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With the onset of the Information Age, a new breed of communication is gaining momentum. Since the late 1990's, the Internet has provided users with a novel framework for publishing content in the form of interactive weblogs (blogs). By enabling new patterns of use, blogs have the potential to transform the general realm of the Internet<sup>1</sup>. For the last decade, blogs have typically been solo endeavors, often concentrating on a specific topic. Recently, however, multiple-author blogs (MABs) have started to dominate the blogosphere. Group blogs consists of posts centered on a major theme and are written by multiple authors in a collaborative effort. The *Central America Applied Biodiversity Science Blog* is one example of multiple authors working together to share their knowledge and experiences from a variety of

disciplines about a single common interest: conservation science.

While there are advantages of single-author blogs (e.g. total ownership), they are dwarfed by even greater benefits offered by multi-author blogging. We will discuss three primary reasons that group-blogging enhances the overall academic blogging experience, especially in the interdisciplinary field of conservation science.

### Collaboration

Whether you are in the natural sciences or social sciences, the development of collaborations are imperative for sharing knowledge and fostering partnerships with scholars, institutions, and actors. Collaborations are essential for maintaining established relationships, and for promoting new idea transfer and encouraging interdisciplinary exchange. Multi-author blogging brings together


researchers working on individual goals, and through shared experiences and learning, provides support through a common interest. Collaborative blogging improves interdisciplinary understanding and provides an avenue for moving away from silos towards synergy, in a more creative and accessible arena.

### Diverse Perspectives

Multi-author blogs have various contributors, each with their own writing style, strengths, and unique personal experiences. It is expected that multiple authors are going to share different viewpoints and opinions. Consequently, the authors, as well as the readers, are exposed to diverse perspectives from a variety of different topics. In the sciences, such as conservation science, this is critical because actors within the field hold widely varying viewpoints and perspectives.

### Time is Precious

Producing fresh, stimulating content on a regular weekly basis is quite onerous for anyone, but especially for scholars who are already swamped by the demands of academia. If posts are not published routinely enough, you risk losing the attention of readers. By cooperating through multi-author blogging, academics are able to contribute a reasonable level of submissions without sacrificing valuable time.

In addition to creating networks among scientists, blogging has the capacity to promote "broader impacts" by enhancing communication between academics and the general public<sup>2</sup>. Scientists are obligated to disseminate the findings of their research to the public, especially with recent skepticism and negative public sentiment towards science (e.g., climate change). Scientists must try harder to convey why science and research is important. Blogging is one avenue that academics can use to provide the public and fellow scientists with accessible information on leading edge research. Collaboratory blogging may be used as a channel for communicating scientific knowledge and generating topical discussion with a broad audience, while breaking free from the restrictive, esoteric means of exclusively conveying data to other scientists in the same field. 

### Other Collaboratory Conservation Blogs

*Stirling Conservation Science, Stirling University*

*Applied Conservation Lab, University of Victoria*

*Cool Green Science, The Nature Conservancy*

### References

1. Kwaśnik, B. H., Crowston K., Herring, S. C., Scheidt L. A., Wright E., and S. Bonus. (2005). Weblogs as a bridging genre. *Information Technology & People*. 18:2, 142-171.
2. Wilcox, C. (2012). Guest editorial. It's time to evolve: taking responsibility for science communication in a digital age. *The Biological Bulletin*. 222(2):85-7.



*Above.* Kelsey Neam and Margot Wood collecting vegetation data at a reforestation site in Costa Rica. *Opposite.* Several authors of the Central America Applied Biodiversity Science Blog (pictured from left to right): Mike Petriello, Margot Wood, and Kelsey Neam.