Fresh Technology, Toy Talk? Linguistic Metadiscourse on Writers' Blogs and Tweets
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Writer-cum-journalist Linor Goralik has a special interest in handcrafted artifacts. She makes her own jewelry, publishes about handmade fashion, and her blog (snorapp.livejournal.com) and site (www.linorg.ru) consciously opt for the amateurly crafted esthetics of early web design. Goralik embraces the imperfection that marks handcrafted design on a linguistic level, too. Blithely ignoring editorial rules, in her weblog and Twitter tweets (twitter.com/snorapp) she permits one typo after another.

Goralik's blog is not unique. In the words of one of her own readers, (linguistic) "rawness" is precisely what makes a blog interesting. Other Russian writers seem to agree with that statement. The internationally renowned author Tat'iana Tolstaia opens her blog (tanyant.livejournal.com) with the statement that *here*, she is going to defy all grammar and spelling rules. The poet Stanislav L'vovskii emerges from his Twitter entries (twitter.com/halfofthesky) as a linguistic happy-go-lucky, who doesn't mind reverting to broken English. Another poet, Dmitrii Vodennikov, claims to fill his blog (vodennikov.livejournal.com) with "permanent typos": after all, these only add to their "non-artificiality"?

In a world of spanking new technologies and spellcheckers, so these examples suggest, linguistic norms are there to be consciously deviated from and toyed with. Plays with (language) norms as a guarantee for authenticity and sincerity: that trope runs as a *continuo basso* through metalinguistic discourse on digital writing among Russian authors and their readers. Monitoring that discussion with a special eye for notions of play, my talk explores the following questions: In talk about the language of writers' blogs and tweets, does the traditional binary opposition playfulness <> sincerity hold firm? Or is, in digital realms, "play" considered the very warrant for sincerity and seriousness? And if so, just how new, or old, is that "sincerity-ensuring" function of play?