

Using Women in Science Blogs to Encourage Girls in Science

Girls are already part of the web; let's make them part of the science web.

Getting Started...

Be safe. Talk to girls about the importance of being safe online, including not revealing personally identifiable information about themselves or their location. The Stay Safe web site (www.staysafe.org) has some great suggestions for online safety for teens, parents, and educators. Also consider the age-appropriateness of the blogs for the girls with whom you are working. The blogs listed here have been checked for content and language, but not every blog works for every girl.

Read some women in science blogs yourself. Women in science blogs tend to be women writing about:

1. their lives as science students and scientists;
2. balancing their professional and personal lives;
3. the cool science they do.

Some places to start are:

- **Sciencewomen** (scienceblogs.com/sciencewoman) is written by two fabulous women who share their professional and personal lives. One is a new science assistant professor with a husband and a young child, while the other is a new assistant professor in engineering education in a long-distance marriage.
- **Cocktail Party Physics** (www.twistedphysics.typepad.com) is written by the science writer author of *The Physics of the BuffyVerse*, who believes “physics can be both fun and fascinating—instead of scary and separate.” Cocktail Party Physics is just one example of how blogs can present science in fun ways.
- **The Happy Scientist** (thehappyscientistblog.blogspot.com) and **A Lady Scientist** (biochemgradstudent.blogspot.com) give girls a taste of graduate student life and paths to a PhD in earth/life sciences (**The Happy Scientist**) and in biochemistry (**A Lady Scientist**).

Comment on a blog yourself. Blogs are interactive; it makes the bloggers very happy to hear from you and they love to get discussions started. Have something to say? You are always welcome to comment on the **FairerScience** weblog (www.fairerscience.org/fs-blogs/index.html). It's easy!

Jumping into the Web...

Find out what interests the girls with whom you work and help them find science blogs in those areas. Art? Baking? Sports? Makeup? There's a science blog for almost any topic. Search on the term “science blogs” with key words related to the interest and see what happens..

- **Biophemera** (www.scienceblogs.com/biophemera) is written by a biologist/artist and is about “art + biology—anything and everything from representations of science in art and literature to the neuroscience of aesthetics.”
- **Parsnip Parsimony** (parsnipparsimony.wordpress.com) is written by a woman who realized that she could use the scientific method to veganize the traditional bakery products she was learning to bake and ended up getting a degree in food science.



- **The Science of Sport** (scienceofsport.blogspot.com) analyzes and interprets sports performances from around the world and provides “training tips, insight and opinion.”
- **The Beauty Brains** (thebeautybrains.com) are cosmetic scientists who write about the chemicals used in cosmetics, how products are tested, and what all the advertising means. Sometimes they cover topics, like the science of attraction, that may not be appropriate for all ages.

Never underestimate the power of trendy and cute. One big advantage of blogs is that they’re current. Unlike print publications, there’s no long wait to publish; so blogs are often on the cutting-edge of trends. This, combined with the ease of incorporating photos and video, makes it easy for blogs (like these below), to highlight the warm, fuzzy, and currently popular.

- **Antarctic Journal** (antarcticjournal.blogspot.com) is written by an Ecology graduate student who spends a lot of time in Antarctica conducting research on Adelie penguins. She provides a glimpse of a place few people get to see while describing a different type of scientific research. She also posts pictures of Antarctica’s penguins that are totally cute and trendy.
- **Biology in Science Fiction** (sciencefictionbiology.blogspot.com) is about, well, biology in science fiction from TV, books, and films. This is where you go to find out if there is, for example, a scientific basis for saying there are dinosaurs on the moon. Because the blog often quotes books, there is a smattering of “curse words.”

Through blogs, help girls learn more about the science areas in which they have an interest. Many blogs have specific scientific foci that match girls’ existing science interests.

- **The Culture of Chemistry** (cultureofchemistry.blogspot.com) is based on the premise that “Chemistry is not a world unto itself. It is woven firmly into the fabric of the rest of the world, and various fields, from literature to archeology, thread their way through the chemist’s text.”
- **Star Stryder** (www.starstryder.com) is an astronomer “blogging the sky one sidereal day at a time.”
- **Eye on DNA** (www.eyeonDNA.com) by an epidemiologist/biotech consultant highlights the latest in DNA-related research and applications.

Keeping It Going...

Take advantage of science and math in social networking. Science and math are there on **Facebook** and **MySpace** waiting for your girls to connect. On **Facebook**, they can get daily science news and information from applications like the *Daily Galaxy* or join science-related groups like *Null Hypothesis – The Journal of Unlikely Science*. They (or you) can also start your own science related discussion group. To do this, join **Facebook** and click on the link for “Groups” to find or create a group. On **MySpace**, girls can join groups to discuss a wide range of scientific topics from global warming to theoretical physics. <http://www.wildapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/archive/2007/05/23/put-your-non-profit-on-facebook.aspx> is a useful guide for nonprofit groups wanting to join **Facebook**.

Check out how much more there is out there. Good places to start are:

- **Scientiae Carnival** (scientiae-carnival.blogspot.com) is a blog carnival that compiles posts written about the broad topic of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
- **Science Blogs** (www.scienceblogs.com) hosts over 60 science blogs, including many of our favorite women in science blogs.
- **Women in Science** (sciencewomen.blogspot.com) is a good source of women who blog about science and engineering and of site for girls who are interested in math, science and engineering.

Remember the gentlemen. Most of these blogs will interest boys in science as well and there is the added benefit of helping boys learn more about women in science. And, of course, girls can get hooked on science through the many cool science blogs written by men in science as well.