

Why do I blog?



Published January 11, 2007

Citation

Willighagen, E. (2007, January 11). Why do I blog?. *Chem-bla-ics*. <https://doi.org/10.59350/ke8wz-vks94>

Keywords

Blog, Chemistry

Abstract

Mitch blogged about a comment Bethany Halford, Associate Editor of C&EN, left in The Chem Blog. She is writing an opinion piece on chemistry blogs, and is wondering why I blog, whether I use a nickname, and if my employer knows I blog. So, here goes.

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[Mitch blogged](#) about a comment Bethany Halford, Associate Editor of [C&EN](#), [left in The Chem Blog](#). She is writing an opinion piece on chemistry blogs, and is wondering why I blog, whether I use a nickname, and if my employer knows I blog. So, here goes.

Why do I blog?

I started blogging [in October 2005](#) to reduce my workload: involved in open source chemoinformatics projects, I quite often emailed to mailing lists about interesting websites/projects/events etc. Not uncommonly to multiple lists, which required me to tune the email to the list. I realized that blogging about it, would make it possible to no longer post it to mailing lists, and, therefore, reduce my workload. A second reason is that I post tricks there, so that I have them available in a central place, and to post questions that, hopefully, others can answer. As such, it is a way of communicating with fellow scientists, without the need to specifically address them. Open, free and fast.

Deliberately, I did not start a personally diary blog, but a blog about my work as chemoinformatician. Nevertheless, the nature of blogging allows to give what you write a personal twist. To stress scientific nature of my blog, and many others, is that blogging scientists often cite and discuss literature, which nicely leads to scientific blog aggregators like [Postgenomic.com](#) and [Chemical blogspace](#), which summarize the scientific literature being discussed in the blogosphere. The latter even [recently started to blog about molecules being discussed](#). There are even blogs which specialize on discussing literature, such as [the blog by Rajarshi, Gary and David](#).

Why do I not use a nickname?

In my blogging I am clear in who I am, even where I work; I blog about my scientific work, and, as reader, putting one and one together would lead to my real name soon enough anyway. I did not discuss the blogging with the employer I had in 2005, but the blogging is mostly done outside office hours anyway, certainly in that period. My current employer is a [scientific blogger himself](#). Even my nickname, or pseudonym, is not that obfuscated.

Moreover, I do make a statement in my blog (which sort of summarizes to: “you cannot do science if you cannot reproduce experimental results”), and I think it is not more than fair to identify myself. I’m not like Ender’s brother [Peter](#).

Why do I answer Bethany’s questions?

I try to convince myself that I do not answer these questions out of [procrastination](#), something Bethany is wondering. Instead, I like blogging as new way to communicate with fellow scientists on a scientific level (Bethany, please *do* explore [the full chemical blogspace](#), and be amazed of the high scientific content gems around!), though this might qualify as catching up with current

chem-bla-ics

literature. Moreover, answering this questions allows me to advertize my blog, and some websites I like. I feel that blogging might fill a niche in scientific communication.

Bethany, please feel free to leave additional questions as comment.