

TIGMOO.co.uk



GUIDE TO UNION BLOGGING 2009

Published by TIGMOO.co.uk
The network for union blogs and bloggers

What is TIGMOO?

TIGMOO.co.uk is an aggregator service for blogs about unions and unionism in the UK. By visiting just one site, or subscribing to one RSS feed, you can stay up to date with dozens of different opinions on union matters.

The network has grown considerably over 2008, and now includes links to over 120 blogs, by or about the UK labour movement. The site scans them all automatically for new content every hour and publishes a feed of links directly into their stories.

'TIGMOO' is affectionate insider slang for the labour movement "This Great Movement Of Ours", and the site hopes to contribute to the labour movement by creating an environment where more people are encouraged to talk publicly on the web about their union involvement.

The top 25 union blogs

This guide is a play on Iain Dale's Total Politics Guide to Political Blogs, which annually ranks hundreds of blogs from across the political spectrum.

The blogs in the TIGMOO network have been ranked according to four equally weighted factors: Traffic ratings generated by Alexa.com, number of posts in the last 8 weeks, number of comments in that time, and the number of inbound links found by Google.

Of course, these measures have a huge margin of error, especially when dealing with smaller sites, and of course measuring quantity doesn't always predict quality, though all the 25 listed here are certainly well worth checking out.

So we are very proud to present this year's top 25 trade union blogs, from TIGMOO.co.uk

1: John's Labour blog (1)

Last year's top spot retained again for this blog by a UNISON convenor reporting on his work and union issues in general. The blog has a strong focus on Labour party activism through the UNISON Labour Link and on developments for union pensions activists.
grayee.blogspot.com

2: ToUChstone (new entry)

An economic and social policy group blog from the TUC, offering topical commentary written by the organisation's policy staffers and guest contributors.
www.touchstoneblog.org.uk

3: The WGGB Blog (2)

This frequently updated site from the Writers' Guild of Great Britain discusses news and gossip for writers, and links to WGGB members' blogs.
writersguild.blogspot.com

4. Save 600 Jobs at Vestas (new entry)

Prolific activist run site helping to co-ordinate the campaign around the Vestas wind turbines factory on the Isle of Wight.
savevestas.wordpress.com

5: Labour and capital (5)

Former union staffer turned investment analyst writing on economics, governance and pensions from a labour movement perspective.
labourandcapital.blogspot.com

6: Jon's union blog (6)

UNISON NEC member reports back on his work, as well as discussing wider union and political issues.
jonrogers1963.blogspot.com

7: Stronger Unions (new entry)

Group blog on trends in union organising from the TUC Organising Team.
www.strongerunions.org

8: Union Futures (3)

Group blog with regular and opinionated news on union and political activism.
unionfutures.blogspot.com

9: Johnninit (7)

Union staffer's personal comments on international unions' growing use of new media.
www.johnninit.co.uk

10: Rene Lavanchy's Blog (new entry)

Tribune Magazine reporter's insights into unions and politics.
renelavanchy.wordpress.com

11: Port of Felixstowe Unite (new entry)

Workplace rep with branch news and wider comment on shipping issues.
Pofunite.blogspot.com

12: NUJ Left (new entry)

Co-ordinating blog for the NUJ's left activist coalition.
www.nujleft.org

13: Eric Lee (8)

Labourstart.org founder writes about unions using technology and international solidarity.
www.ericlee.me.uk

14: Jeremy Dear (19)

NUJ General Secretary reports on his work and comments on media and current affairs
jeremydear.blogspot.com

15: Blacklist blog (new entry)

Hazards Magazine editor exposes blacklisting of safety activists.
www.hazards.org/blacklistblog

16 Connected Research (new entry)

Connect researcher on policy matters in telecoms and technology and current affairs.
connectedresearch.wordpress.com

17: Action Without Theory (4)

Unions, politics and popular culture with a Manchester slant.
action-without-theory.blogspot.com

18: Ian's Unite Site (12)

Unite EC member writes on engineering and IT sector issues.
www.iansunitesite.org.uk

19: RTUC's blog (new entry)

Ryde Trades Union Council aim to give Isle of Wight workers a voice online.
rtuc.wordpress.com

20: John McD's union blog (10)

UNISON convenor updates on his activities and views.
johnmcdsunionblog.blogspot.com

21: PCS Euston Branch (new entry)

Workplace, branch and wider news for PCS members at HMRC in Euston.
pcseuston.wordpress.com

22: Roger McKenzie blog (60)

UNISON Midlands Regional Secretary using new media to stay in touch.
rogermckenzie.blogspot.com

23: Green Party Trade Union Group (22)

Communicating and co-ordinating the group's activities.
gptublog.blogspot.com

24: Barnet Unison (18)

News and discussion for Barnet Council's UNISON members
www.barnetunison.me.uk

25: Solidarity Magazine (16)

Regular online complement to the quarterly activists' print magazine.
solidaritymagazine.wordpress.com

2008/9 in union blogs

Looking over our league table of union bloggers, it's clear that the last year has seen a lot of new activity. Now over a third of the top 25 are new entries.

Union and political blogs in the USA continue to point the way, with insider commentary from *LaborNerd*, effective online campaigning from *SEIU blog*, or comprehensive and timely labour movement coverage from *AFL-CIONow*. But things are growing over here too.

Rene Lavanchy's blog offers unique insights into the UK labour movement, and more official national union blogs have been launched, with sites like *PCS Comment* or *Stronger Unions* trying to engage more closely with the membership.

Policy blogs *ToUChstone* and *Connected Research* have joined more established ones like *Labour and Capital* to reach out beyond the movement and represent union ideas to the wider policy blogging community.

2009 has also seen blogs used to co-ordinate campaigns and disputes, with the excellent work done by the *Keep Burberry British* blog last year being continued by activists involved in the Vestas dispute on the Isle of Wight, and the *Save 600 Jobs at Vestas* blog has been the most heavily updated on the whole network.

More blogs are also being used to help network local union organisations. *Port of Felixstowe Unite*, *PCS Euston Branch* and *Barnet UNISON*, amongst others are becoming established and useful presences online for their respective branches.

Blogs have also helped give an extra dimension to union election campaigns, with all the candidates in the recent Amicus GS election fielding commentable online communications for the first time.

And the range of tools used has increased too. The international volunteer network *LabourStart* have launched *UnionBook.org*, a union specific social network, offering powerful networking tools free to union organisers (a safer option for many than the major networks like *Facebook*, which have banned individual union activists or terminated campaigns in recent years). *UnionBook* has a blogging tool, integrated within their supportive community, and already two of its bloggers are represented on *TIGMOO.co.uk*.

Twitter has also burst onto the blogging scene in a bigger way, with UK politicians keenly taking up the opportunities to report back to constituents or to crowdsource opinion with this fashionable microblogging service. Unions are now starting to make use of Twitter to make contact with members too. *@NUSuk*, *@WorkersUniting*, *@EquityUK*, *@UnitetheUnion*, *@UNISONtweets*, *@LabourStart* and others have already amassed creditable levels of followers. And an international union *Twibe* at *twibes.com/union* collates trade union Twitter accounts in a similar way to *TIGMOO.co.uk*.

We've also seen the *TIGMOO.co.uk* model extended to Canada with the launch of the new site *UnionBlogs.ca*, and word is that a US version is now in the pipeline. Who knows, next year could see us go international with a *TIGMOO.com* network!

If you have a union related blog, or are thinking of starting one, why not join the network? Visit www.tigmoo.co.uk and let us know what you are doing. By linking together we can create a bigger union blogging community and help support all UK union bloggers.