Blog, for all our sakes

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This post is about how important it is to blog.

Perhaps people think it isn't important to blog, that it's trivial, it doesn't matter, it's duplicating other work, it's pointless. So I feel it's useful to list a few reasons why blogging is vital as part of debate and information online. Of course blogs play different roles for different areas of knowledge, skills or business, as well as being a very effective outlet for all kinds of projects to document what's happening and publicise their work to the outside world. But blogs also play a role of verifying thinking, providing examples of problem solving, challenges that have been overcome, or celebrations of moments of success. This binds us together as an online community of knowers and thinkers, and of being. For me, blogging is the very human face of the Internet.

I benefit constantly from finding academic bloggers online. In academic work it is easy sometimes to get lost in the deluge of research and serious writing that is available on any topic. Academic writing is detailed, yet thick with nuance and lack of specific clarity. It can be hard to know what you are reading about sometimes, and problematic to announce that to your academic community, you risk looking a fool. But blogs are here to save you. I find academic blogs explain things, show me that other people struggle with ideas, resolving approaches and making their thinking visible. This is a massive boost to my own understanding, and at times has been very important. It also proves to me that I am not alone, that other people *do* struggle with similar things, or suffer similar moments of neurosis.

From a digital and technical perspective, blogs are vital at showing you how to solve problems, explaining technical procedures, sometimes with additional video, with image guides, or just step by step processes. They discuss code issues, risks and best practice. They showcase brilliant work, provide new inspiration, encouragement at certain directions, examples of issues or problems you might encounter. Technical blogging is an absolutely essential part of the digital infrastructure of connected life.

Opinion, review and critique blogging provide us with a rich dynamic source of ideas, dangerous or problematic topic discourses, platforms for deeper discussion and reasoning. And of course the vital art of venting. Don't forget venting. Naturally there are some radical bloggers, not all of which you will agree with and a few of which probably should not be on the internet at all. This increasingly poses a problem for a balance between the management of the right to free speech versus dissemination of hate speech or worse, and we work towards finding better solutions for these issues in our digital world.

The important thing is, blog. Write your hearts out. Learn to use a good blog platform, there are many out there, both paid for and free solutions. Your blog provides you with a historic record of your thinking, a way of archiving digitally the process by which you traveled from one place to another in progressing in your life. It can be an entertaining romp or a serious reflection, it can be one off pieces or a continuous flow, it can be whatever you need it to be. It is yours while at the same time being part of a greater network of billions of others. Blogging is the first and true network of digital souls, and it is no wonder it gave rise to so many other things on the Internet. From the early days of Technorati to the vast Linked Open Data network, we have come a long way.

Good blogging platforms, often available as open source content management publishing software, or cloud based. Not all are free, but many are.

- WordPress.com or own hosted
- Blogger
- Medium
- Ghost
- Movable Type
- TypePad
- Drupal
- Umbraco

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