



## Nip and Tuck: Redesigning a Medical Journal's Blog

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Back in the July 2012 issue of *EON*, I wrote about the experience of launching a blog for the *American Journal of Kidney Diseases (AJKD)*.<sup>1</sup> Earlier this year, with a couple of years of blogging under our belt, we were ready to refresh the look of the blog. The initial aims of our redesign were to update the blog's name, logo, and header. However, the blog team (comprising 20+ clinician-educators) also wanted the new blog design to be flexible enough to accommodate a March Madness-themed educational activity we run for one month each year. The team planned to use a custom homepage layout during the weeks of the educational activity and then return to our usual blog organization (posts in reverse chronological order) thereafter.

### Looking for Inspiration

For the redesign, we scoped out other journal blogs to get ideas and also tried to keep in mind design elements of blogs/sites outside of medicine. If we liked a layout of a blog and it was hosted by WordPress.com (the platform we use), we made note of the theme's name.

One aspect that our blog lacked was images. In posts about journal articles, we used an original image from the article if there was one, or an author headshot for an interview, but for most posts we had used our logo in place of an image. The blog team felt strongly that we needed to have images for all posts so we started using stock images where needed. Another idea is one we took from reading about the AGA (American Gastroenterological Association) Journals Blog redesign in *EON*<sup>2</sup>: adding general topics to the

navigation bar so readers can easily access the related posts. We previously had a tag cloud with topics, but it looked cluttered and took up a lot of space.

### Changing the Blog's Name

Our original blog name, *eAJKD*, not only sounded outdated but also incorrectly suggested our blog was the electronic version of the journal. Also, one of our blog team members described it as an alphabet soup. When we were deciding on a new name, we considered replacing it with something creative, but our Editor-in-Chief wanted to make sure that the blog and journal branding was cohesive and clearly connected the blog to the journal, so we opted simply for "AJKD Blog."

Changing the blog name is a headache in many ways, because the name needs to be updated on other sites and for marketing, and we still are finding the old name here and there. Since we had long been using [www.ajkdblog.org](http://www.ajkdblog.org) as our primary domain for the blog ([eajkd.org](http://eajkd.org) was set to redirect), I didn't think it would be a big deal to update our WordPress username from *eAJKD* to *AJKDblog*. What I didn't take into account was that media files use the WordPress URL (username.wordpress.com) and while it seems that the URL is supposed to update attachments in posts, I came across quite a few posts where I had to reattach the media.

### Updating the Blog's Logo

Our previous blog logo was basically our journal's logo with an italicized "e" in front, and we felt that we needed something more modern looking. We wanted a logo that would be complementary to the journal's logo and would work in the blog header as well as in icon form for things like our

1 Bury. One Journal's Journey into the Blogosphere. *Editorial Office News*. July 2012;5(6):6-8.

2 Novak K, Simpson B. We Are Blogging—Now What? *Editorial Office News*. August 2014;7(7):4-6.

Twitter profile image. We used a crowdsourcing service for the new logo, a process discussed in a previous *EON* article.<sup>3</sup>

### Choosing a New Theme

Searching for a new theme can be quite fun but exhausting, considering that there are 300+ options at WordPress. I think it is useful to have the person who manages the blog be part of the selection process, as each theme has its own parameters and quirks, including image dimension requirements, menu set-up options, etc.

In our search, we gravitated toward themes geared toward magazine/news content. Themes have live demos and many have links to real-world examples of blogs that use the theme, which are particularly helpful. Our priority was finding a theme with a flexible homepage where we could organize content appropriately for the blog and the monthlong educational activity. We also wanted a mobile-friendly and newer theme. After combing through options, I advocated for the MH Magazine theme (<https://theme.wordpress.com/themes/mh-magazine/>) because it has a flexible homepage layout that uses widgets and includes some theme-specific custom widgets that I thought would work for the structure we had in mind.

### Demo Site

While you can preview a theme for your blog in WordPress, I haven't generally found this very useful as many themes require a particular set up to get a good idea of what your content will actually look like with the theme. Our blog team was originally lukewarm on the theme I proposed and I think this was because the real-world blog examples didn't have anything similar to how we planned to use it. With a demo site, I could show them that I could achieve a homepage close to what they wanted for the educational activity.

We also found it valuable to have a demo site to try out and discover a potential theme's quirks and to figure out the arrangement for the redesign, as well as for the special educational project, without messing with the main blog (and potentially confusing readers). To start a demo site is relatively easy: you download the export file from your blog and then create a new WordPress blog and upload this file, setting your demo site to private if desired. You will have to pay separately for any upgrades for the demo site (of note, there is an unlimited premium themes upgrade: <https://store.wordpress.com/premium-upgrades/unlimited-themes/>).

### Opportunities for Improvement

As part of the redesign process, we looked for ways to improve the reader experience with the new theme as well as any areas we could make more efficient.

3 Bury L. Crowdsourcing Design. *Editorial Office News*. March 2015;8(3):10-12.



For the navigation bar, we choose topics based on the most frequently used tags/keywords for posts (acute kidney injury, hemodialysis, etc.). Since page view data show our quizzes and puzzles are some of our more popular posts, we wanted to highlight those as well. With these additions to the navigation bar, we moved some items from the original navigation to the top right of the header and bottom of the page.

On the homepage, the slider and the posts excerpted below it are the most recent. Under these, we repeat the topics from the navigation bar but each lists a few of the most recent posts for the particular topic. At the bottom, we have a carousel widget that randomly cycles through all of the quizzes and puzzles.

We had a page that listed descriptions of the types of blog posts (interview, commentary, etc.)

but it had relatively low page views so we removed this page but retained the option to select these post categories in a dropdown selector in the footer.

### Refining

We are pleased with how our blog's redesign turned out (see the image for the before and after) and we like how the new organization showcases topics and allows us to get more mileage out of older posts. However, as we settle into the new design, we plan to periodically finesse the design with a goal of highlighting our content but making sure our homepage isn't cluttered. Such refinements may include changes to the highlighted topics, modifications to the header, or removing the slider/carousel (which seem to be losing popularity in mainstream blogs).

## ISMTE Awards

ISMTE is excited to announce that from April 10<sup>th</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup> we are inviting nominations for three new ISMTE Awards. These awards will be presented at the North American and European Conferences where the winners will also receive a credit for either membership or registration to next year's ISMTE meeting.

The categories are:

- ISMTE Award for Excellence
- ISMTE Award for Achievement or Innovation
- ISMTE Jason Roberts Founder's Award

**Visit the [ISMTE Awards Web page](#) for more information!**

## Discovering Our Roots: Something Borrowed is Nothing New

By Stephanie Kinnan

Stealing, cheating, borrowing, call it what you will, but plagiarism is a menace that plagues the world of publishing. Every editor and publisher lives in fear of the dreaded “duplicate text” that could threaten the integrity of their publication. The term plagiarism has taken on such a negative connotation and is so damaging to one’s reputation that even the word itself has become taboo in some publications (*The word that must not be named.*) What you may not know, however, is that plagiarism has a long history of prominence and importance in the world of literature.

Plagiarism has been a constant for nearly as long as the written word has existed. Before widespread availability of literature, stories and songs were memorized and passed from person to person through what one could term a type of verbal plagiarism. It was not until the age of William Shakespeare, however, due in part to his popularity, that we become truly aware of its prominence. The word plagiarism comes from the Latin word “plagiare,” meaning to abduct or steal, and that is exactly what Shakespeare did. Most of his historical plots were stolen from the work of Raphael Holinshed, an English writer and historian, and many of his plays contained entire lines cut straight from the works of other authors.

Although Shakespeare’s dalliance with plagiarism is widely known, he is not the only penman to be accused of the offense. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Oscar Wilde, Alex Haley, and T.S. Eliot are all writers of note who have been accused of plagiarism. In fact, Eliot’s response to this accusation was to take pride in his use of the pilfered works of others. “Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.” Musicians throughout history, from Johannes Brahms to George Harrison, have also “borrowed” from the accomplishments of others. Even Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. plagiarized part of his doctoral thesis.

So you see, plagiarism is not just a menace for those of us in the editing and publishing fields; it is also a grand literary tradition, observed by many of the most celebrated artists throughout history. With that being said, plagiarism is still the greatest of literary sins, and I wouldn’t try to get away with it in this day and age; plagiarism detection technology has taken great strides since the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### 10 great works you never knew were accused of plagiarism

- 1) *Henry VI* by William Shakespeare
- 2) *Roots* by Alex Haley
- 3) Johannes Brahms’ piano and violin sonatas in A Major
- 4) *The Frost King* by Helen Keller
- 5) “The Waste Land” by T.S. Eliot
- 6) “My Sweet Lord” (song) by George Harrison
- 7) *The Outline of History* by H. G. Wells
- 8) “Folsom Prison Blues” (song) by Johnny Cash
- 9) Various silk-screened reproductions by Andy Warhol
- 10) *Pong* (video game) by Atari

Adapted in part from: Moss, S. A history of plagiarism (not my own work). The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/nov/23/comment.stephenmoss>. Accessed April 28, 2015.