# A GUIDE TO USING BLOGS:
## Creating Online Reflective Journals

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# What is a 'blog'?

A blog is a type of website, usually written by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other things such as pictures or videos. Blogs allow you to put your own thoughts/stories/information on the Internet.

We will be using Blogger which is a website that allows you to create free blogs. The address is: www.blogspot.com



# Why are we using a blog?

Talking Realities is using blogs a bit like an online diary, as a way for you to write down your thoughts and feelings in one place. These blogs will be used during your Talking Realities course.

Your blog is a private website for your eyes only unless you decide to give permission to others to read it.

You will be given some time each week to update your blog so you can reflect on your feelings/thoughts/worries/happy points/experiences over the last week.

At certain points during the course you will be asked to review your blog and reflect on things that have changed for you as a result of participating in Talking Realities.

We are trying this as a new part of Talking Realities and we would really like to know what you think of using it.

# How do I create a blog?

This is the first page that you will come to when you go to the Blogger website (www.blogspot.com):



Click on the 'CREATE A BLOG' to do just that. You will be transferred to the next page where you can create your blog account.

NOTE: Creating an account will require an email address. (If you do not have an existing email then you can get a free one by going to www.gmail.com)

Complete all the details on this page including making up a password.



Then click on 'CONTINUE'.

You will then be transferred to the next page, which will ask you to give your blog a name. You can make up anything you like.

You will also be asked to give a blog address. This is the address that you type into the top of your screen when you are connected to the Internet to view your blog.



Then click on '**CONTINUE'** to go to the next page.

Here you will be able to select a template for your blog.

A template is a collection of colours, text styles and formatting that will change what your blog looks like. You can change what your blog looks like any time in the future simply by selecting a different template. You can personalise the look of your blog further later on.
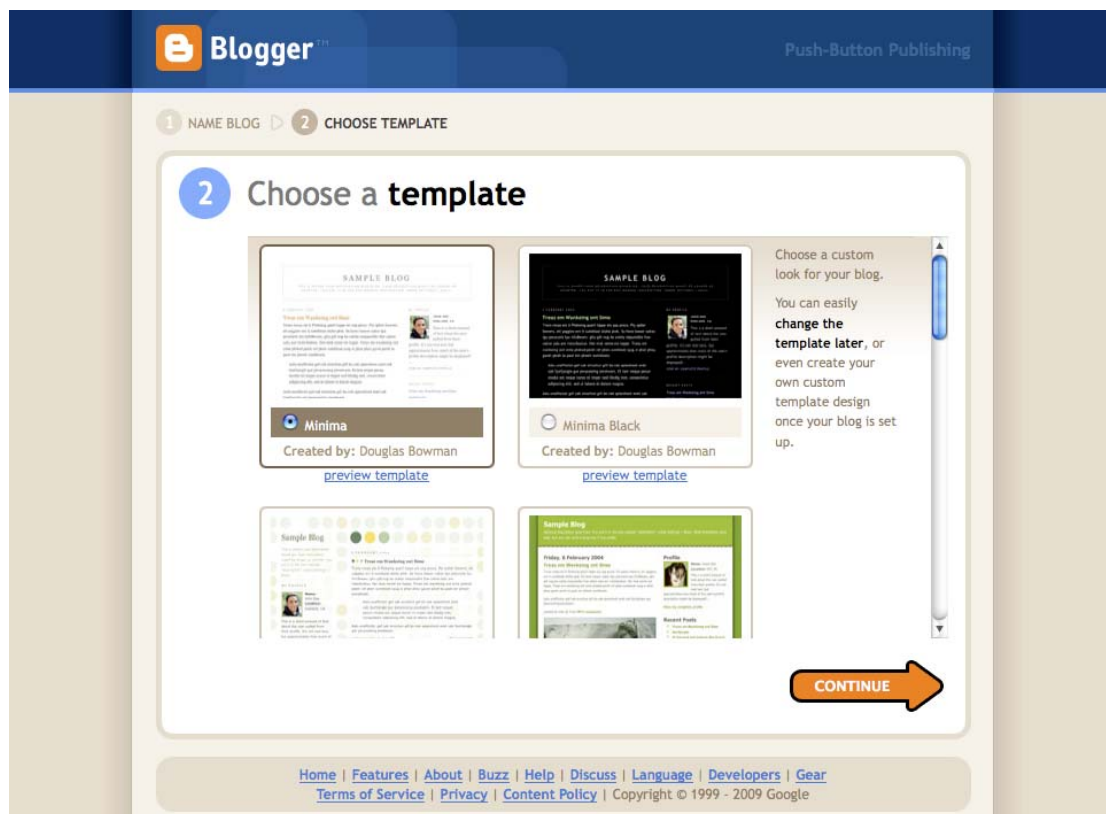


Then click on '**CONTINUE**' to complete the creation of your blog and you will be transferred to this page:
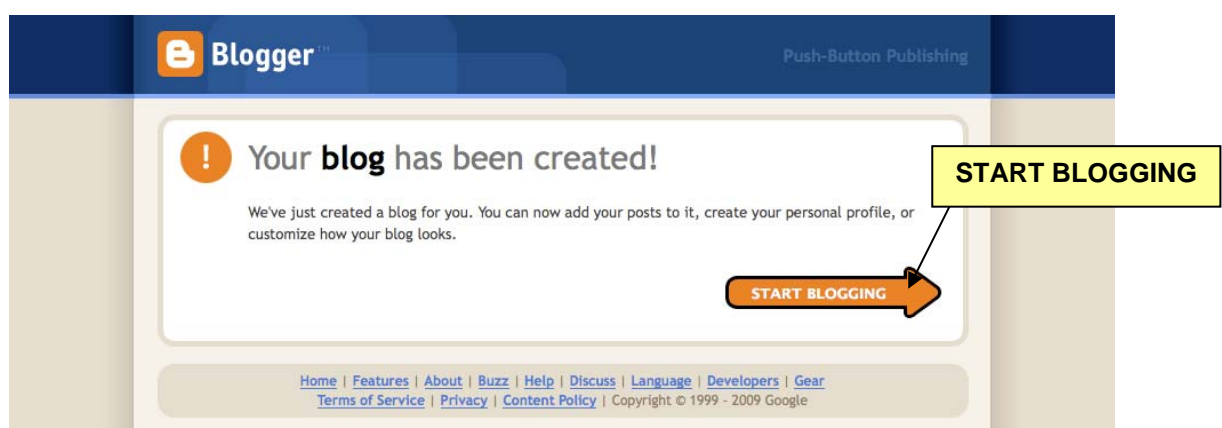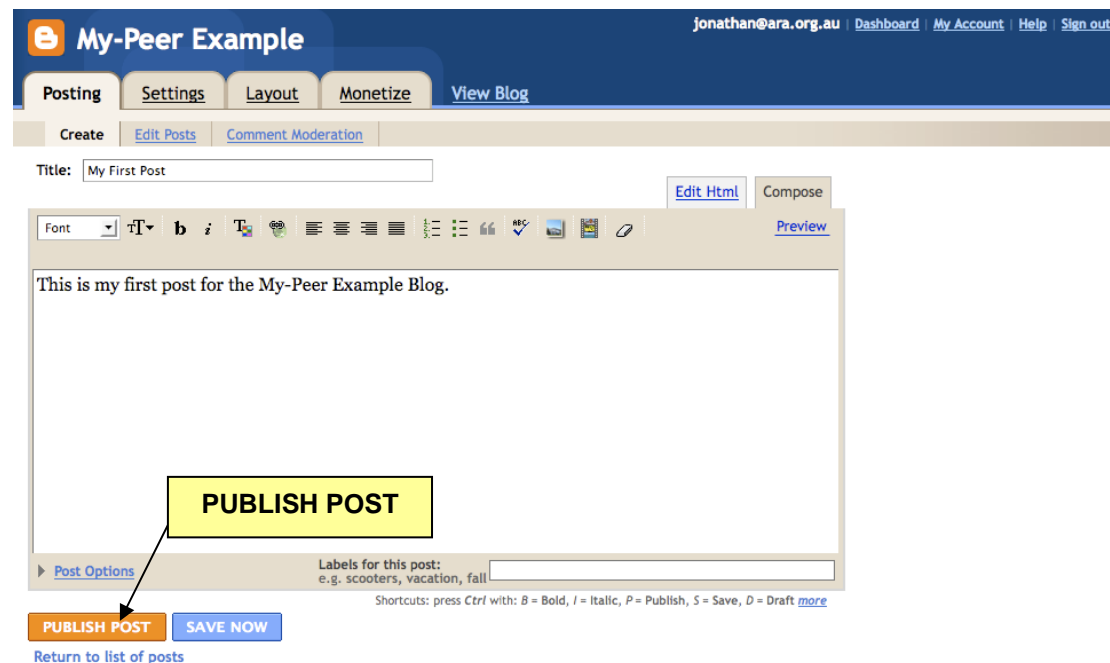


Now you can click on '**START BLOGGING**' to start writing content for your blog.

# How do I write something for my blog?

Each time you write something for your blog it is called a 'post'. A 'post' is like an article or story that you put on your blog.

Here is an example:



Make sure that you give the post a name in the 'Title' section and then write your post in the main box. You can change the look of your text such as making it **bold** or *italicised* or changing the colour by clicking on the small symbols above the text box.

When you have finished your post click on '**PUBLISH POST**' to save it and make it appear on your blog.

You will be told if the post is published successfully and then click on '**View Blog**' to have a look:

This is what your blog will look like (depending on the template you chose):
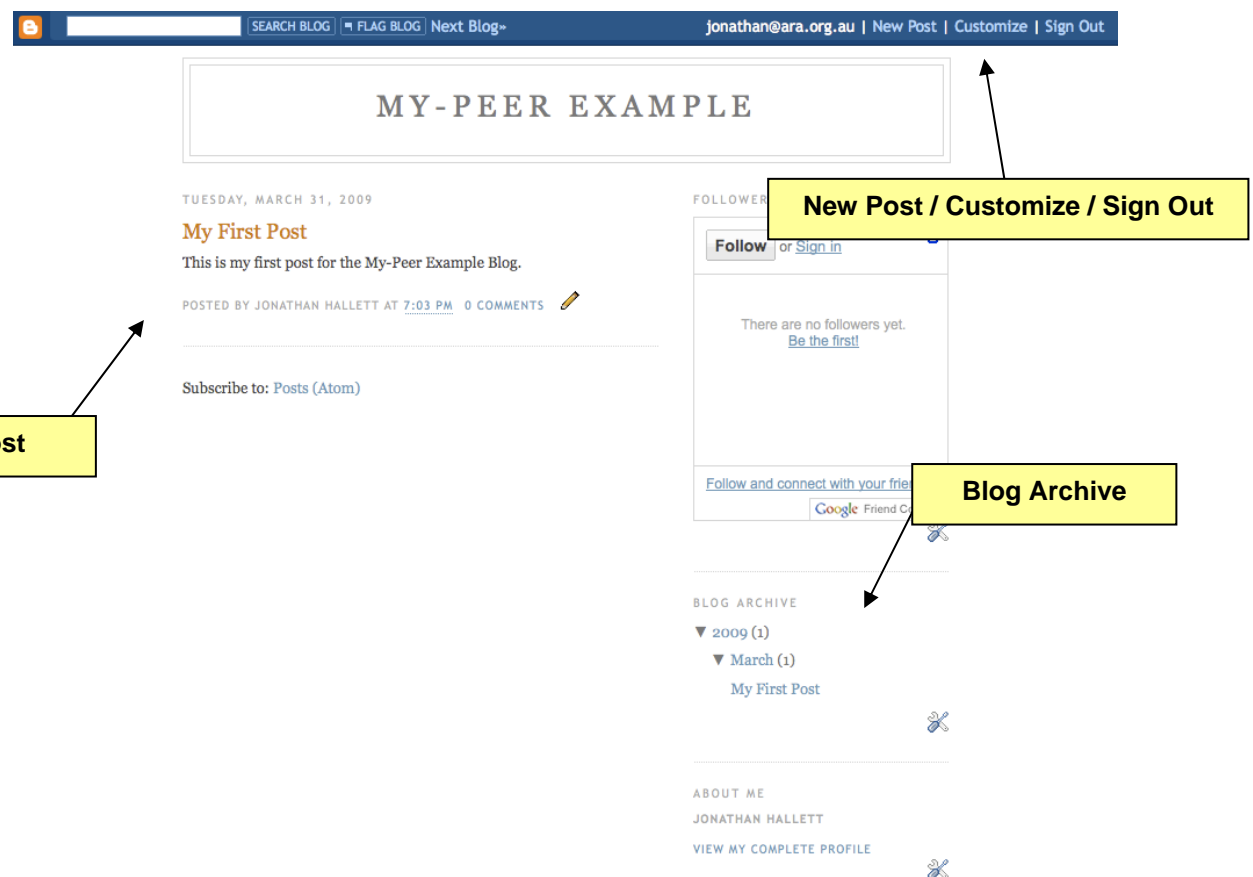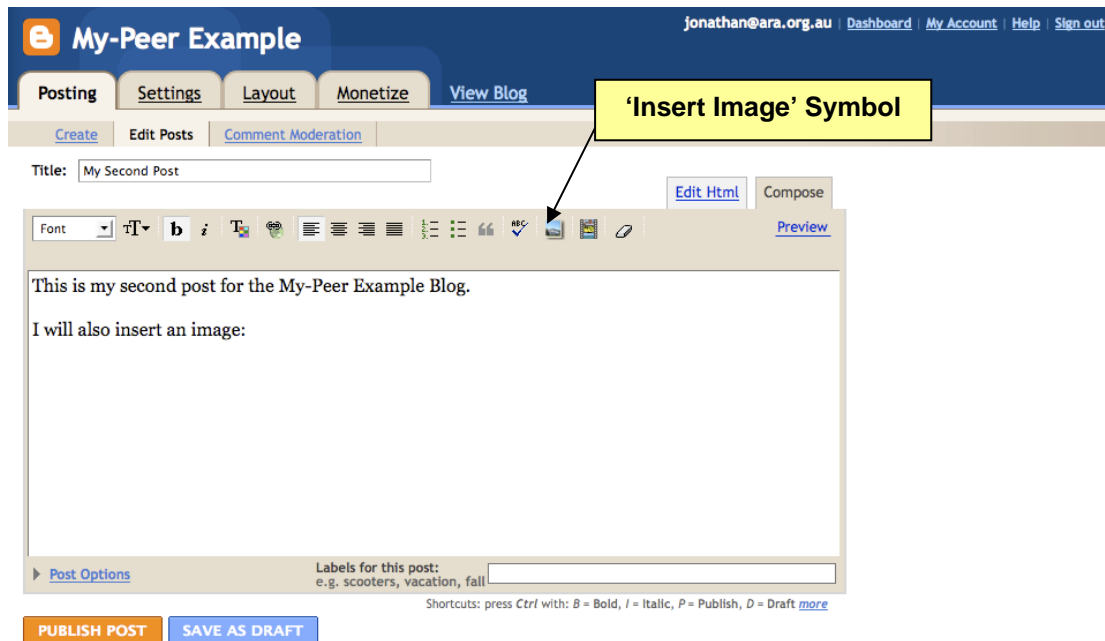


You can see that the first post has appeared on the blog.

On the right side is a **'Blog Archive'**. This will contain a list of all your posts once you have them.

At the top of the page you will see your email and the options of **'New Post'**, **'Customize'** and **'Sign Out'**. If you are not logged into your account these options won't be there.

'Insert Image' Symbol

If you want to include an image in your post then you can click on the **'Insert Image'** symbol and a popup window will appear allowing you to add an image from your computer:



Browse

Accept Terms of Service
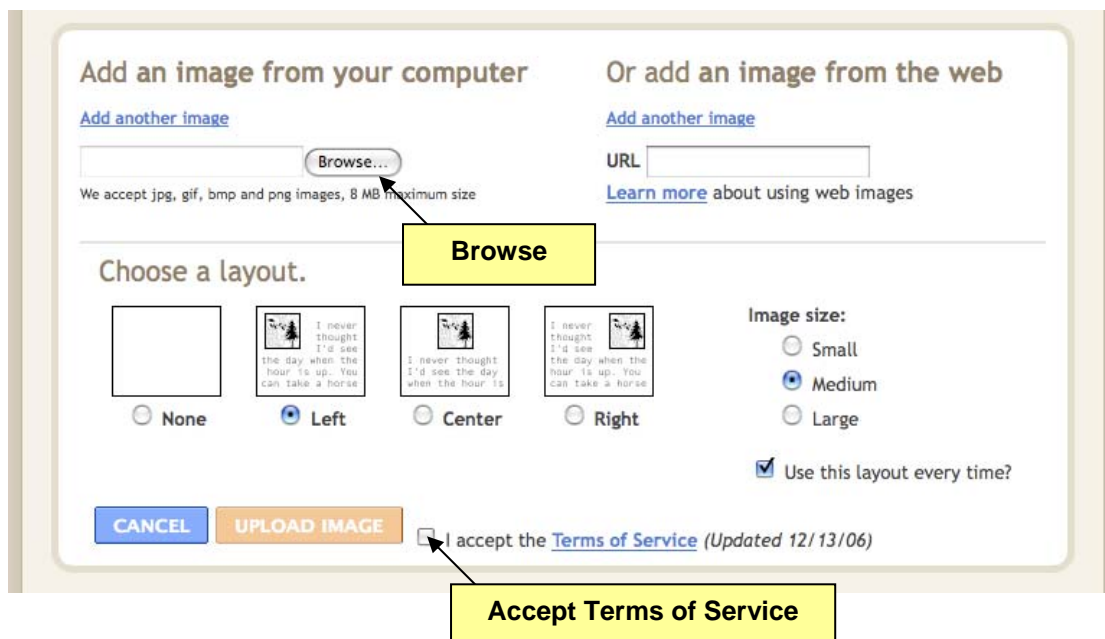
Click on **'Browse'** to look at the files on your computer and select your image. Then choose a layout by deciding whether you want the image centered or to the left or right of your post. You can also change the size of an image.

Then make sure you have ticked the **'I accept the Terms of Service'** box before clicking on **'UPLOAD IMAGE'**.

This window will appear confirming that your image has been added:
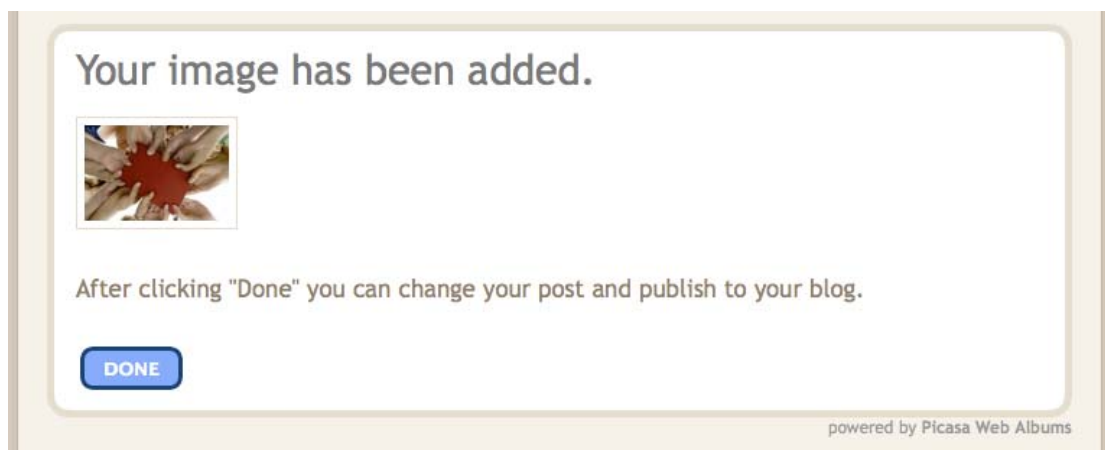


Select **'DONE'** to go back to editing your post:
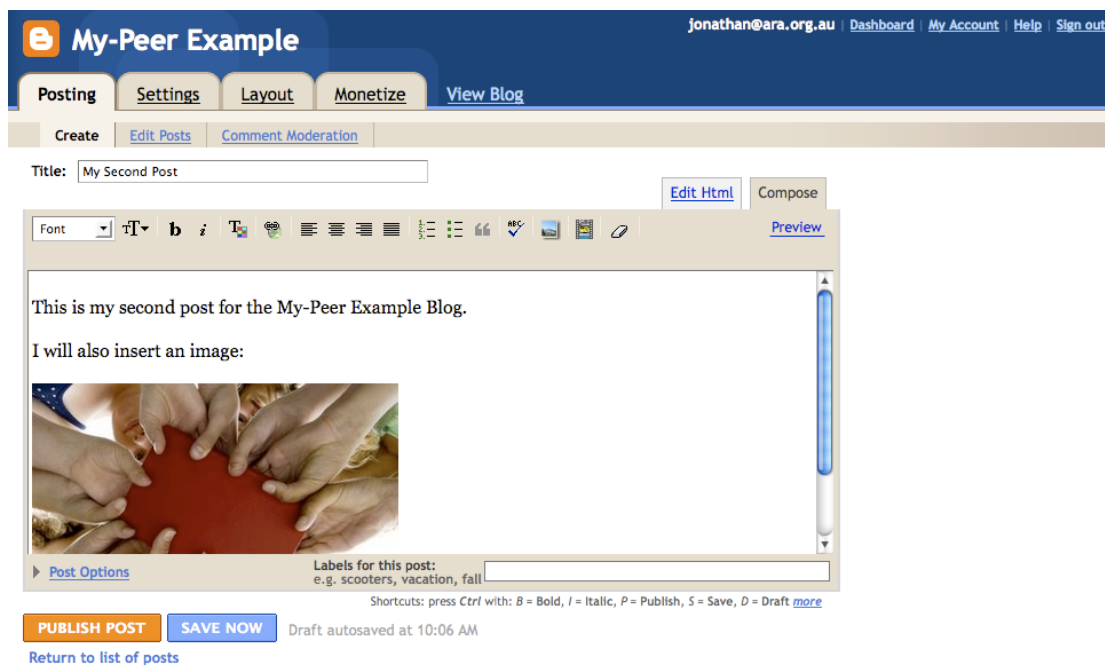


Once you have finished click on **'PUBLISH POST'**. Then view your blog.

Your blog:



You will see that there are now two posts. Older posts move down the page and the new ones appear at the top.

# How do I edit my blog?

If at any time you want to edit the posts that are already on your blog, go to your **'Dashboard'** by clicking on the link at the top of the page.

Your dashboard is like your control centre – it provides options for editing and adding posts, changing the look of your blog and various other settings.

You will see an **'Edit Posts'** tab underneath the **'Posting'** one:



This is where you can select a post and edit it.

# How do I make my blog private?

To ensure your blog is private and no one else can see it there are two steps.

If you click on **'Settings'** you will have a range of options including changing the title of your blog and adding a short description which will appear under the title.

The first privacy setting is on this page and you can select **'No'** to adding your blog to the listing and to letting search engines find your blog:

Make sure you select '**SAVE SETTINGS**' once you have made your changes.

The second privacy function is under **'Permissions'** and allows you to specify who can read your blog:



Select **'Only blog authors'** so only you can view your blog. If in the future you want someone else to be able to view the blog you can select **'Only people I choose'** and then enter that person's email address.

# How do I change the look of my blog?

Lastly, if you would like to now change the look of your blog select **'Layout'** and **'Pick New Template'**. Then select from the available templates a new one. Each template also has several colour options and you can preview what your blog will look like:



Once you have chosen the template, select **'SAVE TEMPLATE'** and then view your blog to see the new look.

The blog now looks completely different but has the same content including your posts:
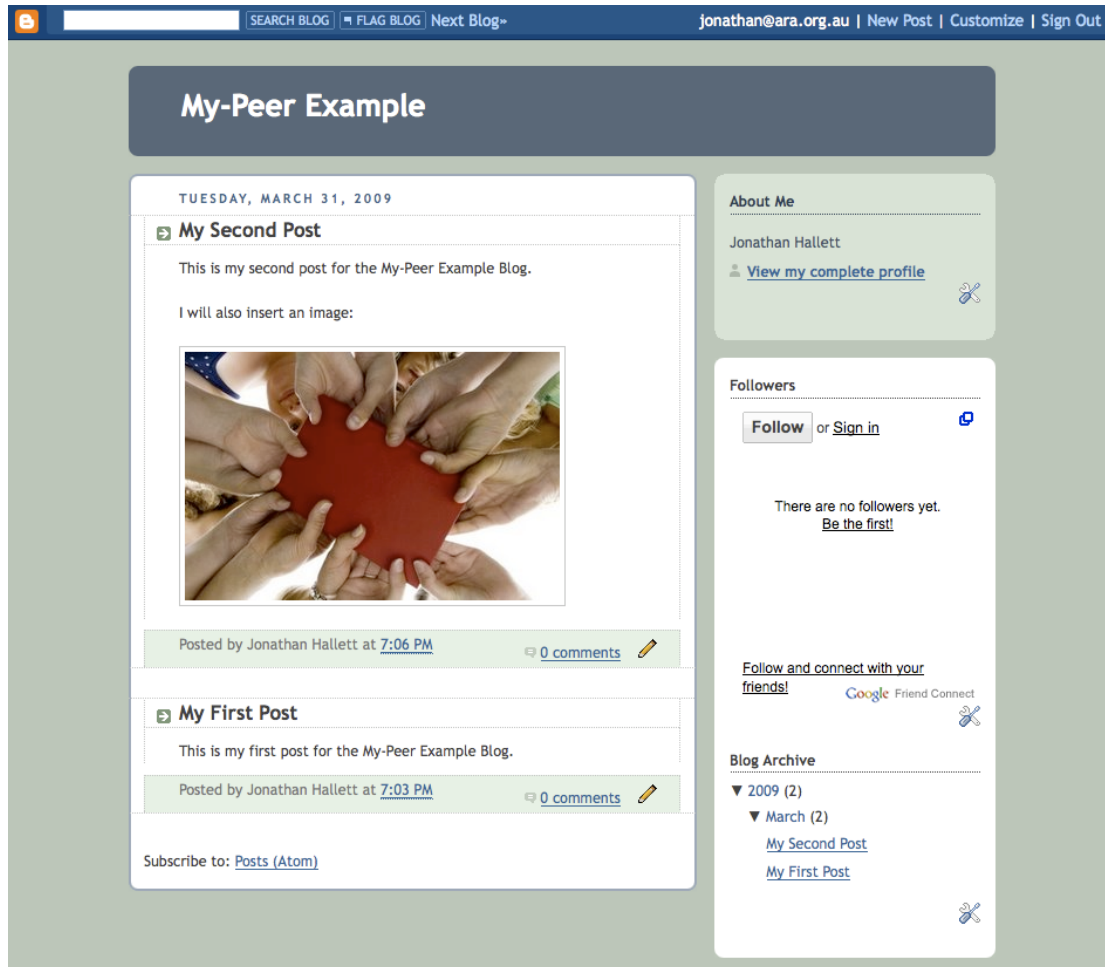


Now you are ready to continue using your blog.

Enjoy!