

**Title of Session:** BlogStreams Salon

**Moderator:** Bee Dieu and Aaron Campbell

**Guest Speaker:** Peter Ford

**Title of File:** 20050501blogstreamsford

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Room: After School Online Room

Room: ASO

**BeeD:** Welcome to the Blogstreams Salon Special Session

**BeeD:** Peter Ford will be our guest speaker tonight...

**BeeD:** presenting a great collaborative project on blogs he is developing together with Mario Camilleri and Valerie Sollars from Malta

**PeterFo** looks nervous

**BeeD:** But before he gets into the heart of his presentation, let's all introduce ourselves for the records

**JeffC** joined the room.

**SusanneN** joined the room.

**BeeD** waves to Susan and Jeff...we have just started introductions

**SusanneN:** hello, what a lot of people! Yes, I'm certainly come to the right place

**LeanneMM:** I'm from Canada, an ESL teacher wannabe, just learning about all the toys in my computer

**BeeD:** \*\*\*\*\* Please type a brief introduction now \*\*\*\*\*

**AaronPC:** I'm Aaron Campbell and I teach EFL at Kyoto Sangyo University in Kyoto, Japan. I'm interested in using blogs and wikis for learning.

**Maggi:** **Maggi** in Germany, freelance Business English trainer in companies.

**GrahamS:** I'm Graham, an EFL teacher based in Barcelona, Spain.

**GayleK:** I'm Gayle Keresey, a middle school library media specialist in Wilmington, NC.

**BeeD:** Barbara Dieu, an EFL teacher at the Franco-Brazilian school in Sao Paulo, Brazil

**SaroltaG:** I'm Sarolta and I teach English at a tourism college in Slovenia.

**GailTi:** Gail from the University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning

**ChristinLo:** I'm from Belgium, teaching French in a secondary school

**EmilyW:** Emily in TX, recent college grad, web designer, I am interested in ICT use in education

**SusanneN:** Sus in Denmark, recently engaged in a guest teacher blog project with students in Belarus (and their teacher, Sergei) - called Mystery guest blog

**BeeD:** oh..une Belge!

**SaraGst4:** Sara (Brazil) I teach diplomats and run training Projects for the British Council

**TerrapiGst5:** Mike Thornton, from the Brit Council in Sau Paulo in Brazil managing our ELT programme

**JulianGst2:** Julian - BC Brazil ELT team

**EstherO:** I'm a preservice teacher from the University of Houston

**DianaFi:** I am Diana in Texas a pre-service teacher

**SusanR:** I'm Sue from Ottawa, Canada; K to 8 Occasional Teacher and K to 3+ Great Resources presenter here at Tapped In.

**CrystalAS:** I'm a pre-service teacher from U of H too

**AlejandraW** joined the room.

**LeanneMM** hugs Ale

**SaroltaG** waves hello to Ale

**BeeD:** Ale we have just started..could you introduce yourself

**AlejandraW:** hi, everyone

**AlejandraW:** oh, of course

**AlejandraW:** I am an EFL teacher in Argentina

**AlejandraW:** and have been blogging since Febr

**AlejandraW:** mostly used blogs with my elementary and pre intermediate classes

**BeeD** looks around

**BeeD:** I think we have all introduced ourselves

**SusanneN** leans back and feel ready to "listen" to Peter Ford

**BeeD:** Peter, I suggest you go ahead

**PeterFo:** Greetings from a hotel room at Stansted Airport just outside London in the UK.

**PeterFo:** Thanks for the invite!

BjB . o O ( if you just entered the discussion, a reminder to go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat window and detach )

**PeterFo:** A bit about me...

**BeeD** listens attentively

**PeterFo:** My background is that I was a primary/elementary schoolteacher in an international school in the Netherlands.

**PeterFo:** I have always been interested in providing my students with a real audience for their writing and thoughts

**RobertWB** joined the room.

**PeterFo:** and started using weblogs with my class of 10 year olds in 2000.

**BeeD** welcomes Elderbob

**PeterFo:** I quickly realized that this was very motivating for them

**AaronPC** nods

**AlejandraW** wants to hear about that ...

**PeterFo:** and me!

**BeeD** couldn't agree more

**PeterFo:** and a great platform for real collaboration and communication and probably most importantly of all ..

**PeterFo:** it provided them a real stake in ownership of the learning process.

**BeeD** shows

**PeterFo:** Created some great memories with those bloggers and at the same time set up SchoolBlogs.com with Adam Curry

**PeterFo:** (lately of podcasting fame) as place where educators could try out blogs for themselves for free.

**PeterFo:** It still chugs along nicely today with 3500+ created blogs there at the moment.

**GrahamS:** I've been listening to Adam's DSC podcast recently

**EstherO** . o O ( wow )

**PeterFo:** do you like it?

**GrahamS:** love it

**EstherO:** I had no idea about this

**PeterFo:** Great potential - podcasting...

**CrystalAS:** First time hearing about it

**ChristinLo:** me too!

**BeeD** . o O ( always time to learn something new! )

**PeterFo:** You heard it here first

**PeterFo:** Now I work in the UK and internationally helping teachers really start to embed technology across the curriculum.

**PeterFo:** Blogging is beginning to play an increasingly bigger part in that process.

**PeterFo:** I guess that is why I was invited to take part in the European Centre of Modern Languages ECML BLOGS project.

**BeeD:** Lots of great projects out there

**PeterFo:** ECML is great because

**PeterFo:** it is willing to take risks with innovative stuff. I like that

**BeeD:** You have such a variety of teachers from different countries as well

**SeanCS** joined the room.

**SeanCS:** Hello

**BeeD** welcomes Sean and directs him to an empty seat in a very crowded room

**PeterFo:** Absolutely

**PeterFo:** The ECML BLOGS project aim rather grandly states 'This project investigates the use of blogs to promote collaborative,

**PeterFo:** intercultural writing by secondary school-aged students of English and of French.'

**GrahamS:** a great idea

**BeeD:** Just my area

**LeanneMM:** May I ask a question?

**PeterFo:** sure

**LeanneMM:** Do you have French students collaborate with French or English?

**ChristinLo** smiles

**PeterFo:** There are two tracks to the project...

**SusanneN:** both!

**PeterFo:** an English and French one

**SeanCS:** I joined late, so probably missed it, but could you provide a link

**PeterFo:** students from Poland and the Czech republic collaborate in French

**BeeD:** We have not yet shown any links Sean

**BeeD:** I believe Peter will direct us there in a minute

**SeanCS:** Okay

**PeterFo:** and students from Malta and Poland communicate in English

**LeanneMM:** I see, so their only means of communication is their shared second language. Thanks Peter.

**PeterFo:** That's it!

**BeeD:** Tell me Peter if you would you like me to paste the link for you

**SharonSp:** Is there anything in the works for Spanish Language students?

**CrystalAS:** Are what about younger students

**BeeD:** Maybe people could have a quick look and then ask you questions

**ChristinLo** thanks Leanne for the accurate question

**LeanneMM** smiles at Christine

**PeterFo:** We are piloting the concept and software to see whether it works..

**PeterFo:** if it works in our context, then it will work any where

**BeeD** nods

**PeterFo:** Although journal writing has always been a favourite tool of language teachers,

**PeterFo:** the public nature of a blog gives it a social, collaborative and intercultural dimension not otherwise present.

**SeanCS:** And that can be scaled

**SeanCS:** publicly available or only locally available to the class?

**PeterFo:** Publicly

**PeterFo:** it would be exciting to see what teachers and students from Poland, Malta, the Czech Republic would make

**PeterFo:** From a personal point of view, having worked with a range of excellent blogging software that ...

**PeterFo:** was not specifically designed for education,

**PeterFo:** and therefore sometimes overcomplicated

**PeterFo:** I wanted to see if stripping away all the 'bells and whistles' and building something from scratch

**PeterFo:** would make it easier to implement.

**PeterFo:** Mario the technical guru of the team has certainly produced a blogging framework that is simple to use

**PeterFo:** using the software has not even been an issue for either students or teachers.

**BeeD:** I think Mario is doing an excellent job there. I found it very easy to work with...a very user-friendly interface which also allows for some creativity and customization

**AaronPC:** Yes...I'm curious about the software you are using, what makes it different.

**SeanCS:** presumably it has comments and trackbacks available

**PeterFo:** I'm not really the technical guy I'm afraid - I like it when the technology fades into the background and

**PeterFo:** you can concentrate on the pedagogy.

**SusanneN:** is everybody looking at a page now? I lost connection and feel left behind

**JeffC** uses Bloglines <http://www.bloglines.com/> to have a one stop place to organize blogs.

**LeanneMM:** Not me, Sus

**BeeD:** Peter...people are dying to see it...how long will you maintain the suspense?

**BeeD:** May I give them the link?

**EmilyW** used bloglines too

**PeterFo:** Sorry I would like to give you the opportunity to have a quick browse from the home page of the project..

**PeterFo:** to see if [it] throws up any initial thoughts or questions.

**PeterFo:** Have a look at the Statistics link on the left hand side of the page -

**PeterFo:** I like the visual nature of that feature

**SusanR:** I too am using bloglines

**SeanCS:** I use bloglines and the blogroll on my blog

**PeterFo:** Anyway here is the link. Let's meet back here in five minutes

**PeterFo:** <http://www.helferlein.com/blogs/blog.asp>

**BeeD** claps in delight

**BeeD:** Please note that when Peter types the URL (internet address) of a website, it is highlighted in blue and you can click on it to open the site (you may have to press the CTRL key at the same time)

**BeeD:** You will have to juggle between two windows.

**SusanneN:** aha - I was just reading this page earlier today, sweet memories

**SeanCS:** that's easy when you are running two monitors. hee hee

**PeterFo:** lol

**SusanneN:** or toggle between two monitors, yes

**SusanneN:** almost as good as having a wall screen <grin>

**BeeD** laughs

**SeanCS:** well since they are 2 19" screens side by side it works just like that...I'm just a big geek

**GrahamS:** I really like the 'community' links box on the blog

**BeeD:** It's a whole environment

**PeterFo:** Gives a nice community feeling/overview

**BeeD:** with individual student blogs

**BeeD:** and tutor blogs

**BeeD:** and guest blogs

**SeanCS:** Bee, how many blogs do you have? I see you have one here too...

**SeanCS:** where do you find the time to keep them all active and updated?



**SeanCS:** not just time, but content also?

**BeeD:** I guess I will become a blog!

**GrahamS:** Bee doesn't sleep

**SusanR:** clear and inviting interface...nice comment box

**GrahamS** smiles

**SusanneN:** Bee IS a blog!

**AaronPC:** lol

**BeeD:** At home nobody can stand this word anymore

**AlejandraW:** lol

**SeanCS:** My wife hates it when I talk about blogging too

**LeanneMM:** Are we all back?

**RobertWB:** I just blog nice things about my wife and it keeps her off my back.

**PeterFo:** It's the easiest interface I have worked with. The students simply login

**DianaFi:** I am back

**PeterFo:** write in a text editing box

**PeterFo:** upload a picture if they want and push the button to publish

**PeterFo:** or save their work without publishing to the world.

**PeterFo:** and can change the look and feel of the site easily

**PeterFo:** What more could you ask for?

**BeeD:** Mario told me they even designed different skins for him to add...this is nice

**PeterFo:** I love it when students do the teaching

**SusanR:** non threatening interface

**BeeD:** Some of them have really taken to it

**EstherO** agrees

**SeanCS**: I see a sign-in block but nowhere to register

**LeanneMM**: Peter, I loved your blogsite as soon as I saw the photo of chocolate right at the top! But I had to look up "parkour" and did not find it

**PeterFo**: It's that mad sport of jumping off things..

**ChristinLo**: Nice blogsite Peter

**PeterFo**: like building and street furniture

**SusanneN**: well, it looks nice, but hard to read for someone like me - what I would like to do with such a white type on a mixed color background, would be to turn off the blog skin prefs and enlarge type size - that would help me to start reading text.

**SusanneN**: But I enjoy the hyperstructure very easy to get an overview

**CrystalAS**: yeah nice website

**EstherO** definitely agree

**PeterFo**: Did you have a look at the community of students?

**AlejandraW**: is it restricted to students in the project?

**BeeD**: What I love most is the dialogue that goes on, students responding and participating

**ChristinLo**: I looked at Les blogs français

**BeeD**: How did you choose the schools?

**PeterFo** agrees

**BeeD**: And what kind of training did you give to the teachers?

**SusanneN**: I read about a granddaughter's appraisal of her granny (from Malta I think) - very heartfelt little essay

**ChristinLo**: And I wondered there are not so many comments (les blogs français)

**PeterFo**: Interesting question Bee

**PeterFo**: And an important observation Christine

**PeterFo:** Let me try and wrap them together

**SusanneN:** did you encourage teachers start blogging on their own before getting involved with students?

**PeterFo:** The software training took minutes...

**PeterFo:** and then the teachers and team had time to play

**CrystalAS:** How many people are working with you on this project

**BeeD:** Please hold further questions until Peter gets some answers off

**DianaFi:** ok

**JulianGst2:** was the training delivered F2F?

**PeterFo:** One of the key elements of this project and any I guess, is the building of community

**PeterFo:** Any online community has to be built and teachers have a crucial role to play,

**PeterFo:** modeling and encouraging without over-powering.

**PeterFo:** I think someone described this process as being like a DJ...

**BeeD** smiles

**PeterFo:** spinning records and introducing other people's tunes

**PeterFo:** We majored on these points when we met together with the pilot teachers and ECML team

**PeterFo:** The software was not the important thing

**EstherO** . o O ( how interesting )

**PeterFo:** I tried to model as many different approaches to engaging the students as possible.

**PeterFo:** For example:

**PeterFo:** Linking to students writing and commenting ...

**PeterFo:** Just writing

**PeterFo:** Links to interesting sites or activities

**PeterFo:** throwing out questions

**SeanCS:** When you finish your testing phase are you going to be writing an article about the experiment and results? if so, will it be for an academic journal or publicly available on the net

**SusanneN:** I really like the DJ analogy Peter!

**GrahamS:** me too

**AaronPC:** Yeah...it captures the essence nicely

**BeeD:** fine tuning

**PeterFo:** It is published as a book through [www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at)

**PeterFo:** Here's the rub though

**PeterFo:** Even examining the results of the pilot project so far it seems that the most 'successful' parts of the projects are

**PeterFo:** the ones where the teachers have really owned the process and modeled the process.

**PeterFo:** If teachers write and model.

**PeterFo:** then the students will follow.

**PeterFo:** This scaffolding of the writing process is even more important when the students are not confident

**PeterFo:** in expressing themselves in the language.

**SeanCS:** that fit's in with my experience

**AaronPC:** interesting

**PeterFo:** Have a look at Karolina, a Polish student in the English track -

**PeterFo:** She writes pretty engaging stuff in her

**PeterFo:** blog but rarely hyperlinks to other students writing.

**PeterFo:** She does however, comment loads on the sites of others directly.

**BeeD:** Was this true with all the groups?

**SeanCS:** I also found requiring writing as a set graded homework assignment helps get the ball rolling

**BeeD:** Karolina Michno did a great job

**PeterFo:** It's early days Bee..

**PeterFo:** but that is my initial view

**BeeD:** and she is one of the leaders I believe

**PeterFo:** <http://www.helferlein.com/blogs/blog.asp?id=47>

**PeterFo:** She is a student...

**PeterFo:** but follows the model of her teacher..

**BeeD:** Do teachers correct the posts before they appear online? Is there an editing tool behind?

**PeterFo:** Teachers can moderate if they want...

**PeterFo:** It is an interesting discussion culturally

**PeterFo:** some students are not allowed to post incorrect stuff

**SeanCS:** What happens when a course a teacher is teaching finishes, do the students get to keep their blogs indefinitely or are they shut down?

**BeeD:** Do they have set themes or do they just post whatever they feel like?

**PeterFo:** This is the pilot so there is a set end to the phase.

**PeterFo:** They will be able to carry on if they wish

**SeanCS:** What about once the project goes live for the public?

**DianaFi:** yeah

**PeterFo:** I'm not sure what you mean

**SeanCS:** I assumed that the project will eventually be available to the public (anyone can sign up)

**PeterFo:** Bee - Both agreed themes and freedom!

**PeterFo:** The next phase of this project...

**SeanCS:** and that teachers/courses would be coming and going, but hopefully some students would remain

**PeterFo:** is for a trial with schools from all countries in the EU

**BeeD . o O** ( ambitious project )

**PeterFo:** I think the software

**SeanCS:** I'm probably going to be using blogs with some summer students this year, I guess Asia won't be keyed up by that time...

**PeterFo:** The software is in beta...

**PeterFo:** and needs to be tested

**PeterFo:** but I would love to stick it on a server and

**ChristinLo:** Peter, can you resume the rules for using the blog for the students?

**PeterFo:** let folks play a la SchoolBlogs.com

**PeterFo:** Do you mean a Blog use contract etc?

**Maggi** slips quietly away to bed and thanks Peter

**RobertWB:** very cool stuff.

**PeterFo:** Thanks

**BeeD:** Does anyone have any more questions?

**ChristinLo:** not really, frequency, ...

**DianaFi:** no questions from me

**SeanCS:** nothing to ask so much as to say I'm keen on the project since it appears to be exactly what I'm looking for

**BeeD** suggests a round of applause

**AaronPC**: not here....just very impressed with what I'm seeing.

**SeanCS**: and schoolblogs won't accept registrations unless you have an academic address which I do not

**SeanCS** claps

**BeeD** claps enthusiastically

**SaroltaG** clap, clap

**PeterFo**: Get in touch and I'll sort you out

**AaronPC** claps

**PeterFo**: Thank you so much. You have brightened up my evening

**SusanR** claps for a successful project

**AlejandraW** thanks Peter for the talk

**BeeD**: Thank you Peter for accepting to share with us your experience

**SeanCS**: I'm going to put on a pot of coffee and get ready to go to work

**ChristinLo** zegt dank je wel!

**GrahamS**: Thank you Peter, that was very interesting

**EstherO**: Thanks for everything

**DianaFi**: thank you!

**SaroltaG**: Thank you for sharing, Peter.

**PeterFo**: Graag gedaan

**AaronPC**: Thank you so much Peter!

**BeeD**: We hope to meet you all at the Blogstreams Salon next week and in following weeks for our ongoing discussions on webpublishing...

**GayleK**: Thanks, Peter!

**EstherO** feels like she's learned tons

**JulianGst2**: thanks Peter

**BeeD**: and would like to announce also the birth of a new site

**SusanR**: Thanks again

**PeterFo** smiles

**BeeD**: <http://www.dekita.org>

**PeterFo**: It's a great site Bee!

**ChristinLo**: I have bookmarked the site, thanks!

**SaroltaG**: Congratulations, it's a great site, Bee!

**BeeD**: Thanks Peter and Sarolta

**AlejandraW**: have already visited the site, really nice, Bee

**BeeD**: this is the result of a great collaboration

**BeeD**: with Rudolf and Aaron

**BeeD**: Our next special session will be on June 5th featuring Natalie d' Arbeloff

**PeterFo**: Thanks Bee. I'm off to bed

**BeeD**: Thank you all for being here with us tonight

**SaroltaG**: Thank you too. See you net Sunday. Goodnight everyone.

**BeeD**: Thanks again Peter. It was great

**SusanneN**: I'll mark that in my digital calendar, and thanks to Peter for this session, always good to learn about innovative examples of online collaboration

**AlejandraW**: Thank you Bee and Aaron for making these meetings possible. Goodnight