

# Becoming a blogger

## **How to set up a free blog**

You can do it with [blogger.com](http://blogger.com) or [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com). They are very easy to use, and you can set your account up in minutes. You'll get your own website address such as [you.blogspot.com](http://you.blogspot.com) or [you.wordpress.com](http://you.wordpress.com). If you go with Wordpress, you can switch to a custom address later if you like (at a cost.)

## **How to attract readers**

- Comment on other blogs (and put your website in your profile.)
- Add blogs to your blogroll and ask to be added on theirs.
- Put your blog on lists such as [blogcatalog.com](http://blogcatalog.com), [delicious.com](http://delicious.com) and [stumbleupon.com](http://stumbleupon.com).
- Start a Twitter account and set it to automatically tweet your blog posts (install the Tweetable plugin on Wordpress.)
- Post links to your Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Tumblr, LinkedIn, etc. if you have them.
- Write catchy titles, use eye-catching pictures and write in small paragraphs. Internet users have a VERY short attention span - grab their attention quickly.
- Increase your google hits by writing longer titles, and using tags and categories. Google does not search your whole post for key words, just those three places and any images.
- Label images correctly so they appear in a Google Images search – this will boost your hit rate, and improve your rating in Google searches.
- Use Google Analytics for blogger or the Wordpress stats to check where you're readers are coming from. Find out what works and what doesn't.
- Lastly, don't be overzealous! You will build up a solid readership over time. Excessively marketing your blog at every opportunity can do more harm than good.

## Managing comments

- Install a spam filter such as Akismet on Wordpress, or enable word verification on Blogger.
- Check comments regularly and delete any spam.
- Respond to people who write negative comments, but don't be rude.
- Don't delete comments just because you don't like them, it makes you seem untrustworthy.
- Reply to comments that ask questions, be helpful whenever you can.

## Suggested reading

### *The who's who of science blogging*

Carl Zimmer at The Loom	<a href="http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/loom/">http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/loom/</a>
Ed Yong at Not Exactly Rocket Science	<a href="http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/notrocketscience/">http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/notrocketscience/</a>
Ben Goldacre at Bad Science	<a href="http://badscience.net">http://badscience.net</a>
Neurotic Psychology	<a href="http://scientopia.org/blogs/scicurious/">http://scientopia.org/blogs/scicurious/</a>

### *Other great writers*

Deep Sea News (biology)	<a href="http://deepseanews.com/">http://deepseanews.com/</a>
ERV (biochemistry)	<a href="http://scienceblogs.com/erv/">http://scienceblogs.com/erv/</a>
Lab Rat (bacteria)	<a href="http://labrat.fieldofscience.com/">http://labrat.fieldofscience.com/</a>
Science Geek Girl (Sci comm)	<a href="http://blog.sciencegeekgirl.com">http://blog.sciencegeekgirl.com</a>
Carbon-Based Curiosities (chem)	<a href="http://coronene.com/blog">http://coronene.com/blog</a>

## My details

I'd love to connect with other Australian science bloggers. If you're just starting out, e-mail me a link to your new blog at [aschoonerofscience@hotmail.com](mailto:aschoonerofscience@hotmail.com) or tweet me @CaptainSkellett

Captain Skellett

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