

Nurse Author & Editor

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Blogging

Roger Watson

What's a Blog?

A blog is whatever you want it to be. "Blog" is short for "weblog," literally a log of events, opinions, activities or anything that can be written about periodically and put on the World Wide Web. A blog is, therefore, a webpage where it is easy to write, post links and pictures and—unless you want to pay for one—it's free. The best thing about blogging is that it's fun. Naturally, you blog on the assumption that someone wants to read what you write but—for those reluctant bloggers—nobody will read your blog if you don't write one. Clearly, you don't want to say anything untoward, embarrassing or libellous in a blog, but any mistakes you make, or if you decide you want to edit your blog it is very easy; you are in complete control. The best way to explain what blogging is about is to show you some examples and tell you about my experiences.

Blogging for Editors

Many publications have blogs and these take different forms. For example, some newspapers allow comments to be made on articles on their website by readers; mostly these are moderated but in some cases they go up directly and unexpurgated. However, blogs are also used by editors to draw attention to features of their journal such as published papers of particular interest, personnel changes, and to contribute to debates in the publishing industry. All blogs have the capacity for readers to post comments and, while always welcome, this is usually a minor consideration compared with the entries themselves and their capacity to advertise the contents of the journal.

At the ***Journal of Advanced Nursing*** (JAN) we have had a blog since April 2013 and at the time of writing we have put up 19 posts and had over 6000 views. We have mainly blogged about **specific papers** that have attracted our attention and we also introduced the team of editors using a '**Ten things about...**' series. Of course, a blog is no use if nobody knows about it and we ensure that there is a prominent link to the blog on our webpage and that all entries are "tweeted" out, including the weblinks, by means of our **Twitter** site, also prominently displayed on our website. The Twitter site and the website (and our **LinkedIn** site) are also linked to the blog to make sure that, by whatever route people find us, they are able easily to link to the other sites and follow us. It is hard to gauge the effectiveness of having a blog and other social media but I consider that, of the 6000 views in around a year, at least some of those who viewed the blog may never have heard of JAN before and may not otherwise have read about the specific items we post. The effort is minimal but the potential rewards are high. In fact, so convinced are we about the value of blogging that our blog for the new Wiley ***Nursing Open*** journal was live before the **new webpage**.

Blogging for Authors

There is a body of opinion, with which I agree, that considers blogging and other forms of social networking used for academic purposes to be a legitimate form of scholarship. A blog can also be used effectively to advertise the scholarship and achievements of a group of people such as my

Faculty at the University of Hull.

A blog is an excellent way to keep up the momentum of writing. There is something about writing and making it public, even temporarily, that helps you to focus and sharpen your ideas. Blogging can also be used to publicise your **research interests**, your **publications** and generally raise your profile as an author. The versatility of a blog means that you can **sound off** about something that has taken your interest, **share syntax for statistical software** or teach your students (and any other students worldwide who find your blog), and in each case you have the opportunity to provide links to your own publications and then 'tweet' out the links to your blog. It is hard to predict how frequently a blog will be viewed but in little over three years my blog entitled "**Four things about...a simple approach to anatomy and physiology**" has had over 90,000 views.

Future Developments

Journal publishing will continue to move online and I predict that some journals currently online/hardcopy hybrids will soon be exclusively available online. The pressure towards open access is providing momentum for this online movement and I also predict that it will soon be normal for all published papers to have a blogging/comment facility linked to them online. A final prediction is that this online activity will eventually be considered as a metric to measure the readership and influence of published work. If you don't agree with my predictions then you need to take a careful look at what is happening in the academic publishing industry; if you agree with my predictions then can you afford not to join the blogging, tweeting and LinkedIn community? If you are not already engaged, then this is your invitation.

About the Author

Roger Watson, PhD, FRCN, FAAN is the Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Advanced Nursing and Editor, Nursing Open. He is a member of the Faculty of Health & Social Care, University of Hull, Hull, UK.

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