

# Another Great Communication Tool

# BLOGGING

Theme Team Production ||| Jack Kingston, Chairman

"Talk [radio] shows have done three big things for the country. **First**, they give people a place to ventilate and have a public dialogue rather than simply being lectured to by the elite commentators. **Second**, they have created a unifying sense of confidence among millions of listeners that it is okay to be conservative and challenge the liberal wisdom. **Third**, when the elite media have tried to distort the news, the talk shows have a pretty good record of setting things straight over the following four or five days."  
-Newt Gingrich, *To Renew America*, 1995

In 1995, **Newt Gingrich** seized a "new" media to help get his message past the Beltway by permitting radio show hosts to broadcast live from the Capitol. In his words, he helped create thousands of surrogates for the *Contract With America* by doing so.

Today, talk radio shows are no longer taboo. Names like Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, Laura Ingraham, Michael Reagan, G. Gordon Liddy, and others are now celebrity rock stars in the Republican Party and are generals in conservative thought.

**The Next Great Thing In Republican Communication Has Emerged: Blogs.**

## What is a blog?

A **blog** is a website in which items are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order. The term blog is a shortened form of **weblog** or **web log**. Authoring a blog, maintaining a blog or adding an article to an existing blog is called "**blogging**". Individual articles on a blog are called "**blog posts**," "**posts**" or "**entries**". A person who posts these entries is called a "**blogger**".  
[SOURCE: Wikipedia]

## The Facts:

In March 2003 there were 100,000 blogs.  
Today there are more than 29.1 million.  
75,000 blogs are created every day.

On average, a new blog is created every second of every single day, and the blogosphere doubles in size every 5 ½ months.  
[SOURCE: State of the Blogosphere, February 2006]

## The Rise of the Blog

Many people, including its campaign manager, credit the blog of Democratic Presidential Candidate Howard Dean as "instrumental to its candidate's rise from obscurity to front-runner for the Democratic nomination in 2003. Bloggers have been credited with helping "out" the memos used by former CBS anchor Dan Rather in his report about George W. Bush's service in the National Guard. This **buzz** resulted in the public apology of CBS and the early retirement of its most prominent anchor.

**According to a Pew Study, Blogs were established during the 2004 Presidential campaigns.** One word has emerged: “**Rathergate.**” The scandal known as Rathergate and other moments in the 2004 campaign enhanced the reputation of political blogs, bloggers, and the blogosphere. [SOURCE: PEW: Buzz, Blogs, and Beyond]

### Four Reasons Why Blogs Are Popular

1. The internet itself is a place freely “roamed” for topics of interest and makes monitoring, tabulating, tagging, indexing, reconstructing, and redistributing information simple, fast, and easy.
2. Blogs can connect to “buzzworthy” material quickly, and provide a forum for discussion and usually a “blogroll” where bloggers can link to other blogs of interest. And posted in reverse chronological order, one can always see what is hot right now.
3. Birds of a feather flock together. Internet users are drawn by their interest or the same ideology of a certain blogger. Conservatives read conservative blogs.
4. “A-List bloggers” occupy key positions in the mediascape where they are quickly becoming the thermometer to gauge what is hot by journalists, activists, and political decision-makers. [SOURCE: PEW: Buzz, Blogs, and Beyond]

### How Can You Interact With Blogs

- **Start one.** The problem with Congressional websites (and websites in general) is that they never have fresh content so constituents, students, and others visit a website, hopefully find what they need, and move on. ***Why not keep your constituents involved with what you’re working on (for them) and your progress?*** To do so, consider establishing a blog on your webpage or create a blog with a third-party vendor and prominently link to it from your website.
- **Write conversationally.** Consider using a voice similar to that you would use for a statement or an op-ed.
- **Establish relationships with bloggers and keep them updated on what you are working on and give them access.** Most bloggers freely list their contact information on their blog. Keep in mind that bloggers often have “day jobs” and are not paid to cover Congress. Make their job easier by letting them know what you’re boss is working on and why they may find it interesting.
  - i. **Do Your Homework and know your blogger.** Bloggers cover the issues they care about. Find their interest and share your news with them.
  - ii. **Do not simply send your press release to a wide list of blogs.** Choose one blogger and share your story and provide the materials to back it up. If they do not want it – ship it out to a wider group.
  - iii. **Do not expect instant gratification.** For six baseball seasons, Babe Ruth led the National League with more strikeouts than any other player, but that didn’t deter him from taking a swing in hopes of hitting his next homerun.
  - iv. **WARNING:** Bloggers are “friendly,” but you should understand that there could and probably will be criticism and questions from the Right so choose your issues well.

**The Bottom Line:** Blogs are here to stay and you can ensure that your boss is communicating as effectively as possible by using every tool in your arsenal to help deliver their message.

“I would not want to live in an America where the only source of information was talk radio. But as long as the elite media remains so cynical and so out of touch with average Americans, I sure am glad we have Rush Limbaugh and his friends to **keep us company, keep us informed, and keep us on the offense.**”

-Newt Gingrich, *To Renew America*, 1995