



Race Track Industry Program

**33rd ANNUAL  
SYMPOSIUM ON RACING & GAMING**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2006**

**THE BLOG: NEW MEDIA MONSTER?**

Moderator:

Bob Wolff, Vice President-Public Relations, Robert Brandt & Associates

Speakers

Dr. Nora Ganim Barnes, Chancellor Professor of Marketing, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

Stephen W. Dittmore, Assistant Professor, Sport Management Department, East Stroudsburg University

David Rubin, Blogger, Your Average Horseplayer

**MR. DOUG REED:** Welcome again. Good morning. It's always that last morning when you start drifting in here and it's a little slower, we wind down. For me this week is like a flash of lightning, all the work leading up to it and then for it to go by is too quick for me. I hate it in some ways. So many friends of mine come here and I don't get to visit with all of you enough.

First of all, I just want to announce we've made changes in the video and there are DVDs available of the sessions and they are of much higher quality that we have had in the past. You can get a form at the registration office if you want to purchase any. If you go home and forget, you can download the form on the Web site. And you if you want to look at the quality of the videos, in the foyer, if you are interested in the sessions, they are available for purchase; and months later, the transcripts will be available, but that's quite a chore.

Immediately following the panel, stay for a few minutes. The Horseplayer Magazine is going to make an announcement. They had a contest, "Blog Your Way To A Job," and they are going to come up and announce the winner of that contest after the session.

One other announcement, out in the foyer between 9:30 and 11:30 — in the breaks between the next couple sessions — are students that have done their projects for next semester, showcasing them in a poster session. They are listed in the program, and stop by and visit with the students and see the work they have done. I think there will be some projects of interest to a variety of you.

And again, I want to thank the sponsors. Last night we had a great reception sponsored by Mountaineer Racetrack & Gaming Resort.

To close out our refreshment breaks, the breakfast this morning was provided by Equibase; this panel session is sponsored by Canterbury Park; and our refreshments afterwards, sponsored by TVG. I want to thank our sponsors.

Well, our next speakers — we thought we would do something different. We've been talking about regulation and gaming and track surfaces and things like that. We're going to change the menu and bring you new content.

I think we have an exciting panel assembled here, academics, bloggers, racetrackers, PR people. We have a good variety right here.

I'd like to introduce the moderator. Bob Wolff and I go way back. Bob is currently the vice president of public relations for Robert Brandt & Associates. It's nice having Bob here. He worked for Arlington Park, Maywood, Dairyland. He assisted WMS Gaming. He has everything but the quarter horse aspect here. Bob, if you want to come out here to the Southwest sometime, I'll introduce you to the quarter horses.

But we've got a multi-breed, multi-species expert in the pari-mutuel industry. He worked 12 years at Arlington. He and I worked together two years at Arlington; we worked through the Arlington fire and the Miracle Million. It's great to have Bob here, not only with his PR expertise, but also racing and gaming expertise. Please welcome Bob Wolff as your moderator today. And, Bob thanks for coming; and thank you, speakers.

**(Applause)**

**MR. BOB WOLFF:** Thank you, Doug. And good morning everyone. Welcome to Tucson. Unfortunately, we all have to leave and get back to colder weather.

Before I get started I wanted to send the thanks back to Doug for the invitation to handle this panel today. And before I get started, I'd like a round of applause for Doug and Wendy and Steve and the rest of the staff from the University of Arizona. I've been involved in a lot of conferences and professional presentations, and this is truly one of the best. Doug, congratulations.

I've been here since Tuesday night and catching up on some of the conversations and panel discussions. I've seen some of you out there, and a lot of people were wondering about this panel today. And some of you were wondering, what the hell is a blog?

And that's what we have, these three people to answer that question today. And before we get any further, a show of hands. Can you tell me if any of you have read a blog or if you write blogs? Don't be shy. This is not a Dr. Phil confessional

show.

Okay, that's great.

And how many of you actually write blogs?

Dave, there's your audience. So today we're going to talk about blogs, specifically business blogs. And joining me is a wonderful group of people here. Doug and I actually stole an idea.

As Doug said, we worked together at Arlington Park. One of our mentors was Joe Joyce, the former president of Arlington, who died last week. And Joe was a master at this. He would speak before conferences and symposiums, and he always did it with great eloquence. And I asked him one time, "Mr. Joyce, how do you get away with this? How do you do this so well?"

And he said, "I have a secret."

And I said, "What's that?"

And he said, "I surround myself with good people."

And I think that's what we have done today.

So to my immediate left, Dr. Nora Ganim Barnes. She is a professor of marketing at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth; a Ph.D. in Consumer Behavior from the University of Connecticut; worked as a consultant for many national and international companies; and published over 125 articles in academic and professional journals; and conducted one of the first research studies on blogging, which is what she is going to share with us today.

The man in the middle. He is not Michael Jordan, but in this business he might as well be. He is one of the very first bloggers. Dave Rubin — and that's what title he goes by, a blogger — the author of "Your Average Player" blog spot. And if any of you had the opportunity to go on the Web, especially during Breeders' Cup week, he was one of the first bloggers to be granted credentials for the Breeders' Cup at Churchill Downs this year.

The man on the end. Steve Dittmore, assistant professor in the Sports Management Department at East Stroudsburg University in Eastern Pennsylvania. He is also the coauthor of "Sport Public Relations: Managing Organizational Communications." Also a former sports administrative instructor at the University of Louisville and Wichita State University, and worked on the PR team involved with the Salt Lake Organizational Committee for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. So welcome to everybody.

Just before we go further, I'd like each of you to give a brief description of what you think a blog is. Nora, we'll start with you first.

**DR. NORA GANIM BARNES:** I think a blog is a cross between a Web site and a chat room.

**MR. DAVID RUBIN:** I think a blog is an opportunity for individuals to voice personal — it's a personal diary, an interactive personal diary.

**MR. STEPHEN W. DITTMORE:** I think an effective blog is a dialogue between whoever is authoring it and whoever the audience is and allows for feedback in a two-way form of communication.

**MR. WOLFF:** Wonderful perspectives, and I'll give an example. I can remember, Snakes on a Plane. Anybody see that movie earlier this year? I won't admit it either. It was a terrible movie. It was driven by blogs, a lot of dialogue was scripted by blogs, even the name of the movie they changed to Snakes on a Plane based on blogs.

So today we're basically in an information age. Used to be the industrial age, and it's been the information age for a number of years. Blogs have been around for five or six years, but red hot on a corporate level for the last year and a half, two years. More companies today are blogging than ever before: McDonald's, Microsoft, General Motors, Wal-Mart, even smaller companies. It's a great two-way marketing tool. It was the subject of a Time Magazine cover story this year. Business Week Magazine, they declared earlier this year, Blogs will change your business. It's not just your customers, involves employees, your vendors, involves other organizations tied into your business.

Blog influence is throughout society and especially in my world, the ad agency, creative world. Later this month and during the Super Bowl you are going to see two spots heavily influenced by blogs: The Doritos spot and a MasterCard spot. They both ran contests and the contest was driven by blogs. You'll see it later on.

You already have customers reading blogs and they are tuned into it. Forty percent of all Internet users read blogs, and blogs have no social or economic boundaries. It's a wide open world. On that note, I'm going to turn it over to Nora.

**DR. NORA GANIM BARNES:** Thank you.

Before I begin, I want to say thank you to Doug for inviting me to do the presentation and for being part of the panel. It's fun to be with other people that are interested in blogs, because I'm finding it nothing but fun.

It's really been great. One of the things that Doug asked me to do was tell you about some of the research done on blogs. There's not much of it. I think it's great when there's not much to learn, to catch up, so that was good.

The research, these are the latest studies. And you can see there's just a

handful, and they have been done by people from the Pew Internet people and some by Harris polls. And basically some of them look at Internet users to see if they are reading blogs, and some of them look at bloggers themselves to try to profile them.

I went through all of these and put them together for you into what I think makes them a little easier. But before I do that, this is one of the studies by Technorati — the largest search engine for blogs — puts out a "State of the Blogosphere" about every six months. And this was the last one that came out, and I thought some of the stuff was terrific and I wanted to share it.

Fifty seven million Web logs are tracked by Technorati. Think of that. Fifty seven million people have blogs right now. And, you know, lots of them are talking about their cats; but lots of them are talking about their business, too. That's why I'm here.

The blogosphere is over a hundred times bigger than it was just three years ago. If you can imagine something like that, there are more than two blogs created every second of every day. Those of us in marketing, the standard was always that one Barbie doll was sold every six seconds somewhere in the world. There's no marketing professor that hasn't quoted that. That was always the standard. Well, when you are bigger than Mattel's Barbie doll, I think that's pretty big.

Eighteen point six posts per second. Posts are those people writing things to their blogs to share, lots of conversation.

And I wanted to show you that the Japanese blog as much as we do. This fluctuates regularly. Sometimes they have the most, sometimes we do. It's us and the Japanese, basically that do blogging.

What's neat about this is, when something goes up on American blog and a Japanese blogger sees it they automatically translate it. And so we all now have the opportunity of going international, literally, in a matter of minutes.

When I did my first blog study it was picked up by American bloggers. I went to Technorati, I put in my name to see if anyone was talking about the study, and I would see a Japanese blog, which I couldn't read. It said, "Character character Nora, character character blog."

It was great. My work was translated into seven languages, none of which I speak; but by time the study was available, in 10 days, it traveled all over the world. That has implications for every business.

This is grand summary of what we know now from the blog research. Who blogs? We know it's everybody. Anybody can blog. Lots of business blogs are maintained by the CEO. And you have all heard about General Motors. The chairman has a blog, many famous CEOs have blogs, but lots of employees have blogs.

At Microsoft there are 3,000 blogs that people in the company run. Lots of that going on. And the newest job — and I'm promoting Dave today — blogmaster. It was cited by CNN as the number one new job of 2006. And a blogmaster is somebody similar to a Webmaster but The Wall Street Journal hired a blogmaster six months ago at \$75,000.

There have been blogmasters hired by many corporate firms to run their blogging expertise. They are building in businesses that are open to it. They post a lot, lots of conversation. Most of them don't have legal review, which means the posts don't get vetted by legal before they go up. Most of them monitor all the blogs, and most of them are very careful about being very transparent. So if they are an employee, they tell you they are an employee. So that's important.

Why do they blog? People tell us they blog, businesses tell us they blog because they want to participate in the conversation, have more interaction with their customers. And this idea of thought leadership comes up a lot. Lots of businesses want to set the tone for what's going on in their industry and they can do it this way.

How many people are blogging? I came to tell you, you're not behind. You are so not behind. While everyone is talking about blogs, the penetration of blogs into formal business is really not high. Right now about eight percent as of today, of the Fortune 500 blog. That's 40 out of 500. You are not behind. You are not behind.

We're doing new studies on the Inc 500. They are running about 17 percent. Again, this is something everyone is talking about in terms of: Do all businesses have blogs? Absolutely not.

Blogs take time, take commitment. You're going to see some of this now. I think I have the only study currently available where the top bloggers have actually gotten together to give advice to people. With that I'd like to show you my study called, "Behind the Scenes in the Blogosphere, Advice from Established Bloggers."

In this study we had 74 respondents. I went to business blog sites. If they had contact information, I sent an e-mail to the CEO and I said, I'm doing a blog study from the University of Massachusetts. I don't think there's anything like this. I need to give advice to businesses that don't have blogs. I need your help. Would you be in my study?

From those, 74 responded that they would help. One interesting thing, I do studies all the time. Most of the time nobody wants to be in my study.

But in this study not only did they want to be in it, they sent it to other people. I got e-mails saying, Buzz sent this to Janet and Janet sent it to Theresa and Theresa sent it to me, so can I be in it, too? Which is a whole new phenomena for me. Nobody wants to do that. It was great.

The biggest statistic I have is the second one. The average amount of time that the people in this study have blogged is two to three years. In this business, that makes them the old people. Of course, they are all about 12; nevertheless, these are the people blogging the longest. These are the people that were in at the beginning. These are the people doing corporate blogs when nobody else was and that's what separates the study and that's why I think the study got as much play as it did.

Two-thirds or more of these people had direct ties to businesses. They are some of the largest blogs. And over a third of these will come up in the top 10 Google search. So, for example, if you Googled "tech consulting firms," Gilbane Company would come up. The people that wrote "Naked Conversations." The people from iUpload, Hewlett Packard, IBM are in the study.

I don't know why but I was lucky. I think it was because it was a university study and they wanted to participate.

Even Mark Cuban wrote to me. He said, "I think it's great, I think you should do it. I don't have time to participate, but good luck."

So I just tell people Mark Cuban wrote to me. I don't say he wasn't in the study. I think it's cool.

In the end I call this "Blogosphere Truths." I call it that, out of the 74 of them that said all of these things, all of them said, tell people blogs take time. All of them said that. Blogs take time and commitment. Unless you are going to stick with it, put time into it, keep it up, don't get into it. A bad blog is worse than no blog.

They said blogs have to be part of a plan. A blog is not something where you wake up one morning and decide to drop into your marketing situation. It has to fit. It has to fit with who you are. Your Web site, your products, services, brochures, newsletters, all have to point to the blog. Your business cards should include the blog URL on them. So it has to be part of your marketing communications plan. It can't be out there by itself. If it is, it's never going to work for you. It's never going to do the things you need it to do.

A blog is a conversation. You will hear it over and over again. If you don't want to hear what people have to say about your product or industry, you should not have a blog; because they will tell you. And unless you have a thick skin and are open to hear it, this is not the way you want to go.

A blog must be authentic. In other words, don't try to play people on a blog, because they have their antenna up. You want to make sure what you are telling them is exactly what you have.

This was one of the questions in the study: How often do you reply to comments on your blog?

The first one, it says, "As they come in."

Everybody tells me those people need to get a life. If you look at the first three blogs: As they come in, daily, often. What you can see, bloggers are vigilant about answering and participating in these conversations.

This one says, is there a downside to having you blog? The two bars at the end. One says no; the other one says, it takes a lot of time. And so bloggers have this feeling that blogs are fabulous. It's a wonderful way to be in touch with people you can't be in touch with any other way, but it takes time.

And that was just a theme throughout this. This one says, does your packaging label or promotion point people to your blog? And you can see that even the corporations that have blogs, a third of them don't incorporate the blog with the rest of the marketing plan. These are big businesses and many of them still don't have the blog advertised on their Web site or other packaging materials.

I asked them how do they plan to grow and develop? And they said things like, encourage employees to blog. Even universities, the admissions department, are having student's blog so students that might be thinking about going to UMass can actually have a dialogue with a student from UMass on the admissions Web site. There's lots of places thinking about, how can the people part of my organization help me promote it through a blog? So that's going on.

Blogs serve as barrier breakers. You can literally introduce a new product at no cost. Think about this. It's like having a worldwide focus group. If you are thinking about putting out a new product, you can drop it on your blog and get all kinds of feedback. Not only from Americans, but literally from people all over the world. You don't have to go to another country, you don't have to hire a PR firm or marketing firm, you don't need translators, because the blogosphere does it itself. It's amazing.

Blogs will evolve. We asked bloggers what they plan to do next. They said they want to add podcasts, video. They want to add other features to their blogs that their blogs might not have now.

Growing the blog, we asked them, how do you make a blog big and successful? Their answer was blogger relations. By being good to other bloggers, linking to other sites, encouraging sites to link to you, and promoting your blog to get people to read it. Again, it is part of a marketing plan. Not just a nice little thing that we drop in, but something we pay a lot of attention to.

We asked them what they specifically wanted you to pay attention to or anybody that they were giving advice to. And they said these are the things you really have to know. They talked about tags and keywords. Somehow your blog has to be found by everybody. You want people to be able to Google whatever it is that you do and find you. So you need to pay attention. This is not a place to be

terribly creative or cute, this is a place to put those words that will bring people right to your doorstep.

Public policy, that's a big discussion now. Should you have a policy for your blog? For example, if someone writes in and uses profanity, will you post that? If someone writes in threats to the company or anybody in it, will you post that? If somebody writes negative comments, will you post that? All these things need to be considered and planned prior to launching a blog.

Everyone is saying, if you don't want a blog fine, don't have one. But if you are not at least listening to the conversation, if you are not at least finding out what people are saying about you and your competitors, you're missing the boat. Because 57 million people are talking and, yes, lots of them are talking about their cats.

But you know what? They are talking about printers, racetracks, talking about knitting, lots of things. And they may be talking about you. And so all you have to do is as simple as going to Technorati, typing the name of your business or your own name, and seeing if there's conversation going on so you can address it. The worst thing to happen is have the blogosphere about you and not participate in the conversation.

Competitive searches are important. And reviews. You need to decide is it okay for the person with a blog to write whatever they want back to people. Is that okay with you, or do you need to check it first? Keep in mind, anything reviewed takes another step and more time. So if it's got to go through legal before it goes to the blog, it's going to take more time to answer people.

Who responds to those that post, and you can see, again, we have CEO, top management, blogmasters, group blogs, many people, team blogs, it's anything you want. Blogs are flexible and you can set one up that works however you want it to work.

Am I out of time? Let me wrap it up.

Public policy, most blogs don't have one. The last part of this as a human factor, blogs are a human endeavor, readers form relationship with bloggers, communities formed, it's a very interactive, nice feeling. It puts you in connection with your consumers.

And the grand finale, blogs are not a fad. If you are not going to participate, at least listen. You can take baby steps, you can look at Technorati, listen, before you get in. You're not behind, it's easy to do. You can jump in any time you want, any way you want Thank you.

**(Applause)**

**MR. WOLFF:** Thanks, Nora. It was great information. We have a lot to talk about

in a limited time. So we still have built in time at the end of presentations for your questions as well. Most of the panel members — and I agree, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages for blogging. And one who has a completely vested interest is our next speaker, Dave Rubin.

**MR. DAVID RUBIN:** I love smart people, they are great, and I love numbers people, too. I'm not a numbers person, my handicapping skills don't revolve around numbers, I'm really not that good.

But I want to start by saying thank you to Doug and Steve and the Race Track Industry Program for inviting me here. Some thanks to Bob for sending e-mail and organizing us. And with that, lets see if this works.

Just to start, I blog as Rubin Bailey, it's my pseudonym. And I guess the genesis of that came when I started my blog two years ago. And to try to create that, it wasn't super, it was a little subconscious, the fact that people are familiar — they call me Dave, or more familiar, it's Rube or Rubin — so a natural progression of Rubin and one of the most well-known people in the industry, Jerry Bailey, nothing too scientific.

That's where I blog at, [www.averagehorseplayer.blogspot.com](http://www.averagehorseplayer.blogspot.com). And also part of what we call Thoroughbred Bloggers Alliance.

I started my blog in 2004, and around October 2005 a group of seven individual bloggers found each other and decided to combine forces and started the Thoroughbred Bloggers Alliance. And in 12 months, as of October 2006, we increased to 25 members. It's about a 300 percent increase in 12 months with members from around the world. I wanted to give you a sense of potential growth and what's out there.

The first part of my presentation is basically a group of slides and thoughts from what's called "The Cluetrain Manifesto." And Cluetrain started as an Internet site, a bunch of thoughts and ideas from people about Internet culture and ideology, what's going on in the brains of Internet marketplace.

For the next few minutes I'll read some slides and I hope you can clear your minds and really get into energies, some of the thought processes of what's going on the Internet.

We'll start with, markets are conversations. And markets consist of human beings, not demographic sectors. Conversations among human beings sound human. They are conducted in a human voice.

Whether delivering information opinions, perspectives, dissenting arguments or humorous asides, the human voice is typically open, natural and uncontrived. People recognize each other as such from the sound of this voice. The Internet is enabling conversations among human beings that were simply not possible in the era of mass media.

In both Internetworked markets and among Intranetworked employees, people are speaking to each other in a powerful new way. These network conversations are enabling powerful new forms of social organization and knowledge exchange to emerge. As a result markets are getting smarter, more informed, more organized. Participation in a networked market changes people fundamentally. People in networked markets have figured out that they get far better information and support from one another than from vendors.

It's kind of scary. There are no secrets. The networked market knows more than companies do about their own products. And whether the news is good or bad, they tell everyone.

Corporations do not speak in the same voice as these new networked conversations. To their intended online audiences companies sound hollow, flat and literally inhuman. Already, companies that speak in the language of the pitch or the dog and pony show are no longer speaking to anyone. Companies can now communicate with their markets directly. If they blow it, it could be their last chance.

Companies need to realize their markets, and competitors, are often laughing at them.

Companies need to lighten up and take themselves less seriously. They need to get a sense of humor. Getting a sense of humor does not mean putting some jokes on the corporate Web site. Rather, it requires big values, a little humility, straight talk, and a genuine point of view.

Most marketing programs are based on the fear that the market might see what's really going on inside the company. Learning to speak with a human voice is not a parlor trick. It can't be picked up at some tony conference, not that this is a tony conference.

To speak with a human voice, companies must share the concerns of their communities, but first, they must belong to a community.

Companies must ask themselves where their corporate cultures end. If their cultures end before the community begins, they will have no market. Human communities are based on discourse, on human speech about human concerns. But learning to speak in a human voice is not some trick, nor will corporations convince us they are human with lip service about listening to customers. They will only sound human when they empower real human beings to speak on their behalf.

The community of discourse is the market. Companies, and in this case an entire industry, that do not belong to a community of discourse will die. Markets want to talk to companies. Sadly, the part of the company a networked market wants to talk to is usually hidden behind a smokescreen of hucksterism, of language that rings false, and often is. Markets do not want to talk to flacks and

hucksters. They want to participate in the conversations going on behind the corporate firewall.

We want access to your corporate information, to your plans and strategies, your best thinking, your genuine knowledge. We will not settle for the four-color brochure, for Web sites chock-a-block with eye candy but lacking any substance. And I hope that one rings true for a lot of you out there, in the horse racing industry.

Your tired notions of the market makes our eyes glaze over. We don't recognize ourselves in your projections — perhaps because we know we're already elsewhere. When we have questions we turn to each other for answers. If you didn't have such a tight rein on your people, maybe they'd be among the people we'd turn to.

We know some people from your company. They are pretty cool online. Do you have any more like that you're hiding? Can they come out and play?

Networked markets are beginning to self-organize faster than the companies that have traditionally served them. Thanks to the Web, markets are becoming better informed, smarter, and more demanding of qualities missing from most business organizations. We like this new marketplace much better. In fact, we are creating it.

You're invited, but it's our world. Take your shoes off at the door. If you want to barter with us, get down off that camel.

That's basically the thought process. It doesn't just apply to the 25 horse racing bloggers, it applies more to the generation out there on the Internet and where we need to tap into.

The next part — over the past week I've met a lot people here, young and old. And they say, what do you do? Why are you here? And I say, I'm a blogger. And they say, what's a blog? So here's a couple of notes: A blog is a Web site where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. Blogs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject such as food, politics, horse racing or local news. Some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, audio, video, and links to other blogs, Web pages and other media related to its topic.

The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on photographs, Photoblog, videos, VLOG, or audio, podcasting, and are part of a wider network of social media.

So why blogs, why are they important?

Connection. They offer connection, tap into the community, and more

importantly they offer a connection to the community. I think that's something we need to focus on, connecting to a new community.

And blogs are the opportunity to connect to the market. And I would say, what is the market? The market is our demographic, is getting older. Not to be a negative guy, but they are dying off. We need to tap into the next generation of horseplayers and owners. Where will they come from? I'll get to it in a minute.

We have a quiz. So, a quick quiz. I want a show of hands. Who has heard of MySpace? How many of you have MySpace pages? How about YouTube? How many have posted to YouTube? Okay. And how many of you read Wired Magazine?

These, to me, are really important parts and things we need to be a part of and more educated about. These are all part of online social networking. That's the future of the industry. This is where the next generation is living. These are the things that your organization, your individual organization — whether you are Churchill Downs, Canterbury Park, the entire industry — this is what we need to know for the future and the growth. Here is a pretty good list of the different types of social media.

Are we using interns that might be in Facebook? You need to have a dot-com address. This is not a complete list, but if you don't know the majority of these, you need to do extra homework. This is where the future of the business is at.

Someone from your organization needs to own these specific targeted marketing initiatives. Ideally, however, it would be someone from outside the organization who can work/act as a consultant. More importantly, it's the concept of having autonomy, someone in control of these social networking initiatives.

There's a lot of negativity, and I could be a negative person. I will think half full. Here's a couple of quick, positive thoughts. I think it can be done.

Nora talked about numbers, how we are not behind. I take it from a more left-brain perspective and think that we are behind in the thought process. Maybe not the numbers, but from the show of hands from before in terms of how we participate in the social networking sites, we are behind. It can be done, it's just begun, let's not fall further behind. Let's be active participants.

Now is the time to implement the social networking initiatives such as blogging not just blogging, blogging is an important part and it's a great, simple way to start the resource and knowledge base are out there. And to continue on that positive note, this is from Business 2.0 in September.

The senior VP of digital operations, Martin Nisenholtz, New York Times said, "Internet revenue soared from \$49 million to \$66 million. We touch 25 or 26 million people a month and a very minimal number of them are technologically savvy. Our median age online is 44 or 45 years old, so we have to find ways to

bring people into the loop who don't know what a tag cloud is."

He continued in the article talking about the Gray Lady's online business strategy. And if you take these quotes and really internalize them, I think it can be pretty poignant.

"The executive committee of the company created a strategy that said we're in the business of convening communities here: We're not just in the business of pushing information at people." And I think finally what he said, "The New York Times is like a battleship. It turns slowly, but once it turns, look out."

And that's kind of the positive outlook I have for our industry. It's a big, slow-moving, older-school-thinking operation. Once we can start to turn, we're going to move it and it's going to be huge.

And finally, two thoughts I want you to walk away with. Have no fear in 2007, and don't be afraid to dip your marketing toe. These two thoughts, if you can walk out of here, leave with that, I'll be happy.

And thank you very much, and I look forward to the discussion afterward.

**(Applause)**

**MR. WOLFF:** Thank you, Dave.

As he mentioned, the media world, it's changing out there and the future really is online. If you've been reading in the news in the last couple months — most of your major daily newspapers, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia — they are undergoing a lot of change and a lot of chagrin. They are thinking hard about the futures right now, ad revenues are shrinking space and online revenues are rising.

You have to realize, newspapers have been the king of the printed word since Gutenberg invented the printing press. Thirty years ago, three-quarters of all 30-somethings read a daily newspaper, and now it's down to a third.

And the average audience for newspaper reader is 55. Which you can identify with the customers, whether it's a racing property or gaming property. There's a lot of change going on. More videos applied to various newspaper Web sites and more newspaper columnists are having their own blog so they have more two-way communication.

And a guy that knows that and has lived that very well is Steve Dittmore.

**MR. STEPHEN DITTMORE:** Hope I can live up to that. Thank you, Bob. I try to be a cross between Dave sitting and Nora roaming around. As a professor you don't sit, but I won't go in the crowd. It's not my style.

One of the perspectives that I bring, which is different than what we heard, my background is more in media relations. And working with media and assisting media when they cover sporting events. That's what I did for 10 years. I transitioned to academia and continued to follow the role of public relations in sports organizations while I teach sports administration courses.

My perspective stems from an article I wrote that ran in the Sports Business Journal in which I advocated that sports organizations consider accrediting bloggers as media to cover events. I do it only with qualifications. I don't encourage the person writing about their cats to be accredited to cover an event. Somebody like Dave, as Bob pointed out, covered the Breeders' Cup this year as a blogger. I encourage that, and I'll talk about that and look at what other aspects of the sports industry are doing.

One of the things we have done is try to define a blog. There was a pretty decent academic study done in 2004 that looked at blogs and defined them as diary-style Web sites.

What the researchers did, you have to keep it in mind they surveyed 3,800 blog readers, people that read blogs. Already you know where the results are probably going to go. What they found, of the blog readers, three-quarters believed blogs to be credible. Moderately to very credible.

Blog readers had different opinions about traditional forms of media. Newspapers, broadcast news, had a lesser degree of credibility with blog readers. One of the things that we wanted to do is try to look at a couple Web sites and look at organizational blogs in the sense of what some sports organizations are doing. And I have two different examples here.

One of the ones I wanted to reference here is a Web site done by Josh Rawitch, the public relations director for the Los Angeles Dodgers. He writes this dialogue read by Dodger fans and he writes things, I looked at it this morning in my room, and the post here from a long day, I didn't recall seeing it, it must have been late last night. He updates this thing at the wee hours of the morning, but he is talking to Dodger fans around the country as baseball winter meetings are taking place this week in Orlando, and explaining what is going on behind the scenes.

Yes, the Dodgers signed Jason Schmidt yesterday, they signed other people earlier in the week. So kind of giving you a behind-the-scenes perspective on that. And there's a place for comments, and it says 15. That's the total number of people that responded to that specific posting. That is viewed as an information type of blog.

The other one, the Twins' blog, Dave St. Peter, the president of the Minnesota Twins, keeps an active blog as a dialogue with members of the community about the Twins' new stadium, seeking input from the community as to how the stadium should be designed, what sort of things should be incorporated into the new stadium. If you are not familiar with Minnesota, the Twins have a long

battle trying to get a new ballpark for the Minnesota Twins. It finally got new approval, legislative and voter approval, and so he has gone out and is actively seeking community feedback, and he writes this blog.

Both of these are considered organizational blogs. They are written by businesses. Very much like what Nora was alluding to. Another example of this, she mentioned Mark Cuban. Another owner is Ted Leonsis of the Washington Capitals. You can read the quote there: "Blogs are one of the next steps in the continuing social dynamic that makes up the online world; and they are perhaps the single best device yet, invented to spark new conversation and launch new ideas." Leonsis blog, January 4, 2006.

He got his start or built his fortune as being integral to the development of AOL, which is clearly a leader in the Internet service provider business. But he actually — Ted's take, this is his blog, and he actually got interested in this in a certain degree because he was reading a Web site called offwingopinion.com, which is a blog Web site for hockey fans, written by hockey fans.

And he invited the offwingopinion.com blogger to watch a Capital game. He couldn't give them media credentials, because NHL policy doesn't allow it. He said, why don't you come and sit in my box and watch a Capitals game and we'll talk? And that led to a whole new appreciation. In his mind, this guy is a die-hard hockey fan, I'm missing out if I can't talk to die-hard hockey fans that are on the Internet and doing active blogging.

So he started his own blog as a way to dialogue and have conversations with those. There's another term specific to the sports industry that's called "fan-generated media." And Kathleen Hessert, president of Sports Media Challenge, coined this term to refer to message boards, chat rooms and other online channels visited by sports organizations.

Fan-generated media can get a little obsessive, especially at the collegiate level where you have boosters posting things on message boards about student athletes, prospective recruits. It can get out of hand. One of the things she says, "It's visited by sport's most dedicated and passionate fans," and that is true.

Most people who are posting on Web site blogs about an organization are the most passionate and dedicated fans. They are investing their time in doing that. They are the ones going to the game, coming back home, getting on the Internet and saying, "You know what, that pass in the second quarter, he missed the wide open receiver in the flat."

Okay. That may be negative, but that's your hard-core fan, your target audience. She has a couple of other quotes referring to it as the team's bias.

Nora mentioned this a little about the fact, blogs, because of their very nature and people are worried about them being negative, users say they rely on blogs because they provide more depth and thoughtful analysis. And four out of 10

thought blogs were fair. That's part of the appeal to it, and I don't think organizations should be afraid of hearing what your audience has to say. She referred to it in a business sense, hear what your fans have to say if you are a sports organization. Hear what the people paying to come to your track have to say. If they don't like something, you have to be able to listen to that. And I think that's why blogs are so attractive.

Now, this gets into blog as media and this is kind of the area that I'm interested in. I bring up Aaron Gleeman. Anybody heard about him? He is from Minnesota. Grew up in Minnesota, went to the University of Minnesota. He was a sports editor at the high school paper, wanted to write for The Minnesota Daily. He could not get a job at The Minnesota Daily, even covering anything. He says he could not even get a job covering women's gymnastics at the University of Minnesota.

So he started his own blog. Pretty soon it caught on. He started writing about the Twins. He never graduated from the University of Minnesota, but his Web site gets 2,500 unique visitors a day. Here he is interviewing the manager of the Minnesota Twins, Ron Gardenhire, at the baseball winter meetings. He got hired by NBCSports.com to blog for them. So that line, as he referred to it, the blurriness existing between blog and media. Aaron Gleeman is living that. NBC is a legitimate media source. Aarongleeman.com might not be considered that, but that line is becoming ever more fuzzy.

So I have information about what other organizations do about blogs as media. The NBA doesn't have a policy that says they embrace them, but they don't shun away from them either.

Brian McIntyre, their VP of communications says, we keep our eyes open to everything. One of the things he says is, we're focused on the end user, the fans. Anything we can do to reach our fans we will consider. That's what we want to do, keep the NBA fan.

That compares one side of the spectrum, too. The NCAA, they keep saying they are not behind. The NCAA is behind on many things. They say specifically, "I don't see how they can be referred to as media," and they continued to say they would never accredit a blog as a member of the media.

Now, I understand that for the Final Four. There's a lot of reasons why you would not want to offer up credentials to a blog. But for certain niche sports that don't get a lot of coverage, why not consider it?

Major League Baseball is the only major team sport in the country that has a definitive policy regarding blogs. MLB credentials will be granted to online entities that are part of a national agency, reach a broad audience, have a record of producing original content, and employ at least four full-time journalists. Sports Business Journal June 19, 2006.

Which gives the impression that, yes, blogs can be media if they employ four full-time journalists. Journalists go to school, become a journalist, and go write somewhere. That's a definition of a media.

The Olympics have a little different take on this. When I was working for the Salt Lake Organizing Committee in 2002, and we had a conversation in 2000, how do we deal with accrediting online journalists? We referred to them not as blogs but online journalists. I remember sitting in Lausanne, Switzerland, what should we do?

There was a legitimate Web site called i.skater.com, which is now out of business. And it had a history of covering figure skating and it wanted to come to the Olympics and cover figure skating. It wanted credentials. And we said, what do we do? We don't have any policy on this. They don't fit neatly in any category of journalists. How do we do this?

So we came up with a criteria. And among the criteria — and it is still reflected today in how the IOC credentials blogs. Blogs must provide audited statistics, including number of visitors a month. So the blog that's visited by a woman's boyfriend and her parents and all that sort of thing doesn't count. It's not getting enough visits. What is original content versus nonoriginal content.

There's a number of sites out there that don't really generate unique posts but really just provide links to stories in other newspapers or copy from AP or Reuters or other news agencies, an official auditing body, if one exists for the Web site, the number of employed, full-time journalists, and that's something new they added since we did this.

And the blog agrees to adhere to IOC Internet guidelines, meaning no posting of audio play-by-play, streaming video, any of those sorts of things that might infringe on the rights-holders which have paid millions and millions of dollars for the right to broadcast the Olympics, so they are still protecting those interests.

Beijing 2008, the USOC announced credentialing for the 2008 Olympics. They granted 20 credentials to Web sites that cover the Olympics in the United States. Even Yahoo! Sports would have applied for credentials here. They had to show history of sports coverage, proven traffic, and the ability to generate original content.

Last thing, developing a policy. That's my fundamental stance on this thing. Bloggers can be accredited as journalists, they reach the target audience, hitting the core base, your hard-core fans, people highly identified with an organization are most likely to post and read blogs. How do we get more information? I want to read everything I can about the Arizona Diamondbacks, had a sort of off season, moves they are going to make, so I'm going to an Arizona Diamondback Web Site. But there's some considerations to giving media credentials to just a blogger, and those are the things I articulated here.

Original content. It shouldn't be a repository for other people's work. History of covering the industry or history of covering the team. How long has the blog been in business? Is it something that just got started two days before opening day in baseball and now you're going to accredit them? Is it a Web Site in the last Saturday in April it pops up and we accredit them for the Derby? Not likely.

Unique visitors. How many people are getting there. That Aaron Gleeman Web site — I don't know if you noticed — in the upper left-hand corner, 2.5 million people have been there since 2002. Obviously, there's concerns about press box and space, basketball, press row, you have a finite number of spaces, it might not work there. But if your press box is not being utilized why not consider it? Why not consider giving bloggers access? If all that means is that the blogger doesn't have to pay the two or three dollar admission charge, why not? You might be able to generate more interest and more revenue through word of mouth.

And rights issues. There's concerns about if NBC is paid \$894 million for the right to broadcast the Olympics in Beijing, which it has, it obviously doesn't want it's rights infringed on by a blogger posting live video from the gymnastic venue on their blogging site. So you do have to make those sorts of considerations. But my point on this is trying to illustrate David has the manifesto of what bloggers are, the corporate blog setting, I'm looking more from how can I get blogs as a part of the media, give them similar access as media, and allow them to reach out to their core fans?

I thank you for inviting me, and I enjoyed it. And let Bob go to the next part.

**(Applause)**

**MR. WOLFF:** Just before we get to your questions — and I hope you are writing them down — I have a few questions I will pop at the panel and have a little open discussion. We talked about some of these things, but one of the biggest issues, from a legal perspective, what are the potential downsides of having a blog?

**DR. BARNES:** What I got, we asked that question, and the potential downsides are new product information getting out or leaking, leaks from employees that have a blog saying something that may not be true, so some liability or defamation problems. We haven't seen a lot of them. In the blogs we talked to for the most part most companies have employee behavior policies, so using those and just extending those in some way to cover the blogging behavior. So we haven't seen a lot of big legal issues with the corporations that have blogs so far.

**MR. RUBIN:** When I first started blogging — I'm not a journalist by trade, and I reprinted a quote from a real journalist — and a fellow blogger said, you can't do that. You're screwing him. And it's like, it was self-policing and a fellow blogger said, you can't do that, you've got to do it this way. And so from what I do, you put a section of a quote and a link to a site and that's better for everyone, then you are sending traffic to the columnist or newspaper site and it's helping that

columnist out there in the blogosphere, lots of self-policing.

I got the Cluetrain. I never would have come across that manifesto if a fellow blogger hadn't said, hey, why don't you check it out for your presentation. Self-policing is definitely out there.

**MR. DITTMORE:** I think of the organizational blogs I looked at for sports organizations, specifically, like the one with the Dodgers, White Sox, Phillies, as long as the person who is having the dialogue is someone who is aware of, if it's a crisis-type information, or information that's proprietary, making sure that person is somebody that has the ear of management or is in the know and isn't the coordinator of communications, as opposed to the director who sits in management meetings and understands what's going on and what's the message trying to be delivered? That whole part works itself out as long as it's part of a marketing communications plan, that you don't necessarily get those issues about proprietary issues.

**MR. WOLFF:** From a marketing view, there's an old marketing adage out there that basically you need to get an ad or commercial or print ad, testimonial, they need to see your commercial or ad eight times before a consumer will act.

Let's talk about blog ideology from a blogger's perspective. Can blogging help break through the clutter of advertising to help reach consumers?

**MR. RUBIN:** Absolutely. The big example is YouTube, and Bob and I talked before. I have two great examples presented to me at a panel. One is a three-minute video. I don't know how many people know who Ronaldinho is, you know, one of the foremost world football players in South America, I think Brazil.

**MR. WOLFF:** I think they call it soccer in this country.

**MR. RUBIN:** I know, I just try to be official.

But anyway, there's a three-minute video on YouTube that's been up for just under a year that's gotten 8.2 million views. Essentially, it's not an ad for Nike, it's a non-mainstream video where literally a producer and a cameraman went down to a soccer field in Brazil. We see him lacing up the Nikes. That's basically the only advertisement there is, and he walks out, starts juggling off his leg, his chest, and he walks out to the middle of the field and kicks the ball and hits the crossbar so hard the ball comes back, off his chest, he is juggling it again, does it again kicks off the crossbar. It's a really cool, nontraditional — it's not an ad, 8,000,000 views that people sat three minutes to view it.

You know, we were saying advertisers are begging for people to watch 30 seconds of a commercial. Here's a three-minute spot that 8,000,000 people have spent three minutes, you know, watching. And it's not, hey, we're Nike. So I think that's there, too, and another example. I can give you my YouTube site. Dove did a good video on self-image for girls. It's a really cool thing, you have to watch it.

It's good original media content and that's the potential of free thinking and of the blogs and YouTube and MySpace.

**MR. WOLFF:** Steve, from your research and your experience, are bloggers more likely to be brand loyal?

**DR. BARNES:** I find bloggers to be very free thinking and information collecting. They say the average person that blogs reads six to eight other blog sites, so it appears as though those people that blogging are interested in moving around the blogosphere and finding out — which is why I say you need to be monitoring what's happening. They are asking a lot of questions about products, industries, sports, pieces of journalism. They are asking each other's advice. I don't see it so much as brand loyal as information seeking.

I was at a conference last week and they said blogs are the number one form of marketing research right now.

**MR. DITTMORE:** There's a Web site called athleticsnation.com. It's about the Oakland A's, and it's written by a blogger, someone that has a full-time job and lives in San Jose or whatever. He averages about 10,000 hits a day on athleticsnation.com. And the majority of those hits come from people after the game is over with — or as the game is going on — they have the dialogue. Why did he not swing at that pitch? That sort of thing. In that sense it's highly loyal to the A's. These people are investing their time even after they come home from the game, or while they are watching the game, to make a running commentary about it.

**DR. BARNES:** There's sites people are loyal to.

**MR. WOLFF:** I have one more question before I open it to the audience. If there's anybody with questions, please approach the microphone and we'll take your questions in order.

Technology is a big issue because it's evolving and sometimes it's evolving so fast that what was used a year ago is now obsolete. The deal between the Verizon and YouTube last week, it was announced. Talking about what role video will have in blogging in the near future, where do you see technology, a continuation of technology evolving and making things easier to become involved with it?

**DR. BARNES:** No doubt. I spoke at a tech conference last week and they were presenting new software. And they have amazing software which can search wickis and all kinds of conversation so that you can literally just put in a horse's name if you wanted to and all of the — anybody that every mentioned the name, a Web site, all the social media in existence would be searched. It's amazing.

**MR. DITTMORE:** I think one of the things technology has done that impacted social networking sites in sport, everybody that has a little digital camera phone now — universities caution student athletes not to post pictures of themselves or

put in positions where pictures will be posted on MySpace or Facebook or any of those social networking sites. It reflects on them as student athletes. You don't want a picture taken of you outside a bar. I don't know how it translates into things horses might do, maybe horses standing outside the local pub.

**MR. RUBIN:** That's for our industry. These are all established industries, companies. Our industry should be open to those opportunities, like the horse in front of the bar. What a great photo. You know what I mean? Like, something like that that creates attention and is nontraditional, alternative, and we get new fresh faces in the game; that's one of the most important things. I hope it is to a lot of you.

It's shame that the 25-, 30-year-olds — you know, my friends that bet on sports, they have their accounts and it's a shame.

Just a quick story. We watched trick shot billiards in a hotel room with a bunch of contemporaries, and they compared trick shot billiards to horse racing. And the point was, like, I just click through it, its horse racing. And that doesn't make sense. Like sports minded people that somehow aren't getting brought into the passion; that for someone like me, I'm a sports guy, I'm in love with it.

**MR. WOLFF:** That raises a good question. In the old days, not that long ago, to get your information source you went to newspapers or magazines. And the industry publications do a good job of that with the Web sites and promoting that. But are you getting enough information out there, or is there room for more information? I always found it to be, from a horseplayer's perspective, more information was better. It seemed to give you more inside knowledge into the game. And I don't know if that's out there.

**DR. BARNES:** It's not information so much as it's conversation. A lot of times we have the information we need but we have stuff we want to talk about.

**MR. WOLFF:** And you're talking about good conversation.

**DR. BARNES:** Yeah, good conversation. I mean, sometimes it's really nice to know that at the other end there's someone that knows something about that product or that industry that you can talk to, you have an idea you can share, an idea or suggestion, or they have information to share with you that you can participate in. It's another layer of past information. It's taking like information on drugs or something. It's another level where you can talk to somebody about the information that you have.

**MR. WOLFF:** Great.

**MR. RUBIN:** I don't mean to call them out; it's a good example. If I'm wrong I know someone is here from CDI, and I appreciate the e-mail this morning. And CDI Churchill offers videos of races; but the one feature it doesn't have, YouTube, is the ability to share the video. Like hey, Bob, I just saw this race. Remember we

were at this race five years ago. I can't easily get the link and share it. And that is where I think it needs to be going and in other industries, the easily shared information.

**DR. BARNES:** The problem is you can't get to people anymore. I don't know if it's different with you, but what I hear all the time is that when you call any business, newspaper magazine, you get the voicemail, you get the directory, you don't know the person's name. It's frustrating. Consumers have moved to the blogosphere because they know there are people there, and they can say something and someone will talk back to them.

**MR. WOLFF:** Previously, with the newspaper if you didn't like a columnist or what he wrote, you wrote a letter to the editor, and it would take several days. And then it went to e-mail. And nowadays a columnist posts an article in the paper and within an hour, on his blog, there's commentary filtering in. And what's interesting, some of the more proactive columnists now are firing back and having that two-way dialogue. It's a continuation beyond the printed version. They are in the real world in realtime online.

Do we have any questions? If you don't, I do have a few for the panel before we let them go. We still have a few minutes. Please step up to the microphone.

**A VOICE:** Two questions. First one, all the bloggers sound like they are doing this every waking hour. Do they actually get dressed and leave the house?

**DR. BARNES:** You know I was a little worried when we say blogging takes time. We actually quantified that. And it's one to two hours a day on average. They said they put in one to two hours a day

**A VOICE:** Okay. The real question is: I'm sold, how do I start?

**DR. BARNES:** You know, I'm going to tell you; these guys are way past where I am. My son is an IT guy. I have Nick take care of my stuff. And I said, Nick, I have to have a blog. I'm doing all these presentations. People think I know what I'm doing. I need a blog. And, Nick — I don't know how your kids are, but Nick says, yeah, I'll get to that. And you know if — and, of course, I didn't have one. So I said I'm going to have to do myself.

I went to [blogger.com](http://blogger.com), and it opens up and says, would you like to have a blog? And I type, yes. And then it says which of the following backgrounds would you like? I pick polka dots. And it said, put your picture here. And I put my picture and then I had a blog.

I mean, it was so ridiculously simple that you could all walk out of here 15 minutes from now and have a blog. Blogger is free. There are many, many free sites where you can do that and they literally walk you through. All you have to do is add your picture. I use that site, put up the blog studies as they come out, so people will know where to go to get any new studies that I do. It's very simple.

**MR. WOLFF:** And if you are running a company, call your IT guy.

**DR. BARNES:** Don't call Nick, I'll tell you now.

**MR. WOLFF:** Any other questions. Yes, sir?

**A VOICE:** The panel expressed that blogs and other Internet media sites are great market opportunities. Do any of you have ideas about what the racing industry can do to take advantage of this opportunity? Right now it's only the fans on Web sites such as Thoroughbred Bloggers Alliance or Horseplayer Magazine that are writing on the blogs, and current racing fans discussing amongst each other. What can we do to attract new fans to our game?

**MR. RUBIN:** I charge a hundred dollars an hour.

**(Laughter)**

There are a lot of things. I'll give you one example. It's far-fetched. I don't know how many of you know what Second Life is? It's basically a virtual world that's created. You buy and sell things and they're created in a virtual world. They created real money situations so that people buy and sell with dollars things, items, land, in this virtual world. And there are casinos.

I went there — and I don't have an avatar, I'm not a member — but there are real people in there, there's money, it's real world. We can start a racetrack, or get in there and start getting people. That's the future, believe it or not, online. Something like Second Life that's in the virtual world and is really rearing it's head. Showing it's in the real world. That's one example of being creative and trying all this stuff. TVG has a MySpace page. Good for them. Awesome. It's a great first step. Are they going to reach out? Man, that's good on them. It's great for them.

**MR. WOLFF:** Expanding on that, there's several companies using Second Life opening up new divisions and new companies and gone to the extent of designing some things and showing the employees how it's going to look, some of the customers what they are intending on doing, and it's online and evoking responses and making adjustments as they go along. That was a subject of a Newsweek story several months ago, and you be will be reading and hearing more about Second Life probably in the next to 12 months. So it's a phase that's coming.

**MR. DITTMORE:** You need to have more, how many in the Thoroughbred Alliance, 20-25. You need more than that. It's a networking thing. The more people that get it — I don't know if you have come across word-of-mouth research and how that's affecting marketing, but it's the same concept. I'll tell you about something, you go out, that's what it is. A network has to start someplace. It doesn't just appear. You don't just get network like Nora got her blog. But it has start someplace and just expands. You need more and more people willing to do it, willing to invest the time and energy in order to do something. And, jockeys, do

they have Web sites?

**DR. BARNES:** That would be huge. I was asked last week by a pharmaceutical company, and they said, what could we possibly have a blog on?

And I said, "Are you kidding me?"

I mean, if they had one of the pharmaceutical researchers talking about the new disease they were trying to come up with something for, or what goes on behind the scenes at a pharmaceutical plant. Everyone wants to know what goes on behind the scenes.

If you had jockeys blogging about what goes on behind the scenes, what kind of hours do they put in, what time do they get up. It's a mystery. Your industry for someone outside is interesting but a mystery. It would be wonderful to listen to that conversation. I would love to hear what a jockey's life is like it would be fascinating.

**MR. WOLFF:** I think building off the last part of the question; David and I had this conversation last night. I don't think a lot of racetracks use their Web sites to their fullest capabilities and, obviously, a blog is something that could be or should be part of that or should be part the consideration for that. As Nora was talking about.

The story about the jockeys. Here's a person outside the industry saying something about it being interesting. This could be something that came up as a keyword. People just entering keywords on Google and you may come across this and this is another way to bring in new fans.

I don't know if he is here today, but Stan Bergstein told me years ago that there's a thousand great stories on every backstretch at every racetrack; and the same applies to a gaming property, racino or casino or racetrack. There are stories out there to be told, and a blog is a great way to get that message through.

Another question?

**A VOICE:** Two questions. One is obviously, mentioning MySpace or Friendster or Facebook. What should companies be cognizant of, certain demographics, they tend to be fickle. So say Friendster is no longer in, where MySpace may transition and maybe Facebook is the new one. How do companies keep abreast of those trends so their blog becomes stale because the audience drifts away?

The second part, social networking. How are companies looking at sites such as LinkedIn? Companies are not only competing in the market for customers, they are also competing in the market for talent. And how are companies addressing those kinds of things?

**MR. RUBIN:** The first part at least, you know, you got to take a chance. And I know there's lots of conversation this week about capital intensive and tax

structures, and we don't have money to do things. It takes an investment. We need to invest to move forward.

To the first part of the question, hire a blogmaster, 25 or 30. And maybe that's the new résumé. Show me what you know about the things I said before. Do you read Wired Magazine so you know what's going on what's hot and what's not? And is YouTube fading out? Those are huge issues. And I don't think it's about an age thing.

If you have someone dedicated, it's research and being kind of in the know. Information travels real quick. There are Web sites. TechCrunch, they have the new products every day. I was on a panel, and this guy said, if you are in the tech world and you're not reading TechCrunch, you're out.

And, you know, I definitely think MySpace is fading. Friendster might be fading. But we're kind of at zero, so I don't think we're in that position yet. But the short answer would be, hire good people. And that's the challenge. Invest, time, effort, money. And, Nora, this morning with the blogmaster, I love that idea.

**DR. BARNES:** I told him I'd be his marketer today.

We also can reallocate resources. Big companies are finding they need to put less resources into things like newsletters and maybe those kinds of brochures and newsletters and more money in online investments like this.

Reallocating resources. Some of my students are 18 to 22. One of them was doing a paper and at the end she said, I'm just going to recommend that he build a new location and cut his prices. And I thought, right, that's great. That will be really good. You know, you have to be practical in this world. And everybody has limited resources. I say reallocate them.

Blogging is not expensive, you can do it pretty cheaply, and you can move things around a bit.

**MR. WOLFF:** Okay. We have a question in the back?

**A VOICE:** David indicated that he was amenable to self-policing. What about the person who is not. They have an extreme prejudice or monetary agenda or generally disruptive nature and they want to put out misinformation. How does the blogosphere deal with that?

**MR. WOLFF:** I'm sure you've had a few negative comments.

**MR. RUBIN:** I hate to say it. It's being smart, common sense, and it varies from job to job and company to company. You know, some people turn off their comments and in chat rooms they have monitors, and everyone has different rules. I'm not sure what your specific business is within the industry. You can keep people out. People will keep coming back. I don't have a great answer. It's

common sense; and if it doesn't work for you, shut it down. Ban them. Turn off comments.

There's lots of sites, at times they accept comments and then there's a roll of super negativity or just spamming, and they say, know what? I'm turning off comments for the week. I can't deal with it, and it's not working.

**MR. DITTMORE:** Your question about disinformation, just again, my interest looks at sports and media and the merger between the two. There's so much rumor and disinformation just in mainstream media. The media world in sport today has turned into talking heads on ESPN interviewing other talking heads, because that's the only way they have to communicate back and forth.

This whole Around the Horn scenario — those are just four journalists getting together and talking about rumors and innuendo and spouting off on their opinions. I don't know, misinformation, if it's something critical or proprietary or key to a business, it's a different situation in my mind. Just a occasional rumor or something factually inaccurate, that's going to happen, I think. I don't know how you can avoid it.

**DR. BARNES:** You control it. On a blog you see comments that come in before they go out. If something comes in that you feel strongly about, don't put it up. In the end though, people that come to your blog if all they see on your blog is wonderful, nice things about you, they will begin to wonder about the credibility of your blog. So I would be careful to the extent that I edit it, but certainly when something comes through that's off the wall. I would not put it up.

**MR. WOLFF:** That's an excellent point. Don't go anywhere just yet. I want to thank everybody on the panel for an excellent conversation. I want to thank the audience you were terrific. You came forward with a lot of questions.

**(Applause)**

Right now we need to announce the winner of Horseplayer Magazine's "Blog Your Way to a Job Contest" winner. And to make that announcement is Jeremy Plonk.

**MR. JEREMY PLONK:** I came here to make a 10 second announcement. Since May on our Web site, Horseplayer Magazine, horseplayerdaily.com, we ran the promotion beginning at the Kentucky Derby. We redesigned our Web site, "Blog Your Way to a Job." We said come, type what you want, cover horse racing, talk amongst yourselves. We'll judge it every week. It was like American Idol.

We had Dave, a good friend from England, who was a host for Racing World; Chris White at Philadelphia Park; and myself, look at all the bloggers each week. We made comments, like, "Great job," to Silver Charm. Someone was blogging under that name. Or AirForbes1 or Octave-the-Rave. All kinds of wild raves and people that did amazing things.

It far exceeded expectations to the point where we thought, we're going to give one of these people a job where they can write in our magazine, which comes out six times a year, and get paid the same salary any other writer would get paid.

In the end the decision to who would win the contest — we decided, we have six issues, we're going to have one winner, who would debut in our January issue and five consolation prizes that will write one paid article in our magazine in each of the subsequent issues the rest of the year. It was that good.

And far as self-policing goes, in six months we have not taken one post off our Web site. Not one single one was considered inflammatory. People called me an idiot; people called me immature, things like that. It happens. And most of you that know me think it's true any way. It happens.

Self-policing is true. We have the ability to filter out things. I can check every comment before it posts or after it posts. If I want to ban somebody I can ban their URL so if they change their name and they are using the same computer we know it's them trying to get in.

So I want to open it up to anyone in the audience here who wants to bring blogs to your pages. If you want to go through us at Horseplayer Magazine we have an existing product. We would be happy to link your Web site to ours and have a huge blogging community.

We have 156 bloggers as of this morning, opened up and registered an account. About 60 of them are pretty active. You know, you get 156 people some people post once or twice. In a six-month run these people were doing it over and over again. And they are not young people. That's what I was surprised to hear. We have a grandmother from Ohio who is one of the finalists. She's a handicapper who has qualified for the National Handicapping Championship.

We have two people from Kentucky and also Florida who are in their 50s if not early 60s — they didn't put their ages in — but by discussing who they have talked to over the years and how long they have been around the races — if they have been playing the races for 40 years, they've got to be in their 50s or 60s. They were amongst the six finalists. California, Kentucky, Ohio, Florida, Massachusetts, Virginia. Six people, six different states all over the place, and they did an absolutely wonderful job of it.

I, myself, blog each day, each week, and put our comments on the Web site. And when the topic came up I wrote something about how I perceived there wasn't a real bias on Breeders' Cup day. The bloggers took me to the woodshed and disagreed, called me names. It was a good chance to get interaction from the company with the customer. Probably got at least 10 story ideas in the last couple months that will run in the magazine from bloggers that want to see these things covered. We know that bloggers are meeting people from around the country. Two bloggers met in Maryland, one from Virginia and one man from Massachusetts.

They got together at Laurel Park for the handicapping tournament.

Qualifier for the NHC, they sat together, played the races together, and got to know each other. These are two guys that would have never met otherwise and horse racing fans. And the simulcast market bringing the nation together and what's good for us as a magazine covering the races on a national basis. So if anybody wants to link to our site and get involved, come up and talk after the presentation.

Our finalists, we have five who will write once in the magazine. We have a finalist from Lexington, Kentucky, who blogs under the name "Mall." I won't give everybody's names because I don't have their permission to do so, but we have registered names, addresses, phone numbers for everybody that sets up a blog.

"Lady horseplayer", she is the grandmother from Ohio. She is a finalist.

"Octave-the-Rave," Palm beach, Florida, one of our 50-something writers.

"Silver Charm" and "Caesars Ghost," two guys adamant handicapping tournament players. They play year-round. One from Massachusetts and the other from Virginia.

Our first winner — I'm so pleased the publisher had the vision to do the project and listen to me, and we're going to do it again. We're not sure if you are going to blog your way to a job or maybe the Breeders' Cup or Kentucky Derby, but we know our first inaugural contest is in the books. It's not coincidence, it happened that way. It happened to be the University of Arizona Race Track Industry student, Jon Forbes, and he asked one of the questions earlier. Jon you are hired.

**(Applause)**

Jon will get six freelance paid articles at full price, which any respected journalist that wrote more the magazine was paid at full price. It will start with the January/February issue of the magazine. We come out six times a year. His first column will actually be a reproduction of one of his blogs. If you go to horseplayerdaily.com, it says "your blogs." It will take you to the blog page.

He wrote about how one of his friends huckstered him into going to Mexico to bet the match races. And it's a great tale, and it's a good read. And I'll tell you, there's a lot of great young talent.

Myself, I'm only 35 years old. I've been in the business since I was 18. At 35, I have 17 years experience; and there are a lot of good, young people, but a lot of older bloggers, older than you think. A lot of your wives, spouses, mothers, and grandmothers, and it's a wonderful thing. And the blog has been a success story for us.

I apologize for taking so much time. I didn't mean to steal any thunder. Everything I heard today was so encouraging and moving forward, and I like to hear the fact that we're ahead of the curve.

And, again, anybody who wants to come aboard and link to our site, we can blow this thing up from 150 bloggers to thousands and maybe all link back to your sites and that sort of thing and drive the traffic that way.

**MR. WOLFF:** Thanks, Jeremy. Good job.

The panel and I will be available to answer any and all of your questions. They may kick us out of the room.

Thank you, again.

**(Applause)**

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