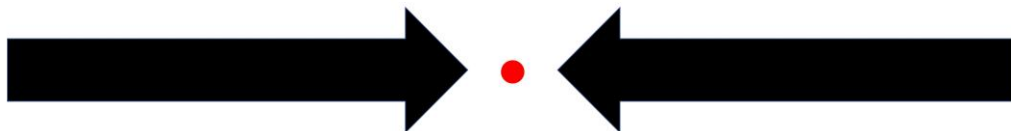


# There's Nothing Wrong with Writing About Trivial Things

Shôn Ellerton, January 9, 2020

*Many writers who start out worry too much that what they're writing about will be too trivial. My advice. Just do it!*



A couple of years ago, I wrote a short article about how Aldi still use coin-operated locks on their shopping trolleys whereas many of the other supermarkets do not. [Click here](#) if you're curious!

I got a few puzzled reactions from readers.

'Why is this so important?'

'Yeah, so what?'

'Surely there are more important issues to discuss.'

'You have way too much time on your hands'

Bizarrely though, it got far more views than the more 'serious' topics I wrote. And it makes perfect sense.

## Gilligan's Island Syndrome

Last year I read a book called *The Skeptics' Guide to the Universe* by Steven Novella. At the end of the first chapter, the author discusses this very thing. The misguided notion that we should be tackling only the big problems and not waste time with the little problems. The author cleverly points out that this works handsomely well on a small island where a few stranded individuals are surviving to the best of their abilities. However, he then states that in a world of

seven billion people, this makes absolutely no sense. He coined the syndrome as [Gilligan's Island](#) syndrome based on a once-popular American comedy TV sitcom made in the 60s about a shipwrecked crew on an island somewhere in the Pacific.

However, living in a world of seven billion people in very complex societies, can you imagine if everyone wrote about how to solve world hunger or the energy crisis? Even to make a simple lightbulb, somebody out there needs to understand how to make glass, another one will need to understand how a basic electric circuit works, and yet another will need to know how to put together a tungsten coil if you're still using the old-fashioned light bulbs (or globes if you're an Aussie!). It would be ridiculous to suggest that only heady topics such as world hunger, war, climate change and nuclear disarmament be discussed.

## Nothing's too insignificant to write about

If you've ever written a university thesis or dissertation, you might possibly remember encountering works from others sporting outrageously lengthy and incredibly specific titles. My late grandfather wrote a thesis titled [The Genetics and Gene Distribution in Triticum Vulgare](#) (that's wheat to you and me). Very specific and detailed. If you're really, really bored or if you have a fascination with wheat, you can read the whole thesis by clicking on the title of the thesis!

Therefore, to write about something as trivial as if it's better to write in green or blue ink or if it's a good or bad thing if your poop floats in the toilet bowl is okay. Someone out there will be interested. .... Probably.

A lot of stuff is seemingly trivial with no real importance but when all the trivial pieces are assembled, it often leads to something far more significant.

## Surely it can't be that important

We've all seen it on social media. On LinkedIn alone, I came across cat pictures being posted, presumably to arouse die-hard LinkedIn fans who don't approve of that sort of thing. A video from a camera panning back and forth across an idyllic snowy scene somewhere in Switzerland without any text or commentary generated thousands of views and hundreds of comments. Why? I don't know.

This is the point. It does not always have to be important.

## Without trivial writings, the world would be a dull place

As tragic as the bushfires are in Australia, we begin to become tired of watching or reading the same stories. I'm not suggesting that we don't position important stories as priority, but with so many people writing about it, it just creates so much additional 'noise' that we eventually become a little more immune to them.

To some extent, the same has applied to the dreadful 'woke' movement. We stumble across it so frequently that we start learning to get tired of reading about it. All I can say is hats off to Ricky Gervais and his speech at the Golden Globes 2020. Maybe that'll put an end to all that nonsense!

I'm sure we could find enough reading material about Trump and his international escapades to bore us to death, but coming across an article extolling the virtues whether one should drink out of a green or a red mug *could* be more interesting, if not amusing.

## Screw the trolls

There is one absolute certainty. There'll always be someone out there who wants to throw dirt onto someone's writings given the chance. I'm not talking about disagreements backed up with reasons, but rather, lazy and down-putting statements just to make the one throwing dirt feel superior and all-knowing. The most repugnant trolls tend to hide behind a wall of anonymity. I've had a couple of trolls and I was sorely tempted to block them but thought better of it. Blocking is largely ineffective anyway.

Having trolls is arguably a good thing. Statistically, if you have trolls commenting, the likelihood of those who support, or at least show a mild interest, in what you're writing about is often significantly higher than those against. That's my experience in any case.

## You have way too much time on your hands

How many times have you been told that you've got too much time on your hands? Chances are that if you did, you've done something epic or kept up a

practice of doing something on a frequent basis which many others wouldn't contemplate doing.

I'm a stalwart believer that those who do a *lot* of things actually have *more* time on their hands, at least within reasonable expectations. Some of us know just how easy it is to have the occasional lazy day of waking up late on a weekend morning, stumble around for breakfast, only to then start preparing for lunch. After which, you binge watch an epic series of something on Netflix (which you'll forget all about the next month) or watch every James Bond movie ever made. Sure enough, most of us would frown on doing this too often but occasionally, I don't see anything wrong with it.

On the other hand, I have time to play with my son, tend to the garden, dabble in photography, 'do the technical stuff' for my wife's Tai Chi business, enjoy going to friends' barbecues, write stuff like this, maintain a daily diary, preparing to publish my grandfather's autobiography, play the piano, upskill my technical knowledge in IT, keep my CV up-to-date, do the finances, host international students, fix and mend things in the house, and I still have some time to wind down after dinner with a glass of wine watching something on Netflix or listening to music. If anything, it keeps me so busy so that I don't have time to harbour any stressful thoughts!

## Just do it

If you're keen on writing and have second thoughts about writing something which many others may regard as being 'too trivial', highly-specific or not suited to the platform you're publishing it on, you may be surprised to learn that someone out there might be missing out because you're too afraid of being ostracised to write about it.

Monty Python took this to another level in one of its books, [The Brand New Monty Python Bok](#), in which a complete page is written in small print with multi-coloured text proudly discussed that this page is in colour complete with a long, rambling witty discourse. It was utterly pointless, but it was funny. How very British!

Back to what I stated earlier, it is often those articles which are trivial that interact with more readers. We can only comment so many times on topics which are on the minds of so many others.

My advice. Be brave. Write something about the most trivial of things. Perhaps, a black dot on a piece of paper!