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## Beware Of Bloglash

By [Dawn Wagenaar](#) on May 17, 2008 @ 2:53 pm in [Law Associates](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

An early adopter and tracker of legal blogs (or blawgs), William Gratsch estimates that there are now more than 2,000 law-related blogs since they began to sprout about six years ago. As you probably know, blog content is now becoming admissible as evidence in some court cases. The media are quoting blogs, and people are using them to talk across the globe.

While communicating online might be as natural to you as texting on your cell phone, it's easy to develop a false sense of security in the vast reaches of cyberspace. Blogs are informal means of communication compared to articles or white papers, but anything you say in a blog may still be held against you in a court of law or a job interview.

Frequent bloggers have developed some "do's and don'ts" that reflect what type of blogging is appreciated and what is annoying. One of the primary rules of blogging is to spread the love. Blogging has always been about building community and sharing knowledge, so there is a proper way to participate if you want to enhance rather than hurt your career.

### Join The Conversation But Be Considerate

We encourage our clients to comment on industry-related blogs. If they find a post that they like or one with which they disagree, posting a comment is welcome if it adds to the base of knowledge or perspective. Don't just say, "I agree." A helpful or insightful comment can build name recognition and positive exposure for you and your firm.

Include your name with comments at the very least, then your firm email address and website if allowed by the firm. This encourages feedback from other legal professionals or referral sources. The more thoughtful and frequent your comments, the faster you can build an online power base of industry colleagues. Don't forget the blogs of referral sources such as financial advisors and accountants.

Like bios, blogs can tell you valuable information about people before you meet them.

Phrase your comments so their tone matches that of the blog. If the blog has a fairly serious tone, keep your comments to the point. If the tone has playful or humorous tone, play along. Although some say that blogs don't have to adhere to every grammatical rule, we recommend avoiding slang, bad language and typos unless it's clear that you mean to be informal.

### Relevance Matters And Spam Slams

There is a difference between mentioning your firm and spreading spam. First of all, any mention of your firm or services should be relevant to the post or other comments. The same is true for posting links. Make sure it fits the audience. You wouldn't post a comment about your law firm on a blog about easy-to-prepare desserts any more than you would want comments about Jell-O on your blog.

Look for topics among the posts that fit your experience or practice area so you can provide a natural response just as you would to an email. Bloggers who know their etiquette will usually respond to you with a thank you or a request for more information.

It is also acceptable to refer to your firm's blog if the information is relevant to the audience. In fact, add value to your own blog research by recommending sites that your firm blog should check out or flag as favorites. Better yet, offer to write a post for the firm blog; you can provide a list

about other blogs that are great for associates or various practice areas. You could write about the benefits of legal blogs for trends and networking opportunities. Even if the blog is written by one attorney in your firm, it doesn't hurt to ask.

Plus, from a marketing perspective, your blog should offer insights from a variety of people at different levels of your firm. This makes it more interesting and dynamic. It's also easier to maintain regular posts; fresh content supports search engine rankings.

### **Create A Workable Blog Strategy**

Although you can spend hours on blogs, it's advisable to set aside just 10-15 minutes every couple days for non-billable blog networking. Check back and see how others have commented on a post or responded to your comments.

If you come across an interesting post or comment, pass it around to your boss or colleagues for their enjoyment or follow-up. At the very least, the post could result in an interesting discussion. Or it could lead to a strategic connection for firm training, marketing or new business down the road.

One final note: keep track of the bloggers you admire and the commentators who add value to the discussion. Like any networking opportunity, blogs can connect you to future opportunities that you can't imagine right now. Be impeccable in the blogosphere to enhance your sphere of influence.

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