

## **Keep Your Eye Out For Blogs**

The time for blogs is here - for business and just about everyone.

What is a blog? It's an online journal, a diary for everyone to see. It's a posting of observations, stories, news, tidbits, commentaries, how-to's, tips, and whatever else the "blogger" wishes to put out there in the blogosphere.

Blogs attract a self-targeted audience of readers, thereby becoming a powerful way of sharing ideas, expertise, news about products or services.

Larry Bodine, Esq., recently named "Legal Technology Consultant of the Year" at the 2004 TechnoLawyers@Awards, held in New York City, took ten minutes to set up his blog last year. His news, views and information about law firm marketing now draws thousands of bloggers to his site.

"Blogs are excellent marketing vehicles," he reports. "They let a lawyer demonstrate expertise in a particular topic. A well-done blog is very impressive to clients and a great business-getter."

The beauty of blogs, he says is that they allow any businessperson, lawyer or not, to market directly to clients and prospects.

Blogging is a grassroots effort at communication with fresh postings daily. Further, visitors are invited to share their insights, plus click on any number of links to articles, commentaries, other blogs - all in an effort to get the word out quickly and conveniently to fellow bloggers.

This grassroots approach, which can be a highly strategic public relations tactic, is not to be underestimated in today's world of seeming disconnect. For example, 200 bloggers - who had never met in person - raised over 3 million yen for a defense fund within days after the arrest of

Isanu Kaneko, an assistant professor at the University of Tokyo. One week later, that number had more than doubled to roughly \$62,000 in U.S. dollars. Kaneko, a popular figure known as “Mr. 47” on the Internet, was charged with copyright violations. His file-sharing software, named “Winny,” allows people to swap movies and video games online.

The power of the blog is also witnessed by journalists and politicians.

Dan Gillmor, a technology columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, hosts a blog that draws over 3 million readers a year. His short, one-two, paragraph jabs at traditional media headlines range from Schwarzeegger and his lawsuit against bobblehead makers to the Green lobbies and nuclear power.

Further, politicians everywhere are utilizing blogs for updating their views, posting “down-home” events, recruiting, fundraising and posting “old-fashioned” interaction between the “folks” and the candidates.

In fact, for the past several months, blogging has been in every presidential candidate’s arsenal of communication weapons, including John Kerry’s <http://blog.johnkerry.com> and George W. Bush’s [www.georgewbush.com/blog](http://www.georgewbush.com/blog).

Not all bloggers are celebrities or extraordinary people. Most do not sit with their laptop dictionaries open. Misspellings are common. Everyday, simple language is used.

On the other hand, bloggers should not be misjudged or underrated. If too much self-promotion is evident, they will nix a debate or simply not return.

Should anyone doubt that blogs are here to stay or are of any value to business, they should look to the signs. Blogs were touted by Bill Gates at Microsoft’s recent 8<sup>th</sup> annual CEO summit in Redmond, Washington. In May, Google.com introduced Blogger.com, which boasts over 1 million members and 200,000 active blogs.

For anyone who wishes to set up a blog, the two most popular blogging software are TypePad ([www.typepad.com](http://www.typepad.com)) and Moveable Type ([www.moveabletype.org](http://www.moveabletype.org)).

Happy blogging.

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