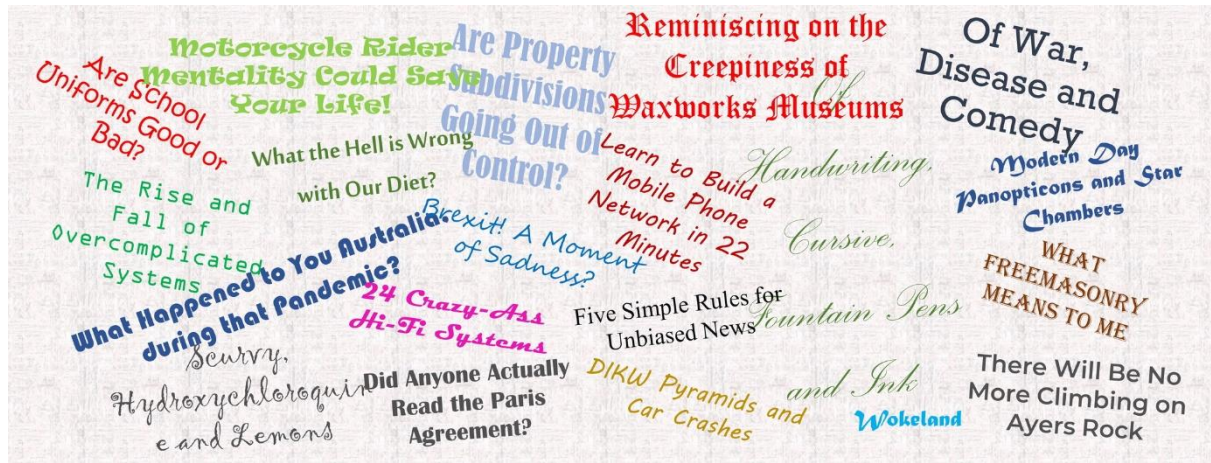


8 Reasons Why I Write Articles

Shôn Ellerton, October 20, 2021

I frequently get asked why I bother to write articles. Here I explain why.



Having written nearly two hundred longform articles since 2017, I often get asked why I write them.

What's the purpose?

Who's going to read them?

Aren't there more important things to do?

Why do I write on such subjects which may be controversial?

I'll give you eight reasons why I continue to write longform and why I have no qualms in writing about any subject that satiates my curiosity.

1. To put the subject to bed

Let's face it. Social media is a two-edged sword. Good things and bad things. We all know we can't have all the good things and we certainly don't want all the bad. Besides the 'nice' posts which many of us enjoy, the ones of family photos and holiday snaps, there are often those which generate controversy and publicise collective support of a common enemy.

Social media is an extraordinarily difficult place to hold a nuanced debate, because we tend not to think too much when commenting and don't have the patience or finger dexterity using smartphones to elaborate. Due to the transient and sporadic nature of social media, it's far too easy to get caught up in that

endless loop of regurgitating a subject of contention over and over without getting the full message across. The problem of social media's transient nature is that its audience is for the present only. Seldom will anyone try to unearth and piece together commentary on old social media posts to learn of our past. We tend to learn history through documentaries and books.

Instead of looping around the same subject repeatedly, my way of getting around this is to isolate that subject and write something about it. Some subjects are too big to write on extensively but if they are taken in bite-sized sections, they can be documented as standalone articles. The time it takes to read my articles ranges from one to two minutes up to nearly twenty. Some articles are very trivial, for example, an article I wrote about Aldi shopping trolleys and some articles are quite long and extensive as the one I did about the pandemic in Australia.

For me, completing and publishing an article on a specific subject provides closure or putting it to bed.

2. To create a history for others through my experiences

Documenting events that take place today are important for tomorrow's readers. As mentioned above, social media posts and its commentary will not provide a coherent and understandable history. History books, of course, are good ways in which we can learn history; however, there will be many history books written by many authors, each having their own viewpoints and biases.

What many of my readers do not realise is that I am primarily writing for my young son and not for today's readers who are often overcome with an abundance of material to read on the subjects I am writing about. It is something for him to remember when I become old and pass away. I am grateful that my late grandfather left behind his writings of his extensive travels around the world being a sugar beet scientist. Interspersed in his stories are snippets of well-known events that took place from a viewpoint I never came across before in the history books. When I was younger, I remember him typing away and stashing his life experiences in a box. At the time, he asked me if I wanted to read them but, shamefully, I was not interested at the time. I wish I asked more questions then, but I was young and aloof and wasn't much into history and politics as I am now. There is a deeply personal connection when one reads the history of the day through the eyes of a family member.

Articles, not being as permanent as a properly published book with an ISBN number, it is my intention to author a few books from the collected articles I have written or intend to write.

3. Thinking before you write

Many know the expression. ‘*Sleep over it*’. For example, if you receive an irritating email from someone, the impulse could be to respond immediately whilst the emotions are at a high only to then realise that what you sent is not what you intended. Perhaps the response didn’t make sense. Perhaps a few hurtful phrases were strewn in littered with profanity. Or something else which you wish you never sent. It’s happened to me many times as, I’m sure, to many others.

Writing an article, particularly that of a sensitive or controversial subject, disciplines us to think before we put pen to paper. When writing, we want to make the message understood, but at the same time, we don’t really want to start upsetting others needlessly by being nasty. It allows us to add nuance and context, which, in today’s fast-paced world of social media posts and memes is void of.

Publishing an article is another step to thinking yet again through the process of carefully re-reading and editing it. Although context and nuance are very important, so is correct grammar and elimination of spelling mistakes, although no one is perfect here. Especially not me! Many social media posts and commentary are almost unreadable due to horrendous grammar.

4. To make real changes in society

‘How can one little article make a difference?’

‘Nobody’s going to read it.’

‘Surely, you can do something more productive with your time.’

‘Leave these issues to the experts’

I’ve heard all these lines before and, frankly, it really bothers me.

I think most of us would agree that various issues bother various people, but not all of them. There are those who are against anything to do with nuclear power

stations. There are those who are upset with the current leader of the nation they live in. There are those who get upset with hunting wild animals. It's unlikely anybody will be upset at everything, if not impossible. You get the gist.

The problem of not taking a stand about an issue, is that the issue of concern continues to be an issue. Too many of us assume that *someone else* will sort out the issue. I don't want to pick a specific issue but, say, there is a new law that is being proposed that you just do not like. Keeping your head in the sand like an ostrich hoping that the consensus will make the right decision is wrong. This strategy, or lack of one, is the way of the silent majority, and that is why they are often taken by surprise by the much louder minority who tend to be extremely vocal and active in successfully pushing their ideals across. What invariably happens is that those within the relatively small number of the majority speaking out gets ostracised, humiliated or even [doxed](#).

Sometimes, it does not take much for a very few to make a very big difference to society, whether good or bad. It didn't take much for a very few, in the case of 9/11, to make a very big difference to society. As for new innovations that offer improvements in our life, it must be remembered that, although most fringe ideas are wrong, almost all good ideas come from the fringe.

5. To be able to debate about the subject better

After writing an article about a specific subject, I always find debating the subject far easier having spent the time to translate my thoughts into words by writing them down. When authors of books talk about the subject they wrote, they do so with conviction, ease and comprehension.

When I see two people debating a subject in which one has written extensively on it and the other not, I can almost guarantee that the one who writes about it will have the upper hand in the debate. This does create a bit of problem for those who choose not to write and want to contest the subject in question with equal conviction. I choose the word, *contest*, rather than debate in such situations, although there are exceptions, as with most of what we do in life.

The next three reasons are short and sweet.

6. To add nuance and context

Writing longform articles allows for more detail with nuance and context. A well-written article is not only easily understood but contains enough material to make it less easy to misconstrue or taken out of context.

7. To do something productive

I like watching the latest Netflix series of something I like, but is it productive? Do I get something out of it? It may provide an opportunity to talk about it to friends or family, but, by and large, in my case, I tend to forget what I watched one month ago. However, with each story or article I write, I usually look back upon them as a renewed experience in the future, sometimes surprising myself with knowledge that I would have forgotten if I hadn't written it down.

8. And lastly, just to write better

Put simply. The more you read and write. The better you are at doing it!