



Blog aka Weblog

“Blog” was Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary “word of the year” for 2004. Cleverness aside, a blog, short for weblog, is a “web-based publication” that contains dated entries about a particular topic. Functioning as an online journal, blogs can be written by one person or a group of contributors (www.answers.com).

According to Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, blogs range in scope from individual diaries to arms of political campaigns, media programs, and corporations.

They range in scale from the writings of one occasional author, to the collaboration of a large community of writers.

With the technology of chat rooms and bulletin boards, blogs create a forum for readers to share opinions, exchange information and ideas. The format of weblogs varies from simple bullet lists of hyperlinks to article summaries or complete articles with user-provided comments and ratings.

The Blogosphere: A New News Channel

Eight to 10 million people in the U.S. and around the world are using blogs: “the people’s media.”

Fans of “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” should know that the word blogosphere is very similar to the much older word “logosphere.” The word comes from the Greek words “logo” meaning “word”, and “sphere,” which can be interpreted as “world”. The result is the “world of words” in the universe of discourse (www.wikipedia.org).

With many in the 18-32 demographic passing on newspapers, the web continues to grow in its dominance as a news source. These young adults are turning away from national network news and are increasingly turning to blogs for “edutainment”. With a mainstream media infrastructure, blogs have an overlay of personalization, passion, and even provocation. While traditional news journalists report in the third person and must provide their editors with a credible source to back up their findings, bloggers write in the first person and do not have to

substantiate that their information or seek alternative view points.

Many bloggers are “ordinary citizens” who set out to share their opinions or expertise with the web public. Some see blogs as helping to hold the mainstream media more accountable by providing alternative opinions in the public discourse.

Increasingly traditional journalists are setting up their own blogs to attract this new audience of web news junkies and extending their reputations by revealing more of their personalities and personal opinions. Different news voices are developing for the main stream media that may be softer and friendlier than the schooled “just the facts, mam” approach. The challenge, as these journalists build their followings, is to differentiate when they are espousing personal opinions and interests versus presenting formally researched stories on behalf of their publishers.

News organizations have an interest in

having their reporters blog under their news organization’s brand to connect with this large audience. Some in news management are concerned that reporters will develop their personal brands and professional advancement for bringing their following to another media outlet.

The mainstream media is examining how to adopt and adapt to the blog world. With more and more young people consuming major media online than print and television, they have no choice.

Calling All Bloggers

If you have a story about how blogs are being used to promote companies, products, people or ideas, please email them to ivy@ivycohen.com. Future issues of *Marketing Coach* will provide information and ideas about how to successfully use blogs to achieve marketing and public relations goals.