

# Marketing Your Legal Practice Using Social Media

## Going Small or Solo

*Massachusetts Bar Association  
Law Practice Management Section  
at the Boston University School of Law*

David Harlow JD MPH  
THE HARLOW GROUP LLC

March 23, 2009



MASSACHUSETTS BAR ASSOCIATION

*Serving the legal profession and public since 1911*

## THE HARLOW GROUP LLC



***“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.”***

# Web 2.0 - the great equalizer

- **Interactive**
- **User-generated content**
- **Not “broadcasting”**
- **Dialogue**
- **Valuable as a networking and marketing “channel”**
- **“Social Media”**

# Four key social media tools

- Blog, or Blawg
- Twitter
- Linked In
- Facebook
- Remember, the medium is *not* the message
- Social media strategy must fit in with remainder of marketing strategy
  - Depends on your target audience
    - E.g., new media startups vs. insurance companies

# Social media popularity: Google Trends




*I saw this illustration recently and recreated it. Let me know if you know who came up with it.*

# What is a blawg?

- **Legal web log = law blog = blawg**
  - **Blog: online journal, posted in reverse chronological order**
- **Blog: a manifestation of Web 2.0**
  - **Not static**
  - **Interactive**
    - **Links**
    - **Comments**
  - **RSS: Really Simple Syndication (“push” technology)**

# Why blog?

- PR/marketing for your practice and yourself
- Improved web presence (Google loves blogs)
- Networking
  - Other bloggers
  - Readers
  - Referral sources
  - Clients
- Marketing
  - Higher Google profile  more press calls

# How to blog

- **Pick a niche and start writing**
  - And don't stop . . . commitment matters
  - You will find your voice . . . or several voices
  - Don't do this unless you really like writing and have something to say
    - But don't be put off by the fallacy: "If I'm thinking it, then everyone must be thinking it."
  - Begin publicizing after writing several posts
- **Read voraciously**
- **Join the conversation**
  - Comment on, and link to, other blogs



# Learning the ropes

- Read other blogs
  - Find them via directories, e.g.:
    - [Blawg.com](http://Blawg.com)
    - [Justia.com](http://Justia.com)
    - [ABA Journal](http://ABA Journal)
    - [myHq:blawgs](http://myHq:blawgs)
  - Read [Blawg Review](#) and posts from other blog carnivals ([definition](#)) ([examples](#)) and follow the links
  - Subscribe to blogs using a feed reader, e.g.:
    - [Bloglines](#)
    - [Google Reader](#)
    - [FeedDemon](#)

# Technical stuff

- **Blogging infrastructure**
  - **Choose a platform**
    - **DIY**
      - Typepad
      - Blogger
      - Wordpress
      - Others
    - **Hosted, designed, optimized**
      - Justia
      - LexBlog

# More technical stuff

- **Syndication**
  - Tune into the magic of RSS – “really simple syndication” for your [feed](#)
    - Register with [Feedburner](#)
    - “Push” technology
    - Email subscriptions for the dinosaurs out there
- **Ping: let Google and others know you’ve posted**
- **Track readership**
  - Track reactions and links with [Technorati](#)
    - Freshness counts
  - Track incoming traffic with [StatCounter](#) or [SiteMeter](#)
    - SEO: Adjust writing based on this information

## Blog carnivals (“traveling posts”)

- Participate in blog carnivals ([definition](#))
  - Submit posts
  - Host carnivals
- General and specialized; legal and non-legal
  - See [BlogCarnival.com](#)

## Blog carnivals (cont'd)

- **Blog carnivals I contribute to and/or host**
  - [Blawg Review](#)
  - [Health Wonk Review](#)
  - [Grand Rounds](#)
- **Others:**
  - [Carnival of the Capitalists](#)
  - [Cavalcade of Risk](#)

# Blog carnival juice in action

**Blogrunner: Health - Mozilla Firefox**

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.blogrunner.com/snapshot/topics/health/

Getting Started with Fir... TypePad post to del.icio.us my del.icio.us SocialMarker.com HealthBlawg StatCounter Free invis...

**Blogrunner: Health**

**blogrunner | Health**

Politics Technology Media Business Economy Law **Health** Movies Books Religion Iraq Entertainment ALL TOPICS »

Home > Topics > Health

Google™ Custom Search Search

**Top Stories** | The Latest | By Source

**SHERYL GAY STOLBERG | THE NEW YORK TIMES**  
1 DAY AGO  
**President Vetoes Second Measure to Expand Children's Health Program**  
It was the seventh veto of President Bush's presidency and the second veto of a children's health bill.  
**MORE SOURCES:** THE CARPETBAGGER REPORT, PETE LIT, WSJ.COM: HEALTH BLOG  
FULL COVERAGE (47) »

**DAVID HARLOW | HEALTHBLAWG :: DAVID HARLOW'S HEALTH CARE LAW BLOG**  
1 DAY AGO  
**Health Wonk Review: December 2007 edition**  
Welcome to the final edition of Health Wonk Review for 2007. HWR is a biweekly compendium of the best of the health policy blogs, hosted in rotation by -- you guessed it -- health wonks who blog.  
**MORE SOURCES:** THE HEALTH CARE BLOG, HEALTH BUSINESS BLOG, HEALTHCARE ECONOMIST  
FULL COVERAGE (25) »

**The Latest**

**THESTREET.COM**  
1 HOURS AGO  
**Biogen Idec Execs Accelerated Own Stock Sales**

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
2 HOURS AGO  
**Merck Recalls Childhood Vaccine**

**TIME.COM**  
2 HOURS AGO  
**High-Dose Chemo Doesn't Help Breast Cancer**

**CBS NEWS**  
1 DAY AGO  
**Minnesota Bans Adding Mercury To Cosmetics, First State In Nation To Adopt Safety Standard Tougher Than Feds - CBS News**

**MEDICAL NEWS TODAY**  
2 HOURS AGO  
**Lengthy Review: FDA Asses...**

**Most Influential**

This Week | This Month

1. MIKE ALLEN | THE POLITICO Liberal views could haunt Obama
2. ERIK ECKHOLM | THE NEW YORK TIMES Disability Cases Last Far Longer as Backlog Rises
3. GREG SARGENT | TPMCAFE ELECTION CENTRAL Obama Campaign Denies Collecting "Oppo Research" On Progressive Bloggers
4. DAVID HARLOW | HEALTHBLAWG :: DAVID HARLOW'S HEALTH CARE LAW BLOG Health Wonk Review: December 2007 edition
5. ROB STEIN | THE WASHINGTON POST Virus Starts Like a Cold But Can Turn Into a Killer
6. MATTHEW HUTSON | THE NEW YORK TIMES Neurorealism
7. SHERYL GAY STOLBERG | THE NEW YORK TIMES President Vetoes Second Measure to Expand Children's Health Program
8. REBECCA SKLOOT | THE NEW YORK TIMES 'Cat Lady' Conundrum, The
9. DAVID MARKHAM | MARKHAM'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Done

start | Inbox - Microsof... | Blogrunner: Hea... | 8:06 AM

# Google juice in action

Web Images Maps News Shopping Gmail more ▾ Sign In

Google  Search [Advanced Search](#) [Preferences](#)

Web Results 1 - 10 of about 5,940 for **oig gainsharing** (0.06 seconds)

Sponsored Links

**Gainsharing Inc.**  
Full range of **Gainsharing** services, from design to long term success.  
[gainsharing.com](http://gainsharing.com)

**Gainsharing/Goalsharing**  
Pioneering Group Incentive Systems Gainplanning & Gainmaking included!  
[www.scanlonleader.org](http://www.scanlonleader.org)

**OIG Rules for Gainsharing**  
Attend 90-Minute Audio Alert to ensure you're in compliance  
[www.beardaudioconferences.com](http://www.beardaudioconferences.com)

**Gainsharing Arrangements and CMPs for Hospital**  
While the **OIG** recognizes that appropriately structured **gainsharing** arrangements may offer significant benefits where there is no adverse impact on the ...  
[www.oig.hhs.gov/fraud/docs/alertsandbulletins/gainsh.htm](http://www.oig.hhs.gov/fraud/docs/alertsandbulletins/gainsh.htm) - 20k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**HealthBlawg: Gainsharing: OIG posts two new advisories**  
Jan 15, 2008 ... The **OIG** issued two new advisory opinions last month (posted this week) blessing a cardiac surgery **gainsharing** arrangement and a related ...  
[healthblawg.typepad.com/healthblawg/2008/01/two-new-gainsha.html](http://healthblawg.typepad.com/healthblawg/2008/01/two-new-gainsha.html) - 46k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**HealthBlawg: Gainsharing: implications of the latest OIG advisories**  
The **OIG** has now issued a total of ten **gainsharing** advisory rulings, all with respect to programs set up by Goodroe Consulting (now a division of VHA).  
[healthblawg.typepad.com/healthblawg/2008/01/gainsharing-imp.html](http://healthblawg.typepad.com/healthblawg/2008/01/gainsharing-imp.html) - 48k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**Gainsharing Becomes An Option Again As Oig Relaxes Stance**  
September 7, 2005 To reduce operational expenditures substantially in coming years, hospitals need to align physician financial incentives with those of the ...  
[www.hfma.org/publications/know\\_newsletter/archives/090705.htm](http://www.hfma.org/publications/know_newsletter/archives/090705.htm) - 52k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**OIG Approves Physician-Hospital Gainsharing Agreement**  
The Houston accounting and consulting firm of Reed Tinsley CPA advises medical professionals and healthcare organizations on tax, accounting, ...  
[rtcpa.blogs.com/reedtinsley/2008/12/oig-approves-physicianhospital-gainsharing-agreement.html](http://rtcpa.blogs.com/reedtinsley/2008/12/oig-approves-physicianhospital-gainsharing-agreement.html) - 26k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**Ober|Kaler - Health Law Alert - Spring 2005**  
In July 1999, the **OIG** threw cold water over **gainsharing** arrangements when it .... The **OIG** cautioned that **gainsharing** arrangements could be used to disguise ...  
[www.ober.com/shared\\_resources/news/newsletters/HLA/hla\\_spr05\\_05.htm](http://www.ober.com/shared_resources/news/newsletters/HLA/hla_spr05_05.htm) - 23k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**OIG approves hospital-physician gainsharing**  
Although the **OIG** reiterated its concerns regarding the potential adverse affects of **gainsharing** on patient care and its potential for disguising payments ...  
[www.physiciansnews.com/law/701.html](http://www.physiciansnews.com/law/701.html) - 26k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

**[doc] GAINSHARING/OIG**  
File Format: Microsoft Word - [View as HTML](#)  
**GAINSHARING/OIG** SPECIAL ADVISORY BULLETIN. On July 8, 1999 the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the "**OIG**") ...  
[www.kutakrock.com/publications/healthcare/GAINSHARING.doc](http://www.kutakrock.com/publications/healthcare/GAINSHARING.doc) - [Similar pages](#)

**OIG Approves Gainsharing Program for Ortho and Spine ...**  
Aug 14, 2008 ... The **OIG** has approved the first orthopedic and spine **gainsharing** project, which will be overseen by Goodroe Healthcare Solutions, LLC.  
[www.healthpointcapital.com/research/2008/08/14/oig-approves\\_gainsharing\\_program\\_for\\_ortho\\_and\\_spine/](http://www.healthpointcapital.com/research/2008/08/14/oig-approves_gainsharing_program_for_ortho_and_spine/) - 22k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

OIG

Health  
Blawg

HFMA

Ober

Kutak

# Maintaining a blog

- **Content is king**
  - Add something to the discourse
- **Every link to your blog on another site improves Google Page Rank and can help draw more visitors**
  - Link to others in blogroll and text; others will link to you
  - Social bookmarking services
    - Give readers easy access
      - Ex: [Add This](#)
    - You can submit posts yourself
      - Tool: [SocialMarker](#)



# From blogging to microblogging

- Twitter
  - Microblogging platform -- 140 character limit per post
  - Over 3 million registered users, including big business and lawyers from solos to Am Law 200
  - “Broadcast” vs. interactive
    - Can be used for one-way communication
    - More effective as medium for conversation
  - Networking and communication tool

# Using Twitter effectively

- Need to establish tactics that further your marketing strategy, e.g.:
  - Broadcast blog posts
  - “Tweet” information/links not worth a whole blog post or that you have no time to blog about
  - Follow other “tweeple” or “twits” of interest
  - Engage in dialogue – public or private – with other twits
- Again, you need to have an overarching marketing strategy to ensure that you remain as focused and effective as possible

# Some Twitter tools

- To find other tweeples to follow:
  - [Twellow](#) (index organized a la the original Yahoo!)
  - [Twubble](#), [MrTweet](#) (once you're following some)
  - [JD Scoop](#) list of 500+ twittering lawyers
  - [Legal Birds](#) aggregator (Justia blog provider)
  - [LexTweet](#) aggregator (LexBlog blog provider)
- To follow tweeples without being overwhelmed by the volume; lets you assign tweeples to groups
  - [TweetDeck](#)
- Twitter on the go
  - [TwitterBerry](#) or [iTweet](#)

## Some Twitter tools (cont'd)

- Integrate tweets into other social media
  - I usually tweet via [Ping.fm](#)
    - configured to post to [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Linked In](#).
  - I feed my blog through [Twitterfeed](#), so post titles end up in my “twitterstream” with links back to the blog.
- Increases my blog posts’ and tweets’ exposure

# Facebook and Linked In

- **Online networking communities**
- **Leverage your network to avoid cold calls**
- **Allow you to feed content to their sites, including**
  - **RSS feeds of blogs**
  - **Tweets**
- **Allow you to remain top-of-mind**

# Facebook

- Personal pages and business pages
  - Personal pages – access may be limited to “friends”
  - Business pages open to all
  - Examples:
    - [David Harlow](#) and [The Harlow Group LLC](#)
- Turned “friend” into a verb
- Useful platform for communication with defined groups and friends

# Linked In

- **Linked In** – “Facebook for grownups”
  - Allows for exploration of contacts’ networks
    - Useful in avoiding cold calling
  - Includes Q&A forums to demonstrate expertise
  - Adding functionality mimicking Facebook
    - Groups
    - Feeds
    - Slideshare

# Resources

- [Electronic Frontier Foundation: Legal Guide for Bloggers](#)
- Bob Coffield's *Health Care Law Blog* post: [Healthcare Blogging and Web 2.0](#)
- [Twitter for Lawyers](#) on *HealthBlawg*
- Darren Rowse's [TwiTips](#).
- My Web 2.0 sites:
  - [HealthBlawg](#)
  - [HealthBlawg on Twitter](#)
  - [Linked In](#)
  - [Facebook](#)



# Questions / Discussion

**David Harlow JD MPH**  
**THE HARLOW GROUP LLC**

[www.harlowgroup.net](http://www.harlowgroup.net)

[www.healthblawg.typepad.com](http://www.healthblawg.typepad.com)

[www.twitter.com/healthblawg](http://www.twitter.com/healthblawg)

[david@harlowgroup.net](mailto:david@harlowgroup.net)

617.965.9732