blogging isn't dead (test post)

Gawker is changing the layout of its homepage to look more like a “magazine,” which means rearranging the posts so that the most newsworthy and popular (not just the most recent) are in the biggest boxes at the top of the page. You can check out the beta version here.

I agree with Ben Smith, who writes, "blogging -- which was, for a minute, 'the future,' -- has receded to being one of many useful forms." But because I fear that those who still aren't comfortable with the format will celebrate its so-called demise without realizing what hasn't changed in online news, here's what I think is most useful about blogging that won't go away and shouldn't.

**The speed and lack of bureaucracy.** A reporter-blogger composes her post directly in an online content management system (CMS), and likely drafts her own headline and SEO tags, too. If an editor goes over the post, she does so immediately after it is written, inside the CMS. With a trusted writer, the editor may even choose to review the post after it goes live.

**The mix of reporting and analysis.** It's rare that a website without a distinctive writerly voice (or multiple voices) will attract much of an audience. Editorially, that means a health policy blogger-reporter shouldn't necessarily have to call three "political observers" to explain to readers what the outcome of tomorrow's election will be on health care reform. The reporter-blogger likely knows the answer to this question already, and can tell readers faster and in fewer words himself. He'll save the interviews and quotes for a longer enterprise story in which they'll add real value, and in the process, create more content, more pageviews, and attract a loyal audience that learns to trust his analysis because they realize it's based on expertise.

**The brevity.** A lot of traditional news stories add a lot of length by denying writers the right to analyze. (See above.) On the web, people have limited attention spans, especially for breaking news. Be honest about your own views, get to the point, link liberally, and close out.

In short, the basic architecture of blogging as a means of breaking and explaining news isn't going anywhere, even if reporters are spending more time these days on their Twitter feeds and Facebook pages. Those are means of promoting content or crowd-sourcing reporting questions; ultimately, a writer returns to the page to get down what he or she has learned, and the blog post is still a very effective way to do that on short-term stories. ~ Dana Goldstein