

## BLOGGING ETIQUETTE AND MEANINGFUL CONTENT

### Explanation:

**Write for a Global Audience.** The first thing to consider always is that you are blogging for a global audience. Even though your blog may be for your university studies, it is public and accessible to anyone. They haven't necessarily attended the lecture. They may not know where Wollongong is or the name of the Australian Prime Minister. Further, it's good practice to avoid using foul language or colloquialisms that will turn readers off or worse, offend them. Don't assume that your readers have the same religious or cultural beliefs and attitudes. Write with sensitivities in mind. Be courteous and be kind. Have fun connecting with others.

**Be Original.** Being steadfast in your commitment to creating original content is critical to your online reputation. Do not plagiarize, steal or copy someone else's ideas or content. This is unethical and often illegal. And, let's face it, what are you doing wasting your time publishing the same material that's out there? Sometimes you will find that there is a plethora of work on a topic you are required to write about. Your unique contribution to the subject is what is most likely to draw attention to your blog. Make sure you publish what YOU have to share on the topic.

**Acknowledge.** Those who shape your thinking or inspire your blog post deserve a mention. Mention their post and/or include hyperlinks to your sources where appropriate.

**Stay on topic.** Make sure your post is on topic. Does the title match the subject matter of the post? Make sure everything you include relates to the subject of that post. Constantly ask yourself, 'Do my readers need to know that?'

**Be Consistent.** It is important to think about the tone of your communication and the online identity you are forging. How do you wish to be perceived and understood? Think about your readers and who you hope to attract to your blog. Determine your style and stick with it.

**Check Yourself.** Typos and spelling errors seem easier to make than ever. The blogosphere is flooded with them. Try your hardest not to contribute to the problem. A real motivator is that you will look much more credible if your posts are error free. It's highly recommended that you type your blog post offline first and save it. Once you are happy with your draft, add it to your blog drafts and invite someone to proofread it before publishing if need be.

**Research.** An informed blog will get more traction than hearsay. Support your ideas with research. In order to develop credibility avoid soapboxing. Use information to help tell your story. Be careful not to simply rely on the content of other blogs.

**Look Good.** Infographics are extremely helpful for displaying your findings at a glance. Photographs, clips, clear fonts and a stylish layout enhance the appearance of your blog and make them enjoyable to navigate.

**Make Links.** Links are often entirely appropriate and incredibly useful however, a sure way to frustrate readers is to provide dead or 404 links. If your links don't work you will lose credibility too. Check that they work before you publish. It's essential that you ensure that your links are also relevant. You don't want readers to start wondering if you were on something when you crafted the post.

**Comment.** Saying 'great post' is affable but not particularly valuable. It creates clutter. Think of something valuable to say that relates to the topic or compliment the research/work that has gone into informing you on a topic. Can you add anything to the topic? Comment sections can become content rich, fuel discussion and add a lot of value. Avoid going off topic, or including irrelevant links. Two and three word comments are sometimes considered as spam by professional bloggers and consequently get deleted. It can be immensely beneficial to challenge an idea but negative and personal comments are never helpful. Take care not to alienate the author with derogatory comments.

**Respond.** You want to be perceived as being on top of your game. If a comment to on your blog sits under a wood pile awaiting approval or reply you create the impression of a novice and that's one potential reader you're likely to lose. Someone's comment to your post may offer you a whole new insight and develop your thinking. Even a simple thank you in acknowledgement of your commenter is better than silence. You can take this one step further by making time to visit their blog, dig through some of their posts and find one you can leave a short comment on.

**Enable easy navigation.** Would you ask someone to look at something for you but fail to give them directions? Similarly, you want readers to be able to navigate your blog easily. Tags and categories are handy signposts for your readers and for you to find your way around.

**Dealing with Negativity.** If someone leaves a negative comment on your blog or spams you, do not feel obligated to leave it in your comment section. Dispense of it quickly. It may affect subsequent comments and alter the dynamic of your blog.