

# Bloggning

# A tale of two blogs

## Not Exactly Rocket Science

Not Exactly Rocket Science  
science for everyone

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**Profile**

Ed Yong is an award-winning science writer based in London. Not Exactly Rocket Science is his attempt to make the latest scientific discoveries interesting to everyone by beating jargon, confusion and clutter with the stick of good writing. He finds writing about himself in the third person strange and amusing.

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### Venomous Komodo dragons kill prey with wound-and-poison tactics

Category: [Animal behaviour](#) • [Animals](#) • [Lizards](#) • [Predators and prey](#) • [Reptiles](#)  
Posted on: May 18, 2009 5:00 PM, by [Ed Yong](#)

For the longest time, people believed that the world's largest lizard, the Komodo dragon, killed its prey with a dirty mouth. Strands of rotting flesh trapped in its teeth harbour thriving colonies of bacteria and when the dragon bites an animal, those microbes feed into the wound and eventually cause blood poisoning.

But that theory was contested in 2005 when Bryan Fry from the University of Melbourne discovered that a close relative, the lace monitor, has venom glands in its mouth. The discovery made Fry suspect that Komodo dragons also poison their prey and he has just confirmed that in a whirlwind of a paper, which details the dragon's 'sophisticated combined-arsenal killing apparatus'.

By putting a virtual dragon skull through a digital crash-test, Fry showed that its bite is relatively weak for a predator of its size - instead it's adapted to resist strong pulling forces. This is a hunter built to

- Engage the sci-curious
- Provide accurate source of science news
- Showcase writing

## Cancer Research UK Science Update Blog

CANCER RESEARCH UK

Science Update blog

Home About this blog High-Impact Science Our websites Terms & Conditions The bloggers

### Why are men more likely to die from cancer?

June 21, 2009

Figures released today show a worrying trend - UK men are more likely to get cancer than women, and also more likely to die from the disease.

Is lack of awareness and reluctance to go to the doctor leading to increased cancer deaths in men?

The report (pdf), compiled by Cancer Research UK, the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN), Leeds Metropolitan University and the Men's Health Forum shows that men are 40 per cent more likely to die from cancer than women overall, and 16 per cent more likely to get the disease.

To find out if this was due to cancers that predominantly affect only one sex, the researchers removed certain cancers from their equation - namely sex-specific cancers (such as prostate

Welcome to the Science Update blog, from Cancer Research UK

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Other blogs we like

- Dr Lan's Cancer Blog
- NHS Choices - Behind the headlines

- Communicate about science (ours + beyond)
- Rapid topical commentary
- Influence wider narrative

# Benefits and challenges I

## Commenters

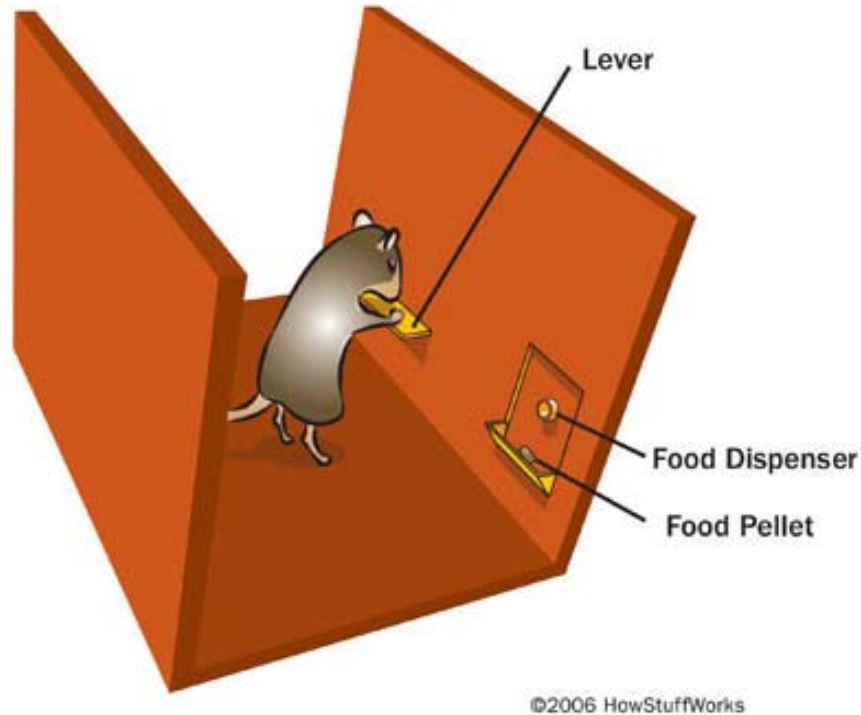


## Commenters



- **Much greater challenge on corporate vs personal blogs**
- **Everything in moderation?**

## Benefits and challenges II



- Virtual Skinner box – excellent way of building and retaining audience



- Significant time commitment – writing, management, outreach

## Benefits and challenges III



- Anyone can do it
- Get your hands dirty
- Diversity of styles, topics and content

**PEBCAC**



**Problem Exists Between  
Chair and Computer**

- Anyone can do it
- Lots of chaff;  
    where's the wheat?
- Standing out

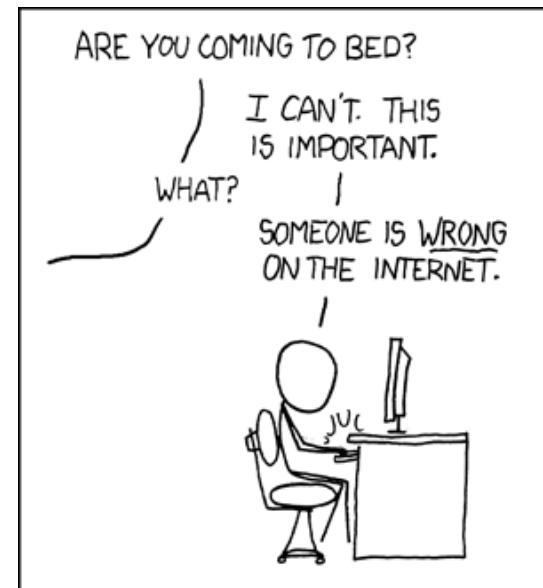
## Dos and don'ts

### For individuals

- Have something to say; say it well
- No substitute for interesting content and skillful writing
- Don't listen to rulebooks

### Extra tips for organisations

- Clarity, personality and plain English
- See your blog as a flexible extension of your website
- Don't try to sign-off the internet
- Don't turn your blog into your organisation's diary



# The future

Entering the mainstream (has it already?)



## Attendance at religious services, but not religious devotion, predicts support for suicide attacks

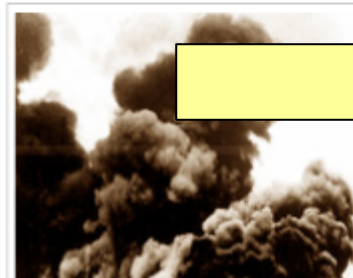
Category: **Psychology** - **Religion**

Posted on: February 20, 2009 8:30 AM, by **Ed Yong**



When it comes to discussing suicide bombers, the controversial topic of religion is never far behind. Scholars and pundits have proposed [several theories](#) to explain why people would sacrifice their lives to take those of others, and conjectures about religious views seem easy to defend. After all, anthropologist Scott Atran estimated that since 2000, 70% of suicide attacks have been carried out by religious groups, and Islamic ones in particular.

But for all the speculation, very few people have examined the supposed link between religion and suicide attacks with an objective scientific eye. Enter [Jeremy Ginges](#) from the New School for Social Research in New York. He has used four related studies to show that there is indeed a link between religion and support for suicide attacks, but it's a complicated one.



# guardian.co.uk

## The trouble with crowds

Group involvement, rather than personal religious devotion, determines whether or not an individual approves of suicide attacks



**Ed Yong**

[guardian.co.uk](#), Saturday 28 February 2009 15.00 GMT

[Article history](#)

Since the events of 9/11, the links between suicide attacks and religious groups, particularly Islamic ones, have been firmly ingrained in the western consciousness. Scholars and pundits have debated the aspects of [religion](#), from personal devotion to group worship, that could convince people to sacrifice their own lives to take those of others.

But so far, their arguments have hinged on mere speculation.