

## Looking at Mathematics Blogs

JoAnne Growney  
*Silver Spring, MD*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm>



Part of the [Other Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

JoAnne Growney, "Looking at Mathematics Blogs," *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*, Volume 1 Issue 2 (July 2011), pages 70-74. DOI: 10.5642/jhummath.201102.08. Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/vol1/iss2/8>

©2011 by the authors. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

JHM is an open access bi-annual journal sponsored by the Claremont Center for the Mathematical Sciences and published by the Claremont Colleges Library | ISSN 2159-8118 | <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/>

The editorial staff of JHM works hard to make sure the scholarship disseminated in JHM is accurate and upholds professional ethical guidelines. However the views and opinions expressed in each published manuscript belong exclusively to the individual contributor(s). The publisher and the editors do not endorse or accept responsibility for them. See <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/policies.html> for more information.

# Looking at Mathematics Blogs

JoAnne Growney

*Silver Spring, MD*

japoet@msn.com

<http://poetrywithmathematics.blogspot.com>

---

## Synopsis

A mathematician, poet, and poetry-math blogger offers a personal selection of links to a few of the blogs and other websites she has found wandering the Internet.

---

Blogging is promoted as an easy way to keep a diary – and to share it with friends. Or with everyone. Beyond that, however, many blogs offer serious learning opportunities. And the collection of blogs written by mathematicians is a diverse and interesting set.

In the following paragraphs I share links to some math-blogs and other math-rich web sites I have found of interest. Many contain valuable and well-written material – offered by mathematicians, scientists, students, and teachers. My compilation here is not comprehensive but a window into the world of blogging that can enable you to pursue your own interests.

Readers of the *New York Times* may be familiar with its series of OPINIONATOR BLOGS<sup>1</sup> – one of which was written, for 15 weeks in 2010 by Cornell mathematician STEVEN STROGATZ. The *Times* also has blogs related to TEACHING AND LEARNING MATHEMATICS. The MAA (Mathematical Association of America) has links to SEVERAL MATHEMATICAL COLUMNS on its website. Not exactly blogs, but forerunners.

One of many personal blogs focused on mathematics education is MATH MAMA WRITES – created by Sue VanHattum, a teacher of mathematics at a California community college.<sup>2</sup> Scrolling down the right hand column

---

<sup>1</sup>The electronic version of this essay contains live links for each phrase that appears in SMALL CAPS.

<sup>2</sup>Editor note: Sue VanHattum also has an essay in this issue of the Journal.

at MATH MAMA WRITES, one finds a list of other blogs that VanHattum follows; such a “blogroll” is a frequent property of a blog – and it helps visitors to find other postings of interest. Mathematician Timothy Gowers of Cambridge University offers GOWERS’S WEBLOG: MATHEMATICS RELATED DISCUSSIONS – as well as advanced mathematical topics, this blog includes mathematics related to proposed legislation or other current events.

University of London mathematician PETER CAMERON’S BLOG is long running with a rich variety of topics available; when you visit the site, you may wish to start with these links: ABOUT – which tells a bit about Peter – and CONTENTS – which offers an organized list of his postings over the years. I came to Cameron’s blog because of OUR COMMON INTEREST IN THE INTERSECTIONS OF MATHEMATICS AND POETRY. Cameron’s blogroll also lists other blogs of potential interest – and his final link highlights one of my favorites, *xkcd*, billed by creator Randall Munroe as “A webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language.” I visit it often.

Whereas Cameron includes reflective postings as well as mathematical ones, many blogs focus entirely on mathematical research. One such is CHROMOTOPY – with postings by five authors – which focuses on research in algebraic topology.

Because some writers and organizations have busy web-pages on which they post often, it is not always easy to distinguish blogs from other postings. Two of my most valued online sources are actually websites that contain blogs and much more. One of these is *+plus*, a wonderfully various online magazine for students that contains mathematics articles, book reviews, contests, and more. *+plus* welcomes visitors to its site this way: “Plus magazine opens a door to the world of maths, with all its beauty and applications, by providing articles from the top mathematicians and science writers on topics as diverse as art, medicine, cosmology and sport.” Another richly valuable online site is UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: WHERE WOMEN AND SCIENCE CONNECT. The online component of the Women Writing Science project at The Feminist Press, this site includes stories from and about women involved with science, technology, engineering, and math; one of its goals is to offer a survival guide for women in science – especially young women. UNDER THE MICROSCOPE also publishes news, tips, interviews and profiles. On a smaller scale, WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS shares personal and mathematical experiences of four mathematics PhD students in Berlin.

The March 2010 issue of the *Notices of the American Mathematical Soci-*

ety had A BRIEF ARTICLE ON “MATH BLOGS” – its author (a mathematical physicist) John Baez also offers A LIST OF BLOGS to explore. Baez is also a blogger – he participates in *The n-Category Café*, which bills itself as “a group blog on math, physics and philosophy.”

There are several blogs that gather and present links to other blogs. MATHEMATICS MATTERS is one of many “Matters” blogs that gather links to blog postings on a variety of topics. There are also BASIC MATH MATTERS and ADVANCED MATH MATTERS and dozens of others. These are “monetized” blogs and the ads can be annoying. However, the sites provide a service by gathering titles of recent blog postings and you may use them as part of a search to find sites that satisfy your interests. Here is, for example, a screen-captured portion of the May 11, 2011 posting at MATHEMATICS MATTERS:

The screenshot shows the Mathematics Matters blog interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "timeline", "best of", "today", and "yesterday", along with a star icon and a count "(1)". The main heading is "HOW TO MAP CONNECTIONS WITH GREAT CIRCLES". Below this, there are several article cards, each with a "1" in a circle and a "VOTE" button. The articles include:

- Quaternions and Quilts**: "As I write this my beautiful Jeannie is in Paducah working on our retirement home. I mention this because Paducah happens to... about 5 hours ago From PATSBLOG in Math"
- Pace of brain development still strong in late teens**: "Converted from two comments by Thomas Riepe made elsewhere in this blog. Here is a report about a new study on teenage brains... about 10 hours ago From"
- EC2 Trials and Tribulation Part 1 (Web Crawling)**: "Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) is a service provided a Amazon Web Services that allows users to leverage computing power without... about 3 hours ago From R BLOGGERS in Statistics"
- An essential vocabulary for the R**: "1 VOTE"
- Snake Oil version 2**: "We've updated SnakeOil, our interactive 'balloon race' visualization of the scientific evidence for over 100 nutritiona... about 4 hours ago From INFORMATION IS BEAUTIFUL in Data Visualization"
- How to Decrease Algebraic Mistakes – Part 6**: "This is Part 6 in my series for helping students make fewer"

There are also advertisements on the right side of the page:

- NEW HEIGHTS**: "shop celestean.com >"
- We're Hiring!**: "Want to come and work for Information Is Beautiful? Get in. Designer – Are you an all-rounder with a perfectionist slant w... 2 days ago From INFORMATION IS BEAUTIFUL in Data Visualization"
- Targeting the inverted classroom approach**: "1 VOTE"

At the bottom right, there is a blue sidebar with the text "Find the right Card to help power your business." and a "LEARN MORE >" button. The "OPEN" logo is also visible at the bottom right.

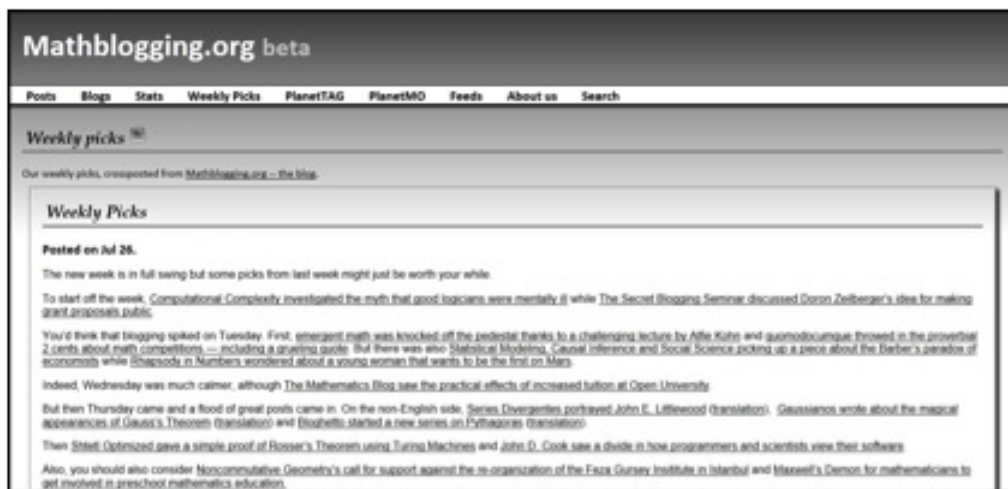
Most of the blogs that interest me are not monetized – written, I suppose, for the love of mathematics – and I close by mentioning one that I find very useful. It is actually A CATALOGUE OF BLOGS – a bit similar to the library card catalogues of old and often a good place to start browsing. Here are some snippets that capture portions of the screen from this catalog-blog. For example, at the home-page, <http://www.mathblogging.org/> we find these category choices:



If we click on VIEW THE LATEST POSTS we get a screen like this:

| Date  | Blog                           | Post  |
|-------|--------------------------------|---|
| today | Spiked Math                    | Summer vacation   |
| today | Math Blog                      | Associative Arrays and Cellular Automata in Octave        |
| today | GED insight                    | Some Math's Lessons For Learning                          |
| today | Math takes 4 Mathy folks       | Funniest joke in the World?                               |
| today | The Value of the Variable      | I am twenty and more casual, also briefly                 |
| today | Mathematics and Multimedia     | Promoting your Blog with Math Carnival                    |
| today | The Endavour                   | Move on to the next question                              |
| today | An Physics                     | Como a Ciência escapa da Força do Ornamento – #11 agora.. |
| today | Neurotic Codings – an blog di  | Parole matematiche: vertice                               |
| today | WJ Hanner                      | One-Cat Challenge: Triangles                              |
| today | Statistical Modeling, Causal   | "Discovered" the genetic secret of a happy life"          |
| today | Cutting out Nines              | Targeting the inverted classroom approach                 |
| today | Wild About Math!               | Carnival of Mathematics #177 posted                       |
| today | n-Category Café                | Category Theoretic Characterizations of Entropy II        |
| today | Interactions – Poetry with     | Counting: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...                              |
| today | Flowing Data                   | Stats of the Union tells health stories in America        |
| today | yeh                            | Sun's sequence  |
| today | Flowing Data                   | Where the water resources are and where it goes           |
| today | Math is Not a Four Letter Word | Some Fun Ways to Teach Counterexamples                    |
| today | Interactions – Poetry with     | Poetry generators   |
| today | Math Prose                     | Algebra, Geometry... and Quantum Mechanics                |

Selection of OUR WEEKLY PICKS leads to this sort of listing



The choice VIEW BY CATEGORY leads to six choices:



And so on. You take it from here:

Explore. Learn. Enjoy.