

# GAIN

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## KNOWLEDGE BRIEFING

Effective Corporate Blogging

April 2009

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## FOREWORD

Short for weblogs, blogs are Web sites journaling a person's thoughts and ideas about a particular topic.<sup>1</sup> Blogs are different from forums or discussion boards, since the owner of the blog controls the content of the posting. While visitors to blogs can post comments, blogs are not entirely public forums. In addition, visitors typically go to a blog to read the latest news and opinions of the blogger.<sup>2</sup>

The blogging phenomenon is not limited to individuals. In fact, many organizations around the world are starting to create blogs, where company executives, stakeholders, vendors, and employees post their thoughts and opinions on certain subjects. However, corporate blogs are not a panacea — personal blogs in which employer-related information is shared might create legal problems for the blogger. For instance, a Google assistant product manager was terminated in 2005 after 10 days of employment for discussing corporate secrets on his personal blog. And in India, a blogger resigned from IBM after he posted false claims about a management school, IIPM, which led the school's management to threaten the IT giant with burning the school's IBM laptops as a sign of protest against the employee.<sup>3</sup>

To prevent situations that might put the organization in a legal, financial, or otherwise embarrassing scenario, many companies actively monitor employee online behavior at work and have blogging policies in place. A March 2008 GAIN Flash Survey of 170 IIA members<sup>4</sup> found that one organization blocks blogging sites within the company; another hosts a corporate blog where only executives are allowed to communicate issues and solicit input from employees on those topics; and in another organization call center agents often refer to industry-specific blogs but are not allowed to post on them.

This *Knowledge Briefing* summarizes some of the key points, recommendations, and leading practices on corporate blogging from IIA members and professional online resources to help internal auditors provide recommendations that enhance the use of corporate blogs, as well as ensure employee blogging activities do not hamper an organization's reputation.

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<sup>1</sup> PR Communications, [http://pr.typepad.com/pr\\_communications](http://pr.typepad.com/pr_communications)

<sup>2</sup> PR Communications, [http://pr.typepad.com/pr\\_communications](http://pr.typepad.com/pr_communications)

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia's blog entry, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogging>

<sup>4</sup> "Blogging Within the Organization" (March 2008), [www.theiia.org/download.cfm?file=6438](http://www.theiia.org/download.cfm?file=6438) (PDF, 130 KB)

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## WHAT IS A BLOG?

As described earlier, many of today's blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject, while others function as more personal online diaries. In addition to text, many bloggers post images, music, and videos, as well as links to different blogs, Web pages, and other media related to the topic. Blog entries are displayed in reverse-chronological order (i.e., the most recent entry appears first), similar to comments posted on many Web forums or discussion boards. (Read "Common Cataloguing Terms" for a list of commonly used blogging words.)

In the beginning, blogs were manually updated components of Web sites. However, their popularity spread rapidly after 1999 due in part to the arrival of the first hosted blog tools, which facilitated the production and maintenance of Web articles in reverse-chronological order to a less technical and much larger population.<sup>5</sup> After 2002, blogs gained increasing notice and coverage for their role in breaking and shaping news stories.

There are different types of blogs, differing only in the type of content and the way the content is delivered. Two common types of blogs are personal blogs and corporate blogs (see Figure 1 for an image of a corporate blog). While personal blogs are more of an ongoing diary or commentary by an individual, corporate blogs provide an effective and reliable way for organizations to build trust-based relationships with customers. In essence, a corporate blog is published by or with the support of an organization to reach the organization's goals.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of their type, all blogs share the following six characteristics:<sup>7</sup>

1. **Subjective personality.** Blogs are not objective mediums. "In a way, they're much like reading letters from someone," explains CorporateBlogging.Info, a Web site that offers information on business blogging. "After a while, you can sense [the blogger's] values and interests, and you can't remove the person — the personality — from the equation."
2. **A voice.** Blogs have a voice of their own. Most have an everyday voice — natural, direct, and informal, and sometimes funny or irritating.
3. **Links.** Hyperlinks are a major part of most blogs. Good, popular blogs provide hyperlinks to interesting information with some degree of context.
4. **A conversation.** Many bloggers become part of existing conversations by linking to other blogs in their posts, stating their opinions, and publishing related information or thoughts.
5. **An immediate frequency.** Blogging is immediate, almost instantaneous. Popular blogs publish content more than once a month or even more than once a week.
6. **A feed.** Many blogs are published on a Web site and also as feeds — a data format that provides subscribers with frequently updated content.

<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia's blog entry, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogging>

<sup>6</sup> "Your Guide to Corporate Blogging," [www.corporateblogging.info/basics/what/](http://www.corporateblogging.info/basics/what/)

<sup>7</sup> "Your Guide to Corporate Blogging," [www.corporateblogging.info/basics/what/](http://www.corporateblogging.info/basics/what/)

### Common Cataloguing Terms

The following is a list of commonly used terms for cataloguing blogging activity:

- **Blogosphere** — the collective community of all online blogs.
- **Bloghood** — a collection of local blogs.
- **Blog search engines** — used to search blog content such as Bloglines and Technorati.
- **Blogging communities and directories** — online communities and directories that connect people to blogs and bloggers to other bloggers.
- **Blogging and advertising** — blogs may feature advertisements to financially benefit the blogger or promote the blogger's favorite causes.
- **Fake blogs** — fictional blogs created by a company to market a tool or promote a product.

Source: Wikipedia's Blog Web page, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/blogging>.



Figure 1. Screenshot of a corporate blog  
Source: [www.internalauditoronline.org](http://www.internalauditoronline.org)

Just as there are different kinds of blogs, Wikipedia differentiates among three kinds of corporate blogs:<sup>8</sup>

1. **Internal blogs.** These blogs are generally accessed through the company's Intranet site and are accessible to all employees. Many internal blogs are communal — that is, they allow any employee to post on them. Besides encouraging employee participation and a free discussion of issues, successful internal blogs provide **collective intelligence** (i.e., a shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration and competition of many individuals), direct communication between various layers of an organization, and a sense of community. Furthermore, internal blogs may be used in exchange of meetings and e-mail discussions, and are especially useful when the people involved are in different locations or have conflicting schedules.
2. **External blogs.** Corporate blogs that are hosted externally are available to the public. These blogs are mostly used to announce new products and services, to explain and clarify policies, or to respond to public criticism on certain issues. Because of their public nature, external blogs allow those outside the organization to have a glimpse into the organization's culture, although they are used mostly as public relations tools. While some external corporate blogs allow comments to be made on posts, not all do. In addition, all comments are reviewed before they are posted.
3. **Chief executive officer (CEO) blogs.** Many corporate blogs feature information posted by the organization's CEO. However, some CEOs have their own blogs, whether internal or external, where they post information. Although there are debates on whether or not CEOs should blog, blogging among CEOs is becoming popular, as shown in Figure 1. In this blog, the latest entry is provided by IIA President and CEO Richard Chambers, CIA.

Whether external or internal, blogs are not new to the business world. In fact, according to Wikipedia, more than 5 percent of the Fortune 500 companies blog externally.<sup>9</sup> The next section will describe the key recommendations internal auditors should keep in mind when reviewing the presence of corporate blogs and the effectiveness of their organization's blogging policy.

<sup>8</sup> Wikipedia's corporate blog entry, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_blog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_blog)

<sup>9</sup> Wikipedia's corporate blog entry, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_blog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_blog)

## RULES FOR CORPORATE BLOGS

In the business world, the presence and use of a blog can be a powerful tool for communicating with employees and stakeholders alike. Corporate blogs also can provide additional value by adding a level of credibility that is often unobtainable from a standard corporate site. Oftentimes, the informality and timeliness of information posted on blogs can serve to increase an organization's image of transparency and accessibility. What's more, corporate blogs can interact with a given target market on a more personal level, while building a level of credibility that is ultimately tied back to the corporate site.<sup>10</sup>

### The Four Do's of Corporate Blogging

According to IIA Director of Marketing Peter Scott, internal auditors working in organizations that have established a corporate blog need to ensure blogging policies:

- Help manage the organization's reputation by actively monitoring blogging activities.
- Establish a social media content strategy (i.e., policies regarding the kinds of comments employees can post on the organization's blog and comments posted on other blogs).
- Promote the use of a conversational and authentic voice and tone on all blogs.
- Call for the posting of blogs on a consistent basis.

In addition, internal auditors need to assess the risks organizations could be exposed to by either creating a corporate blog or becoming an active participant in another blog. For instance, auditors need to determine the kinds of messages the organization could send that may prove risky and provide recommendations that enable the organization to control the different elements of risks.

- There might be legal repercussions when negative content is allowed to be published, especially on an external blog or when employees make promises on behalf of the company.
- Some employees may cast the corporate brand in the wrong light.
- It is hard to measure a blog's success, especially when it is measured in terms of the overall number of visits, blog registrations, and comments.

As these problems indicate, without a clear-cut organizational blogging policy and strategy, corporate blogs can turn into dead zones. Worse, enabling employees to post information on personal blogs about corporate information can provide material suitable for a lawsuit. The question then is, what kinds of recommendations can internal auditors make to enhance the presence of existing or future corporate blogs?

### Recommendations

Nancy Flynn, the founder and executive director of The ePolicy Institute, an organization that provides policies and advice on information security issues, recommends that organizations keep in mind the following 12 rules before implementing a corporate blog:

However, corporate blogs are not without their share of problems. According to the article "The Many Challenges of Corporate Blogging," some of the common problems faced by corporate blogs include the following:<sup>11</sup>

- Most corporate blogs don't receive a lot of traffic.
- Blogs require a lot of time, and when it comes to CEO blogs, the cost per hour increases as many executives require the help of a support technician or a line marketing manager.
- Despite good intentions, "business speak" dictates the voice of many corporate blogs.
- There is often no strategy to discontinue an unpopular blog.
- As employee bloggers become popular, the company's brand may suffer as the individual, rather than the organization, is now seen as the source of information.

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia's corporate blog entry, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_blog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_blog)

<sup>11</sup> "The Many Challenges of Corporate Blogging," [www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/05/29/the-many-challenges-of-corporate-blogging/](http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/05/29/the-many-challenges-of-corporate-blogging/)

1. The blog is an electronic communications “powerhouse.” According to Flynn, blogs can have a greater impact on business communication efforts than e-mail, instant messaging, and traditional marketing-oriented Web sites combined. In addition, blogs can have a greater impact in helping to promote the organization’s image or brand than more traditional electronic communication tools.
2. Not all organizations need a corporate blog, nor are they appropriate in all companies. Evaluating the risks and benefits of a corporate blog can help organizations determine if one is needed or if it will add value to corporate strategic efforts.
3. Similarly, determining why an organization wants a blog in the first place can help establish clear strategic blogging objectives.
4. Business owners and executives need to learn how to strategically and successfully manage today’s blogosphere through education and training.
5. A blog’s casual and conversational nature, while making it appealing to writers and readers, also can be dangerous to an organization, as employees may be tempted to provide inappropriate or sensitive business content.
6. Organizations without an external blog program may risk losing position, market share, reputation, and sales to technically savvy competitors.
7. Establishing written rules and policies governing blog use and content is necessary for the strategic management of blogs and other electronic business tools. A good point to keep in mind when writing the blogging policy is that all information included in a blog can be subject to a libel lawsuit, much like in a publication. As a result, content should be reviewed and approved before going live.

## List of Common Blogging Policies

Below is a list of 14 core, common, and unusual corporate blogging practices, as described on CorporateBlogging.Info’s Web site based on a survey of several business blogging policies.

### Core (i.e., policies found in all companies surveyed)

- Employees are personally responsible for all the content they provide, not the organization.
- Employees must abide by existing corporate rules.
- Employees are not allowed to disclose secret, confidential, or otherwise company-sensitive information on personal or corporate blogs.
- Employees must display common sense when interacting on the blog — be nice, don’t insult anyone, don’t use profanity or attack people personally, and avoid inflammatory subjects.

### Common (i.e., policies found in approximately half of all companies surveyed)

- Bloggers are recommended to be relevant and write about what they know, thus adding value to the blog.
- Employees must follow internal policies and procedures, discussing what can or cannot be said about the organization in a public or quasi-public forum.
- Employees must respect copyright law.
- Employees must cite and link to material where appropriate.
- Employees must talk to their managers whenever they are uncertain about posting information.

### Unusual (i.e., policies found in few of the companies surveyed)

- Employees can (or can’t) write on company time.
- Employees need to keep in mind the blog’s goal when posting information.
- Employees may disagree with company policies, actions, or management, but must do so in a respectful manner without attacking fellow employees, authors, customers, vendors, or shareholders.
- Employees must stop blogging if instructed to do so.
- Employees must contact the organization’s public relations, media relations, or communications department if a member of the media contacts them about a corporate-related blog.

8. Corporate blogs that are poorly managed can open the door to business risks, including but not limited to loss of trade secrets, confidential information, and intellectual property; negative publicity, a damaged reputation, or public embarrassment; copyright infringement, defamation, and sexual harassment lawsuits; court sanctions, legal settlements, and regulatory fines; and loss of employee productivity.
9. Business management and technology, and the legal system have not fully caught up with the potential risks of corporate blogging. However, recent e-discovery laws in the United States and abroad, such as the U.S. Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, are shedding light into the potential dangers of electronically stored information. (For more information on e-discovery compliance, read “On the Road to E-discovery” (June 10, 2008) and “Facing the E-discovery Challenge: A Proactive Approach” (Nov. 10, 2007), published on *ITAudit*, [www.theiia.org/itaudit](http://www.theiia.org/itaudit)).
10. Don't allow any single department to dictate the organization's blogging program or policy. Different business units, functions, or departments need to work together in implementing corporate blogging rules, policies, and procedures.
11. Require all employees to sign a confidentiality agreement to protect trade secrets and confidential data belonging to the organization, employees, customers, business partners, stakeholders, and other third parties. The confidentiality agreement should cover comments posted on corporate, personal, and other external blogs during or after work hours.
12. Use discipline to ensure employee compliance with blog rules, policies, and procedures. In addition, blog content and use rules should be put in writing and inform employees that any violation will result in disciplinary action leading to and including termination.

### Blogging Tools

Organizations should not be afraid to use more than one blogging tool. In addition to blogging publisher WordPress, <http://wordpress.org/>, organizations should incorporate images, presentations, and even videos as part of their blogging posts. Free services such as SlideShare, [www.slideshare.net/](http://www.slideshare.net/), and YouTube, [www.youtube.com/](http://www.youtube.com/), can help organizations download PowerPoint presentations as well as videos that can enhance a blog's message.

In addition to these recommendations, it is important for organizations to listen to what the community is saying about them in other blogs as part of its overall blogging strategy. “Organizations need to identify what others are saying about them and participate in other blogs,” says Peter Scott, IIA Director of Marketing. “This will enable organizations looking to implement a blog to become part of the blogging community by participating in already existing conversations.” An important aspect to keep in mind, Scott continues, is to determine how the organization will respond to

negative comments. “As a rule, the organization should provide feedback in a positive tone that adds value and substance to the comment and the blogging community as a whole. Otherwise, the comment can be viewed as self-serving, redundant, or unnecessary, which could hinder the organization's reputation and business efforts.”

This aspect of blogging, **reputation management**, is one of four areas — content control, voice and tone, and consistency — that internal auditors need to keep in mind when reviewing an organization's blogging or social media policy. “Every organization should have a social media policy, even if the organization decides not to create an external blog or simply uses an internal one,” Scott emphasizes. Because everything posted on the Internet can be disseminated publicly in an instant, internal blogs should be treated the same way as external blogs. “It is just as easy for an employee to copy information from an internal corporate blog and paste it on their personal Web site as it is for them to copy information from an external blog,” says Scott.

To this end, organizations need to keep a watchful eye once a corporate blog is in place and actively monitor all blogging activity from employees. Thus, in addition to reputation management, organizations should have a **social media content strategy**. “A key aspect of having a blog is to promote an atmosphere of corporate transparency and openness,” explains Scott. “However, just because you can do something it doesn't mean you should.” Therefore, the social media content strategy should stipulate

what employees are allowed to say about the organization during all corporate and personal social media activities. For example, many policies prevent current and former employees from making any comments — good or bad — about the organization and from disclosing sensitive or confidential information.

Effective blogs also have the right **tone and voice**. “When it comes to a blog, marketing and public relations staff need to put the pen down,” says Scott. “Blogs need to have a conversational, authentic tone, and the best way to accomplish this is by appointing an author or group of authors.” Many large-size organizations, Scott points out, have a chief blogger or corporate blogger who gathers information that is then reviewed and posted on the corporate blog.

Many organizations also have staff members actively monitoring and participating in external blogs where information is shared about the company. A problem with having a designated author is that blog participants may visit the blog, not to read the latest news about the organization, but to read the latest entry by the author. However, as long as the organization remains the main focus of most blog entries, the company can avoid situations in which the blogger becomes his or her own brand.

When appointing internal staff as designated bloggers, Scott recommends for organizations to look at those performing nontraditional business roles. “People would much rather talk to the person who designed the Xbox 360, rather than Microsoft’s public relations manager,” he says. Therefore, organizations should appoint staff who have something to contribute to the blogging community or who can address customer responses or complaints more effectively. This may not necessarily be the customer relations staff or even the CEO. In fact, “not all executives should be allowed to blog,” says Scott. “It all depends on the executive and whether he or she can keep the blog on a conversational tone without sounding promotional.”

Finally, blogs have to be **consistent**. “Blogs that die are the one that provide stale, boring, and old content,” explains Scott. “They also don’t provide fresh, new content on a consistent basis.” Although the old adage of quality over quantity holds true in the blogosphere, the organization should make it a point to be consistent regarding the number of comments it posts per week. This encourages others to continue visiting the blog. “A good policy is to provide three posts per week, roughly 400 words each,” Scott mentions. General Motors’ blogs, <http://www.gmblogs.com>, and Dell’s Direct2Dell, <http://direct2dell.com/one2one/default.aspx>, are examples of blogs that provide fresh content on a consistent basis. (For additional recommendations for internal auditors, read “The Four Do’s of Corporate Blogging.”)

## WHAT IIA MEMBERS AND OTHERS ARE DOING

As explained in the last section, it is important to see what others are saying and doing as part of the blogging community. This extends to the use of blogging and social media policies and procedures. Consequently, before organizations establish a blogging policy, they should see what other organizations in their industry have implemented as well as what works. A good source of information for internal auditors is CorporateBlogging.Info, [www.corporateblogging.info](http://www.corporateblogging.info), which provides a comparison of business blogging practices.

The Web site offers a description of nine blogging policies commonly found in organizations including IBM, Yahoo!, and Plaxo and breaks down the nine policies in two sets: core policies (i.e., those existing in all companies surveyed) and common policies (i.e., those implemented in approximately half of all companies). (For a complete list of all 14 policies, read “List of Common Blogging Policies.”) Internal auditors also can read a March 2008 article published on the Social Media Marketing Blog that summarizes the key activities of two successful external corporate blogs — Dell’s Direct2Dell blog and LinkedIn’s blog — and what the organizations have done to keep them relevant among customers. As the article explains, successful blogs:<sup>12</sup>

- Are created in response to a particular problem that needs to be solved and are part of an overall communications strategy.
- Have clear measures of success. Metrics cited to measure success include benchmarking yourself against the competition (e.g., tracking the number of posts on a weekly basis), as well as tracking the blog’s tone (e.g., ratio of positive to negative comments over time) and engagement (e.g., the number of blog subscriptions, comments posted, etc.).
- Are relevant to the target audience by taking action on information posted, thus showing participants information is read and analyzed.
- Establish conversations that make it easy for the customer to interact with the organization.
- Have the support of the entire organization. Oftentimes, this means the organization may need to experience change for the social media strategy to take root.
- Employ whatever tools their customers use to answer problems or questions in the shortest amount of time, such as live stream videos.

Unfortunately, not many organizations have a corporate blogging policy. According to a March 2008 Flash Survey of 170 IIA members on blogging within the organization, nearly 90 percent of the organizations represented in the survey do not have a blogging policy (refer to Figure 2). While this finding could be the result of organizations not having a corporate blog, thus having a blogging policy may seem unnecessary, employees may still visit personal or other external blogging sites at work. Consequently, a formal blogging policy can serve as a good preventive measure that lets employees know the kinds of corporate information they can write about in an external or personal blog site during and after work hours to avoid lawsuits.

1: Does your organization have a policy on blogging? (Respondents could only choose a single response)			
Response	Chart	Frequency	Count
Yes, will share policy		0.6%	1
Yes, but unable to share policy		9.5%	16
<b>No</b>		<b>89.9%</b>	<b>152</b>
Not Answered			1
		<b>Valid Responses</b>	<b>169</b>
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>170</b>

**Figure 2.** Percent of IIA Flash Survey respondents with corporate blogging policy  
Source: IIA Flash Survey, “Blogging Within Your Organization” (March 2008)

<sup>12</sup> The Social Media Marketing Blog, “Corporate Blogging — How the Pros Do It,” [www.scottmonty.com/2008/03/corporate-blogging-how-pros-do-it.html](http://www.scottmonty.com/2008/03/corporate-blogging-how-pros-do-it.html)

Of the 10.1 percent of auditors who indicated their organizations do have a blogging policy, the use of blogs varied from marketing purposes to product blogs (refer to Figures 3 and 4).

		Yes	No	Total
Marketing blogs	Count	8	93	101
	% by Row	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
Executive: corporate blogs	Count	12	91	103
	% by Row	11.7%	88.3%	100.0%
Executive: product blogs	Count	4	99	103
	% by Row	3.9%	96.1%	100.0%
Responding to blogs	Count	12	91	103
	% by Row	11.7%	88.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	36	374	410
	% by Row	8.8%	91.2%	100.0%

**Figure 3. Corporate blog use among Flash Survey respondents**  
Source: IIA Flash Survey, "Blogging Within Your Organization" (March 2008)

		Yes	No	Not Applicable	Total
Marketing blogs	Count	12	14	94	120
	% by Row	10.0%	11.7%	78.3%	100.0%
Executive: corporate blogs	Count	14	14	95	123
	% by Row	11.4%	11.4%	77.2%	100.0%
Executive: product blogs	Count	8	14	96	118
	% by Row	6.8%	11.9%	81.4%	100.0%
Responding to blogs	Count	11	16	94	121
	% by Row	9.1%	13.2%	77.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	45	58	379	482
	% by Row	9.3%	12.0%	78.6%	100.0%

**Figure 4. Control of blog use among Flash Survey respondents**  
Source: IIA Flash Survey, "Blogging Within Your Organization" (March 2008)

When it comes to using their employee e-mail account for blogging purposes, 25.3 percent of respondents said this is not allowed, 20.2 percent said this is discouraged, and 15.2 percent said it is controlled or monitored. In terms of handling employee blogs through a method that would identify the organization, 13.6 percent of survey participants said this not allowed, 10.4 percent said this is discouraged, and 8.4 percent said this is controlled or monitored. Finally, when asked what area of the organization auditors would report unpermitted use or misuse of blogging to, the number one response was IT (refer to Figures 5 for a breakdown of all responses).

Response	Chart	Frequency	Count
Human resources		9.6%	15
Information technology		22.9%	36
Internal audit		9.6%	15
Ethics		5.7%	9
Legal		4.5%	7
Hotline		9.6%	15

**Figure 5. Party responsible for receiving reports of blog misuse or unpermitted use**  
Source: IIA Flash Survey, "Blogging Within Your Organization" (March 2008)

## RESOURCES

As more employees join blogs where they can express their opinions or create their personal blogs, implementing a blogging policy or incorporating blogging procedures as part of the organization's information security stance is more than good business practice — it is a necessary preventive tool that can keep the organization out of trouble if a corporate secret were to be divulged in a public forum. In addition, as more organizations take advantage of today's Web 2.0 technologies, a blogging policy should be an integral part of any blog implementation effort.

Unfortunately, many organizations are still playing catch up when it comes to implementing corporate blogging policies. As part of their work, internal auditors can help organizations enhance their current blogging efforts by providing recommendations that maximize the use of this powerful communication medium, as well as ensure a blogging policy is in place that clearly states what kinds of corporate information can or cannot be shared through a blog.

For additional information on blogging, internal auditors and CAEs can visit the following Web sites:

*Reference Web sites and Online Resources*

- CorporateBlogging.Info's Web site, "Policies Compared: Today's Corporate Blogging Rules," [www.corporateblogging.info/2005/06/policies-compared-todays-corporate.asp](http://www.corporateblogging.info/2005/06/policies-compared-todays-corporate.asp).
- International Association of Online Communications' Web site, "12 Best Practices for Business Blogging," [www.iaocblog.com/blog/archives/2006/12/13/2571935.html](http://www.iaocblog.com/blog/archives/2006/12/13/2571935.html).
- Marketing and Innovation Web site, "Golden Rules for Corporate Blogging," <http://visionarymarketing.wordpress.com/2008/05/29/blogging/>.
- The Social Media Marketing Blog, "Corporate Blogging — How the Pros Do It," [www.scottmonty.com/2008/03/corporate-blogging-how-pros-do-it.html](http://www.scottmonty.com/2008/03/corporate-blogging-how-pros-do-it.html).
- Web Strategy by Jeremiah's Web site, "The Many Challenges of Corporate Blogging," [www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/05/29/the-many-challenges-of-corporate-blogging/](http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/05/29/the-many-challenges-of-corporate-blogging/).
- Web Strategy by Jeremiah's Web site, "Web Strategy: The Many Challenges of Writing a CEO Blog," [www.web-strategist.com/blog/2007/10/12/challenges-of-writing-a-ceo-blog-checklist/](http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2007/10/12/challenges-of-writing-a-ceo-blog-checklist/).

*Sample Blogging Policies*

- CorporateBloggingInfo's Corporate Policies Web page: [www.corporateblogging.info/2004/06/corporate-blogging-policies.asp](http://www.corporateblogging.info/2004/06/corporate-blogging-policies.asp).
- Feedster: [http://feedster.blogs.com/corporate/2005/03/corporate\\_blog.html](http://feedster.blogs.com/corporate/2005/03/corporate_blog.html).
- Hill & Knowlton: <http://weblogs.netcoms.com/blogs/niallcook/archive/2005/05/19/279.aspx>.
- Plaxo: <http://blog.plaxoed.com/2005/03/29/plaxos-communication-policy/>.
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## APPENDIX: SAMPLE BLOGGING POLICY

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### Blog Code of Conduct

To benefit from **[Insert Name of Blog Here]** we ask for all of our readers, including XYZ Corp. employees, to abide by our code on conduct.

The purpose of this blog is to encourage participation. Your feedback will be vital to the success of ongoing and future marketing initiatives.

Lastly, when you post a comment, it will be reviewed and monitored by the BlogMaster first prior to posting. We do so because:

- (1) This blog is public. Given this, it will then be accessible to the spamming community and those comments are obviously irrelevant.
- (2) Should we receive any comments that do not abide by the Code of Conduct below, we will not post it. Management will contact the user directly to address any and all issues raised in the post.

**Note:** We do not wish to censor any posted comments. However, to prevent abuses by a few people and to keep this blog comfortable and appropriate for the general audience, which includes people of all ages, races, religions, and nationalities, we reserve the right to remove any notices in violation of our Code of Conduct that are brought to our attention. Therefore, all comments in violation of our guidelines are subject to being removed immediately and without prior notice.

### By posting here, you agree to the following statement:

“I agree that I will be solely responsible for the use and content of all blog comments that I post under this program and that I will indemnify XYZ Corp. and hold it harmless for any losses or damages to myself or to others that may result directly or indirectly from any notices that I post here.”

Because of the size of our community, we cannot monitor all posts or comments on the site. If you see a message you believe violates our guidelines, please contact us at **[Insert contact e-mail address here]**.

We hope that these guidelines will make the **[Insert Name of Blog Here]** successful and enjoyable for everyone.

### To participate in posting comments, you agree NOT to:

Post anything obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, illegal, harmful, insulting, threatening, abusive, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing, defamatory, libelous, untrue, invasive of someone else's privacy, or objectionable (in our sole discretion).

Post anything hateful — including targeting race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, weight, or disability.

Post with the intent to disrupt or disturb the community or to interfere with another user's use and enjoyment of our community.

Attack the character or damage the reputation of other users, including but not limited to the use of name-calling, insults, ridicule, harassment, and mockery, or otherwise assaulting other community members.

Insult, attack, belittle, or ridicule the beliefs and life choices of other users, or tell others what they should believe or how they should live.

Create a screen name to hide your identity and violate our guidelines.

Post or link to inappropriate content. Inappropriate content is anything XYZ Corp. deems obscene or vulgar, including graphic images or stories.

Post anything you don't have the right to publish or violate any copyright or other proprietary rights in your posts. That includes excerpting published articles without the author or owner's permission.

Transfer issues or posts from this blog to another with the intention of drawing negative attention to the post. In addition, don't quote someone else's comment from another blog without that person's permission and refrain from directing people to controversial or problematic comments on other blogs.

"Hit and run." Please don't comment to a posting where you wouldn't ordinarily, simply to point out the wrongness of another poster or group's actions, beliefs, or comments.

Use all capital letters in your comments.

Flood. This includes repeatedly "bumping" a comment, disrupting a discussion via comments by entering the same phrase over and over again, or otherwise using up bandwidth.

Post on behalf of a banned user. This is grounds for immediate banning of the blog without notice or warning.

## **Violations of These Guidelines**

If you violate the Code of Conduct, you will be contacted individually by XYZ Corp. Your actions may result in a warning, suspension, or permanent banning from participation in any XYZ Corp. online community. We do not publicly discuss or announce warnings, suspensions, or bannings.

Banning is done at the XYZ Corp.'s discretion and is the result of our sole judgment of a user's demonstrated inability or disinclination to follow our guidelines. We reserve the right to ban any user at any time for any reason with or without warning.

If a comment is posted that violates any these guidelines, but contains information that is useful to the original poster or other members of the site, it may be edited or locked. However, if in our sole judgment, a comment was deemed to be created for the purpose of violating the guidelines, violates enough guidelines to be irredeemable, or contains no otherwise useful information, it may be removed.

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*Please note this sample blogging policy was printed and modified with permission from the author. Also, the sample blogging policy is meant to provide a good starting point for organizations in need of establishing a similar process. However, each individual blogging or social media policy should ultimately fit the particular needs of the organization.*



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