

Where Do I Even Start?

A Quick Reference Guide for Starting a Data Viz Blog

There are so many ways to engage with the Tableau or data viz community; there's the Tableau community forum, blogging, Twitter, Facebook, and more. So how do you know which one (or two) is right for you?

FIGURE OUT YOUR PLATFORM(S)

Before you declare that you are joining the hundreds of data viz bloggers, consider: If you want to share information but not write lengthy posts, Twitter may be a good option. If you don't like writing but love the idea of contributing to the community, perhaps the community forum or other channels like YouTube are more appropriate for you. If you want to have a continual dialogue and rich conversation, a Facebook page can be your communication channel or supplement your blog.

Consider these three questions:

Do you like writing?

Do you want to be a source of information for yourself and others?

Do you plan on publishing on a monthly basis (or thereabouts)?

If the answers to those questions is yes, yes, yes, then **you too can be a data viz blogger!**

DEFINE YOUR BLOG

There are a lot of data viz and tableau blogs on the internet and it's challenging to read them all. The interesting thing is that each blog is unique. Some blogs skew more towards tips and tricks, some convey makeovers, some show the hackiest things possible, and some just provide commentary. Some tried and true advice is to **write what you know**. That's a great starting point but there is also an opportunity to **write about what you want to know**. Identify your strengths or weaknesses and write to those. Do you know tableau server like the back of your hand? **Write about it**. Are you a hacker but want to learn more about dashboard design? **Write about it** and document your learnings in a series of blogposts. A really good example of someone who has done this is [Anya A'Hearn](#). In her blogpost "Designing Without Emotion" she challenged herself to design without emotion, since she usually is emotive with her non-work visualizations. The other reason why Anya's post is a good example is because she stayed within the topic of design. The point being, you can find challenges in and out of your wheelhouse to write about.

CREATE A BLOG

Now that you're ready to start a blog, where do you go to create one? First point to consider is that if you want to own your content and ensure you have it for all of eternity, a self-hosted site like Wordpress (not the free version) is a good choice. If you aren't concerned about that now or don't want to pay for a service, blogger, blogspot, weebly, wix, and others are good options.

Now the name! Pick a name that you like, that is unique, and that can span multiple platforms. You may find a year or two for now get you don't like the name or you want to switch blogging sites. It happens. Others have [rebranded](#) their blogs and so can you. In addition to naming the blog, you also need to design the blog. Click [here](#) for some great tips on blog design! The Blog-

cademy also has a great video on their page for [Blogging Basics](#)...definitely a must watch! Above all else, **don't let perfection be the enemy of good.** Now that the blog is set up, it's time to create killer content. Write in a style that suits you. Some people are conversational while others write like a reference manual. Write in your voice and write about topics that interest you or are related to your goals for your blog. Each blogpost is not likely to be picked up by major news outlets, retweeted by all of your followers, or go viral on Facebook. Understanding that is essential for continuing on when you have only a few readers.

DRIVE TRAFFIC