

How Nature Network changed my life

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Nature Network turns one year old today and it's time to celebrate. We already have a number of interesting – and entertaining – birthday celebrations. I want to contribute with my personal experience at Nature Network.

During the day I treat cancer patients and do cancer research at a German University hospital. But I have been interested in programming for many years, first with the Applescript language (I was involved with the Macscripter website) and more recently Ruby on Rails. Open sharing of resources and information using blogs and other tools is common in these communities.

I joined Nature Network last August. In May I had started a science blog on my own server, more as a personal experiment than a serious blogging effort. The inspiration came from an article by Laura Bonetta published in *Cell* entitled Scientists enter the blogosphere. Moving to Nature Network gave me a much wider audience, but also meant a commitment to a more serious blogging effort.

The topics I pick for my blog mostly relate to how the internet has changed the way we publish our scientific work. Writing regular blog posts about these topics has forced me to do a lot of background research and I have probably learned more than I would have by just reading papers and other people's blog posts or comments.

In the early 1990s, when Internet use was mostly by dialup and could cost \$10 per hour, I was involved with the Compuserve network. I was an assistant Sysop with the MacUser Forum and we had message boards, chat and file downloads.

Nature Network has many of the same features, but with the technology of the 21st century. The community of fellow NatWorkers is one big reason to stick around here. Not only did I learn a lot from others, but it is also just fun to learn about singing scientists and houses in Cromer.

Did Nature Network change my life? At least a little bit already. I wish Nature Network a happy birthday.