

A new trend appears to be developing amongst those who wish to troll on this site.

In the last week, I have had to block a couple of people who had posted at least 50 comments before it became apparent that they were really here to present unacceptable views. At least one other commentator is currently being reviewed for the same reason.

One of these people did, after being blocked under their pseudonym, then try to post under their own name, quite offensively. This is very tedious. It could also be time-wasting, which I am sure is these people's aim, which is why I block them rather than engage in most cases.

So, can I make it unambiguously clear that no comment is posted on this blog without me having seen it?

That said, I recognise that I do sometimes make mistakes when moderating. Comments that I should have deleted, including from long-term commentators, sometimes slip through. If you were faced with moderating 40 or 50 comments, as I sometimes am in a batch, then you, too, would sometimes make mistakes. Those mistakes do not, however, create precedents. I will always go back and delete comments if anyone points out my mistakes, so feel free to do so.

I also need to make clear, again, most particularly for those who want to abuse the rules, that I have always written this blog to explore ideas. Over time, others have made significant contributions through their comments. I appreciate the efforts of those who do so in good faith. But not everybody seeks to do that. That is why, as a result, more than 1,000 people have been blocked over the last 19 years that I have been blogging, which at the rate of approximately one a week, is not that excessive, but is nonetheless tedious.

I will continue to block people when I think it's appropriate, with just one comment usually being sufficient for me to decide on that course of action, which is generally irreversible. I do not have the time to spend agonising over the hurt feelings of those who, by and large, post under a pseudonym using an email address that gives no clue

as to their identity.

Let me make it clear that the right to comment on this blog is granted as a favour, and not as a right. Saying so does not represent censorship. It represents the essential freedom of an editor to decide what they will and will not accept for publication. That right is fundamental to the advancement of free speech.

In summary, if you are here to waste my time, it will not take me that long, in the end, to rumble you, and to then ban you. Writing a whole pile of apparently acceptable posts before beginning to unleash your unacceptable views, before being banned, does seem like the most immense waste of time. Might I suggest you do something better with your life?

I blog because I like writing to explore ideas. That is my primary goal. I, as a consequence, spend two or more hours moderating a day. But I have no time to waste on those who want to abuse that time. Please understand that.