

My Personal Plans for 2009

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The end of the year is always a time to think about the past and the future. Even more so if you also have your birthday (FemaleScienceProfessor calls it Christmas Time Birthdays). Below are some of my plans for the next year. The general theme: more overlap of science blogging with my daytime job as physician treating cancer patients and doing cancer research.

Meet fellow science bloggers

I'm looking forward to ScienceOnline'09 in January. Please contact me by email if you have an interesting idea for the session Providing public health and medical information to all. Cromer is so Bracing in February will be very different, maybe something like conversations at the fireplace? And I hope we repeat Science Blogging 2008: London.

Start a new job

If everything works out as expected, I will start a new job next year. It will still be at my institution and will in fact be very similar, but will present new challenges and opportunities. One of these new opportunities is science communication, or how to communicate our efforts in cancer research and treating cancer patients both within our institution and to the public.

Blog more about research

Science blogging means many different things to different people. Blogging about research (your own or that of other people) is one important part of it. In 2008 I have written only a few blog posts about research (e.g. this one), but I want to do more of it in 2009. Nature.com Blogs and Research Blogging are great tools to find blogging about research, and I hope the broken integration of Nature Network blog posts with Research Blogging will soon be fixed.

Start a new blog

Related to the last two topics, I might start a new blog. This would be a German-language blog and would be an official blog of our institution. But first

I have to convince a few people that such a blog is a good idea. I might ask Ed Yong for advice, as he writes for Cancer Research UK.

Find good papers

The Good Paper Journal Club is a Nature Network Forum to promote good scientific writing. It is a good idea and the forum has over 200 members and some very interesting discussions, but it is very time-consuming to find good examples of well-written papers. The best approach would be regular contributions by a large number of people, but the incentives for doing so are probably not there. But it is possible to pick well-written papers from a journal I read anyway, so I will try to do that for Nature in regular intervals in 2009. And in January I will give my first seminar on science writing.

Collaborate with fellow science bloggers

We constantly have many interesting and (sometimes) important discussions. Why shouldn't more of these discussions turn into formal projects, e.g. a paper or a presentation at a science conference? Science bloggers are a very diverse mix of people, and this could lead to some very interesting approaches.

Spend more time cooking

I think it is important to also do stuff not related to science. Some fellow Nature Network bloggers write books (Jennifer Rohn, Henry Gee), write about books (Maxine Clarke), write about music (Eva Amsen), write about food (Anna Kushnir) or write about their favorite city (Matt Brown). I like cooking. I don't write about it, but I hope to do more cooking in 2009. Preparing good food is not only tasty and fun, but also a good distraction from the daytime work. And reading a good cookbook (for example Culinary Artistry) can be as entertaining as reading a good novel.

Go to a warm place in the summer

This year's summer vacation was basically a trip to London for a long weekend. Next year I need a longer summer vacation, and also a place with more sun. We have almost finished planning our trip to this place:

Flickr Picture by Scott Ingram