

**Title of Session:** Blogstreams Salon  
**Moderator:** Bee Dieu and Aaron Campbell  
**Guest Speaker:** Natalie d'Arbeloff  
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**BeeD:** Welcome to the fourth Blogstreams Salon Special Session on the topic: Blogging as freedom and as home.

**BeeD:** It's a great pleasure to have Natalie d'Arbeloff here with us. Natalie is an artist/writer/philosophical cartoonist. Today she will be sharing with us how her blog has freed her to be who she is and how it has become her virtual home with open windows to the world.

**BeeD:** But before I start the interview with Natalie, would you please introduce yourselves for the record?

**DavidWe . o O ( Bienvenue, Natalie )**

**NatalieGst5:** That sounds impressive.

**BeeD** smiles

**BeeD:** \*\*\*\*\*type your introductions now\*\*\*\*\*

**DavidWe:** I'm David Weksler - an occasional French speaker - I'm in Pennsylvania, north of Philadelphia and I help teachers learn more about technology in the real world and in Tapped In

**AaronPC:** I'm Aaron Campbell and I teach EFL at Kyoto Sangyo University in Kyoto, Japan. Welcome Natalie!

**BeeD:** Barbara Dieu teaches EFL at the Franco -Brazilian school in Sao Paulo

**Maggi:** I am a Business English trainer in Germany

**JeffC:** Jeff Cooper, Education Technology Consultant and Helpdesk here at Tapped In.

**BJB2:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

**MarshaR:** My name is Marsha Ratzel, I teach 6th gr math and science at Leawood Middle in KS.

**SusanneN:** Susanne Nyrop, Webheads in Action, from Denmark - and a blogger since 2002

**AlainKr:** I'm Alain Krizic, I teach English in a high school in France

**JoyceJH:** Hi, I am Joyce Jarosz Hannula, I teach AP Psychology in Bozeman Montana, Ed. Psych at Montana S. U good to be with you

**WendyES:** Great to meet you Natalie - I'm Wendy Seale-Bakes - an ESL teacher in Canada. I teach adult immigrants

**EmilyW:** I am from TX, I am a web designer, and been blogging for about 6 months

**BobZw:** I'm Bob Zwick - Living near Dallas, Texas. an IT expert and online education provider. My newest project is [www.globaleschool.com](http://www.globaleschool.com)

**BeeD** looks around

**NatalieGst5:** Very interesting bunch here, I'm honored to be the guest, thanks to Bee.

**BeeD:** it's great to have you here and thanks for having accepted to join us tonight

**BeeD:** Now...is it Natalie or Augustine who is going to be interviewed?

**NatalieGst5:** My great pleasure.

**BeeD:** or both?

**AaronPC:** Good question Bee.

**NatalieGst5:** Ha! Now that's a tricky question. Augustine is my cartoon alter ego (my blog is her territory). But since she's a cartoon, I guess I'll have to speak for her.

**BeeD** grins like a Cheshire Cat

**JeffC:** url?

**BeeD:** <http://www.nataliedarbeloff.com/blaugustine.html>

**NatalieGst5:** <http://www.nataliedarbeloff.com/blaugustine.html>

**NatalieGst5:** Oops, duplicated! Now you won't forget it.

**BobZw:** it usually takes telling me everything twice

**BeeD:** When and why was Augustine born?

**NatalieGst5:** Augustine's birth? How much time have you got?

**BJB2** . o O ( Natalie is the guest speaker for today's Blogstreams Salon )

**BJB2** listens passionately

**BJB2** is very interested in alter egos

**AaronPC** leans forward

**JackieG:** What do I do when I'm looking at the blog

**NatalieGst5:** Okay, Augustine first appeared around 1984 as a series of cartoon booklets, The Augustine Adventures. If you go to this page:

**NatalieGst5:** <http://www.nataliedarbeloff.com/comics.html>

**NatalieGst5:** it gives you some background info. I don't know if I should repeat it here?

**BeeD** . o O ( discovering it...I had always thought Augustine was born with the blog )

**BeeD:** Please Natalie

**BeeD:** just a short sketch

**NatalieGst5:** No, she existed before the blog. But when I started the blog, or Blaug, I decided to hand her that space to do with as she liked.

**SusanneN:** So by now, Augustine is a mature cartoon person!

**NatalieGst5:** Well, blogging was such a great way to get ideas and images across, and so immediate, I thought it was ideal

**AaronPC:** wonders what Natalie's relationship with Augustine is like.

**NatalieGst5:** I don't know about mature! She stays the same while I get decrepit. The portrait of Dorian Gray all over again!

**BeeD** . o O ( so today Natalie has to manage not only Augustine's temper and character but also the Gnovel and Gabriel )

**BJB2** smiles. I can't imagine Natalie or Augustine as evil

**JackieG:** would like to know how you discovered blogs and how you go about developing them. How do you start? How long does it take to make them as beautiful as this one?

**NatalieGst5:** Aaron, that's a good question. If Augustine had her way, I'd be drawing all the time, But Natalie...er, me...has other plans and talks too much.

**Maggi:** lol

**SusanneN:** Please tell Augustine I adore her green hat!

**BeeD:** Natalie...you are also working on a gnovel

**DavidWe** likes "gnovel" - it is so "gnu"

**NatalieGst5:** Jackie, I created my website after I learned how to use Dreamweaver and Photoshop software. Then I started the blog, from my website, in order to get people to come and visit my online home.

**SusanneN:** yes, I wanted to find out, what IS a gnovel?

**AaronPC:** like gnocchi

**DavidWe** gnods

**JackieG:** Thanks

**NatalieGst5:** A gnovel is just my abbreviation for GRAPHIC NOVEL. Takes too long to write the whole thing.

**BeeD:** and I have recently read that Augustine seems to be taking lots of your energy blogging and does not let you continue writing. What is the main difference between blogging and writing the gnovel and why is it so much tempting to blog?

**NatalieGst5:** gnocchi, gnu, and gnovel...something could come from that!

**DavidWe** . o O ( indeed )

**JackieG:** another interesting GN word is gneis. It's a German name for a type of rock that you find in the Alps

**WendyES:** I'm reading Augustine and Inertia - it's wonderful!

**WendyES:** How did you know?

**NatalieGst5:** Bee, the gnovel is in fact mostly drawing, with not too many words included. The reason I avoid working on it is just because it's such a huge task and I tend to get distracted by blogging and other things.

**NatalieGst5:** Wendy, thanks. All the Augustine booklets were about situations I experienced.

**WendyES:** It's lovely!

**AaronPC:** I like that gnovel you posted, especially the quote about a picture being more real than the event.

**NatalieGst5:** Aaron, yes, I often think that remembering something and making it into an image makes that event more real than it was in fact.

**Maggi** agrees

**BeeD:** Interviews and the interviews with God are recurring motifs in Augustine's blog.

**AaronPC:** yeah, it brings a whole new entity into being.

**NatalieGst5:** I found that having the blog and the feedback from visitors to it has given me much more incentive to keep up ideas.

**AaronPC:** I guess blogs could be like that too.

**EmilyW:** I like getting feedback in my blog

**BJB2** . o O ( almost like an interactive painting or digital story )

**EmilyW:** I am going to start adding images in my blog entries

**NatalieGst5:** Somehow knowing that there are people out there reading you, even if it's only a few, makes a huge difference if you spend a lot of time working on your own.

**SusanneN:** I think that feedback is one of the major reasons why blogging has such a great potential

**BeeD:** Creating is a solitary activity

**BJB2** agrees

**JackieG:** Do you get ideas from people and their feedback?

**NatalieGst5:** Yes, it has to be solitary but it's great when you post something and get a positive response.

**BeeD:** I copied this from your friend Tamar's blog: Sitting at my computer trying to write. A block, wall, mountain of silence facing me. I sit really, really still and listen to my mind. Nothing. Waiting.

**BeeD:** What sparks the imagination? What makes you blog or draw?

**EmilyW:** one of my entries is getting a great response, many bloggers are referencing my entry in their blog

**NatalieGst5:** Jackie, no, not ideas so much as encouragement. I've never been very good at collaborative creativity but on the other hand, responses are hugely helpful.

**DavidWe** responds helpfully

**WendyES:** I'd like to post a link to your blog for my students

**BeeD** . o O ( David is a great responder )

**WendyES:** I'm not sure they'd post comments, but I think they'd love looking at it

**WendyES:** (They've just started blogging)

**DavidWe** . o O ( Merci, Bee )

**NatalieGst5:** Thanks Wendy, David, Emily. Bee, what makes me blog is whatever happens to be on my mind, or sometimes a response to events. Though I try to avoid being political, certain things just get me going. Like the recent famine in Niger.

**AaronPC:** Bee mentioned earlier in the chat how blogging has 'freed you to be who you are'. I wonder what that statement means to you.

**WendyES:** yes, good question

**BeeD** . o O ( I think it was Natalie who suggested it )

**NatalieGst5:** Aaron, it's the spontaneity and ease of the medium that is so unique. Before I ever had a computer, I worked on a lot of projects that required endless time before they ever got out where people could see the result. Blogging is like having a newspaper column. If you're an artist/writer with lots of ideas, it frees you.

**JackieG:** Is it about doubting what you do? Does the steady response make you more confident?

**JoyceJH:** Do you think blogging equals less self-edit?

**AaronPC:** I also wonder to what extent using an alter-ego for your blog adds to the sense of freedom.

**NatalieGst5:** I also did quite a bit of self-publishing and when the books were printed, there was the whole job of distributing, promoting, selling, etc. With blogging (apart from the selling, which doesn't happen!), it all happens at once.

**JoyceJH:** Rats--I have to go--I'll catch the transcript--thanks Natalie for giving your time and energy....

**JoyceJH** left the room (signed off).

**BeeD . o O** ( I'd say the conversation you establish with the readers is the most rewarding part in blogs like yours )

**NatalieGst5:** Jackie, no, not about self-doubt. On the contrary, I felt very confident when starting to blog. Joyce, sorry to see you go, self-editing: yes, there's some of that of course.

**BobZw:** I'm wondering if your blogging is part business in addition to expression and feedback.

**SusanneN:** Not only the blogger herself, but also the readers have that pleasure from reading other's comments

**BeeD:** A conversation in progress

**NatalieGst5:** Bob, no it's not business at present ( i.e. I make no money from it!). But I do put up some artwork for sale and I did try putting some prints, t-shirts etc at other sites, but very little has come from that.

**AaronPC:** Has running a blog helped you as an artist in any way?

**NatalieGst5:** Aaron, yes, using the alter ego did give me a new freedom. It helps me as an artist in one sense, because it's an ongoing window in which I can put stuff for people to see. In another sense, I think it takes away a lot of time that I could/should be spending working.

**NatalieGst5:** Many other people have said that their addiction to blogging is preventing them from completing other creative work.

**NatalieGst5:** Do any of you have this problem?

**EmilyW:** I don't blog very often

**BJB2** wonders if Natalie sees words in color? I think if you can convert words to pictures, and pictures to words as you do in your blog, that you are a very visual reader/thinker

**NatalieGst5:** Then you haven't become an addict (yet!)

**BeeD:** Definitely...absolutely...not necessarily blogging...but connecting to people on the net

**BobZw:** At first I was captured by blogging, then work demanded my time, now I can't find enough time to blog as much as I should.

**AaronPC:** It certainly can be time-consuming. I have to find a balance.

**NatalieGst5:** BJ that's an interesting thought. I guess I do have a sense of words being allied to images and vice versa.

**EmilyW:** I can't be an addict yet

**EmilyW:** maybe soon

**SusanneN** nods thoughtfully - I can definitely see texts as sort of images for my inner eye

**NatalieGst5:** Bob, count yourself lucky. Blog addicts have no life outside the blog!

**BobZw** -) I do find myself mentally writing articles while I am at a social event....

**NatalieGst5:** Suzanne, do you have a visual blog?

**AaronPC** loves the medley of colours on Natalie's blog.

**BeeD** is fascinated by medley of colours

**BeeD:** Melanie from the Chandrasutra blog has recently interviewed you [http://chandrasutra.typepad.com/chandra/2005/04/the\\_bloggers\\_bl\\_1.html](http://chandrasutra.typepad.com/chandra/2005/04/the_bloggers_bl_1.html) and you have also been interviewed by Tamar . <http://tamarika.typepad.com/>

**BobZw:** I must be 1/2 brained. I see in black & white like a newspaper or text book.

**NatalieGst5:** Bob, me too. I think of blog texts when I sit on a bus, take a shower etc. Aaron & Bee, yes I love color. So I'm not a minimalist!

**RoseAH:** waves hi



**NatalieGst5:** Hi Rose. A new color joins the conversation.

**BeeD:** and I have chosen one of the quotations you like :

**BeeD:** Be the change you want to see in the world. (Ghandi)

**BJB2** smiles. I rest my case.

**SusanneN:** My blog has occasional photos Natalie

**RoseAH:** I've kind of come in on the end of this discussion

**NatalieGst5:** Those interviews were very helpful, and especially in answering Tamar's questions, I looked into things I hadn't thought about for some time.

**BeeD:** to ask you what changes Augustine/Natalie have incorporated and that you would like to see in the world

**NatalieGst5:** Bee, that's a huge question! What I feel is that individuals need to get away from the belief that "they", whoever they are (authorities, experts, etc) will make the changes that they want to see. The fact is that it's individuals who make changes, spreading an idea little by little.

**BobZw:** thank you Natalie ! and Bee for arranging this

**BobZw:** have to leave - bye

**BobZw** left the room (signed off).

**BeeD:** Thanks for coming Bob

**AaronPC:** thanks for coming Bob.

**NatalieGst5:** Yes, thanks to Bee and to all of you. I'm very happy to have had this chance to meet you.

**BeeD:** I know that the chat format is not the one you prefer Natalie

**BeeD:** and that we do not manage to expand on deep thoughts

**NatalieGst5:** It's true, I find it awkward, but at least it's allowed me to be in contact with an interesting group.

**BJB2:** one of the features of Tapped In is that each group room has a threaded discussion board...

**BeeD:** it's constrained by time...you have to be there...while when blogging you can answer at your own time

**BJB2:** if you were interested in going more deeply into a topic

**BJB2:** . o O ( although Natalie would have to get a Tapped In membership to be able to post to the discussion board )

**BeeD:** or she can blog it...

**JackieG:** But her graphics would look great in TI

**Maggi:** yes!

**NatalieGst5:** For the time being, I won't do that because I'm trying to cut down on commitments and to concentrate on work that needs finishing. But maybe when I clear some of the backlog.....

**WendyES:** I'm sorry, I have to go now. I've really enjoyed meeting you and Augustine, Natalie. Been great meeting all of you here. Thanks so much! I'll be watching your - oops! Augustine's - blog from now on.

**BJB2:** Thanks so much for joining us today, Natalie...very interesting

**BeeD:** Too many tempting distractions..

**AaronPC:** Yes...thank you Natalie. It was a pleasure chatting with you.

**BeeD:** It was great to have you here today Natalie

**JackieG:** Thanks, it was great! and good night

**BeeD:** and thanks again for accepting

**Maggi:** thank you Natalie

**WendyES:** And thanks for setting this up for us, Bee.

**NatalieGst5:** Thanks all of you, hope to see you at the Blaug. And the best of everything with your own work, blogs, etc.