

**RAW ZOOM TRANSCRIPT FOR EDITING**  
Edited by: **Charlotte Nelson, Leah Turner**

**Transcript of Dr. Terry McGlynn's talk: Science Blogging**

**00:03:24.630 → 00:03:54.719**      ***Introduction***

Terry McGlynn: Hi thanks so much, so I have lots to say and want to leave time for questions and discussion afterwards so I'm just going to get to this so I'm going to do the weird awkward pause the thing, while I share my screen. Now you get to see my desktop for a brief moment.

**00:03:53.820 → 00:04:32.370**      ***Science Blogging***

Terry McGlynn: All right, hi there. So, super glad to be here and I'm charged and flattered by the fact that I'm here talking to you about this stuff so. First, I just want to answer and address the one question that almost everybody has when they when I mentioned that I was starting a blog or feel when people find out, I have a blog and don't read it, which is like most people don't read my blog right. Which is if you ask Google: Is blogging dead? Is blogging still relevant? Is blogging worth it? blah blah blah and so.

**00:04:32.790 → 00:06:10.020**      ***Is Blogging Dead?***

Terry McGlynn: Like, why are we talking about blogs people would wonder, and so I think the the subtext is like: should I start a blog? Are you being wise if you start a blog? And I think that the answer to that question will be essentially like are you feeling lucky. So just answer your question that question is blogging dead? Well, no, because there currently exist many, many blogs in the world that on their own terms are successful. Like blogs are still a thing, blogs exist. So how can blogging be dead, if there are active blogs? But it's different than it used to be. Back in the day blogs were a really active social community and they were a pathway to journalism for many different people. Those things aren't as true, as they were used to be so blogs are just one format of communicating in a really broad social media landscape; a media landscape, including social media. Which is evolving really rapidly and some of the predominant forms of communication now are things that didn't exist just within recent years. So, in the early days of the Web interesting blogs grew really rapidly because they basically serve the function that social media does now. There are people that interacted with one another on blogs, and in comment sections and across blogs. That now you people interact with one another on Facebook and Twitter and other media so so if you're going to have a blog you need to have a more robust rationale for existing than you do if you just you know, want to have a community of people to interact and talk with about your shared interests.

**00:06:11.070 → 00:07:05.070**      ***What is a Blog?***

Terry McGlynn: So. What is a blog? So it's a weird word 'blog' and so it's a shortening of a weblog. And so the idea of a weblog is it sort of like an Internet diary. I think originally the idea is

that people just write here's what's going on in my day and here's how things are going and here's something I thought about. And that's what in many times blogs were just like the arbitrary thoughts of people throughout their day that they felt like sharing. In some particular form of interest, and so I would say, so my own definition of what I can see, to be a blog is is it serialized writing that emphasizes a personal perspective. And yeah it's distributed by the Internet and it's usually some informal in tone right, that is what I perceived to be a blog so what what does what is a blog in terms of what you see in terms of blog content.

**00:07:07.890 → 00:07:57.480**      ***What is a Blog? Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: It's somewhere in but in this spectrum between being a piece of journalism and just like a casual letter to a friend right, and so I think almost every blog post is somewhere between these two some are really, really, really highly personalized so as if they're just writing to a friend and then some read, just like magazine or newspaper articles and so it's like that's a piece of journalism. But I'd say most blogs land somewhere in the middle, in terms of tone and content and approach um, so I think, to understand what blogs are, it's worth going through the history of of blogs and web based blogging platforms, so in the early days of the Internet um.

**00:07:58.230 → 00:10:06.930**      ***What is a Blog? Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: We had there are things like geocities and live journal where basically you could create your own website, you know and and you just. You know pre-MySpace essentially, but these were things where people could update information about, however, they wanted life journal was basically an early blogging type platform. In the early 2000s then Blogger came about, and that was quickly purchased by Google and then Wordpress which still exists which actually I run my blog on and also Typepad was another website, and these were software platforms, where people could create their blogs, and also could give you a web address if you so chose and then later on in 2000s then Tumblr came on the scene. And then they're all these other blogging than they were a blog networks, which mostly were by invitation. Not that an invitation necessarily would be hard to come upon but it's like if you chose to create a blog it's a science blogs is one network and they're all these other networks of people that had science blogs. And those some of those networks still exist or disappeared or came back in some level but they're not as at least thought to be as prominent as they used to be. Then, last decade Medium came about, which is a sort of like a newer version of Wordpress it away if you just wanted to share some things people would blog on Medium or if you had a post you wanted to put you put it on Medium. And then the newsletter has become a thing, and so TinyLetter was one company that created newsletters and now a way to monetize that process is through Substack. They do that and so that's something we see nowadays. But I would say, most people that have their own blogs would use Wordpress or some other kind of software platform, but then they'll have their own URL so my blog is smallpondscience.com. If you go to smallpondscience.wordpress.com you'll find my blog too, but it's just a small pond science so it's like. The now it doesn't seem to matter what platform you're on but simply you just have a web URL right. Um so.

00:10:08.250 → 00:13:13.410

### *What is a Blog? Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: So what is a blog um I would, I think I will break down science blogs into two major categories, what a lot of people call science blogs are blogs that talk about science, but they're designed to distribute science to a non-specialist audience so it's like so essentially it's like people are writing about science for the public in general, so it's just like an article in The Smithsonian or it would be you know something in The LA Times you know or but um but it's in a blog venue and it's from the same voice of the same person writing about this stuff multiple times. And then there's a whole other family of blogs, which we've called science community blogs, and so Manu Saunders et al and I'm one of the people In et al in this paper in 2017 we basically defined a science community blog as a thing, where it's a bunch of scientists who are writing for other scientists. Which is what my own site is, which is like I'm not pretending to be writing for the general public, I'm just writing for other scientists and so to create community to other scientists and to try to impact what they're doing and thinking. And so, these are two very distinct and separate things. And because the content is different, but the motives are different and how people how and why people approach these things are very, very different from one another and so when people often talk about science blogs, I think they're thinking about the former, and so I would say, well, am I a science blogger? No? Am I a science communicator? I often get called that I think I put that in my own bio so I guess so because I communicate and I'm a scientist. But I don't do much about communicating my science or science in general to the general public, other than just being a general ambassador of like a science person, so I should point out that there's this book that came out called Science blogging: the essential guide, and so this book I believe it's published by Yale University Press is edited by three people who are you know classic science bloggers and that they were writing for the general public. And so, and these all these three people now are journalists of in one form or other through various media and they and they basically got their start with science blogging um so the I can't really speak that much to what that world is like because frankly I'm not involved in that world it's actually very much a club. And they actually even had a camp in LA like every year, now that I think Jason Goldman is one of the people who organizes this camp and they bring out other science communicators. And you can become their friend and you learn things from one another and, as far as I can tell they're all great people but it's a close-knit network that I'm just simply not involved in. I just know who some of the people are because I'm on Twitter um.

00:13:14.580 → 00:14:16.680

### *What is a Blog? Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: So what is the ? There are so many different kinds of blogs. So right there's food blogs, there's parenting blogs, there's a lot of these blogs about search engine optimization because blogs about getting traffic to your blog to make more money. Journals have blogs, you know personal websites will have blog sections on them, members of the National Academy of Sciences Richard Lenski has a really great blog that he will contribute to once in a while that's totally worth the read. You know, academic departments do, museums do, the NSF has like four or five blogs on its own website that talk about NSF business, that are super duper helpful if you're thinking about writing a grant um so I mean. So blogs exist, many people have blogs it's you know if you've cooked a recipe recently odds are you found that recipe on a food blog. So

to say that blogging is dead is not true, but it's but that the blogging environment is very different than what it used to be.

### 00:14:19.110 → 00:15:22.650 *What is a Blog? Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: So if you were to think of serialized communication, *sensu lato* right and use the taxonomic word like in the general sense in the broad sense. Then Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, podcasting, Reddit, ResearchGate, Tik Tok, Twitch, Twitter, YouTube, and probably some other things I'm forgetting are all essentially like forms of blogging in that you have an individual who is sharing ideas and content on a regular basis that accumulates followers and then people will read that. And then it very I read an article really interestingly, I could share with you later if you're interested about about how Twitter threads basically are replacement for blogs. What blogs used to be like 10-15 years ago many people are doing the same thing, using threaded conversations on Twitter to do the same thing. And oftentimes as many of the same people. So why would you blog? Like what is, why would you create a blog as opposed to doing something else, like a website blog?

### 00:15:24.270 → 00:16:35.820 *Why Blog?*

Terry McGlynn: You know, like my blog, for example, and so well, here are some motivations. Well you wouldn't want it to dissolve into social media, so you could, if you put something on Facebook or Twitter or Tik Tok it'll get seen and then it will essentially disappear, and no one will see it again, unless you get like super famous then people might throw it and find embarrassing things right. So it might not fit into social media, for a variety of reasons, like. You know, it just doesn't seem appropriate or won't catch on. You wanted to be found by search engines, a lot of the traffic that my blog gets by now, or people who find it by Google, because I wrote something about it and then people link to it and then now it just gets discovered. And you or let's say you want to have something last longer so you can point people to it if people ask you a question, if you have something to share like oh actually I wrote a little thing about that, and you can provide a link to it. Also, you might have a lot of things that you just want to say, but the chunks of the things that you want to say wouldn't fit into social media. Because based on not just the content, but just the size of it like you might have a lot more words to say.

### 00:16:37.860 → 00:18:36.720 *Why Blog? Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: um, so why would you blog, though, like what are you trying to do for yourself to blog did someone say you should blog right or maybe you feel compelled like you have something to say, and you have nowhere else to say it. You could be a masochist you just want to punish yourself. You want practice writing. Do you want to find friends, by creating a blog and interacting with them? Do you want to influence other people? Do you want to be famous? Do you want to do outreach? Are you using this to find some kind of job? Or do you want to get money? Money through the blog itself, through advertising revenue or various kinds. Are you looking to have some kind of power? Are you looking to become a journalist? So, these are all motivations that people have I think most of these would be very poor motivations that blogs aren't good for it. I could talk at great length at all of these. But. But actually, some of these

actually do apply and depending on how you create your blog some of these could work. But you want to definitely have a plan to so that it makes sense. I think a lot of these ideas that people have about you know, large blogs, and what it's like to have a blog and have a successful blog don't just aren't true but, on the other hand, there are a lot of diffuse benefits I've experienced by having. A well read a blog that are really hard to quantify which I wouldn't say results in fame or outreach or power in a general sense, but it has been some form of career advancement. I could talk more about that later and answer questions about that um so um what makes a good blog post if you're writing a blog post. Um.

**00:18:37.980 → 00:19:47.370**      ***What Makes a Good Blog Post?***

Terry McGlynn: What people say, is it should be short and to the point. It should be time often it's timely if there's something happening, and you connect it to what's happening or, if you have a response to something that's happening in the world right then people would want to read your take on that. That you want a storyline and characters or that it perhaps that your post is actually part of a larger story of yours, but also that you know it's readable. Photos, you know there's research that shows if you put a photo with a blog post then it gets read more often, like it gets shared on social media people see that photo and they click on it more likely. You should be targeting a particular audience you just don't want to try to write for everybody in the world, but you have an idea of you're trying to communicate to and you reach that person, it should have something about yourself in it. Like not necessarily that you're revealing personal things about yourself, but that it has your own tone right and so ideally, you'd be funny or charming or casual be don't want to be cloying. And then, also a good blog post is copy edited, like in theory it's not just chock full of like you know sentences that don't make sense and typos and things like that. Copy editing is good.

**00:19:48.510 → 00:22:35.610**      ***What Makes a Good Blog Post? Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: That said, it seems like my successful posts and my good posts seem to break these rules a lot. So, in my personal experience, sometimes my good posts are really short but sometimes they're like super duper long essays. And so it's an essay that I could never ever published anywhere else, no one no venue would want to publish it it's not going to be an op ED in Washington Post and I'm not going to submit as a journal article, so what the heck am I going to do with it? But if I really have something to say it, then I might put it on my blog. And if it connects then it'll have readership even if it's really long. The impact, some of the ones that that have the most impact, I think, are the ones that actually don't spread on social media. And the reason I know that they'll have impact is I could talk to someone, you know, a year and a half later like at a conference and be like oh my gosh I read that and that changed my career trajectory. I applied for this job because of that blog post or Oh, I read that and I sent that to my Dean, and that my Dean said it's my Provost and that end up changing the RDP guidelines at my university. You know, so no one puts this stuff on Twitter or Facebook, or whatever, but um.: So they don't share the articles that way, but they still might read it, and it still might impact what they're doing. I usually don't include photos for the most part. Yeh, it increases readership, and so what? If someone's only going to click on my article because there's a photo and not just because there's like they're interested in what the headline is or what it has to say then do I really care if they read it or not, you know there's a lot, and so, while I think copy editing is

important, I will go back and find weird missing words and typos and mistakes in my old posts. And so the worse thing that having poor copy editing is spending so much time copy editing that you actually don't write your blog. In my opinion, and so, if I spend so much time copy editing then it takes up so much of my time, then, why would I then, then it limits, how much or how often I would write. My good post had my voice and I've noticed that the ones again that I that actually do catch on that have a big audience, that people talk about are actually the ones that I write really, really quickly. Like sometimes I'll write a blog post, it could be a long blog post but I'll write it in like an hour or two or a short blog post I'd write in 15 minutes, but I, and I think that's because if there's an idea that I'm burning my mind that I want to get out and I just want to say it and put it in the world and be done with it. Then I think that's more consequential, and so I think it's, not because I wrote it quickly it's accessible, but because I'm excited about getting it out there in the world quickly. I just want to get it done get it so now that I think that it ends up if I feel that way about it, then I think it might be more likely to have impact. That's not always true sometimes I think oh my God, this is going to be an amazing post that knowing that no one cares at all that happens to.

**00:22:37.470 → 00:23:20.910**

### ***What Makes a Good Blog? Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: So what makes for a good blog in general? Um so a good blog is created for a particular audience and has a particular identity, and so, if you're writing a blog that the whole world will want to read. Then. Then I think you might end up attracting almost nobody. But also you're going to want to have something to say and that's something that you want to say should be connecting with people that would be interested in hearing it. Posting frequency is really critical. If you have if you're trying to build an audience, then you need to post regularly.

**00:23:21.840 → 00:26:40.110**

### ***What makes a good blog? Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: Just that's the way it is, that what, if you look at the data of the way which blogs accumulate an audience how often you post really matters. In general, historically a good blog has a whole ecosystem and community of people who comment in that blog and respond to one another. But I think those days are kind of gone. Some blogs have retained communities of people who content -- who comment, but I would say, there are a lot of people who lurk and read blogs, who never ever comment and those could be just as valuable. Or they take those blog posts and they'll post them in social media and have those conversations on social media. So I think the conventional wisdom is that commenting on blogs is an important piece of what those blogs are, but now I think the conversation happens off-site and not necessarily on the blog itself. And some which you don't even see, right, people talk about my post, without even including me, and that's fine, you know. And that's part of the conversation that's driven. Also, I've noticed that, like, on a lot of blogs it's like really male-biased about who chooses to comment, and maybe people with more seniority, or people who just feel like their opinion is bigger or more important than others', it's like it's so... So, actually, for a while I just shut down the comments on my blog because they were being dominated by a few individuals who just were frequently imposing their views. They were basically using my real estate to express their own perspectives, and why would I want to give them free real estate if I don't feel like, you know, that influences the tone of my blog in the way I don't want it to go? You should be able to explain your blog with like a tagline. Like, so it's like just a few words, like here's what your blog

is about that's tied to your identity. I think a blog nowadays can't be successful independently, but it has to be part of a social media ecosystem in some way. If you just have your blog as a website and it's not connected to your communicating presence in other means, if you have a podcast, if you have a Twitter account, and so I think a blog is a component of that. If you're if you have a thing that you're working to communicate about, then, then I think just a website nowadays can't do it in isolation, because that's not how people consume media. But also, I think what makes a good blog, the reason that you would put it on a website where would live theoretically in perpetuity, is that your people -- it has things that you'll want to point people to, that people will want to refer back to, it has some particular utility. So, think of food blogs, right? So, food blogs will have perennial utility. If something... if you have a recipe for a thing that's delicious, then people always want to go back to that. And so I think I would like to think that when I write something be like "Oh, that's an interesting point, oh I'm going to share that!" And so, a lot of things that I write are for people who are for graduate students, or for junior faculty at teaching-focused institutions, and so, once a person is like "Oh my gosh, I'm applying for jobs at a small liberal arts college," then I'll be like "Well I've got, I've got, like you know, eight years of a blog for you to read about all these different topics. What are you interested in?" "Oh, the interview process, oh, here's these five posts," you know stuff like that. And so I think the reason that I wrote it in blog form, in part, is because I hoped that it would have longer utility.

**00:26:42.000 → 00:27:44.160**      ***What's a Blogosphere?***

Terry McGlynn: So you may come upon the idea, the concept of a "blogosphere," that blogs often share interests, ideas; they feed off one another. And so like in economics and politics, you have many people who are active bloggers and share ideas with one another, will have arguments. A journal article comes out and they'll discuss it. A preprint comes out, you know, and they hash it out. There – there's a new story, they figure out the implications. And so, ecology, has a very light blogosphere, but it seems like most people who blog don't do it super frequently and actually a lot of us don't interact with one another that often on their – on our – blogs. So, do we have a blogosphere? Yeah, but it's not really active. So again, I've talked about blog commenting already, and how I think it's going by the wayside. You know, some people still have active blogs with active commenters, but compared to what's happening in social media and other venues, I think, you know, it's relatively minor.

**00:27:45.300 → 00:28:43.650**      ***What is the "Success Rate" of Science Blogs?***

Terry McGlynn: So if you were to create a blog, or if a blog exists, how can you tell if it's successful? How many sites/blogs are successful? Well, it depends on what you call "success!" Like, why do you have a blog? And so, so a blog could give you more writing experience, it could help you communicate more with your peers, you could raise money through it actually, maybe, if that's really what you wanted to do. It could give you professional visibility, prepare you for your career in various ways, or you could actually change how people think, which is frankly what I try to do with my blog, is I'm actually trying to change the world. And, and so, by putting out ideas that I think matter, maybe I am, you know, I mean, it's a huge aspirational goal,

but if you don't try, and you can't do it... So let me give you some examples of different kinds of blogs that have experienced these kinds of success.

**00:28:45.840 → 00:34:50.460** *What is the "Success Rate" of Science Blogs? Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: So, with respect to more experience writing, every blog, right? If you have a blog, then that -- and you write for that blog regularly, then you write more. And so I have found that actually when I was blogging more regularly, then my publication rate was higher, because I was just like the words were flowing from me. So, if I can knock out a 500-word blog post every day or 2, 3, 4 times a week, then that makes it much easier for me to write a grant or a proposal or something like that. It's like you know, writing is an instrument that you get better with you more practice. And so, and I haven't been blogging much in the last couple years, and actually I haven't been submitting manuscripts in the last couple years, and so because I've been tied up with all these other kinds of things. And so -- that's -- so I think people say blogging takes away time from writing, but I think actually blogging might actually help you become a more successful writer and write more productively. In terms of communicating with peers, like in the world of ecology, *Ecology Is Not a Dirty Word*, is Manu Saunders' blog, who was the first author of that paper I referred to earlier. So she has -- there's a variety of people who comment on her posts, and so she often blogs about issues involving science, but usually communicating with other scientists about this: "Oh so, what do you think about this idea?" or "I'm not so sure about this," or, you know, "Oh I looked at this paper, what do you think about this paper?" And, but also about science communication issues, too, and so there's interesting engagement in her comments, for example. And so, even though she doesn't blog super frequently, that she still has that kind of audience, and so in the world of ecology, "Dynamic Ecology" is also that way to some extent. In terms of raising money, so there's a blog that's been in existence, for I don't know a couple decades now, at least, *Pharyngula*, which is by PZ Myers, who's a professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris, who's like in the school of like new atheists, but he's not a jerk like most of them, apparently. And his -- he -- blogs posts like one or multiple times per day, and this is very much like a personal journal, and he talks about a variety of issues and science and his personal life and evolution and creationism and whatnot, and he has a really big audience because he's been at it for so long. And, apparently, he said that he makes this as much money from the ads on his blog as he does from his salary as a professor, which I find rather surprising. But also he's got a lot of ads, but he also writes, he posts, very frequently. And I think he has enough followers just following along with his blog on a regular basis. That said, he puts a lot of time into his blog, where he puts several posts out per day, sometimes. Not necessarily extraordinarily long things, but just like a missive. So just like I might post to Twitter, he would post to a blog. And, and he actually says it raises him money, so how about that? Professional visibility, so *Spider Bytes* is an example. So a fellow Canadian, I'm not a Canadian, but she is, who is also you know, at one point contributed regularly to my blog. So she has a blog where she's written about spider stuff, to the point where now media will contact her and ask her questions about spiders. And so she is you know, one of the most visible people in the world with respect to spider biology, you know. And now she's a postdoc and when she created that blog, she was a PhD student, but yet she has high level of public visibility. And that's because of her blog. So plenty of people have created blogs, in the past, to become science communicators. I think the most extraordinary example of this is Ed Yong created the blog *Not Exactly Rocket Science*, and now he is a, you know, a writer for *The Atlantic*, and he is an

amazing writer, and now he's had a couple books come out. And he just explains science really well to people as a science communicator. And then Bethany Berkshire's blog *SciCurious* was also really, really good, and I think she's an extraordinary science journalist as well. That's another example. But another example of praying for a cure in science communication, but it's more of a science community blog is *Mary Anning's Revenge*, which hasn't been -- hasn't posted in the last couple years was by two paleontology grad students had this blog, which I thought was extraordinarily charming, irreverent, and fun. And, and I just thought they were really interesting people, and they had a lot of fun with their blog and they also had an Instagram and Twitter that went along with it. And so now they're doing other things with their careers, but you can see – and one of them is a curator in a museum now, or a collections assist – collections manager, I'm not sure, but she works in a museum and she has great Instagram posts, and I think the blogging started to get her into that. Also, you really can influence people with blogs. As a counter example, I would say that Jerry Coyne, who is like a famous evolutionary biologist in his own right, has this blog called *Why Evolution is True*, which is the name of a book that he once published. And he's just a flat-out jerk and he uses his blog to identify people that he doesn't like, and targets them for mobbing and his followers will then mob other people, and you know, harass them on social media and whatnot. And he does this through his blog, you know, he targets people and says, "Look at how horrible these people are," on a regular basis. It's rather odd but what I'm saying is, but if that's if that's what you want to do, and you could do it, you can influence others. I'd like to think that other people are more positive examples, but I thought it'd be interesting to have a counter example. I wouldn't necessarily recommend seeing his blog, but I just let you know he exists.

**00:34:51.900 → 00:37:12.150     *What is the "Success Rate" of Science Blogs? Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: So um, but when I'm talking about the success rate of blogs, I can't *not* mention that the Internet is littered with the remains of apparently nascent, yet extinct blogs. Like if you search around, then you see, "Oh my gosh, that looks like such - this looks like a really interesting post," "This looks like a really cool person," "Oh, they're starting something," and then they stopped after like a month. "Oh, here's a post," and so – I – you know I'd be like, "Oh here's a new blog on the block; look at that!" "Oh, that's great, oh," and then they're done. And so I'd say most blogs like, just never take off. You know, there's just not enough fuel in the tank and people don't do it. Or maybe some blogs are interesting, and sometimes you're like "Oh, I'm doing this, but I don't feel like I'm getting the word out, so I'll stop. I don't know if anybody's reading." And then, sometimes, you know, where people feel like people are reading or whatever, for them, they just stopped anyway. And so I think of investing into a blog like a mortgage, right? And so, when you mortgage a house – what happens is when you purchase a mortgage for a house, like initially, you're paying – you're not paying down the principal, you're just paying interest, and the way it's amortized over time, then you start paying down principle. And so, if so, creating a blog you build an audience, but that audience builds really slowly, relatively speaking, compared to the amount of time you put into it. And so I think now, I've purchased this platform for myself, where I can write a post and it will be going out to email to a lot of people and people see it on the Internet. And you know, and there's this platform that I have, but I built it over the course of years, and it wasn't a small investment of my time. In, you know, the early days, I would have a blog post almost every weekday, and so I would spend anywhere between 15 minutes to an hour and a half writing a blog post. Because I wanted – I

sort of was treating the blog as a class I was teaching in terms of the amount of time and responsibility I put into it, and so I built that. And for me, it's actually paid off, but I think a lot of people are like, "Oh it'll be fine, I'll do a blog," but then, will people see it or not? Does that matter to you? Those are things to think about.

**00:37:12.690 → 00:38:12.960**      **Guest Posts**

Terry McGlynn: A phenomenon in blogs, is the existence of the guest post. And so, you could think as a parasitism, but really, it's a mutualism, in which you're leveraging someone's existing platform. If someone has a blog and they – and you - have something interesting to say, then they might want to host your post, saying that. So does a blog exist with an audience - that's a redundancy - that that you're trying to reach? So, if you have something to say to ecologists, then you could approach Manu Saunders, or you could approach Jeremy Fox (he runs *Dynamic Ecology*) be like "Can I write a guest post?", for example. Some blogs have actual policies for guest pitches, some just invite their friends in a weird clubby thing, and some just don't do them at all. I have a policy that if, if you are interested in writing a guest post, let me know. I usually - I don't actively solicit them, because frankly I think people deserve to be paid for their work. And I've actually paid people for posts when I want to post on a particular thing, but I'm not going to say, "Please write for me," and then not pay you, so I just generally don't solicit them.

**00:38:14.070 → 00:39:32.430**      **A Failed Experiment**

Terry McGlynn: I and some other people created this experiment called *Rapid Ecology*, that I consider to be a failure, in which I wanted to minimize barriers to having people write blog posts for the public. And so, we created this website and basically I paid for it out of pocket, which wasn't that much money. And said "Hey, here's a blog you can write for," and all of you are like "Wow that's really cool!" And so anybody to this day, can submit to *Rapid Ecology*, you say "Hey, I want to write a post!" and then send your post, and it gets posted on your behalf. And in that way, if you will – basically, it's like – it had – would in theory, would have like a built-in audience. So that way, I was trying to minimize barriers to access that if people had something to share, then they can share it. So, it's kind of like a new, modern-day version of a listserv, but no one's published a post on it in more than a year. So we had a rapid launch and then it died quickly, and so what this tells me is everyone who wants to blog is already blogging. So I will, quickly now, because I want to get to Q & A, which I think will probably be more interesting than what I have to say right now, tell you the story of just how my own blog originated, so I will do this promptly.

**00:39:33.900 → 00:40:18.090**      **My Blogging Story Cont'd**

Terry McGlynn: So I should say that in 2007, I wrote a series of articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* under a pseudonym. They're asking - when I was applying for a faculty job. So it's a long dramatic story; I was denied tenure at my university and I was looking for a new position. And the *Chronicle* career section was like, "Hey we're looking for people to write posts on our site in our advice section about - just to chronicle their job search and what they're experiencing," and I'm like, "Oh well, hell I got something to share." And, but I wrote it under a

pseudonym because obviously you don't want to share, about how you were denied tenure so publicly. Now I share about that publicly.

**00:40:18.750 → 00:40:39.750**      ***My Blogging Story Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: So that was my first experience with like writing something that essentially wasn't a journal article for an audience and then, as I was getting tenure later and I thought you know, I have a lot to say about how to do research at a teaching-focused institution, what it's like to be a researcher in a teaching-focused institution, so here's a manuscript, right?

**00:40:40.110 → 00:41:08.370**      ***My Blogging Story Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: And I realized that, even though I had a lot to say, I wrote this manuscript, there was nowhere to publish it, like there was no venue for this kind of thing, no journal existed. And then I realized there a few blogs that I was reading that I really enjoyed, so one was *Myrmecos* by Alex Wild, who's an ant biologist like myself, and he's a photographer, and so his blog is moribund because he does other things now. But he used to write on his blog, and you know, most days, and it was really interesting and it was a blog by ant people for ant people and ant enthusiasts.

**00:41:09.270 → 00:41:50.580**      ***My Blogging Story Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: And another blog that I absolutely loved was *FemaleScienceProfessor*. And so, she wrote one post every day, and it was a thoughtful post somewhere between a few hundred up to 1000 words about something about science careers, and I learned so much from her. And I even think from some scientific societies, she even won a mentoring award, even though it was all pseudonymous. I think I have no idea who she act - her identity is, I haven't tried to find out, but she's a wonderful human, thoughtful human being, and I just loved her blog and she was at it for I think 5, 6, 7, 8 years or something like that. And I still go back to look at things she wrote.

**00:41:51.360 → 00:42:30.810**      ***My Blogging Story Cont'd***

Terry McGlynn: And so, over the course of a couple hours at my dining room table, I created this blog called *Small Pond Science*, and I realized that - basically took that big manuscript that I had written and I carved it into much smaller – a large number of small posts and cued them up for publishing. Like literally just like in an hour or two, I found a nice picture of a rainforest I took from a tower, which is what you see here, and I was like “Here's my blog, here's some posts,” and after I had a few posts up, then I posted it on Twitter and I had a Twitter account that I never really used. And then, some people found it and so Alex Wild and *Dynamic Ecology*, which had big, big audiences at the time were like “Oh this looks like a really good blog.”

00:42:32.190→00:42:39.000

### *My Blogging Story Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: So, then I kept doing it and I realized very quickly that more people were reading this than would ever be reading any of my manuscripts. And so then actually I was invited by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to publish stuff like my own name, how about that, and so I, this is the first piece, I wrote in the *Chronicle*, which I actually have no memory of writing at all, whatsoever, back in 2016, but that was my first one.

00:43:12.390 → 00:43:23.340

### *My Blogging Story Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: And eventually the – this led to me – so, based on my regular writing about teaching and noticing there's a big gap in the world, in teaching, I wrote *The Guide to College Science Teaching*, which again, not that I'm necessarily - I'm not an expert in pedagogy, I'm just a guy who teaches college. But I think I wanted to bridge the divide between the people who create the literature, who do the research in science education and the grad students and junior faculty who are brand new in a classroom, who basically don't access that literature.

00:43:41.070 → 00:43:51.480

### *My Blogging Story Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: And that's why I wrote this book. And I should say that here's my blog, I'm still creating a post at least once a week, usually nowadays, so here you go it's 2021 and I'm still doing that.

00:43:52.890 → 00:44:44.820

### *How to Write a Blog Post Cont'd*

Terry McGlynn: What I had to say about writing a blog post is don't try to say too much, don't bring it out slowly, you just want to get right to the point, because otherwise people aren't going to read. I would - I'd like to - idea is, if you write as if you're writing to one person; credit ideas liberally; use lots of links; if there's an idea that someone had, share their post. But also, don't fuss about it; it's just a blog post, the whole point is that supposed to be spontaneous and unpolished. And so sometimes when people do – want to write a guest post for me, they ask me if I will, I say yes, and they agonize over it so much and they spent... oh! And I'm like, "It's just a blog post, just publish it," that's kind of my take. Okay, so I received comments, and there's lots of questions, and those will be moderated so let's just get to those. Thanks.