AES Blog

The objective of the AES blog is to provide a space for AES members – both new and experienced in evaluation – to share their perspectives and experiences of AES activities, and evaluation theory and practice. The blog speaks to our Australasian context, highlighting examples drawn from conducting or commissioning evaluations in Australasia, as well as from observing and participating in evaluation activities.

Guidelines

To effectively achieve this objective, each post must be clear and accessible, and present the opportunity to connect with the AES site, as well as external resources. The audience is those with an interest in evaluation: evaluators, program managers, researchers, students etc. They are busy. What are they going to get out of your post?

Best Practice:

1. **No jargon or bureaucratese**. Keep the language simple and straightforward. If you are using technical terms, please explain them for people who may not be familiar with them.
2. **Keep it interesting and conversational**. Try to make your post as practical as possible – even when discussing theory, think about how the reader might use the concepts in practice. This might include links to tools or resources, as well as practice tips and tricks.
3. **Write in your own voice**. Where appropriate, use first person voice as if you are talking to an acquaintance or friend sitting next to you. Speak for yourself, as an expert (because you are sharing insights and reflections through your writing) and as a learner (because there is always room to grow and improve).
4. **Well-structured**. The reader should know what to expect from the blog: the title and introduction should create an expectation of what is to follow. Include a clear conclusion, such as a call to action for comments/sharing, or food for thought. Use **section headings** to break up the text when it makes sense. Subheadings make it easier for the reader to skim the blog to the section they would most like to read. Keep each section as contained and coherent as possible so the reader does not feel lost for not having read what came before.
5. **Original content**. Most of the text must be of your own writing. If quoting another source, give a link or citation, and limit the quote to a few sentences.
6. **Self-edit**. Write the content in a program with a good text editor to eliminate most writing errors. While the AES blog team vets all articles, we ask that you provide us a clean a copy as possible.

Pitching blog ideas

Every month, AES will send out a call for writers and multimedia creators to publish a piece (write-up, video, interactive online presentation etc.) about a theme or upcoming AES event. This will be communicated as a blog post on the AES site, and via our email and social media channels. However, we are always open to hearing about your ideas and interests. We encourage you to email us a short pitch at blog@aes.asn.au. Be patient with us; we are all busy professionals. We will review pitches every month and reply to your email once we've discussed with the team.

Requirements

The following are required material for the AES blog.

Word count

- Approximately 500 words (minimum) – Please don't limit your blog post based on this number. Most of our blog posts range from 500 – 2,000 words.

Format for submission

- Share a Google doc or email a Word doc.

Links

- Link to other content whenever relevant. Every link included must add value for readers.

Paragraph length and spacing

- Keep paragraphs short. No longer than about 5 lines.
- We adhere to the one space after the full stop philosophy, not two.

Language

- Use plain language. Explain technical terms.
- Use sensitive and culturally appropriate language.

Formatting

- Use headers and subheaders to break up your post.
- Avoid big blocks of text.
- Use bullet or numbered lists.

Structure

- When writing headlines be specific and indicate a benefit to the reader.
- End the post with a question or a call to action for comments/sharing. The more specific, the better.

Images

We love images on the AES blog, though feel free to submit your post without one (or ask us for ideas). We use images to break up text, make the blog post scannable, and visualise a main idea. Ideally, we include one image at every scroll depth, so an image is always visible. At a minimum, we will include one header image.

Images might include visual depictions of data (e.g. charts, infographics), diagrams or processes, or photography – whatever will help explain your message and engage the reader. Where applicable, ensure you have the permission of people in the photo and/or the rights to publish, as well as cited your source. You can also use Google images or free stock images. Here's a list of image sources under Creative Commons: https://blog.hootsuite.com/20-free-stock-photo-sites-social-media-images/

Note that if an image is blurry or not clearly relevant to your post, then it shouldn't be on the blog. Find a different image or ask us for ideas. We recommend a 600x400 image, as we find this the optimum image resolution when sharing articles.

Author bio

- Author bio should be 50 words max.
- Include your headshot (350×350).
- If possible, link to your Twitter, LinkedIn and/or website.

Publishing

Editing

We may edit your post for conventions, cohesion and voice, where appropriate, and bounce it back to you for revisions. We may edit anchor text and links that are not relevant to your post. Sometimes scheduling may change but we will let you know ahead of time.

Deadline

We ask that your articles be submitted 7 days prior to your scheduled run date. Don't worry, we'll coordinate a date together.

Sharing and promoting

Blogs are designed to be shared. AES will publish your post on the website, and share it on our LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Please plan to promote your post throughout your own social networks. We ask that you share it more than once on multiple networks over multiple days. The timeframe and scheduling is up to you.

Occasionally, we may contact authors for permission to republish their post on our page, with credit and a link to the original article. The AES blog team may publish a collations of blogs written by members of AES. Let us know about your blog if you'd like us to consider it for inclusion.

Commenting

Please be available the day your article publishes and the following days to respond to comments. Answer questions or at least acknowledge the comment so readers know you're listening.

Contact

For questions and inquiries, please don't hesitate to contact our AES blog team at blog@aes.asn.au