

How to become a fantastic blogger... in just 60 minutes

Presenter: Laura Durnford

laura.durnford@geant.org

Based on training devised by: Jan Michielsen, SURFnet

Presented at SIG-Marcomms, September 2016



AARC All Hands meeting, Geneva

1st December 2016

What are we going to do?

- Real life examples – practical exercises
- Preparation:
 - purpose, audience, medium
 - Storytelling techniques & considerations
 - Key message
 - Structure
 - Headline
 - Content
- Feedback & conclusions

→ → → actual blog publications... ?

Real life examples – practical exercises

- **Topic 1: Report on a specific development in your activity / task**
 - Not necessarily to do with talks in this meeting
- **Topic 2: Report on this All Hands meeting**
 - Summary of the wholeOR
 - Focus on your activity / task area
- **Approach 1: News**
- **Approach 2: Dramaturgic**

Assignment: choose your topic for the exercises to come / an actual blog

Preparation – purpose, audience, medium

- **Purpose**
 - News vs opinion
- **Audience**
 - Specialist vs more general
 - Within your community vs. external
 - What do I want them to know / do?
- **Medium**
 - Controlled vs not controlled by you
 - Website, magazine,
 - AARC project 'News' blog
- **Work with your Marcomms colleagues!**



Purpose - 2 main approaches to our storytelling...

- **Journalistic**

- Who, what, where, when...
- Informative & neutral
- Emphasises sharing and openness - not sales
- For example: news article, web content, blog



- **Dramaturgic**

- Change, challenge, conflict, values...
- Emotional, evocative, personal
- Dramatic, immersive tone
- For example: corporate story ("about" pages), blog



Assignment:

Choose your approach for your topic in the exercises to come

... Storytelling - features of a good story

- Simple
- Unexpected
- Concrete
- Credible
- Emotional
- Story-based

=> SUCCES(S)!



... Storytelling - what is it?

- Inspiring people with a message that involves people
- A moment of change / conflict
 - how is it handled?
 - what are the consequences?

Aristotle



... Storytelling - 7 basic plots

- Tragedy
- Comedy
- Overcoming the monster
- Voyage & return
- Rags to riches
- The quest
- Rebirth

... Storytelling - rhetorical devices make for more colourful writing!

CHIASMUS

ANTITHESIS

ANADIPLOSIS

PARADIGM

PARALIPSIS

PUN

PLAY ON WORDS

ALLITERATION

ASYNDETON

(EXTENDED) METAPHOR

Main message about your topic

What should the reader remember or do?

What do you want to tell in one or two sentences.

- We have set ourselves a nice but difficult goal. We ran into X and Y.
- One of the problems with 'Secure authentication' is X and my project ensures that Y.
- 'Secure authentication' is important. And my project contributes by X and Y.
- Our project approach is revolutionary. Our intent is X and the first results are Y. I'm satisfied.
- Many institutions invest in security technology A. I think that's not the right way to go, for reasons X and Y.

Assignment: Formulate the main message for your own blog topic.

- Bear in mind purpose & journalistic / dramaturgic approach

Choose a structure that will best allow you to convey your key message in a memorable way. E.g.:

- Advantages / disadvantages
- Problem → possible solutions → advice
- List (e.g. '5 music festivals to visit in the Netherlands')
- Questions and answers (FAQ / interview)
- News pyramid



We rely mostly on Journalistic...

- Your headline and intro are the most important parts of your texts

- Research shows that readers leave webtexts after:

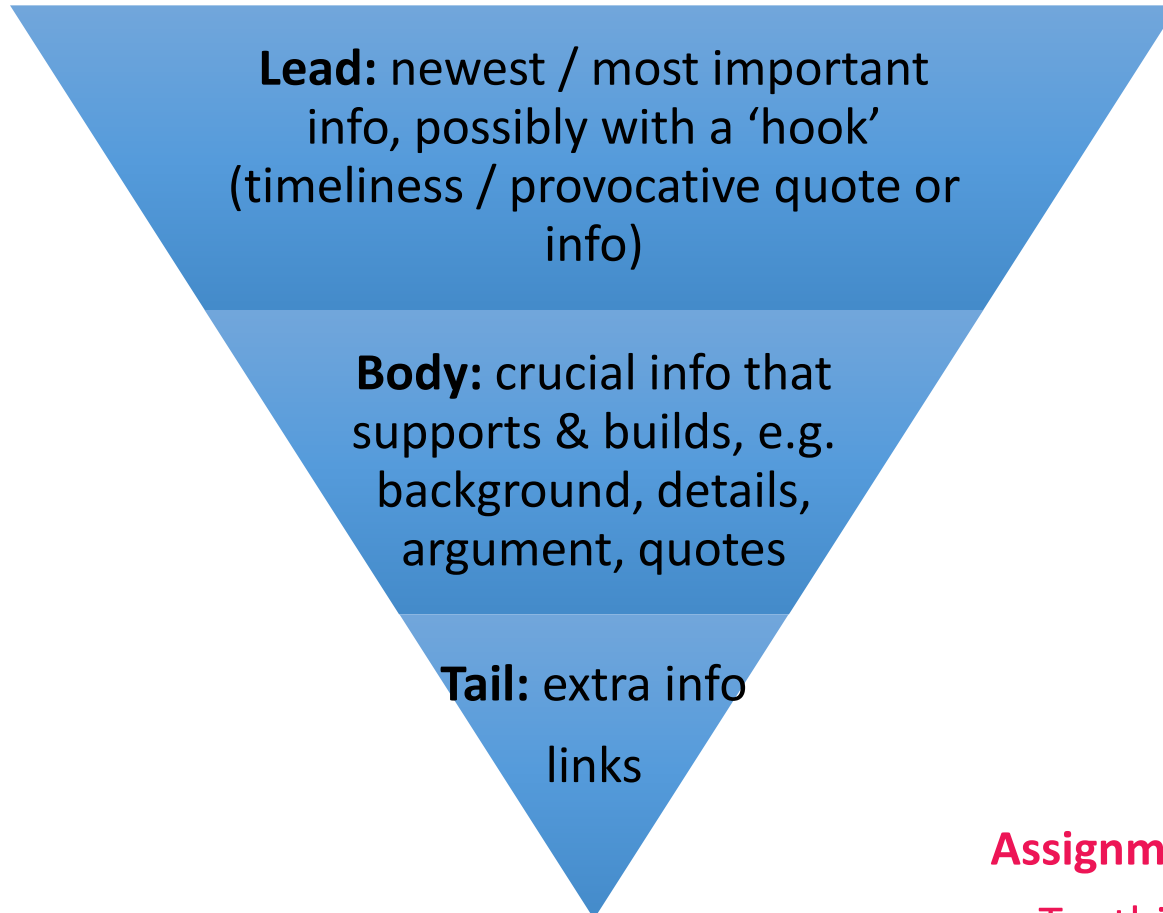
100 words 25%

300 words 40%

500 words 60%

1000 words 80%

- The main BENEFIT for the reader should be in the headline and the intro, even in the URL



Inverted pyramid is most common structure for news stories.

- Headline & 'slug' are most important parts.
- Information is in descending order of importance (in case end not read / edited out)
- Less important material builds on, supports & broadens the leading information.
- Turns traditional storytelling on its head
 - Climax right at the start!
- Can still use other storytelling techniques

Assignment: create your own blog structure plan - in five bullets

- Try this pyramid for news, but not for opinion / expertise sharing

Headline - purpose

- Raises curiosity / encourages further reading
- Encapsulates the key story
- Is short (but not too short)
- Is easily found (contains key words)
- Can be shared on Twitter, Facebook etc.
- Incorporates rhetorical / storytelling techniques



Example headlines: good, or can be better?

- Elliptic Curve Cryptography: the next big step for DNSSEC
- Can You Keep a Secret?
- Thoughts on Two Years of Working from Home
- Hot news from New York
- Writing a Custom IPAM Application
- Moving Computer: Don't forget to follow precious steps
- Every operator's worst nightmare: Single Points of Failures
- Would You Use This ATM?

8 Headline Strategies That Guarantee a Successful Blog Post

- **Surprise** – “This Is Not a Perfect Blog Post (But It Could’ve Been)”
- **Questions** – “Do You Know How to Create the Perfect Blog Post?”
- **Curiosity gap** – “10 Ingredients in a Perfect Blog Post. Number 9 Is Impossible!”
- **Negatives** – “Never Write a Boring Blog Post Again”
- **How to** – “How to Create a Perfect Blog Post”
- **Numbers** – “10 Tips to Creating a Perfect Blog Post”
- **Audience referencing** – “For People on the Verge of Writing the Perfect Blog Post”
- **Specificity** – “The 6-Part Process to Getting Twice the Traffic to Your Blog Post”

(source: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/perfect-blog-post-research-data>)

Assignment: think of a headline for your blog

- Write a concise, attractive introduction
 - Use images
 - Simple sentences & structure for easy sharing
 - Links to other sites / content
 - Be yourself!
-
- Add keywords
 - SEO info
 - Sensible URL!



And after your blog is written

- Have it reviewed before publication – facts then proofreading
- Make sure people find it – tweet, Facebook, newsletter, etc.
- Reply to comments
- **Work with your Marcomms colleagues!**



- Email aarc-comms@lists.geant.org
 - your blog topic, title, structure, key message
 - say whether you would like / be willing to develop this blog further
- For future support go to AARC wiki (NA2) <https://wiki.geant.org/x/Hlq7Ag>
 - Download & use the prompt document (linked)
 - Email it to aarc-comms@lists.geant.org

- Why the title “How to become a fantastic blogger... in just 60 minutes”?
- Suggestions for improvement to the training?

laura.durnford@geant.org



Thank you and any questions



Networks · Services · People
www.geant.org

