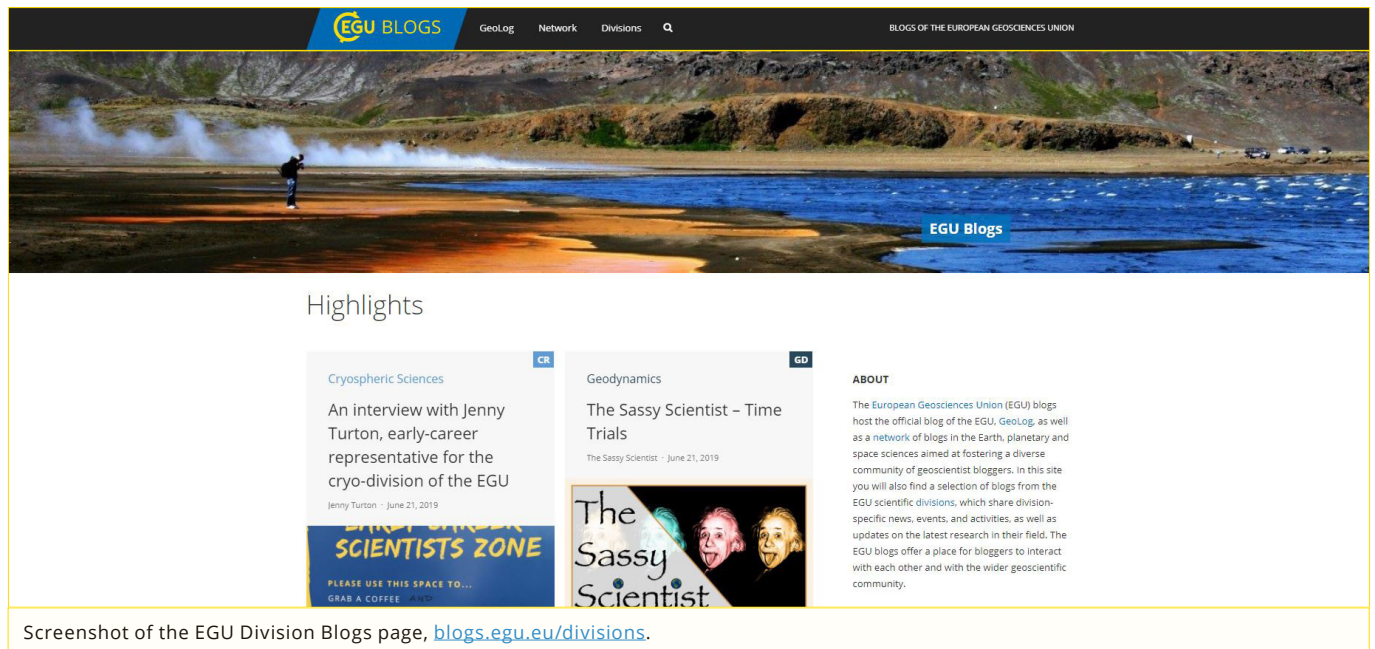


Guidelines for Division and Network Blogs



Blogging on the EGU network is a great tool for sharing news and resources, raising awareness of Union activities, discussing important topics and the latest findings in research, and building a community within the geosciences. Contributing to the EGU blogs also allows scientists to interact with others (both in and outside their field), develop their writing skills, increase their professional profiles, as well as practice outreach and science communication.

The [EGU division and network blogs](#) complement our official blog, [GeoLog](#), and showcase the work being undertaken within individual EGU scientific divisions and broader research areas. The division and network blogs work similarly to GeoLog, with all pages having a unified design and general theme – Earth, space and planetary sciences – but with each division and network being responsible for the content of their own blog.

The set-up of division and network blogs is undertaken by the EGU webmaster and the EGU communications officer in collaboration with the appointed blog editor. Please contact the EGU communications officer (networking@egu.eu) if you are interested in receiving information on how to set-up a new blog or get involved with an existing blog.

You can use the index below to navigate the document:

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Things to consider when setting up or getting involved with a blog

You and your blogging team shouldn't set up or relaunch a division or network blog without having a plan or assessing the current blog. Here are some of the things your team ought to think about:

- **Audience** – Who do you want to reach and what do you hope they'll get out of it? Is there a better (or already existing) way to reach that audience?
- **Content** – What do you plan to share and communicate? Make sure it is relevant to your audience and their interests.
- **Know your audience and what content they like** – Don't underestimate the value of checking the inbuilt analytics of your blog once it's set up or relaunched. Once you are running a blog, look into how regularly your blog is visited, who visits, what content visitors enjoy most, and what makes them stay.
- **Be consistent** – Update your blog regularly (at least once a month) to give your audience a reason to return to your page. Not posting regularly is one of the main causes of readership drop.
- **What resources will you need?** Maintaining a blog is time consuming. Be realistic about the resources you can dedicate to the job. Are you prepared to spend a few hours each month preparing, writing, editing, uploading and promoting blog posts? If not, could you recruit blog team members to help you accomplish these tasks in less time?
- **How will you promote the blog?** Pressing 'publish' isn't the last step to completing a blog post. Have a plan for how you will attract an audience, whether that's sharing the post on social media platforms, sharing posts with colleagues, etc.
- **Are you in it for the long run?** Think about how you are going to sustain the account long-term as volunteers in the division move on.
- **You are live!** Remember that your blog is public and (mostly) permanent. Consider the language and tone you use, as well as the stories you share (fact-check). As blog editors, you are the online voices of the division or the network you are representing.
- **Be social** – Interact with others and build a network. Become part of the online community. In addition, be sure to reply to all comments – show your readers you care.

Best practices

The divisions and networks have full editorial control over the content on the blogs. However, it is worthwhile highlighting some best practices which should be kept in mind when preparing posts:

- The division blogs should represent the broad spectrum of disciplines within their division and present the breadth of research being carried out in each division. Network blogs should feature posts consistent with the topics their editors proposed to cover when setting up the blogs.
 - While opinion-style posts are not discouraged in division blogs, these should be approved by division presidents prior to publication, to ensure the content is not seen to misrepresent the views of the division, particularly if they might be seen as presenting a controversial
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opinion. No approval is needed for opinion-style blog posts in network blogs, though blog editors should take care to highlight that the views presented are those of the author(s) and not those of the EGU.

- If blogging about a research paper, always link to the original article. Give preference to articles published in open access journals, such as the [EGU journals](#), as not all readers may be able to read a paper published in a closed-access journal.
- When blogging about recent scientific results, please make sure the research is peer-reviewed; if the paper is still undergoing review, please mention this in your post.
- Give full credit to images and videos used in posts (e.g. [Credit: Vytas Huth \(distributed via imaggeo.egu.eu\)](#)). Additionally, ensure your chosen image/video is licensed to be reused, or that permission to reproduce it is granted by the author/owner of the image copyright. Good sources for images you can use, often with credit, are [imaggeo.egu.eu](#), [Wikimedia Commons](#), [Pixabay](#) or [Unsplash](#). Additionally, many photos from government agencies (such as NASA, NOAA, ESA, European Parliament) are free for public use.
- Once you publish a post, share it across social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or LinkedIn) so that it has the best chance to reach a broad audience. Many EGU divisions are also active on varying social media channels – we suggest coordinating with the social media admins for division accounts to share your blog posts more widely. Additionally, we recommend sharing the post more than once featuring a different aspect of the article and different images.
- Do not post any content that is unlawful, harmful, hateful, libellous, defamatory, or otherwise objectionable, on social media or the blogs.

You can also find some external resources with useful blogging tips through the EGU online resources page [here](#).

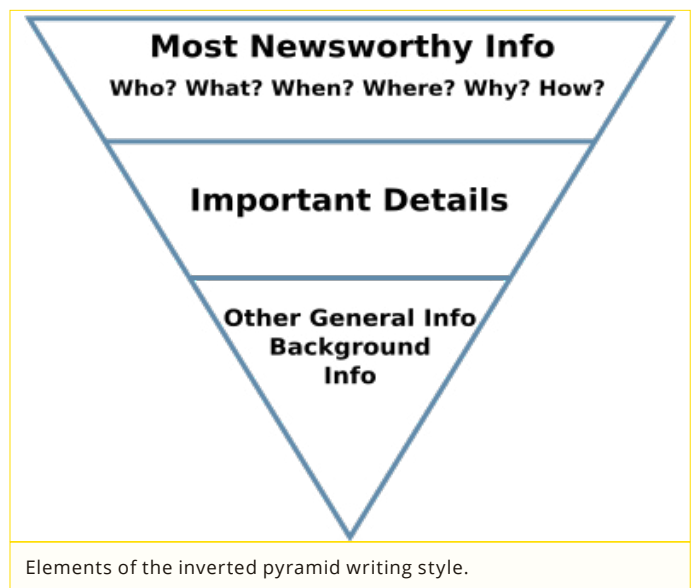
Keeping your audience engaged

According to data from [Chartbeat](#), about 55% of online visitors spend fewer than 15 seconds actively on a page. Even then, those that stay on a page longer often only spend a few minutes before turning to something else. Therefore, it's very important to frame blog articles in a way that is easy to read, understand and navigate. Here are some tips to keep your audience engaged:

- **Put thought into your blog headlines** – Your blog post title is usually the first interaction blog readers have with your post and often determines whether someone will read further. The title of your post is meant to grab your audience and give them an idea of what the article is about. When writing up title ideas, ask yourself if you'd click on a link with this headline. If not, change it.
 - **Engaging writing style** – When writing a blog post, there are several writing approaches you can use to keep your audience interested. For example, you could use the 'inverted pyramid' writing style. Start with your main conclusions and why they are important, follow with any other important details and supporting information, and then end with details that aren't vital but may be nice to know. Another approach is to tell a story when writing your post, which doesn't reveal all the main points right away and keeps readers engaged
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throughout. You can find more advice about storytelling in science with these resources: [Enago Academy](#) & [LSE Impact Blog](#)

- **Write using the active voice** – Sentences that use the passive voice are less engaging and run the risk of hiding the characters in your article (e.g. “The forest fire in Portugal was suppressed” vs. “Over 700 firefighters suppressed the forest fire in Portugal”).
- **Keep your paragraphs short** – One rule of thumb is to make sure each paragraph has 1 idea, written out in 2-3 sentences, taking up 4-5 lines on the page.
- **Use subheaders to break up long posts** – People often scan through blog posts rather than read the entire content. Subheaders will make your blog post easier to navigate and hold your reader’s attention as they make their way through your post.
- **Incorporate visuals** – Long chunks for text can look pretty onerous to many readers. Adding visual elements to your posts, whether that’s photos, videos, cartoons, graphs or infographics, can help break up your content into pieces that are easier for readers to digest.



Tips for regular blogging

Being consistent and blogging regularly is one of the key aspects to having a great blog with a regular following. Here, we collate a few tips and suggestions for generating content easily and (relatively) quickly. As experienced bloggers, some of you may already be familiar with the suggestions below, but we hope some of the content may be useful, even if not new.

Regular features

These are great for a number of reasons. First, they mean you don’t need to fear the dreaded blogger’s block which can lead to a lack of ideas, lack of posting and consequent dwindling readership numbers. Second, they encourage you to update your blog regularly, no matter what! Finally, they can act as a great hook that has the potential to draw in more readers.

How regularly you post these is up to you. Weekly works well, as it ensures very regular content, but features which might require a bit more work maybe best posted fortnightly or monthly. Once you’ve chosen the frequency of the feature, be consistent: your readers will know when to expect it, and will look forward to reading it. If you stick to your schedule, you’ll build trust and a regular following.

Further down we’ve given some ideas for blog posts – many of these could be adapted and used for regular features. However, some things work really well as regular features so we explore those in a little more detail next.

- **Photo blog posts** – Find a great geo-themed image (imaggeo.egu.eu is a good source) and blog about it. The post can be [detailed](#) or simply an [image with a caption](#), you can mix up the format (long, short, more than one image, dependent on the time you've got to dedicate to the post) but the key is to post regularly on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly basis.
- **Video blog posts** – Same as above. You might consider making these yourself but most likely is that you find them online. No problem with reposting these, just make sure you credit the original source fully. One example is the GeoLog [Communicate your Science Video Competition](#) series.
- **Highlight papers** – As you trawl the literature in your field to keep up to speed with the latest developments, pick a paper and highlight it on your blog. Add a few lines as to why you thought it was interesting; maybe even write a summary if you have the time. You can find an example of such on the [Stratigraphy, Sedimentology and Palaeontology Division blog](#).
- **News round-ups** – Searching for news can be time consuming, so try to keep it manageable: consider selecting the top three, five or ten news stories of the week or month and highlight them in a list. Such blog posts can take a deep dive into a few big science stories (like GeoLog's monthly [GeoRoundUp](#) series) or give a list of your favourite recent posts on a certain topic (like the Geology for Global Development blog series [#GfGDpicks](#)). For more inspiration, check the news round-ups on other websites, such as [ScienceSeeker](#).

More blog posts ideas

- **Book reviews**
 - **Research article summaries**, or if you are feeling brave, a review
 - **Summaries/comments on research that is 'newsy'** in your field
 - Review and discuss the **'open questions' and unknowns** still present in your field
 - **Interviews with other scientists** (à la [GeoTalk](#) in GeoLog, or the Tectonics and Structural Geology Division blog series [Meeting Plate Tectonics](#)) – This a good one for a monthly/bimonthly feature.
 - **Field work** – Blog about what you are doing when you go on field work. [Consider making this into a series if you are going away for a while](#).
 - **Lab work** – As per above
 - **Conferences** – What are the most exciting developments happening at the current or next conference you are attending?
 - **Workshops** – To advertise upcoming ones to your peers or to tell people about your experience
 - **How to** – Describe the methodology behind some of your research. For greater impact add images (or even video!) of yourself carrying out an experiment or research task.
 - **How do** – Some of the most popular social media posts on the EGU pages are those which describe how things work (for instance, the science behind turbidity currents). Unpick the science behind some of the key aspects in your field; if you can get your hands on some cool graphics, or footage, even better!
 - **'Crowdsourced' post** – Pose a question to your peers, colleagues, social media followers and anyone else you can think of and collate the answers to create a blog post.
 - **People to follow** – A list of your favourite blogs/social media people to follow
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- **'Best of' post** – This works well at the end of the year as a round up or to celebrate your 'blogging anniversary': A list of your most popular posts. You could also group posts of a similar theme or topic and publish this at other times of the year.
- **Science art** – Consider engaging your audience through an artistic lens, whether that's writing poetry, creating cartoons, making graphics, or recording a song about a certain scientific subject.
- **Job and PhD postings** – Raise awareness of job and PhD openings in your field (you can review the [EGU jobs search page](#) for new listings).
- **Quizzes** – Engage with your audience by putting their geoscientific knowledge to the test!
- **Polls/Surveys** – Get ideas from your audience. There are a few ways you could use this:
 - First, you could do something similar to what the former EGU network blogger Matt Herod has done on GeoSphere with [GeoPolls](#), where he seeks readers' opinions on certain topics to drive discussion and engagement.
 - The Geodynamics Division blog follows a similar format through their advice column, [The Sassy Scientist](#), where readers can put forward questions about research, academic life, career development, or anything in between.
 - Or you could use polls/surveys to gather information from your readers about the sort of content they'd like you to share in the future. This could help you get ideas for future content and more posts. You can find examples of such posts from the [Natural Hazards](#) and the [Tectonics and Structural Geology](#) Division blogs.

If your blog has an active comments section and your audience engages with you, why not tap into this? Create blog posts which answer the most common questions from your audience.

Are you active on social media? Why not use the most interesting questions from people you engage with via these platforms to kick start a blog post?

This also applies if you take part in outreach and communication activities. What are the most common questions you get asked about your research and field work during these events? Why not turn them into a blog post? Chances are your readers are also interested in the same topics.

Are you writing for other blogs or publications? Why not cross post your articles? This will save you time but mean that your EGU blog still has a regular content stream even when you aren't writing 'bespoke' features for it. Just remember to add a by-line at the end of the post indicating that it was published elsewhere first: former EGU network blogger Simon Redfern [has done it in the past](#).

Finally, it's worthwhile taking a look at what other science bloggers are writing about. Their posts and blogs might inspire new ideas and content for your own blog.

Recruiting and working with guest bloggers

Attracting and canvassing guest bloggers will enhance the blog's content, readership and profile. It is a great way to generate relatively quick content for the blog, while also offering division members or people in your community a way of getting involved. Don't be afraid to [advertise calls for guest bloggers](#), both on social media and the blog itself.

You can also recruit guest writers in person or via email if there is a certain study or person that you think would make great content for your blog. Conferences, workshops and other networking events are prime opportunities to recruit guest bloggers.

When approached by a potential guest contributor, or when inviting someone to write a post, please consider sharing with them the [general blogging guidelines we feature on GeoLog](#). These outline important things to consider when preparing a blog post, such as length of the post, use of images, language to use and the how to use references.

Reaching a public audience

While several of the division and network blog posts are targeted to scientists, many topics in the Earth, planetary and space sciences are of interest to a wide audience, beyond your scientific peers! Here are some tips to make your posts more accessible to the general public.

Coming up with blog post ideas

One of the best ways to engage a general audience is to clearly show how a topic or area of research influences their lives (directly or indirectly). When brainstorming blog ideas, think about how geoscience topics can be connected to non-scientific communities and what aspects of a particular field of study would be the most relevant.

For example, you can write about recent geoscience-related events and topics covered in the media. Examples include the Seismology Division blog's post about the [2018 Palu earthquake and tsunami](#) and the Stratigraphy, Sedimentology and Palaeontology Division blog's post about [plastic in the sedimentary record](#). These two posts were very popular, receiving 1,854 and 10,698 pageviews respectively in the first six weeks after publication.

You could also think about highlighting the geosciences in topics that don't have an evident connection to Earth sciences, whether that's particular places, aspects of everyday life, or pop culture. Past EGU blog posts have discussed the geological elements of cities like [Lisbon](#) and [Rome](#), explained [mantle convection in Easter eggs](#), and covered [climate science in the world of Game of Thrones](#) (the last receiving more than 2,200 page views in the first six weeks after publication).

Also keep an eye out for topics that are particularly quirky and unusual, or feature cool visuals. Examples include an EGU press release on [peculiar ice filaments](#) that grow on dead wood, and the Cryospheric Sciences Division's blog post on [why icebergs are different colours](#).

Be specific and give context

When writing blog posts for the general public, don't underestimate their intelligence, but don't overestimate their knowledge of the geosciences. As you discuss certain regions, processes, ideas, and theories, make sure you clearly show why they are important and what implications are present.

For example, if you are studying the climate impacts of air traffic activity, you need to illustrate what these impacts are exactly. If you are talking about research on the Tibetan Plateau, you need to explain why this particular region is significant.

Use accessible language

Avoid using technical language, acronyms and jargon, as well as words that have different meanings for a public audience (such as dating, cycling, models, faults, shelf). Try explaining concepts as if you were talking to a non-geoscientist friend over coffee or to a relative at a dinner.

When talking about numbers or measurements, try putting numbers into perspective by using comparisons that visualise magnitude and scale. For example: [An iceberg twice the size of Luxembourg broke away from Larsen C.](#)

Feeling stuck trying to explain something super complex? Analogies, metaphors, examples, and graphics are helpful tools for illustrating a complicated idea or topic in your blog posts.

For example, one [GeoLog blog post](#) on teleconnections used ‘postcards’ and ‘text messages’ as an analogy for how Earth’s polar regions communicate differently, complete with an [infographic](#) to get the point across.

If you have any questions about blogging, or any other information within this document, please contact the EGU Communications Officer (networking@egu.eu).
