



## SparkBlog Weblog Management System User Manual

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the SparkBlog Weblog Management System (CMS) for the Macromedia Coldfusion platform. SparkBlog, developed by 13amp.com, is a powerful Web browser-based weblog management system that allows you to quickly take advantage of the Coldfusion platform to create database-driven dynamic personal or corporate Weblogs or blogs. No knowledge of Coldfusion is required, although some knowledge of CFML will allow Web developers to customize the system to meet certain blog-specific needs.

SparkBlog Weblog Management System is the result of years of experience developing corporate Web blogs and portals for leading companies around the world. The application is based on the same database-driven content framework as our popular SparkPlug Content Management System. Developed to run on the cost-effective Coldfusion platform from Macromedia and priced like a custom tag or CGI application, SparkBlog offers features found in blogging applications that cost thousands of dollars.

SparkBlog Weblog Management System offers blog developers and contributors the following features:

- Built-in WYSIWYG HTML Editor
- Unlimited Weblogs
- Unlimited users, subscribers, commentators
- Admin and blog owner (or manager) user roles
- Built-in image management
- Editorial workflow and blog entry approval system
- Blog entry scheduling
- Blogging via E-mail/E-mail-enabled mobile phone
- Import and Export XML RSS 2.0 Feeds

SparkBlog offers IT departments all the tools they need to create database-driven corporate blogs to which employees can contribute using only a Web browser.

## INSTALLING SPARKBLOG WEBLOG MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

SparkBlog Weblog Management System (CMS) is a Coldfusion application and requires at least version 4.5 of Macromedia Coldfusion running on Microsoft Windows. The software can also run on other Coldfusion platforms such as Linux, with some minor modifications depending on the Linux environment.

### **Installation Directory**

The application is delivered as a single executable or ZIP, which copies the application templates and related files into `c:\sparkblog`, `c:\cfusionmx\wwwroot\sparkblog` or another location of your choice. No changes are made to your system so you can remove the software simply by deleting the sparkblog folder.

After installing the application you need to create a Coldfusion Data Source for the SparkBlog Access database using the Coldfusion Administrator. The instructions below assume your installation is on Coldfusion MX. Instructions for other versions of Coldfusion may vary but the principle remains the same.

### **ODBC Data Sources**

SparkBlog ships with a Microsoft Access database called SparkBlog.mdb. To set up the ODBC data sources for the database, log in to the ColdFusion Server Administrator and click on ODBC (4.x) or Data Sources (MX). In the Data Source Name input box enter SparkBlog and in the Driver select box choose Microsoft Access Driver. Click the Add... button. On the following screen enter the location of the SparkBlog.mdb file (usually `c:\cfusionmx\wwwroot\sparkblog\database\SparkBlog.mdb`) in the Database File text box or Browse to the sparkblog.mdb database file on your server. Leave the other fields untouched and click the Create button.

Make sure that the datasource is verified by clicking the Verify link next to the SparkBlog datasource.

**Note:** You can name the datasource something other than SparkBlog and configure the software accordingly but this is not recommended for a first time installation. *The Access databases can be upsized to Microsoft SQL Server databases using the Upsize Wizard that comes with SQL Server. Refer to your SQL Server documentation for details.*

### **Coldfusion Administrator Settings**

SparkBlog needs a number of Coldfusion Administrator settings to be enabled to function correctly. In the ColdFusion Administrator, click on Memory Variables. Enable Application Variables and Enable Session Variables must be selected. SparkBlog uses the default Timeout settings for both Application and Session variables although you may customize the timeout to your setup if you so wish. If your version of Coldfusion allows you to do this, be sure to enable the CFCONTENT, CFDIRECTORY and CFFILE tags. These tags are necessary for the SparkBlog application to function fully.

### **Configuring Web Server Software**

To use the SparkBlog Admin interface locally or over the Internet you need to set it up as a virtual blog under IIS or another Web server. Coldfusion MX comes with a built-in Web server which you may use instead of a separate Web server. Refer to your MX documentation for configuring the built-in Web server.

In previous versions of Coldfusion, you set up a virtual blog in your Web server called SparkBlog and point it to *c:\SparkBlog* (Coldfusion 4.X) with the default document set to *index.html*. You can then access the SparkBlog Admin interface using *http://localhost/SparkBlog*, *http://127.0.0.1/SparkBlog* or a domain name or IP address of your choosing if the application will be accessed over the Internet.

In Coldfusion MX you may simply install SparkBlog within the *wwwroot* folder located at: *C:\CFusionMX\wwwroot* to take advantage of MX's built-in Web server.

If you are using the built-in Web server in MX, you access the admin interface at *http://localhost:8500/SparkBlog*, *http://127.0.0.1:8500/SparkBlog* or *http://www.yourdomain.com:8500*. 8500 is the port on which Coldfusion MX's built-in Web server can be accessed by default.

Use your Web server security and/or a firewall to avoid unauthorized access to the SparkBlog admin interface.

### **Configuring SparkBlog**

SparkBlog behaviour is controlled by two *Application.cfm* files. One located in the *\SparkBlog* directory and the other in the *\SparkBlog\\_Admin* directory. Essentially, the one in *\_Admin* controls behaviour and look-and-feel of the Admin interface while the other does the same for SparkBlog blogs.

SparkBlog offers a convenient *Configure* button that allows you to configure the system without manually editing the *Application.cfm* files. The *Configure* button can only be used by the default administrator after logging into the system.

The default setting in the *Configure* form are as follows:

<b>Install Directory Path:</b>	C:\CFusionMX\wwwroot\SparkBlog
<b>Install Directory Path:</b>	http://localhost:8500/SparkBlog
<b>Coldfusion Datasource:</b>	SparkBlog
<b>E-mail Server:</b>	mail.yourmailserver.com [Used to send blog e-mails]
<b>Default E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@yourmailserver.com">info@yourmailserver.com</a> [Used to send blog e-mails]
<b>SparkBlog Admin Font:</b>	Verdana
<b>Display Items per Page:</b>	10
<b>Max. Image Size (KB):</b>	50

After saving the configuration settings, you may log in with the default Admin username: *admin* and password: *sparkblog*. This gives you full admin multiple-blog privileges so remember to change the password.

### **Manually Edit the Application.cfm files**

If you are feeling brave, you may also set these parameters manually in the *Application.cfm* and *configure.txt* files but resort to this only if you have problems with the *configure* button.

Open the two *Application.cfm* files one at a time in a text editor like Notepad and change the directories and URLs in the following lines according to your installation directory and Web server setup. The settings that need changing look something like this:

```
<CFSET application.path = "c:\cfusionmx\wwwroot\sparkblog">  
<CFSET application.url = "http://localhost:8500/sparkblog">  
etc.
```

Feel free to change the IP address to localhost or fully qualified domain names such as *www.myblog.com*. Do not modify the other lines. Save the Application.cfm files and then access the SparkBlog Admin interface by typing its url in your browser - *http://localhost/sparkblog* or *http://127.0.0.1/sparkblog* or *http://localhost:8500/sparkblog* (MX).

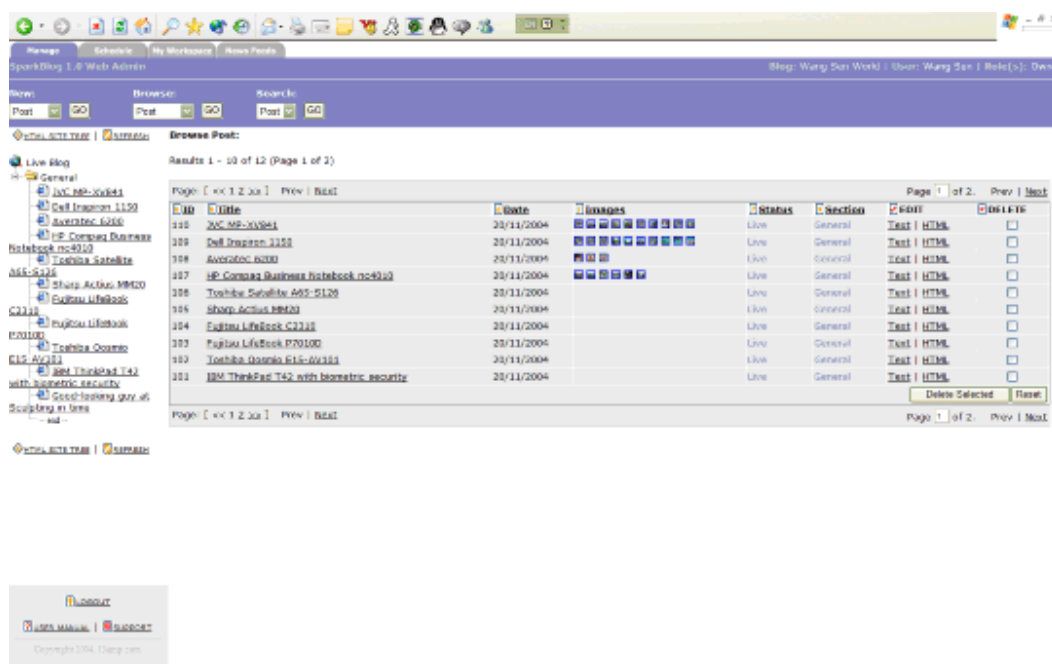
**NOTE:** If you changed the default install directory or the datasource name you should manually edit the Application.cfm files in the `_admin` and SparkBlog folders as well as the `configure.txt` file in the `_admin` folder.

**NOTE:** Default admin username is *admin* and password is *sparkblog*.

This gives you full admin privileges for all blogs so remember to change the password. Once logged in as the Default Admin, you can then create new blogs, users etc.

## THE SPARKBLOG INTERFACE

The SparkBlog user interface is very intuitive. It consists of Navigation Tabs for accessing key functions such as Scheduling, the Workspace, importing RSS Feeds, a Navigation Bar for blog management activities, a Blog Info Bar displaying the current blog, owner and the owner's privileges, a Blog Tree for previewing the "Live" dynamic version of your blog and a Main Area where most blog management activity takes place.



### The Navigation Tabs:

At the top of the SparkBlog interface are the four Navigation Tabs: Manage, Schedule, My Workspace and Newsfeeds. Users can access features behind these Navigation Buttons depending on their role for the blog.

### The Navigation Bar:

The Navigation Bar is located below the Navigation Buttons. It has three dropdown lists: New, Browse and Search. The New drop-down list lets Admin add new blogs, templates and users. Blog Owners can also add posts, comments, sections and so on to individual blogs. The Browse drop-down list lets users browse blogs, users, posts, templates, sections, and so on depending on whether they have Admin or Owner privileges.

### The Blog Info Bar:

Just below the Navigation Buttons and to the right of the screen, you'll find the Blog Info Bar, which displays the name of the current blog, the current user and their blog privileges.

### The Blog Tree:

The Blog Tree allows you to easily preview the current Blog you are managing. Clicking a folder will load the relevant Section for the blog. Expanding a folder

displays any posts or entries currently assigned to that blog section with a status of "Live".

**The Logout Box:**

Below the Blog Tree are the REFRESH, USER MANUAL and LOGOUT links. Clicking REFRESH reloads the Blog Menu to reflect any changes. Clicking LOGOUT logs you out of the system.

**The Main Area:**

The Main Area is where most of the action takes place in SparkBlog. When the user first logs in, the Main Area displays the Blog name, and the encoding language. It also notifies the user if any posts to the current blog remain outstanding for editing or approval. Clicking the number of the post takes you to into your workspace where you can work on the post

## CREATING A NEW BLOG

Creating a new blog in SparkBlog is as easy as creating a new user who will act as the Blog Owner and selecting Blog from the New drop-down list. The New Blog input form is displayed. Give the new blog a name – such as Sales Department Blog - and choose a Template, and the encoding language.

When a new blog is created in SparkBlog, a folder with the same name as the blog (with spaces replaced by an “\_”) is created under the Sites directory. All related blog files such as images and so on are stored in this folder.

The structure of a new blog folder is as follows:

Blog images are stored in the *images* directory. Published blog RSS feeds are stored in the *rss* folder.

*Note: You can edit information for a blog (except the blog name) or delete a blog at anytime by selecting Blog from the Browse drop-down list and clicking Edit.*

## CREATING NEW USERS

While the Default Admin user account can access any blog in SparkBlog, other users are tied to a specific blog. These users are blog owners or in a corporate environment you can think of them as blog managers. Before creating a new blog, you should create a user other than Default Admin who has administrative privileges for that specific Web blog. To do so, simply select User from the New drop-down box.

In SparkBlog, there are only two roles.

*Default Admin - Can perform all management functions including change blog templates*

*Owner - Can add, edit, browse and delete posts, comments, subscribers, sections and post images*

To add a new user, select User from the New drop-down list and click GO. In the Add User form, type the user's name, e-mail address, username and password. You can upload a photo for the user and decide whether the photo will appear on the user's blog as well as whether to display their e-mail address on the block. If the size of the photo is larger than the size permitted, the photo will not be added with the users details. Click the Add User to save the user's details.

**Note:** *To edit a specific user's information or delete that user, select User in the Browse drop-down list and click GO. A list of users appears showing their details. Default Admin can then Edit or Delete any user. A blog owner cannot delete themselves but they can edit their own details.*

## CREATING NEW SECTIONS

After creating a new blog and assigning at least one new user to it with at least, the next step is to create a new section for the blog. In SparkBlog, all blogs have at least one section – a section called General is automatically created for every new Blog.

To create a new section in SparkBlog, select Section from the New drop-down list and click GO. In the Add New Section form, enter a name for your Section (e.g. Sales or Human Resources or Sports).

**Note:** *To edit or remove a section, select Section in the Browse drop-down list and click GO. A list of sections related to the current blog is displayed. Click Edit or Delete depending on what you'd like to do with the section. The default General section cannot be deleted.*

## CREATING NEW TEMPLATES

SparkBlog ships with 10 blog templates that use a simple layout and color scheme and should be suitable for almost any kind of Blog. Default Admin can change the color scheme of existing template simply by browsing templates, clicking edit and changing the CSS style colors specified in the Header.

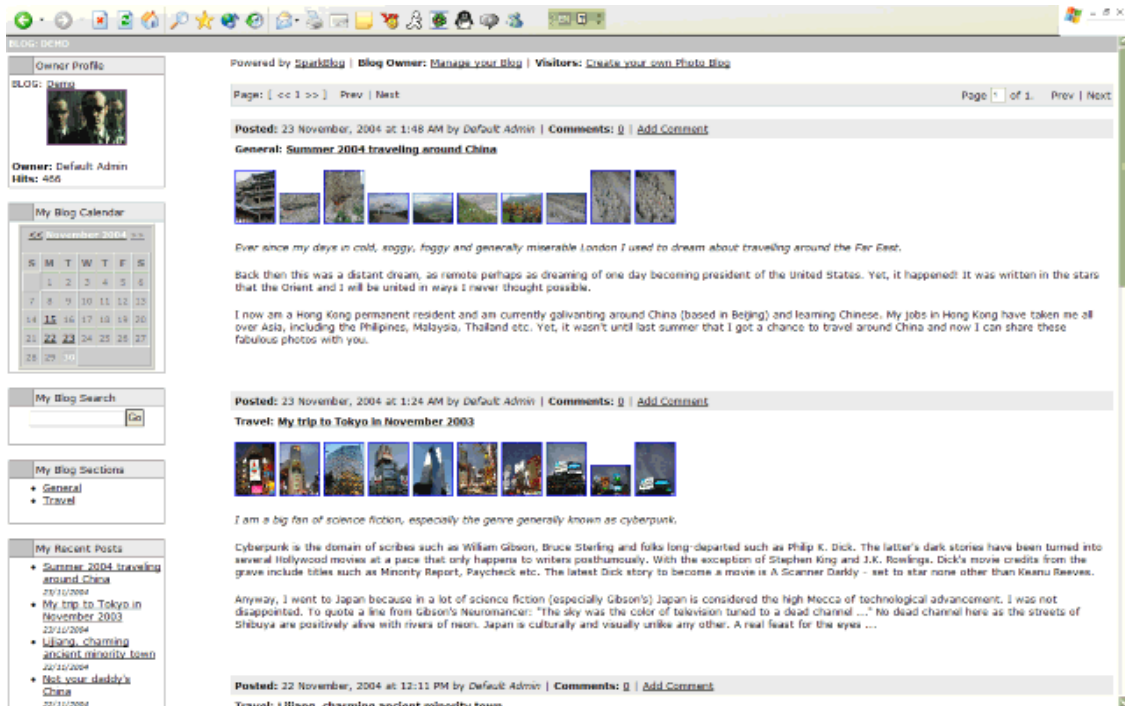
Alternatively, admin can create new templates with the look and feel of their choice. Where possible they should use the CSS style statements from the included template as these are used for the look and feel of the blog elsewhere. Create a new template in an HTML editor of your choice and select Template in the New drop-down to add the template header and footer. Setting a template to Live means that it will appear as a template choice when creating new blogs.

Templates are saved in the *sparkblog/templates* folder. Any images used in the template should be save in the *images* folder located in the *templates* folder and referenced accordingly.

**NOTE:** You won't be able to preview templates until a template is assigned to a blog.

## BLOG INTERFACE

The interface of individual blogs is very simple and easy to use as you can see from the following diagram:



The blog interface features, an owner profile, clickable blog calendar, blog search, blog sections, recent posts, enlargeable post thumbnails and the ability to add comments and subscribe to individual posts.

### The Multi-Blog Portal

The Multi-Blog Portal is a window into multiple blogs for customers who have purchased more than one Blog License. The portal is a window into all Live Blogs in the SparkBlog system. It displays, the most popular blogs, most recent posts as well as a calendar and search that allows for easy navigation across multiple blogs. The Multi-Blog portal front page is located in the *portal* folder and can be accessed at [http://YOUR\\_DOMAIN\\_OR\\_IP/sparkblog/portal/index.cfm](http://YOUR_DOMAIN_OR_IP/sparkblog/portal/index.cfm).

Instead of directing company employees to an individual blog, the blog portal is a convenient way for users to access all blogs from a single interface.

## CREATING POSTS / BLOG ENTRIES

Content is the most important aspect of any Web blog. All the steps explained in the earlier part of this manual are for the sole purpose of making it easy to add content (posts or blog entries) to your SparkBlog-powered Web blogs.

To add a new Post, select Post in the New drop-down

- Select a Section for the content
- Choose an Author (*usually the blog owner*)
- Type a title for the post (*e.g. Al Gore wins US presidential election or Check out my holiday photos!*)
- Enter a Post Date using the calendar or leave blank for today's date and the current time
- Type an Abstract or short introduction if you plan to display a post summary in your blog
- Type or paste the post entry into body field. Use the WYSIWYG editor to format the content if necessary.
- Assign up to 10 images to the post. You can also insert other images directly into the post using the WYSIWYG editor or HTML code. (e.g. ``)
- Choose a status for the post. Only Live posts appear on your blog
- Click the Add Post button to save the entry

**Note:** *You won't be able to view posts in the Blog Menu until their status has been changed to "Live".*

### What next?

SparkBlog uses a staged approach for posts if you require this function. Newly added posts can be assigned the status 'Added'. This means the post has not been edited or approved. The status of 'Edited' means that the post is edited but has not been made Live yet. Posts with a status of Edited or Added appear in My WorkSpace for convenient editing. You can also find posts using various criteria with the Search drop-down list or by browsing posts. In any of these three locations you can click the Edit link to change the status of the post.

### Post Scheduling

Content Scheduling allows users with Owner or Admin privileges to schedule content with a status of 'Edited' to automatically appear on live blogs at a certain time on a specific date. To use content scheduling, click the Schedule button at the top of the screen.

You can schedule multiple posts at a time. Enter a day and time that you want the content to appear Live on your Web blog. SparkBlog will generate an entry under Scheduled Tasks in the Coldfusion administration interface. On the scheduled date and time, the status of your content will be changed from 'Edited' to 'Live' and the content will appear on your Web blog automatically. The scheduled task will be automatically removed from the Coldfusion Administrator when it is complete.

**NOTE:** You can quickly change multiple 'Edited' posts to 'Live' by using the schedule function without modifying the date or time.

### **E-mailing Posts**

SparkBlog allows users to e-mail posts (including images) from any e-mail client to a live blog. You do this by sending a correctly formatted message to a specific e-mail address provided by Default Admin. Admin needs to be able to set up a new e-mail account on your mail server to do this.

- First, create a new e-mail account on your mail server called something like sparkBlog@yourdomain.com
- Next, open the file in the \_admin folder under SparkBlog called MailContent.cfm
- Configure the two <cfpop> sections in this file with your mailserver information and the new e-mail account you just created
- Finally, create a Schedule Task in the Coldfusion Administrator that will run the MailContent.cfm file every few minutes or at intervals that suit your requirements.

*If your ISP account doesn't give you access to Coldfusion Admin, you can call the mailcontent\_scheduler.cfm file in the \_admin folder using your browser to set up the scheduled task.*

MailContent.cfm checks the specified mail server account according to your Scheduled Task for new messages. If there is a new message in the correct format, the content of the message will be added to the Post database table and will appear in SparkBlog or on the target blog.

### **Formatting Message**

For E-mail to SparkBlog to work correctly, the e-mail message must be formatted to exact rules. First, in the To: section of the e-mail type the e-mail address that e-mail posts are sent to. E.g. sparkblog@yourdomain.com [replace yourdomain.com with the correct domain].

The subject of your e-mail message must have the following format:

BlogID,SectionID,Title,Status,Username,Password.

E.g. **1,1,SparkBlog is so cool man,Live,admin,sparkblog** (no spaces before or after the commas).

You may replace the 'Live' status with 'Edited' or 'Added' if you don't want the post to go live immediately.

The entire body of the e-mail message will become the body of the post. You may attach up to 10 images with the message, these will become your post images. Getting the subject formatting wrong will either result in MailContent.cfm doing nothing or inserting rubbish in your content database so use this feature carefully.



**NOTE:** *The E-mail To SparkBlog feature is as secure as the SparkBlog@yourdomain.com e-mail account so do not give out this e-mail account or the message formatting instructions to anyone who might abuse it.*

It is recommended that in its current form, this feature should be used sparingly as running the MailContent.cfm file every few minute may take up valuable system resources.

## RSS 2.0 Feeds

In SparkBlog, you can publish RSS news feeds of any blog to allow that blog to be syndicated by external sites. You can also import RSS feeds and use those as part of your blog post or entry. Click the News Feeds tab. You will then see two options:

- Import External RSS Feed
- Publish Blog RSS Feeds

### **Import External RSS Feed**

Clicking this option allows you to enter the url of an external RSS feed. The contents of the feed are then displayed and you can select which of the feed items you want to convert into a post. The selected items are then converted to posts with a status of 'Edited'. You may then click the My Workspace or Schedule tabs to edit or make those posts 'Live'. The latter lets you easily make a large number of posts Live by scheduling them to go Live immediately.

### **Publish Blog RSS Feeds**

Clicking this option allows you to publish all or some of your blog content to an RSS feed file that can be syndicated to other sites. The RSS feed will appear automatically on the target blog if the Show RSS Feed field was set to Yes. The published feed is named rss.xml and saved in the related blog's *rss* folder.

## GOING LIVE

A blog is Live as soon as it is created by Default Admin and set to Live. Of course no blog is complete unless it contains posts. You can preview Live Blogs from the Browse Blog screen. The default url for a blog is [http://localhost:8500/sparblog/blogs/\[BLOG\\_NAME\]/blog.cfm/.id.\[BlogID\]](http://localhost:8500/sparblog/blogs/[BLOG_NAME]/blog.cfm/.id.[BlogID]).

Happy blogging!

-- THE END --