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Much information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan comes from soldiers' military blogs, some of which are shaping public opinion.	

No: Blogs Offer Nothing Important to the Public at Large

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Andrew Keen

Citizen journalists have neither the ability nor the resources to provide reliable news reports, and they are not held accountable for their work. The public is better served by professionals than by amateurs.

Most Blogs Reach Only Small, Specialized Audiences 54

Nicholas Lemann

The mainstream media were never as monolithically influential as blog enthusiasts believe. What bloggers are producing does not live up to the claims made for it, and it reaches only relatively small audiences.

Blogging Results in Instant Obsolescence 64

Trevor Butterworth

Blogs have produced fragmentation of society rather than democracy, and most of what is written in them cannot be taken seriously because there is too much of it, produced too hurriedly. Talented writers need time to create work of enduring significance.

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Biz Stone

Bloggers of all political persuasions agree that blogging is a powerful force in politics. It forces professional journalists to follow stories that bloggers will not let lie.

Blogs Are a Critical Part of Political Commentary 82

Carla Marinucci

Political parties and candidates now understand that blogs will be an important part of the commentary on the next election and that they will influence campaign strategy.

The Future Will Not Be Unblogged 87

David D. Perlmutter

It is too soon to know whether blogs will affect the outcome of the 2008 election, but they will certainly play a role in public debates and in people's perceptions of candidates.

No: Blogs Do Not Affect the Outcome of Elections

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George Packer

The blogosphere is detached from the real world. Blogs are too fragmentary and too lacking in depth to have political significance.

Specific Blogs Reach Only Small Segments of the Population 107

Byron York

Even if a million people read a particular blog, they may be the same million whose minds were already made up on the basis of other media—and it takes 60 million to elect a president.

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Robbie Allen

People of all backgrounds, interests, and biases now contribute to the global discourse on human affairs.

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Mainstream Journalism **118**

Rebecca MacKinnon

There is a power shift happening as bloggers enter the space once occupied by journalists. However, the relationship between bloggers and mainstream journalism does not have to be an adversarial one.

Blogging Has Replaced the Common
Culture with Subcultures **125**

Terry Teachout

Americans were once united by a common culture that no longer exists. Now people tend to read blogs that reflect their own views rather than relying on news from a few major media.

Blogs Provide Responses to
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Craig Colgan

Commenting on blogs maintained by administrators and teachers is a popular and effective way for people to respond to school incidents and other community issues. But some schools are reluctant to use them.

Blogs Can Impact Grassroots Politics **144**

Lakshmi Chaudhry

Blogs are increasingly being used as tools for grassroots political movements. They allow voters greater participation and can serve as organizing mechanisms.

Amateur Detectives Use Blogs to
Investigate Crime **148**

Laura Bauer

People who feel powerless in the face of crime are finding an outlet in keeping up with detailed reports of current crimes posted on blogs. Though many of these reports are inaccurate, bloggers do sometimes uncover information of value to the police.

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Lawsuits are being brought against bloggers who libel others. The time is coming when they will no longer be considered judgment-proof because they are not rich.	
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<i>Jonathan A. Segal</i>	
Employers should be careful about attempting to restrict the blogging of employees on their own time. Although in many cases it is legal to do so, it may be unwise.	
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<i>Electronic Frontier Foundation</i>	
Students generally have the right to express their opinions in off-campus blogs, but there are rules that must be followed to avoid trouble with school authorities.	
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Lawyers are now taking advantage of the evidence available in blogs, which can be used in various ways even if it is not directly admissible.	

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J.D. Lasica

Advertising is becoming common in blogs, and the rules are different from those followed by mainstream media. Bloggers who have commercial connections should not call themselves journalists, as journalists never accept money from sources.

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