

The Fog about Blogs

According to *Business Week*, as of late 2005, 7% of all CEOs had engaged in blogging, and 18% stated that they expected to host a company blog within two years. For those still in a fog about blogs, here's a definition: A blog (shortened from web log) is an online diary published on a web page. In addition to the author, just about anybody can update a blog. A business may use a blog as a marketing tool, allowing continuous updates by directors, employees, and clients. Comments posted on a blog can have both positive and negative consequences for your organization and personal reputation.

If you're thinking about becoming a blogger (someone who uses a blog), or establishing a blog for your organization, there are many risk management and legal issues to consider. These include employment practice violations, slander, invasion of privacy, child abuse, and illegal use of photographs. Consult an attorney about your responsibilities and options for dealing with the many situations that could arise.

Claims—Covering the Business of Loss, recently published an article "Managing Blog Risks Isn't Blah," which shares a number of helpful hints to consider when managing your blog.

- Monitor comments posted on the blog to filter out spam, libelous material, or porn.
- Get prior legal review of any company-sponsored blog content.
- Engage an expert or consultant to outline the blog risks to your particular industry.
- Include a section on blogging in your employee handbook that clearly states your organization's policy. Require each employee to sign for having received, read, and agreed to the handbook.
- Talk with your insurance agent to ensure you are adequately covered for advertising and personal injury liability, among many other potential exposures, including any claims from web sites or electronic media.
- Consider purchasing control software that can help monitor or restrict unauthorized access to your blog.