



# Corporate Weblogging Best Practices

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*A guide for enterprises seeking to leverage corporate blogs.*

## SUMMARY

Weblogging, also known as blogging, is an online phenomena providing the opportunity for employees at all levels of an organization to communicate with each other and to form communities around products, projects, and similar interests. As the technology has matured, many examples of successful blog implementations have surfaced and best practices have evolved. Likewise, several missteps have been made along the way which serve as learning opportunities.

This paper describes the different types of corporate blogs and their applications; lists best practices for running one's own corporate blog and for managing how your company is represented on others' blogs; examines case studies exploring successful and unsuccessful corporate blogging attempts; and contains a glossary of specialized terms found in the blogging community.

This paper is intended for various audiences including executives faced with the decision of whether or not to implement blogging at their company, human resources professionals who will need to handle blogging-related incidents involving company employees, and marketers looking for ways to leverage blogs without damaging the organization's credibility in the fickle "blogosphere."

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## WHAT IS A BLOG?

A blog is a Web site which is continually updated as a personal diary, collaboration space, news outlet, collection of links, or memos to the world. Almost anything can go into a blog, including: text, links, pictures, audio, video, and more.

Blogs find their earliest roots in newsgroups and Internet forums where people could post messages and engage in conversations. The ability for anyone to initiate and join these conversations, regardless of their expertise, fostered a community that, while usually friendly, was cynical and accepted little at face value.

These online bulletin board applications evolved into personal web pages and online diaries where people could post personal messages about anything in their lives—complete with pictures, music, and other media. When tools became available to make frequent posting and linking easier, the true blog emerged.

What separates a blog from an online journal is the community and interaction that accompanies it. While an online journal allows a user to post personal messages and content, a blogger includes links to other relevant blogs and includes backtracks. Backtracks are posts which continue a conversation from another blog on one's own blog and typically include the original post for reference. Many bloggers read and comment at other authors' blogs. All of this linking and commenting creates an inter-related network of blogs called the "blogosphere."

## TYPES OF BLOGS

Businesses can utilize blogs in two primary formats: internal and external — each with its own unique applications. These applications can be dramatically altered depending on the options blog administrators have enabled.

### INTERNAL

An internal blog exists "behind the firewall." It is accessible only from within the company's network. Internal blogs can be used to facilitate one-way information sharing as an executive or manager shares her insights with other employees. Another level of settings allows readers to comment on posts where they may provide feedback on another employee's post. The most liberal settings al-