

How to... become a blog master

Clarity matters

What is the purpose of your blog? To raise awareness of an issue? Create a debate? Inspire action? All of the above? Having a clear idea of what impact you want your blog to have will help you identify who your audience should be, the tone your writing should take, and where your blog should be hosted.

Know your audience

How knowledgeable and engaged are they? If your audience is new to campaigning and development, you should be careful not to get carried away with complex detail or jargon. On the other hand – if your audience is specialist and savvy – make sure you can keep up with the pace!

It's a tone and style things

Humorous? Quirky? Sarcastic? Sensitive? Your writing should reflect who you are and what you are passionate about. Be yourself and develop your own unique style. Above all, make sure you're friendly, informal, and engaging. Remember – a blog is a conversation, not a dissertation!

Content that commands

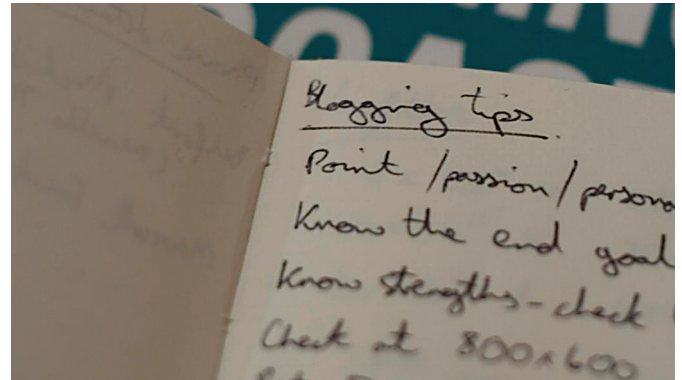
Always have a title that grabs attention. Search engines, RSS feeds and blog aggregators often just display the title and a tiny morsel of your blog. If that is all potential subscribers have to go on – it has to be good! Know what your unique selling point is. Why should readers choose your blog over others selling similar content?

Promotion, promotion, promotion

It's no good writing a fantastic blog if no one reads it. Post your blog on social networks. Paste a link in all your emails. Another way to build interest is by chatting to other bloggers and commenting on their posts. Promote your self through your profile page too – readers will be interested in who you are and what you stand for.

Substance and consistency

Once you've bagged your readers you want to keep them! The best way to do this is keep your postings regular and make sure you reply to any comments left. An inactive blog is a lonely blog. Try embedding photos



and videos in your work; provide links to news stories and other interesting and relevant things you find on the web.

Join the community

Bloggers are a community. Get to know your allies and adversaries. Whether you're praising and promoting their posts, or challenging and contesting them; by making friends or creating controversy you'll keep your blogging interesting and probably pick up some readers too!

Getting started

You can download free software to set up your own blog at – wordpress.com, blogger.com, and typepad.com. You can also try Oxfam's campaigns and news blogs for ideas:
www.oxfam.org.uk/applications/blogs/campaigners
www.oxfam.org.uk/news

A particularly popular blog is by Duncan Green, Head of Research: We've included a taster below and might even make it a regular feature – if it's popular? Email in and tell us what you think.

How much is \$700bn?

"The arguments for a bail out [for banks] to avoid systemic collapse, are of course genuine and persuasive, but so are the arguments for aid, and against standing by and allowing a child to die every 3 seconds, or a woman to die in childbirth every minute. To put the proposed Wall Street bailout into perspective, \$700bn: would clear the accumulated debt of the 49 poorest countries in the world (\$375bn) twice over. Read more of Duncan's blog here:
www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/