

How Malala started a movement with a blog

In 2008, Taliban militants, who had taken over the Swat Valley of Pakistan the previous year, banned girls from going to school. This edict hit an 11-year-old girl hard. Malala, who loved her school and loved getting an education, began to blog about her school's closing for the BBC.

When the Pakistani Army started fighting the Taliban in the Swat Valley, Malala's family moved. But Malala kept blogging. She wrote with passion about her love of learning and took her readers inside what it was like to live under the Taliban, where even wearing a pink dress could be an act of rebellion and a dangerous choice for a young girl to make. Among the people paying attention to her blog were reporters at the New York Times, who made a short video featuring Malala.



Malala's school reopened — and Malala continued to speak out, encouraging other Muslim girls to get an education, even though she knew the Taliban would be angered by her campaign. And she was right, especially as knowledge of her blog continued to spread worldwide.

One day, as Malala was on her way to school, a Taliban gunman boarded her school bus and shot her in the head. Malala was 15.

Malala was flown to the United Kingdom for treatment, and her family followed, relocating there. After a year of tough rehabilitation, Malala was able to return to school — but she also continued to spread her campaign for girls' education, not just via her blog, but through trips to Nigeria, Lebanon, Rwanda and more, meeting with heads of state all over the world.

On her 16th birthday, Malala addressed the United Nations, and in 2014, at the age of 17, Malala became the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. All of this because she had the courage and ability to keep writing a blog.

The outreach of Malala's blog was unprecedented, breaking down national, religious and linguistic barriers. Teachers from Germany to Syria, activists from Ireland to Pakistan, and ordinary people from the United States to Nigeria responded with hope and encouragement, inspired by Malala's words and example to seek unity and spread the power of education.

Over the last few years, social media seems to have eclipsed blogging as a means of reaching out to the world, but Malala's story shows the power of a focused message. After all, social media is becoming increasingly driven by images, and you can't communicate a thoughtful position with just a few words and a picture. When you take the time to craft an extended story, article or essay on a blog, you have the room you need to say what you want to say.

One of the best ways to get your message out, whether you're trying to raise awareness for a cause or for a business, is to pair your blog with your social media platforms. Use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to direct your readers and followers to your blog, where they can learn about your passions and follow your discussion in detail.

When you create great content, you draw attention to your cause or business. Great content is worth sharing — which is what happened with Malala's simple blog. Blogging drives long-term results (because blog posts don't disappear, pushed off the screen by whatever's new, the way social media posts do), and they draw people in to your cause or product. They help establish you as a leader in your field, they boost your site in search rankings, and they feed your social media platforms.

A teenage girl started a worldwide movement with a simple blog. Consider the value of a blog to your own cause or business.



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