

## **Blogosphere review: Facilitating interactions through blogs and posts**

**Keywords:** Facilitation; blogs; blog posts; collective action; knowledge management; graphic facilitation

Facilitation has invested the blogosphere, as one could expect. Various people are blogging about facilitation, collective action, organizing events, structuring group processes etc. although not many of them combine the lens of knowledge management with that of facilitation.

There are, of course, many websites that provide facilitation tools, training, advices etc. One of the most prominent ones among these is the Knowledge Sharing Toolkit (<http://www.kstoolkit.org/> - accessed 28 April 2015) but this review is particularly about *blogs*, and the people that *blog* regularly about facilitation and could help you keep your facilitation practice up-to-date with new ideas.

The following selection offers a glimpse of blogs you can find on the World Wide Web, as well as a short selection of specific blog posts that editors from this issue and members of the global community of practice -Knowledge Management for Developmentø (KM4Dev) found particularly inspiring to consider the role and opportunities of facilitation in knowledge management for the development sector.

### **Selection of blogs**

*Beyond the edge / Viv McWaters* (<http://vivmcwaters.com.au/> - accessed 29 April 2015). Australia-based Viv McWaters works with groups, and organizations to explore creativity and innovation, change and leadership by disrupting patterns of thinking and acting and exploring serious issues playfully.

*Chris Corrigan* (<http://www.chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/blog/> - accessed 29 April 2015). Corrigan is looking at the intersection of group process and complexity lately, a fabulous combination for development work.

*Conferences that Work* (<http://www.conferencesthatwork.com/index.php/blog> - accessed 28 April 2015). Vermont-based Adrian Segar runs this event design blog which provides

practical information and tools to help plan and facilitate safe and supportive participant-driven peer events.

*Conversation matters / Nancy Dixon* ([www.nancydixonblog.com](http://www.nancydixonblog.com) ó accessed 29 April 2015). Nancy Dixon focuses on the people side of knowledge management. Our most effective knowledge sharing tool is conversation. As she says: “The words we choose, the questions we ask, and the metaphors we use to explain ourselves, are what determine our success in creating new knowledge, as well as sharing that knowledge with each other.”

*Geoff Brown’s Yes!And Space* (<http://www.tangentconsulting.com.au/blog/> - accessed 29 April 2015). The title Yes!AndSpace was inspired by the adventure, connections and ideas that flow by the simple act of saying Yes!

*Group Jazz / Lisa Kimball* (<http://www.groupjazz.com> ó accessed 29 April 2015). Lisa Kimble, a creative and original thinker runs Group Jazz which works with organizations and communities to build their capacity to engage everyone in meetings, events, and initiatives that change the conversation about what matters.

*Johnnie Moore’s blog* (<http://johnniemoore.com/blog> - accessed 28 April 2015). A UK-based facilitator and coach, Johnnie Moore provides nice insights and reflections, as well as tips and ideas on facilitation practice.

*You learn something new every day* (<http://welearnsomething.blogspot.com/> - accessed 28 April 2015). Gillian Mehers and colleagues relay their facilitation and learning stories, insights and tips from very large events to confidential and cutting-edge small gatherings.

### **More specifically on graphic facilitation**

*The center for graphic facilitation* (<http://graphicfacilitation.blogs.com/> - accessed 6 May 2015) acts as some kind of portal to the blogs of various amazing graphic facilitators.

*Michelle Laurie rants and raves*’s blog specifically (<http://michellelaurie.com/> - accessed 6 May 2015). Michelle Laurie doesn't post frequently, but posts high value reflections on (graphic) facilitation and KM.

### **Specific blog posts**

*Dead beat meetings – bring facilitation to the rescue* (<http://maarifa.ilri.org/2015/04/08/dead-beat-meetings/> - accessed 28 April 2015). From the experience of facilitators at the International Livestock Research Institute, here are

some reflections about the real value of bringing a facilitator on board and what that does not mean (although that is what often people think facilitators focus on).

*How do we know we were learning* (<http://www.euforicervices.com/2015/02/how-do-we-know-were-learning.html> - accessed 28 April 2015). Pete Cranston, from the Euforic Services team, reflects about how a group gets on the watch for those moments when reflection and learning is visible and to note when it's happening, in what context, why and as part of what process suggesting that, understanding these things may help us better architect time/space/structure for learning. Euforic Services are regularly blogging about facilitation.

*How on earth do you measure the impact of your events?* (<http://onthinktanks.org/2015/02/09/how-on-earth-do-you-measure-the-impact-of-your-events> - accessed 28 April 2015). On Think Tanks adds an extra layer of sense-making onto events and facilitation to provide a series of indicators to consider to better assess the value and return on investment of events.

*Ideas for bringing online participation into offline events* (<http://www.fullcirc.com/2013/05/01/ideas-for-bringing-online-participation-into-offline-events/> - accessed 28 April 2015). Nancy White offers proven and very useful options for expanding online participation in face-to-face interactions. White is a famous (graphic, online and face-to-face) facilitator of the global KM4Dev community.

*Make a compelling case for facilitation* (<http://facilitatoru.com/facilitation/make-a-compelling-case-for-facilitation/> - accessed 28 April 2015) collects a lot of responses to the question: 'what do facilitators do?'

*Of 'healthy human systems' beyond 'the field' and facilitating conversations that change the world: an interview with Sam Kaner and Nelli Noakes* (<https://km4meu.wordpress.com/2015/03/22/of-healthy-human-systems-beyond-the-field-and-facilitating-conversations-that-change-the-world-an-interview-with-sam-kaner-and-nelli-noakes/> - accessed 28 April 2015). Facilitation guru Sam Kaner and his colleague Nelli Noakes share insights about how the world of facilitation has changed and how (and why) to get involved in it.

*Simple meeting design* (<http://www.chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/simple-meeting-design/> - accessed 28 April 2015). Chris Corrigan comes to the bottom of what meeting design really boils down to: purpose, harvest, wise action, invitation.

*The first thing a new KM team needs* (<http://www.nickmilton.com/2014/07/the-first-thing-new-km-team-needs-to.html> - accessed 28 April 2015) explains the foundational importance of group and process facilitation to doing meaningful knowledge management.

*What's different about facilitation* (<http://www.nickmilton.com/2015/04/whats-different-about-facilitation.html> - accessed 29 April 2015). The same Nick Milton unpacks the specific role that a KM facilitator might play in a rainbow spectrum spanning low or high engagement and low or high ownership of content by the facilitator.

*What makes organizational conversations effective? Participant skill or skillful design?* (<http://www.nancydixonblog.com/2014/02/what-makes-organizational-conversations-effective-participant-skill-or-skillful-design.html> - accessed 29 April 2015). Nancy Dixon explores what collective sense-making is and how this can be influenced by what participants bring to the conversation or how design can turn meetings to become conversational.

## **Other references**

In addition to the many toolkits and facilitation sites, many people who contributed some links and resources for this review mentioned the names of other people who may not focus so much on facilitation (and KM) but operate at the junction of both and/or have something very interesting to say about collective (facilitated) action. You may thus consider the writings of: Andrew Rixon, Bob Dick, Bonnie Koenig (<http://www.goinginternational.com> - accessed 6 May 2015), Dave Pollard (<http://howtosavetheworld.ca/> - accessed 6 May 2015), Gisela Wendling (<http://www.liminalsonglines.com/> - accessed 6 May 2015), Peggy Holman (<http://peggyholman.com/> - accessed 6 May 2015), Roxana Samii, (<http://rsamii.blogspot.com> - accessed 6 May 2015) and Tree Bressen (<http://treegroup.info/> - accessed 6 May 2015).

You can find the entire selection of links and references provided by KM4Dev members at: <http://www.km4dev.org/forum/topics/the-cream-of-the-crop-of-facilitation-blogs-and-blog-posts> (last accessed 6 May 2015).