

Mark Bieraugel

# Hit that push button

## Using LinkedIn to improve your reputation and writing

**A**re you tired of waiting to publish your peer-reviewed article? Anxious to get your ideas out there to a broad range of people? Then consider publishing on LinkedIn.

I regularly write posts for LinkedIn as an academic librarian. I don't just use LinkedIn as a parking spot for my CV/resume, but I use it to build and burnish my reputation. I also use LinkedIn to both improve and speed up my writing. And to write in a more natural and conversational way versus my scholarly writing.

### What is LinkedIn and what is it for?

LinkedIn is a platform for making connections with people, to read their articles and posts, and for posting your CV/resume for employers and recruiters. LinkedIn currently has 740 million members, and is the main networking site for the work world. Like many other social media sites, LinkedIn encourages content creation and publishing in three basic forms: videos, articles, and posts. I'll cover articles and posts.

### Why write for LinkedIn?

Why write for LinkedIn? Frictionless publishing. You are the author and the editor. There are no barriers to writing and publishing. You can include an image, a bulleted list, and write hundreds of words or just a dozen. You decide.

One benefit is to have time set aside every week to write. I post on LinkedIn every Friday. I usually finish writing within an hour, and often times less (around ten minutes or less for a short post), especially if I've thought about my post all

week. Sometimes I have an idea of what I want to write about once Friday rolls around.

Another benefit is you get to practice writing in a low stakes environment. Not many people are likely reading your posts other than your personal LinkedIn connections, a friendly audience. On this platform you get to write in any style you like: erudite, sassy, friendly. Writing this way gives you a chance to develop your own, more personal voice—not a scholarly peer-reviewed writing voice, but an individual and distinct writing style unique to you.

The weekly posting has helped me to improve my writing. I have learned to write more clearly, to compose at the keyboard, and to just dive in and write. There's no time for dithering. This weekly writing formed a new habit: not writing connected to fear, anxiety, and long literature reviews, but writing that is fun. I enjoy writing scholarly articles, but they involve a lot of work, and waiting. It is satisfying to get that type of article published, but so is getting responses from a LinkedIn post and seeing the viewer numbers rise up. Writing posts or even articles is fast, and no footnotes, bibliography, or APA, MLA, or Chicago style is required.

Another reason to write LinkedIn posts is that you can write on any topic you like. I started writing on career readiness, job searching, and researching potential employers. After I came out as nonbinary, I've been writing on being nonbinary

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Mark Bieraugel is business librarian at California Polytechnic State University, email: mbieraug@calpoly.edu

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in the workplace, with all its challenges and fun. For my LinkedIn posts, no one tells me what to write. It's likely I'll write on other topics in the future. No one is overseeing your writing, which is a bit of a double-edged sword. You don't have anyone telling you what to write, but that means you have to have something to write.

In scholarly publishing, I often feel that I need to "stay in my lane" and continue to research and write in the area of entrepreneurial spaces and ecosystems. When writing for LinkedIn, I can readily publish outside of my field. You can, too. Of course, not everyone is a scholar or has to write peer reviewed articles to get tenure and promotion. LinkedIn is an ideal way to publish and publish a lot, whenever you'd like.

Writing this way, for a larger and more diverse audience, you can build upon your existing reputation. You can also work to develop a reputation in another area. I was recommended to speak on nonbinary workplace inclusion to Mojang Studios because of my LinkedIn posts on the topic. You can explore new topics, learn and write about them, all while not impinging on your current position.

### **The downsides of LinkedIn**

The downsides of LinkedIn are few. I have gotten some sales pitches and sat through some Zoom meetings, which I shouldn't have taken. I have been lucky enough to not have trolls visit and comment on my posts, but some higher profile folx I follow, such as Madison Butler, are constantly trolled and verbally abused. I'm waiting for it to happen, sadly, given my posts are on nonbinary gender and gender nonconformity.

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*("Confronting the beast," continued from page 480)*

reflection, and goofy behavior. Moving forward, we can see the usefulness of gamification in many areas of the library, though more research into this area of study is needed. Whether you are interested in gamifying a large project like strategic planning or just setting aside some time at lunch for staff members to gather (in person or virtually) we encourage you to integrate gaming into your workplace. And above all, have fun.

### **A word of caution**

I'm pushing LinkedIn as a publishing platform, but not as a replacement for publishing peer-reviewed journal articles. Your employer may encourage or require you to publish in peer-reviewed journal articles in order to get promoted or to get tenure. My pitch is that LinkedIn gives you other publishing opportunities outside of traditional scholarly publishing.

### **Posts versus articles**

On LinkedIn you have the option to publish standalone articles or post to your feed. Not many people read my articles. The two most viewed articles, "My Gender Journey at Work" parts one and two, have 339 and 157 views respectively. Many more people looked at my posts. Sometimes hundreds of people. Sometimes thousands of people. One of my posts, about coming out at work as nonbinary has 5,307 views, and most posts have more than 400 views. The impact and reach are likely greater than the scholarly articles I write and get published, which get put behind a publisher's pay wall.

### **Final points**

Getting better at writing takes practice. It also helps to write for an audience. Writing and posting on LinkedIn gives you both: an opportunity to write as often as you like and to write for your network. It also gives you a chance to write outside of the confines of scholarly publications and without barriers to publishing. It is easy to explore and write about new topics, and to engage directly with your readers. And finally, writing for LinkedIn is really fun. Try writing a LinkedIn post and see what happens. *zz*

### **Notes**

1. Emily Lloyd, "Cards Against Librarianship: Let's Play!" Shelf Check, January 21, 2014, <http://shelfcheck.blogspot.com/2014/01/cards-against-librarianship-lets-play.html>.
2. "PlayingCards.io," PlayingCards.io Virtual Tabletop, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://playingcards.io/>. *zz*