

Professional Blogging

CNET has a thoughtful and informative article describing blogging in the workplace. The authors claim private employers often practice employment-at-will, which means that employees can be fired because they post critical comments about the company or their boss. Although the First Amendment protects citizens from the government, it is very possible that public declarations against your company can get you fired. The article also points out that disclosing company secrets in your blog is prohibited by confidentiality agreements. The article recommends that professionals who wish to continue blogging avoid criticism and sensitive information, or that they publish anonymously.

Slashdot is one of the most popular computer news blogs. This blog has a very large and enthusiastic reader base that comments on "Stuff that matters". Most computer professionals read some of its articles at least once a week. It often takes a very critical viewpoint on current technologies and products. This viewpoint makes it slightly anti-corporate. Most of the Slashdot readership dislikes Microsoft and digital rights management (DRM)¹ instead advocating Linux and other open-source² alternatives to commercial products. However, in general Slashdot articles are often very optimistic about future technologies that are still in development. Slashdot news is often a few days behind the initial announcement, but it frequently has more than one source for its news articles.

Works Cited

McCullagh, Declan. "FAQ: Blogging on the job." Media 2.0. 08 March 2005. CNET. 03 Feb. 2006 <http://news.com.com/FAQ%20Blogging%20on%20the%20job/2100-1030_3-5597010.html>.

"Slashdot: News for nerds, stuff that matters." 03 Feb. 2006. OSTG. 03 Feb. 2006 <<http://slashdot.org>>.

¹ DRM is a system that places limits on the way digital information such as movies, music, and software is used. DRM is intended to prevent piracy, but it often troubles well-meaning users.

² Open-source software is given freely by the authors to anyone who has non-profit uses for it. Most open-source software can be freely modified by anyone and re-distributed. Some popular examples of open-source are Firefox, GAIM and VLC. Sourceforge (<http://sourceforge.net/>) is part of the OSTG network and a very popular open-source webpage.