



Welcome to 'Blogs for Marketing', one of the training modules from Community Literacy of Ontario's Social Media Marketing project. This project is designed to develop resources to help Ontario's literacy agencies, and others, use social media for marketing.

Click here to access our resources.

## **Using Blogs for Marketing**

Once you have set up your blog (and we show you how to do this in our <u>Blogging 101</u> module), you need to let people know where to find it so that they will start following it! Be sure to include a link to your blog in your email signature, on your website, on your Twitter feed and on your Facebook page – in short, anywhere you have a web presence, let people know about your blog.

You can also choose to integrate your blog right into your website, which means that people won't have to go somewhere else to find it. Promote new blog posts on your Facebook page and Twitter feed. If you are tech savvy, you can set this up so it happens automatically. This blog entry from Kate McMillan's Outbox Online Design Studio can help you do that. If you send out a newsletter, mention it there as well. Promote your blog at every opportunity!

It will take some time to build a following, so don't despair if you don't get a lot of feedback in the first couple of months. If you still only have a few followers after six months or so, you may need to rethink your blog. Are you posting regularly to keep readers interested? Are you responding to comments to keep readers engaged? Have you let people know where to find your blog? Are you following and commenting on other blogs so that those bloggers will follow you? Do a blog entry to ask your followers what topics have been the most interesting and what type of content they might like to see in future blog posts.







Like so many social media marketing tools, blogs are not generally used for a "hard sell". Social media is often used to gather a following, to give your agency a voice, and to engage in conversation with your stakeholders and target audience. Blogs are no exception. Use your blog to discuss literacy issues, to share resources and learner testimonials (with permission, of course), to thank donors and to encourage donations, and to post pictures of celebrations or fundraising events.

Because blogs aren't generally used specifically for marketing, it can be difficult to find examples of how they are used for marketing. There are many excellent literacy blogs that share success stories and, in general, act as a vehicle to promote and advocate for adult literacy. These are perfect examples of how social media marketing is used to start a conversation and to engage readers. When you are starting a new series of classes or workshops, or if you have a resource to sell, you can promote them on your blog, but it won't seem like a marketing ploy to your followers because you have already established a relationship and a discussion with them.

Whatever you are marketing on your blog — literacy in general or activities specific to your agency — it is important to keep your blog up-to-date. This doesn't mean that you have to post every day or even every week (blogs are generally less immediate and time-sensitive than other social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook), but you should try to post regularly. Many non-profit blogs are updated bi-weekly or monthly. Remember that writing the blog doesn't have to be done by one person. However, one person should have the responsibility for ensuring that all blog posts fit with the agency's overall communication practices and standards. Staff can take turns, volunteers can write entries, and learners can contribute their stories as well. Remember to keep blog posts interesting and friendly — they can be more personal than a press release, for example.

Blog posts don't have to be long – 500 words or so is plenty. Most people won't read much more than that anyway. Make sure that someone edits blog posts for both grammar and content, and to ensure that the content meets social media guidelines (adherence to privacy guidelines, to Human Rights codes, etc.).







## **Target Audience**

Blogs do require a certain level of literacy to both write and to read. Using clear language and non-written information through photos, videos and audio podcasts can help your blog be more accessible to more people, including literacy students and potential students. For example, you can embed a YouTube or other video file directly into your blog.

There are two ways to approach creating a blog – choose the audience first or choose the topic first. If you are focusing on general literacy advocacy, you will want to promote and target your blog to the public at large, to potential partners and donor, and perhaps to employers. If you are focusing on what your literacy agency offers, you will more likely want to target referral agencies as well as current, former and potential volunteers and students.

Use the tools from your blogging platform to find out how many people are following your blog. Check your Facebook and Twitter profiles to see who shared or retweeted posts about your blog. If your blog is open to comments, respond to them and listen to commenters' constructive ideas and suggestions to help develop further posts.

Whatever your blog's focus and regardless of the audience you are targeting, remember to include links to your website and to your other social media profiles.



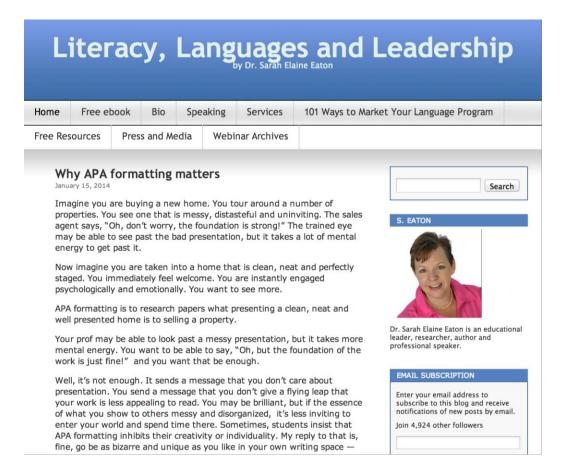




## Using Blogs to Market to Other Literacy Agencies

We often don't think of other literacy agencies as a target audience for our marketing efforts, but we should. Establishing working relationships – networking with our colleagues – is an important way to gain new information and knowledge, to develop partnerships, to gain referrals and to promote any resources we might want to share or even sell.

Dr. Sarah Eaton, a respected educator and social media advocate, writes a blog (using WordPress) that is a good example of marketing to colleagues. She uses her blog (and other social media tools) to network and begin conversations with literacy practitioners. Because she establishes relationships, she can then also use her blog to promote her books, workshops and webinars.







## Using Blogs to Market Your Resources

Similarly, <u>GCFLearnFree</u> uses their blog to share information and learning tips and tools, but they also promote their other numerous resources. GCFLearnFree provides free resources, but even though they are free, they still need to be marketed so that potential users know they exist. Marketing isn't just about selling things for money!







## Using Blogs for Marketing to Adult Students

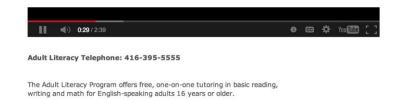
Blog posts can be a great way to let potential students see some of the skills they can gain by joining your program. For example, blogs can highlight not only written communication skills but also digital communication skills, such as social media, multimedia storytelling, videos and more. Encouraging your learners to write guest blog entries is a terrific way to market your agency. Just as in-person testimonials can be a powerful way to market literacy programs, so too can personal blog entries about an individual's literacy journey.

Your blog is also an excellent tool for sharing any promotional videos you have, providing updates about registration information, dates and times the centre is open, and any other information that potential students would find interesting and useful.

The <u>Toronto Public Library</u> uses a blog entry to let potential students know about their program – as you can see, they use very little text, opting instead to use a video encouraging adults to sign up for their programs.









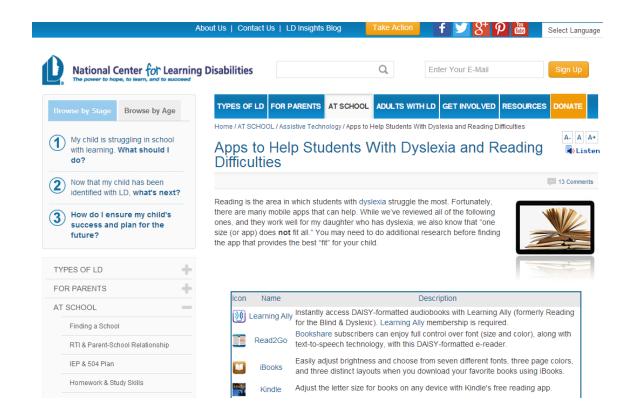


## Using Blogs to Market to Community Stakeholders

Blogs can also be good tools for sharing information about your agency and its programs and achievements with community stakeholders such as service providers, funders, volunteers, donors and the media. You can use your blog to share inspirational videos about literacy in general or videos created for or about your own agency.

Your blog can also be a good place to share any partnership success stories. Again, this is a great opportunity to bring in a guest blogger, perhaps from an agency you partnered with or a volunteer who has contributed to your program. You could run a series of guest blogs from a variety of stakeholders, each highlighting why your agency is important and why the guest blogger is proud to be associated with you.

The <u>National Center for Learning Disabilities</u> in the United States makes good use of their blog to promote the work they do, to share resources, and to promote awareness about issues relating to learning disabilities for children, families and adults.







## Using Blogs to Market to the General Public

Your blog can be a useful tool for sharing information about upcoming events, fundraising activities and literacy in general. Again, videos are a terrific way to showcase achievements, whether it's an award that your agency won or a graduation ceremony.

<u>Parkdale Project Read</u> in Toronto uses their blog to share information about their programs, to encourage new learners to sign up, to link up with their volunteers, and to let people know about their resources. They are an active and busy agency, and their blog entries are a great way to share all of the good work they are involved in.

## **Welcome to Parkdale Project Read**

We are excited to tell you about our program, literacy in Parkdale, and how you can get involved.

We have organized our site so that you can browse by topic, for example, What's New or Groups & Projects, or you can visit the audience page that best describes you – Learner, Volunteer or Supporter. If you are a frequent visitor, check out the What's New section for updates on our events and groups.

- Thank you to everyone who attended our Annual General Meeting. We appreciate your support and contributions to our community. Thanks to Erin Hatfield of InsideToronto.com for covering the event; read the story here Rita Cox tells the story of Parkdale Project Read
- If you are a current Volunteer Tutor with us, please take a few minutes to complete the following survey Volunteer Feedback Survey
- Thanks to our community corporate partner, Softchoice Corporation, we are pleased to share our latest marketing and outreach video: Parkdale Project Read
- · Take a look at our PSA (Public Service Announcement) on YouTube: Parkdale Project Read PSA
- Parkdale Project Read is always looking for volunteer literacy tutors. If you are interested
  in becoming a volunteer and would like more information, please visit our Volunteer page. Complete
  the tutor application form (click on the Volunteer link at the top of the page to download a copy) and
  give us a call at 416 531 6308 to arrange an interview.
- Parkdale Project Read is excited to announce the launch of NEW online tools for
  community literacy workers and students; A Reflection Guide on Community Based
  Literacy and a kit for students, Helping Myself Learn located at
  www.learningandviolence.net . Just click on the Changing Education box on the top right
  corner or on the words above. This research was made possible through a partnership with
  George Brown College and generous funding from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills Canada
  (OLES).
- Academic Upgrading Program with George Brown College: In partnership with George Brown
  College, we offer an Academic Upgrading Program that provides students with an opportunity to
  upgrade their Communications and Computer skills in a community setting. This program is geared to
  youth and younger adults and accepts students on a continual basis. Program hours are Tuesday,
  Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Call 416 531 6308 or 416.415.5000 ext. 2438
  for more information or to register for an information session.

## Recent Posts

Summer Project
Reflection on Project
Read
Party Time
Tutor Training
My Favorite Body Part
Carrot and Raisin
Salad
Feel Like a Woman
Living on My Own
Spring Time Again
Community Garden
Orientation

## **Blogroll**

Documentation
Plugins
Suggest Ideas
Support Forum
Themes
WordPress Planet

**Development Blog** 

### Meta

Log in
WordPress





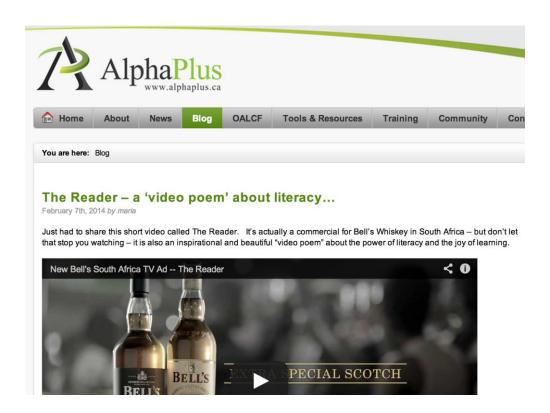
## More Examples of Marketing Using Blogs

## **Literacy Examples**

<u>The Literacy Shed</u> is a collection of school blogs. It is an excellent example of how to use blogging, both as a learning and a promotional tool.

This approach could be adapted for use with adult literacy learners. For example, a recent entry included the promotion of an upcoming training session.

<u>AlphaPlus</u> has been blogging for many years. Their blog entries are informative and educational and provide links to useful resources as well as information about literacy, technology and more.







The <u>ReadWriteServe Tutor Blog</u> is a good example of how a literacy program can use a blog to share success stories and promote the good work it does. This blog is targeted at literacy tutors, and is an excellent way for this agency to build relationships and network.

## ReadWriteServe Tutor Blog

A resource for literacy tutors



← A Flexible Framework for Tutoring

UNC Charlotte calls faculty & staff to volunteer for Project 1 000 →

### Success Stories: Progress at Druid Hills Elementary

Posted on January 22, 2014

Tutors from St. Peter Catholic Church in Charlotte have been working with students at Druid Hills Academy, a Pre-K through grade 8 school in CMS, since September, 2013. The program is seeing success!

Phoebe Levine, a volunteer with St. Peter, said that 18 tutors meeting twice a week with 9 second grade students since the last week in September.



Tutor Broderick Sings works with a student from Druid Hills.



Brenda Eckmair tutors a student.



Angeline Ransom is one of the tutors from St. Peter Catholic Church.

- UNC Charlotte calls faculty & staff to volunteer for Project 1,000
- Success Stories: Progress at Druid Hills Elementary
- A Flexible Framework for Tutoring

**Recent Posts** 

- Sept. 30 Tutoring Training at Davidson College
- ReadWriteServe support for Project 1,000

### Recent Comments

jo F d d F

johnshivamber on A Flexible Framework for ..

dialogicblog on A Flexible Framework for ...



Mattijs on A Flexible Framework for ...

### Archives

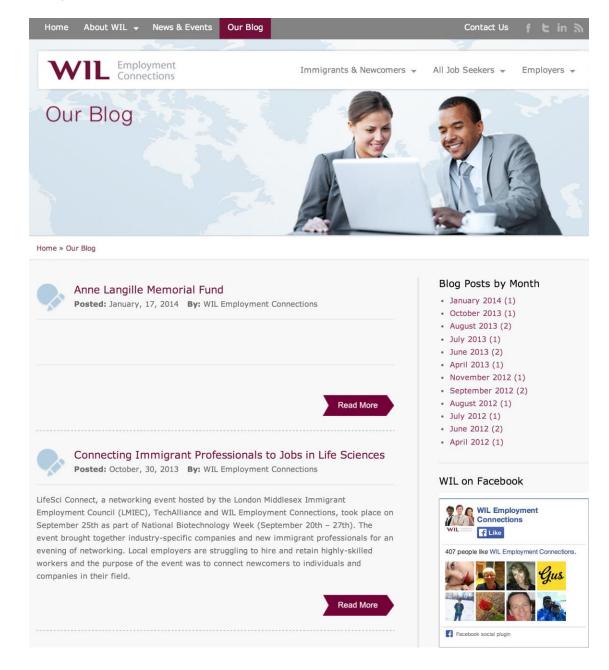
- February 2014
- January 2014





## **Employment Services Examples**

Employment Services agencies use blogs to promote their services and to engage with their partners and community stakeholders. A good example of this is <u>WIL Employment Connections</u> in London, Ontario.







Lutherwood, a multi-service agency in Wellington County, Ontario, provides blog entries on a number of topics, including jobs. Through their blog entries, they offer valuable resources to their clients and the community while promoting their services, and hopefully attracting new clients and partners.



REGISTER FOR HELP



Finding opportunities to meet employers face-to-face or get introduced to other professionals in your field can feel like a daunting task for any job seeker. Fortunately, Chamber of Commerce events, job fairs and industry-specific networking events are great opportunities to connect with employers, meet others with similar interests and increase your contact list. Attending these events can make a huge difference in your job search if you show up ready to network!

Read more

### **Employment**

- Employment Programs
- Employment Training
- Start A Business / Self-Employment
- Employer Support
- Lutherwood Job Board
- Job Search Information
- Service Locations
- Service Charter

### Hit Your Career Sweet Spot with Mentorship!

Fri, 01/31/2014 - 10:10



The work world has changed considerably over the past two decades. Employees must do more with fewer resources. Having a mentor who can guide you and advise you will make your career journey smoother, more enjoyable and more successful.

Read more





## **Nonprofit Examples**

Beth Kanter has been active on social media, including blogs, for many years. She is a well-known expert in the nonprofit field and uses <a href="Beth's Blog">Beth's Blog</a> to provide tips, information and resources, as well as to market her workshops, books and other materials.







## **Business Examples**

Many for-profit businesses use blogs to connect with their customers and to build a relationship. Businesses can provide tips and tools, ideas on how to use their products, links to useful information and so much more. They can solicit input and feedback from their customers and respond to them. The customer feels that they are being taken care of and that they are getting good value for their money. The business has an excellent way to interact with their customers and to promote their products. Once again, it's about the "soft sell".

<u>Whole Foods</u> is an excellent example of how a company uses a blog (and other tools) to engage and keep their customers while also promoting their goods and services.







Ikea is another company that uses a blog to interact with its customers. In this example, they promote some of the good work they have done in one blog entry, and provide design ideas to their customers in another. Of course, their design ideas use their products! (Update: this blog is no longer available).



## **Design By IKEA**



### IKEA Lights Up UNHCR Refugee Camps With Sustainable Lighting

Posted by Christine Soner on February 12, 2014

Choosing to make a difference in the lives of millions of refugees is what has motivated the IKEA Foundation to partner with UNHCR to create a 'Brighter Lives for R... Read More...

Tags: brighter lives, donation, ikea foundation, led, lighting, one night without lights, refugees, twitter party, unhor Categories: Done in a Day, Sustainability, Tios & Ideas

### About the Bloggers



Janice Simonse

Philadelphia-based IKEA design spokesperson, Janice Simonsen is the main blogger for Design by IKEA Blog. Read More

### Categorie

Before & After Behind the Scenes Colors

Done in a Day
Organization

© Inter IKEA Systems B.V. 2011



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# Pick of the Week - Smart Studio Space

Posted by Janice Simonsen on February 11, 2014

Small spaces might seem like a challenge but with the right solutions in mind, you can turn a small space into a smart space like our Pick of the Week, Rosemary

FLike Pinit V

Comments (

Tags: bedroom, dining, expedit, fusion, living room, pick of the week, rosemary lopez, small space, smart solution, soderhamn, sofa, storage, studio

Categories: Organization, Tips & Ideas

### Recent Popular Posts

### Circular Motion -Polka Dots

(Image: Life Magazine, April 14 th 1952, via Pinterest) Polka dots have been trending the last year, not ... Read more...

### Street Cred

Just about 10 years ago, I suddenly developed a love for modern art, including street art. I was finding that ... Read more...

### Pick of the Week

This week's pick is a little girl's bedroom by MarthaB . I love this





## **Examples from the Social Media Greats**

National Geographic provides a variety of blogs on their website. You can read about intelligent travel, view entries from their experts, keep up with adventure news, or follow their "digital nomad". While this might not seem like marketing, it is an excellent example of the "soft sell" for the work that National Geographic does.

# National Geographic Blogs

Daily writings, photos, and videos from National Geographic's explorers, scientists, adventurers, and staff.

Travel & Adventure | Photography | National Geographic Channels | News & Information | Environment

## Travel & Adventure



Intelligent Travel

Cultural, authentic, and sustainable: This is your brain on



**Digital Nomad** 

Andrew Evans is National Geographic's digital nomad always traveling and always wired.



Field Notes

Get inspired to explore with stories, photos, and videos from our experts and travelers.



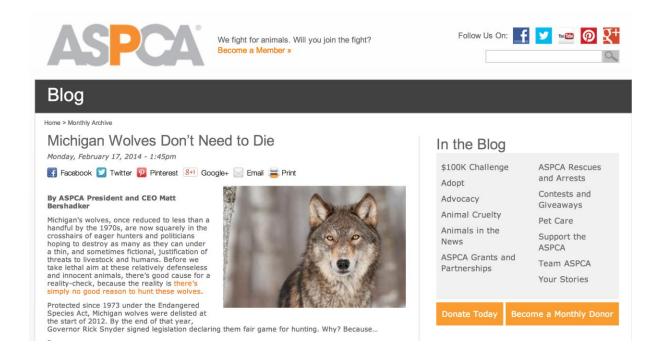
### Adventure Blog

Get the latest in adventure news -trip ideas, explorer and athlete updates, outdoor skills and advice, gear reviews, and more.





<u>American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals</u> uses their blog to write about issues related to the treatment of animals. They hope to engage their readers in the work that they do to stop animal abuse; they also hope that readers will support their efforts through donations and membership.







## Resources to Learn More About Blogs and Marketing

- <u>How to Use Blogging as a Marketing Tool</u> by Russell S. Powell, in <u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u> (September 2010)
- <u>6 Reasons Why Nonprofits Must Blog</u> by Jamie Smith, for jamiesnotebook.com (January 2020)
- <u>6 Essential Components of Top Notch Nonprofit Blogs</u> by Taylor Corrado, for <u>Inbound</u>
   <u>Marketing</u> (August 2013)







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