

Abstract

Madeline A. Hoag for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Liberal Studies with an option in New Media Communications presented on May 28, 2013. Title: *A Tablespoon or Two* Food Blog

Abstract approved: _____
Mentor's Name (no titles)

A Tablespoon or Two is a food blog featuring recipes, featured folks, featured ingredients, an about me section, and my food history. The target audience is Pacific Northwest young chefs who like to cook affordable and fresh comfort food. The pages of the blog feature posts such as a trip to the Corvallis Farmers' Market, a history of Lebanese cuisine and some profiles of local influential people in the Corvallis food community.

This thesis examines the process of creating a food blog by detailing which blogs and magazines provided inspiration, how my background as a new media communications major played a role in blogging and the content decisions that led to establishing a brand and logo. How improvements were made, the social media aspect and the blog future are discussed in great detail as crucial components to maintaining a successful food blog.

Keywords: blogging, food writing, Corvallis community, social media

Corresponding e-mail address: hoagm@onid.orst.edu

A Tablespoon or Two Food Blog

by

Madeline Hoag

A Project

submitted to

Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Liberal Arts (New Media Communications)

Presented May 28, 2013
Commencement June 15, 2013

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Liberal Studies with an option in New Media
Communications project of Madeline A. Hoag presented on May 28, 2013.

APPROVED:

Mentor, representing the School of Writing, Literature and Film

Committee Member, representing the School of Writing, Literature and Film

Committee Member, representing Graphic Design

Dean, University Honors College

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon
State University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to
any reader upon request.

Madeline A. Hoag, Author

Acknowledgements

I would like to give a big thanks to my mentor, Sara Jameson, and committee members, Kristin Griffin and Maschell Cha. This entire project would not have been possible without my bi-monthly meetings with Kristin and her wealth of knowledge and inspiration. Kristin offered me valuable insight regarding how to effectively communicate my ideas, came up with creative post ideas, and kept me on track. I am truly grateful for the energy and enthusiasm everyone brought to the project and their continued support and feedback.

Thanks to everyone that I was able to interview for some of my “featured folks” posts, especially Evelyn Hall, Lisbeth Goddik and Michele Walker.

Lastly, thanks to all of my friends and family who encourage my passion for food, eat my meal creations and follow my blog. With all of you, cooking is more enjoyable and my blog has gained success and views.

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Inspiration	1
• Annie's Eats	
• Real Simple's Simply Stated	
Audience	3
Graphic Design	3
Creating the Blog	5
• Choosing a platform	
• Choosing a name	
The Blog Pages	6
• Homepage	
• The About Me Page	
• The Food History Page	
• The Featured Folks Page	
• The Featured Ingredients Page	
Revision and Usability	12
• Consulting blog experts for suggestions	
• Usability testing with typical target audience	
Social Media	14
Readership	14
• Statistics and demographics on users	
The Future of <i>A Tablespoon or Two</i>	18
Sources Consulted	19
Appendices	21
• Appendix A: Thesis Fair Poster	
• Appendix B: Design Plan	
• Appendix C: Defense PowerPoint	
• Appendix D: Thesis Proposal	
• Appendix E: Brochure	

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. Version one of the blog layout	4
2. Version two of the blog layout	5
3. The logo and blog appearance	6
4. The Corvallis Farmers' Market Post	7
5. The About Me page	8
6. The Food History page	9
7. My interview with Evelyn Hall	11
8. The Featured Ingredients page	12
9. The number of visitors to my blog broken down my day	15
10. The number of visitors to my blog broken down by week	15
11. The ways in which viewers were referred to my blog	16
12. The number of visitors to my blog broken down by country	16
13. Corvallis Farmers' Market post on Corvallis Maven's Facebook page	17

A Tablespoon or Two Food Blog

Introduction

An idea that occurred to me during an appointment with my honors advisor quickly blossomed into an exciting, yet substantial project that enabled me to further explore a topic that I adore, food writing. My initial inspiration to write a food blog came during my sophomore year when I took a reporting class and a food writing class. Learning that this was something that I could develop for my honor's thesis project thrilled me, and I immediately began exploring current food blogs out there, deciding what type of content I wanted to produce, what audience to address, and who would be by my side to help me through this exciting process.

Inspiration

After my first meeting with my committee member, Kristin Griffin in the fall of 2012, I set out to explore all of the magazines and blogs that she recommended for inspiration. At the first of our twice monthly visits, she suggested I take a look at *Lucky Peach* magazine. The magazine initially caught my eye because of its bold colors and young, hip vibe. I knew that this was the type of look that I wanted to create because my target audience is young chefs looking for delicious, yet simple ways to incorporate cooking into their lifestyles. The style of *Lucky Peach* emphasizes one major theme throughout each entire issue, which was a thoroughness I admired, but knew would be challenging to replicate in a blog. Instead, I took inspiration from the bold images, detailed language and unique creative edge.

Other blogs I looked to included *Smitten Kitchen*, *Pioneer Woman*, *Annie's Eats* and *Real Simple's Simply Stated*. Deb Perelman's *Smitten Kitchen* emphasizes intricate

and poetic language describing each as if it were sitting on my kitchen table, while Ree Drummond's *Pioneer Woman* has a traditional and image-based interface. Both Smitten Kitchen and Pioneer Woman appeal to me and feature fantastic recipes, but my blog is more closely structured similar to *Annie's Eats*, which features a simple layout, a clear header at the top allowing users to easily navigate the site and concise posts with high quality photos in order to easily engage readers.

Annie's Eats has an especially inviting layout with a friendly voice. The slogan is "making your days taste better," which I enjoy for its simplicity and concise wording. I try to model my blog after the same phrasing used on their site, which says, "My hope is to inspire you to be fearless in the kitchen, to try new things, to take the time to make things the homemade way and most importantly, to have fun doing it!" (M., Annie). In a similar manner to Annie of *Annie's Eats*, I hope that my blog inspires readers to get in the kitchen and make meals for themselves or try ingredients that they may not have otherwise thought of to incorporate in to their diet.

Simply Stated is the blog that I mainly rely on for my recipe selections. The food posts feature fresh, seasonable ingredients for dishes that always look appealing, can be made in a reasonable amount of time, and grab the attention of my taste buds in less than three seconds. This is critical in blogging because the reader's attention must be captured quickly if they are going to continue to read the post. The dinner courses are well thought out, balanced and healthy, which are three key aspects in my recipe posts as well. In addition, *Simply Stated* has more than just recipe posts. Likewise, I also post about local restaurants, Lebanese cuisine and farmer's market trips.

A lot of the inspiration for my recipe posts comes from magazines like *Real Simple*, *Martha Stewart*, *Bon Appetit* and other blogs that I find linked to Pinterest, such as *My Baking Addiction*, *The Baker Chick* and *Cooking Classy*. After four or five completed posts, I realized that my slant seemed to be heading towards comfort food (chicken pot pie, sweet and sour chicken, savory tomato cheddar pie, quiche, etc.), which is how I came up with my slogan, “fresh comfort food for young chefs.”

Audience

I define the audience of *A Tablespoon or Two* as anyone who likes to eat good fresh local food that is easy to prepare and not overly expensive. The recipes are fun, rather than time consuming and complicated. Originally, my main audience was family and friends, but as I continue the blog I hope to reach more people like me, who are college aged men and women in the Pacific Northwest who may be starting their first job. I want to share with others the comfort food that I like to eat at home and the recipes that I remember from childhood memories. My hope is that my posts will be read and prepared during milestones of young 20-somethings lives, such as a successful job interview, the day of a challenging midterm, graduation day or birthdays.

Graphic Design

The design of a blog is one of the most important aspects because it is the first thing that the reader sees and uses to form opinions of the blog. The Hungry Australian blogger writes, “I read a lot of food blogs and I generally decide within a minute or so whether a new blog I've come across is one I'm going to keep visiting. For me, bad design is a real turn off. It doesn't matter how good the writing is, if the site is poorly designed or overly busy I probably won't visit again” (Soong-Kroeger). This is a testament to how

design can be just as important as the content and can be the deciding factor for viewers on whether or not they will visit your site again.

In order to enhance my own design, I contacted senior graphic design student, Maschell Cha, who could help me with establishing my brand, logo and banner at the top of my blog. Meeting with Maschell was really beneficial because she was able to add a valuable component that my blog was lacking. I had a fun background, but the blog didn't appear to be cohesive or represent the style of bold, hip flavor that I wanted to see. Maschell was professional and laid out a clear design plan with deadlines throughout our thorough meetings. By the second deadline, she had created a logo in eight different color combinations and asked me to choose my favorite. I debated between a couple options but decided that I liked the title in two different colors while the two tablespoons were represented in the same color. Her logo really captured my design style of bold colors and a hip vibe, enhanced my blogging experience and added to its success through my social media efforts. Here is a before and after of my homepage:

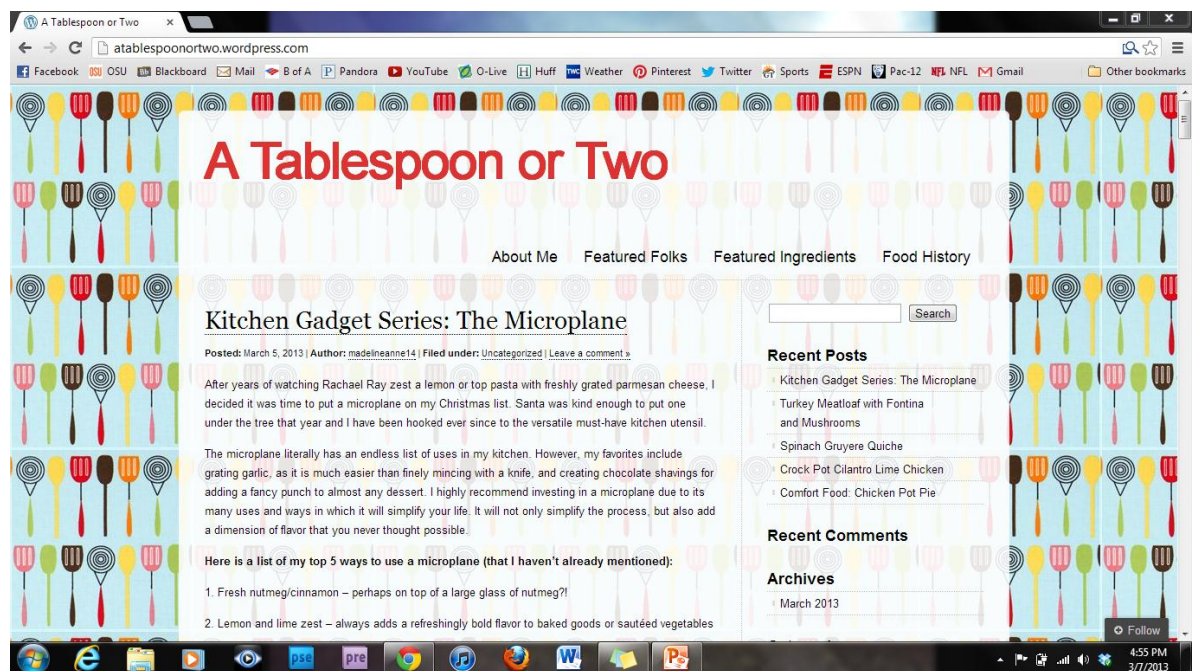


Figure 1. A screenshot of one of the many attempted blog layouts.



Figure 2. How my blog looks now, after working with Maschell Cha.

Creating the Blog

Once I established a target audience and general style, I began exploring whether I wanted to use Blogspot, Wordpress or Wix. In previous new media courses, such as Reporting 302, I used Blogspot to create a food blog that was user friendly, but I decided that I wanted to try something new and explore another option with Wordpress. Getting feedback and being able to interact with readers was an important component to me, so I decided to go with Wordpress because it allows me to receive comments, be creative with the layout and share my posts via social media more easily. Wordpress also allows me to have various pages, which enables me to have a more diverse array of posts.

A couple months into the process, I developed the name, *A Tablespoon or Two*, as a way to represent my cooking style. Noted in the about me page of the blog, the name arose because I tend to add a little bit more than the recipe calls for if I ever measure individual ingredients in the first place. I wanted the name to express how much I enjoy

carefree cooking and adding amounts based on how I want the end result to taste. I also try to maintain a consistent angle, which is important in food blogging. In a list of food blogging tips, Christina from *The Hungry Australian* writes, “Deciding on a content strategy makes it easier to build a dedicated readership because people know what to expect when they visit your site” (Soong-Kroeger). Establishing posts that align with one another is critical in food blogging.



Figure 3. My logo and how the banner appears on my blog.

The Blog Pages

The main categories of my blog are food history, featured ingredients, featured folks and a brief about me section in addition to the homepage. The established categories for my blog set the tone for a dynamic array of content that is not only about the things I make in my kitchen, but the people I meet and the ingredients I find interesting.

The Homepage

The homepage of my blog features easy dinner recipes, snacks, desserts, the kitchen gadget series and some re-blogging of posts that I enjoyed from other great food blogs. I try to incorporate in each post why I chose to make the recipe, a brief history (if there is one), where I found the recipe and how it turned out or ways that it can be altered. A key component to the posts is a large variety of pictures, enabling the reader to

understand the process. After reading my posts, I hope they will come away with an idea of how the food looks and if it is going to be easy to make in their own kitchen.

One of my favorite and most popular posts in this section was about my trip to the Corvallis Farmers' Market. I posted a lot of pictures, discussed the experience, what I purchased and how I planned on incorporating those ingredients in my weekly meals. I did a follow-up post with my creation of strawberry-rhubarb compote and the ways in which I utilized this tasty treat – on toast, ice cream and in Greek plain yogurt. This style of post engaged my readers and personalized the experience, which is critical in blogging. For example, Amateur Gourmet writes, “My most popular posts were all produced from a place of passion. Whether reacting to a bad restaurant experience or a really incredible evening out, I was really worked up when I sat down to write. I had an all-consuming need to get these stories out into the blogosphere for people to read: there was urgency, there was fire in my belly” (Roberts). Similarly, my genuine excitement to share my experience at the market may have been what helped me receive an all-time high for views in one day of 86.



Figure 4. The Corvallis Farmers' Market Post

The About Me Page

Understanding the blogger and their voice is crucial in feeling connected to the content and is more likely to engage readers and encourage them to bookmark a blog. The about me section of *A Tablespoon or Two* is a way for readers to understand more about who I am, why I am writing and where my passion for food comes from. After reading this page, I want readers to feel like they know me, my food personality and comprehend my passion for food. I share some quotes from Michael Pollan's books that represent my outlook on food and cooking as well as links to my food board on Pinterest and my Twitter account.

The Food History Page

The food history page explains how cooking has been a part of my childhood and describes some of my first memories in the kitchen. By sharing anecdotes of when I was young, my inspirations and favorite foods, readers will realize that food has always been a part of my life and that being in the kitchen truly excites me. In this section, readers will get to learn about everything from my first experimental muffin recipe to getting my first cookbook and making dinner for my whole family. To understand my history better, here is the about me section and the food history page along with how it appears on my blog:



Figure 5. The “About Me” page, which features background information and reasons for blogging.



Figure 6. My “Food History” page, which also features a picture of my first cookbook.

One of my first memories of food dates back to the age of four, when I would tag along with my mom to Parent and Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and sit crisscross applesauce in the corner of the carpeted room, peeling red grapes from the bunch my mom prepared for me in a zip-lock baggie. I had a genuine interest for what the grape looked like on the inside, what the skin tasted like and how big of a piece I could strip off each grape without tearing into the juicy center. It may have been a strange activity for a four year old, but it definitely kept me occupied for close to an hour, while the people surrounding me discussed the auction budget and how to better teach math to second graders.

By the time I reached age seven, I learned a new activity that gave me much more of a thrill than peeling grapes. It was a fun event that I only got to do over at my neighbor Molly’s house because my mom would never allow for this kind of a mess to take place in her kitchen. I don’t know if we ever named it, but it basically consisted of making muffins with no recipe...and what curious and daring seven year-old wouldn’t love getting to throw whatever they wanted into a bowl and then eat it? Molly’s mom would fill a bowl with the basic ingredients necessary for the muffins to turn out somewhat edible and we would get to add whatever our little hearts desired from the pantry. Sometimes this meant marshmallows, raisins, fruit, chocolate chips, cereal or all of the above. We stirred it all together and patiently waited for them to bake, eagerly eating them the second they came out of the oven, pretending they tasted good even if our combination was a tad questionable. We loved knowing that it was our creation, a feeling that has stuck with me all the way up to my college years.

Christmas of 2002 my Aunt Joan bought me my first cookbook, a huge turning point in my life that led to meals upon meals prepared by my energetic eleven year old self for my entire family. The first recipe that I made out of “Fun with Cooking” was called Pancake Packages. The oh-so creative recipe consisted of making crepes and filling them with a cream cheese, ham and cheddar mixture.

Wrapped with a slightly cooked green onion to look like a present, the final product was a hit with my family. Based on the success of this culinary endeavor, I learned to love everything about the cooking process – watching the items I bought at the store and farmer’s market turn into wholesome, colorful meals for my family and friends to enjoy.

I became an avid Food Network viewer and vividly remember getting yelled at by my sister for watching too much “Emeril Live” (I’m sorry, but who doesn’t want to kick it up a notch!?). I even began tearing out recipes and pages from my mom’s Better Homes and Garden, Real Simple and Martha Stewart Living Magazines, probably at times to her dismay. I even got a subscription to Bon Appetit, hoping to expand my skills and explore new ingredients. Cooking quickly became my favorite hobby because it relaxed me and truly allowed me to express my creativity.

My love for food followed me into my senior year of college and that is why I feel like creating a website where I can showcase my meals, trips to the farmer’s markets and discovery of new ingredients is a necessary progression in my food journey. My food history is only the beginning of my story as I embark on my last year of college, full of new ingredients, recipes, cultures and friends to share the experience with. Join me on my journey and tell me your food memories!

The Featured Folks Page

The featured folks page of my blog emphasizes people that are particularly interesting and unique to the Pacific Northwest food environment. For example, my first featured folk, Evelyn Hall, is the manager of the North Corvallis Cooperative Grocery Store. For this interview, I prepared questions about the store and recorded the conversation in order to produce a podcast. The podcast allowed me to include a multimedia aspect to my blog, which is an important way for me to attract attention from my readers and appeal to them in different ways. The post also enabled me to learn more about how the store plays a part in the local Corvallis food community through a series of in-depth questions. Conducting interviews can be challenging, but it is a valuable skill to have in order to learn first-hand from an expert. In order to get a better idea of what I learned during the interview here are some sample questions that I asked Evelyn Hall:

1. *What is a cooperative grocery store and how is it structured?*
2. *How would you describe the typical cooperative shopper (families, college students, etc.)?*
3. *What do customers value most about the store (organic products, freshness, etc.)?*
4. *How much local produce do you provide to customers and who do you buy from?*
5. *Do you have any specialty products that are specific to certain diets and food trends?*

The interview was educational and got me to become a regular shopper at the cooperative grocery store, as I hope I inspired others to do so as well. I would like to enhance this page of my blog with even more interviews with people who really have something to say on a variety of food related fields.

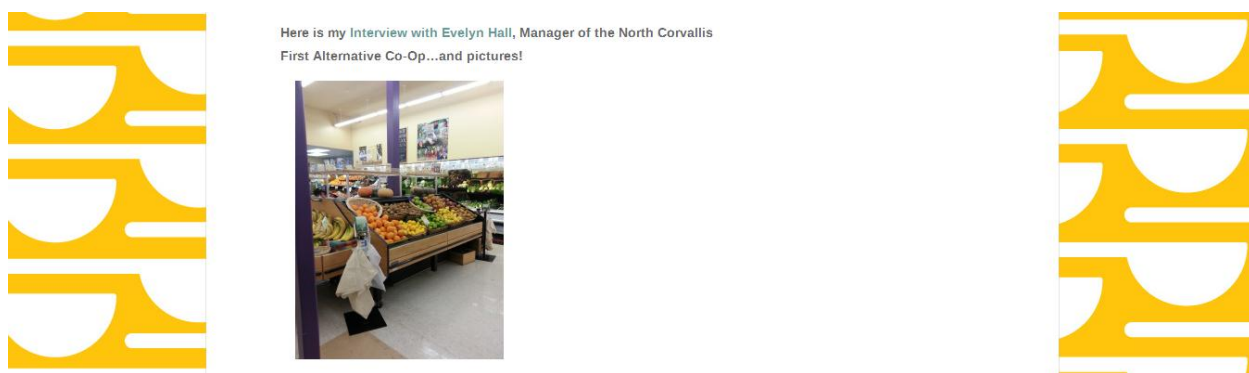


Figure 7. My blog post with Evelyn Hall, which includes a link to listen to it on YouTube.

The Featured Ingredients Page

For this page of my blog, I feature several ingredients that I enjoy cooking with, the different ways in which they can be used, a little history about the ingredient and several recipes. I have featured ingredients such as Brussels sprouts, barley and avocados. For the avocado post, which I also mention as one of my favorite foods in the about me section, I linked my YouTube instructional video on how to make guacamole to the post.

This is a section of my blog that I am hoping to expand further by exploring some more exotic ingredients.



Figure 8. The “Featured Ingredients” page, which discusses new and fun ways to cook with them.

Revision and Usability

However, I have made progress in enhancing my blog by talking to successful bloggers and learning about the components that led them to productive blogging. One accomplished blogger that I interviewed was Alicia Jones, the co-owner of Afton Field Farm, OSU graduate and avid blogger for *High Heels in the Barnyard*. Her tips were valuable and encouraged me to really examine the reasons behind the visual and content decisions that I make. She taught me ways to design the layout of my blog, establish a brand, remain consistent and have more fun during the blogging experience by producing content that represents me and no one else. She taught me ways to get creative with the lighting for taking pictures of my food and reassured me that taking food outside for photographs is sometimes necessary. Alicia Jones’ comments were extremely helpful and necessary for making blog revisions, as well as words of advice from The Hungry

Australian blogger, who wrote, “I read a lot of food blogs and I generally decide within a minute or so whether a new blog I've come across is one I'm going to keep visiting. For me, bad design is a real turn off. It doesn't matter how good the writing is, if the site is poorly designed or overly busy I probably won't visit again.”

In addition, the comments that I received from presenting my blog to Kristin Griffin's food writing class (WR 383) on March 8, 2013 of winter term gave reader feedback. I gave a 15-20 minute presentation that covered why I made certain visual and content decisions, the process of coming up with a name and how I planned on growing the blog to reach a wider audience. At the end of my presentation, I handed out a questionnaire to the students regarding my blog layout, content and overall appeal. Here are some sample questions:

1. *Based on what you saw of my blog, rate from 1 to 10 the following components...
Overall visual appeal, Design & Layout, Interest in the content, Ease of navigation, Appeal and amount of pictures/images*
2. *Do you have any suggestions for how the site could be more appealing to my target audience (college aged people who like to cook/want to learn more about local food and the community)?*
3. *What is your favorite part about the blog? Why?*
4. *Is there something that could be improved about the blog that may make you more likely to read it? What could I do more/less of on the blog?*
5. *What types of interviews or articles would you like to see in the future?*

Hearing feedback from students and people my age was extremely beneficial because they are predominately my target audience and the people that I believe will potentially read my blog. It was rewarding to hear their positive feedback and motivating to hear all of their constructive criticism. Changes that I made include more pictures,

more local content, and emphasizing the college student lifestyle of living in small spaces and being on a budget. I made changes based on what a large number of students commented because I want my blog to be inviting, interesting and worth reading. For example, I tried to respond to comments about content by providing more local stories with my Corvallis Farmers' Market trip, the story about Corvallis food cart owner, Michele Walker, and an interview with OSU's top cheese expert on campus, Lisbeth Goddik. Several students also mentioned that they wanted to see more pictures, so I tried to take more pictures, include larger pictures and really display the process of cooking through my pictures.

Social Media

As a new media communications major, I found that tweeting, pinning and making Facebook posts were quickly integrated into my blogging efforts. However, I also found it interesting to connect some concepts from classes that I have taken into understanding why people read blogs. Research by Cori Lynn Hemmah regarding the uses and gratifications of the Food Network found that, "participants enjoy the ability to watch a Food Network program on television and then look up the recipe on the Food Network website so they can attempt to prepare a recipe themselves" (4). This concept is also true for blogs because if the content is presented well, it will inspire readers to get in the kitchen and make it themselves.

Readership

Wordpress has a dashboard of statistics for the blog, which is fun to watch the when the number of viewers skyrocket on days that I make a new post and see comments or likes from readers that enjoyed my posts. So far, Facebook seems to be the avenue that

brings in the most readers and commenters, but I am making progress in getting my content out there for more than just my Facebook friends to read. Here are some statistics to further explain my readership:

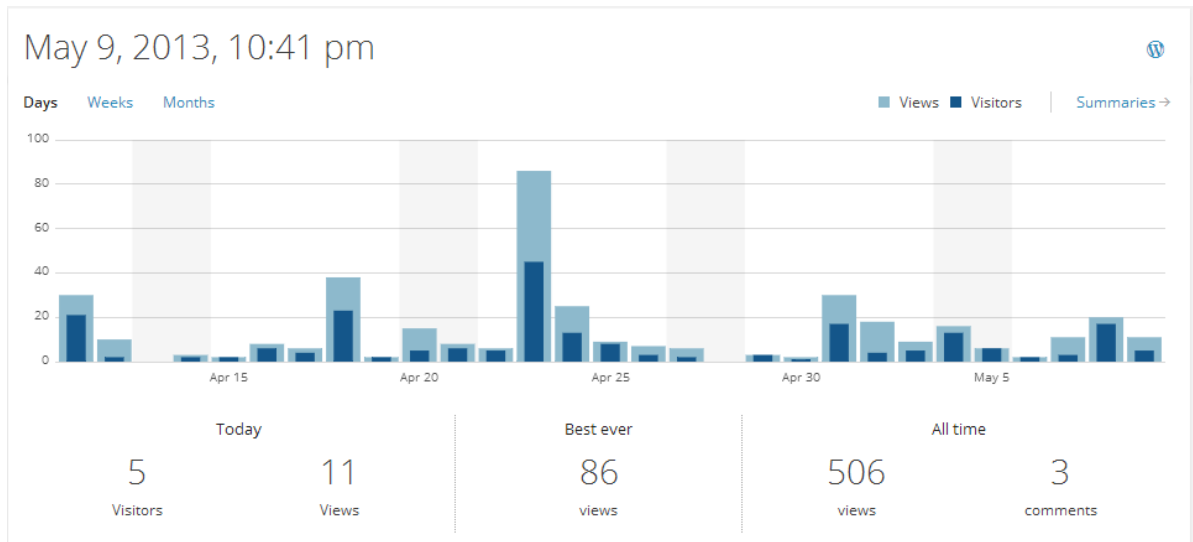


Figure 9. The number of visitors to my blog broken down by day.

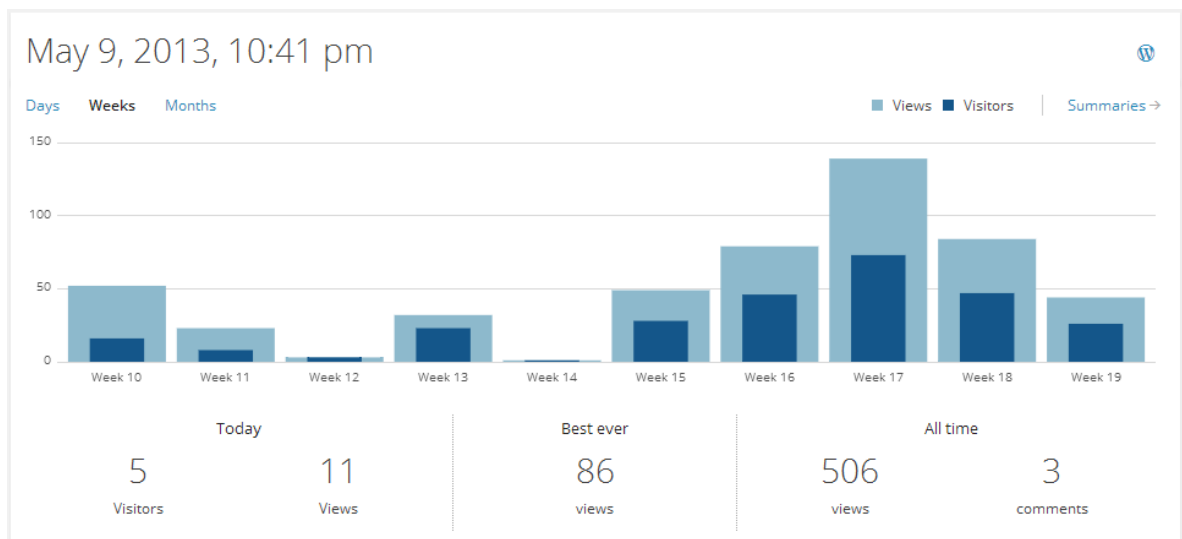


Figure 10. The number of visitors to my blog broken down by week.

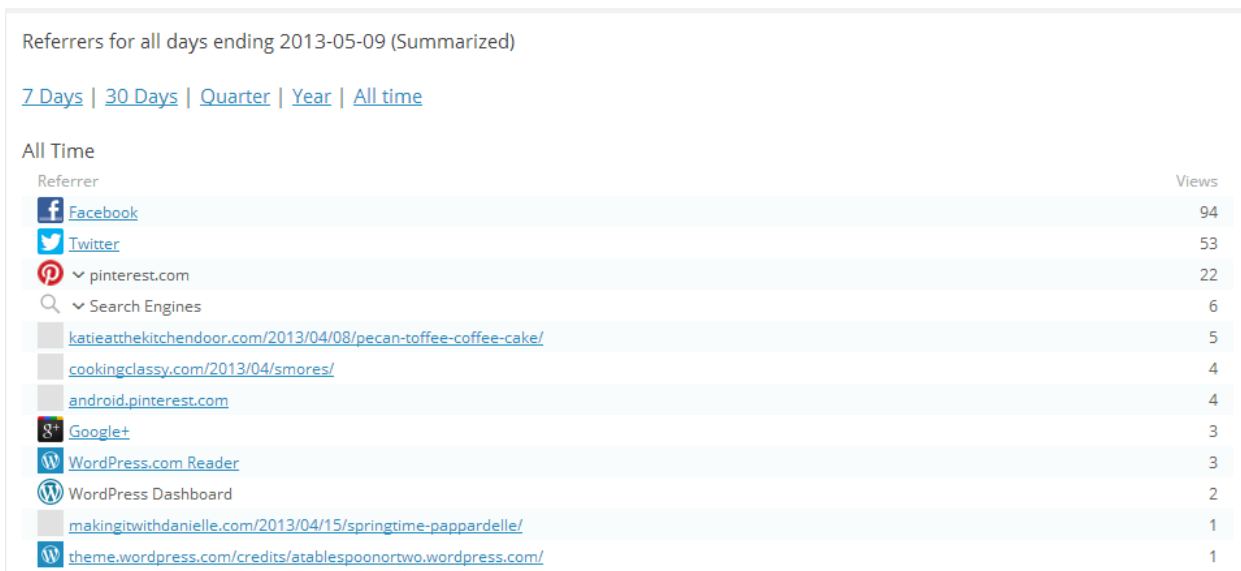


Figure 11. The ways in which viewers were referred to my blog.

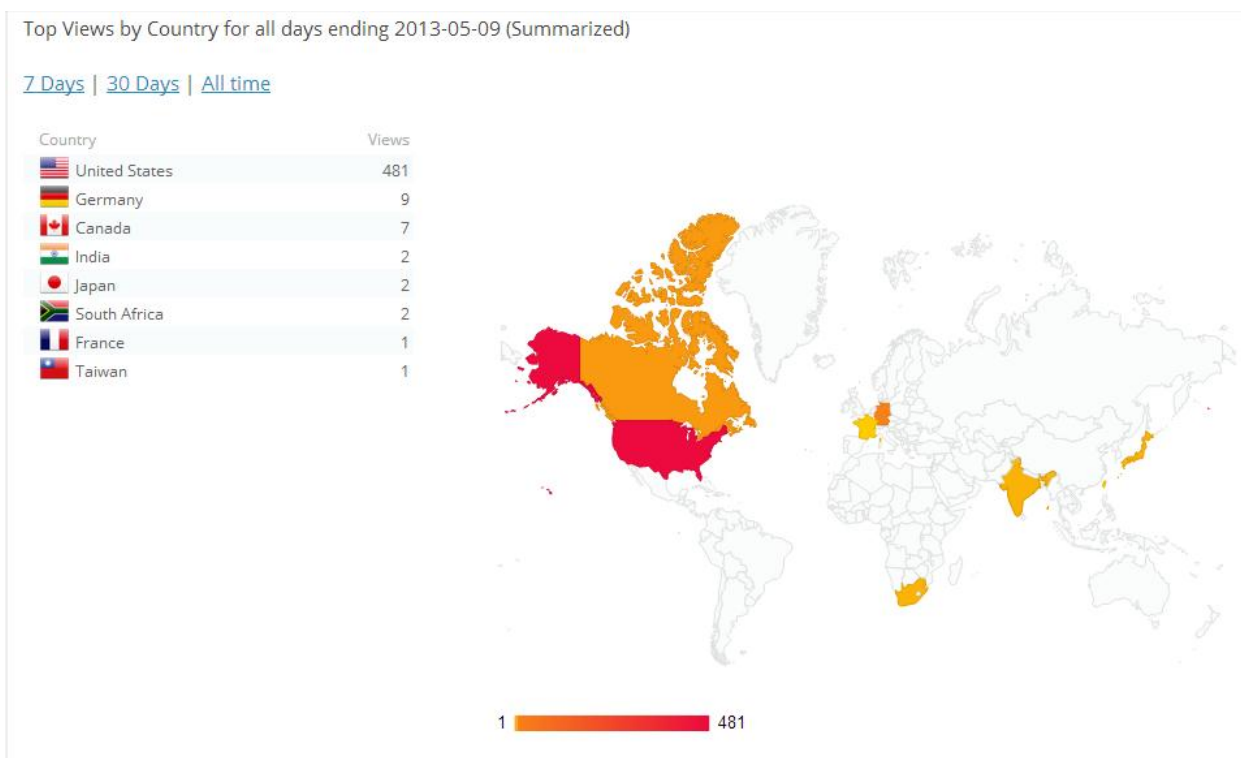


Figure 12. The number of visitors to my blog broken down by country.

In order to gain higher readership of my content, I contacted the Corvallis Maven Facebook Page from the advice of Kristin Griffin, who ended up linking my Farmers’

Market and Corvallis food cart posts to their Facebook site. Corvallis Maven is part of Visit Corvallis, the tourism center for Corvallis, Oregon. The Corvallis Maven Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest sites promote local events, people and landmarks of Corvallis. The Facebook page has over 17,000 “Likes” and has strong interactivity with its followers. It was rewarding to hear that Corvallis Maven enjoyed reading my blog and felt that the content could enhance their site. I look forward to getting more opportunities like this as I produce more local content.



Figure 13. My Corvallis Farmers' Market Post featured on Corvallis Maven's Facebook site.

The Future of *A Tablespoon or Two*

When I interviewed with a recent start-up company called Kitchen Surfing, the woman who was interviewing me mentioned that she thoroughly enjoyed reading my blog and wanted to discuss the opportunity of me guest blogging for their site. Knowing that my content is being read and that it is enjoyed by potential employers is rewarding and extremely encouraging. It is nice to know that *A Tablespoon or Two* can also act as an asset on my resume and be an attractive component to employers looking for creative content. As I explore my future and jobs that I want to pursue, having a food blog is crucial to my success and is why I plan on keeping the blog going after my defense and graduation. As I continue *A Tablespoon or Two*, I plan to make changes and have it grow and evolve as my food preferences progress.

The future of *A Tablespoon or Two* expands far beyond Corvallis and interviews with OSU employees or the meals I produce in my small apartment kitchen. I see it being a way for me to enhance my culinary, writing and social media skills in a way that enables me to produce a brand for myself that appeals to other bloggers, friends and potential employers. Example posts for the future include reviews of cookbooks, food biographies and films as well as lists of recommended readings. As a new media communications major, I hope to include more multimedia content such as videos, links, podcasts and polls.

The entire experience, working with my mentors and producing content for my readers has been challenging, rewarding and educational in ways that I never imagined when starting my food blog. *A Tablespoon or Two* is a dynamic expression of my food personality that I envision being a part of my life for quite some time.

Sources Consulted

Bon Appetit Feb. 2013: 3 Mar. 2013.

Bukvova, Helena, Hendrik Kalb, and Eric Schoop. "What We Blog? A Qualitative Analysis of Researchers Weblogs." *Conference on Electronic Publishing* (2010).

Bell, Jaclyn. *Cooking Classy*. 6 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.cookingclassy.com/>>.

Chang, David. *Lucky Peach* Nov. 2012: 15 Nov. 2012. <<http://lky.ph/>>.

Drummond, Ree. *Pioneer Woman*. 5 Mar. 2013. <<http://thepioneerwoman.com/>>.

Fullerton, Audra. The Baker Chick. 2013. 23 Mar. 2013. <<http://www.the-baker-chick.com/>>.

Guzman, Pilar. *Martha Stewart Living* Feb. 2013: 5 Feb. 2013.

Hemmah, Cori L. *Uses and Gratifications of the Food Network*. Thesis. San Jose State University, 2009.

Jacob, Dianne. "Get Published With A Food Blog." *Will Write for Food: The Complete Guide to Writing Cookbooks, Restaurant Reviews, Articles, Memoir, Fiction, and More*. New York: Marlowe and, 2005. 59-106.

Jones, Alicia. High Heels in the Barnyard. 30 Mar. 2013. <<http://highheelsinthebarnyard.wordpress.com/>>.

Lothridge, Jamie. *My Baking Addiction*. Web. 4 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.mybakingaddiction.com/>>.

M., Annie. Annie's Eats. 2007. Web. 21 Feb. 2013. <<http://www.annies-eats.com/>>.

Perelman, Deb. Web log post. *Smitten Kitchen*. 2007. 23 Jan. 2013. <<http://smittenkitchen.com/>>.

Pollan, Michael. *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual*. New York: Penguin, 2009.

Roberts, Adam. "How to Make Your Food Blog Popular." *Amateur Gourmet*. 8 Oct. 2007. 12 May 2013.

Schmidt, Jan. "Blogging Practices: An Analytical Framework." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12.4 (2007): 1409-427.

Simply Stated. Real Simple Magazine, Web. 3 Feb. 2013.
<<http://simplystated.realsimple.com/>>.

Soong-Kroeger, Christina. "How to Blog about Food: Useful Tips for New, Emerging & Aspiring Bloggers." *The Hungry Australian*. 17 Feb. 2012. 15 May 2013.

APPENDIX A



A Tablespoon or Two Food Blog
 Madeline Hoag, Sara Jameson, Kristin Griffin
 School of Writing, Literature and Film
 Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331



Abstract

My food blog, "A Tablespoon or Two" targets young chefs who enjoy simply delicious recipes, learning about local Corvallis food culture and reading personal memoirs regarding my own passion for cooking. The blog features various pages that explore local entrepreneurs, my background with Lebanese cuisine, restaurant reviews and simple dinner recipes. The site is heavily publicized through social media avenues, such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest to enhance its readership and popularity among the target audience.

Inspiration

Research for my blog required looking to other blogs and magazines for visual and content inspiration. I ended up basing my blog off elements of the following sites:

- Lucky Peach Magazine
- Pioneer Woman
- Annie's Eats
- Smitten Kitchen
- Real Simple's Simply Stated

Blog Content

Homepage – Various dinner, dessert and snack posts for young chefs to feel inspired to create in their own kitchen. Example posts include Cilantro Lime Chicken, Bread Pudding, Strawberry-Rhubarb Compote and my trip to the Corvallis Farmers' Market.

Food History – A brief history of my background with food, when I got my first cookbook and why I have a passion for all things food-related.

Featured Folks – Interviews with people in the local Corvallis food community and articles about inspiring chefs. Example posts on this page include a podcast with the manager of the North Corvallis Cooperative Grocery Store, Evelyn Hall, an article about the Creperie du Lys food cart located in downtown Corvallis and a Q&A with OSU cheese expert, Lisbeth Goddik.

Featured Ingredients – A profile of a specific ingredient, a brief history and how it can be incorporated into multiple dishes. Example posts include Brussels sprouts and barley.

Interface and Design



Figure 1: The homepage of my blog with easily accessible headers to the various pages.

Results

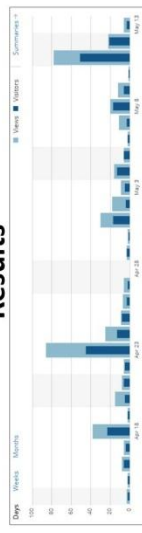


Figure 2: A graph representing how many readers view my blog each day.



Figure 3: The top views by country for my blog.

Conclusions

The success of my blog opened up the opportunity for my posts to be featured on the Corvallis Maven, Twitter and Facebook sites. Corvallis Maven is part of Visit Corvallis and has over 17,000 "Likes" on Facebook.

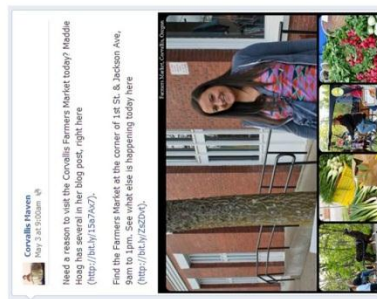


Figure 4: My Corvallis Farmer's Market post on Corvallis Maven.



Figure 5: My article about Creperie du Lys featured on Corvallis Maven.

APPENDIX B

Design Plan from Maschell Cha, Oregon State Department of Graphic Design

Organizational profile

A Tablespoon or Two is a food blog that features fresh comfort food and local interviews.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Objective

The objective is to create a brand identity for the blog.

Project overview

Maschell will be designing the web banner and background graphics for the blog.

Target audience

The people who will be receiving the graphics are viewers of the blog, the community, locals, food lovers, and young adults.

Stylistic preferences

The client's stylistic preferences consist of bright, bold, hip, young, and fun design.

PROJECT SPECIFICS

Scope of services

Logo, web banner, blog background, social media icon, Facebook banner

Deliverables

All digital JPEG files.

Web Banner: TBD - pixels

Social Media Icon: 1x1 ratio

Facebook Banner: 851 x 314 pixels

Roles and Responsibilities

Client: A Tablespoon or Two

Primary client contact: Madeline Hoag, madelineanne14@gmail.com, 971.285.5540

Design and production: Maschell Cha, maschellcha@gmail.com, 541.974.6157

Tentative schedule

- 4-26-13: Contract signed by client, design brief approval
- 5-02-13: Initial directions/ideas comps presented to client
- 5-02-13: Client response to comps received (Same Day as presented, Have meeting?)
- 5-07-13: Revised comps presented to client
- 5-08-13: Client response to comps received
- 5-10-13: Final proofs shown to client

APPENDIX C

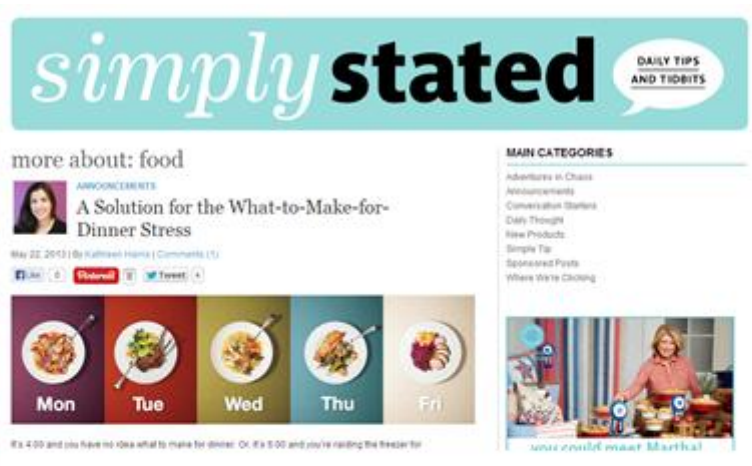
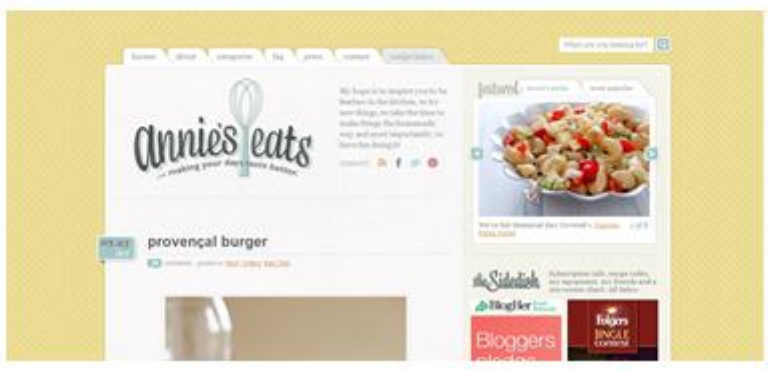


Abstract

- *A Tablespoon or Two* - a food blog with recipes, featured folks and ingredients, an about me section and my food history
- The target audience - young chefs who like to cook affordable and fresh comfort food.
- Main Analysis: process of gathering inspiration, building my site and marketing through social media

Inspiration

- *Annie's Eats*: Inviting, simplistic layout
- *Lucky Peach*: Young, hip, artistic vibe
- *Pioneer Woman*: Excellent photographs



- Fresh, affordable recipes
- Easy to navigate layout
- Inspiration for my kitchen gadget series

Creating the Blog



- Wordpress:
 - Theme options
 - Comments
 - Archives
 - Share on social media sites
 - Statistics for Administrator
- Deciding on a name
- Producing consistent content

a tablespoon or two
Cook, Connect, Feed, For a Healthier World

Home | About Us | Featured Posts | Featured Recipes | Feed Back

Crock Pot Cilantro Lime Chicken

POSTED ON MARCH 6, 2018



As a busy college student, the crock pot is truly one of my favorite inventions. There is nothing nothing better than throwing four ingredients into the pot and six hours later devouring a warm, delicious tender meal. That is why for dinner this week, I decided to try this easy and healthy chicken recipe from [The 60/60](#).

Chicken, tortillas, sour cream and salsa are some of my favorite foods, so I was especially excited to try this one. When I got back from classes around noon, I cut some salsa, taco seasoning, lime juice and cilantro in the bottom of the crock pot, added it all and added eight chicken tenders. Four hours later, I added a can of corn and a can of black beans to the mix. By 6 p.m., all I had to do was shred the chicken and pour it to the pot, melt some sharp cheddar cheese on what four tortillas and eat the sour cream on the side.

Although very tasty as my husband found that 24 hours of salsa was a bit and that I was really missing a sour-like consistency. As I was eating the leftovers in a plastic container, my roommate and I decided that with a little melted cheese on top, this recipe could also be eaten at about the next day. Not only do I love this recipe in burrito and as soup, but I also enjoy it being delicious on tacos. By spreading tortilla chips out on a baking sheet, topping with the shredded chicken, beans, salsa and cheese and broiling it under the broiler, you could have another tasty meal. And although I realize that the salsa is a little more, this recipe is also delicious straight out of the crock pot as a meal.

Here is the full recipe:

- One Zirculca jalapeno in mild salsa
- Salsa Non-ono One
- Two 4-oz. cans of corn
- One 15-oz. can of black beans
- Two 15-oz. cans of chicken tenders
- Two 15-oz. cans of chicken tenders




Cook the chicken with the salsa mixture. Cook and cook on Low for 6 hours. Enjoy!

The Blog Pages

- The homepage:
- Easy dinner recipes, snacks, desserts, the kitchen gadget series and some re-blogging of posts I enjoyed reading
- Why I chose to make the recipe, a brief history (if there is one), where I found the recipe and how it turned out or ways that it can be altered.

Share this: [Press This](#) [Email](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [7](#) [Pinterest](#) [Print](#)

Like this: [Like](#) 
One blogger likes this.

Posted in Adventures | Tagged corvallis community, food, rhubarb compote, strawberry rhubarb | 2 Comments | [Edit](#)

- *“My most popular posts were all produced from a place of passion. Whether reacting to a bad restaurant experience or a really incredible evening out, I was really worked up when I sat down to write. I had an all-consuming need to get these stories out into the blogosphere for people to read: there was urgency, there was fire in my belly.”*
– Adam Roberts of *Amateur Gourmet*

Success of Farmers' Market Post

Saturday Adventure at the Corvallis Farmers' Market

POSTED ON APRIL 22, 2012



The sun was out on a bright Saturday morning after the Corvallis community purchased veggies, shared with farmers, and even observed a horse race (only in Corvallis, right?). While I passed the flowers and plants in the perfectly ripe abundance, I lingered brainstorming recipe ideas and thinking about how I could incorporate all of the fresh produce into my weekly meals. Here is a photo essay of my Saturday morning adventures, which will likely become a weekly posting for me. (Yes, a special thanks to my friend, Jessica, for the awesome photos!)



- All time high of views in one day of 86
- Local event, quality photos
- Genuine excitement to share my fun experience

Follow-up to the Farmers' Market Post



Home | About Us | Featured Posts | Featured Ingredients | Feed Back

Strawberry Rhubarb Compote

POSTED ON APRIL 24, 2012



As the rhubarb started slowly boiling in the pan, the scent filled my kitchen and reminded me of childhood. I quickly realized that I frequently ate rhubarb as a child because my Grandma loved making compotes and always served me a small bowl when we visited her house. It had been so long that the memories just started flooding me while my anticipation grew for the strawberry rhubarb compote to finish cooking. I found the recipe on the adorable Baker Chick blog and am now incorporating it into every meal. Since it has been in my fridge for the past day, I have eaten it on toast, English muffins and stored it in my morning Greek yogurt. I may even treat myself to some vanilla bean ice cream this weekend just so I can scoop a heaping tablespoon of the compote into my bowl (yum).

Food History/About Me Pages



- Who I am, why I am writing, where my passion for food comes from
- My food philosophy
- Quotes from Michael Pollan's "Food Rules"

Featured Folks Page

- Interviews with:
 - Evelyn Hall of the North Corvallis First Alternative Cooperative Grocery Store
 - Lisbeth Goddik, OSU's top cheese making expert
 - Michelle Walker, Owner of Creperie du Lys Food Cart in Corvallis

Here is my interview with Evelyn Hall, Manager of the North Corvallis First Alternative Co-Op...and pictures!



Example Questions for Evelyn Hall

- 1. What is a cooperative grocery store and how is it structured?
- 2. How would you describe the typical cooperative shopper (families, college students, etc.)?
- 3. What do customers value most about the store (organic products, freshness, etc.)?
- 4. How much local produce do you provide to customers and who do you buy from?
- 5. Do you have any specialty products that are specific to certain diets and food trends?



Process of Blog Revisions

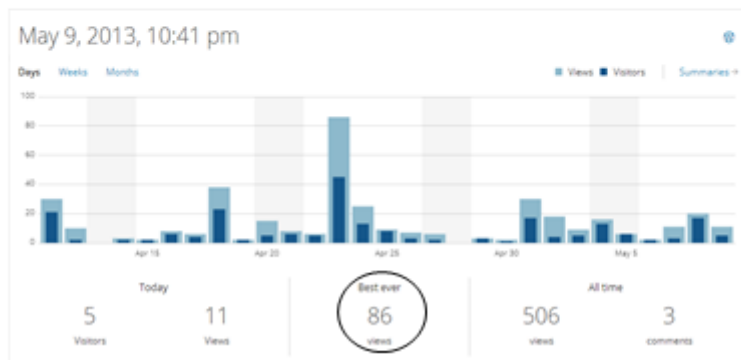
- Presented to Kristin Griffin's WR 383: Food Writing Class
- Interviewed successful food blogger, Alicia Jones of *High Heels in the Barnyard*
- Worked with Maschell Cha to produce a more visually appealing site and logo



Social Media and Readership

- Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest
- Wordpress Dashboard to monitor success

Graph 1: Number of viewers per day



Blog Views by Week and Month



A Tablespoon or Two on Twitter

Home Contact # Discover Me Search

Tweets

Following

Followers

Favorites

Lists

Tweet to A Tablespoon or Two

@TablespoonerTwo

9 TWEETS 32 FOLLOWERS 9 FOLLOWING

Following

Tweets

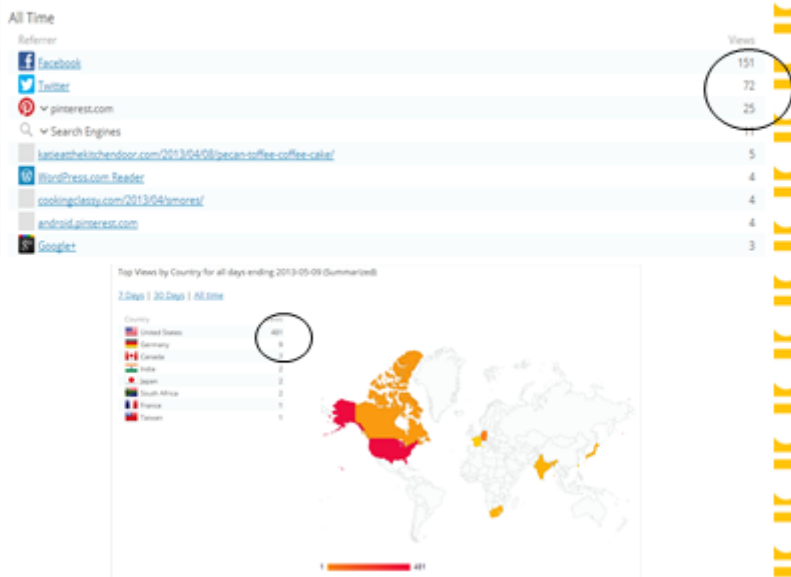
A Tablespoon or Two (@TablespoonerTwo) 14m
Time for some cookie baking on this lovely Monday :-)
#caramecashew #thanksmartha pic.twitter.com/EZpjucbat
View photo

epicurious (@epicurious) 2h
Burger Primer: A guide to reaching hamburger perfection, whether starting with ground beef or grinding it yourself. epi.us/10BjA2q
Expand

Who to follow Refresh View all

Nike.com @nikestore
Followed by Lauren Colmer and ...

Social Media and Readership



Social Media and Readership

- Number of viewers for my top posts

Top Posts for all days ending 2013-05-28 (Summarized)

7 Days | 30 Days | Quarter | Year | All time

All Time

Title	Views
Home page / Archives	272
Featured Posts	107
Saturday Adventure at the Corvallis Farmers' Market	84
About Me	53
The Pi Day Pie...that almost caught my apartment on fire	25
Cauliflower "Mac" and Cheese Casserole	21
Food History	21
Bread Pudding	20
Strawberry Rhubarb Compote	12
Discovering Lebanese Cuisine	12
Taste of Italy Comes to Pangea	11
Kitchen Gadget Series: The Microplane	11
Featured Ingredients	10
Pecan Toffee Coffee Cake	8
Greek Pasta Salad	7

Corvallis Maven



- Part of Visit Corvallis, which promotes local events and activities
- Over 17,000 Facebook "Likes"

The Future of *A Tablespoon or Two*

- Plan to continue the blog by adding content, such as:
 - Food related movie reviews
 - Cookbook features
 - Recommended readings
- Interactive Content:
 - Videos
 - Links to outside content
 - Podcasts
 - Improve social media success

Thanks!

- Special thanks to:
 - Kristin Griffin
 - Sara Jameson
 - Maschell Cha
 - Jeanna Craig
 - Lisbeth Goddik
 - Evelyn Hall
 - Michelle Walker
 - Friends and Family who read and support my blog!

Follow my blog: atablespoonortwo.wordpress.com

Twitter: [@atablespoonortwo](https://twitter.com/atablespoonortwo)

Contact me: madelineanne14@gmail.com

APPENDIX D

Thesis Proposal

Title: Online Food Magazine (name TBD)

Introduction/Thesis Statement

I plan to create an online food magazine that displays my passion for food, cooking and writing. My website will feature an introduction with my food history, posts about weekly dinners that I make, spotlights on various ingredients and features on professors, students and food enthusiasts. By researching various food blogs, magazines and websites, I will establish my angle and target audience. I hope to take a local perspective and write for a young audience, basing my website on blogs such as Smitten Kitchen, Orangette and Lucky Peach Magazine. Taking a local angle will enable me to discuss local restaurants, document my trips to the farmer's market and emphasize aspects of food in both Portland and Corvallis. As I begin the process, I hope to establish a name and a more concrete overall vibe for my site. Throughout the process, I will also produce a reflection on my experience, my inspirations, analysis of its success and my hopes for the future of the website.

Approach

In order to complete this project, I will implement my writing, video and design skills. I plan to incorporate local events, restaurants and resources through all forms of multimedia, including vivid images and videos. With help from one of my friends who has video editing experience, I hope to create some videos of interviews and various other experiences. I hope to implement skills that I have gained from previously writing a food blog and taking a food writing class, which gave me valuable knowledge for how to go about a project of this variety.

Expected Results and Significance

By creating a food website, I hope to inspire others to cook, learn about food and engage in conversation. I look forward to promoting my website through other social media websites, particularly Twitter and Pinterest. I hope to create a website that embodies a local and fresh feeling that demonstrates my knowledge of cooking, what I learn through my interviews and experiences and my creativity. I look forward to creating a site that represents my food background and personality that I can continue for years to come.

APPENDIX E

Abstract

My food blog, "A Tablespoon or Two" targets young chefs who enjoy simply delicious recipes, learning about local Corvallis food culture and reading personal memoirs regarding my own passion for cooking. The blog features various pages that explore local entrepreneurs, my background with Lebanese cuisine, restaurant reviews and simple dinner recipes. The site is heavily publicized through social media avenues, such as Facebook, Twitter and ~~Instagram~~ to enhance its readership and popularity among the target audience.


Inspiration

Research for my blog required looking to other blogs and magazines for visual and content inspiration. I ended up basing my blog off elements of the following sites:

- Lucky Peach Magazine
- Pioneer Woman
- Annie's Eats
- Smitten Kitchen
- Real Simple's Simply Stated



Appearance of my blog



Blog Content


Homepage -
Various dinner, dessert and snack posts for young chefs to feel inspired to create in their own kitchen. Example posts include Cilantro Lime Chicken, Bread Pudding, Strawberry-Rhubarb Compote and my trip to the Corvallis Farmers' Market.

Food History -
A brief history of my background with food, when I got my first cookbook and why I have a passion for all things food-related.

Featured Folks -
Interviews with people in the local Corvallis food community and articles about inspiring chefs. Example posts on this page include a podcast with the manager of the North Corvallis Cooperative Grocery Store, Evelyn Hall, an article about the ~~Cocopie~~ du Lys food cart located in downtown Corvallis and a Q&A with OSU cheese expert, Lisbeth Goddijk.

Featured Ingredients -
A profile of a specific ingredient, a brief history and how it can be incorporated into multiple dishes. Example posts include Brussels sprouts and barley.

Farmers' Market Post



Results

Figure 1: This graph shows how many people visited my blog each day. Generally the larger numbers come on a day when I make a new post.

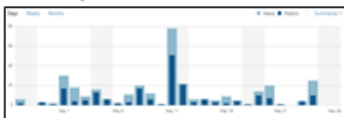




Figure 2: This image shows the various social media outlets that referred readers to my blog.



Conclusions

Figure 3: My post featured on Corvallis Maven's Facebook.



Appendix E: The inside of the brochure that I prepared for my thesis defense.

