

## **Blog, Schmog: What Is This Internet Phenomenon and What Can It Do for Me?**

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### **What is a Blog?**

A blog, short for "weblog," is essentially an online diary. A blogger, the author of the blog, writes a short paragraph or two about a topic, a website he or she has discovered, or just random thoughts. These writings, called "posts," appear in the author's blog in website format and in reverse chronological order, so that the most recent post is always at the top of the web page. It is typical for a blogger to post once a day, although some bloggers post multiple times a day and some post very rarely.

### **What can Blogs do for Me?**

Because law blogs, generally referred to as "blawgs," tend to be created around a specific area of law or a specific part of the legal system, the blog's author can become known as *the* expert in that area. The articles written for a blog may promote credibility with potential clients and colleagues.

Beyond marketing and attracting clients, a blog can also give a boost to an attorney's or a law firm's website. Websites that are updated frequently tend to place higher in search engine results. This gives blogs a distinct advantage over static websites.

### **How do I Start My Own Blog?**

Blogs are easy to create and use. To become a blogger, one does not need to know how to write HTML, create graphics, or program software.

If you have your own website already, you may want to use blogging software that runs on your web server. There are many free, open source programs such as Greymatter and b2Evolution. If you or someone in your information technology department has the ability to tweak a few files on your web server, you can make your first post in about 30 minutes. If this seems too complicated, you can use a free, hosted blog at someplace like <http://www.blogger.com> or <http://www.livejournal.com>. With blog hosting websites, your setup will be no more complicated than filling out a web form that will have you blogging within minutes. Both blog software and blog hosts come with default templates which alleviate the need to know how to design web pages or create graphics.

No matter what your role in the blogosphere, this newest addition to the world wide web can offer you a wealth of information and the ability to connect with colleagues and clients alike.