Blogging and Tweeting for Mathematicians:
Why and How

Nick Higham
School of Mathematics
The University of Manchester

`@nhigham`

SIAM Annual Meeting 2013, San Diego

Slides at nickhigham.wordpress.com

Outline

- Why blog?

- Why tweet?

- SIAM plans.

My History

- First website (home page) around 1993.

- **Redesigned** in 2007 with the help of colleague Hykel Hosni.

- **Started using Twitter** in Sep 2009.

- **Started Wordpress blog** in Jan 2013.

- Have but do not use Facebook, LinkedIn accounts.

Definitions

Blog

- Blog = web log.

- Posts in reverse order.

- Usually creatable without using html.

- Content management system underneath.

- Free hosting from Wordpress, Blogger (Google), etc.

Twitter

- Particular form of microblogging with 140 character limit.

Why Blog or Tweet?

- Instant publication.

- (Quick) feedback on ideas/requests.

- Announcements: jobs, tech reports, confs, software, . . .

- Sharing interesting links.

- Promoting research: summary of talk or paper.

- Passing on tips about software etc.

- "Making stuff available".

Desiderata of Blog

- Have a theme.

- Have something to say.

- May or may not express opinions.

- Be unique.

- Provide useful information.

- Be controversial?

- Regular posts.

- Posts that are not papers!

Excellent advice on **Wordpress** site.

Feedback

- Stats/analytics show popularity of posts, search terms, etc.
- **Blog**: comments on post page.
- **Twitter**: replies, retweets.

Most Popular Links

| Rank	Date	Post	Clicks
1	Mar 16, 2013	http://ow.ly/j308Z https://github.com/kragen/knuth-interview-2006 RT @nhigham Donald Knuth: "my education boiled down to 50% mathematics, 50% English" - http://ow.ly/j308Z Fascinating interview.	**1,154** clicks
2	May 31, 2013	http://ow.ly/lzsP5 https://www.jobs.manchester.ac.uk/DisplayJob.as... Two Lectureships in Applied Mathematics (Industrial Modelling) available at Univ. of Manchester. Closes 13-6-13. http://ow.ly/lzsP5	**224** clicks
3	Apr 3, 2013	http://ow.ly/jHBKD https://www.jobs.manchester.ac.uk/DisplayJob.as... Two Research Associate positions in Numerical Linear Algebra available with Prof Françoise Tisseur (closes May 2) - http://ow.ly/jHBKD	**207** clicks
4	Apr 29, 2013	http://ow.ly/kxsZq http://scholar.google.com/citations?user=VWCHIw... Alan Turing ("Reader, University of Manchester") has a Google Scholar page: http://ow.ly/kxsZq	**80** clicks
5	Apr 2, 2013	http://ow.ly/jECJi http://www.informit.com/articles/article.aspx?p... Donald Knuth: "I have ... special Emacs keyboard shortcuts that make bookwriting a little bit like playing an organ" http://ow.ly/jECJi	**78** clicks
6	Feb 13, 2013	http://ow.ly/hFQsf https://www.jobs.manchester.ac.uk/DisplayJob.as... Chair of Statistics available at the University of Manchester (closes March 6, 2013) - http://ow.ly/hFQsf	**45** clicks
7	Mar 2, 2013	http://ow.ly/idxHs http://nickhigham.wordpress.com/2013/03/02/tiny... New blog post: Tiny Relative Errors - http://ow.ly/idxHs	**44** clicks
8	Mar 14, 2013	http://ow.ly/iSKN5 http://blogs.mathworks.com/cleve/2013/02/18/jim... Blog post by Cleve Moler about Jim Wilkinson - http://ow.ly/iSKN5	**42** clicks
9	Mar 13, 2013	http://ow.ly/iRunn http://nickhigham.wordpress.com/2013/03/13/how-... New blog post: How Accurate Are Spreadsheets in the Cloud? - http://ow.ly/iRunn	**40** clicks
10	Mar 5, 2013	http://ow.ly/inJ46 http://swaroopch.com/2013/01/16/orgmode/ From multiple apps to ORG mode - http://ow.ly/inJ46 #emacs	**40** clicks

June 29, 2013, 1:57 pm

■ Views ■ Visitors   Summaries →
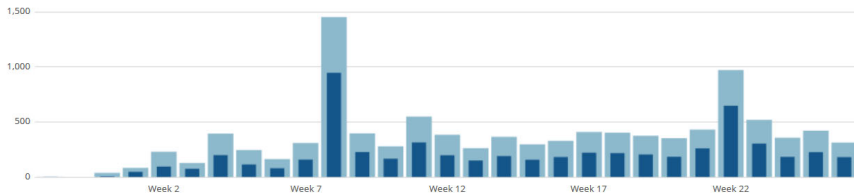
	Today	Best ever	All time	
11	**16**	**610**	**10,429**	**15**
Visitors	Views	views	views	comments

VIEWS BY COUNTRY

Today   Yesterday

Summaries →

Country	Views
🇺🇸 United States	7
🇬🇧 United Kingd...	3
🇭🇰 Hong Kong	2
🇨🇭 Switzerland	1
🇨🇦 Canada	1
🇸🇪 Sweden	1
🇩🇪 Germany	1
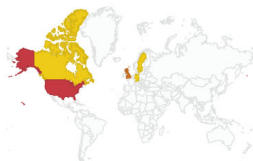
1 ▬▬▬ 7

TOP POSTS & PAGES

Today   Yesterday

Summaries →

Title	Views
Home page / Archives	6
Top 5 Beamer Tips	3
Second Edition (2013) of *Matrix Analysis* by Horn and Joh...	3
The Nearest Correlation Matrix	2
Emacs: The Ultimate Editor?	1
A Black Background for More Restful PDF viewing	1
Total views of posts on your blog	16

CLICKS

My Blogging (2013–)

- **The Nearest Correlation Matrix**: written to collect different software implementations and promote use of the best method.

- Book reviews.

- Report on meetings: Cardiff SIAM Student Chapter, SIAM CSE13 (*"your published algorithms are slowly making their way into scipy (the main scientific python library"*),...

- LaTeX, Beamer, PDF viewer tips.

My Blogging (2013–), cont.

- Historical info: **Lanczos Tapes**, **Sir Horace Lamb**, **Arthur Buchheim** (*"I've just found your recent blog on Arthur Buchheim whilst researching my family tree and it seems he is probably a distant relative"*).

- 15 comments (+ 171 spam).

How to Blog

- (E.g.) **Wordpress.com** or **Wordpress.org**. Many themes available, customizable.

- To write a post
    - use wysywig interface,
    - write html,
    - post from Emacs **org2blog**.

- Organize: choose categories (not too many) and tags carefully.

- Promote posts via Twitter.

- Make RSS feed available.

Misc Wordpress

- **Wordpress supports LaTeX**. Put LaTeX in dollar signs. Even: `$\LaTeX$`.

- May 2013: Wordpress changed the font for listings. Had to edit an old post.

- Wordpress.com shows **adverts** to people not logged in to Wordpress. Can pay $30 per year for no ads.

- Comments are automatically accepted from a person once one has been accepted.

Discovery

- Google indexes blogs.

- Can subscribe to a blog via RSS feed, or within Wordpress.

- I tend to reach via Twitter: post announcements or recommendations from other readers.

- **Hootsuite** Social Media Management Dashboard has an RSS Reader app.

Twitter Tips

- **Lists** invaluable for scanning feeds by topic. E.g., people, software, news.

- New followers often come after tweets and retweets.

- Hashtags useful for collecting Tweets about an event: **#SIAMAN13**, **#SIAMCSE13**.

- Conference prize for best Tweet (see **Manchester Student Chapter 2013 meeting**).

- "Tip" feeds can be a good way to learn a topic.

SIAM CSE13

Lorena Barba @LorenaABarba | 28 Feb
I will be showing how I use @figshare and Twitter as part of my strategy for communication at #SIAMCSE13 today: ↻
meetings.siam.org/sess/dsp_progr...
Expand

Tammy Kolda @TammyKolda | 28 Feb
In case you're wondering... 1st question winner is Jie Chen, and his prize is the BIG data pin! #siamcse13 ↻
pic.twitter.com/EGPIcW0OS8
▣ View photo

Fernando Perez @fperez_org | 27 Feb
As expected, @profjsb plenary #siamcse13 on automating astronomical discovery in the age of big data was a knockout. Stay tuned for video
Retweeted by SIAM
Expand

Tammy Kolda @TammyKolda | 27 Feb
SiSC Special Section on two topics: Planet Earth and Big Data now accepting submissions. ↻siam.org/journals/sisc/... #siamcse13
Expand

Berkeley Lab CS @LBNLcs | 26 Feb
RT @lbnlcs: If u r @ #SIAMCSE13 in Boston this week. Look out for these Berkeley Lab speakers! @SIAMconnect ↻fb.me
/2aeJNnoUd
Followed by HECToR CSE Team and 1 other
Expand

Thomas Wiecki @TWiecki | 25 Feb
CythonGSL IPython NB I used during my #siamcse13 talk ↻
nbviewer.ipython.org/urls/raw.githu...
Expand ← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ••• More

Ali Pinar @alipinar9 | 25 Feb
#siamcse13 @TammyKolda Call me biased and prejudiced (wasn't even there), but I think Tammy's was best CSE plenary talk ever. :)
Expand

ICERM @ICERM | 25 Feb
All set up in the galleria for @SIAMconnect conference! Come visit us during the first coffee break! #SIAMCSE13 ↻
pic.twitter.com/2icxOSU96k
Followed by AmericanMathSociety and 1 other
▣ View photo

SciPyTip
Jun 29, 3:31pm via HootSuite

SpacePy spacepy.lanl.gov

12 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 28, 4:55pm via HootSuite

Geographic pandas extensions ow.ly/mtmRo

3 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 28, 4:26pm via HootSuite

Python Ecosystem: An Introduction
goo.gl/n8JZG

12 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 28, 2:45pm via HootSuite

Videos of #scipy2013 tutorials are up
ow.ly/mtlmJ

25 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 27, 4:26pm via HootSuite

Create a 2x3 array filled with integer 7's:
7*np.ones((2,3), int)

SciPyTip
Jun 26, 7:41pm via HootSuite

Processing biggish data on commodity
hardware: simple Python patterns
ow.ly/mpM94 #scipy2013 slides by
@GaelVaroquaux

8 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 26, 4:26pm via HootSuite

Common matplotlib line types: '-' solid, '--'
dashed, ':' dotted, 'o' circles, '^' triangles

1 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 26, 3:13pm via HootSuite

How fast can we make interpreted Python?
ow.ly/mp6k3

8 retweets

SciPyTip
Jun 25, 10:08pm via HootSuite

A Tour Through the Visualization Zoo
hci.stanford.edu/jheer/files/zo…

19 retweets

Woody Osher

@WoodyOsher FOLLOWS YOU

The math/life wisdom of Stanley Osher and Woody Allen mashed up in 1 place ↻en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_All… ↻en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_O…

19	14	24
TWEETS	FOLLOWING	FOLLOWERS

👤▾ 🐦 **Follow**

Tweets

Nick Higham @nhigham   6h
Stan Osher going for the record for max no of Beamer themes used in one talk - ↻ow.ly/i/2zhlZ #SIAMAN13
↻ Retweeted by Woody Osher

Data Preservation

- Principle of *data in–data out*.
  Keep backup of your tweets and blog posts.
  - ▶ Twitter allows download of archive of tweets.
  - ▶ Wordpress allows export of content.
- Shortened URLs are not guaranteed to be preserved.

SIAM: Existing Blogs

SIAM Connect is a Wordpress blog with 5 "sub-blogs":

SIAM: New Blog

- Regular solicited contributions from SIAM officers, committee chairs, and existing bloggers.

- In due course, contributions from membership in general.

- Categories: science policy, education, conferences, research, general.

- If successful will break into separate, more specific blogs.

- Relation to SIAM News?
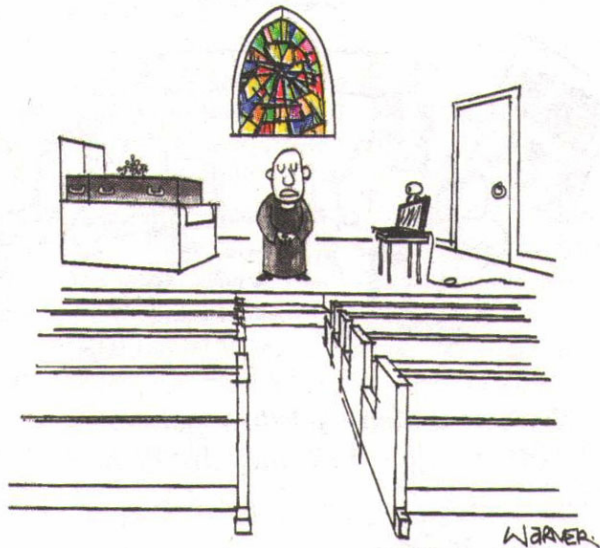
"But it was with the online community where he found true and lasting friendship..."