Marketing Your Legal Practice Using Social Media

Going Small or Solo

Massachusetts Bar Association Law Practice Management Section at the Boston University School of Law David Harlow JD MPH
THE HARLOW GROUP LLC

March 23, 2009



MASSACHUSETTS BAR ASSOCIATION

Serving the legal profession and public since 1911



"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

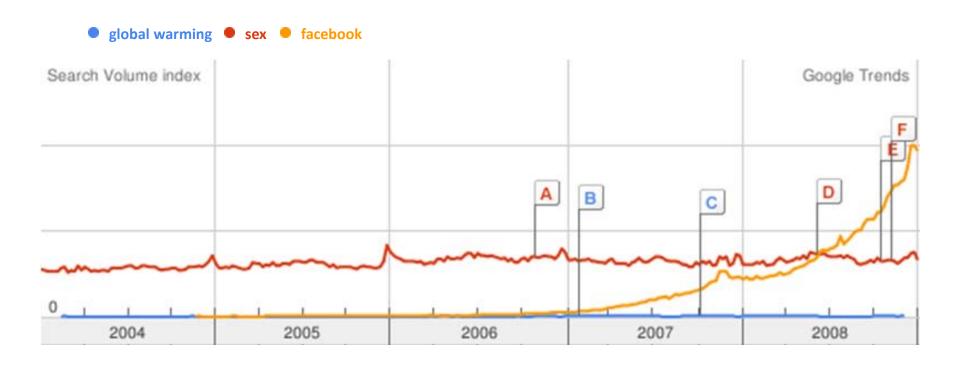
Web 2.0 - the great equalizer

- Interactive
- User-generated content
- Not "broadcasting"
- Dialogue
- Valuable as a networking and marketing "channel"
- "Social Media"

Four key social media tools

- Blog, or Blawg
- Twitter
- Linked In
- Facebook
- Remember, the medium is *not* the message
- Social media strategy must fit in with remainder of marketing strategy
 - Depends on your target audience
 - E.g., new media startups vs. insurance companies

Social media popularity: Google Trends



I saw this illustration recently and recreated it. Let me know if you know who came up with it.

What is a blawg?

- Legal web log = law blog = blawg
 - Blog: online journal, posted in reverse chronological order
- Blog: a manifestation of Web 2.0
 - Not static
 - Interactive
 - Links
 - Comments
 - RSS: Really Simple Syndication ("push" technology)

Why blog?

- PR/marketing for your practice and yourself
- Improved web presence (Google loves blogs)
- Networking
 - Other bloggers
 - Readers
 - Referral sources
 - Clients
- Marketing
 - Higher Google profile ______ more press calls

How to blog

- Pick a niche and start writing
 - And don't stop . . . commitment matters
 - You will find your voice . . . or several voices
 - Don't do this unless you really like writing and have something to say
 - But don't be put off by the fallacy: "If I'm thinking it, then everyone must be thinking it."
 - Begin publicizing after writing several posts
- Read voraciously
- Join the conversation
 - Comment on, and link to, other blogs

Learning the ropes

- Read other blogs
 - Find them via directories, e.g.:
 - Blawg.com
 - · Justia.com
 - ABA Journal
 - · myHq:blawgs
 - Read <u>Blawg Review</u> and posts from other blog carnivals (<u>definition</u>) (<u>examples</u>) and follow the links
 - Subscribe to blogs using a feed reader, e.g.:
 - Bloglines
 - Google Reader
 - FeedDemon

Technical stuff

- Blogging infrastructure
 - Choose a platform
 - DIY
 - Typepad
 - <u>Blogger</u>
 - Wordpress
 - Others
 - Hosted, designed, optimized
 - Justia
 - <u>LexBlog</u>

More technical stuff

- Syndication
 - Tune into the magic of RSS "really simple syndication" for your <u>feed</u>
 - Register with <u>Feedburner</u>
 - "Push" technology
 - Email subscriptions for the dinosaurs out there
- Ping: let Google and others know you've posted
- Track readership
 - Track reactions and links with <u>Technorati</u>
 - Freshness counts
 - Track incoming traffic with <u>StatCounter</u> or <u>SiteMeter</u>
 - SEO: Adjust writing based on this information

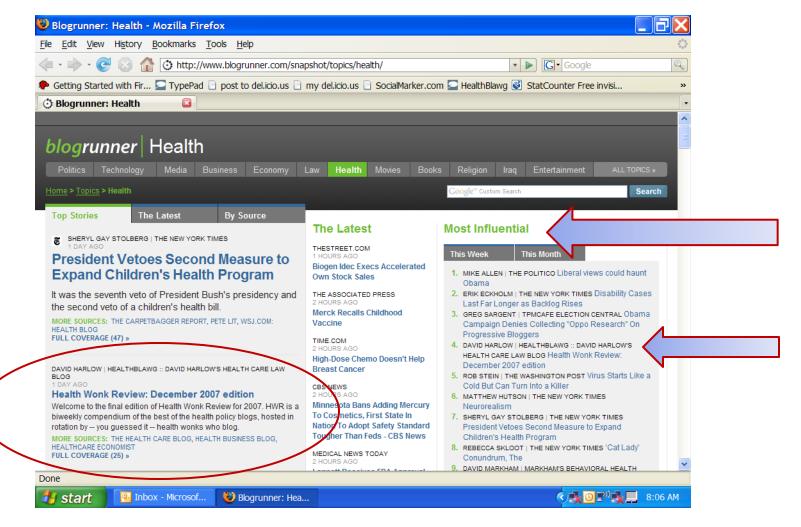
Blog carnivals ("traveling posts")

- Participate in blog carnivals (<u>definition</u>)
 - Submit posts
 - Host carnivals
- General and specialized; legal and non-legal
 - See <u>BlogCarnival.com</u>

Blog carnivals (cont'd)

- Blog carnivals I contribute to and/or host
 - Blawg Review
 - Health Wonk Review
 - Grand Rounds
- Others:
 - Carnival of the Capitalists
 - Cavalcade of Risk

Blog carnival juice in action



Google juice in action

which will be overseen by Goodroe Healthcare Solutions, LLC.

www.healthpointcapital.com/research/2008/08/14/oig_approves_gainsharing _program_for_ortho_and_spine/ - 22k - Cached - Similar pages

OIG

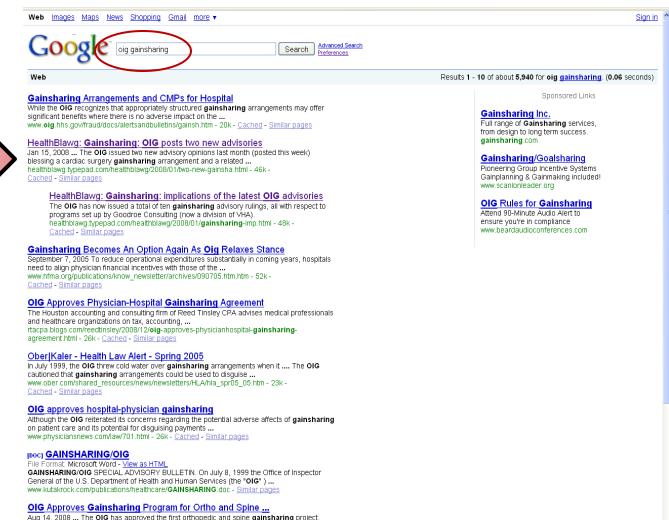
Health

Blawg

HFMA

Ober

Kutak



Maintaining a blog

- Content is king
 - Add something to the discourse
- Every link to your blog on another site improves Google Page Rank and can help draw more visitors
 - Link to others in blogroll and text; others will link to you
 - Social bookmarking services
 - Give readers easy access
 - Ex: Add This
 - You can submit posts yourself
 - Tool: <u>SocialMarker</u>

From blogging to microblogging

• Twitter

- Microblogging platform -- 140 character limit per post
- Over 3 million registered users, including big business and lawyers from solos to Am Law 200
- "Broadcast" vs. interactive
 - Can be used for one-way communication
 - More effective as medium for conversation
- Networking and communication tool

Using Twitter effectively

- Need to establish tactics that further your marketing strategy, e.g.:
 - Broadcast blog posts
 - "Tweet" information/links not worth a whole blog post or that you have no time to blog about
 - Follow other "tweeple" or "twits" of interest
 - Engage in dialogue public or private with other twits
- Again, you need to have an overarching marketing strategy to ensure that you remain as focused and effective as possible

Some Twitter tools

- To find other tweeple to follow:
 - <u>Twellow</u> (index organized a la the original Yahoo!)
 - <u>Twubble</u>, <u>MrTweet</u> (once you're following some)
 - JD Scoop list of 500+ twittering lawyers
 - <u>Legal Birds</u> aggregator (Justia blog provider)
 - <u>LexTweet</u> aggregator (LexBlog blog provider)
- To follow tweeple without being overwhelmed by the volume; lets you assign tweeple to groups
 - TweetDeck
- Twitter on the go
 - <u>TwitterBerry</u> or <u>iTweet</u>

Some Twitter tools (cont'd)

- Integrate tweets into other social media
 - I usually tweet via Ping.fm
 - configured to post to <u>Twitter</u>, <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Linked</u>
 In.
 - I feed my blog through <u>Twitterfeed</u>, so post titles end up in my "twitterstream" with links back to the blog.
- Increases my blog posts' and tweets' exposure

Facebook and Linked In

- Online networking communities
- Leverage your network to avoid cold calls
- Allow you to feed content to their sites, including
 - RSS feeds of blogs
 - Tweets
- Allow you to remain top-of-mind

Facebook

- Personal pages and business pages
 - Personal pages access may be limited to "friends"
 - Business pages open to all
 - Examples:
 - <u>David Harlow</u> and <u>The Harlow Group LLC</u>
- Turned "friend" into a verb
- Useful platform for communication with defined groups and friends

Linked In

- <u>Linked In</u> "Facebook for grownups"
 - Allows for exploration of contacts' networks
 - Useful in avoiding cold calling
 - Includes Q&A forums to demonstrate expertise
 - Adding functionality mimicking Facebook
 - Groups
 - Feeds
 - Slideshare

Resources

- <u>Electronic Frontier Foundation: Legal Guide for Bloggers</u>
- Bob Coffield's *Health Care Law Blog* post: <u>Healthcare Blogging and Web 2.0</u>
- Twitter for Lawyers on HealthBlawg
- Darren Rowse's <u>TwiTips</u>.
- My Web 2.0 sites:
 - HealthBlawg
 - <u>HealthBlawg</u> on Twitter
 - Linked In
 - Facebook

Questions / Discussion

David Harlow JD MPH THE HARLOW GROUP LLC

www.harlowgroup.net
www.healthblawg.typepad.com
www.twitter.com/healthblawg
david@harlowgroup.net
617.965.9732