

Are Legal Blogs Dead?

15 new legal blogs prove the blawgosphere is alive and kicking.

By Robert J. Ambrogi

A direct quote from a lawyer, in 2002: "I can see the amusement value in these things, but I can't see how they are of any use in a law practice."

He was referring to blogs. That was at a time when the number of law-related blogs was still small, and when many blawgers were still finding their sea legs. (It was also the year the word "blawg" was coined, its origin credited to blogger Denise Howell.)

Eight years later, blogs have firmly established their usefulness in law practice. A blog such as SCOTUS blog, www.scotusblog.com, demonstrates the gold standard of what a blog can be, having become the preeminent resource on all things Supreme Court.

But if what goes around comes around, I am now hearing murmurs that blogs are dead — or at least dying — within the legal profession.

The universe of blogs has become too crowded, too noisy, and too cluttered with spam to have any value, some say. Services such as Twitter and Facebook are easier, more direct and more personal, they contend.

So I come today to declare blogging alive, well and thriving within the legal profession. As evidence, I could refer you to any number of established blogs such as the one I already mentioned. But the future is foretold by what is new, so allow me to highlight some recently launched blogs, all of which show the continuing vitality of the medium. (My listing is alphabetical, not preferential.)

- **AOTUS**, <http://blogs.archives.gov/aotus>. AOTUS stands for archivist of the United States, and this is his blog. The current archivist is David Ferriero. His job and that of the agency he runs, the National Archives and Records Administration, is to protect and preserve the records of the federal government. What does that entail? Read his blog and find out.

- **California Corporate & Securities Law**, www.calcorporatelaw.com. Keith Bishop, a partner with

the California law firm Allen Matkins, covers California securities laws and regulations, corporate governance, the California Department of Corporations, the California Public Employees' Retirement System, the California Secretary of State, pending legislation and rulemaking, quirky California laws, and other topics.

- **CaseClothesed**, www.caseclothesed.com. If blogging is fashionable, this blog makes fashion law bloggable. Created, edited and run by students at New York Law School, it covers fashion law and offers legal perspectives on developments in the fashion industry.

- **Crime in the Suites**, <http://crimeinthesuites.com>. From the Washington, D.C., Ifrah Law Firm, this blog covers white-collar crime, Department of Justice enforcement, federal sentencing and similar topics. Contributors include the firm's founding partner, Jeff Ifrah, and several associates.



- **First One @ One First**, <http://f11f.wordpress.com>. Call me late to the party. Although this is my first time writing about this blog, it has already been mentioned in *The New York Times* and the *ABA Journal* and on National Public Radio, to name but a few places. Georgetown 3L Mike Sacks started it in January with this introduction: "This semester, I have no morning classes. As such, I will be taking advantage of living only minutes from the Supreme Court to pursue a rather unorthodox extracurricular activity: reporting from the court as the first one in line at One First Street." This he did — and did well. Now, the semester is over, but the blog continues.

- **Government Contracts Legal Forum**, www.governmentcontractslegalforum.com. From the law firm Crowell & Moring, this blog provides news and commentary on legal issues relating to government contracts. With nearly a dozen contributors from the firm's government contracts group, the blog covers such issues as the False Claims Act, cost accounting, public-private partnerships and General Services Administration schedule contracting.

- **In Custodia Legis**: Law Librarians of Congress, <http://blogs.loc.gov/law>. Launched early in August by the Law Library of Congress, this blog features a team of bloggers writing about current legal trends in the U.S. and elsewhere, developments and enhancements to the "Thomas" legislative research service, and cultural intelligence and the law.

- **Internet and E-commerce Law Blog**, www.internetecommercelaw.com. Since 2005, California solo lawyer David Johnson has written the well-regarded Digital Media Lawyer Blog. This March, he moved his practice to Epstein, Becker & Green in San Francisco. Soon after, he transformed his former blog into this new one.

- **Just Books**, www.brennancenter.org/content/pages/JustBooks. The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law launched this unique site in April, "dedicated to justice, books

and ideas." Part blog, part literary review, Just Books features reviews, criticism, essays and excerpts contributed by a range of prominent writers.

- **Law Firm Transitions**, www.lawfirmtransitions.com, and **Legal Vendor Advisory**, www.legalvendoradvisory.com. Here are two blogs launched this summer by principals of the legal marketing firm Legal Vertical Strategies, both focused on how the legal industry can improve the delivery of legal services.

Law Firm Transitions, written by Debra Baker, addresses the issue from the perspective of law firms. Legal Vendor Advisory, written by Cathy Kenton, addresses companies that offer products and services to legal professionals.

- **Legal Divas Blog**, www.legaldivasblog.com. Four women partners with Bowman and Brooke write this blog focused on diversity law. It is intended as a resource for women in law and other professions to keep them up to date on best practices, benchmarking, current issues and trends that impact women in leadership, business and law.

- **LobbyBlog.com**, <http://lobbyblog.com>. This new blog targets Washington, D.C., lobbyists, providing news and information on ethics, campaign finance, pay to play, and other lobbying issues. It is published

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by Lobbyists.info, a website with various resources related to federal lobbying and lobbying compliance.

- **Trademarks + Brands**, www.trademarksand

brands.com. Launched by the trademark research company CT Corsearch, this trademark blog is intended to be a resource for industry best practices, expert opinions and news. Topics it covers include trademark infringements, industry buzz, vertical happenings, unique marks and major events.

- **The ZRG Blog**, <http://zimmermansguide.wordpress.com>. For roughly a decade, legal researcher Andrew Zimmerman has published *Zimmerman's Research Guide*, <http://law.lexisnexis.com/info/pro/zimmermans>, an online encyclopedia for legal researchers. At long last, he has launched this blog to keep his readers informed of updates to the guide.

I have no idea how many law-related blogs exist. I doubt anyone can say for certain. But these blogs show that there is always room for new ideas or for novel approaches to established topics.

With new and clever blogs continuing to emerge, it would seem that reports of blogging's death have been greatly exaggerated. **LTN**

Robert J. Ambrogi is a Massachusetts lawyer and media consultant. He writes the blogs LawSites and Media Law. E-mail: ambrogi@legalline.com.

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