

## Look who's talking – blogging in business

The word “weblog” was coined in 1997. Since then, this online “exhibitionism in writing” has mushroomed. So we've been casting our eyes abroad and looking beyond the hypertext...

**SOME FACTS:** Modern blogs fall into four main categories

- genuine blogs – personal diaries online, a blog in the true sense of the word
- communities/chat – the world's biggest “blog” is more of a chat site on search engine optimisation: [searchengineblog.com](http://searchengineblog.com)
- news forums – commentary and updates on industry developments. Big in the States where they attract lively discussions on business. Example: [emergencemarketing.com](http://emergencemarketing.com)
- update tools – a quick and cheap way to inform clients and the industry about happenings at your company – without having to redesign the whole website. A best practice example we found: [thepenguinblog.typepad.com](http://thepenguinblog.typepad.com)

### The good...

Used well, blogs can increase website hits through “lateral surfing”. To do this, experts say blogs should talk on the same wavelength as the readers (your market) and focus on genuine interests – not yours. Good blogs fill an information niche – they boost the reader's knowledge. This way the blog doesn't look like a clumsy add-on to your marketing.

### ... the bad ...

Unfortunately, as some major corporations have discovered to their expense, blogs can be extremely dangerous. Some blogs set up by disgruntled customers have turned into a forum for public floggings. Ask Land Rover. It was lampooned by a blog identified by *The Times* as one of the “Top 50 Blogs Impacting Brands”: [haveyoursay.com](http://haveyoursay.com). Some blogs have even forced corporations to completely overhaul policies.

### ... and the ... oh dear!

Worst still, companies have sometimes created blog scandals themselves, either by masquerading as someone else (high-profile scandal: Wal-Mart, aided by a journalist), or by sneaking into third-party blogs (spectacular case: Whole Foods chairman John Mackey, who posted remarks about arch-rival Wild Oats, who he was actually planning to take over).

### Learning from Anglophone blogs

One thing most “blogsperts” agree on: blogs must never look like sales platforms (also be careful of senior execs on an ego trip). Most importantly, content should be professionally penned. So we'll finish with the following [blogging best practice from Anglophone markets](#)

- Blog consistently, at regular intervals, through a minimum number of people
- Avoid special offers and links to sales opportunities
- No hastily typed entries, or comments that look like internal gossip or chat with clients
- Link to other sites – this does not lose you readers, they often come back
- Beware content found elsewhere, be unique
- Address one tightly defined target group, with common interests
- Research well, write clearly and sound objective but authoritative

For more information and links to quoted examples visit: [newstalk online](#)

### Happy blogging!

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