

Meet the bloggers

Neil Christie wrote:

Hello, bloggers. I'm a wee bit hung-over this morning as yesterday was our 10th birthday. Here goes...

Welcome to Optimism is, I guess, part of W+K London's marketing for itself. In a low-key sort of way.

It aims to be a window on life at the agency, our people and our work. What makes us/me/blog? It was originally an experiment started by Russell [Davies]. That was back in the days when the rest of us were still asking, 'What's a blog?' Now, I keep it going because it seems to work well as a way of reaching potential hires, clients, contacts and the wider world.

Ben Kay wrote:

What makes me blog? I wasn't really sure until a couple of weeks ago when I had a chat with a creative and realised how much I enjoy just wittering away about ads. Blogging lets me take part in a wider comtop-notch strategic community of ad creatives and be made aware of all sorts of interesting things.

It's also helped to get the Lunar name out and reflect what we stand for, so although I almost always write it, it's also a corporate blog which hopefully conveys some of our attitudes and interests.

Finally I just get really fucking marked at certain things and the ability to sound off to a bunch of people about China hosting the bloody Olympics or the hypocrisy of Dove or some misplaced apostrophe keeps me sane.

Faris Yakob wrote:

O blogging how do I love thee - let me count the ways.

I blog because it makes me think. The blog needs constant feeding, so I need to keep thinking and reading and making things up.

I'm constantly looking to make connections between disparate things, to package them up into posts. Finding patterns. Or creating them.

It's a place where I can think unfettered and get feedback on what comes out, from people who I know are interested in the same sorts of things.

It's writing but it's not solitary. It's a place where I can do whatever I want with words.

Richard Huntington wrote:

Why I blog and why I started to blog are very different questions.

I started adliterate after a conference speech I did. It was to a group of financial clients and the talk had taken a good chunk of my time and therefore the agency's time. And when it was done I knew that, though I might have given good conference, it was to a handful of potential clients that I would never hear from again. I wanted a place to put the stuff I was doing that the rest of the world could find.

I have a very low frequency of posting because of the ridiculous criteria I place on the nature of a post - a piece of original thinking from my own mind about brands or communications. I can only get so many of those out in a month while holding down a day job.

And what keeps me regular is fear. Fear of not delivering something new and, if not good then at least contrary and reasonably controversial.



Faris Yakob

Strategist, Naked New York
farisyakob.typepad.com

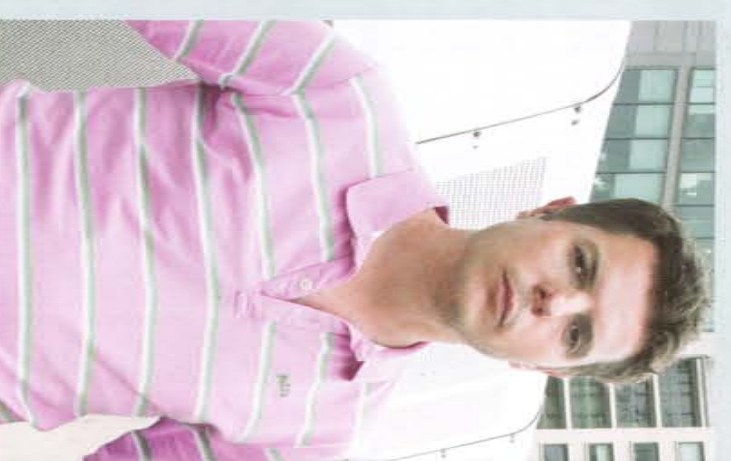
"Talent irritates, genius steals" is not your typical advertising blog. Faris Yakob has got a planner's intellect with a digital bent, and has a knack for uncovering obscure, but interesting, material.



Ben Kay

Creative partner, Lunar BBDO
lunarbdo.blogspot.com

There's something a bit chippy about Lunar and his blog, perhaps because it's not nearly as popular as Scamp's. Although he blogs under the agency's name, it's often quite edgy.



Simon Veksner

Creative director, Bartle Bogle Hegarty
scampblog.blogspot.com

This is the site for bitchy commentar from creatives. Scamp kicks off with interesting observations, provoking eye-watering commentary from anonymous, usually angry, creatives. A great way to while away an afterno

MY LIFE AS A

Adland's best bloggers meet in cyberspace to discuss rival ramblers, whether

Oh and there is the narcissism of course.

Faris Yakob wrote:

Definitely the narcissism. i second that.

Scamp wrote:

I started blogging out of a fear of obselence. A headhunter told me she wasn't sure about putting me and my partner up for a job because our book was "a bit old-fashioned." She said more and more creatives were creating work for something she called "the internet". My former agency had Digital in a separate department and we weren't getting any digital briefs, so I thought I had better create some digital content off my own bat.

Ben Kay wrote:

As far as Scamp and W2O go, they seem to offer something I'd have loved

as an aspiring creative: direct access to an MD and CD of two of London's best agencies.

The lack of agency blogs seems to be an extension of the old complaint that agencies are terrible at selling themselves. These days every shop in town has to wear its digital credentials on its sleeve and yet the lack of something as simple as a blog shows a reluctance to really walk the walk.

Neil Christie wrote:

Scamp - I thought it was interesting that, after blogging about the WCERS moonwalking bear 'Do the test' spot, and seeing the ensuing controversy, you actually contacted the creative team responsible and the professor who conducted the original experiment. That was a bit of actual journalism. Were you conscious of crossing a line? And your blog was arguably better suited than the trade press to host

the debate surrounding the campaign. Does this mean that blogs could take over from the trade press?

Ben Kay wrote:

Scamp's journalism was great because that dohcheest story lived and died in two days.

Richard Huntington wrote:

Why don't agencies blog. Two reasons. 1) Most ad agencies and most people in them don't really have much to say for themselves that is remotely interesting. And when they do they are far too scared to express those opinions. 2) Blogging is not a team sport. Very few collective blogs work.

Scamp wrote:

I agree with Richard. A blog is one person's voice; agencies shouldn't blog - they're corporations not a person. Having said that, W&K London's blog



Neil Christie
Managing director, Wieden & Kennedy
wklondon.typepad.com

Welcome to Optimism by name and nature, the Wieden & Kennedy blog, led by Neil Christie, is a nice look at life at a trendy advertising agency. It's on-brand, and does a good job of marketing W&K.



Richard Huntington
Director of strategy, Saatchi & Saatchi
adliterate.com

Huntington's musings are accessible and fun (although there's a big emphasis on him). They're carefully planned, as you'd expect, and offer useful conversation pieces to recycle when you're a bit stuck.

BLOGGER

blogs will replace Campaign and, of course, Juan Cabral

is great. And so is Lunar BBDO's. Maybe that's because they're really Neil's and Ben's blogs.

Scamp wrote:

In answer to Neil's question, I suppose I did feel a bit like an actual journalist when I contacted the creative team behind Dothetest, and the professor who claimed it was based on his work. But I didn't do it because I want to replace Campaign or anything. I just did it because from the volume of comments (there ended up being 229 of them) I knew people wanted to know the truth.

Actually, the comments point leads me on to another observation about blogging. Sometimes I might spend a week working on, say, a radio ad. It goes out into the world, millions of people hear it, and I hear nothing back. Whereas if you write an interesting blog post you start getting comments

from all round the world, straight away. What does everyone else feel about comments'?

Ben Kay wrote:

Comments...Hmmm. I'm in the middle of an interesting conversation on my blog with the guys from Sell Sell about the pros and cons of creating ads purely for awards. I'm not really sure about my opinion on the intricacies of this subject, so I'm quite glad of the input. And it's great to get the views of so many different people on one subject.

Richard Huntington wrote:

On adliterate the comments are where it really happens. On a really successful post I will write something typically opinionated. Then a group of like-minded people will heartily agree in the comments. And then someone will tell me that I am an utter arse and eve-

rything I have written is arrant nonsense. Then it will kick off and I can sit back and watch the fight. I maintain that the comments are usually better than the original post on adliterate and they are where I really learn stuff.

Neil Christie wrote:

We don't get many comments on W2O. (I'm jealous of you guys.) But - so I console myself - the content and context don't lend themselves either to provide a platform for bitter creatives complaining about their inadequate hair and remuneration (like on Scampblog) or for brainy planners debating nuances of strategy (like on Adliterate).

I tend to self-censor as I write. Obviously, there are areas that need to be treated with discretion because it does represent W+K, not just me. When I posted some fairly bland info about the briefing meeting on the Nokia pitch, it stirred up more interest than I'd expected. An article commenting on the post appeared in *AdWeek*.

Things worked out OK for us with the Nokia pitch but the reaction did give me pause. Now, every time I'm writing something about a pitch or a client, my finger hovers over the 'post' button.

Richard Huntington wrote:

I avoid talking about clients and current work. But I was dispirited at the reaction to the Nokia pitch stuff - I really valued the openness that you were promoting.

A very clever guy once told me something which has become my blogging/new media/new brands/new communications mantra - that we must learn to give away control to gain influence. That is what we are all doing online and it's the people that don't understand this that fundamentally don't get what is going on.

Campaign magazine wrote:

Do you ever feel competitive with each other. Do you ever rush to get a news-related item up first'?

Richard Huntington wrote:

I feel hugely competitive. Not about specific content as I think we are all offering something rather different to each other. But about traffic and links and stuff like that. I'd be totally disingenuous if I didn't admit to watching my 'technorati' ranking and daily traffic like a hawk.

Ben Kay wrote:

I only look at Scamp's commenters and he's so far ahead in terms of readers that I can't think of us in any way as competitors. Besides, we're friends who meet up outside the blog world, so there's no animosity.

Scamp wrote:

On accountability - there are precedents of bloggers being sued; of course we are accountable for everything we write. Not sure if we're accountable for what appears in comments... hmmm, maybe I should check that out...

But much more than worrying about being sued, I worry about hurting people's feelings. That's why I allow obscene or abusive comments but only about the work, not people.

Some people seem surprised by the degree of negativity in the comments... have they never been to the pub after work? It's the same, right?

Ben Kay wrote:

Or a two-year-old?

I was just watching Cadbury Trucks in the break of Liverpool v Arsenal and my truck-loving son watched unblinking and gave a one-word review: "Poo". Fortunately for Juan, he wasn't talking about the ad. He was talking about what he'd just done in his nappy. Or was he?

Scamp wrote:

On competitiveness - like every other ad creative, I am monstrously competitive. You have to be. On nearly every brief I am in competition with other teams within BBH. But it's a friendly rivalry, and that goes for blogging too. Neil, Richard, Russell and Faris's blogs and readerships are very different to mine. But I still want to beat them. I guess it's a competition to see who can be the most interesting.

Actually, there is a sense of cooperativeness too - I often pick up on things they've said in their blogs, to write about on mine. Like when Richard said that planners should be allowed in the edit suite. Oh how we laughed.

Ben says he doesn't think of us as competitive, but I suspect he's lying. Our content is really very similar - the ad world from a creative's point of view. Yes, we're friends... but it's always our friends we're most competitive with, right?

Neil Christie wrote:

Of course there's a degree of competitiveness. I can't pretend not to be jealous of the amount of discussion generated on other blogs. And a little part of me grieves when our ratings slip on the *AdAge* Power 150.

BTW - thank God someone has finally mentioned Cabral, the Million £ Man. Scamp - given the amount of discussion about him on your blog, have you tried to get an interview with him? That'd boost your readership.

Richard Huntington wrote:

One of the reasons that I take it so seriously - this blogging thing - really struck me when things weren't so hot at HHCL/United. I realised that what adliterate gave me was a form of professional affirmation that wasn't dependent on my place of work.

Faris Yakob wrote:

Competitive - sure it is. That's what links and that are for. That's what charts are for. But it ain't a nasty kind. It's fun.

The internet is a live attention market - and you want to see how much attention you can get re-allocated to stuff you put out there.

Richard Huntington wrote:

It would be surprising if ad blogging wasn't competitive given advertising self-selects for the most competitive bunch of people imaginable - people that really hate coming second.

To read the blog in all of its glory, log on to brandrepublic.com/campaign