

BLOGS – AN INFORMAL USER’S GUIDE

CONTENTS	<u>Page number</u>
General points about blogs and blogging at Warwick	2
• Getting further information	2
• Accessing the Medical School postgraduate blog	2
• Privacy and security	2
• Main features of blogs – entries, comments, and tags	3
Entries (including tags)	
• Viewing and searching entries	3
• Privacy settings and what they mean for viewing	4
• Screenshot 1: Blog main page	5
• Create a new entry (and the difference between entries and comments)	6
• Screenshot 2: Creating a blog entry, step 1	6
• Screenshot 3: Creating a blog entry, step 2	8
• Create a follow-up entry	9
• Edit your entry after it’s appeared on the blog	9
• Get emailed when people have commented on an entry	9
Comments	11
• Read comments	11
• Write a comment	11
• Delete a comment	11
• Screenshot 4: Viewing comments and writing a comment on a blog entry	12

GENERAL POINTS ABOUT BLOGS & BLOGGING AT WARWICK

A blog (web log) can be a useful way to share your thoughts with other people, and see what they have to say. Like most things, learning how to use a Warwick blog can take a little time if you're not familiar with it.

Getting further information

I've written this document, and included some screenshots of sample messages, to provide a fairly quick 'how-to tour' of what I think are the main elements of blogs.

- **We've created an online 'User's guide to blogging'**. It's on the blogging project webpage. The link is <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/study/cpd/pgle/support/online/blogguide/>
- There is a useful FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) website about the Warwick Blogs system at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/blogs/faqs/> which covers all kinds of useful things (though here and there it's a little out of date).
- *If you are stuck, can't find the information you need here or on the FAQ site, or just want to communicate with a real person - please email me. I'm Rebecca Putz, the blog moderator (and former Warwick postgraduate), and here to help. My email address is: r.putz@warwick.ac.uk*

Accessing the Medical School postgraduate blog

You can access the blog (<http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/studentpilot1/>) from the project homepage: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/study/cpd/current/handbook-pg/support/online>

In order to read (all) the blog contents, **you will need to have a Warwick IT account and sign in** using your Warwick username and password. There is a link to sign in at the top right of the blog screen – see Screenshot 1 below (p. 5), top right corner.

Privacy and security

More on this in later pages. Main points:

- What is visible to people reading a blog depends on the settings chosen by the person who writes an entry – so it's important to **think about privacy settings** every time you write anything for a blog.

- If you're using a public computer and you've signed in, it's important to **sign out** when you finish.

Main features of blogs

In terms of the messages (text) on blogs, there are two main kinds: **entries** and **comments**.

- Entries are the main messages on a blog. In Screenshot 1 below, you can see 3 entries.
- Comments are for commenting on a particular entry. In Screenshot 1, the second entry has one comment (but you can't read it there)

Tags are keywords chosen by the writer to indicate what an entry is about. Each entry's tags appear at the bottom of that entry. All the tags given to entries in a blog are listed under the Tag heading in the sidebar (the box on the left-hand side of the screen).

See the pages below for more about entries, comments and tags. There are other features of blogs that I don't cover below, such as galleries where you can upload a picture or photo. For more info. on blogs, see the Warwick Blogs FAQs (link on p. 2).

ENTRIES

Viewing and searching entries *(and see Screenshot 1, p. 5)*

The best way to learn about viewing and moving around entries in a blog is just to have a go. Some general pointers:

- Entries are listed in chronological order starting with the most recent at the top of the screen. In the sidebar (on the left side of the screen), there is a heading listing 'Most recent entries' (see Screenshot 1).
- Text along the bottom of each entry lists the author and time of being 'published' on the blog (date of publication is at the top), among other info.
- Entries can stand alone, or follow up an existing entry (for example, giving an update, extending a discussion, etc.). If an entry is a follow-up, text in boldface under the entry title says so and indicates which entry is being followed up (see the top entry in Screenshot 1, below).
- Clicking on a tag shows you entries – and only entries – that also use that tag
 - If you click on a tag (keyword) listed under the Tags heading in the sidebar, you will see all entries *from this blog* with that tag.

- if you click on a tag in an individual entry, you will see all entries *on Warwick Blogs as a whole* with that tag. If you meant to do this, great; if you did it by mistake or want to go back, click the Back button in your web browser
- To search entries for a word or phrase, type it into the Search field at the top of the sidebar. You will be shown all – and only – entries with the text you’re searching for. You can search entries but not comments.

Privacy settings and what they mean for viewing

EACH ENTRY’S VISIBILITY IS INDIVIDUALLY SET by the person who’s written that entry – an important point, hence why I’m shouting about it!

- Entries can be set to be visible only to the author, only to university students and staff, to anybody at all, etc.
- If viewing for an entry has been restricted to “University and alumni” or any smaller group than this, there will be a small ‘lock’ symbol to the right of the entry title. If you put your mouse cursor arrow over the lock, a box will appear telling you who can view the entry. If the lock symbol is not there, the entry is viewable to anybody at all.

This is why signing-in determines what you see when you go to a blog. And if you’re writing something, you clearly need to think about who you want – or don’t want - to be able to see what you’ve written!

See next page for Screenshot 1

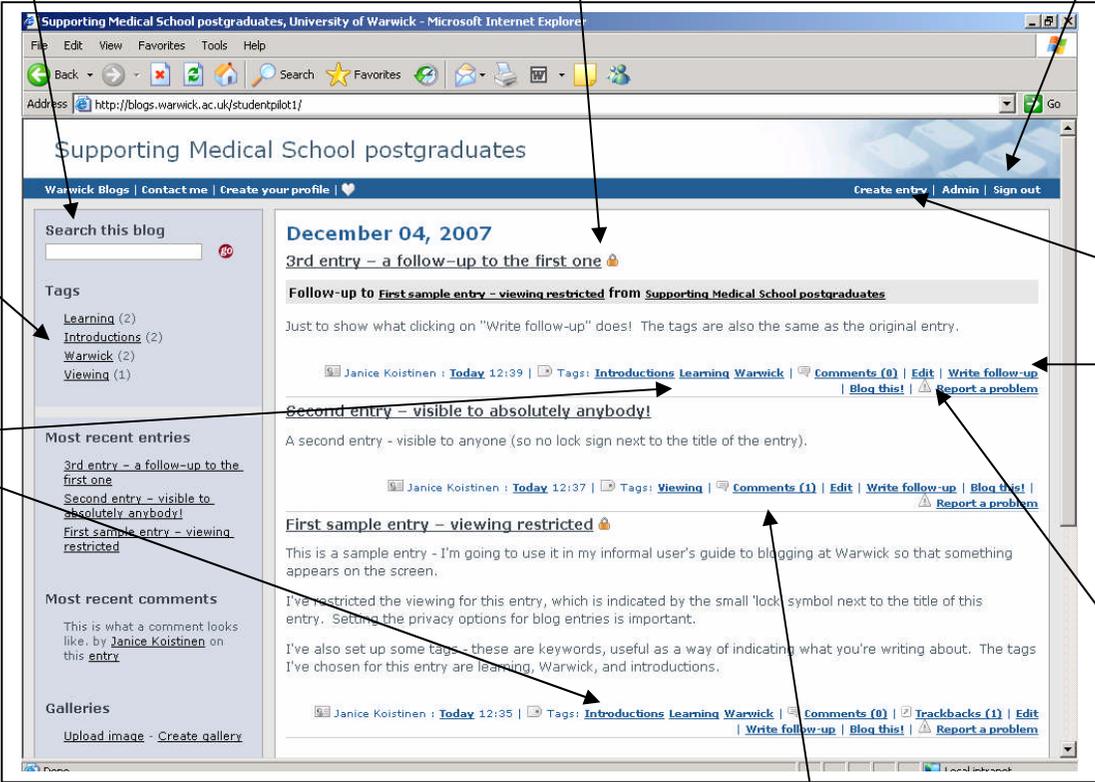
Enter a word or phrase here to **search** entries (you can't search comments)

The 'lock' symbol on this entry shows that **viewing has been restricted**.

Click here to **sign out** when you're finished (important for security). If you're not signed in yet, the link will say **sign in**

List of **all tags (keywords)** used in entries on this blog, and in brackets, the number of entries using that tag.

Here are the **individual tags (keywords)** used in these entries



Click here to **create a new entry OR ...**

... click here to write an **entry that follows up an existing entry**. On this screen, the boldface text underneath the title of the top entry shows that it follows up the first entry

Changed your mind after writing an entry? Click here to **edit an entry**

Click here to read a **comment** someone has written about an entry or to write your own comment. This also shows how many comments have been made about an entry.

Screenshot 1: Blog main page

Create a new entry (that's not a follow-up; for a follow-up, see p. 9)

... but first!...

Difference between entries and comments

Do you want to write about something on your mind? Great – create an entry. Are you responding, probably fairly briefly, to what somebody else has said in an entry? Then you probably want to make a **comment** (see p. 10).

- 1) Click on the 'Create entry' link towards the top right corner of the screen.
- 2) You will be offered a choice of privacy settings - see Screenshot 2, below. Choices range from very private (the entry will only be visible to you, the author) through to not at all private ('World viewable').
 - a) The entries I've created are set to 'Private entry (Contributors)' – Contributors being the postgrad & CPD students we've set up to be able to read and contribute to the blog.
 - b) I would suggest that this 'Private entry (Contributors)' is a sensible setting to use – since the aim of the blog is to communicate with other Medical School postgrads/CPD students, but you may not want absolutely anybody to be able to see what you've written. But this is up to you.

The screenshot shows a blog page titled "Supporting Medical School postgraduates". The navigation bar includes "Warwick Blogs | Contact me | Create your profile | ❤️" and "Create entry | Admin | Sign out". A dropdown menu is open under "Create entry", listing the following options: "University only entry", "University & Alumni entry", "World viewable entry", "Private entry (Just me)", "Private entry (Contributors)", and "Write Review". An arrow points from a text box on the right to the "Private entry (Contributors)" option. The main content area shows a post from December 04, 2007, titled "3rd entry – a follow-up to the first one" with a lock icon. Below it is a "Follow-up to First sample entry - viewing restricted from Supporting Medical School postgrad" and another entry titled "Second entry – visible to absolutely anybody!". The left sidebar contains a search box, tags for "Learning (2)", "Introductions (2)", "Warwick (2)", and "Viewing (1)", and a "Most recent entries" section.

For a **new entry**, here's the list of **privacy settings** to choose from. I'd suggest choosing 'Private entry (Contributors)'

Screenshot 2: Creating a blog entry, step 1

- 3) At the Create entry screen, click in the Title field to give your blog entry a title - see *Screenshot 3 below (on your screen, you will have to scroll down to see the buttons at the bottom)*
- 4) Click in the Tags/Keywords field to give your entry some tags – keywords which tell other readers what your entry is about.
 - a) **For readability purposes**, we'd want to avoid having lots and lots of tags on the blog, especially if there are tags that mean very similar things. Otherwise, in the list of Tags used in the blog (the list in the sidebar), a reader would be presented with a seemingly endless list!
 - b) Underneath the Tags field in the 'Create entry' screen, you'll see a list of tag **Suggestions** – these are the tags that existing entries use. Before you create a new tag, have a look at the suggestions and see if one (or more) would work for your entry.
- 5) If you want to keep your entry more private, click on the "Show just on my blog" radio button on the right-hand side
- 6) Write your entry. You can format it (underline, bullet points, paste in text, etc.) if you want, using the buttons that appear at the top of the blank bit of screen where you enter text.
- 7) When finished, go to the buttons at the bottom (you will probably have to scroll down your screen). You will probably either want to click on 'Preview', or 'Publish now' to have it appear on the blog. If you don't want your entry, click on 'Cancel'.

See next page for Screenshot 3

blogbuilder WARWICK

Title of entry [?](#)
 Related web page [?](#)
 Tags/Keywords [?](#)
 Suggestions (Click on a tag to add it)
 Learning Introductions Warwick Viewing

Who can see this entry? [?](#)
 Authors/Moderators/Administrators [v](#)
 Who can comment on this entry? [?](#)
 Authors/Moderators/Administrators [v](#)
 Show in blog collections [?](#)
 Show just on my blog [?](#)
 Show trackbacks? [?](#)
 Send Technorati ping?

Switch to the Textile2 editor (WARNING: You will lose any changes you have made)

Text of entry

Write your entry text here. Formatting buttons are just above

Tags (keywords) field and below it, a list of some **Suggestions** for tags – these are the tags that other entries on this blog have used. Have a look at the suggestions (click on one to use it in your entry) to see if you can use them, before you create a new tag.

These buttons enable you to **preview** your entry before you publish it (very useful!), **cancel** it if you don't want it, and when you're happy with your entry, to **publish** it (that is, have it appear on the blog)

When you're done: [?](#)

Cancel or Save for later or Preview or Schedule or Publish now

If you want to keep your entry more private, click on 'Show just on my blog'

Screenshot 3: Creating a blog entry, step 2

Create a follow-up entry

Very similar process to creating a new, stand-alone entry:

- 1) At the entry you want to follow-up, click on the link at the bottom of the entry that says 'Write follow-up'. You will go straight to the 'Create entry' screen
- 2) Check that you are happy with the **default privacy setting and tags**. The system automatically gives a follow-up entry the same privacy setting and same tags as the original entry.
 - a) to change default tags: just click in the Tags/Keywords field, and edit/add as you see fit. Remember the list of tag Suggestions.
 - b) to change privacy setting: at the top right of the blue box on the screen, you'll see two drop-down lists - one called 'Who can see this entry?' and 'Who can comment on this entry?' Click on the arrow next to a drop-down list to see the list. When you've chosen your readers/viewers, click on Done.
 - i) If you want to restrict viewing and/or commenting to the blog Contributors – that is, the group of postgrads/CPD students we've set up to be able to read and contribute to the blog – then on one or both of the drop-down list(s), select Authors and Moderators
- 3) Continue from Step 4 on page 7.

Edit your entry after it's appeared on the blog

After you've published an entry, you can change the text, tags or privacy settings:

- 1) At the bottom of the entry, click on 'Edit'
- 2) Make the changes you want in your entry
- 3) Click on 'Preview' to see if you're happy with it, or 'Publish now'
- 4) Click 'Back to my blog' (unless you want to 'Continue editing' your entry)

Get emailed when people have commented on an entry (your own or somebody else's)

- **Your own entry:** when somebody writes a comment, the system will send an email to your Warwick account

- **How often do you check your Warwick email account?** If not regularly, and if you have a SquirrelMail account, you can forward messages to another account you do use. See <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/email/smail/fags-smail/07/>

(Unfortunately, if you're a research student and have an Outlook email account, it's not possible to forward email from this to another account)

- **Somebody else's entry, that you're interested in:**

1. Click on the Comments link at the bottom of the entry
2. Right below the entry, a heading will come up saying how many comments there are for the entry. Just under this heading, look for a link saying 'Watch this entry for new comments'.
3. Click on this link
4. On the next screen, click on the 'Watch this entry' button. The blog system will send an email to your Warwick account when comments are added. (If you don't regularly check your Warwick account, see above for info. on how to forward messages.)

- **Want to stop watching an entry for new comments?**

1. Go to the blog entry that you're watching
2. Click on the Comments link at the bottom
3. Look for the heading listing the number of comments that have been made
4. Just underneath this heading, click on the 'Unsubscribe' link

COMMENTS *(see Screenshot 4, on next page)*

At the bottom of each blog entry is a link that says 'Comments (0, 1, 2, etc.)', with the number indicating how many comments have been made on this entry. You can add a comment to any entry, including your own.

- Comments follow the privacy settings of the entry they're commenting on. (If you want to check the privacy settings, look at the entry title: if no lock symbol, it's viewable to anyone. If there's a lock symbol, hover your mouse arrow over the lock and a box will appear telling you who can view the entry.)

Read comments

- 1) At the bottom of the entry, click on 'Comments'. Screenshot 4, on the next page, shows how comments are displayed after clicking on the Comments link. Comments are listed in chronological order, starting with oldest at the top
- 2) When finished reading, and if you don't want to add a comment, find the Comments link at the bottom of the entry. It now says 'Close comments', and click on it.

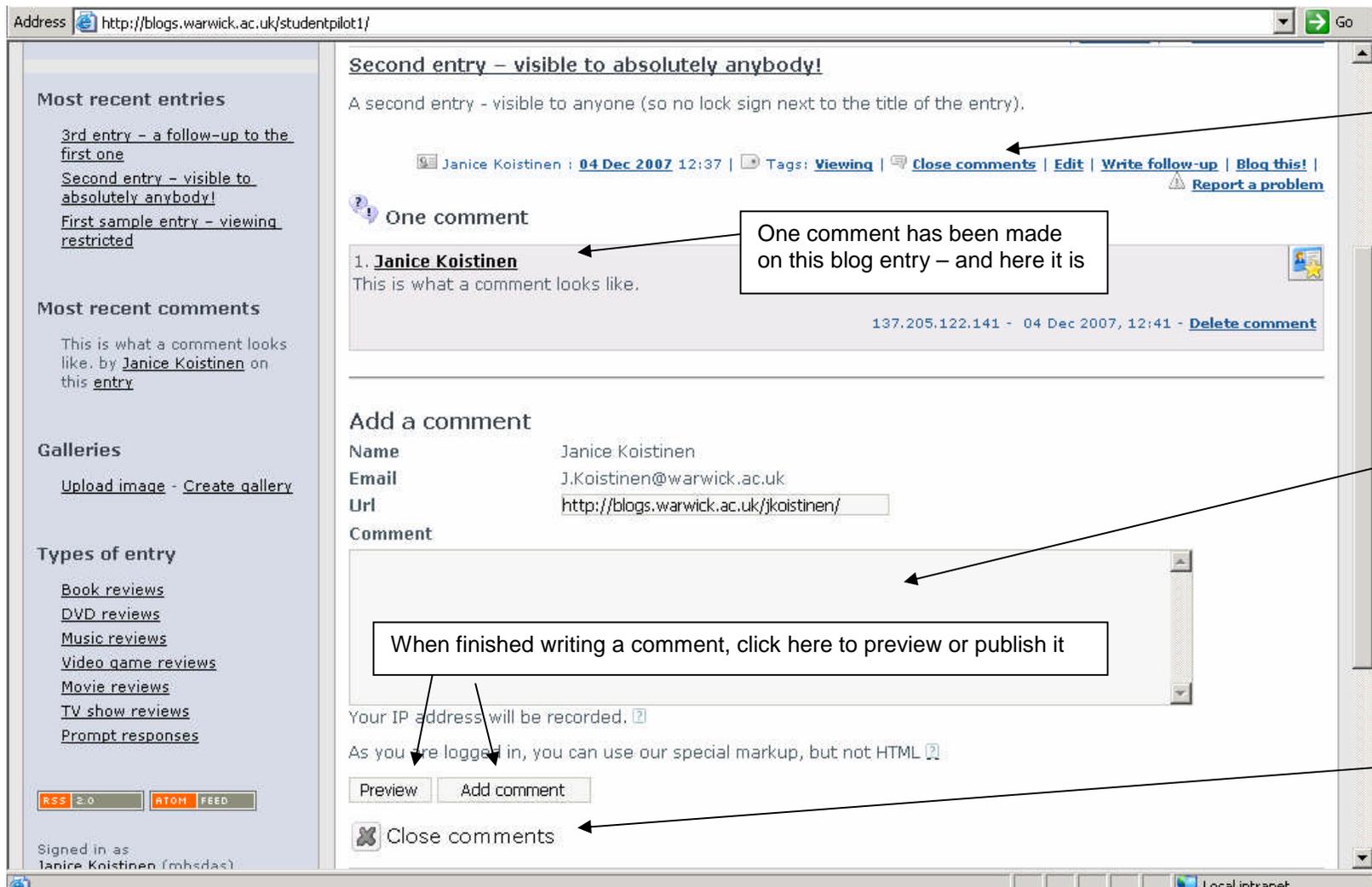
Write a comment

- 1) At the bottom of the entry, click on 'Comments'
- 2) Below any existing comments, find the blank entry headed 'Add a comment'
- 3) Click in the box just below the word Comment, and write in your text
- 4) Below the box, click on the 'Preview' if you wish or the 'Add comment' button. Once you click 'Add comment', you'll see your comment appear straight away. It will list your name and the date and time of the comment.
- 5) Either add another comment, or just below the blank 'Add comment' entry, find and click on the 'Close comments' button

Delete a comment

Once you've published a comment, you can't change it – you can only delete it.

- 1) At the bottom of the entry, click on 'Comments'
- 2) Find the comment you want to delete, and click 'Delete comment' at the bottom right-hand corner of the comment box
- 3) At the next screen, click 'Delete comment'
- 4) Either add a (new) comment, or exit comments by clicking on the title of another entry in the main screen or on a tag in the sidebar. (For some odd reason, once you've deleted a comment, the 'Close comments' button doesn't appear)



After you've clicked on the Comments link in an entry, the link changes to say 'Close comments', as here

One comment has been made on this blog entry - and here it is

If you want to write a comment, enter your text in here.

When finished writing a comment, click here to preview or publish it

When finished with comments on an entry altogether, click here

Screenshot 4: Viewing comments and writing a comment on a blog entry