Emily

26 years old
B.A. in History

"I'd like to visit Florence someday. But for now I'm happy to be able to read and learn all I can about it."

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ABOUT EMILY O'CONNOR

- Lives in a downtown apartment with her dog, Zoe

- Northwestern University graduate who is an associate curator at the Art Institute of Chicago

- Last book read: "The Road to Burgundy"

- Loves trying out new dishes, and DIY projects. Writes about them in her blog

PET PEEVE The hot dog vendor who never remembers her usual order even though she's been a longtime customer

COWORKERS SAY The most organized person we know, come check out her office. A "Taste of Chicago" aficionado. Handles life's challenges with grace.

BUSINESS DOMAIN INFO

I'm Emily O'Connor. I work as an associate curator at the Art Institute of Chicago. I love art, and while I'm no Picasso, I spend a lot of my spare time on do-it-yourself arts and crafts projects that usually turn out pretty well. I get a lot of ideas for projects from blogs all around the world. There are about 20 blogs I follow religiously, and another dozen that I read occasionally. It all started a few years back when I was looking for information on glass etching. I found the best advice on several personal blogs and I was hooked.

I quickly found other blogs that interested me, such as arts & crafts blogs, and the many food blogs with authors that span the entire spectrum from famous chefs, to talented amateurs, some of whom rival professionals. With blogs, I found a community in which people exchange ideas and learn from each other. I liked it so much that I became a blogger myself, sharing some of my projects online. One of my most popular posts showed how to embellish fabric with ribbon embroidery.

Spends 1-2 hours weekly
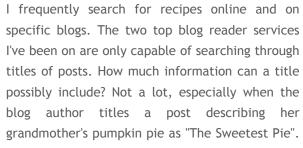reading her favorite blogs

Follows 20 blogs regularly, and
another 14 less frequently

Has her own blog which takes
an additional hour to maintain

As we get busy with life, it becomes harder to keep up with so many blogs, including your own. You start posting less, reading less. A central hub which gathers all your favorite blogs is helpful for keeping up. I can take a quick look to see if there's anything new posted that interests me instead of having to visit each one separately. There are some blog reader services out there, but I have yet to find one that works well for me.

I want to be able to search through more than just the title of a post.

Emily on blog reader searches

I frequently search for recipes online and on specific blogs. The two top blog reader services I've been on are only capable of searching through titles of posts. How much information can a title possibly include? Not a lot, especially when the blog author titles a post describing her grandmother's pumpkin pie as "The Sweetest Pie". It would be helpful if aggregator sites offered better searches.

When I spot a blog recipe, a DIY project, or travel tips that I like, I either bookmark the page or save it to my disk. The thing is, it is too easy to forget about bookmarks and I can assure you saved pages don't ever see the light of day. I've got folders full of them, sitting on my disk. Alternatively, I could pin my favorites on Pinterest, but I would prefer to gather all my favorites in a personal cookbook format for easy reference without having to jump to another application.

One potential problem I see with blog reader services is privacy. For the types blogs that I follow, it's not a huge concern, but I can see where a lot of people would not want a middleman to be watching over their shoulder, monitoring every post they read. If they start keeping a history of everything we look at, they should at the very least let us opt out of it.

I want to have the illusion of being there at the blog's site instead of constantly being reminded that I'm reading via the blog reader service.

Emily on blog readers

Another thing I noticed, is that when you read a blog at one of the top blog readers today, you get a slim menu bar at the top of your screen for navigation. Maybe they feel this is necessary, but I'd like something less intrusive. When I'm reading my blogs, I want to have the illusion of being there at the blog's site instead of being constantly reminded that I'm reading them by way of a third party service. I appreciate the benefits of these services, but at the same time, I want them to take a step back and stay as invisible as possible while I'm reading.