

# Serbia's One and Only Science Blog: Help Save It!

by [Danica Radovanovic](#)

**Also available in:**

French :

[Le Seul Blogue Scientifique de Serbie: Aidez-Nous à le Sauver!...](#)

What is the cost of having and maintaining a science blog? What does science blogging mean for the scientific community and education of a country like Serbia, especially after years and years of sanctions, war and political disturbances?

Serbia is the country in transition, and right now there is a great chance for its scientific community to jump into the ICT world science highway by implementing new technologies into its scientific and educational systems. One of the main postulates of this year's [workshop in Belgrade](#) at [FP 7/ICT Work Programme](#) on science in society was that technology is worth nothing without users, content and interaction. If Serbia wants to become part of e-Europe, many things must be changed, beginning locally and then on a much broader scale.

But some representatives of Serbian educational and science institutions don't seem to care too much about information literacy and information sharing, as well as developing new information technology tools – which, ironically, happen to be open software applications and platforms that do not cost anything. One of the professors at Belgrade Open School ([BOS](#)) has described the situation in the region as not good: the educational system is neither valued enough, nor evaluated.

Blogs would have been a great medium for interaction, publishing, communication and collaboration in science, a good place for showcasing Serbian scientific achievement, which has been in the shade lately. In Serbia, however, there is only one institutional science blog – [the blog](#) of [KoBSON](#), the Serbian Consortium of Coordinated Library Acquisition hosted and maintained by the Center for Scientific Information at the National Library of Serbia.

Besides being one and only in Serbia - and despite providing the Serbian scientific community with examples of various uses of blogs in science, education, teaching, research, networking, popularization of science and online activism - the *KoBSON* blog may soon disappear altogether.

[Bora Zivkovic](#), a science blogger and the founder of the [Science Blogging Initiative](#), [reports](#) on the problem at *ScienceBlogs.com*:

Do Serbian scientists need a blog of their own?

Not that it costs anything to have one...

Yet, the [Konsortium of science libraries in Serbia](#) is seriously contemplating shutting down their [KOBSON blog](#), an invaluable tool in science communication in the region.

[Danica](#), who the regular readers of this blog are [quite familiar](#) with as she is the Number One Champion for Open Science and Web 2.0 science in Serbia, has put a lot of effort into building the online infrastructure for Serbian scientific communication, including the KOBSON blog and the [KOBSON wiki](#), as well as teaching and preaching to the local scientific community about the importance of catching up with the world after a decade of isolation and fully embracing the modern communication tools.”

Below is some of what other bloggers write about the value of the *KoBSON* blog and science blogging in general.

Journalist and blogger [Ljubisa Bojic](#) comments in [Serbian version of the post](#) at KoBSON. He believes that blogs are a necessary tool in education, at universities as well as in the scientific community, because they help to “[exchange] ideas between scientists”:

I use the KOBSON services from time to time and I think that frequent users should as well make their own blogs. Therefore, it is not only you [addressing KoBSON], but also the university professors and students who feel that your internet page is their own home and who have the need to share their views and to talk about their own research.

A colleague from Croatia, [Filologanoga](#), who is also blogger in education and science area, [thinks that communication and interaction are very important factors](#):

It is necessary for Institutions who are dealing with acquisition, keeping and sharing the information to have communication with their users. The only problem is that for this kind of communication two sides are necessary, at least, according to my experience, and in science this process sometimes doesn’t go very well.

[Tanja](#), who is researching the areas of virtual communication and blogs, [writes](#):

Excellent discussion... I think that we do not have developed audience for understanding such issues, still. [...] And, of course, it’s not just the science blogs that we need :)

Solana [wrote this](#), in English:

The more science blogging the better! Knowledge should be open to all.

What is to be done about the situation?

Bora Zivkovic [suggests](#) direct action and interaction:

There is not much more that Danica alone can do in the present situation to save the KOBSON blog, but perhaps YOU all can help. How? Let’s demonstrate the power of

Science 2.0 by direct example! Go to the KOBSON blog and explain the importance of such a tool in the comments of [this post](#). Even better, if you are fluent in one or another variant of the Serbo-Croatian language, post a comment on the [Serbian version](#) of the post. Then, post a link and this plea to your own blog as well and ask your readers to do the same.

Science blog presents great science and social medium for networking that makes social structure in blogosphere with great impact of interaction, getting new ideas, scientific results, publishing, values, visions, exchange, web links, and interactions between other networks, institutions, social growth, making the science open.

With KoBSON blog there is a great chance to give them examples of various uses of blogs in science, education, teaching, research, networking, popularization of science, online activism, collaboration.

One of the major problems, that I have been researching in the past few years and published in master thesis paper, shows that there is the lack of digital literacy in scientific institutions, universities in Serbia which is direct result of the time delay of joining the ICT world infrastructure or/and is the result of short-comings of different kind. ***Usage of electronic resources in Serbia I science community is not on the enviable and satisfactory level, as shown by the statistics of KoBSON, therefore many valuable e-resources are unused.*** Reasons for this situation are critically represented in the paper. It is suggested that clearly defined strategy for changing this situation, workshops, training courses, implementation of open source, web 2.0 services for scientists, university staff, will facilitate better usage of digital resources.

Also, according to some of the representatives in Serbian education and science institutions, who seem that only formally accepted postulates of the Bologna declaration but not implementing them into the practice, the answer would be that they do not care too much for information literacy and information sharing, free and open education and knowledge as well as developing new information technology tools – which is ironically speaking - free, open software applications and platforms that do not cost anything.

Is it an excuse for intellectual inertia, non-activism and lack of motivation to change education system on better after decade under sanctions that reflected each area of living, including science, education, or there are some other motives for such situation?

Now is the final chance for Serbian science to wake up and get involved by joining wider world scientific pool where the “new” applications - blogs are one of the greatest medium for interaction, publishing, communication and collaboration in science blogosphere, the right place for exporting and exposing Serbian scientific scene that was in the shade in past years.