

SOCIAL MEDIA BIBLE

Everything Legal Professionals Need To Know About the New Media Revolution

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BLOGGING

What is it?

Blogging: The word blog is a short form for the term web log. A blog has traditionally been a journal or diary with dated entries. Law "blawgs" are rampant online.

Why do I need to know about it?

Think of blogging as educational-marketing. It drives people seeking information about a particular area of law to you as the expert in the subject. That, in turn, leads potential clients to your website.

How does it work for me?

By sharing your expertise online, not only are you providing Internet users valuable legal information, you are driving traffic to your website and improving your search engine optimization.

1. Visit www.blogger.com to set up your own blog. Make it look as much like your own website as possible.
2. Try and create a blog short version of what is on your website homepage in the blog header.
3. Be sure and add a social bookmarking widget to the page, click here to do this: <http://www.addthis.com/>
- 4. You will need a strong appeal to get people off your blog and onto your website- so make the link easy to find.**
- 5. Offer fresh content as often as possible, twice a week at least.**
6. A great example of a blog with an RSS feed can be found here: <http://www.enronfraud.com/>

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Make sure anything you post is in easily digestible bites of info- like top ten lists- not a long-drawn out synopsis. The key is to update postings early and often. Make sure the information posted answers the "What's in it for me?" questions for the reader.

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ONLINE PODCASTING

What is it?

A podcast is a series of digital-media files that are distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and computers. The term podcast, like broadcast, can refer either to the series of content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also called podcasting. The host or author of a podcast is often called a podcaster. Podcasting takes longer to establish an audience. But once you do, they are extremely loyal and intimate. You have a direct voice to their ears unfiltered. There is something magical about that. Reading always comes with filters but auditory somehow bypasses many of these filters.

Why do I need to know about it?

Podcasts are a very effective way to easily disseminate information about a service or company. Though podcasters' web sites may also offer direct download or streaming of their content, a podcast is distinguished from other digital media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, and downloaded automatically when new content is added, using an aggregator or feed reader capable of reading feed formats such as RSS or Atom. *What does that mean?* One podcast can very effectively spread a legal professionals' message directly to an individual looking for that information.

How does it work for me?

The basic four steps include: plan your podcast, produce your podcast, publish and promote your podcast.

A step-by-step podcast tutorial can be found here:

<http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/>

RSS FEED

What is it?

RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication and is a vehicle for people interested in certain topics to quickly get new information, news and other good stuff without have to wade through tons of web pages. RSS Pages are generated in XML and are not meant for the human eye, but rather for RSS Readers or Aggregators.

Why do I need to know about it?

RSS feeds make it easy to check one place on your desktop to receive information that give you the cutting edge with the least amount of time doing research. The power comes from the news alerts. For instance, if you want to remain on the cutting edge on all the patent law decisions that make the news set up a news alert. Anytime a news source publishes something on your topic, 2 seconds later you have it in your inbox. Then cut and past the underlying article and email that to a client or superior who is interested in the topic. **Maximum impact for little work.**

How does it work for me?

1. Set up an RSS reader
2. Choose which sites you want to subscribe to
3. Click on orange icon.
4. Copy URL out of page.
5. Look for link that says add subscription and paste it in your window.



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www.mediamastersonline.net

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Top 7 RSS Readers:

News.google.com (the top choice, it aggregates over 4,500 news submissions sources. And organizes them by topic.)

Others include:

RssReader

SharpReader

NewsGator

FeedDemon

FeedBucket (Web Based)

NetNewsWire (for Mac OS X)

CREATING YOUR OWN RSS FEEDS

What Is It?

RSS is an XML-based format that allows the syndication of lists of hyperlinks, along with other information, or metadata, that helps viewers decide whether they want to follow the link.

Why should I know about it?

Creating your own RSS for your website, blog or any other information portal you have set up allows visitors to see your information without going out of their way to visit.

While this seems bad at first glance, it actually improves your site's and your visibility; by making it easier for your individual sinterested in your expertise to keep up with your information. An RSS allows people them to see your information the way they want to and it's more likely that they'll know when something that interests them is available on your site. Any list-oriented information on your site that your viewers might be interested in tracking or reusing is a good candidate for a feed. This can encompass news headlines and press releases, job listings, conference calendars and rankings (like 'top 10' lists).

Generally, each area of your site that features a changing list of information should have a corresponding feed; this allows viewers to precisely target their interests.

How does it work for me?

There are a number of ways to generate a feed from your content. First of all, explore your content management system - it might already have an option to generate an RSS feed. If not, consult your firm's IT department or you can hire a third-party to create and maintain your RSS feed. For more information on how to create your own RSS feed click here:

<http://www.wizard-creek.com/rss/tutorial/rss-website-feed-services.php>

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ONLINE NEWSROOMS

What are they?

A page online where you can post all the news about your firm, case, or yourself.

Why do I need to know about them?

Journalists rank online press rooms as their first stop when looking for information about a firm, or a company and keeping the content fresh improves your search engine optimization ranking.

How does it work for me?

Online newsrooms don't have to be fancy endeavors. Simply designate a page on your site as a "newsroom". Make sure your newsroom includes contact information, firm background, announcements and accolades, a multimedia gallery and a search capability to allow journalists, consumers, investors and other visitors to easily find information they need.

Post news releases on the page on the firm website. Be sure and make the newsroom RSS compatible. Offer users news alerts via email updates or RSS feeds. Here is a good example of an online newsroom:

<http://www.enronfraud.com/>

Improve your site's Search Engine Optimization (SEO) by:

1. Creating a library of company press releases and submit a sitemap of that portion of the site to Google:
<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/docs/en/sitemap-generator.html>
2. Submit your press release directly to Google: go to
<http://www.google.com/intl/en/submit.content.html>
3. Place the release on your website and create a direct link to it from your homepage to improve a site's Search Engine Optimization.

If your IT department can't do this for you: www.vocus.com is a good resource.

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Why do I need to know about it?

Podcasts are a very effective way to easily disseminate information about a service or company. Though podcasters' web sites may also offer direct download or streaming of their content, a podcast is distinguished from other digital media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, and downloaded automatically when new content is added, using an aggregator or feed reader capable of reading feed formats such as RSS or Atom.

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SOCIAL BOOKMARKING

What is it?

Social bookmarking websites are becoming more and more popular. They allow the user to save bookmarks online and Tag/Categorize them with keywords instead of saving them as bookmarks in the favorites list of the user's browser. These sites enable users to share their favorite website content with other users in their network. Here are some brief descriptions of the most popular bookmarking sites:

Del.icio.us

del.icio.us allows users to save their bookmarks online. del.icio.us also gives users the ability to "tag" their bookmarks with descriptive category names. As members of a "social bookmarking" community, del.icio.us users can also see how many other people have bookmarked the same pages, and they can look at those users' bookmark collections to find other interesting online content.

Digg:

Users share interesting online content by submitting links to the site. At that point, the Digg audience can vote on whether or not they think it is interesting. Articles with lots of votes, or "diggs," rise up higher on the site's main page and topical subsection pages.

Another form of social sharing, this site also lets users categorize the content they are submitting to Digg and label it with descriptions of up to 350 characters. Digg users can also submit comments on each content item submitted to the site.

Technorati:

Technorati searches and organizes blogs and the other forms of independent, user-generated content (photos, videos, voting, etc.).

Reddit:

reddit allows users to share news articles and other online content with users of the site. Users also give articles a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. reddit then uses those votes to build a user profile and to find articles to recommend to you. Users can also submit comments on items posted to the site.

Newsvine:

At Newsvine, you can share this news article, and read news stories from established media organizations, as well as individual contributors from all around the world.

Google:

If you are a registered user of Google's personalized homepage, e-mail and other services, you can also save bookmarks and label them with keywords.



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Yahoo:

If you are a registered user of Google's personalized homepage, e-mail and other services, you can also save bookmarks and label them with keywords.

Why should I know about it?

Social bookmarking is a great way to bypass the traditional media gatekeepers when it comes to getting your information to the people who want to know about it on a very large scale. Because people vote on their favorite posts, traditional media is starting to use their sites as barometers of what people are interested in. Sometimes the popularity of certain posts on these bookmarking sites can influence traditional media to pick up the story.

How does it work for me?

Visit some of the sites provided here. Create an account. Then bookmark interesting and useful things in the areas of your interest or expertise. By doing so you create a useful Feed. Once you've done that you intermittently, (or aggressively), add useful and interesting items, you can also submit your own content that could use additional exposure.

Make an honest effort to contribute **USEFUL** information and links. This is all about sharing and exposure. Done properly, you can be as aggressive as you want to be about sharing information. You can share your blog(s), links to your informational/resource sites etc. Think about the fact that when you share links to other's resources, you're also effectively promoting their content as well.

1. Sign up for a free account
2. Some social bookmarking sites offer tag buttons so all you have to do is tag your favorite sites to add them to your online social bookmarking page. (The site will instruct you on how to do this)
3. When you tag a page a window will pop up asking what tag words you want to use to describe the content. This is important as later when you go back eventually you will find you have bookmarked 100 webpages or more. To sort through all of the content all you will have to refer to is your list of tags which will have numbers next to the words indicating how many pages you have bookmarked with that particular word in it.
4. Here is the social aspect- these bookmarks are public that means your friends can see your bookmarks and your tags just like you.
5. Bookmark your own post on your website

Search Engine spiders will go into these sites and recognize posted items as highly valuable so it increases your post's ranking in search engines.

Tags:

A tag is simply a word you use to describe a bookmark. Unlike folders, you make up tags when you need them and you can use as many as you like. The result is a better way to organize your bookmarks and a great way to discover interesting things on the Web.

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PUBLISHING TO SOCIAL BOOKMARKING SITES

What is it?

Opening accounts at a number of social bookmarking sites and posting your own content to reach a wider audience of people.

Why do I need to know about it?

Publishing your own content to a number of social bookmarking sites disseminates the information to a large number of people and greatly improves the search engine optimization of your content.

If you have written a good article or your client has a press release everyone should know about, consider publishing it in this way.

How does it work for me?

First set up free accounts at each of these social bookmarking sites:

www.Propeller.com

www.Stumbleupon.com

www.Reddit.com

www.Tagza.com

www.Fark.com

www.Newsvine.com

www.Furl.net

www.swik.net

www.Connotea.org

www.netvouz.com

1. After you upload content Go to : <http://www.socialmarker.com/>
2. All you need to do is simply drag a button see homepage under "how to use it" to your bookmarks toolbar, in order to create a submission bookmarklet. When you are on a website that you want to socially mark, simply select the text and click the SocialMarker button to pre-populate the submission form with the selected information.
3. Go to the section on the homepage that says "select the Social Bookmarking sites you want to submit to"
4. Click the word "Best" under that title.
5. It will take you to Bookmark Details box at the top- type in the Title of the Article- the link of the blog posting, a brief description of the article and the tags- these are very important- they tell the RSS feeds and search engines what to look for.
6. Social marker will take you to each of the sites checked where you will enter your username and password you've set up- click "remember me on this computer" and you'll only have to type the whole thing in once.

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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

What is it?

SEO ranks your site higher in search engine listings when someone searches for your practice area, your firm or you.

Why do I need to know about it?

Because the higher your site is listed on search engines the more people will visit it.

How does it work for me?

Meta tag every page of the website up to 250 words per page. A content management system is good for this or the IT department can do this for you. Also-by adding RSS feeds and encouraging others to link to your site via social bookmarking your site will rank higher in search engines.

SELF-SYNDICATING ARTICLES

What is it?

If you take the time to post an article on your blog, or take the time to write an article for a legal publication why not make sure as many people as possible see it?

Why do I need to know about it?

It is estimated 80% of people looking for an attorney or legal service Google that individual first. The more places online a legal professional's name appears, the more credibility they generate in the client.

How does it work for me?

All you have to do is write an article, making sure it has a bio with your website link or contact information, and send it off to content ezines such as:

Alumbo! <http://www.alumbo.com>

Article Alley <http://www.articlealley.com>

Article City <http://www.articlecity.com>

Article Marketer <http://www.articlemarketer.com>

Article Corners <http://www.articlecorners.com>

Associated Content (this one pays!) <http://www.associatedcontent.com>

Ezine Articles <http://www.ezinearticles.com>

Go Articles <http://www.goarticles.com>

Be sure to list recent articles on the firm homepage and write anyone is welcome to re-publish your article as long as your bio is intact.

You have permission to publish this article electronically in your eZine and website free of charge, as long as the author byline and "About the Author" are included. Please note this is a non-exclusive submission, and this article may appear elsewhere.

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SOCIAL NETWORKING

What Is It?

Social networking is a phenomena defined by linking people to each other in some way. Facebook is a popular example of a social network using social bookmarking.

Why should I know about it?

Users work together to rate news and are linked by rating choices or the professional expertise of other members. Generally, social networks are used to allow or encourage various types of activity whether commercial, social or some combination of the two. Barack Obama's page on facebook is an excellent example of how to utilize the site to your advantage:

<http://www.facebook.com/barackobama>

How does it work for me?

Sign up for free accounts at each of these sites be sure and include a complete work history and often you will be reconnected with other old colleagues, which is great for future referrals.

Here are the most popular:

www.linkedin.com
www.myspace.com
www.facebook.com

TWITTER

What is it?

Primarily designed for mobile devices, Twitter or "tweet" is a micro-blog for people who want to write about the little things that happen in their life. Twitter's greatest asset is its mobility as it is optimized for Blackberrys and other PDAs.

Why should I know about it?

Twitter pages look like blogs with very short posts. Twitter is a useful tool for groups that need to easily stay up to date with daily events when they are on the go. This is a very useful tool for ongoing trials and settlement agreements that can change from minute to minute. Twitter is full of influential bloggers, as well as people who pass along messages

How does it work for me?

For lawyers- Twitter can be very beneficial during trials to keep the legal team updated as to minute to minute proceedings during trials and settlement discussions. Click follow on the friends you want to keep up with and all day- your page will be updated with the minute details of your friends on your page. Posts are under 140 words

www.twitter.com

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VIDEO SHARING SITES

What is it?

Video sharing refers to websites or software where a user can distribute their video clips. Some services may charge, but the bulk of them offer free services. Many services have options for private sharing and other publication options.

Why do I need to know about it?

Video sharing is a very effective tool for communicating a client's message. Video gives a message more of a presence to a wider audience as videos can be bookmarked just like written web content.

How does it work for me?

User-generated sites mostly offer free services whereby users can upload video clips and share it with the masses. Many sites place restrictions on the file size, duration, subject matter and format of the uploaded video file.

Here are the top video sharing sites:

www.grouper.com
www.jumpcut.com
www.google.com
www.eyespot.com
www.youtube.com
www.ourmedia.com
www.rever.com
www.videoegg.com
www.vimeo.com
www.vSocial.com
www.blip.tv
www.dailymotion.com
www.buzznet.com

WIDGET

What is it?

A widget is a piece of code, an application you can grab free from anywhere and post it on your blog, Website or desktop. Then, like an RSS, it feeds you the latest updates. Widgets can be web videos, online games, stock market tickers, news feeds.

Why do I need to know about it?

This is a great way to create an ongoing dialogue with target audiences as their decision to grab your widget and put it on their site means they want to interact with your brand on a regular basis. Widgets allow you to change content frequently and refresh easily.

How does it work for me?

Widgets are an easy way to distribute content and leverage your brand.

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The widget's updates once added by the communicator are automatically sent to anyone who has downloaded them, so there is no need for additional follow-ups or notifications.

Resources for understanding and creating widgets:

www.clearspring.com

www.widgetcon.com

www.widgetbox.com

www.rockyou.com

http://www.comscore.com/metricio/widget_mx.asp

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/gadgets>

WIKIS

What is it?

A wiki is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language.

Why do I need to know about it?

Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites. For example, the collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best known wikis.

How does it work for me?

Wikis are used in businesses to provide affordable and effective intranets and for Knowledge Management. Ward Cunningham, developer of the first wiki software, WikiWikiWeb, originally described it as "the simplest online database that could possibly work".

Sign up for free WIKIS at

www.pbwiki.com

www.wetpaint.com

www.wikispaces.com

GOOGLE FRIEND CONNECT

What is it?

Google Friend Connect lets you grow traffic by easily adding social features to your website. With just a few snippets of code, you get more people engaging more deeply with your site.

Why do I need to know about it?

Attract more visitors. Visitors bring along friends from social networks like Facebook, orkut, and others to interact on your site.

Enrich your site with social features. Choose engaging social features from a catalog of gadgets provided by Google and the OpenSocial developer community. No programming whatsoever. Just copy and paste snippets of code into your site, and Google Friend Connect does the rest.

How does it work for me?

To learn more about how Google Friend Connect can help your website visitors engage more with your site and your brand set up an account here:



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<http://www.google.com/friendconnect/home/moreinfo>

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