PORTAL

Information Management Resource Portal

BLOGGING GUIDELINES

Step 1 | Choosing a topic

1. | Please consider the following questions concerning your topic:

- Is it relevant to the current trends in Information Management observed in the humanitarian aid and international development sector and the challenges faced by IM practitioners?
- Does it lack coverage within the aid sector and should be further discussed?
- Would it benefit from having additional information made available to practitioners within the aid sector?

What thematics are we looking at here?

Information Management or Programme Data Management is understood here as the full range of processes, methodologies, and tools required for the various stages in the programme data analysis chain- that is, from the collection of data to the decision-making process internal to aid organisations to which the said data contributes. It therefore includes:
- Technical or technological subtopics of IM such as mapping, Geographical Information Systems, data processing, data analysis, Mobile Data Collection, etc.
- Larger topics such as data literacy, responsible data, Open Data, etc.
- Cross-cutting approaches such as IM needs evaluations, IM organisational strategies, the imbrication of IM and Monitoring & Evaluation for instance.

It however does not include topics such as ICT4D more widely (the digitisation of dedicated sector processes such as e-health, e-agriculture, or tools used by external end users rather than an aid organisation's staff, etc.) or Knowledge Management (of which IM is just one of the steps).

2. | More generally speaking, what are the kinds of blog post suggestions or submissions that we would expect to receive for the IM Resource Portal?

- A post giving tips or recommendations about a methodology, tool or practice,
- A post which provides an accessible and also engaging "way in" to a bigger IM report, lessons learned guidance or study,
- A post giving an expert opinion on a major IM development or a growing IM trend within the aid community,
- A post aiming to provoke and invite debate on a key IM topic,
- A post which gives a quick round-up or highlights after a key IM conference or event,
- A post which focuses on something that has not been said before regarding IM or which provides a new perspective on a known topic,
- A post which provides contextual information and/or a short summary about a new legislation or the release of new standards which impacts IM within the aid sector.

We welcome blog post suggestions in both French and English!

Step 2 | Planning

1. **Once you have chosen the subject of your future blog post, take some time to consider these 5 questions:**

- **Who** - Who am I (in relation to the reader) and for whom am I writing for?
- **What** - What is the question that this blog post answers and what is my key message?
- **Why** - How does this blog post add value to the conversation? In short, what's unique about it and thus why should it get published?
- **When** - When should I publish this blog post?
- **How** - How do I write a quality-content post? How do I make my message(s) understandable?

Formats to consider for a blog post

• **Lists of recommendations or takeaways**
The idea is to present a few pieces of advice or considerations that could benefit the sector as a whole looking at best practices or existing challenges (especially in regards to a crisis or a new trend for instance), and presenting them as a list. In a way, it is a more personal take on lessons learned or learnings.

• **Introductory posts**
The idea is to make a new resource accessible to a larger audience and to encourage them to check it out.

• **Explainers, arguments or pleas**
This format of blog post aims to underline the importance of the topic addressed and to give a few considerations on what the sector or other practitioners should do, and why.

• **Counter-intuitive statements or myth busting posts**
The goal is to present a topic that lacks coverage or to address a well-known topic using a different angle to create a debate or at least shed light on a particular aspect which has been misunderstood or misrepresented so far.

• **Quick post-event debriefs or direct addresses to someone or an organization**
This format of blog post can be very light, or yet very engaged depending on the tone in which it is written or to whom it is addressed.

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2. **At this stage, we would invite you to submit your blog post suggestion via the IM Resource Portal.**

By doing so, we will be able to review it, and potentially advise on how to shape the message to make sure it resonates with your target audience(s) as well as help you structure the post and discuss the best time for release.

How to get in touch?

Send us your suggestion by clicking on the button "Idea for a blog post?" on the blog page, or email us at: **blog@im-portal.org**. Please include the topic and key message(s) you'd like to address in your post, as well as a suggestion for the title, the intended length of the blog post, your target audience(s) and when you would like to see the post released, as well as some basic information about you.

Step 3 | Writing

General speaking a blog post is composed of:

- A compelling title,
- An introductory sentence or paragraph which includes the key argument of the post,
- A body of text separated into sections or paragraphs, ideally with a short subtitle for each main section,
- Some visuals if possible and a few key URL links,
- A conclusion or opening sentence,
- **Keep in mind you should keep it as concise as possible! Around 800 words is ideal.**

If you submit your blog post once fully written up, please know that we might suggest some rephrasings and changes to the text. If the topic is out of scope of the portal, we might also not be in a position to publish it. So, it's truly best to reach out to us by email at: **blog@im-portal.org** before starting to write the post in full.

We still are a relatively small team at CartONG. Thus, please consider that the review process might take a week or two, so no matter what, please plan ahead!

The portal is brought to you by **CartONG**, a French H2H (humanitarian to humanitarian) NGO specialised in Information Management and whose mission is to put data at the service of humanitarian, development and social action projects.

TIPS | **For those not accustomed to writing a blog post, here are some more detailed guidelines:**

◆ **Structure your arguments**

- **Each paragraph should correspond to an idea or sub idea.** The reader's attention will be much more focused on a structured text than on one main block of text.
- One of the most commonly used writing techniques is "*What? Why? What now?*". By answering these three questions, you'll be able to structure your text and invite the reader to reflect.
- **The key message of your post should appear in your first paragraph!**
- **Each main paragraph or section should start with a subheading.**

◆ **Be concise**

- **Do not repeat the same information twice** or else you risk losing your audience. Aim for a maximum of 800 words in total!
- **Write in short, concise sentences, as much as possible.**

◆ **Adapt your language to your target audience**

- **Adapt the language** (technicality of the terminology used) **to the target audience**, avoid jargon and spell out any acronyms the first time you use them.

◆ **Write in the first person**

- Favor the use of the first person and build upon your work and expertise, making reference to them.
- Also, keep the tone "conversational" without dumbing things down.

◆ **Give your post some context, especially in the intro**

- The idea here is to help the reader understand why he/she is reading your post now.

◆ **Illustrate what you want to say**

- Include facts and statistics, where relevant.
- Include photos, visuals, infographics and videos if possible. Consider also using Excel graphs or if applicable, Google Sheets for your post (they can be embedded in the post).
- These will also help with the dissemination on social media!

◆ **Link to further information**

- Feel free to refer the reader to **external resources to support your arguments** using URL links.
- When mentioning another organisation or a tool, always include the link to their website.
- If you want to include an appendix with all your sources listed, make sure to use the same formatting system for all them.

◆ **Invite the reader to react**

- **Invite the reader to interact and contribute to the reflection** by raising some questions and points to dig into in your blog post.
- You can also invite the reader to respond and/or ask their questions on the comment section below the blog post.

◆ **Last but not least find a catchy title!**

- The title of a blog post should reflect the content and subject covered by the post while making the reader want to read the content.
- Title aspects which work well are: titles in the form of a question or in two parts (a topic and an action such as "Humanitarian innovation: we need to get better at it"), titles including a number ("5 steps for...", "4 lessons learned to consider...", etc.), statement title indicative of an intention or assessment ("we need to...", "we are failing at...", etc.).