Campaigns
Common Cause
DCCC
DNC
DSCC
Donkey Rising
NDN
NRSC
Our Congress

Congress
Rep. Conyers
Rep. Harris
Rep. Kirk
Sen. Leahy
Rep. Pence
Rep. Tancredo
Rep. Waxman

Courts
The Becker-Posner Blog

Media
&c.
Act Now
Bench Memos
The Buzz
C-Log
Capital Games
Cook's Capitol
The Corner
The Daily Outrage
David Frum's Diary
Editor's Cut
Fedblog
Galley Slaves
Hit & Run
The Huffington Blog
MoJo Blog
Chris Mooney
The Online Beat
Political Animal
Tapped
TKS
Uncommon Sense
White House Briefing

Misc. Groups
AARP Issues Blog
ACCAbuzz
ACSBlog
Abolish the Death Penalty
Computing Research Policy
English First News & Notes
Government Bytes
Health Facts and Fears
Heritage Foundation InkWell
The Insider
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The Market Center Blog
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Arms Control Wonk
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Education Weak
Eduwonk
Amitai Etzioni Notes
The Fly Bottle
The Immigration Blog
Intel Dump
Knowledge Problem
MaxSpeak, You Listen!
NewDonkey
Out of Control
Personal Democracy Forum
Skeptic's Eye
Susan Crawford Blog
TPMCafe
Talking Points Memo
Tapscott's Copy

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June 20, 2005
BELTWAY BLOGROLL
The Power Of The Blog

Last year was a big one for bloggers on the political front. They breathed life into the presidential candidacy of **Howard Dean**, now the chairman of the Democratic Party; they earned credentials to cover the political conventions; and they helped Republican **John Thune** of South Dakota topple the Goliath that was Senate Minority Leader **Thomas Daschle**.

People who are passionate about the business of government already have discovered the simplicity, immediacy and global reach of blogging.

The blog days of Campaign 2004 are over now, but this year the technology that transformed the political scene is taking root in the wonky world of Washington. Web logs are quickly becoming a more visible and influential policy weapon.

The high-profile debate over Social Security is a good example. The topic already has generated thousands of blog postings.

The conservative Club for Growth, led by former Rep. **Pat Toomey**, R-Pa., started a blog on Social Security in January. SocialSecurityChoice.org unabashedly claims its mission as promoting President Bush's "ownership society," in particular personal retirement accounts.

By contrast, ThereIsNoCrisis.com challenges the notion that Social Security faces any "crisis." The blog is run by BlogPac, which bills itself as "a group of bloggers not content to simply write words or read them, but eager to take action on the pressing issues of our day."

The retirement group AARP also has a Social Security blog. And a fourth blog, Talking Points Memo, has dedicated much of its space to challenging the Bush administration's stance on Social Security over the past several months. The blog ranks Democrats who may be swing votes in the debate as part of "The Fainthearted Faction" and Republicans as members of "The Conscience Caucus."

That's four blogs focused on one issue -- two by established advocacy groups and two by Internet upstarts who have seen and seized the power of the blog.

The blogswarm that stung the Federal Election Commission (FEC) earlier this year is even more telling of blogs' emerging influence in Washington.

When one commissioner hinted in a News.com interview that the agency might regulate blogs under campaign-finance law, bloggers of all political persuasions rallied against the FEC. The commission blinked, proposing a much narrower set of rules than the draft suggested by the FEC's general counsel -- a draft that was made public by a blogger.

Conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt predicts more such blogswarms in his book "Blog: Understanding the Information Revolution That's Changing Your World."

"What is coming soon -- and perhaps even in the summer of 2005 -- are clashes between competing blogging camps," he writes. "The perfect interblog storm is brewing and will break when the next Supreme Court nominee is sent from the White House to [Congress]. In fact, all future Supreme Court nominations are going to ignite blog wars."

Both inside and outside the Beltway, people who are passionate about the business of government already have discovered the simplicity, immediacy and global reach of blogging. And with Bush in office four more years and Republicans dominating all branches of government, the conditions are ripe for another round of information warfare that targets not just candidates but their ideas.

Wide-ranging blogs like Instapundit and Talking Points Memo are well-read by policymakers. Think tanks like the New America Foundation, Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation either have their own blogs, or have affiliated staffers who write independent ones.

Trade groups as prominent as the National Association of Manufacturers and as obscure as the Air Conditioning Contractors of America have Web logs, as do watchdog organizations such as the National Taxpayers Union and the Project on Government Oversight.

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Judges and lawyers have policy blogs. Academics, journalists, public-relations consultants and scientists have them, too.

The blogosphere even includes members of the U.S. Congress, state lawmakers and the British Parliament.

Whether the subject is arms control, education, immigration or taxes, policy mavens and wannabe wonks are finding their voices in blogs.

Andrew Cochran, a former top aide to the House Financial Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee and now a consultant, created a counter-terrorism blog in January. He told *National Journal's Technology Daily* that he was inspired to start the blog through his work at Public Policy Partners after seeing how much influence blogs had in last year's campaign.

In Congress, one of Nevadan **Harry Reid**'s first acts upon replacing Daschle as minority leader was to hire **Ari Rabin-Havt** as the director of Internet communications, with one key mission being outreach to bloggers. And Thune hired lawyer **Jason Van Beek**, one of the bloggers whose coverage of the Daschle-Thune race in 2004 helped Thune get elected.

All of which explains why I am starting this column. Blogs are big newsmakers. They are transforming the political and policy worlds, and I will follow that transformation.

"Beltway Blogroll" is intended to be a biweekly column, but is being published in blog form for three reasons:

1. It just makes sense to use the medium that sparked the idea for this column;
2. It makes it easy to post off-deadline updates when the need or desire arises; and
3. I want to hear from you. I agree with **Dan Gillmor**, who wrote this in "We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People": "If my readers know more than I do (which I know they do), I can include them in the process of making my journalism better."

So if you have a policy blog, let me know. If you see an interesting debate percolating in the blogosphere that has gone unnoticed by the mainstream media, tell me about it. If you are using blogs or related Internet technologies to try to reshape the public discourse, shoot me an e-mail or post a comment here. I look forward to making "Beltway Blogroll" part of the conversation.

Posted by dglover at June 20, 2005 12:06 AM

Comments

Here Here! Great start and an instant must-read.

Posted by: PinkDome at June 20, 2005 09:26 PM

A lot has been written about public policy blogs, but there are many ways to use the medium of blogs to benefit folks interested in politics. For example, my blog (www.mattlewis.org) focuses on training Republicans how to be more effective. We spend little time discussing the issues, but a lot of time talking about strategy and tactics. It's like attending a campaign training seminar from the comfort of your keyboard. Although public policy blogs are important, the medium can benefit people interested in many facets of politics.

Posted by: Matt Lewis at June 21, 2005 10:05 AM

Just when you thought the Internet couldn't affect our lives any more drastically than it has these past few years, blogging comes out of nowhere and bam! the Internet is almost born anew. :)

Posted by: Ryan Franklin at June 21, 2005 02:25 PM

Oops...
Two things happened to Scooturd today which resulted in this blog being shut down. Because of an intense desire for the arrival of the Rapture without any of the required apocalypse mumbo-jumbo, Scooturd headed into the backwoods of the Appalachia to practice a divinely inspired chant he received while vegetating on the sofa the prior night. Upon arrival at what appeared to be an ideal location, he stumbled upon Christopher Hitchens and Thomas Friedman consummating their love in a makeshift hammock. Startled and distracted, Scooturd found cover behind a nearby patch of brush, and began quietly chanting. Due to either the nearby distraction and/or getting the chant mixed up,...the millions of Rapture Christianists who truly deserve to be raptured the hell away from the normal people living on this planet...alas, are still here wreaking havoc. Regardless of good intentions, Scooturd accidentally raptured himself. Details of Scooturd's disappearance are sketchy, and Mr. Hitchens and Mr. Friedman deny being in the backwoods and also claim to have never seen Scooturd to begin with. We can only hope that on whatever dimension Scooturd dwells now,...that Scooturd is still trying to free the planet of the Christianist wack job End Times readers...and to also accomplish his ultimate goal of turning LaHaye and the other End Times author into Pez dispensers in a different galaxy. We wish Scooturd well...and the best of luck. And we ask that when he's done dealing with the radical unRight, that he then works his magic on all gREedPUBLICANs, American Talibangelists,...and

the racist offspring of our Founding Mothers and Fathers. Again, good luck Scooturd. We have confidence you can free this country of the insane tyrants who are now running it. If there's anything we can do to help...please let us know.

Posted by: Scooturd at June 21, 2005 02:29 PM

The problem with blogs is that they have a flat indexing system and must be 'Searched'. Getting historical information out of them is not intuitive.

I believe there is another form of site that can best be described as a hybrid. It has some elements of a blog, but also has reference information. www.gunlawnews.org is closer to an encyclopedia with a forum for feedback.

As time goes by we will become a reference site for the gun control issues at the federal level.

Posted by: GLN Admin at June 21, 2005 02:29 PM

Somebody tell Ryan up there that satire -- if that's what that was -- must be funny. It's almost a law.

Posted by: Banjo at June 21, 2005 03:27 PM

I know this would mean some extra work, but as this is wartime it would be sensible to keep a separate category for military bloggers: both personnel stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan and embedded journalists. They cover one of the most salient policy areas there is, and are closer to it than any of the bloggers sitting in front of screens in the States.

Posted by: Zathras at June 21, 2005 05:12 PM

I've lived in a suburb of this stinkin' town (DC) for twenty years now, and I still wouldn't have the slightest idea how exactly to define a "policy blog." If today I toss in my two cents about how if Dubya is a lame duck then bring on more lame ducks...and then tomorrow wax lustfully about the ass on the 2005 Mustang...does that constitute a "policy blog"?

Well, probably not...and as for "shaping Washington debates" I have no shot. Then again, all of the Washington debates are shaped by the liberals and their first cousins in the media, so I stand proudly outside that incestuous mess.

Does Joe Gibbs have a blog? Use his if so...

Peace Out

Kelly Palmer
Gaithersburg, MD

Posted by: Otto Parts at June 21, 2005 09:09 PM

Thanks for including Abolish the Death Penalty, www.deathpenaltyusa.blogspot.com, among your links! I started this blog a year ago as an experiment. Back then, no one was reading except maybe my girlfriend, my sister and her pet dog.

Now, one year later, more than 18,000 readers have stopped by and daily readership ranged from 50 to 100 or so, depending on what is going on. This isn't a huge readership compared with some of the blogs out there, obviously. But it's not bad for a single-issue blog in what many would consider a depressing topic!

Posted by: David Elliot at June 22, 2005 04:59 PM

Thanks for letting me know about this column/blog. We'll definitely be tracking it. Cisco's government affairs blog was started to lend some of our expert staff opinions to the policy blogosphere. We're just now learning how to walk.

Posted by: John Earnhardt at July 12, 2005 02:39 PM

How about providing RSS feeds/syndication for your column - or is it already hidden somewhere? It would make it easier for people to keep track..

Posted by: thirdi at July 12, 2005 07:05 PM

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Preview Post

"Beltway Blogroll" is K. Daniel Glover's bi-weekly look at the growing number of policy blogs shaping Washington debates. It publishes every other Monday, although additional updates will be made when events warrant.

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