



Créateurs d'avenirs



Albrecht Sonntag
UACES Doctoral Training Academy

Blogging.
Why? And how?



WWW.ESSCA.FR



Why blogging?

- ★ What are the advantages of blogging?
- ★ What form may a blogpost take?

How to go about it?

- ★ What topics are suitable?
- ★ In what style and tone?
- ★ In how many words?
- ★ How long does it take?
- ★ How do I finalise my post?
- ★ Where can it be published?
- ★ How can I promote my post?

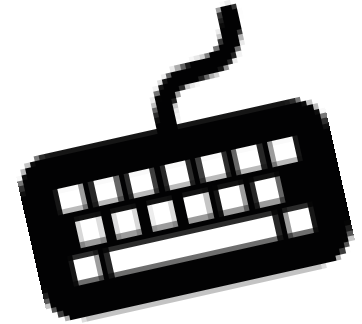
Albrecht Sonntag

- * professor of European Studies
- * ESSCA School of Management
- * based in Angers, France
- * regular contributor to regional and national (French) media
- * serial blogger on several platforms in English and French since 2014
- * weekly column on www.euradio.fr
- * Twitter: [@albrechtsonntag](https://twitter.com/albrechtsonntag)



Writing about a complex topic in limited space:

- * a stimulating exercise and an essential skill:
 - focusing on an idea and structuring one's thoughts,
 - being clear, down to the point and precise,
- * which is open to everybody



All it takes is

- * serious research on the topic fed by a variety of good sources
- * which leads to a well-argued personal reflection

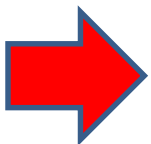
The ideal blogpost provides “informed analysis”:

- * not just an opinion, but an argument based on knowledge acquired through previous interest and research

Simon Usherwood



- * University of Surrey
- * long-standing UACES member
- * regular contributor to the *ideasoneuropa* multiblog
- * some recent posts:
 - [Three messages from the withdrawal agreement](#)
 - [The pros and cons of a longer transition](#)
 - [Cui malum?](#)



<https://youtu.be/yoT1uNCI-TQ>

Freedom of expression:

- * it's not an academic piece of writing!
- * there is place for stylistic freedom, and even some humour!

The digital nature of a blog:

- * allows for reactivity in engaging with current news and facts
- * enables combining different media (→ hyperlinks)
- * leaves an archived trace (“URL”)
- * enhances an online profile



So little constraints, so many options!

- * an analysis of a problem that requires a minimum of expertise
- * a personal position on a current issue
- * an interview with an individual actor or expert
- * a comment or argued response to other media articles
- * a polemical (yet controlled) “WTF” outburst
- * a provocative satire on a regrettable state of affairs
- * a critical review of recently read book (or a TV series, or a film etc.)
- * a new interpretation of a historical date, event, anniversary
- * an obituary or tribute to a personality
- * a critical summary of a recently attended event
- * and more!

A really good post is a post that...

- * brings an added value to what you can find in mainstream media » (→ **originality**)
- * knows what it's talking about: it is fed and underpinned by research on the topic addressed (→ **expertise**)
- * provides a piece of new knowledge to the reader, in an entertaining, not lecturing manner (→ **tone and style**)
- * makes good use, beyond its message, of the possibilities offered by the online support (→ **illustrations, hyperlinks, dissemination**)
- * focuses on one issue at a time and does not stray in many different directions (→ **readability, reader's attention**)
- * may be part of a series, with a follow-up (→ **serialisation**)
- * makes the reader want to react (→ **debate, reactivity**)



What topics are suitable?



Rule No. 1 : never write a post without personal interest for the topic!

- * what am I passionate about? (→ *sharing*)
- * what puzzles me? (→ *questioning*)
- * what makes my voice different? (→ *added value*)

Rule No. 2 : be patient – blogging is “learning by doing”!

- * no one is a super-blogger at their first attempt

Rule No. 3 : « *If it's not fun, don't do it !* »

- * if the author of a post has no pleasure in writing it, why would a reader like to read it?

What style is appropriate?

Three major questions to ask yourself:

- * how do I want to express myself?
- * what is the context in which I publish my post?
- * what is my target audience?

Style is a very personal component of a post

- * be honest, be yourself, be spontaneous
- * get inspired by your research on the topic
- * be patient: a real, personal style emerges in the long run



For our blog like <https://ideason europe.eu/>:

- * target an audience of interested citizens (→ civil society, media)
- * but respect the context of publication (→ academic)

It's important to adapt the text to the medium



- * take into consideration the expectations linked to reading on screens (laptop, mobile):
 - the ideal volume of a post is between 600 and 1,000 words
- * stick to one central idea you want to bring across
- * condense your text to the essential:
 - even your final text can be shortened
 - go over it several times
 - cut out the superfluous, the repetitive, the redundant

For our post to be published on <https://ideasononeurope.eu/>:

- * constrain yourself to remain within the 600-1,000 words bracket
- * force yourself to go over your final text two or three times



How much time does it take?

Blogs are easy reading, but a demanding writing exercise

- * **Research and reflection:** investment in research prior to writing depends on previously existing expertise, but should by no means underestimated.
- * **Drafting:** it is impossible to rush the writing process. You will need to count three hours for 1,000 words, maybe a bit less once you have the habit.
- * **Proofreading** : once finalised, leave it alone, go over it again later
- * **Form:** it's not because it's just a blogpost that spelling and grammar may be neglected!



Recommendations in case you have a deadline:

- * schedule your work, let your ideas and your formulations mature
- * avoid at all costs to rush the drafting in the last-minute – it shows!

A blogpost is a multi-media document

- * first of all a well-carved text,
with a title that provides incentive to click on it
- * secondly, it is enriched by **images** or **graphs**, which
may provide visual stimulation or a touch of humour
- * finally, it is completed and enhanced by **hyperlinks**
in order to refer to sources or recommend further reading



Expectation for any post on any blog:

- * exploit the possibilities of the medium
- * enhance your post intelligently (→ added value)
- * give evidence of your research and knowledge through links



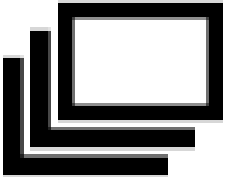
For the text:

- * read it out loud – it will improve your final editing
- * avoid long sentences and endless paragraphs
- * make sure the author (you!) is well identified



For the illustrations:

- * careful with copyrights!
- * use free pictures like you can find on [wikimedia](#), [unsplash](#), [pexels](#), [pixabay](#), [gettyimages](#) or other [image banks](#) (this PPT thanks [flaticon](#) for its icons!)



For the hyperlinks:

- * make sure they open in another window

Option 1:

- * create your own blog
 - not very complicated (esp. with templates like *WordPress*)
 - useful if you want to cover your own little niche
 - but only worth while if you blog regularly

Option 2:

- * contribute to an existing collective blog like <https://ideason europe.eu/>
 - recommended to beginners
 - ideal for positioning oneself in a given field and audience
 - makes life easy in technical terms

A blog is a “*social media*”

- * it has a [URL](#) that is easy to disseminate and communicate
- * it is archived online
- * it can easily be promoted through other social media channels



Obvious suggestion for your own posts:

- * send them round in your own networks!

For all further questions

- * Use and follow our hashtags
#UACESdta and **#AcademicBlogging**



Follow-up of the workshop:

- * inspired and decided to go for it? → *Great!*
- * unsure how to go about it? → *Normal.*
- * wrote a first draft but have doubts about quality? → *Send it!*
- * To: albrecht.sonntag@essca.fr
- * Members of the UACES Doctoral Training Academy benefit from a 100% discount on some editing suggestions for their first post!



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