

Goodbye PLOS Blogs, Welcome Github Pages

Martin Fenner, Gobbledygook

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This is the last Gobbledygook post on PLOS Blogs, and at the same time the first post at the new Github blog location. I have been blogging at PLOS Blogs since the PLOS Blogs Network was launched in September 2010, so this step wasn't easy. But I have two good reasons.

In May 2012 I started to work as technical lead for the PLOS Article-Level Metrics project. Although this is contract work, and I also do other things - including spending 5% of my time as clinical researcher at Hannover Medical School - this created the awkward situation that I was never quite sure whether I was blogging as Martin Fenner or as someone working for PLOS. This was all in my head, as I never had any restrictions in my blogging from PLOS. With the recent launch of the PLOS Tech Blog there is now a good venue for the kind of topics I like to write about, and I have started to work on two posts for this new blog.

There will always be topics for which the PLOS Tech Blog is not a good fit, and for these posts I have launched the new personal blog at Github. But the main reason for this new blog is a technical one: I'm moving away from blogging on Wordpress to writing my posts in markdown (a lightweight markup language), that are then transformed into static HTML pages using Jekyll and Pandoc. Last weekend I co-organized the workshop **Scholarly Markdown** together with Stian Håklev. A full workshop report will follow in another post, but the discussions before, at and after the workshop convinced me that **Scholarly Markdown** has a bright future and that it is time to move more of my writing to markdown. At the end of the workshop each participant suggested a todo item that he/she would be working on, and my todo item was "Think about document type where MD shines". Markdown might be good for writing scientific papers, but I think it really shines in shorter scientific documents that can easily be shared with others. And blog posts are a perfect fit.

The new site is work in progress. Over time I will copy over all old blog posts from PLOS Blogs, and will work on the layout as well as additional features. Special thanks to Carl Boettiger for helping me to get started with Jekyll and Github pages.