

PERSONAL BLOG REPORT

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MED503 Interactive Media

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Blog Link

<https://straightfromthehorsemouthtravelblog.wordpress.com>

Blog Theme

I had thought that this assignment was going to be incredibly difficult because I didn't have access to resources I normally do at home or in school. However, I decided that it would be my inspiration to create a travel blog based on my experiences of being a student on a budget. Later, I realized that my school didn't really have a way to showcase experiences that students had during study abroad. I also decided on writing this so that it helps others from my school to have a great time in any country they study in.

I use my voice when I write my blog posts. The way that I speak is how I write, such as using humor. If the writing seems too formal the blog won't feel like a student is speaking from personal experience and it is a chance to get to know me, their peer. I also acknowledge and sympathize with the fact that we are all students.

I give a few specifics about me (in my first post) that help the reader put together a profile of the person that they are reading about.

Post Types

My posts are:

- A profile "About Me: An Introduction to This Blog"
- A how-to "How-To: Prepare for Study Abroad"
- A how-to "How-To: Travel on a Budget"
- A personal story "Letting Loose on the Page: Learning to Journal"
- A photo essay "Photo Essay #1: The Netherlands, Wales, Scotland"
- Recommendations "Thrifting: A World of Treasures"

- A personal story with recommendations “Holidays #1: Halloween and Guy Fawkes”
- A photo essay “Photo Essay #2: Switzerland, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden”
- A list with photos “Review: Explorations in London”
- An interview “Interview: Behind the Photographer”
- A personal story with recommendations and photos “Holidays #2: Thanksgiving and Christmas”
- A personal story “A Reflective: Going Home”

In my posts, I also included resources, links to other blogs, videos, or websites, downloads, photos, and videos.

Instead of explaining everything I did in the photo essay posts or recommendation posts, it was more effective to have multimedia to show more than just the place or activity but the experience you could have.

In terms of community engagement, I was able to get 115 views, 34 visitors, 4 comments, and 6 likes. I linked to other articles, videos, etc. I also responded to any comments I received.

Challenges Encountered

One challenge I encountered was that it was difficult to make time to write and getting past the question ‘what did I do?’ What helped with that was having different types of blog posts. The photos helped where I could write about everything but the details of activities. In some posts, I was able to dig into recommendations or my personal experiences. However, except for the fourth post, I couldn’t express my emotion, which is something I have a hard time with in general. I was able to move past this by choosing topics that weren’t emotionally inclined.

Another challenge I faced was trouble getting views or comments. Part of this issue was because I didn't think people would keep coming back to the blog to read my posts if I only had one or two, so I published after three or four. I also started giving the link of my blog to others in November. I was able to get views, but comments were extremely difficult to receive. I think it is because a blog is not what people my age read and follow. I could have overcome this by creating many social media accounts and linking them to my blog, but my way of curating images were the photo essays.

Successes

One success that I consider is that I was able to look back at my posts and experiences and be proud of the work that I created and how I've changed. I learned to find more confidence in sharing this personal blog, and it makes me feel more secure because I can truly say 'this is me, and this is what I think and feel.' I was able to create twelve completely unique posts and all of the imagery was created by me on the activities I participated in or places that I visited. I owned my comments based on the experiences that I had, and my recommendations.

Theory Into Practice

One concept I see that is directly applicable to my blog is the aspect of curation. According to Alex Bruns, in *Gatekeeping, Gatewatching, Real-Time Feedback: New Challenges to Journalism*, he describes gatekeeping as "a tightly edited selection of the day's news; judgments of which stories were most important for audiences to learn about" (Bruns, 2011, 118). This concept has changed to the public having access and power of distribution of information. The reason for this is the "development of collaborative models for user participation and content creation which are now often summarized under the 'Web 2.0' label" (Ibid, 120). My blog relates to this because I am acting as a gatewatcher. I am able to decide the

information I publish. During the process of writing, I was not able to include everything that I did during my time here. So, I only chose one picture of each activity and only the most interesting.

Conclusion

My overall impression of blogging is that I thought this assignment was going to be work, but it was unexpected that I enjoyed keeping a blog. I don't believe it is something I'll continue in the future in regards to this particular travel blog. However, I might take more care in crafting a story for my school portfolio that functions like a blog (powered by WordPress).

The skills I learned in keeping this blog will help when doing any kind of project or work-related assignment. I would apply skills such as making time, crafting a story, finding a voice, expression my opinions or thoughts, and formatting in a curated way.

Bibliography

Bruns, A. (2011). Gatekeeping, Gatewatching, Real-Time Feedback: New Challenges for Journalism. *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 7(2), pp.117-136.