

A Tasting Menu

Description

In a few short days, I will be heading off to [Science Online 2013](#) – an annual gathering of scientists, journalists, educators and more to discuss science communication in Raleigh, North Carolina. But, it is not your average conference, with presenters reading PowerPoint slides and talking **at** you. Science online is designed as an “unconference,” where there are no lectures or presentations, but sessions that encourage and are built on **discussion**.

I cannot wait to attend and meet up with people that I met last year: collaborators, Twitter friends, fellow writers and more. As cliché as it is to say, we are all like a big family at this conference. Everyone is respectful, kind and absolutely cuckoo for science (I even think that’s a requirement on the registration form).

Last year, I did a session with [@DrRubidium](#), where we made people laugh (and think) using Mel Brooks movie clips to inspire and improve blogs. We heard nothing but good things about our session, which spawned numerous conversations with other attendees about future sessions – one of which came to fruition.

This year, I’m teaming up with [@jeannegarb](#) to discuss a very specific style of writing and storytelling: first person narrative. She is a fantastic person and writer, and I could not choose a better person to co-moderate with.

For those of you that follow my blog and my other writings, you will know that I’ve experimented with this format a bit.

When I was doing my Masters of Journalism, we were told to avoid using “I” in a piece of reporting, as we are supposed to be objective and not become part of the story. “We are storytellers, not story-makers,” my professors would say. In fact, the only time we were told to use first-person was during two specific assignments – one where we had to use first or third-person, and when we had to write an editorial. And it was hard to break the format that had been drilled into us over the course of the program. But, I found I enjoyed it.

After I graduated, I experimented with the format a bit more in my writings for Scientific American, using **my voice** to talk about [black-footed ferrets](#), [growing up as a twin](#) and more. And those quickly became my most popular articles – the article about being an identical twin even got published in a book entitled “The Best Science Writing Online 2012” (you can order your very own copy [here](#)).

And what do Jeanne and I have in store?

For that, you’ll have to attend our session entitled “Scientific storytelling: Using personal narrative to communicate science” on Thursday January 31 from Noon – 1 pm in room 4. But if not, rest-assured that I will do a conference wrap up post, just like last year (which you can read [here](#) and [here](#)).

I hope to see you there!

Category

1. first person
2. Journalism
3. narrative
4. Science Journalism
5. science online
6. science writing

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