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The legal scholarship of blogs

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If you’ve ever felt the need to share your opinions with the world, then blogs just may provide you with the global audience you’ve been longing for. Geoff Sharp surfs the wave of the future and finds out the skinny on blawging.

In 2006, Time Magazine’s ‘Person of the Year’ was You!

“To be sure, there are individuals we could blame for the many painful and disturbing things that happened in 2006… But look at 2006 through a different lens and you’ll see another story, one that isn’t about conflict or great men.

It’s a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before… It’s about the many wrestling power from the few… The tool that makes this possible is the World Wide Web.

Who are these people? Seriously, who actually sits down after a long day at work and says… I’m going to blog about my state of mind or the state of the nation or the steak-frits at the new bistro down the street? Who has that time and that energy and that passion?”

Well… clearly many people.

About 175,000 new blogs are created each and every day, and in America alone over 57 million adults read them. But why should lawyers spend time reading blogs if we aren’t interested in the local bistro or the machinations of a love-struck teenager?

Time to keep up; according to American Lawyer, law blogs, or blawgs as they have become known, moved up the food chain in 2006 to be mainstream:

“The most compelling, cutting edge, honest legal writing being produced out the skinny on blawging.

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Welcome to the new world

It’s a world where open access and disintermediation rules; it’s all right there for you at the click of a button. No legal publishers, no editors, no editorial boards; nothing between you and useful, often times entertaining, material.

To get you started, I’ve included a selection of blawgs in this article. If you find a blog that is of interest to you, look for its ‘blogroll’. A blogroll is a list of blogs (often sitting to one side of the post) that the author is reading, and will often include like-minded material that is worth exploring.

But if all that is information overload, you can do no better than visit Blawg Review, a must-read blog posted every Monday that reviews the best of the previous week’s legal blog posts, and which can be found at http://blawgreview.blogspot.com/index.html.

The good ol’ Kiwi blawger

As you read this, there will no doubt be moves afoot to begin blogging by some in our legal community in 2007. It will be interesting to observe the New Zealand profession’s attitude to this new form of legal scholarship, and what readership levels can be achieved by the leaders that emerge.

If we follow the US example, we may even see our large law firms dabbling in the legal blogosphere; however, for those with such aspirations, we can expect much angst around the partnership table when it comes time to consider the firm’s investment needed to maintain a popular blog, how it can be made profitable, and the potential organisational risk of what is inherently an individual pursuit.

For those that do take the leap, you better read a recent blog post primer on keeping your law firm safe in the blogosphere: As Blogging Grows, So Does Its Do’s and Don’ts, by Washington DC firm Kelley Drye Collier Shannon http://www.law.com/jsp/legaltechnology/pubArticleL.jsp?id=1171620175568.

A tour of the legal blogosphere

To navigate this vast, and in some cases unmapped, landscape it makes sense to organise your tour into some sort of taxonomy. Geoff offers just a small selection of the sometimes hundreds of blogs falling into the following categories;

Legal specialty blogs organised by subject matter, e.g. tort, IP etc

Jurygeek – jury issues, jury research, jury verdicts http://www.jurygeek.blogspot.com/

Insurance Scrawl – the law of insurance, the insurance of business, and the business of insurance http://insurancecscrawl.com/about.html

Naked Law – UK technology law laid bare by Cambridge lawyers http://nakedlaw.typepad.com/

Pharmalawg – by NZ lawyer Richard Best providing those in the pharmaceutical sector with an alternative source of summaries and comment on judicial, regulatory, legislative, and policy developments http://www.pharmalawg.com/

Lawyer blogs

Human Law by UK barrister Justin Patten – law, technology and people http://www.human-law.org/


Home Office Lawyer – for the solo lawyer or small office http://gdgrifflaw.typepad.com/home_office_lawyer/

The Barrister Blog – written by the barristers of 1 Temple Gardens http://timkevan.blogspot.com/

Trial Lawyer Resource Centre – the blog where a number of the USAs top trial attorneys join together http://www.tlrcblog.com/

How Appealing – devoted to appellate litigation http://howappealing.law.com/

Slaw – a cooperative blog on Canadian legal research and IT http://www.slaw.ca/
If you or your clients have registered Financing Statements on the PPSR they may need to be renewed.

Unless renewed, a security interest registered on the PPSR will automatically expire at a date and time which is five years after the Financing Statement was registered (or at an earlier date where a lesser term has been specified in the Financing Statement). A Financing Statement will need to be renewed before it expires to maintain its priority.

When do Financing Statements Expire?
To help keep track of when registered Financing Statements are due to expire you can create reports on the PPSR for free. Simply access the PPSR, select Miscellaneous from the left hand menu and select the Financing Statement List. Remember, to do this you will need the Secured Party Group ID and password.

Financing Statement List
This report lists:
• All Financing Statements due to expire in a specified date range; and
• All Financing Statements registered in a specified date range.
This report can be displayed in excel format within a browser window or sent as a PDF attachment by email.

What is Needed Before Renewing Financing Statements?
Before renewing, you will need to have the following details:
• User ID and Password – to Logon to the website
• Secured Party Group ID and Password – to identify the Secured Party
• Financing Statement Registration Number and PIN – to identify the Financing Statement

To retrieve a lost ID or Password go to the Contact Us section on the PPSR website. Lost access information will be sent to an email address for the secured party which is listed in the Financing Statement.

How to Renew Financing Statements?
1) Renew via the PPSR Website (www.ppsr.govt.nz)
   - Use the renewal tool on the PPSR Registration menu [Financing Statements - Maintain Financing Statements - Renew]
2) Contact your PPSR Service Provider

What Does it Cost?
The prescribed renewal fee applies; please refer to the PPSR website for a current fee schedule

Where to Get More Information?
Call our Contact Centre toll free on 0508 777 746 (0508 PPSR INFO), use our Contact Us service within the Information Library or ask your PPSR service provider.
Remember: Financing Statement will need to be renewed before it expires to maintain its priority.