the strongest predictor of intention to blog, followed by social influence ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Both attitude and social influence positively predicted intention to blog (see Table 2). The findings revealed that people's attitude and social pressure affected their intention to use a blog. Those that felt positive toward using a blog and used it because of their family's and friends' encouragement tended to use a blog more often in the future.

**Table 2:** Multiple Regression Analysis for Attitude toward using a Blog and Social Influence Predicting Intention to Blog (N = 267)

Dependent Variable	Predictors <i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	$\beta$
			$R^2 = .50***$
Intention to Blog	Attitude toward using a Blog	.60	.05
	Social Influence	.14	.05

Note: \* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

In Hypothesis 3, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the contribution of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude toward blog use, and social influence in predicting intention to blog. The predictors were entered in the two conceptual blocks based on the TAM framework, suggesting that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude toward blog use, and social influence contributed to intention to blog. After all variables were entered, the final regression equation accounted for 50.5% of the variance in intention to blog,  $R = .71$ ,  $R^2 = .50$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .49$ ,  $F(5, 262) = 53.45$ ,  $p < .001$ . Attitude toward using a blog ( $\beta = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and social influence ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were the two strongest predictors and positively predicted intention to blog (see Table 3).

**Table 3:** Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Enjoyment, Attitude toward Blog Use, and Social Influence Predicting Intention to Blog (N = 267)

Dependent Variable	Predictors	B	SE B	$\beta$
	Step 1	$R^2 = .34***$		
	Perceived Usefulness	.14	.04	.16**
	Perceived Ease of Use	.13	.06	.13*
	Perceived Enjoyment	.47	.07	.43***
Intention to Blog	Step 2	$\Delta R^2 = .49***$		
	Perceived Usefulness	.02	.04	.03
	Perceived Ease of Use	.09	.05	.09
	Perceived Enjoyment	.07	.06	.07
	Attitude toward Blog Use	.52	.07	.52***
	Social Influence	.12	.05	.13*

Note: \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

In summary, the three hypotheses in this study were supported. Overall, the results indicated that all predictors, including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude toward blog use, and social influence, contributed to intention to blog. In particular, the findings revealed that the more people perceived that using a blog was enjoyable and useful, the more likely that they would feel positive toward using it. In addition, significant others' encouragement affected people's attitude toward blogging. The more support that was received in blog use from family and friends, the more likely people would feel positive toward participating in a blog. Furthermore, the results showed that people's intention to blog or not to blog was affected by their attitudes and social influence. There was a high likelihood that people would use or return to using a blog more often in the future when their attitudes toward blogging were positive, and when their significant others, family, and friends encouraged them to use it.

## Discussion

The results of this study help extend the TRA and the TAM in understanding the factors influencing blog acceptance and intention to use it. The TRA suggests that people intend to behave according to their attitude toward the behavior and toward subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). However, the explanation of which variables influence attitude toward behavior is limited. In order to expand theoretically the TRA, this study proposed Hypothesis 1 to further explore the predictors of attitude toward behavior. The results showed that perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and social influence were positively significant predictors of attitude toward blogging. Among all predictors, only perceived ease of use did not predict attitude toward blogging. One possible explanation is that the participants in this study were rather familiar with the functions of blogs or social networking websites. Thus, how easy or difficult it was to use blogs may not have impacted the way in which the participants think about using the sites.

In this study, enjoyment was the strongest predictor of attitude toward blogging, followed by social influence and perceived usefulness. The findings imply that Thai people tend to have high intention to blog when they perceive

social values in blogging, such as enjoyment through the exchange of visual/textual information, networking, and peer influence. The functional values of blogging (i.e., usefulness) seem to be less important than the emotional values (i.e., enjoyment) and social values in blog users' attitudes toward blogging.

Furthermore, using a blog is different from other media choices such as television and the Internet. People tend to be motivated to use the Internet for their individual gratification. Past research has shown that people used the Internet, chatrooms, and SMS to fulfill their interpersonal needs rather than social needs (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Dumrongsiri & Pornsakulvanich, 2008; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001). However, social networking sites seem to serve as a channel for gratifying social needs and/or group relationships better than other media choices. The implication for practitioners is to use a blog as a tool for socialization or networking within and outside organizations. Marketers and advertisers may also take advantage of the nature of social networking websites to build relationships and trust with their customers. As we have seen, several international organizations such as Dell, Microsoft, and Home Depot have developed company/ CEO blogs to interact with their customers and to network communities (Marken, 2005).

Hypotheses 2 and 3 provide evidence to support the TRA and TAM. All together, attitude toward blogging, social influence, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use were significant predictors of intention to blog. Adding on to the two theories, perceived enjoyment also positively predicted intention to blog. The strongest predictor of intention to blog was attitude toward blog use. Also, enjoyment was the strongest predictor of attitude toward blog use. This implies that intention to blog or not to blog is characterized by perceived social values (i.e., enjoyment through interaction and significant others' opinions). People tend to blog to socialize with others. The implication for practitioners is to design and make blogs as easy and enjoyable tools to build and maintain active online networking.

This study showed that attitude toward blog use, social influence, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived enjoyment significantly predicted intention for blogging. Several studies have found self-expression,

sharing experiences, and life documenting as the top reasons for blogging (Huang et al., 2007; Technorati, 2008). The findings in this study may not be able to be generalized to other groups of bloggers. This study drew its sample from college students that were well-equipped with Internet access, computer skills, and experience in online interaction. Ease of blog use, enjoyment, and peer influence may not serve as significant predictors of blogging among other bloggers that have less access, skills, and experiences, such as older adults and those in other countries. Future research may expand the findings with other samples.

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