

A Guide to Blog Carnivals

What are Blog Carnivals?

Blog Carnivals are collections of articles written by guest contributors in response to a CFP that centers on a theme. A blog carnival can run anywhere from a month to over a semester, depending on response. We aim to schedule two per semester. The following document provides a step-by-step overview for coordinating a blog carnival with links to resources and templates.

How do I coordinate a Blog Carnival?

Step 1: Determine a theme

Consider what conversations have been lively in scholarship, in the news, or on the listservs. Usually we put our heads together to talk about the next theme at a DRC Fellows meeting. Once we settle on a theme, we decide who will be the coordinator(s). From there, the coordinator(s) draft a CFP.

Step 2: Develop a CFP

Create a Google Drive folder for the blog carnival, and in that folder, start a draft of the CFP. The coordinator is responsible for the initial draft, but all fellows are invited and encouraged to develop it. Generally, the CFP will include a paragraph of introductory text that provides context for the theme, a paragraph or list of potential questions for contributors to explore, and information about deadlines, time frames, and contact information. You can find former CFPs [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) if you'd like some models.

Step 3: Distribute the CFP

Post the CFP on the DRC site, and then share the CFP on social media. Additionally, ask Anne or Naomi to share on major listservs like WPA, WCenter, and Tchrhet. They have name recognition, so when they share, we often get a better response. Feel free to post reminders close to the deadline, varying your wording, and including images and animated gifs. You may create a "soft" deadline to publicize that is about two weeks earlier than your hard deadline, which you keep hidden. If submissions are light, this gives you time to announce an extension of a week or two. This double-deadline method tends to garner more submissions.

Step 4: Respond to submissions

As submissions roll in, respond promptly with an email that lets them know that you've received their proposal and will respond in X time frame, once all submissions have been received. The text might look like this:

I'm writing to let you know we've received your proposal for the [blog carnival theme] blog carnival. Once the committee has had a chance to read all of the submissions, we will get back to you; you can expect to hear from us within X time frame.

Once the deadlines are passed, work with a committee of interested fellows to decide who to accept and who to decline. Past carnivals have published around 10 posts, but this is not a rule and fellows should determine which submissions should be included. Fellows can rate each submission based on following criteria:

- Proposals respond faithfully to the call -- the abstract focuses on the topic at hand, takes up its terms, limits, questions, etc.
- Proposals respond to the spirit of the blog carnival format -- the abstract gestures toward a blog post (i.e. is not a review, experiment, or something else).
- Selection of posts represent the wide variety of concerns given the topic -- posts will respond to several of the questions or bullets in the CFP.
- Proposals are clearly written -- terms are defined and specific questions are suggested.

Here is the text you might use for an acceptance:

Hi [Contributor],

I'd like to officially invite you to contribute a blog post to the DRC's blog carnival on [theme]. The work you're doing on [topic of paper] sounds really important and invigorating, and we can't wait to hear more about it! I wonder if you can include [suggestions about ways the topic could be expanded to better suit the carnival, if you have any]? We'd love to see ways how this develops.

When completed, the blog post should be about 750-1000 words, but we do have some flexibility with that since we're on a digital platform. Also, feel free to include visuals or other multimedia, but don't forget to include appropriate attribution or CC licensing. At least one week before your post will be published, please upload your draft to the google drive folder [include a link]. We will review

drafts there before they are posted and provide you with some time to make revisions, if necessary. We'll also need you to fill out [this DRC contributor form](#). It will ask you for a brief bio and contact info so we can add you as an author to the DRC website.

When do you think you can have the post completed? (include details of your time frame here. It might look something like "We'd like to publish two posts a week throughout the remainder of April and into the first week of May, so the sooner we can see a draft, the better.") Please let me know about how long you think you'll need and we will be in touch to schedule a submission date and publication date ASAP.

Thanks again for your submission! We are really looking forward to reading it! Please let us know if you have any other questions.

Sincerely

[Coordinator Name(s)]

Here is the text you might use for a rejection:

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in the DRC Blog Carnival. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept your proposal for inclusion in the carnival at this time. You have some really interesting ideas about [topic of proposal], though, and we wish you the best of luck in furthering that research.

Best,

[Coordinator Name(s)]

Step 5: Look at Drafts & Schedule the contributors

As drafts come in, the DRC Fellows will review drafts and provide feedback to contributors. The drafts can be accessed on the DRC Wordpress site. When providing feedback, you might ask clarifying questions or make suggestions for fitting the genre of the blog carnival a bit better. This feedback can be sent to the author via e-mail. Also, when responding with feedback, include a recommended revision due date. A week is good for smaller revisions, but more time can be arranged if needed.

As you work with your contributors to determine how much time they need to complete their articles, set up a Google Drive folder for contributors to upload drafts to. For the sake of organization, it might help to create a scheduling spreadsheet. It might look like this:

Contributor name	First draft deadline	Revision deadline	Draft posting deadline	Post goes live date
------------------	----------------------	-------------------	------------------------	---------------------

Step 6: Write an introductory post

Write a post that briefly introduces the blog carnival and the kinds of posts readers can expect. This is an opportunity to generate hype for the carnival and for the DRC. Here, here, and here are a few examples.

Step 7: Deploy the posts

As revisions come in and drafts are posted, schedule them according to your spreadsheets. Remember to promote them on social media as they go live.

Step 8: Write a wrap-up post

At the end of the blog carnival, write a wrap up post that links to and summarizes the posts. End by pointing readers toward other useful, related resources on the DRC site. You can find examples here, here, and here.

Step 9: Send Thank You Notes

After the blog carnival ends, send contributors an email thanking them for participating and linking them to the wrap-up post. This strengthens professional ties and is a mark of politeness. This message can also be an opportunity to reach out and propose further areas for collaboration.