Access Initiative Blog style tips:

Have a good title

Make sure your title makes sense. Remember that on recipients' screens, your title competes with a large number of others for their attention.

Keep the Leads Short and to the Point

When a reader first looks at the front page or the country page, they will (should) only see the first two sentences of the post. If they cannot tell what information they will get from the first two sentences, they probably will not continue to read.

Have a hook and be specific

You need to set the hook right away by telling the reader what the article is about. Articles with good hooks are specific and tell a story which will make the reader want to read more. It is very easy for us to write in the abstract about "access rights" and how they are important, but it is much more interesting to talk about how access to justice has played out in court for the pearl farmers of Bongo-Bongo. Framing articles as "Turning Points" or explaining why they are precedent-setting, significant, or emblematic is always a good thing.

Short Articles

Anything beyond 500 - 550 words will probably lose the interest of the reader, unless it is jam packed with content and they are interested. Today's online readers have online short attentions spans, they are looking for quick content packed sound bites of information.

Keep Paragraphs Short

When an online reader opens an article and sees long paragraphs, they will typically click off and go somewhere else. Long winded paragraphs are for physical books, were you want to spend time developing a story or explaining things in great detail. If you want to provide more details send them to another website or online source, if they are interested they will follow.

Use Links

Links are your friends, because they will provide supporting information about your article topic or guide readers where you want them to go to next, such as to our

[poverty discussion page](). Notice how I did not write the URL, I wrote a 3 word anchor text which contains the link. Anchor text phrases should never be more than three words to avoid confusion. Good links include: your reports, news articles, videos. (Also, remember, you can always post multiple pages or documents that don't have to be on the front page.)

Use Bullets and Paragraph Headers

The use of bullets highlights the important details or information in the article, such as:

- Key points or phrases
- Analytical data
- Important talking points

Bold paragraph headers help a reader skim your article, and to follow the logic of your narrative or argument.

Add a picture or a video

The Access Initiative website is built to have users insert pictures to spice it up. Without them, it just looks like a bunch of words in blue.

Giving Recipients Something to Act On

If the goal of the blog post is to get other people to respond or to discuss an issue, ask your audience to answer a question or to compare experiences described.

Adapted from: http://drwetzel.wordpress.com/2008/05/22/style-guide-for-online-writing/