

It is difficult for me to know what really “works” on the blog. On the whole, most things seem to work well: as I’ve reported recently, the blog continues to grow. We are working toward 7000 members (but I very much want that in six figures!) and this past year we raised on average over \$420 a day for charity. That’s a lot of dosh. All to the good.

But I’m concerned about the quality of the blog and whether it is doing what you yourself want it to. I have only two ways of knowing: the rather crude rating system we use for blog posts and the feedback I get.

The rating system could probably be improved, but I’m not completely sure how. Of course each post isn’t read by 6700+ members every day, but even so, I typically will get somewhere between 5 and 10 people rating a post. That much is helpful (especially if there is a consistent trend), but it’s not a lot to go by, nothing anywhere statistically significant.

The feedback comes in two ways: the comments I receive either in the comment section or in personal emails. Most of the comments are focused on the substance of the post or related – or even unrelated – issues, and that’s what we want: it’s the point of the comment system. It does seem to be working well. When I do receive evaluative feedback, it is almost always positive, for which I’m deeply grateful indeed – every time I get an uplifting comment! But if there are things that can be improved, I would like to know. Tell me, either in a comment or a private email.

What has raised the issue for me is a particular issue. I was thinking last week, while doing a post, that some are a bit longer than others. I always shoot for 1000 words a day, but the reality is that they are almost always a bit longer, more like 1200 words. And sometimes they shoot up over 1400 words. And I wondered: does this make any bit of difference at all to people reading?

Would people prefer \*shorter\* posts, so as not to take so much of their time, making them more likely to read and use the blog with greater regularity, say 500-800 words? Or would people think that isn’t enough bang for their buck – they want more. On the other hand, do longer posts turn people off, so they are unlikely to read them, because it’s too much time and effort? Is 1000 words about right? There’s no particular logic to that number: I just arbitrarily hit on it, mainly because I thought it seemed like a decent length to say something reasonably substantive without getting crazy.

I have no way of knowing! No one has ever said. So feel free to tell me. Even if responses are not statistically significant, it will be of some use. (I’m not about to create a detail questionnaire for people to fill out!)

Feel free to give me other feedback as well. Do you like the topics I cover? The depth at which I cover them (too technical sometimes? Not enough depth? Too much depth? More than you really wanted to know?)? The style and attitude of the posts?

One of the things I really appreciate about the blog myself is that in the comments – even in responses to others – we don’t have any serious snarkiness here. How often does that happen on the Internet??? Other comment forums I occasionally tune into are just awful. (I try to delete snarky comments, and that seems to have created a nice ethos on the blog; if some fall through the cracks, mea culpa!)

In terms of the substance of the comments, some come from people who don’t know the field at all and are just curious. I’d like to encourage those, and you who make them.

Please DON'T feel that you have to have to have an intelligent view of something or a reasoned judgment of it or even any knowledge at all about it before asking a question. Everyone on the blog is respectful of our levels of knowledge.

Other comments come from people who know a heckuva lot. Most come from the lots of folk who are between the two extremes. All comments are welcome. I'm happy to engage both the basic and the highly technical ones, at the level that the commenter seems to want/need.

If you have any responses, in general, to the level of my own responses, let me know that too. I know some people wish I could engage them more and have more sustained and lengthy responses and backs-and-forths. I wish so too.

In any event, and in sum: if you feel like giving me some feedback to make the blog better, let me know. If not, keep reading! I'll take it as a good sign.



[Don't Trust What You Read!](#)  
[My Pod Cast Interview with Sam Harris](#)