



Blog Format Refresh

Summary

Dramatic changes in both visitor engagement and repeat visits were obtained by simplifying a blog's layout and reducing sidebar clutter.

Key Metrics:

Pages per visit	↑36%
Avg. time on site	↑112%
Bounce Rate	↓25%
Repeat Visits	↑10%

Clearing Title (www.clearingtitle.com) is a blog targeted at title insurance practitioners. In existence since 2007, it has a regular readership of real estate and title insurance professionals.

Clearing Title's template, while interesting, had become cluttered by sidebar "widgets" to the extent that might be distracting readers from the content. In addition the layout and typeface used by the blog's template made articles difficult to read. *Clearing Title* might be losing visitors who were put off by the clutter and distraction.

An opportunity arose while migrating *Clearing Title* from Google's blogger platform to self hosted WordPress. As part of that migration, we undertook a radical redesign of the blog site, focusing on the template and the sidebar content.

We selected a commercial template, Thesis for WordPress, which provided a clean layout and solid typography. As a bonus, the template provided easy configuration for search engine optimization.

After the template was installed, we carefully reviewed the function and the utility of each sidebar item. We selected only items that we felt were truly useful, and reordered to provide the best utility.

The results (left) were dramatic. Two months after the transition, the key metrics of visitor engagement (pages per visit, time on site, and bounce rate) had improved. And the new look brought readers back, with a significant increase in repeat visitors.