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How Blogging Helps Graduate Students

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Abstract Title: How Blogging Helps Graduate Students

Poster Presentation: Abbey Dufoe (Journalism)

Maintaining a professional blog or website can help students make sense of graduate school in a concrete way. My blog, Environmental Explorations (abbeydufoe.com), will be used as a case study in a poster presentation to explain how blogging helped with getting into graduate school, maintaining topical conversations through graduate school so far, and helping in the long run with a professional career.

Before I decided to apply to graduate school, I started a personal website with a resume, links to my work and a blog about environmental issues. Upon acceptance, my graduate director said she was impressed with my blog content and the professional layout. This is just one way that my website helped with graduate school, but there are others. First, it allows students to keep a log of the work they have been doing. This is a great portfolio of content that future employers can use to extrapolate what kind of research and topics you are interested in, as well as your work ethic and interests outside of your field. Secondly, a blog can house contact information, links to educational materials and a resume, which allows you to have a web presence when someone “googles” your name. Lastly, a blog can be a way to escape from the daily goings-on of research and reporting in journalism, in my case. Through the blogging element, students can take a closer look at a topic that interests them and delve into it without having the expectations of publishing a paper or story.

My poster presentation will delve into the logistics of creating a blog, including choosing which platform works best and how often to post. The presentation will also talk about why it is important to have a blog during graduate school, including keeping a log of your work and disseminating interesting information. Lastly, I will answer specific questions during the poster session about personal blogs.

I have had success during a conference presentation for the American Geophysical Union conference in December 2013 where I presented during a poster session about how my blog changed my personal and professional goals. During this session, I was able to answer questions from scientists on how to create their own blogs and what they should post.

All in all, blogging is an often overlooked form of communication that can be helpful for graduate students before, during and after their experience. Using my blog as a case study will help focus this topic and provide real-world examples.