

# So you want to start a Substack



## Course outline

### Course Tutor:

Anna Burnside

### Course Content:

This three hour training course is an introduction to the fundamentals of Substack. What is Substack and how does it work? Who uses it, how do they use it, what is it good for? Substack has become like hoover, a brand name that has become generic. Actually you may want to consider another platform, such as Ghost. Outline of pros and cons of both.

### Programme

#### How journalists use Substack

There are many, many different ways to use Substack. Here are some of the main ones. Some Substacks do a couple of different jobs. Other people have different strands within their own brand. Discussion of the pros and cons of these different approaches.

- Links and recommendations (Bluestocking, The Shift)
- Column (Alex Massie, Stephen Daisley, Jaggy Thistle)
- Mini magazine with different strands/elements (Briefette, The Shift)
- Full scale publication with staff and sometimes a paper publication (Glasgow Bell, Edinburgh Inquirer, Vittles)
- Hyperlocal journalism (The Peeblean)
- News aggregator (Glasgow Wrap, Edinburgh Minute)
- Blog - random thoughts, personal stuff (Hairy Eyeball)
- Shop window for writing (Hairy Eyeball)
- Themed newsletter(s) (Lucyverse)
- Industry news/opinion (Build Edinburgh, The Crush Bar, Exeunt)
- Instagram add on (Alexandra Steadman, Thank Fifi)
- BTS / portfolio add-on (Beauty Geekery)
- News aggregator (Glasgow wrap, Edinburgh Minute)
- How to/service journalism (A Lot On Her Plate)

#### So which model might work for you?

With that as context, what model best fits what you want to do?

- How much time do you want to spend on project Substack? How much time can you afford to spend? Be brutally honest. It is very hard to find the motivation to write something for very little when you have other deadlines, life stuff going on.
- What is your niche? What do you bring to the party that no one else is bringing? Why will people open your email, never mind pay for it?

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### Getting started

Substack is very simple, very intuitive to use.

- How to give it a stylistic and visual identity. Keeping this consistent
- Subscriptions and paywalls
- Comments
- Add ons, video, lives, subscriber chats, podcasts, videos

### Building momentum

This is the tricky bit.

- Attracting and retaining readers/subscribers
- Using Substack features

### Questions and feedback