<u>**Lunch and Learn – How to be digital academic, part 2**</u>
Notes on session and useful links

This series is organised by the LSE KEI Integrated Service, a coordinated internal infrastructure to communicate, support and assess knowledge exchange and public engagement activities, as well as other pathways to impact, within the School. We aim to encourage LSE researchers to think about opportunities for knowledge exchange and public engagement throughout their research projects; to communicate the value of engaging non-academic audiences in research to LSE researchers and the wider LSE community; to showcase "effective" engagement activities; and to equip LSE researchers and research support staff with the skills needed to carry these out.

Find more information at [lse.ac.uk/kei](lse.ac.uk/kei)

[Link to handouts and useful links from this session (via Google Drive).](#)

Kieran Booluck (impactofsocialsciences@lse.ac.uk) and Rose Deller (lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk), LSE Blogs team
Academic blogging: making your research available to policymakers and the public (see slides)

LSE has an extensive blog community (blogs.lse.ac.uk) and we encourage you to take advantage of the platform this gives you for promoting your research.

There are two main types of blog: personal and multi-author institutional. With the latter you benefit from the expertise of editors and from an already existing audience, so at LSE you have a head start.

What might you want to blog about?
1. A blog based on recently published research
(See the advice of Patrick Dunleavy here
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/01/25/how-to-write-a-blogpost-from-your-journal-article/)
Consider this as just another step of the process- you write a research paper, you write an easily accessible blog summarising that paper and then you promote it on social media.
Make sure you always link back to the research paper (and tie to the DOI) in the blog and in social media promotion.
Always link to open access research if possible. If you are not sure if a paper is open access install the browser plug-in unpaywall.org, which will find you an open access version if it exists.

2. Posts based on research in progress

- o Discussing research methods
- o Discussion engagement activities
- o Reflecting on process/experience

3. Commentary on recent events (ideally linked back to your research, which LSE blogs will always do)

4. Report on a conference/event

5. Book reviews
If you want to stay in touch with your research discipline, build your profile and practise your blog writing.

Blogging is not impact in itself, but it is a route to engaging a network of useful contacts that can develop into impact. LSE blogs were referenced as corroborating evidence in a number of REF 2014 impact case studies.

Other benefits of blogging include:

- o Citations
- o House of Commons Library uses blogs in research briefings
- o All blog posts are included in LSE Research Online, which means they are discoverable in many places

LSE blogs outstrip major online journals in terms of engagement with the social sciences, including SAGE and Wiley.

In the slides you can see some examples of how blogs have been picked up and used in the media, from the Daily Mail to the Archers.

Tips on pitching and perfecting your blog post

1. Research the blog, look at the "About" section. Work out if you are contributing to an existing conversation or adding something new.
2. Come up with a good title.
   The title should tell you what the blog article is going to argue.
   The best titles make use of common search terms – think about what would people need to search for on Google (or ask Alexa) to find your article. Look at Google Trends to explore commonly used search terms for different topics.
3. Make sure your writing style is clear but also accurate – use hyperlinks for any key claims, back things up with evidence.
4. Make use of imagery – this could be data visualisation but it could also be photography. You can search for images via https://search.creativecommons.org/

Make sure you share blog posts through all your networks – blogging doesn't end at publication.

Cheryl Brumley, Senior Producer (podcast) at *The Economist* (cherylbrumley@economist.com, @cherylbrumley)
Communicating research with podcasts (see slides)

It may seem like everyone is starting their own podcast and that it is an easy thing to do, but it isn't. Above all else, a good podcast series is a very time-consuming thing to make – it is easier to take advantage of opportunities to appear on other podcast series.

Good academic podcast series usually have institutional backing.

If you are asked to be on a podcast:

- o Make sure you research what the podcast is like
- o Ask to speak to the producer and find out how your voice will be used, will you be edited?

- Don't worry if you get cut, sometimes that happens, but you are in the producer's inbox you may well be called on again
- If you are worried about the tyranny of the soundbite, pre-empt it – think about a short way of explaining your key points
- Remember that the difference between radio and podcast is that podcasts are more friendly/informal

What are the lessons you can learn from other successful podcast?

- Don't forget about emotion, pathos is important. Communicate what your research means to someone else.
- Appear enthusiastic
- Paint a picture – imagery is really important in communicating ideas.
- Don't be afraid to be provocative

Rob Booth, Social Affairs Correspondent, The Guardian (rob.booth@theguardian.com)
Tips about media engagement

What are journalists looking for?

- Interesting stuff
- Simply communicated
- Gets a journalist/editor thinking – something counter intuitive/ that fits with news agenda, right at the top of a pitch
- Real people to talk to
- Some kind of action

Practical tips:

- Email them directly, at least 10 days before you are releasing a new report. (Journalists will want to report around the research and need time to speak to some people on the ground, send a photographer somewhere.)
- Think about places and people that can illustrate what you are doing
- Give them a pitch in two paragraphs – why is it interesting? "I've seen that you have written about this…, what about this…"
- Think like a punter, use normal language

Professor Michael Otsuka (@MikeOtsuka)
How to be a digital academic

Has had great success using social media and blogging to contribute to national debate about pensions. As a result he has featured on the WonkHE Higher Education Power List 2018.

Uses medium.com, a blog platform (like Facebook for blogging) and Twitter.

The benefits of medium are that you can try things out and learn what works using their metrics, but it doesn't come with the readymade audience that LSE blogs provides. Because of the topic he is blogging about, USS pensions, he has a captive audience.

His most popular blog post, that was picked up by the *Guardian* Education editor:

https://medium.com/@mikeotsuka/oxfords-and-cambridge-s-role-in-the-demise-of-uss-a3034b62c033

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/feb/21/universities-strike-blamed-on-vote-by-oxbridge-colleges

In terms of engagement: the shorter the better and the less technical the better.