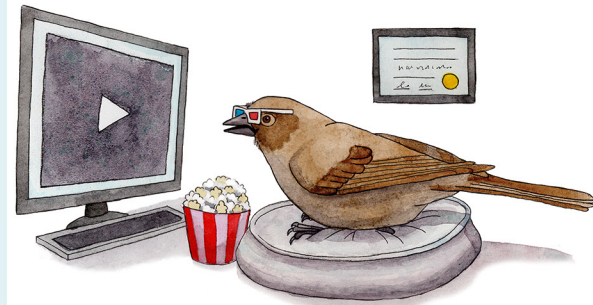


# WHO'S READING SCIENCE BLOGS?

**Science** blogs have exploded as mainstream media have cut science coverage. They are a key way for readers to access information they cannot find elsewhere. But who are these readers? In 2015, we conducted an online survey of the readers of 40 randomly selected science blogs. We gathered 2,955 survey responses (average response rate = 12%), and used an automatic clustering algorithm to group readers according to how

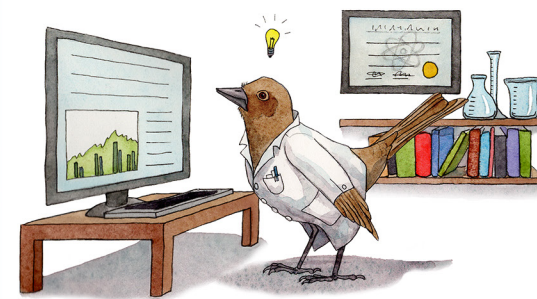
strongly they rated four motivation factors (entertainment, ambiance, information, and community) for using a given science blog\* on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 = strongly agree). Three distinct groups of readers emerged from our data, each with distinguishable blog use patterns and demographic characteristics, and with this information we were able to create profiles of science blog users:

## One-way Entertainment Users (N=1064)



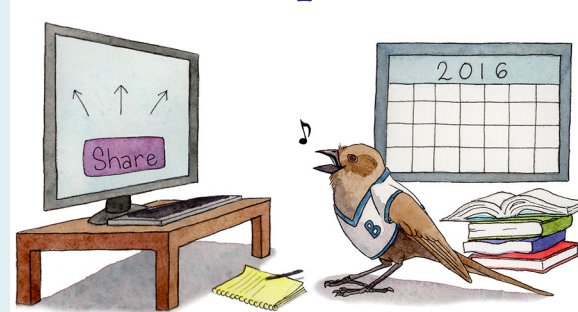
- Highest % of users who have non-science degrees (23%) and are not interested in a career in science.
- Less likely to describe blogs they read as overly technical.
- Score highest on a general science knowledge quiz.
- Least likely to create own science-related social media content or share content they read, and so might fly under bloggers' radar.

## Info-seeking Users (N = 650)



- Oldest group of readers.
- Highest % of users who've already pursued a career in science (e.g. scientists).
- Use blogs particularly to find unique info not found in traditional media.
- Bloggers may cater to these readers by highlighting uniqueness of info they offer and linking to more info.

## Super Users (N = 557)



- Youngest & most active group of readers with highest % of students.
- Read significantly more blogs.
- Significantly more likely to create sci-related social media content and share what they read.
- Rate scientists as significantly more trustworthy.
- Bloggers may appeal to these readers' community-seeking motivations to help spread content.

## Motivational Factors



**Entertainment** and curiosity



**Ambiance:** author's perspective and writing skills



**Information:** to learn, keep up with current events, and find unique information



**Community:** to feel involved, for advice, and to find content for own blogs

N = Number/ sample size.  
M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation.

Science blog readers are highly scientifically literate, answering an average of 6.11 out of 7 (SD = 1.16) general science knowledge quiz questions (from Pew, 2015) correctly. The greater number of blogs readers follow, the more knowledgeable about science they are, even when controlling for education, age, gender and media use.

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