

Bloggers

A portrait of the internet's new storytellers

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Summary of Findings

Blogging is bringing new voices to the online world.

A telephone survey of a nationally-representative sample of bloggers has found that blogging is inspiring a new group of writers and creators to share their voices with the world. Some 54% of bloggers say that they have never published their writing or media creations anywhere else; 44% say they have published elsewhere. While generally youthful, these writers otherwise represent a broad demographic spectrum of people who cite a variety of topics and motives for their blogging.

Eight percent of internet users, or about 12 million American adults, keep a blog. Thirty-nine percent of internet users, or about 57 million American adults, read blogs – a significant increase since the fall of 2005.

Telephone surveys capture a current snapshot of an ever-changing blog universe.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project deployed two strategies to interview bloggers.

First, as part of our standard random-digit dial tracking surveys about internet use among a nationally-representative sample of American adults, we asked respondents if they maintain a blog. Then, we called back these self-identified bloggers between July 2005 and February 2006. Seventy-one percent of those called back completed this second telephone survey, which focused exclusively on blogging. The remaining 29% said they were no longer keeping a blog or were not willing to take another survey, and we eliminated them from the callback interviews. This strategy yielded a relatively small number of respondents (n=233) but allowed us to ask in-depth questions of a nationally-representative sample of bloggers. Numbers cited in this report are based on the callback survey unless specifically noted.

Our second strategy for preparing this report involved fielding additional random-digit surveys between November 2005 and April 2006 to capture an up-to-date estimate of the percentage of internet users who are currently blogging. These large-scale telephone surveys yielded a sample of 7,012 adults, which included 4,753 internet users, 8% of whom are bloggers.

This Pew Internet & American Life Project report is based on the findings of daily tracking surveys on Americans' use of the internet and a special callback survey of bloggers. All numerical data was gathered through telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. The tracking surveys were conducted between November-December 2005 and February-April 2006, with a combined sample of 7,012 adults, aged 18 and older. For results based on internet users (n=4,753), one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is +/- 3%. For tracking survey results based on bloggers (n=308) the margin of error is +/- 7%. The blogger callback survey was conducted between July 5, 2005, and February 17, 2006, among a sample of 233 bloggers, age 18 and older. The margin of error for this sample is +/- 7%.

While many well-publicized blogs focus on politics, the most popular topic among bloggers is their life and experiences.

The Pew Internet Project blogger survey finds that the American blogosphere is dominated by those who use their blogs as personal journals. Most bloggers do not think of what they do as journalism.

Most bloggers say they cover a lot of different topics, but when asked to choose one main topic, 37% of bloggers cite “my life and experiences” as a primary topic of their blog. Politics and government ran a very distant second with 11% of bloggers citing those issues of public life as the main subject of their blog.

Entertainment-related topics were the next most popular blog-type, with 7% of bloggers, followed by sports (6%), general news and current events (5%), business (5%), technology (4%), religion, spirituality or faith (2%), a specific hobby or a health problem or illness (each comprising 1% of bloggers). Other topics mentioned include opinions, volunteering, education, photography, causes and passions, and organizations.

The blogging population is young, evenly split between women and men, and racially diverse.

The following demographic data comes from two surveys of internet users conducted in November-December 2005 and February-April 2006 (n=7,012).

- The most distinguishing characteristic of bloggers is their youth. More than half (54%) of bloggers are under the age of 30. Like the internet population in general, however, bloggers are evenly divided between men and women, and more than half live in the suburbs. Another third live in urban areas and a scant 13% live in rural regions.
- Another distinguishing characteristic is that bloggers are less likely to be white than the general internet population. Sixty percent of bloggers are white, 11% are African American, 19% are English-speaking Hispanic and 10% identify as some other race. By contrast, 74% of internet users are white, 9% are African American, 11% are English-speaking Hispanic and 6% identify as some other race.

Relatively small groups of bloggers view blogging as a public endeavor.

Despite the public nature of creating a blog, most bloggers view it as a personal pursuit.

- 55% of bloggers blog under a pseudonym, and 46% blog under their own name.
- 84% of bloggers describe their blog as either a “hobby” or just “something I do, but not something I spend a lot of time on.”
- 59% of bloggers spend just one or two hours per week tending their blog. One in ten bloggers spend ten or more hours per week on their blog.

Summary of Findings

- 52% of bloggers say they blog mostly for themselves, not for an audience. About one-third of bloggers (32%) say they blog mostly for their audience.

The main reasons for keeping a blog are creative expression and sharing personal experiences.

The majority of bloggers cite an interest in sharing stories and expressing creativity. Just half say they are trying to influence the way other people think.

More Blog to Share Experiences Than to Earn Money			
Please tell me if this is a reason you personally blog, or not:	Major reason	Minor reason	Not a reason
To express yourself creatively	52%	25%	23%
To document your personal experiences or share them with others	50	26	24
To stay in touch with friends and family	37	22	40
To share practical knowledge or skills with others	34	30	35
To motivate other people to action	29	32	38
To entertain people	28	33	39
To store resources or information that is important to you	28	21	52
To influence the way other people think	27	24	49
To network or to meet new people	16	34	50
To make money	7	8	85

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. N=233. Margin of error is ±7%.

Only one-third of bloggers see blogging as a form of journalism. Yet many check facts and cite original sources.

- 34% of bloggers consider their blog a form of journalism, and 65% of bloggers do not.
- 57% of bloggers include links to original sources either “sometimes” or “often.”
- 56% of bloggers spend extra time trying to verify facts they want to include in a post either “sometimes” or “often.”

Bloggers are avid consumers and creators of online content. They are also heavy users of the internet in general.

Fully 79% of bloggers have a broadband connection at home, compared with 62% of all internet users. This high-speed access translates into heavy media consumption and creation.¹ For example:

- 95% of bloggers get news from the internet, compared with 73% of all internet users.
- 77% of bloggers have shared their own artwork, photos, stories, or videos online, compared with 26% of all internet users.
- 64% of bloggers say they go online several times each day from home, compared with 27% of all internet users.

Bloggers are major consumers of political news and about half prefer sources without a particular political viewpoint.

- 72% of bloggers look online for news or information about politics; by contrast, just 58% of all internet users do so.
- 45% of bloggers say they prefer getting news from sources that do not have a particular political point of view; roughly the same percentage of the general internet population agrees.
- 24% of bloggers prefer political news from sources that challenge their viewpoint; and 18% choose to use sources that share their political viewpoint. Again, bloggers' responses are similar to those of the general internet population.

Bloggers often use blog features that enhance community and usability.

Community-focused blogging sites LiveJournal and MySpace top the list of blogging sites used in our sample, together garnering close to a quarter (22%) of all bloggers. Features such as comments, blogrolls, friends lists, and RSS feeds on these and other blogging sites facilitate a sense of community and offer readers additional ways to receive and interact with the blog's content.

- 87% of bloggers allow comments on their blog.
- 41% of bloggers say they have a blogroll or friends list on their blog.
- Only 18% of bloggers offer an RSS feed of their blog's content.

¹ The overall blogging with broadband number and general population comparison are drawn from December 2005 and February-April 2006 Pew Internet telephone surveys.

Summary of Findings

Bloggers by the Numbers	
	Median
Number of hours per week spent working on your blog	2
Number of links on your blogroll or list	10
Number of blogs that link to your blog	13

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. The median is the midpoint – half of bloggers gave an answer above that number, half gave an answer below it. Note: More charts like this are in the last section, “Bloggers by the Numbers.”

Bloggers: Summary of Findings at a Glance
Bloggging is bringing new voices to the online world.
Telephone surveys capture the most accurate snapshot possible of a small and moving target.
Contrary to the impression created by the press attention on political bloggging, just 11% of bloggers say they focus mainly on government or politics.
The bloggging population is young, evenly split between women and men, and racially diverse.
Relatively small groups of bloggers view bloggging as a public endeavor.
The main reasons for keeping a blog are creative expression and sharing personal experiences.
Only one-third of bloggers see bloggging as a form of journalism. Yet many check facts and cite original sources.
Bloggers are avid consumers and creators of online content. They are also heavy users of the internet in general.
Bloggers are major consumers of political news and about half prefer sources without a particular political viewpoint.
Bloggers often utilize community and readership-enhancing features available on their blogs.
Source: Lenhart, Amanda and Susannah Fox. <i>Bloggers</i> . Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, July 19, 2006.

Contents

Summary of Findings

Acknowledgements

Part 1. Introduction

Part 2. Media and Communication Habits of Bloggers

Part 3. Motivation and Content

Part 4. The Practice of Blogging

Part 5. Audience

Part 6. Bloggers by the Numbers

Methodology

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About the Pew Internet & American Life Project: The Pew Internet & American Life Project produces reports that explore the impact of the internet on families, communities, work and home, daily life, education, health care, and civic and political life. The Project aims to be an authoritative source on the evolution of the internet through collection of data and analysis of real-world developments as they affect the virtual world. Support for the project is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The project is an initiative of the Pew Research Center. The project's website: www.pewinternet.org

About Princeton Survey Research Associates: PSRA conducted the survey that is covered in this report. It is an independent research company specializing in social and policy work. The firm designs, conducts, and analyzes surveys worldwide. Its expertise also includes qualitative research and content analysis. With offices in Princeton, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C., PSRA serves the needs of clients around the nation and the world. The firm can be reached at 911 Commons Way, Princeton, NJ 08540, by telephone at 609-924-9204, by fax at 609-924-7499, or by email at ResearchNJ@PSRA.com

Part 1.

Introduction

Blogging is bringing new voices to the online world.

A telephone survey of a nationally-representative sample of bloggers has found that blogging is inspiring a new group of writers and creators to share their voices with the world.

We find that bloggers blog for many different reasons – some blog to exercise their creative muscles, others want to motivate or influence others. Bloggers may want to stay in touch with family and friends, others want to network and meet new people. Bloggers may use their blog as a way of documenting ideas and events and storing them for later retrieval, while others view it as a way to share, to entertain, and even to earn a living.

Some observers have suggested that blogging is nothing more than the next step in a burgeoning culture of narcissism and exhibitionism spurred by reality TV and other elements of the modern media environment. But others contend that blogging promises a democratization of voices that can now bypass the institutional gatekeepers of mainstream media. This democratization is thought to have implications for the practice and business of journalism as well as the future of civic and political discourse.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project wanted to explore the questions of who, what, where, when and how of blogging by going directly to the source – bloggers themselves. This report details the findings of a callback telephone survey of bloggers conducted over approximately six months in 2005-2006. In standard internet tracking surveys of nationally representative samples of American adults by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, a question is asked of all internet users about whether they maintain a blog. Once several hundred bloggers were identified in those standard surveys, the bloggers were called back and asked questions about their specific motivations, their blogging behaviors, the content of their postings, the features on their blogs, and their views about the impact of their blogs.

The blogging population is young, evenly split between women and men, and racially diverse.

According to random-digit dial surveys conducted in the spring of 2006, 8% of internet users age 18 and older, or about 12 million American adults, report keeping a blog. According to a random-digit dial survey conducted in January 2006, 39% of internet

Part 1. Introduction

users age 18 and older, or about 57 million American adults, report reading blogs.² And as described in the Pew Internet Project's *Teen Content Creators and Consumers* report,³ 19% of internet users age 12-17 keep a blog and 38% of online teens read blogs.

"Internet users" — Respondents who answer yes to at least one of the following questions: "Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?" and "Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?"

Bloggers are overwhelmingly young adults who hail from urban and suburban areas. They are evenly divided between men and women. Bloggers are less likely than internet users to be white.⁴

More than half (54%) of bloggers are under the age of 30, and about another third (30%) are between 30 and 50. Just 14% of bloggers fall in the 50 to 64 age group and a tiny 2% are 65 or older. In comparison, only 24% of internet users are age 18-29. Nearly half of internet users (45%) are age 30 to 49 and another quarter (24%) are age 50 to 64. About 7% of internet users are 65 or older.

"Bloggers" — A subset of internet users who answer yes to the following question: "Do you ever create or work on your own online journal or weblog?"

More than half (51%) of bloggers reside in suburban areas, similar to the 54% of internet users who live in the same type of community. Another third (36%) of bloggers live in urban areas, and few bloggers (13%) reside in rural regions, in both cases reflecting a similar distribution of internet users (30% and 16% respectively).

Bloggers are less likely to be white than internet users. While 60% of bloggers are white, 11% are African American, 19% are English-speaking Hispanic and 10% are some other race or ethnicity. By contrast, among internet users 74% are white, 9% are African American, 11% English-speaking Hispanic and 6% are some other race or ethnicity.

² Please note that the question wording for the February-April 2006 survey was slightly different from the wording used to gather sample for our Blogger Callback survey throughout 2004 and 2005. In the February-April survey, the question was as follows: "Do you ever create or work on your own online journal or weblog?" The previous question was "Do you ever create a weblog or blog that others can read on the Web?" Given the rapid growth in the blogosphere, we felt it important to report the most recent data.

³ Please see http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/166/report_display.asp

⁴ Data for this section of the report comes from our February-April 2006 Tracking surveys. The n for bloggers is 175, and margin of error is +/- 8%. The n for internet users is 2,822 and the margin of error is +/- 2%.

Bloggers vs. Internet Users in General		
Demographic Groups	Bloggers	All Internet Users
Sex	%	%
Men	54	49
Women	46	51
Age		
18-29	54	24
30-49	30	45
50-64	14	24
65+	2	7
Race/Ethnicity		
White (non-Hispanic)	60	74
Black (non-Hispanic)	11	9
Hispanic (English-speaking)	19	11
Other	10	6
Location		
Suburban	51	54
Urban	36	30
Rural	13	16
Access Speed		
Dial-up	20	34
Broadband	79	62

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Tracking Surveys, November – December 2005 and February – April 2006. For sample based on bloggers, N=308. Margin of error is ±7%. For sample based on internet users, n=4,753, margin of error is ±2%.

Part 2.

Media and Communication Habits of Bloggers

Broadband is the norm among bloggers, as is going online several times each day.

A majority of bloggers (79%) have a high-speed connection to the internet at home and more than half are between 18 and 29 years old. By comparison, 62% of adult internet users have broadband at home and about one in five is under 30.⁵ This combination of broadband, youth, and interest in content creation translates into heavy media consumption among bloggers.

On a typical day, 84% of bloggers go online, a higher daily participation rate than the general population of home broadband users (78%) and other internet users age 18-29 (66%). Sixty-four percent of bloggers say they go online several times a day from home, outstripping both their high-speed counterparts and young internet users in the general internet user population. Thirty-nine percent of home broadband users and 34% of internet users age 18-29 go online several times a day. By comparison, 27% of all internet users go online from home several times a day.

There is no significant difference between bloggers and other internet users when it comes to frequency of use at work or other places. About four in ten internet users go online several times a day at work and a very small group (about 5%) goes online several times a day from someplace else, like an internet café or library. Interestingly, bloggers are less likely than the rest of the internet population to volunteer that they “never” go online from someplace else – 34% of bloggers vs. 55% of all internet users.

Bloggers are avid online news readers, particularly political news.

Bloggers, most of whom have a high-speed connection at home, are highly likely to read news online. Ninety-five percent of bloggers get news from the internet and 71% say they do so on a typical day. Bloggers’ news reading outpaces even home broadband users, who are among the most enthusiastic online news readers. By comparison, 80% of home broadband users get news online and 63% do so on a typical day.⁶

Bloggers also gather news from diverse sources. Fifty-five percent of bloggers get news from email newsletters or list-servs and 34% do so on a typical day. By comparison, 48%

⁵ Pew Internet & American Life Project February-April 2006 survey.

⁶ Pew Internet & American Life Project January-February 2006 survey.

Part 2. Media and Communication Habits of Bloggers

of home broadband users get news from an email newsletter; 29% of home broadband users do so on a typical day.

Online News		
Do you ever...	Bloggers	All Internet Users
Get news from the internet	95%	73%
Look online for news or information about politics or political campaigns	72	58
Get news from email newsletters or listservs	55	29
Get news from a blog	47	9

Source: Bloggers data is from the Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. N=233. Margin of error is $\pm 7\%$. For the question pertaining to campaign news, internet user data is from the Pew Internet Project November 2004 survey. N=1,324. Margin of error is $\pm 3\%$. For the question pertaining to listservs, internet user data is from the Pew Internet Project June-July 2004 survey. N=1,510. Margin of error is $\pm 3\%$. For other questions the internet user data is from the Pew Internet Project December 2005 survey. N=1,931. Margin of error is $\pm 2\%$.

Not surprisingly, about half of bloggers turn to blogs as a source for news. Forty-seven percent of bloggers say they have gotten news from blogs and 26% do so on a typical day. By comparison, 9% of internet users say they have gotten news from blogs and 3% do so on a typical day.

Bloggers prefer balanced sources of news.

Bloggers are about as likely as the general internet population to pursue non-partisan news sources. Forty-five percent of bloggers (and 50% of all internet users) say they prefer getting news from sources that do not have a particular political point of view. Twenty-four percent of bloggers (and 18% of all internet users) say they prefer getting news from sources that challenge their political point of view. Eighteen percent of bloggers (and 22% of all internet users) say they prefer getting news from sources that share their political point of view.

Bloggers are also pretty typical of the rest of the internet population when it comes to their motivations for reading news online. Forty-two percent of news-reading bloggers (and 40% of all online news readers) say they go online to get news and information because it is more convenient. Twenty-eight percent of news-reading bloggers (and 29% of all online news readers) say they get news online because they can get information from a wider range of viewpoints on the Web. Nine percent of news-reading bloggers (and 24% of all online news readers) say they get news online because they can get more in-depth information on the Web. Eighteen percent of news-reading bloggers (and 2% of all online news readers) say their reasons are a combination of all three choices.

Newspapers, television, and radio are also part of bloggers' daily news diet.

Bloggers are also avid consumers of off-line sources of news and information, but no more so than other internet users. On a typical day, bloggers are about as likely as other internet users to get news from newspapers, TV, magazines, and the radio. Eighty-five percent of both groups (internet users and bloggers) read newspapers and about half do so on a typical day. About nine in ten internet users, and the same share of bloggers, watch television news and between two-thirds and three-quarters do so on a typical day. A bit more than half of both groups read magazines for news and about one-quarter do so on a typical day. Three-quarters of both groups listen to radio news and about half do so on a typical day.

Bloggers are highly engaged with tech-based social interaction.

Bloggers are among the most enthusiastic communicators of the modern age, taking advantage of nearly every opportunity to communicate. Seventy-eight percent of bloggers say they send or receive instant messages. By comparison, 38% of all internet users send and receive instant messages. Again, bloggers outstrip their high-speed counterparts (40% of home broadband users IM) and even internet users between 18 and 29 years old (54% of whom IM). Fifty-five percent of bloggers say they send or receive text messages using a cell phone, compared with 40% of home broadband users and 60% of younger internet users.

Bloggers also like to create and share what they make. Forty-four percent of bloggers have taken material they find online – like songs, text, or images – and remixed it into their own artistic creation. By comparison, just 18% of all internet users have done this.⁷ A whopping 77% of bloggers have shared something online that they created themselves, like their own artwork, photos, stories, or videos. By comparison, 26% of internet users have done this.⁸

Bloggers are likely to have the gadgets to support their online proclivities for social interaction and creativity. Fully 89% of bloggers have used a cell phone in the past month and 78% have used a digital camera during that time. Fifty-six percent of bloggers have used a laptop computer equipped with a wireless modem in the past month and 47% have used an iPod or MP3 player. Bloggers are not as likely to have used a PDA, like a Palm Pilot or pocket PC – just 28% say they have done so within the past month.

⁷ Pew Internet & American Life Project January-February 2005 survey.

⁸ Pew Internet & American Life Project November-December 2005 survey.

Part 3.

Motivation and Content

Two groups of bloggers emerge from our survey: Those who view their blogs as a personal, and somewhat private, hobby and a smaller group who view their blogs as more time-consuming, and more public, endeavors. For both groups, the primary motivations to blog are to express themselves creatively and to record their personal experiences.

For most, blogging is a hobby, not an activity that consumes their lives.

When asked “What does your blog mean to you?” the largest group of bloggers (44%) replied that their blog is “something I do, but not something I spend a lot of time on,” a point that meshes with the findings that bloggers do not update their blogs very frequently and do not spend much time updating their blogs in any given week. Only 13% of bloggers post new material every day. The typical blogger spends five hours per week updating his or her main blog. Another sizable contingent of bloggers (40%) describes blogging as a hobby that they enjoy working on when they can. There is a smaller core of devoted users, just 13%, who say that their blog is very important to them, and describe it as a big part of their life.

Not surprisingly, those who say blogging is an important part of their life are more apt to update their blog frequently. This small group is also more likely to earn money from their blog, via advertisements, tip jars or paid content, and to consider their blog a form of journalism.

Blogging is usually the first foray into authorship; bloggers blog to express themselves creatively and share personal experiences.

Sixty-two percent of bloggers did not have a personal website before launching their blog and 54% of bloggers had not published their writing or media creations anywhere else, either online or offline.

Three in four bloggers (77%) told us that expressing themselves creatively was a reason that they blog. Younger and lower-income bloggers were more likely than other groups to give this as a reason to blog. Similarly, most bloggers (76%) say that they blog to document their personal experiences and share them with others. Younger users were among the most likely to say that they blog to document and share their lives.

Part 3. Motivation and Content

More Blog to Share Experiences Than to Earn Money			
Please tell me if this is a reason you personally blog, or not:	Major reason	Minor reason	Not a reason
To express yourself creatively	52	25	23
To document your personal experiences or share them with others	50	26	24
To stay in touch with friends and family	37	22	40
To share practical knowledge or skills with others	34	30	35
To motivate other people to action	29	32	38
To entertain people	28	33	39
To store resources or information that is important to you	28	21	52
To influence the way other people think	27	24	49
To network or to meet new people	16	34	50
To make money	7	8	85

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. N=233. Margin of error is $\pm 7\%$.

Bloggers are also anxious to share what they know with others. Fully 64% of bloggers say that they blog to share practical knowledge or skills with others. Older bloggers (age 50-64) are the most likely group to say this is a reason to keep a blog.

More than six in ten bloggers (61%) say they blog to motivate other people to take action, and a similar percentage say they blog to entertain. Older, wealthier bloggers are more likely to list motivating others as a major reason to blog. Men are more likely than women (67% to 52%) to say that they blog to entertain people.

Another 60% of bloggers say they blog to keep in touch with family and friends. Women who blog and younger bloggers (age 18-29) are more likely than other groups to say that keeping in touch is a major reason for blogging.

About half of all bloggers say they blog to network or meet new people, and half say they blog to influence the way other people think. Younger bloggers (age 18-29) and lower income bloggers are more likely than other groups to say they blog to meet new people. Male bloggers are more likely than female bloggers to blog to influence others.

About half (48%) of bloggers say they use their blog as a storage site or memory device. Older bloggers (over age 50) are more likely than younger bloggers to say that storing resources or information that is important to you is a main reason they publish their blog.

Part 3. Motivation and Content

The least common reason people blog is to make money. Only 15% of bloggers report this as a reason for their blog-keeping, and just 7% call making money a major reason. Bloggers over age 30 are more likely than younger bloggers to give making money as a reason to blog.

Most bloggers do not confine themselves to one topic.

Nearly two-thirds of bloggers (64%) say they blog on a lot of different topics. The remaining third (35%) say they focus on one topic. Older bloggers (over age 30), higher-income bloggers and parents who blog are more likely to say that they blog about one topic, while younger bloggers (age 18-29) are more likely to say that they blog about many different topics.

Personal experiences are the most popular topic, but politics, entertainment, and sports are also frequently discussed.

While blogs can address any conceivable subject, we asked bloggers to classify the main topic of their blog. The largest percentage of bloggers in our sample (37%) say that “my life and personal experiences” was the main topic. Women who blog and younger bloggers were more likely than other groups to say that they blogged mainly about personal experiences. Politics and government is the next most popular topic, with 11% of bloggers citing it as the main subject of their posts. Bloggers in their thirties and forties and college-educated bloggers were more likely than other groups to list this as a main topic, though still in lower percentages than personal journal-style blogging.

Entertainment-related topics were the next most popular blog-type, with 7% of bloggers, followed by sports (6%)—a topic favored by more men than women—general news and current events (5%), business (5%), technology (4%), religion, spirituality or faith (2%), a specific hobby or a health problem or illness (each comprising 1% of bloggers). Other topics mentioned include opinions, volunteering, education, photography, causes and passions, and organizations.

Personal experiences provide the most inspiration for bloggers.

Bloggers are inspired, for the most part, by things that happen to them, or something they read or observe. More than three-quarters of bloggers (78%) say that a personal experience has inspired them to post. Only 12% say they have never posted about a personal experience. Women who blog and younger bloggers (age 18-29) are more likely than other groups to say they are often motivated to post by a personal experience.

The news media also prove inspirational as 55% of bloggers report that they often or sometimes post because of something they heard or read in the news media. Bloggers frequently inspired by the news media tend to identify politically as Democrats or Independents. Republicans are also inspired to blog by the news, but less often than the

Part 3. Motivation and Content

other two groups. Other people's blogs also instigate blog postings, with more than half of all bloggers (54%) reporting that something they read on another blog inspired a post.

Entertainment media also stimulates the creative juices of bloggers – four in ten (40%) bloggers have often or sometimes posted because of a song, movie or television program they encountered. Younger bloggers (age 18-29) and those with lower levels of education are more likely than other groups to be inspired to post by entertainment media. And close to a third of bloggers are inspired by something else: religious faith, books they have read, holidays or seasons, or the experiences of others.

Half of bloggers keep one blog and most do not share authorship with anyone else.

There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between bloggers and blogs. A little more than half of all bloggers (53%) have just one blog, but another 17% have two blogs, and 26% author three or more. Of bloggers who report having more than one blog, more than half (61%) say that they have three or more blogs. Not surprisingly, bloggers with more blogs report spending more hours per week on average tending their blogs than do single-author bloggers. It is also not clear whether all of the blogs of multi-bloggers are currently active.

In addition to individual bloggers with multiple blogs, sometimes a single blog has multiple authors. Nearly three in ten bloggers say that their primary blog is a multi-author blog. Seven in ten say that they are the only author of their main blog.

Bloggers who are the sole author of their blog are more likely to report that they blog for themselves rather than for the benefit of their audience. On the other side, bloggers who post on group blogs are more likely to report that they blog more for their audience than for themselves.

More than half of bloggers use a pseudonym.

Blog content that is appropriate or even funny for a friend can also be cause for dismissal to a supervisor or employer. To avoid the problem of colliding life spheres and to protect personal privacy, many bloggers use a pseudonym to keep their offline life separate from their online thoughts. In fact, a bit more than half of bloggers (55%) surveyed say they blog under a pseudonym or made-up name, while 43% say they blog using their real name.

Only a third of bloggers think their blog is a form of journalism.

While others sometimes characterize them as journalists, bloggers themselves generally do not think of what they do as journalism. Only a third of bloggers (34%) say that their blog is a form of journalism, while two-thirds (65%) say it is not. To probe further into

Part 3. Motivation and Content

this question, we asked bloggers whether they engage in practices generally associated with journalism: directly quoting sources, fact checking, posting corrections, receiving permission to post copyright material and linking to original source materials outside of the blog.

Are Bloggers Journalists?						
34% of bloggers self-define as journalists; the remainder do not. Below are some activities that journalists engage in, and the % of bloggers who do them on their blog.						
How often, if ever do you do the following things on your blog?	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never	Does not apply to me	Do not know/Refused
Spend extra time trying to verify facts	35%	21%	14%	28%	2%	0%
Quote other people/media directly	15	25	13	41	5	0
Get permission to post copyrighted material	12	8	11	50	17	1
Include links to original source material	35	22	14	27	2	0
Post corrections	11	27	21	38	2	0

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. Margin of error is $\pm 7\%$.

Overall, the most frequently reported journalistic activities are spending extra time verifying facts included in a posting, and including links to original source material that has been cited or in some way used in a post. Just a bit more than a third of bloggers (35%) say they have done these two activities “often.” Another 22% say that they “sometimes” engage in these practices on their blog. Verification of facts was more likely to be reported by bloggers over age 30 and those with a college degree. Those with greater levels of education were more likely to link to original source material than those with less formal education.

Just one in seven (15%) bloggers say they quote people or other media directly on their blog “often,” and another 12% of bloggers say they often seek permission before posting copyrighted material to their blog. Conversely, more than two in five bloggers say they “never” quote sources or other media directly in their blog. Women who blog, younger bloggers, and those with less education are more likely than other groups of bloggers to report “never” quoting directly. Just 11% of bloggers often post corrections on their blog.

Part 4.

The Practice of Blogging

The reality of a blogger's publishing schedule is probably familiar to anyone who juggles a career, a personal life, and a favorite hobby: bloggers cram in their updates when and where they can, and when inspiration strikes.

Most bloggers post infrequently.

While many of the most popular blogs on the internet post material frequently, even multiple times per day, the majority of bloggers do not post nearly so often.⁹ One-quarter of bloggers post one to two days a week, and about one in seven bloggers (15%) post three to five days a week. Twenty-eight percent of bloggers say they post new material to their blog every few weeks. About one in five bloggers (19%) post every few weeks or less often.

In our sample, 13% post daily or more frequently. Bloggers who have had a personal website in the past are more likely to post material daily to their blog, as are bloggers who report higher than average levels of blog traffic.

Seven in ten bloggers post when inspiration strikes, not on a set schedule.

Most bloggers say they post to their blog when something inspires them. Fully 70% of bloggers only post when inspiration strikes, while 22% of bloggers usually update on a regular schedule. A lucky 4% of bloggers say that both options are true: Inspiration strikes on schedule. Another 4% say that neither mode describes their posting habits, or they were not sure.

The typical blogger spends about two hours per week on their blog.

On average, bloggers do not spend a great deal of time on their blogs. Six in ten bloggers (59%) report spending one to two hours a week on their blog, and another quarter spend 3 to 9 hours a week blogging. One in ten (10%) spend ten or more hours a week tending their blog. Six percent did not answer the question or did not know how many hours they spent per week. Younger bloggers, despite being more likely to keep a blog, generally spend fewer hours per week working on their blog.

⁹ "Popular" here is defined based on the Technorati designation of the top 100 blogs, which measures popularity through the number of inbound links to a blog.

Part 4. XThe Practice of Blogging

Bloggers who spend the least amount of time per week on their blog tend to be the sole author of a single blog and update it mainly for their own enjoyment. Bloggers who spend the most time per week on their blogs (ten or more hours) are more likely to say that lots of bloggers link to their blog.

Most bloggers have blogged three years or less.

A suite of user-friendly blogging tools became available in the summer of 1999, and the practice of blogging achieved high levels of media attention and public awareness during the 2004 presidential campaign. Thus, is it not entirely surprising that most bloggers have been blogging for three years or less.¹⁰

Most Began Blogging Within the Last Three Years	
	% of bloggers
Six months or less	18%
About a year	33
Two to three years	30
Four or more years	19

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. Margin of error is $\pm 7\%$.

Most blog from home.

Two types of location are relevant to blogging—the place where the blogger blogs from, and the space or software that hosts or enables the blog’s public expression. Eight out of ten (83%) of bloggers say that they usually blog from home, while 7% say they usually blog at work, and another 6% blog equally at home and at work. Another 3% say they usually blog from somewhere else, usually a friend or relative’s house, a library, or on-the-go with a mobile device like a cell phone or PDA.

Higher income users are more likely than other groups to say that they blog from work. Thirteen percent of those living in households with more than \$75,000 annual income say they blog from work, compared with 3% of those living in households with annual incomes totaling less than \$50,000.

¹⁰ According to Technorati, a website that has monitored a large segment of the universe of blogs since March 2003, the number of blogs doubles approximately every 5 to 6 months.
<http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000432.html>

LiveJournal tops the list of blogging sites in this survey.

In our sample of bloggers, LiveJournal was the most popular blogging site, with 13% of respondents blogging there. MySpace was next in popularity, followed by Blogger, Xanga, FrontPage, Typepad, Blogspot, Moveable Type and Squarespace. Nearly 1 in 6 (17%) bloggers say they use some other type of blogging software to host their blog, 2% say they built their own software, and 5% say they blog without using specific blogging software at all. Dial-up users are most likely to name MySpace and LiveJournal as their blogging software source.

Some of the responses to this question illustrate the variety of definitions that people apply to blogging. Some respondents told us that they blogged on Facebook, which is generally not considered to be blog hosting software, but where links to blogs may be posted. Other respondents told us they blog at Slashdot, a large long-standing online community focused on technology issues that has been considered by some to be a massive multi-author blog.

Among the various blogging software options, there are some demographic differences among their users. LiveJournal users are more likely to be female (22% of all female bloggers in our sample used LiveJournal compared with only 7% of the males) and young – nearly one in five of our 18-29 year old bloggers used LiveJournal. Blogger had more than its share of college graduates with 13% of college-educated bloggers using Blogger and 12% using LiveJournal as compared with 4% of bloggers with college degrees who use MySpace and 2% who use Xanga. MySpace has a larger share of bloggers who have not yet continued their education past high school.

Blog Tools	
Bloggers use a variety of Web services and software packages to build and display their blogs	
	% of bloggers
LiveJournal	13%
MySpace	9
Blogger	6
Xanga	2
FrontPage	2
Typepad	2
Blogspot	2
Moveable Type	1
Squarespace	1
Something else	17
Built own blogging software	2
Do not use blogging software	5
Do not know/Refused	38

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. Margin of error is ±7%.

Text dominates most blogs, but one-third of bloggers post audio files.

As might be expected, writing rules the blogosphere, but bloggers also communicate by sharing a wide array of multimedia content. Most bloggers post text to their blog, in the form of essays, articles or written entries; four out of five bloggers (80%) post text to their blog, but nearly as many (72%) display photos on their blog.

Part 4. XThe Practice of Blogging

Text and Photos Dominate Blogs	
	% of bloggers
Text	80%
Photos	72
Images other than photos, like clip art, graphs	49
Audio	30
Video	15

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. Margin of error is $\pm 7\%$.

Nearly half of all bloggers (49%) say they have posted images other than photos to their blog – items such as drawings, graphs or clip art.

“Vlog” – a shortened form of the word “videoblog,” which is a blog that features video clips

Close to a third (30%) of bloggers had posted audio files to their blog and another 15% vlogged, or posted video files to their blog. Bloggers who have more than one blog, bloggers who contribute to group blogs and bloggers who report working on their blog three or more hours a week are more likely than other bloggers to post audio and video files to their site, as well as drawings, graphs or clip art.

Bloggging for pay is rare.

Even as a subset of bloggers gain prominence in the media and as traffic to blogs grows, bloggging is not exactly the most lucrative of hobbies, let alone professions. Only 15% say earning money is a reason they blog and only 8% of bloggers report actual income. These bloggers are mostly older than age 50.

Selling items is the most popular way for this group of bloggers to raise money. About seven in ten bloggers who make money do so by selling things on their site. Bloggers can sell items branded with their own logo or sentiment through fulfillment sites such as CafePress.com or they can join something akin to the Amazon Associates program that allows individuals who recommend an item for sale on the Amazon site to receive a small payment every time someone uses the link the individual provides to purchase the recommended item.

Blog advertisements are another popular way for bloggers to earn money; about half of money-earning bloggers do so through ads. About a third of money-earning bloggers say they get cash from online “tip jars” where readers can leave donations, either through PayPal or another online payment source. Premium content, which readers must pay for, is a source of income for about one in five money-earning bloggers.

Most expect to be blogging a year from now.

Despite its relatively minor importance in the lives of most bloggers, blogging is still an important enough part of their lives that eight out of ten (82%) of bloggers think they will still be blogging a year from now. One in ten bloggers (11%) say they will not, 3% say they have already stopped, and 4% say they are not sure if they will still be blogging in a year.

Bloggers with broadband at home are more likely than those with dial-up connections to say they will continue blogging into next year. Not surprisingly, long-time bloggers are more likely than newcomers to say they will continue, as are bloggers who maintain two or more blogs. Bloggers who say they write mostly for an audience are more likely than those who write mostly for themselves to say they will still be blogging a year from now.

Part 5.

Audience

Despite a blogger's often private sense of the nature of his or her blog, the act of keeping a blog (unless password protected or otherwise locked down) is an inherently public act. Blogs are generally kept so that they may be read by others, yet the audience of a particular blog is technically nearly impossible to measure. While Web servers have traditionally collected information about who or what visits them, in this day and age of RSS feeds, many blog readers who might have been counted by server or site traffic logs are now obscured behind the single visit of an RSS feed reader's URL or IP address.

But we do have a good idea of the size of the general blog-reading population. In February 2004, the Pew Internet Project added a question to our internet activity survey: "Do you ever read someone else's web log or blog?" At that time, 17% of internet users said yes. Since then, the percentage of blog readers has increased to 39% of internet users, or about 57 million American adults.¹¹

"RSS" – most often thought to stand for "Really Simple Syndication." An RSS feed enables a "feed reader" or aggregator to periodically check particular spots on the Web for new content, pulling that content into one central location for easier reading.

A blogger can gain a sense of audience composition through "on-blog" or "off-blog" means. On-blog measurements include site traffic logs¹² as well as commenting and tagboarding functions where a reader of a blog can post feedback. A comment is generally a response to a specific post, whereas a tagboard is a general space for commenting on the entire blog or website. Off-blog mentions occur outside of the blog and include hearing from someone—in conversation, on the phone, via email or IM—that they read your blog. Readership may also be suggested—though not necessarily guaranteed—by the linking from one blog to another on a blogroll (or list of links to other blogs generally found in the sidebar of a blogpage).

"Blogroll" – a list of links to other blogs generally found in a blog's sidebar¹³

¹¹ Based on January 2006 and February-April 2006 survey data.

¹² This assumes the software the blogger uses provides site traffic logs or that a secondary counting application has been installed, which is often not the case.

¹³ For some bloggers, a different term is used to refer to a list of links to other blogs. For example, with LiveJournal, the list of links is titled "Friends" and may appear on a separate internal page, often with biographical information about the blogger. On Xanga, the same list is called "subscriptions," and appears on the side of the main blog page.

Given the fact that many types of simple blogging software do not incorporate traffic statistics into their blogging packages, it is not surprising that nearly half of the bloggers in our sample (47%) say they do not know their traffic statistics. One in five bloggers (22%) say they have fewer than ten hits a day in blog traffic, and 17% say they have 10 to 99 hits on a typical day. Just 13% have more than 100 hits a day, though a handful in this group has much larger traffic levels.

Of the bloggers who do know their traffic, male bloggers in our sample are more likely to report higher average levels of traffic. The 10 highest self-reports of blog traffic were all by male bloggers.¹⁴

Most bloggers post material for themselves, but one-third blog mostly to engage their audience.

When asked whether they blogged for themselves or for their audience, more than half of bloggers (52%) responded that they blog for themselves. About a third (32%) of bloggers blog mostly to entertain or engage their audience, and another 14% volunteered that they blogged for both themselves and their audience equally. About one percent say that neither personal motivation nor the idea of an audience motivated them.

Many bloggers who say they blog “for themselves” truly do—these bloggers report lower numbers of daily hits than other bloggers.

Blogs gain attention, if only at a personal level.

We asked bloggers what kind of attention they had received for their blog and from whom. Most frequently, bloggers received attention from other bloggers, either through exchanges of links or discussions proceeding from postings and their responses, either via comments or on other blogs. Nearly 60% of bloggers had been noticed by other bloggers. Young bloggers (age 18-29) were most likely to say that they had received this kind of attention. About half of bloggers (52%) report that their blog has been noticed by family members. Parents of children under age 18 living at home were more likely than those without children at home to say that they had had blog recognition by a family member.

Work colleagues, coworkers and bosses were another source of comment or recognition of a blog (though whether the recognition was positive or negative was not asked), with a bit more than a third (35%) of all bloggers hearing mention of their blog from this group. Another 20% of bloggers have received attention for their blog from members of their local community.

¹⁴ A further complication to fully understanding blog traffic--the term “hit” used in the survey question is one which can have a variety of meanings depending on the Web traffic software that a blogger uses, and does not generally represent individual unique visitors to a Web server or site.

Precious few bloggers achieve the kind of attention – very public, and perhaps nationally or internationally influential – that may come from political figures or the news media. Just 10% of bloggers have received attention from public officials, political campaigns or politicians. Nine percent of bloggers have had their blog mentioned by the news media.

In many ways it is not surprising that so few blogs have achieved major recognition politically or in the media. As Clay Shirky points out in his essay, *Power Laws, Weblogs and Inequality*,¹⁵ traffic to blogs builds unevenly, and those who garnered traffic early in the history of blogging for whatever reason will tend to continue to gain traffic over time, while newer blogs will have a harder time earning the same amount of traffic.

Half of bloggers believe their audience is mostly people they know.

Even in the absence of a reliable way to measure their blog traffic, about half of bloggers (49%) believe that their blog readership is mostly made up of people they personally know. Another third of bloggers (35%) believe that their readers are mostly people they have never met. About one in seven (14%) of bloggers say that their readership is a mix of personal friends, family and colleagues as well as people they have never met. Just 3% of bloggers say they do not have a clue as to who reads their blog.

Female bloggers and younger bloggers (age 18-29) are more likely than men or other age groups to say that mostly people they know personally read their blog. People whose blogs are read mostly by strangers are generally male, age 50 or older, and live in higher-income households.

Blog writers are enthusiastic blog readers.

Fully 90% of bloggers say they have read someone else's blog, compared with 39% of all internet users who say they have done so.

Bloggers who read other people's blogs are likely to check in at least a few times per week: 19% read someone else's blog several times a day; 16% do so about once a day; and 16% do so three to five days per week. One in five bloggers who read other blogs say they do so every couple of days. The rest (28%) of blog-reading bloggers say they do so every few weeks or less.

Frequent updates to one's own blog seem to beget frequent reading of others' material. Bloggers who post new material at least once a day are the most likely group to check on other blogs on a daily basis – 61% of daily bloggers say they do so, compared with 16% of bloggers who post weekly.

¹⁵ Shirky, Clay (2003) Power Laws, Weblogs and Inequality.
http://www.shirky.com/writings/powerlaw_weblog.html

Bloggers who say their blog is very important to them are more likely than other bloggers to read someone else's blog several times per day and to post comments.

Nearly nine in ten bloggers allow comments to be posted on their blog.

Commenting functions on blogs allow readers to post text responses to specific posts that the author has written. Comments can create a discussion, a place for feedback or provide a sense of community for both the author and his readers as well as serve as a way to get a sense of the number of active readers. On most blogs, the reader clicks on the comments link below an entry to both read the comments that others have left and to leave a comment themselves via a text box. Commenting functions are found on most blogs, but not all. Fully 87% of bloggers in our sample allow comments on their blogs; only 13% do not allow them. Younger bloggers are more likely than other age groups to allow comments on their blog. Fully 94% of bloggers age 18-29 allow comments, compared with 84% of bloggers age 30-49 and 69% of bloggers age 50-64.

Eighty-two percent of bloggers say they have posted a comment to someone else's blog. While male bloggers are more likely than female bloggers to not only check in on other blogs, but to do so several times a day, male bloggers are not significantly more likely than female bloggers to post comments. Bloggers with broadband at home are more likely than those with dial-up to say they read other blogs and are also more likely to post comments. Bloggers who are part of a multiple-author blog are no more likely than single-author bloggers to read someone else's blog, but they are more likely to post comments (91% vs. 78%).

Four in ten bloggers have a blogroll and most keep the list to under 50 blogs.

Another way to ascertain readership is through blogrolls or friend lists, which list links to other blogs.¹⁶ Two in five bloggers (41%) keep a blogroll on their blog, while 57% say they do not provide such a list. Bloggers who post new material daily are more likely to have a blogroll (70% vs. 30%).

Of those who have a blogroll, the largest percentage of bloggers have fewer than ten blogs on their blogroll. Nearly 43% of bloggers have fewer than 10 blogs listed on their blogroll. Another 29% say they have between 10 and 49 blogs on their link list and 18% have 50 or more links listed. Bloggers age 18 to 29 are more likely than older bloggers to have larger link lists.

¹⁶ Though as Amanda Lenhart has suggested in an academic paper on this topic, the mere fact of a blog being listed on a blogroll does not guarantee that the blog owner doing the listing is actually reading the blog listed. See Lenhart, Amanda. (2005) *Unstable Texts: An ethnographic look at how bloggers and their audience negotiate self-presentation, authenticity and norm formation*. Masters Thesis, Georgetown University. http://lenhart.flashesofpanic.com/Lenhart_thesis.pdf

A bit under half of all bloggers say their blog is listed on the blogroll of someone else. About 46% of bloggers say their blog is on someone else's roll, 34% say their blog is not listed elsewhere. Another one in five bloggers (20%) say they do not know whether their blog appears on another blogroll or not. Younger bloggers are more likely to say that their blog is listed on someone else's roll, as are bloggers who post material daily (78%), or who are members of multi-author blogs (57%).

Of bloggers who know that a link to their blog appears on someone else's blogroll, the largest group – 29% – say that 10 to 49 other blogs link back to them. Another quarter (27%) say that fewer than ten others link to their blog, and 19% say that more than 50 bloggers link to their blog. Another quarter say they do not know how many others link to them.

Few offer an RSS feed, possibly because many bloggers are not aware of the technology.

Bloggers were among the pioneers of RSS feeds, streamlining the users' experience by allowing them to interact with fresh content in one central clearinghouse instead of having to visit blog after blog. Still, RSS does not have a strong presence yet, even within the blogosphere. Only 18% of bloggers in our survey say they offered an RSS feed of their blog. Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) say they do not have an RSS feed for their blog content, and close to another quarter (23%) say they do not know if they had a feed, or did not answer the question. It is worth noting that bloggers are not behind the curve when it comes to this new technology. In a general internet-user survey conducted in May-June 2005 only 9% of internet users said they have a good idea of the meaning of the term "RSS feeds."

Part 6.

Bloggers by the Numbers

Bite-size chunks of survey data.

Bloggers by the Millions	
Number of American adults who use the internet	147 million
Number of American adults who read blogs	57 million
Number of American adults who keep a blog	12 million

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys. January 2006; Feb-April 2006; Nov-Dec 2005 and Feb-April 2006.

See You Next Year	
Percentage of bloggers who have been blogging for less than one year	51%
Percentage of bloggers who think they will still be blogging a year from now	82

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006. Margin of error is $\pm 7\%$.

Bloggers Have a Lot to Say	
Percentage of internet users who use instant messaging	37%
Percentage of bloggers who use instant messaging	78
Percentage of internet users who text message on a cell phone	35
Percentage of bloggers who text message on a cell phone	55
Percentage of internet users who read someone else's blog	39
Percentage of bloggers who read someone else's blog	90
Percentage of internet users who remix songs, text, or images into new creations	18
Percentage of bloggers who remix songs, text, or images into new creations	44
Percentage of internet users who share their own artwork, photos, stories, or videos online	26
Percentage of bloggers who share their own artwork, photos, stories, or videos online	77

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys. Internet user data is based on surveys conducted in January 2005, September 2005, Nov-Dec 2005, and January 2006. Blogger Callback Survey July 2005-February 2006.

A Comparison of All American Adults and Bloggers

Percentage of all American adults with a college degree	27%
Percentage of bloggers with a college degree	37
Percentage of all American adults who are knowledge-based professional workers	13
Percentage of bloggers who are knowledge-based professional workers	38
Percentage of all American adults who are students, either full- or part-time	16
Percentage of all bloggers who are students, either full- or part-time	38

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys. Education data for all Americans is from Feb-April 2006; margin of error is $\pm 2\%$. Employment data for all Americans is from Feb-March 2004; margin of error is $\pm 2\%$. Blogger data is from the Blogger Callback Survey, July 2005-February 2006; margin of error is $\pm 7\%$.

Methodology

The Blogger Callback Survey, sponsored by the Pew Internet and American Life Project (PIALP), conducted telephone interviews with 233 self-identified bloggers from previous surveys conducted for PIALP. The interviews were conducted in English by Princeton Data Source, LLC, from July 5, 2005 to February 17, 2006. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is $\pm 6.7\%$.

The low number of respondents is a significant limitation to this study.

It is important to note some limitations to this callback survey of bloggers. First, the survey is a callback study, which means that it inherently has some bias in that not everyone that we reached in a random sample is willing to take another survey. In addition, a relatively large number of people who told us in an earlier survey that they kept a blog or online journal said in this survey that they were not currently doing this. As a result, this survey has a response rate of 71% and a relatively low “n” or number of respondents, which can make it difficult to do complex analyses of the data with a high degree of certainty. Also, because of the difficulty of finding bloggers to talk to, the survey was conducted over a long period of time, which means that the blogosphere may have changed over the period of time that we were asking our questions.

In addition, some of the question wording in the survey may have used terms to describe elements of a blog that are different from the terms that some bloggers use. For example, a blogroll is also sometimes called a friends list or a subscription list. The term “hits” used to ask bloggers about their traffic has inconsistent meaning across software packages and thus may not accurately measure traffic to a particular weblog.

Respondents who keep a blog were eligible for the callback survey.

Sample for this survey was collected from several recent PIALP general population surveys.¹⁷ All respondents who said they kept their own blogs were eligible for this callback survey. Sample for the original surveys was drawn using standard list-assisted random digit dialing (RDD) methodology.

Interviews were conducted from July 5, 2005, to February 17, 2006. As many as 10 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with

¹⁷ The survey used for callback sample were: February 2004 and 2005 Tracking Surveys; November 2004 Tracking; November Activity Tracking; January 2005 Tracking; September 2005 Tracking; the Exploratorium Survey; Nov/Dec 2005 Tracking Survey; the Spyware Survey; and PSRAI's Demographic Tracking Survey.

potential respondents. Each household received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone at home.

Weighting was used to approximate the demographic characteristics of the national population.

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for patterns of nonresponse that might bias results. The interviewed sample of all bloggers was weighted to match parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, and region. These parameters were defined as the weighted demographics of all self-identified bloggers from the general population surveys from which callback sample was garnered. Table 1 compares weighted and unweighted sample distributions to population parameters.

Weighting was accomplished using Sample Balancing, a special iterative sample weighting program that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using a statistical technique called the Deming Algorithm. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the national population.

Additional national telephone surveys were used to capture an up-to-date estimate of the percentage of internet users who are currently blogging.

Random-digit telephone surveys conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International in two waves (November 29 to December 31, 2005, and February 15 to April 6, 2006) yielded a sample of 7,012 adults. The demographic information for internet users and bloggers listed in this report are derived from those large-scale surveys. For results based on internet users (n=4,753), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on bloggers (n=308), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 7 percentage points.

Further details about survey methodology are available in the questionnaire associated with this report, available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/>