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The world's 50 most powerful blogs

From Prince Harry in Afghanistan to Tom Cruise ranting about Scientology and footage from the Burmese uprising, blogging has never been bigger. It can help elect presidents and take down attorney generals while simultaneously celebrating the minutiae of our everyday obsessions. Here are the 50 best reasons to log on

Read Bobbie Johnson's blog on celebrity snooper Nick Denton [here](#)

Jessica Aldred, Amanda Astell, Rafael Behr, Lauren Cochrane, John Hind, Anna Pickard, Laura Potter, Alice Wignall and Eva Wiseman

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The following apology was published in the Observer's For the record column, Sunday March 16 2008

The article below said 'Psychodwarf' was Beppe Grillo's nickname for 'Mario Mastella, leader of the Popular-UDEUR centre-right party', but it's actually his nickname for Silvio Berlusconi. Mastella's first name is Clemente and Popular-UDEUR was part of Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition. And Peter Rojas, not Ryan Block, founded Engadget and co-founded Gizmodo. Apologies.

1. The Huffington Post

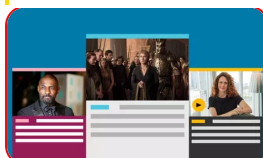
The history of political blogging might usefully be divided into the periods pre- and post-Huffington. Before the millionaire socialite Arianna Huffington decided to get in on the act, bloggers operated in a spirit of underdog solidarity. They hated the mainstream media - and the feeling was mutual.

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Bloggers saw themselves as gadflies, pricking the arrogance of established elites from their home computers, in their pyjamas, late into the night. So when, in 2005, Huffington decided to mobilise her fortune and media connections to create, from scratch, a flagship liberal blog she was roundly derided. Who, spluttered the original bloggerati, did she think she was?

But the pyjama purists were confounded. Arianna's money talked just as loudly online as off, and the Huffington Post quickly became one of the most influential and popular journals on the web. It recruited professional columnists and celebrity bloggers. It hoovered up traffic. Its launch was a landmark moment in the evolution of the web because it showed that many of the old rules still applied to the new medium: a bit of marketing savvy and deep pockets could go just as far as geek credibility, and get there faster.



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To borrow the gold-rush simile beloved of web pioneers, Huffington's success made the first generation of bloggers look like two-bit prospectors panning for nuggets in shallow creeks before the big mining operations moved in. In the era pre-

news for the news-makers



Read more

Huffington, big media companies ignored the web, or feared it; post-Huffington they started to treat it as just another marketplace, open to exploitation. Three years on, Rupert Murdoch owns MySpace, while newbie amateur bloggers have to gather traffic crumbs from under the table of the big-time publishers.

Least likely to post 'I'm so over this story - check out the New York Times'

huffingtonpost.com

2. Boing Boing

Lego reconstructions of pop videos and cakes baked in the shape of iPods are not generally considered relevant to serious political debate. But even the most earnest bloggers will often take time out of their busy schedule to pass on some titbit of mildly entertaining geek ephemera. No one has done more to promote pointless, yet strangely cool, time-wasting stuff on the net than the editors of Boing Boing (subtitle: A Directory of Wonderful Things). It launched in January 2000 and has had an immeasurable influence on the style and idiom of blogging. But hidden among the pictures of steam-powered CD players and Darth Vader tea towels there is a steely, ultra-liberal political agenda: championing the web as a global medium free of state and corporate control.

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Boing Boing chronicles cases where despotic regimes have silenced or imprisoned bloggers. It helped channel blogger scorn on to Yahoo and Google when they kowtowed to China's censors in order to win investment opportunities. It was instrumental in exposing the creeping erosion of civil liberties in the US under post-9/11 'Homeland Security' legislation. And it routinely ridicules attempts by the music and film industries to persecute small-time file sharers and bedroom pirates instead of getting their own web strategies in order. It does it all with gentle, irreverent charm, polluted only occasionally with gratuitous smut.

Their dominance of the terrain where technology meets politics makes the Boing Boing crew geek aristocracy.

Least likely to post 'Has anyone got a stamp?'

boingboing.net

3. Techcrunch

Techcrunch began in 2005 as a blog about dotcom start-ups in Silicon Valley, but has quickly become one of the most influential news websites across the entire technology industry. Founder Michael Arrington had lived through the internet goldrush as a lawyer and entrepreneur before deciding that writing about new companies was more of an opportunity than starting them himself. His site is now ranked the third-most popular blog in the world by search engine Technorati, spawning a mini-empire of websites and conferences as a result. Business Week named Arrington one of the 25 most influential people on the web, and Techcrunch has even scored interviews with Barack Obama and John McCain.

With a horde of hungry geeks and big money investors online, Techcrunch is the largest of a wave of technology-focused blog publishers to tap into the market - GigaOm, PaidContent and Mashable among them - but often proves more contentious than its rivals, thanks to Arrington's aggressive relationships with traditional media and his conflicts of interest as an investor himself.

Least likely to post 'YouTube? It'll never catch on'

4. Kottke

One of the early wave of blogging pioneers, web designer Jason Kottke started keeping track of interesting things on the internet as far back as 1998. The site took off, boosted partly through close links to popular blog-building website Blogger (he later married one of the founders). And as the phenomenon grew quickly, Kottke became a well-known filter for surfers on the lookout for interesting reading.

Kottke remains one of the purest old-skool bloggers on the block - it's a selection of links to websites and articles rather than a repository for detailed personal opinion - and although it remains fairly esoteric, his favourite topics include film, science, graphic design and sport. He often picks up trends and happenings before friends start forwarding them to your inbox. Kottke's decision to consciously avoid politics could be part of his appeal (he declares himself 'not a fan'), particularly since the blog's voice is literate, sober and inquiring, unlike much of the red-faced ranting found elsewhere online.

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A couple of key moments boosted Kottke's fame: first, being threatened with legal action by Sony for breaking news about a TV show, but most notably quitting his web-design job and going solo three years ago. A host of 'micropatrons' and readers donated cash to cover his salary, but these days he gets enough advertising to pay the bills. He continues to plug away at the site as it enters its 10th year.

Least likely to post 'Look at this well wicked vid of a dog on a skateboard'

kottke.org

5. Dooce

One of the best-known personal bloggers (those who provide more of a diary than a soapbox or reporting service), Heather Armstrong has been writing online since 2001. Though there were personal websites that came before hers, certain elements conspired to make Dooce one of the biggest public diaries since Samuel Pepys's (whose diary is itself available, transcribed in blog form, at Pepysdiary.com). Primarily, Armstrong became one of the first high-profile cases of somebody being fired for writing about her job. After describing events that her employer - a dotcom start-up - thought reflected badly on them, Armstrong was sacked. The incident caused such fierce debate that Dooce found itself turned into a verb that is used in popular parlance (often without users realising its evolution): 'dooched - to be fired from one's job as a direct result of one's personal website'.

Behind Dooce stands an army of personal bloggers perhaps not directly influenced by, or even aware of, her work - she represents the hundreds of thousands who decide to share part of their life with strangers.

Armstrong's honesty has added to her popularity, and she has written about work, family life, postnatal depression, motherhood, puppies and her Mormon upbringing with the same candid and engaging voice. Readers feel that they have been brought into her life, and reward her with their loyalty. Since 2005 the advertising revenue on her blog alone has been enough to support her family.

Least likely to post 'I like babies but I couldn't eat a whole one'

dooce.com

6. Perezhilton

Once dubbed 'Hollywood's most hated website', Perezhilton (authored by Mario Lavandeira since 2005) is the gossip site celebrities fear most. Mario, 29, is famous for scrawling rude things (typically doodles about drug use) over pap photos and outing closeted stars. On the day of

Lindsay Lohan's arrest for drink-driving, he posted 60 updates, and 8m readers logged on.

He's a shameless publicity whore, too. His reality show premiered on VH1 last year, and his blogsite is peppered with snaps of him cuddling Paris Hilton at premieres. Fergie from Black Eyed Peas alluded to him in a song, and Avril Lavigne phoned, asking him to stop writing about her after he repeatedly blogged about her lack of talent and her 'freakishly long arm'.

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Least likely to post 'Log on tomorrow for Kofi Annan's live webchat'

perezhilton.com

7. Talking points memo

At some point during the disputed US election of 2000 - when Al Gore was famously defeated by a few hanging chads - Joshua Micah Marshall lost patience. Despite working as a magazine editor, Marshall chose to vent on the web. Eight years later Talking Points Memo and its three siblings draw in more than 400,000 viewers a day from their base in New York.

Marshall has forged a reputation, and now makes enough money to run a small team of reporters who have made an impact by sniffing out political scandal and conspiracy. 'I think in many cases the reporting we do is more honest, more straight than a lot of things you see even on the front pages of great papers like the New York Times and the

Washington Post,' he said in an interview last year. 'But I think both kinds of journalism should exist, should co-exist.'

Although his unabashed partisan approach is admonished by many old-fashioned American reporters, Marshall's skills at pulling together the threads of a story have paid dividends. Last year he helped set the agenda after George Bush covertly fired a string of US attorneys deemed disloyal to the White House. While respected mainstream media figures accused Marshall of seeing conspiracy, he kept digging: the result was the resignation of attorney general Alberto Gonzales, and a prestigious George Polk journalism award for Marshall, the first ever for a blogger.

Least likely to post 'Barack is so, like, gnarly to the max'

talkingpointsmemo.com

8. Icanhascheezburger

Amused by a photo of a smiling cat, idiosyncratically captioned with the query 'I Can Has A Cheezburger?', which he found on the internet while between jobs in early 2007, Eric Nakagawa of Hawaii emailed a copy of it to a friend (known now only as Tofuburger). Then, on a whim, they began a website, first comprising only that one captioned photo but which has since grown into one of the most popular blogs in the world.

Millions of visitors visit Icanhascheezburger.com to see, create, submit and vote on Lolcats (captioned photos of characterful cats in different settings). The 'language' used in the captions, which this blog has helped to spread globally, is known as Lolspeak, aka Kitty Pidgin. In Lolspeak, human becomes 'hooman', Sunday 'bunday', exactly 'xackly' and asthma 'azma'. There is now an effort to develop a LOLCode computer-programming language and another to translate the Bible into Lolspeak.

Least likely to post 'Actually, dogs are much more interesting...'

icanhascheezburger.com

9. Beppe Grillo

Among the most visited blogs in the world is that of Beppe Grillo, a popular Italian comedian and political commentator, long persona non grata on state TV, who is infuriated daily - especially by corruption and financial scandal in his country.

A typical blog by Grillo calls, satirically or otherwise, for the people of Naples and Campania to declare independence, requests that Germany declare war on Italy to help its people ('We will throw violets and mimosa to your Franz and Gunther as they march through') or reports on Grillo's ongoing campaign to introduce a Bill of Popular Initiative to remove from office all members of the Italian parliament who've ever had a criminal conviction. Grillo's name for Mario Mastella, leader of the Popular-UDEUR centre-right party, is Psychodwarf. 'In another country, he would have been the dishwasher in a pizzeria,' says Grillo. Through his blog, he rallied many marchers in 280 Italian towns and cities for his 'Fuck You' Day last September.

Least likely to post 'Sign up to our campaign to grant Silvio Berlusconi immunity'

beppegrillo.it

10. Gawker

A New York blog of 'snarky' gossip and commentary about the media industry, Gawker was founded in 2002 by journalist Nick Denton, who had previously helped set up a networking site called First Tuesday for web and media entrepreneurs. Gawker's earliest fascination was gossip about Vogue editor Anna Wintour, garnered from underlings at Conde

Nast. This set the tone for amassing a readership of movers and shakers on the Upper East Side, as well as 'the angry creative underclass' wishing either to be, or not be, like them, or both ('the charmingly incompetent X... the wildly successful blowhard'). Within a year Gawker's readers were making 500,000 page views per month. Nowadays the figure is 11m, recovering from a recent dip to 8m thanks to the showing of a Tom Cruise 'Indoctrination Video' which Scientologists had legally persuaded YouTube to take down. Gawker remains the flagship of Gawker Media, which now comprises 14 blogs, although gossiping by ex-Gawker insiders, a fixation on clicks (which its bloggers are now paid on the basis of) and fresh anxiety over defining itself have led some to claim Gawker has become more 'tabloidy' and celeb- and It-girl-orientated, and less New York-centric. But its core value - 'media criticism' - appears to be intact.

Least likely to post 'We can only wish Rupert Murdoch well with his new venture'

gawker.com

11. The Drudge Report

The Report started life as an email gossip sheet, and then became a trashy webzine with negligible traffic. But thanks to the decision in 1998 to run a scurrilous rumour - untouched by mainstream media - about Bill Clinton and a White House intern named Monica Lewinsky, it became a national phenomenon. Recent scoops include Barack Obama dressed in tribal garb and the fact [Prince Harry](#) was serving in Afghanistan. Drudge is scorned by journalists and serious bloggers for his tabloid sensibilities, but his place in the media history books is guaranteed. And much though they hate him, the hacks all still check his front page - just in case he gets another president-nobbling scoop.

Least likely to post 'Oops, one sec - just got to check the facts...'

drudgereport.com

12. Xu Jinglei

Jinglei is a popular actress (and director of Letter From An Unknown Woman) in China, who in 2005 began a blog ('I got the joy of expressing myself') which within a few months had garnered 11.5m visits and spurred thousands of other Chinese to blog. In 2006 statisticians at Technorati, having previously not factored China into their calculations, realised Jinglei's blog was the most popular in the world. In it she reports on her day-to-day moods, reflections, travels, social life and cats ('Finally the first kitten's been born!!! Just waiting for the second, in the middle of the third one now!!!!!!! It's midnight, she gave birth to another one!!!!!!'). She blogs in an uncontroversial but quite reflective manner, aiming to show a 'real person' behind the celebrity. Each posting, usually ending with 'I have to be up early' or a promise to report tomorrow on a DVD she is watching, is followed by many hundreds of comments from readers - affirming their love, offering advice, insisting she take care. Last year her blog passed the 1bn clicks mark.

Least likely to post 'Forget the kittens - get a Kalashnikov!!!!!!'

blog.sina.com.cn/xujinglei

13. Treehugger

Treehugger is a green consumer blog with a mission to bring a sustainable lifestyle to the masses. Its ethos, that a green lifestyle does not have to mean sacrifice, and its positive, upbeat feel have attracted over 1.8m unique users a month. Consistently ranked among the top 20 blogs on Technorati, Treehugger has 10 staff but also boasts 40 writers from a wide variety of backgrounds in more than 10 countries around the world, who generate more than 30 new posts a day across eight categories, ranging from fashion and beauty, travel and nature, to science and technology. Treehugger began as an MBA class project four years ago and says it now generates enough revenue from sponsorship and advertising to pay all its staffers and writers. It has developed a highly engaged community and has added popular services like TreeHugger.tv, and a user-generated blog, Hugg. It was bought by the Discovery Channel last year for a rumoured \$10m.

Least likely to post 'Why Plastic Bags rock'

treehugger.com

14. Microsiervos

Microsiervos, which began in 2001, took its name from Douglas Coupland's novel Microserfs, a diary entry-style novel about internet pioneers. It is run by Alvy, Nacho and Wicho, three friends in Madrid, who blog in Spanish. The second most popular blog in Europe and the 13th most popular in the world (according to eBizMBA), Microsiervos concerns itself with science, curiosities, strange reality, chance, games, puzzles, quotations, conspiracies, computers, hacking, graffiti and design. It is informal, friendly and humorous, moving from news of an eccentric new letter font to reflections on the discovery of the Milky Way having double the thickness it was previously thought to have.

Least likely to post 'The internet is, like, so over'

microsiervos.com

15. TMZ

You want relentless celebrity gossip on tap? TMZ will provide it, and when we say relentless, we mean relentless. The US site is dripping with 'breaking news' stories, pictures and videos, and deems celeb activity as mundane as stars walking to their cars worthy of a video post. TMZ was launched in 2005 by AOL and reportedly employs around 20 writers to keep the celeb juice flowing. It pulls in 1.6m readers a month and is endlessly cited as the source for red-top celeb stories. It was the first to break Alec Baldwin's now infamous 'rude little pig' voicemail last April, for instance. TMZ prides itself on being close to the action, so close, in fact, a TMZ photographer had his foot run over by Britney Spears mid-meltdown. They auctioned the tyre-tracked sock on eBay in aid of US charity the Children's Defense Fund last autumn.

Least likely to post 'Paris is a metaphor for Third World debt'

TMZ.com

16. Engadget

Engadget provides breaking news, rumours and commentary on, for instance, a camera able to track a head automatically, the very latest HD screen or 'visual pollution' concerns prompted by hand-held pico laser-projectors. The world's most popular blog on gadgets and consumer electronics, Engadget was founded by Peter Rojas in 2004 and won the Web Blogs Awards that year and each year since. Now part of Weblogs Inc (owned by AOL), it is offered on many other sites (including GoogleMail) as a default RSS feed, and is published in English, Spanish, Japanese and Chinese. Last year, a mistake confirmed Engadget's power - upon reporting a supposed email (which turned out to be a hoax) from Apple, informing Apple employees of a delay in the launch of iPhone, Apple's share price fell by 3 per cent within minutes. Rojas also co-founded rival gadget blog Gizmodo.

Least likely to post 'An iWhat?'

engadget.com

17. Marbury

No matter what happens between now and 4 November, you can be certain the US presidential election of 2008 will be among the most historically important and dramatic of any fought. Having an informed opinion will be a must, but if you are as yet unable to tell your Iowa Caucus from your Feiler Faster Thesis, Marbury - a British blog on American politics - is the place to start. The site's creator, Ian Leslie, is an ex-expat who fell for American politics during a four-year stint living in New York. The site signposts important events and interesting analyses, gives context and witty commentary on everything from the most serious speeches to the silliest election-themed YouTube clips. And West Wing fans will be pleased to note that the blog's name is a reference to the show's British ambassador to the United States, Lord John Marbury, who, appropriately enough, provided an eccentrically British but reliably insightful appraisal of American politics.

Least likely to post 'Is it just me or is Romney getting cuter?'

marbury.typepad.com

18. Chez Pim

Attracting around 10,000 people from all over the globe to her site every week, Pim Techamuanvith has tried and tested an awful lot of food. From Michelin-starred restaurants to street food and diners, she samples it all, and posts her thoughts and pictures to share with other foodie fans. She advises her readers on what cooking equipment to go for, posts recipe suggestions for them to try, and gives them a nudge in the direction of which food shows are worth a watch. She's not just famous on the net, she's attracted global coverage in the media with her writing, recipes and interviews appearing in such diverse publications as the New York Times, Le Monde and the Sydney Morning Herald.

Least likely to post 'Chocolate's my favourite flavour of Pop Tart'

chezpim.typepad.com

19. Basic thinking

Recently rated the 18th most influential blog in the world by Wikio, Basic Thinking, which has the tag line 'Mein Haus, Mein Himmel, Mein Blog', is run by Robert Basic of Usingen, Germany, who aims 'to boldly blog what no one has blogged before', and recently posted his 10,000th entry. Basic Thinking reports on technology and odds and ends, encouraging readers to rummage through an 1851 edition of the New York Times one minute and to contemplate the differences between mooses and elks the next.

Least likely to post 'Mein heim, mein gott - I need to get a life'

basicthinking.de/blog

20. The Sartorialist

As ideas go, this one is pretty simple. Man wanders around Manhattan with a camera. Spots someone whose outfit he likes. Asks if he can take a picture. Goes home and posts it on his blog. But the man in question is Scott Schuman, who had 15 years' experience working at the high-fashion end of the clothing industry before starting The Sartorialist. He's got a sharp eye for a good look, a gift for grabbing an on-the-hoof pic and an unwavering enthusiasm for people going the extra mile in the name of style. Minimalist it might be, but his site - a basic scroll of full-length street portraits, occasionally annotated with a brief note - is

mesmeric and oddly beautiful. The site attracts more than 70,000 readers a day and has been named one of Time's Top 100 Design Influences. So if you're out and about and a guy called Scott asks to take your picture, just smile. You're about to become a style icon.

Least likely to post 'Sometimes you need to chill in a shellsuit'

thesartorialist.blogspot.com

21. Students for a free Tibet

Taking the protest online, Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) is a global, grassroots network of students campaigning to free Tibet, which has been occupied by China since 1950. Students in Tibet face arrest for posting on the site, but many escape to blog about their experiences in exile. With a history of direct action, the group is now uniting worldwide members through the web, blogging to spread word of news and protests, and using sites like Facebook to raise funds. The organisation, which was founded in 1994 in New York, spans more than 35 countries and gets up to 100,000 hits a month. In 2006, SFT used a satellite link at Mount Everest base camp to stream live footage on to YouTube of a demonstration against Chinese Olympic athletes practising carrying the torch there. Later this year the web will be a critical tool in organising and reporting protests during the games. 'SFT plans to stage protests in Beijing during the games and post blogs as events unfold,' says Iain Thom, the SFT UK national co-ordinator. 'But for security reasons we can't reveal details of how or where yet.' Similarly, a massive protest in London on 10 March will be the subject

of intense cyber comment. In response, the site has fallen victim to increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks. Investigations have traced the sources back to China, leading to speculation that the Chinese authorities are trying to sabotage the site to stop online critics.

Least likely to post 'Hey guyz, any hotties in the Nepal region?!'

studentsforafreetibet.org

22. Jezebel

Last year Gawker Media launched Jezebel - a blog which aimed to become a brilliant version of a women's magazine. It succeeded quickly, in part by acknowledging the five big lies perpetuated by the women's media: The Cover Lie (female forgeries of computer-aided artistry); The Celebrity-Profile Lie (flattery, more nakedly consumerist and less imaginative than the movies they're shilling for); The Must-Have Lie (magazine editors are buried in free shit); The Affirmation Crap Lie (you are insecure about things you didn't know it was possible to be insecure about); and The Big Meta Lie (we're devastatingly affected by the celebrity media). Their regular 'Crap Email From a Dude' feature is especially fantastic, as is their coverage of current stories (opinionated and consistently hilarious) and politics. It offers the best lady-aimed writing on the web, along with lots of nice pictures of Amy Winehouse getting out of cars.

Least likely to post 'How To Look Skinny While Pleasing Your Man!'

jezebel.com

23. Gigazine

Created by Satoshi Yamasaki and Mazaki Keito of Osaka, Gigazine is the most popular blog in Japan, covering the latest in junk foods and beverages, games, toys and other ingredients of colourful pop product culture. Visitors first witness 'eye candy' such as David Beckham condoms (from China), 75 turtles in a fridge, the packaging for Mega Frankfurters or a life-size Ferrari knitted from wool, learn of a second X-Files movie moving into pre-pre-production, watch a vacuum-cleaning robot being tested and compare taste reports of Kentucky Fried Chicken's new Shrimp Tsuisuta Chilli.

Least likely to post 'Anyone seen these charming croquet mallets?'

gigazine.net

24. Girl with a one-track mind

Following in the footsteps of Belle de Jour - the anonymous blogger claiming to be a sex worker - the girl with a one track mind started writing in open, explicit terms about her lively sex life in 2004. By 2006, the blog was bookified and published by Ebury, and spent much time on bestseller lists, beach towels and hidden behind the newspapers of serious-looking commuters. Though she was keen to retain her anonymity and continue her career in the film industry, author 'Abby Lee' was soon outed as north Londoner Zoe Margolis by a Sunday newspaper.

Least likely to post 'I've got a headache'

girlwithaonetrackmind.blogspot.com

25. Mashable

Founded by Peter Cashmore in 2005, Mashable is a social-networking news blog, reporting on and reviewing the latest developments, applications and features available in or for MySpace, Facebook, Bebo and countless lesser-known social-networking sites and services, with a special emphasis on functionality. The blog's name Mashable is derived from Mashup, a term for the fusing of multiple web services. Readers

range from top web 2.0 developers to savvy 13-year-olds wishing for the latest plug-ins to pimp up their MySpace pages.

Least likely to post 'But why don't you just phone them up?'

mashable.com

26. Greek tragedy

Stephanie Klein's blog allows her to 'create an online scrapbook of my life, complete with drawings, photos and my daily musings' or, rather, tell tawdry tales of dating nightmares, sexual encounters and bodily dysfunctions. Thousands of women tune in for daily accounts of her narcissistic husband and nightmarish mother-in-law and leave equally self-revealing comments transforming the pages into something of a group confessional. The blog has been so successful that Klein has penned a book, *Straight Up and Dirty*, and has featured in countless magazine and newspaper articles around the globe. Not bad for what Klein describes as 'angst online'.

Least likely to post 'Enough about me - what's your news?'

stephanieklein.blogs.com

27. Holy Moly

If a weekly flick through *Heat* just isn't enough, then a daily intake of Holy Moly will certainly top up those celeb gossip levels. The UK blog attracts 750,000 visitors a month and 240,000 celeb-obsessees subscribe to the accompanying weekly mail-out. It's an established resource for newspaper columnists - both tabloid and broadsheet - and there's a daily 'News from the Molehill' slot in the free London paper *The Metro*. Last month Holy Moly created headlines in its own right by announcing a rethink on publishing paparazzi shots. The blog will no longer publish pics obtained when 'pursuing people in cars and on bikes', as well as 'celebrities with their kids', 'people in distress at being photographed' and off-duty celebs. But don't think that means the omnipresent celeb blog that sends shivers round offices up and down the country on 'mail-out day' is slowing down - there has been talk of Holy Moly expanding into TV.

Least likely to post 'What do you think of the new Hanif Kureishi?'

holymoly.co.uk

28. Michelle Malkin

Most surveys of web use show a fairly even gender balance online, but political blogging is dominated by men. One exception is Michelle Malkin, a conservative newspaper columnist and author with one of the most widely read conservative blogs in the US. That makes her one of the most influential women online. Her main theme is how liberals betray America by being soft on terrorism, peddling lies about global warming and generally lacking patriotism and moral fibre.

Least likely to post 'That Obama's got a lovely smile, hasn't he?'

www.michellemalkin.com

29. Cranky flier

There's nowhere to hide for airlines these days. Not with self-confessed 'airline dork' Brett Snyder, aka Cranky Flier, keeping tabs on their progress. He's moved on from spending his childhood birthdays in airport hotels, face pressed against the window watching the planes come in, and turned his attention to reporting on the state of airlines. His CV is crammed with various US airline jobs, which gives him the insider knowledge to cast his expert eye over everything from the recent 777 emergency landing at Heathrow to spiralling baggage handling costs and the distribution of air miles to 'virtual assistants'.

Least likely to post 'There's nothing wrong with a well-conducted cavity search'

crankyflier.com

30. Go fug yourself

It's a neat word, fug - just a simple contraction of 'ugly' and its preceding expletive - but from those three letters an entire fugging industry has grown. At Go Fug Yourself, celebrity offenders against style, elegance and the basic concept of making sure you're covering your reproductive organs with some form of clothing before you leave the house are 'fugged' by the site's writers, Jessica Morgan and Heather Cocks. In their hands, the simple pleasure of yelping 'Does she even OWN a mirror?' at a paparazzi shot of some B-list headcase in fuchsia becomes an epic battle against dull Oscar gowns, ill-fitting formalwear and Lindsay Lohan's leggings. The site stays on the right side of gratuitous nastiness by dishing out generous praise when due (the coveted 'Well Played'), being genuinely thoughtful on questions of taste and funnier on the subject of random starlets in sequined sweatpants than you could possibly even imagine.

Least likely to post 'Oprah looked great in those stretch jeans'

gofugyourself.typepad.com

31. Gaping void

In the middle of a career as an adman in New York, Hugh MacLeod found himself doodling acerbic and almost surreal cartoons on the back of people's business cards to pass the time in bars. Everyone seemed to like the idea, so he kept going. Things started going gangbusters when he pimped his cartoons on the internet, and as he built an audience through his blog, he started writing about his other passion - the new world of understanding how to adapt marketing to the new world of the net. Remember when everybody was madly printing off vouchers from the web that saved you 40 per cent? That was one of his: aimed at helping shift more bottles from Stormhoek, the South African vintner he works with.

Least likely to post 'This product really sells itself'

gapingvoid.com

32. Dirtydirty dancing

If someone stole your camera, took it out for the night to parties you yourself aren't cool enough to go to and returned it in the morning, you would probably find it loaded up with pictures like those posted on DirtyDirtyDancing. The site seems pretty lo-fi - just entries called things like 'Robin's birthday' and 'FEB16' featuring pages of images of hip young things getting their party on. And that's it. The original delight was in logging on to see if you'd made it on to the site - your chances increase exponentially if you're beautiful, avant-garde and hang out at clubs and parties in the edgier parts of London - but now the site can get up to 900,000 hits a month from all over the world.

Least likely to post 'Revellers at the Earl of Strathdore's hunt ball'

dirtydirtydancing.com

33. Crooked timber

With a title pulled from Immanuel Kant's famous statement that 'out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made', it's an amalgam of academic and political writing that has muscled its way into the epicentre of intelligent discussion since its conception in 2003. Formed as an internet supergroup, pulling several popular intellectual blogs together, Crooked Timber now has 16 members - largely

academics - across the US, Europe, Australia and Asia. The site has built itself a reputation as something of an intellectual powerhouse; a sort of global philosophical thinktank conducted via blog.

Least likely to post 'Did anyone see Casualty last night?'

crookedtimber.org

34. Beansprouts

Combining diary, opinion and green lifestyle tips, Beansprouts is a blog that covers one family's 'search for the good life'. Melanie Rimmer and her family of five live in a 'small ex-council house' with a garden on the edge of farmland in Poynton, Cheshire. They grow food on an allotment nearby, keep chickens and bees and 'try to be green, whatever that means'. Rimmer set up the blog nearly two years ago when she first got the allotment and says she felt it was something worth writing about. With one post a day, often more, topics for discussion can range from top 10 uses for apples to making scrap quilts.

Least likely to post 'Make mine a Happy Meal'

bean-sprouts.blogspot.com

35. The offside

Launched by 'Bob' after the success of his WorldCupBlog in 2006, Offside is a UK-based blog covering football leagues globally, gathering news and visuals on all of it, inviting countless match reports and

promoting discussion on all things soccer, from the attack by a colony of red ants on a player in the Sao Paulo state championship third division, to the particular qualities of every one of Cristiano Ronaldo's goals so far this season. Considered by many to be the best 'serious' blog in the game, it nevertheless promises irreverently, 'If there is a sex scandal in England, we'll be stuck in the middle of it. If a player is traded for 1,000lb of beef in Romania, we'll cook the steak. And if something interesting happens in Major League Soccer, we'll be just as surprised as you.'

Least likely to post 'Check out Ronaldo's bubble butt'

theoffside.com

36. Peteite Anglaise

The tagline of a new book hitting British shelves reads 'In Paris, in love, in trouble', but if it were telling the whole story, perhaps it should read 'In public' too. Bored at work one day in 2004, expat secretary Catherine Sanderson happened upon the concept of blogging. With a few clicks and an impulse she created her own blog, and quickly gathered fans who followed her life in Paris, the strained relationship with her partner and adventures with her toddler. And there was plenty of drama to watch: within a year her relationship had broken up, and she'd met a new man who wooed her online. Readers were mesmerised by her unflinching dedication to telling the whole story, no matter how she would be judged. Soon afterwards, however, Sanderson's employers found out about the blog and promptly fired her. Defeat turned into victory, however, with the press attention she gathered from the dismissal not only securing victory in an industrial tribunal, but also helping her score a lucrative two-book deal with Penguin.

Least likely to post 'J'ai assez parle de moi, qu'est-ce que vous pensez?'

petiteanglaise.com

37. Crooks and liars

Founded in 2004 by John Amato (a professional saxophonist and flautist), Crooks and Liars is a progressive/liberal-leaning political blog, with over 200m visitors to date, which is illustrated by video and audio

clips of politicians and commentators on podiums, radio and TV. Readers post a variety of comments on political talking points of the day, although 9/11 conspiracy theories are often deleted, and there is a daily round-up of notable stories on other political blogs.

Least likely to post 'So just what is a caucus?'

crooksandliars.com

38. Chocolate and Zucchini

For Clothilde Dusoulier, a young woman working in computing and living in the Paris district of Montmartre, starting a blog was a way of venting her boundless enthusiasm for food without worrying she might be boring her friends with it. Five years later Chocolate and Zucchini, one of the most popular cooking blogs, has moved from being a hobby to a full-time career. The mixture of an insider's view on gastronomic Paris, conversational, bilingual writing and the sheer irresistibility of her recipes pull in thousands of readers every day. This, in turn, has led to multiple books and the ability to forge a dream career as a food writer. The name of the blog is, she says, a good metaphor for her cooking style: 'The zucchini illustrates my focus on healthy and natural eating... and the chocolate represents my decidedly marked taste for anything sweet.'

Least likely to post 'Just add instant mash'

chocolateandzucchini.com

39. Samizdata

Samizdata is one of Britain's oldest blogs. Written by a bunch of anarcho-libertarians, tax rebels, Eurosceptics and Wildean individualists, it has a special niche in the political blogosphere: like a dive bar, on the rational side of the border between fringe opinion and foam-flecked paranoid ranting. Samizdata serves its opinions up strong and neat, but still recognisable as politics. On the other side of the border, in the wilderness, the real nutters start.

Least likely to post 'I'd say it's six of one, half a dozen of the other'

samizdata.net

40. The daily dish

Andrew Sullivan is an expat Brit, blogging pioneer and defier-in-chief of American political stereotypes. He is an economic conservative (anti-tax), a social liberal (soft on drugs) and a foreign policy hawk (pro-war). He endorsed George Bush in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004. Barack Obama is his preferred Democrat candidate in 2008. So he is either confused, a hypocrite or a champion of honest non-partisanship - depending on your point of view. He is also gay, a practising Roman Catholic and HIV-positive, a set of credentials he routinely deploys in arguments to confuse atheist liberals and evangelical conservatives.

Least likely to post 'Sorry, I can't think of anything to say'

andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com

41. The F word

Founded in 2001, the UK's first feminist webzine is responsible for reviving debates around feminism in Britain. Edited by Jess McCabe, the site, which receives around 3,000 hits a day, is dedicated to providing a forum for contemporary feminist voices, with a daily news blog, features on stereotypes and censorship, podcasts on pornography and regular feminist film reviews.

Least likely to post 'What's the difference between a woman and a condom?'

theword.org.uk

42. Jonny B's private secret diary

Growing in popularity since its debut in 2003, Jonny B's diary - which is clearly neither private nor terribly secret - catalogues the rock and bowls lifestyle of one man in the depths of rural Norfolk. With the mocking self-awareness of a modern Diary of a Nobody, the author tells tales of wild nights at the village pub and the fortunes of the local bowls team. As a slow, gentle satire on modern village life, it is often held up as an example of blog as sitcom, and has not only attracted a loyal band of readers, but a dedicated fan club on Facebook desperate to work out the real identity of the wit behind the site. Previous guesses have included Chris Evans and Johnny Vaughan, though both have been strenuously denied.

Least likely to post 'OMG, I saw Jessica Simpson in Lidl and she signed my bum!'

privatesecretdiary.com

43. Popjustice

When Smash Hits! died, Popjustice became the new home of pop music. Founded in 2000 by Peter Robinson, it combines fandom with music news and raw critique, all hilarious, and all blindingly correct. Recent features include a review of Eurovision failure Daz Sampson's new single 'Do A Little Dance' ('The listener is invited to muse on the sad inevitability of their own death') and a furious debate about the future of Girls Aloud.

Least likely to post 'I prefer Pierre Boulez's interpretation of Mahler's third'

popjustice.com

44. Waiter rant

Rant isn't quite the right word for this collection of carefully crafted stories from the sharp end of the service industry in a busy New York restaurant. 'The Waiter', as the author is known, has been blogging his experiences with fussy customers and bad tippers since 2004, winning a gong at blogging's biggest awards, the Bloggies, in 2007. It's representative - but by no means the first - of the so-called 'job-blogs', with people from all walks of life, from ambulance drivers (randomactsofreality.net) and policemen (coppersblog.blogspot.com) to the greatly loved but now defunct Call Centre Confidential. Between them they chronicle life in their trade, and usually from behind a veil of anonymity. Something about the everyday nature of The Waiter - a person we like to pretend is invisible or treat with servile disdain - deconstructing the event later with a subtle, erudite typestroke, has captured the public imagination and (hopefully) made some people behave better in restaurants than they otherwise might.

Least likely to post 'The customer is always right'

waiterrant.net

45. Hecklerspray

The internet's not exactly short of gossip websites providing scurrilous rumours of who did what to whom, but some stand out from the rest. Sharply written and often laugh-out-loud funny, Hecklerspray has been called the British alternative to Perez Hilton, but it's different in important ways: the emphasis here is on style and wit, with a stated aim to 'chronicle the ups and downs of all that is populist and niche within the murky world of entertainment'. Basically, it's gossip for grown-ups.

Least likely to post 'If you can't say anything nice...'

hecklerspray.com

46. WoWinsider

WoWinsider is a blog about the World of Warcraft, which is the most popular online role-playing game in the world, one for which over 10m pay subscriptions each month in order to control an avatar (a character, chosen from 10 races) and have it explore landscapes, perform quests, build skills, fight monsters to the death and interact with others' avatars. WoWinsider reports on what's happening within WoW ('Sun's Reach Harbor has been captured'). It also reports on outside developments and rumours ('A future patch will bring a new feature: threat meters'). Supporters of US presidential candidate Ron Paul promoted on WoWInsider their recent virtual mass march through the WoW. And the blog recently reported that America's Homeland Security are - seriously - looking for a terrorist operating within WoW.

Least likely to post 'Who fancies a game of space invaders?'

WoWinsider.com

47. Angry black bitch

Angry Black Bitch, which has the tagline, 'Practising the Fine Art of Bitchitude', is the four-year-old blog of Shark Fu of St Louis, Missouri. She has never posted a photo of herself and this 'anonymity' has led recently to her having to fend off claims she's really a white man, even a drag queen. But taken as read, Shark Fu is a much-discussed, 35-year-old black woman, tired of the 'brutal weight' of her 'invisibility'.

Least likely to post 'I'm off to anger-management'

angryblackbitch.blogspot.com

48. Stylebubble

Fashion blogger Susie Lau says Stylebubble is just a diary of what she wears and why. But few diaries are read by 10,000 people a day. Lau, 23, admits to spending up to 60 per cent of her pay from her day job in advertising on clothes, but now she's viewed as a fashion opinion former, she's being paid in kind. Her influence is such that fashion editors namecheck her blog, Chanel invites her to product launches and advertisers have come calling.

Least likely to post 'I even wear my Ugg boots in bed'

stylebubble.typepad.com

49. AfterEllen

Afterellen takes an irreverent look at how the lesbian community is represented in the media. Started by lesbian pop-culture guru Sarah Warn in 2002, the name of the site gives a nod to the groundbreaking moment Ellen DeGeneres came out on her hit TV show, Ellen, in 1997. Since then, lesbian and bisexual women have moved from the margins on to primetime TV, and this blog analyses the good, the bad and the ugly of how they're portrayed. It's now the biggest website for LGBT women, with half a million hits a month.

Least likely to post 'George Clooney - I wouldn't kick him out of bed'

afterellen.com

50. Copyblogger

It's dry, real, and deafeningly practical, but for an online writing-for-the-internet blog, Copyblogger, founded in 2006, is remarkably interesting. Swelling with advice on online writing, it's an essential tool for anyone trying to make themselves heard online, whether commenting on a discussion board or putting together a corporate website.

Least likely to post 'Social networking - it's just a phase'

copyblogger.com

• Join the Debate: If you would like to comment about our choice of blogs, go to blogs.theguardian.com/digitalcontent

• This article was amended on Friday March 14 2008. In the article above we wrongly said that Ryan Block founded Engadget and co-founded gadget blog Gizmodo. They were actually founded and co-founded by Peter Rojas. This has been corrected.

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