

Blog backfires

By [Pedro de Gouveia](#)

16 Jan 2008

Seeing how influential blogs are becoming, it can be tempting to try to co-opt them as part of a public relations effort. Given the somewhat skeptical, anti-establishment tone of blogs, attempts to make them part of the plan can backfire.

Here are several examples:

Mazda's crash

First, Mazda created a blog called HalloweenM3 via a 23-year-old code-named “Kid Halloween” who listed his movie interests as all car chase movies. He linked to what he said were cool videos a friend of his recorded off local public access cable TV (which carries no ads). The videos were of Mazda cars break dancing, imitating skate boarders, and driving on Halloween night.

Bloggers unmasked Kid Halloween as part of a corporate PR effort when they noticed the production values and the same videos posted on the website of the agency that produced them. The response was an angry blogosphere and thousands of links to the story. Mazda pulled the site. [[Google search results](#)]



Dr Pepper's raging cow turns blogosphere sour

Cadbury's Dr Pepper division created a new milk beverage called Raging Cow with hip, youth-oriented, edgy flavors such as “chocolate insanity” and an angry cow icon. Dr Pepper hired Richards Interactive to create an obviously mock blog written by the cow.

So far so good. Then Richards recruited six bloggers in the target demographic (18 – 24), flew them to Dallas to brief them and work with them and give them product samples.

This was the part that angered the blogger world to such a degree that there was even a call for a boycott of the product

with a boycott viral graphic that spread through blogs.

They see the blogosphere as strictly a bottom-up grass roots world and react badly to any top-down marketing efforts.

[\[Google search results\]](#)



Moblogs and vblogs

Now blogs have moved on beyond text and graphics. Moblogs are blogs created by contributions from mobile devices. Some feature photos taken from mobile phones with cameras. The most popular such site is called "[textamerica](#)".



Podcasting

This is a form of audio blogging. Content creators make radio-style shows or interviews and feed them via RSS. Then you download them on your iPod or other MP3 player. [\[podcasting on Wikipedia\]](#)



Wikis

Another emerging, collaborative online platform useful for business is the [wiki](#). It is named after the Hawaiian word for "quick". Wikis are websites that can easily be edited by anyone visiting them. The best example is a giant online encyclopedia ([Wikipedia](#)) growing every day through contributors. Now the wiki format is being used by corporations for internal project collaboration, information sharing and knowledge management.



ABOUT PEDRO DE GOUVEIA

Pedro de Gouveia is GM of Salient Strategic Advertising and Design, which opened its doors in March 2006. The agency has more than 80 years of accumulated management experience acquired from within the South African advertising and marketing industry. Clients include Red Security, Shoprite, Caturra, Hungry Lion, Boss Paving, International Academy of Health and Skin Care and OFRA Cosmetics (USA).

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