

## **To blog or not to blog**

*Newsweek* prints a weekly scorecard of the best and worst blogs. Newspapers quote bloggers on their editorial pages. Clearly, blogs have gone mainstream. Should your nonprofit join in?

Blogs, or Web logs, are online, chronological diaries that generally are frequently updated. Early blogs featured individuals posting their personal musings, but more nonprofits and for-profit corporations are including blogs in their communication strategies.

### **In its favor**

To determine whether a blog makes sense for your organization, consider these points in their favor:

***Immediacy.*** Because the underlying technology is as simple as typing a message and clicking a button to post, blogs are one of the most immediate types of communication vehicles. There's no Webmaster or designer to involve, and no lost time in printing and mailing. People who subscribe to your blog will receive immediate updates when you refresh your content.

***Intimacy.*** Blog entries can give your communications a personal touch. Instead of sounding like a standard marketing pitch, a blog entry can — and should — be conversational, allowing readers to connect on a personal level.

***Demographics.*** A blog can be an excellent tool if you want to capture the attention of an affluent or young audience. In their 2005 “Behaviors of the Blogosphere” study, Internet information provider comScore Networks found that regular blog readers were significantly more likely to live in wealthy households and be younger than the average Web user.

***Dialogue.*** Most blogs offer readers a place to comment on posted messages, which can be a great way to get feedback. However, you need to be ready for all kinds of comments — positive and negative — and prepared to respond to them.

### **On the other hand**

There are also potential drawbacks to starting a blog, including:

***Time commitment.*** Most blog readers expect content to be updated daily or weekly. If you can't commit to one post a week for the next several months, a blog may not be the ideal tool for your organization.

***Control.*** If you accept comments on your blog, you must allow people to speak their minds. Although you can delete offensive comments, the leaders in your organization need to understand that you won't be controlling the entire conversation.