

Microblogger shootout: Posterous Spaces vs. Tumblr

A new wave of free sites encourages fast blogging, multimedia entries and social networking.

Matt Lake

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The ambient noise in the social networking world is at such a pitch that it's getting hard to make yourself heard. If you've got a business or a topic to promote, you're probably dividing your time and attention among a variety of sites and services -- such as Twitter, Facebook, and your blog and/or website -- most of which you gradually adopted and cobbled together along the way.

In the interests of efficiency, it pays to cut through the redundancies and automate the process of getting the word out to as many people as possible. To that end, a new wave of microblogging sites began to emerge a couple of years ago.

These sites encourage shorter entries of only a few sentences rather than a few paragraphs. They feature a lot more multimedia content; users can quickly throw up videos and a variety of images (including photos, artwork, cartoons and whatever is of interest). And they make it simple to republish (or reblog) content that has already been posted by other users.

The two services that lead the pack are [Tumblr](#) and [Posterous Spaces](#). Both have, for more than three years, provided a one-stop shop for publishing text, pictures, links or videos in blog-style websites. Both services offer tools to spread the word to social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, and to RSS aggregators such as FeedBurner.

The watchword for these two services is simplicity: They provide a template-based process that gets you started quickly and lets you tinker with design and settings as you go. They can keep updating your existing social networking presence and open up new ones among their own communities.

And they provide some handy extras you may never have considered, such as populating your blog (and Facebook news feed) via email.

True, Posterous Spaces and Tumblr lack the commerce tools and other robust site features that WordPress or Blogger can provide, but as a way to streamline your business communications, they may be just what you need.

To evaluate Tumblr and Posterous Spaces, I used a conceptual design for a blog site, along with graphics and editorial content, and tried to make the sites do what I needed them to. The proposed site is called HappyFlight; it has a logo, two contributors and two static pages ("About" and "Tips and Tricks").

More site-building and blogging tools

For more reviews of applications for building blogs and websites, check out these articles:

- Need to build a high-end website? We test three of the top free site-building applications: [Site builder shootout: Drupal vs. Joomla vs. WordPress](#)
- We compare the two best-known free blogging services to find out which is better -- and for whom: [Blogging service shootout: Blogger vs. WordPress](#)

In order to publicize the new site, I needed to repost to Facebook and Twitter and add the blog to RSS feeds. One item on my wish list for a site, a sales page designed for commercial activity, wasn't explicitly supported by either of these services -- but anyone with, say, a PayPal account could use that service to create a sales page with a strong enough sales-fulfillment back-end to handle light sales duties.

In the end, both sites came out looking pretty good, albeit with a couple of frustrations along the way.

[\(Story continues on next page.\)](#)

Matt Lake shows how Posterous Spaces lets you add multimedia content.

Matt Lake demonstrates some of Tumblr's features.

Setting up

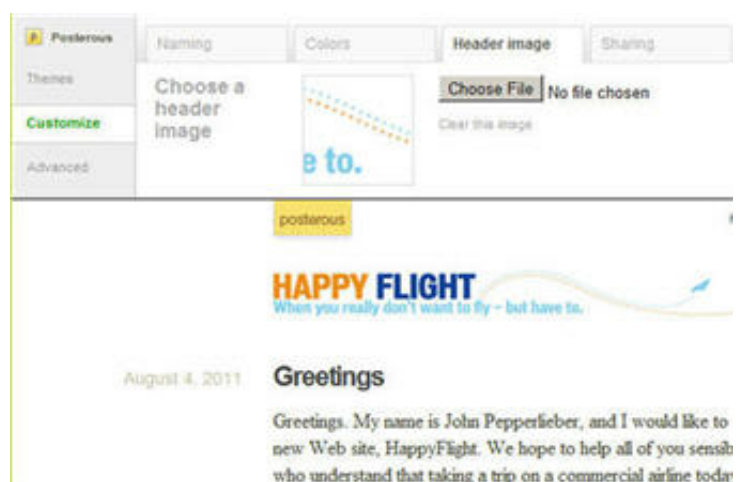
The goal of these services is to get you from zero to an appealing online presence in as little time and with as little effort as possible. Most of the responsibility for the quality of the content lies with the site creator, of course, but the service itself plays a part by providing as few speed bumps as possible along the way.

Both Posterous Spaces and Tumblr make you hit the ground running. You enter an email address, a password and a name for your site, and you're propelled into the blog-building world with a minimum of fuss.

Posterous Spaces

Posterous Spaces recently rebranded itself from the plain name Posterous to the expanded name Posterous Spaces, emphasizing the fact that you can set up multiple blogs (which it calls Spaces) for different purposes.

As a new Posterous Spaces user, you're thrown right into a Facebook-style page of popular Spaces. If it weren't for a large yellow Create a Post button, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were at just another social networking site. In the absence of any other direction, that's what I clicked on first -- though, upon closer inspection, I could equally have gone to the settings menu to apply a design theme or the Spaces menu to create a new blogging space. All told, there was slightly less initial hand-



The Customize page on Posterous Spaces lets you tweak your site.

holding than Tumblr offered -- though, on balance, it was more consistent than Tumblr's spottier approach.

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After clicking the big green Publish button on my first post, there was a slightly heart-sinking moment when a very plain page with the title "happyflight's Space" appeared. It looked dreadful. About the only attractive elements were the friendly Facebook "Like" and Tweet buttons at the bottom of the post -- but this page wasn't ready for the world to see.

And it was live -- unlike Tumblr, Posterous Spaces doesn't filter content in a dashboard preview; it shows you the real thing and provides text links up top to take you to site management. (You can save a draft, however.) To change the appearance of your first posting, you click back to your main page, click on Spaces and from the settings button next to your new space, click Customize.

For each new public or private blog you create in Spaces, you can decide whether you want to automatically post your blog to a welter of other services, including Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Next, you're dropped into the space's Settings menu, where you can invite friends from Facebook and Twitter to subscribe to your new content.

Unlike Tumblr, Posterous Spaces doesn't treat themes as a possible revenue source: What you see and preview, you can apply to your site free of charge. Trying on new themes is easy enough -- Posterous Spaces generates preview pages for your approval before you accept one and go live. However, Tumblr made it considerably easier to change fonts and background colors for a given theme.

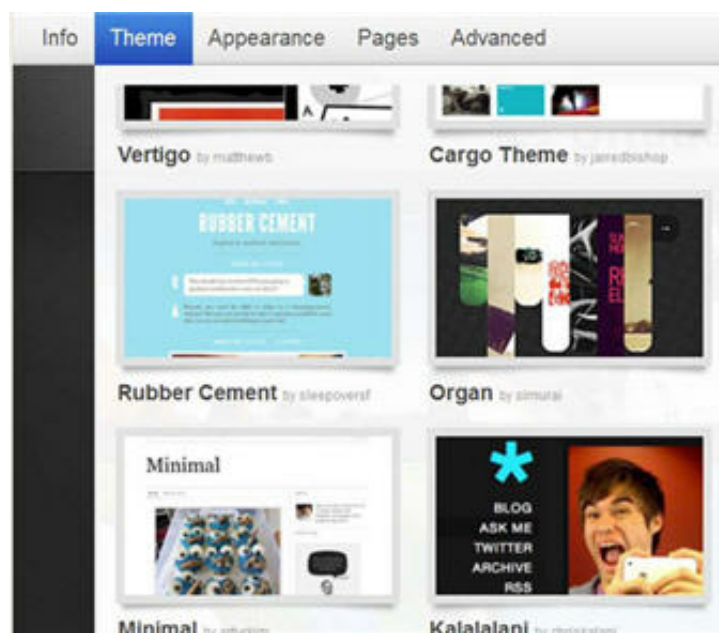
One setup feature that caught my fancy was Posterous Spaces' ability to import blogs from other sites. Posterous Spaces can bring over an entire archive from Google's Blogger, Ning, WordPress and several other sites (including Tumblr). In this era of test-driving and migrating between different providers, this is a feature that all blogging sites should have.

Tumblr

Tumblr throws you right into the deep end when you first register, with a full-page invitation to create your first post. Once you've taken care of that, the site takes you systematically through the process of design.

It's a smooth process to begin with. You start your site with a title and portrait photograph, and then you drop into a Customize page where you can pick a prepackaged theme design and modify it by changing fonts and background colors. You can also add static pages, such as an About Us page. And like Posterous Spaces, you can use a single account to create multiple blog spaces.

The first three screens of templates cost up to \$50, but many of the free designs (which follow) seem to fit the bill just as well. Tumblr previews the theme you pick on a boilerplate page: To see how your real site looks, you need to save and navigate to your blog through the Tumblr Dashboard. (The Dashboard is



Tumblr offers a large variety of themes to choose from.
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your account's main page.)

This unintuitive process is where Tumblr first starts to deviate from its goal of being easy to figure out. It got a little worse later, when it appeared that my first choice of design didn't support the banner-style title bar I wanted to add. It appeared (and the Help section didn't say otherwise) that my only option was to continue to pick new designs and look through the Customize page's Appearance module for each design until the option for a title graphic appeared. Plan B would have been to create my own design from scratch, which was more than I was prepared for.

Another ding against Tumblr's setup: While the Customize page is all well and good, it did not list all the features I needed -- or all the features Tumblr offers. As a case in point, if you want to add a page that lets people ask questions, or allow others to submit posts to your blog, you need to go to the Tumblr Dashboard, click on your blog's name and then click on a separate Settings link. Burrowing through a labyrinth of menus to get to the option you want is always a bit of a nuisance.

Bottom line

Getting from your point of origin to your destination always involves some upheaval, but both Posterous Spaces and Tumblr encounter little turbulence along the way. There's not much to differentiate between Tumblr's Dashboard interface and Posterous Spaces.

Adding content

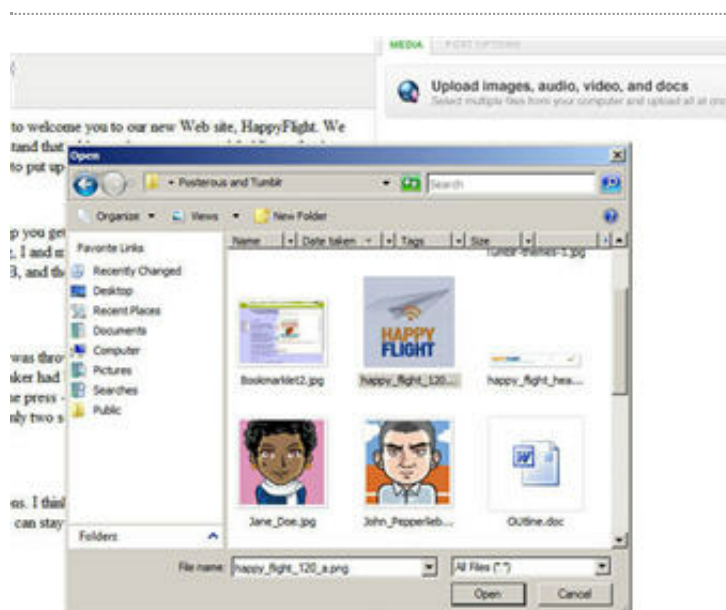
Most bloggers don't just want to post words; they also want to put up pictures, video, audio and links to sites they have come across. And they want to be able to do it remotely as well as from their desk. Both Posterous Spaces and Tumblr recognize this and provide tools to help, including browser apps such as bookmarklets. Both let you post through email and Android and iPhone apps.

Posterous Spaces

There are two philosophies when it comes to adding content to a blog. Tumblr's is to differentiate between all kinds of content and give you a different set of options tailored to each kind. Posterous Spaces takes the other tack: It gives you a page with a huge title-and-text entry box on the left side and a pane for uploading other types of content on the right side.

In the box on the left side, you can fit paragraphs of text -- much more text than Tumblr allows -- and take advantage of lots of text formatting options. That's all there is to it, and it works just fine.

In the pane on the right, you can upload entire galleries of photographs, along with MP3s and videos, all at the same time. This may not sound like a traditional type of blog posting, but it increases your flexibility for getting a point across. As a torture test of Posterous Spaces' media handling, I uploaded four JPEGs, two MP3s, a PDF and three video files in FLV, WMV and MPEG formats. All of them were processed and ready to browse,



You can upload entire galleries of photographs, MP3s and videos to Posterous Spaces.
[Click to view larger image](#)

embedded in a single blog, within a couple of minutes.

Posterous Spaces embeds media players and also has a very nice little embedded slideshow application for browsing such postings. It previews PDFs with an embedded viewer from Scribd that lets you zoom into full screen or print the PDF.

The other main approach Posterous Spaces takes to updating is via email, which it did consistently better than Tumblr did during my evaluation. Send a simple text email to your dedicated Posterous Spaces address from the one email address you've associated with your account, and its subject will appear as the blog post title and its body text as the blog content. Send video, audio or other content as attachments, and they'll appear embedded in the post under the body text.

Tumblr

Tumblr's site interface, the Dashboard, presents (down the side of the screen) a column of the different blog spaces you manage and (across the top) a large, clear row of icons for different types of posts.

Click on Text, and you get an intuitive text-entry box with a text formatting and picture embedding toolbar along the top. You can publish a post immediately or build up a backlog to roll out on a schedule. Click on Photo or Video or Audio, and you can either upload or link to Web-based media sources, which will then embed in your blog. Posts can be tagged as public or private; private ones will be unsearchable but visible to anyone you share a link with.

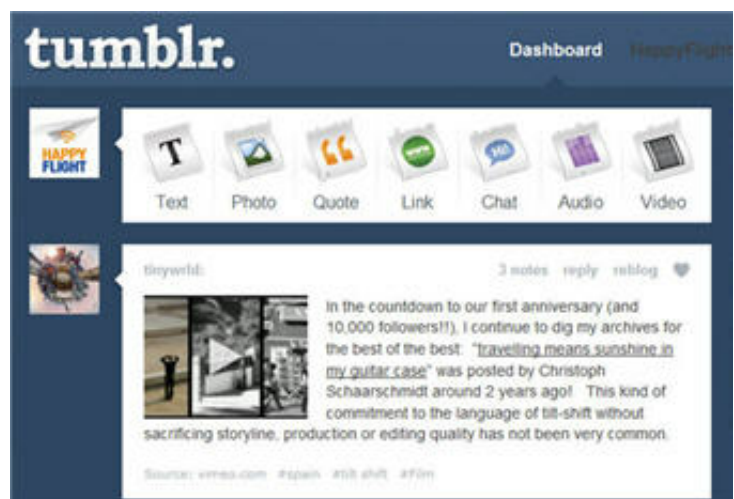
So far, so clear -- but post types labeled Chat and Quote make less sense. The first has nothing to do with instant messaging -- it simply formats text as a dialog. The second formats text as a quotation -- something you could do with little effort for a regular text post.

Tumblr limits audio files to one 10MB upload per day and video to no more than five minutes per day. It's not always gracious about handling the limitations: It let me upload a video that was five minutes and eight seconds long, and only after 10 minutes of processing time did it tell me the file length exceeded the time limit and disallow the post.

There are ways to post to Tumblr other than via the Web, though they can be hard to find on the site. Visit www.tumblr.com/goodies and you can find the number to dial to phone in audio blogs; the dedicated email address assigned to your account, which allows you to post blogs via email; and the name of the AOL Instant Messenger bot to hail when you want to post a blog via AIM.

That said, Tumblr is a bit quirky when it comes to email posting. It handles picture attachments fine, but embedding them in Microsoft Outlook, for example, resulted in a couple of blank posts during my trial. The email subject becomes the caption for an image post, but when I embedded an image rather than attached it, the body of the text did not appear online in my posts. Posterous Spaces didn't exhibit such quirks in my tests.

Bottom line



Tumblr's Dashboard presents a large, clear row of icons for different types of posts.

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Posterous Spaces lets you post more types of media via email, mobile app and Web, using a fairly bland but very powerful set of upload and formatting tools. Tumblr's efforts, no matter how effective Tumblr's mobile and Web apps may be, pale in comparison.

Social networking

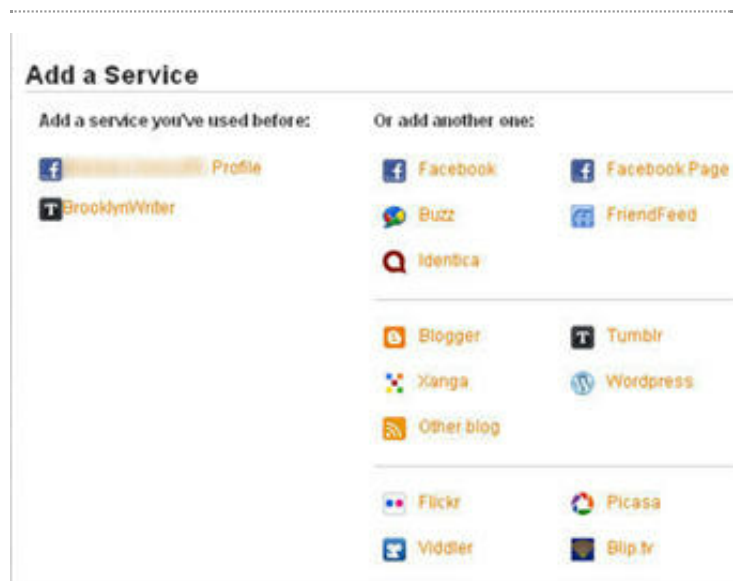
Writing a message is all well and good, but the point of running a blog is to get the message *out*. Both Tumblr and Posterous Spaces have, in effect, created their own social networking sites -- one of the first setup steps you take in both sites is to find content from other Posterous Spaces or Tumblr users you like on both sites, and you are encouraged to cross-post content you enjoy to your own blog.

Posterous Spaces

When it's time to spread the word across other services, Posterous Spaces has the edge over Tumblr. By default, Posterous Spaces slaps [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) graphics discreetly at the end of every blog entry, so visitors can easily spread the word about any posting you make.

Furthermore, Posterous Spaces accounts can be set up to repost to other sites -- and unlike Tumblr, this feature doesn't just apply to typical text and graphics posts reappearing on Twitter and in Facebook news feeds. Posterous Spaces can also repost to video publishers YouTube, Vimeo and Blip.tv; photo sites such as Flickr and Picasa; and other blogging sites, such as Blogger, WordPress and Tumblr.

This makes Posterous Spaces a potential front-end for your entire online presence, which could prove to be a tremendous time-saver.



Posterous Spaces can repost to a variety of services.
[Click to view larger image](#)

Tumblr

In terms of a built-in social network, Tumblr has a slight edge. In fact, Tumblr strives to be a social network all by itself and to a large extent succeeds. Tumblr fosters a vibrant network of bloggers by actively encouraging them to browse other Tumblr-based blogs. During setup, you're channeled towards browsing and picking content, which Tumblr then posts as updates (a la Facebook news feeds) into your Dashboard.

Each post from another blog that appears in your Dashboard has a handy little Reblog link in the top right, which is clearly a favorite among Tumblr users -- over the course of a few weeks, I found my material cross-posted on other blogs more than once, a fact that Tumblr was only too glad to inform me of via email.

Outside of its own network, Tumblr can automatically repost any blog entry you make to Facebook and Twitter once you authorize your account.

However, these features require cooperation from Twitter and Facebook, and during part of this evaluation, I noticed that not all of my postings showed up on Facebook. Since I had the same issue with Posterous Spaces, the problem is likely on Facebook's end, but it does affect Posterous Spaces' and Tumblr's ability to deliver this feature.

In fact, even when things work seamlessly on Facebook's end, you still need to jump through

hoops to enable automatic posting on business-only Facebook pages. (You need to grant admin privileges for business-only pages to a Facebook account with a personal profile, and then link the personal account to Posterous Spaces or Tumblr.)

Bottom line

Tumblr has a vibrant community all its own -- and if that meets your needs, then you have your champion. But if you're already established at several other sites like Facebook, Snapfish or Youtube, Posterous Spaces will repost your blogs there automatically with very little setup effort. For my money, this makes Posterous Spaces a winner in this category.



Tumblr actively encourages users to reblog other Tumblr-based blogs.

[Click to view larger image](#)

Traffic management

Posterous Spaces and Tumblr provide no built-in tools for analyzing site traffic, beyond a basic page counter. But they don't leave you high and dry when it comes to following viewing trends. Both recommend setting up an account at [Google Analytics](#) for site traffic and funneling RSS action through services like Feedburner. With this arrangement, you have these external services monitor your blog activity and crunch the data into information you can act on.

If it's accurate, strictly speaking, to say that Posterous Spaces and Tumblr provide the means to analyze visitor traffic, it's also accurate to say they provide the means to generate revenue from your site -- but once again, they don't provide the actual tools for the job. While browsing Tumblr and Posterous Spaces blogs, I noticed many that used third-party advertising and merchant services in their sites by embedding code from PayPal or AdSense. The capability is there, but neither site emphasizes it.

Posterous Spaces

When you're ready to move beyond mere page counters and the trends on your blog, Posterous Spaces provides accurate step-by-step instructions as to how to set up Google Analytics and somewhat sparser information about configuring Feedburner.

Basically, Google Analytics needs a tracking code embedded on each page of your site, and it collects data about visits to each page. Posterous Spaces made it a lot easier to implement this than some other sites: It requires you to enter an 11-digit code provided when you sign up for Google Analytics in a dialog box on a dedicated Posterous Spaces setup page. Posterous Spaces then spawns the tracking information that Google Analytics requires across all your pages.

The results aren't immediately apparent, but over the weeks, your Google Analytics account becomes the go-to site for tracking information on your blogs.

Tumblr

Tumblr also leaves the heavy-duty site traffic analysis to Google Analytics. To add Analytics tracking code to each page of your site, though, Tumblr makes you paste nine lines of Javascript to your site's description. This is somewhat messier than Posterous Spaces' approach, and Tumblr leaves you to figure out whether to paste the code before or after your actual text

description. In my case, I must have picked wrong, because the formatting of my existing text description was messed up afterwards and I had to recreate it.

Bottom line

There's too little difference -- and too little overall -- in the way of traffic analysis and management tools to call a winner in this category.

Site management

Sites like Posterous Spaces and Tumblr are intended for people without much experience in managing a website, so the onus is on them to guide newbies into best practices and generally make site management easy.

Both companies make it easy to perform basic blog publishing tasks, like queuing up a cache of posts to roll out on a schedule, and spinning off new blogs from your account. Both provide the ability to create private blogs with access limited to people with the password. In these blog basics, the two sites are about equal. It's in the details that the two differ.

Posterous Spaces

At press time, Posterous Spaces was in a state of transition and several of the features of its new Spaces interface were not supported by all browsers.

Strangely enough, Internet Explorer supported so few features that Posterous Spaces slapped on a notice to that effect: "We are working hard to support Internet Explorer, but in the mean time, please try using a different browser." It's possible that this will be rectified by the time you read this -- as we all know, browsers and online services are in a constant state of flux. However, it is interesting that Internet Explorer, which for so long was considered the standard browser, has been left out of this particular party.

In its new revamp, Posterous Spaces missed the chance to catch up with

Tumblr's excellent Mass Post Editor -- when Posterous Spaces users want to edit tags across a whole range of postings, they have to do it one post at a time (or more likely, just not do it because the task is too onerous).

Posterous Spaces' focus is more on letting its users roll out new blog spaces for different purposes -- some of them public, some private -- and switch between them readily. They also make it easier to brand your blog (or Space, as they insist on calling it): Posterous Spaces will register a domain for you using the ICANN-accredited registrar eNom, at the middling price of \$24.95 per year (with multi-year discounts going down to \$12.99 per year with a 10-year prepaid contract).

For that price, you get ownership and control over your domain, your Posterous Spaces pages appear under your own domain name, and you get ten e-mail addresses in the bargain. There are cheaper ways to register a domain, true, but none of them make it easier to brand your Posterous Spaces site. On the downside, you can't transfer an existing domain to eNom to link to

The screenshot shows the 'Space Settings' interface. At the top, there's a title 'Space Settings' and four tabs: 'PAGES', 'MEMBERS', 'AUTOPOST', and 'SETTINGS' (highlighted in orange). Below the tabs, there are two main sections. The first section is 'SPACE NAME AND ADDRESS' with the prompt 'What do you want it to be called?'. It contains a 'Site name' input field with the text 'HappyFlight' and a 'Site subhead (appears directly below the site name)' input field. The second section is 'SPACE URL' with the prompt 'This is the site address people will type to get to your Space'. It contains a 'Site address' input field with the text 'happyflight' and a '.posterous.com' domain.

Posterous Spaces makes it simple for users to register their own domains.

[Click to view larger image](#)

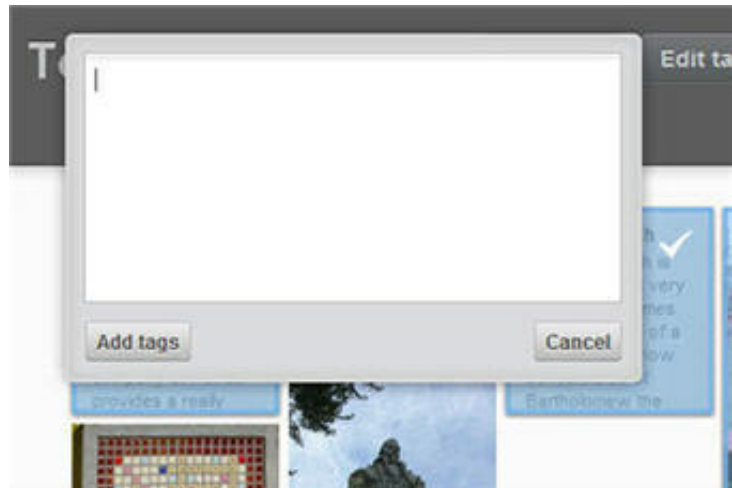
your Posterous Spaces site; for that, you have to get into editing your own DNS records. Posterous Spaces tells you how, but it's not as convenient.

Tumblr

Tumblr's a real mixed bag when it comes to management tools. Its one standout tool is the Mass Post Editor -- a great productivity feature that opens a thumbnail-filled window on all your blog entries and enables you to perform production chores like applying consistent tags on multiple posts. Every blog site should have a feature like this, but it's conspicuously absent from Posterous Spaces (and from higher-end sites like Blogger).

On the other hand, Tumblr makes you jump through hoops to perform much more basic tasks: For example, the ability to make comments on your blogs is only possible if you install a separate module from Disqus, which you can install from Tumblr's Customize page on most, but not all, templates. By contrast, Posterous Spaces provides this as a natural part of the blogging process -- and, to most of us, it is natural (though you can turn it off if you don't like it).

When you're ready to make your blog look professional by branding it with your own domain name, Tumblr is, shall I say, reluctant: It won't handle domain purchasing for you, and though it does provide instructions to help you map an already-registered domain to their servers, it appears to discourage the practice with such comments as "Please contact your domain registrar for support. Our staff is absolutely unable to assist with DNS configuration."



Tumblr's Mass Post Editor enables you to perform production chores like applying consistent tags on multiple posts.

[Click to view larger image](#)

Bottom line

Both Posterous Spaces and Tumblr have strong features and conspicuously missing ones in the area of site management. If you're the kind of compulsive cataloger who wants consistent tags, Tumblr's Mass Post Editor will win you over. If you're all about maintaining Google+-like areas for different groups of people, then Posterous Spaces is the obvious choice.

Extra features/power tools

A checklist of basics for a blogging service would include the tools needed to post, edit and format the content you want to include. A supplementary list might include niceties such as traffic analysis and promotional tools. Posterous Spaces and Blogger do include some other tools that fall outside these basic categories.

It's very telling that features that are commonplace in almost every other type of software -- such as the ability to import or export -- are considered power tools here and are only half-implemented, if at all. To call blog import a power tool speaks volumes about the rudimentary feature set at this end of the market, but that's how it stands with these two services.

Posterous Spaces

Many of Posterous Spaces' strengths come to the fore when using the mobile [iPhone](#) or Android app. Although it's a multipurpose app that can be used for long text postings, its focus is on

allowing users to quickly upload photographs. You can take pictures or select existing mobile phone pictures without leaving the app, and even geotag them on the fly.

On the desktop, Posterous Spaces' stand-out setup tool is its ability to import blogs from many other sites. It was too tempting to not try out, so I pointed it to a three-year-old Blogger site of mine. On the whole, I was very satisfied with the results: The import feature left my original blog intact while recreating it at Posterous Spaces, with the original post dates and tags all successfully copied to the new site. The process took about half an hour.

On the downside, none of the comments from my Blogger subscribers came across, and though the original dates did appear next to each blog entry, Posterous Spaces' archive summary counted them as a single entry in the month of import -- which isn't really an accurate count if you've imported a one-hundred-strong archive. Other than that, it's a handy little feature.

Tumblr

Some of the biggest wows on the Tumblr site come from its enthusiastic community of third-party app developers.

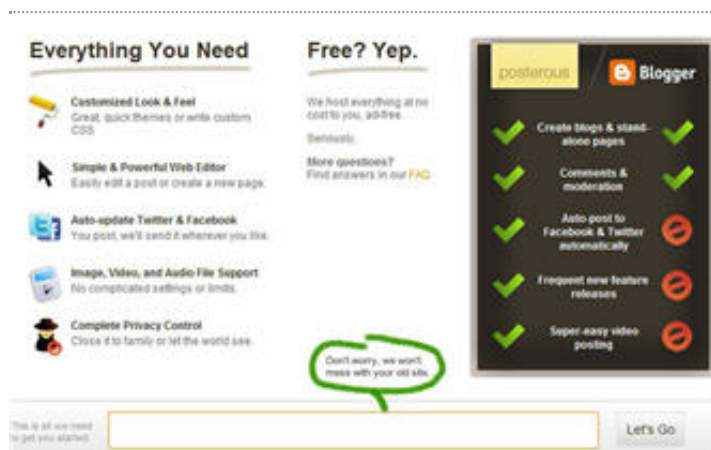
The site highlights the [number of mobile apps](#), many of which are specialty apps like [FiLMiC Pro](#) or [Auteureist](#), whose only real connection to Tumblr is the ability to upload quickly to the site.

That said, if you're looking to enhance your mobile experience and funnel what you do on your phone or [iPad](#) into a blog, Tumblr's third-party apps are a great jumping-off point.

In terms of native ability, Tumblr takes a different approach from Posterous Spaces in the import/export department -- and comes up equally short. Tumblr avoids the issue of importing whole blogs from another site, offering an archiving tool instead. It's handy for compiling all the posts you've made into a single folder on your hard disk, which is great for, say, assembling material for a print anthology or other adaptation you may want to make of your content. But as yet, the feature's only available on the Mac platform.

Bottom line

Once again, when you look at the kind of extra features and power tools that sites like Blogger and WordPress provide, it's hard to give a laurel to either Posterous Spaces or Tumblr. What



Posterous Spaces can import blogs from many other services. [Click to view larger image](#)



Tumblr offers a good number of third-party apps. [Click to view larger image](#)

little they do provide is fairly evenly matched.

Support and community

Both these services encourage you to explore how other people are using them. Tumblr's a bit more forward about this with its Dashboard Explore link, which kicks up a marvelous gallery of Tumblr sites. The services don't provide peer support forums in the traditional sense, but both provide online help in the form of FAQs and detailed how-to instructions.

Posterous Spaces

Posterous's attempts to promote its own community used to be relatively modest, but with the site's revamping as Posterous Spaces, the pendulum has swung the other way. Of the four top-level links you get when you log in to your Posterous Spaces account, three of them (Reader, Popular and Activity) show other people's blogs.

You can also see a scrolling list of some of its more popular recent blogs at posterous.com/explore, and a Friend Finder link that cross-references anyone you may want to connect with on Twitter or Facebook. The company also spotlights some of its favorites at the official Posterous Spaces blog at blog.Posterous.com.

However, in contrast with Tumblr's rather discouraging attitude toward support, Posterous Spaces has a large and well organized help section generously populated with video tutorials, many submitted by Posterous Spaces users.

Tumblr

While I can't fault the quality of email support at Tumblr or the efforts to make the help section international with German, French, Italian, Japanese and Turkish translations, the actual content seemed a bit skimpier than at Posterous Spaces.

On featured sections, such as configuring a personal domain name to resolve to Tumblr servers, the instructions were clear and accurate. But the site's search capability often turned up nothing of use. After finding no information on posting by phone, for example, I sent a request for email support. An accurate reply came in after a day, but it closed with "We cannot provide any additional support." This strongly worded tone echoes through other places on the site ("Our staff is absolutely unable to assist with DNS configuration" and "Really -- our staff isn't able to support many of the issues that may crop up"), which send out an unwelcoming vibe.

Bottom line

Which style of support do you like best? A photograph of a community ambassador saying in warm friendly tones, "Really -- we can't help with this" or a plain set of step-by-step instructions showing how it's done? If you prefer actual help without the friendly face, Posterous Spaces wins the support game. Tumblr's frothy set of developers, however, have the edge in adding Tumblr-specific features to popular mobile apps.

Conclusions

Both Tumblr and Posterous Spaces help new or time-strapped bloggers establish a solid online presence. Their sites can be destinations in themselves or front ends to other social networking sites. But for my money (in the sense that time is money), Posterous Spaces has a usability edge over Tumblr.

Tumblr provides a lot of unusual and handy features, such as posting by phone and instant messenger and tagging multiple posts with a single mass-editing tool. But other basic tasks involve much more clicking around than Posterous Spaces requires: You can't change your

profile picture and site description in the same place; you have to register at a different site to enable comments on your blog; and the list goes on.

Posterous Spaces processes all kinds of media, from audio and video files to entire galleries of graphics and even PDFs, and quickly delivers a smart and functional blog, complete with seamlessly embedded viewers. Though both services handle posting by email, Posterous Spaces handles more media types more smoothly and rapidly.

Matt Lake is an author, award-winning technology journalist and technical services coordinator in the field of education.