

They lurk in the bushes. They camp out in cars. They roam the sidewalks. Camera in hand. A-List celebrities know they are there. They know they are waiting for a moment of weakness. Just a glimpse that they are human, or not quite as glamorous as their publicists present them. When that moment strikes anywhere outside their home, I know they gulp hard, hoping not to hear the sound, or see the burst of a camera flash.

When it happens, there is a price to be paid. The celebrity has to deal with the price of any consequence. The photographer gets paid the price commensurate with the popularity and interest in the star, and the vulnerability captured in the picture.

In the world of political blogging, bloggers are the new paparazzi and the traditional news media reporters and columnists are the new targets.

There have been millions upon millions of blog entries. I know at www.icerocket.com, we have indexed at least 6mm pages of blogs. I don't know the number of political bloggers, or the number of pages posted, but I can tell you this, every single one of them with any aspirations of popularity is looking for a way to stand out. The way that happens is to knock one of the gatekeepers off their perch.

Whether it's been newspapers, magazines, TV or radio, the opportunities to reach an audience has been limited to a finite number of local and national gatekeepers. Just outside those gates, knocking on the door, trying to be heard for the past 100 or more years have been wanna be Woodward and Bernsteins. People with information, ideas and concepts that they know the populace would respond to have been turned away, again and again.

Its payback time . The bloggers are here, and they are ready to knock down the gates and get their pound of flesh. The traditional media has no idea what is about to hit them.

In every major conference, at every major speech, sitting at tables in restaurants, there is going to be a blogger or podcaster with microphone, PDA, Videophone, laptop or paper and pencil in hand. Listening. Taking notes. That information is going to be transmitted to and from a blog entry and placed in the hands of "the readers".

Unlike celebrities who hear or see the flash of the camera, the gatekeepers don't know they are there. Blogging in plain site. Questioning everything.

Dan Rather and Eason Jordan were just practice laps. Let me assure you that from now on, EVERYTHING said. Every video shown. Every picture presented from any traditional media source is going to be scrutinized. The level of scrutiny will make your editors blush.

The gatekeepers are under attack. I'm not saying its right or wrong, but it is the new reality.

Fortunately, there is a way to deal with the paparazzi. There is also a way for the gatekeepers to deal with the bloggers. A simple way.

Recognize them. Give them respect. Celebrities can't keep photographers out of their bushes no matter how hard they try. The gatekeepers won't be able to keep the bloggers out either. Instead they should invite them in.

Not 1. Not 2. But several from both sides. Bring in the more popular blogs that like you, and the same number of those that don't. Give them as much access as you give the NY Times, Wash Post. Don't muzzle them, let them write

I will tell you exactly what will happen next. The blogs you invite in will still try to trip you up, but they will quickly morph and act like traditional media. When you screw up , they will tell you when it happens and give you a chance to comment and respond. They will like being on the inside and adjust to try to stay there.

The bloggers left on the outside will continue to try to trip you up, but will spend more time and energy trying to tear down the bloggers who got inside the gates. Jealousy is a bitch.

It will work, try it.

If you don't, call George Clooney and Britney Spears Federline for advice. You are going to need it

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