

Blogosphere Communities: Lessons from the Automobile Blogging Community

The term *blogosphere* does not only describe one large community of tens of millions of blogs but rather a number of smaller communities each with their own bloggers, social norms, and readership. What works for one community in terms of how you conduct blogging may not necessarily work for another community. To understand a community, a corporate blogger should assess its scope. This chapter provides an assessment of one blogging community, the automobile blogging community; to understand the process of how to assess a blogging community and how a company might use the assessment of the automobile blogging community to develop a corporate blogging strategy for their own company.

This chapter will focus on the lessons companies can learn from one blogging community and how those lessons translate to other industries. The list of automobile blogs was developed in October and November of 2006 to provide enough information for the development of an assessment and strategy recommendations. The assessment of the automobile blogging community is not meant to be comprehensive or up-to-date but rather a demonstration of the steps a company has to complete to develop their own corporate blogging strategy by assessing their own industry's community.

The list of automobile blogs will change, as will their characteristics over time. The list is published as a demonstration of the type of research that has to be conducted by a company to make an assessment of their industry's blogging community.

RESEARCH PROCESS FOR THE AUTOMOBILE BLOG ASSESSMENT

The automobile blogging community was researched using the assessment process found in Chapter 2. When conducting an assessment of your community, it is important for each blog's content strategy, blogger background, and the style of writing to be understood and documented. The assessment of individual blogs in a community will help with developing a corporate blogging strategy, from the basic question "Should my company blog?" to "How should my company interact with a community?" There are a series of factors you should record for your assessment of each blog. As part of the automobile blog assessment the following information was researched for each automobile blog in the community:

- Name of the blog
- URL of the blog
- Name of the blogger
- Blog started
- System used by the blogger
- Interaction elements allowed
- Commenting turned on
- Trackbacks allowed
- Social networking tools enabled
- Comment tracking tools used by the blogger
- Blogger background
 - Does the blogger answer comments?
 - Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?
- Writing style
- Volume of comments received by the blogger
- Technorati.com ranking

A description of each factor can be found in Chapter 2 of this book.

OVERVIEW OF THE AUTOMOBILE BLOGGING ASSESSMENT

The list of automobile blogs gives us an opportunity to build an overall understanding of the automobile blogging community. That is what you should do in

assessing a blogging community—build a good understanding of your industry’s blogging community by reviewing as many of the blogs in the community as possible. Conducting an assessment will help a company to understand who is active in the industry, some of the social mores within the industry, and the leading bloggers.

In this chapter, you will find a list of 42 automobile blogs, with a brief assessment of each blog. The blog assessment is not meant to be a comprehensive review of each blog; rather, the assessment aims to provide an example of how you would conduct a community review for a company to be able to develop a corporate blogging strategy.

We also provide a timeline of when each automobile blog was launched and, lastly, a list of blogs in the order of each blog’s Technorati ranking. The blogs reviewed range from one blog in the top 100 blogs as considered by Technorati’s list of top blogs to blogs that are not very highly ranked. There are many measures of blogging, not just a blog’s Technorati ranking; some important blogs may not even be ranked by Technorati. Therefore, it is important to review and assess all of the blogs in your community, whatever the popular industry ranking’s state.

Understanding the Types of Blogs in the Industry

The automobile blogging community dates back to 2001, with the blogs The Truth about Cars, Minifile, Ride, and Autoguy. Automobile blogs are divided between blogging publishing companies, such as Gawker Media and Weblogs Inc, and car enthusiasts. Blog publishing companies are conglomerates of a number of different types of blogs, run by professional bloggers. The business model for these sites is to attract a large audience and sell advertising on the basis of the audience. Not quite journalists, these types of bloggers are definitely no longer consumers. Autoblog¹ from the Weblogs, Inc. media group is a great example of this type of blog. What is interesting about this type of professional blogger is that public relations can probably be a very effective way to approach such bloggers. The constant need for stories to maintain the volume and quality of posts means that traditional public relations approaches work well with these professional bloggers.

Car enthusiasts are people who love cars or a particular brand of car and write a blog about the subject. Car enthusiasts have a day job besides his or her blog. Typically, the auto enthusiasts favor one model or manufacturer. The blog Cars! Cars! Cars!^{2,3} is definitely a consumer blogger, although the blog is running a few Google Adwords ads on the site.

The blog Jalopnik is notable for the number of humorous and entertaining posts related to the automobile industry.

Automobile Manufacturer Blogs

There are not very many automobile vendor blogs, which makes sense, as there are only a small number of companies in the industry. The General Motors FastLane blog has succeeded in generating a lot of publicity and links on the web for the company. But it is too early to tell if the blog has played a significant role in helping the company to get out of its sales doldrums. The insight provided by customers might actually help future General Motor car designs and upgrades, especially as poor sales at General Motors has been a structural issue in that the company was selling the wrong type of cars and trucks during a period of high gas prices.⁴ Ford is trying a new tactic based on complete openness with its boldnewmoves.com website.

Both the General Motors FastLane blog and Ford's efforts are an attempt to engage customers through the use of blogs. General Motors has not succeeded in engaging every single customer that asks a question on the blog. Although the reason for the lack of engagement on the General Motors blog may be because of a lack of resources, the response demonstrates General Motors has further to go in understanding the brand perception benefits of communicating directly with customers through a blog.

Overview of Topics in Industry

In the automobile blogging community, the range of topics varied. However, certain patterns of stories were recognized—three themes rise to the top as the biggest discussion topics in the industry.

- A review of a car from the perspective of its drivability, style, power, and value.
- The current state of the green car industry, what companies are doing or not doing to help reduce energy consumption and pollution emissions.
- How badly General Motors and Ford are running their affairs in terms of product development, marketing, and each company's falling market share and profitability.

The constant drone of criticism in blogs aimed at the big American automobile manufacturers has some basis because the sales figures for Ford and General Motors have not been very good in recent years. In fact, both large American

manufacturers have lost market share. General Motors launched the General Motors FastLane blog in an effort to engage car customers directly.

Assessment of Automobile Blogging Community Interaction

Critical to the success of any blog is how the authors interact with the rest of the community. Commenting, trackbacks, and linking to other blogs were all actions that were regularly conducted by members of the automobile blogging community. Some of the most highly ranked Technorati auto blogs conducted all of these activities.

Professional bloggers and non-professional bloggers were the bloggers who were most willing to engage in conversation through comments on a blog and link to other blog posts within a blog in the community. Many of the articles in these blogs cited traditional media articles as sources for stories, whereas the blogs run by traditional media companies tended not to cite other blogs or link to other bloggers. Those companies generated their own stories and reviews.

Probably, the blog with most comments was the General Motors FastLane blog, run by the automobile manufacturer General Motors; early in the launch of the General Motors FastLane blog, General Motors received more than 150 comments on a post.

Technorati Rankings

The blogs in the automobile blogging community with the highest Technorati ranking are run by professional bloggers or bloggers whose full-time job is writing a blog. Autoblog and Jalopik have the top Technorati rankings. Most of the highest Technorati-ranked automobile blogs are multiple-author blogs.

The top Technorati-ranked media blogs included the Detroit Press and Edmunds.com. Media-related blogs make up about one fourth of the automobile blogs that are highly ranked in Technorati. Traditional media blogs do appear in the top 30 blogs; typically, those blogs are multiple-author blogs, although the blogs at Edmunds.com authored by some of the company's auto writers do appear in the top 30 blogs by Technorati rankings.

Non-professional writer blogs or ordinary people do not appear very much in the top 30 Technorati-ranked automobile blogs. The Auto Prophet, Cars! Cars! Cars!, MyFordDreams, Carpundit, and Autoguy are all under this type of blog.

ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Compared with some blogging communities, it does not appear that the automobile blogging community is all that large. For example, the public relations blogging community had more than 500 members in 2006; although the volume of comments in community blogs is certainly very active. I suspect that many existing automobile forums developed in the 1990s capture a lot of the discussion in the community, as the industry is so small, with so few blogs dedicated to automobiles. The community does have some significant highly ranked Technorati blogs; therefore, this is a large audience for this type of blog. There is definitely an opportunity for any company to create a successful automobile blog and become an important leader in the industry.

If you were to start blogging in the automobile blogging community, you would need multiple authors with some expertise in the automobile industry to keep up with the frequency of posts. As a lot of news happens in the automobile industry, any blogger who wants to be successful, unless they focus on a particular aspect of the automobile industry, will need to write frequently to cover all that happens in the industry. Many of the automobile blogs have multiple authors. To keep up with the pace of the industry, building a multiple-author blog is one strategy that would enable a blog to keep up with the volume of writing necessary to build a significant blog in the community.

Articles on car reviews, energy-efficient cars and trucks, and issues related to Ford and General Motors are subjects regularly discussed in the automobile blogging community. Discussing the state of the industry in the United States with the larger manufacturers is a current top-of-mind topic for many automobile bloggers. Any blog that can bring perspective, opinion, and some different points of view will definitely be cited by other blogs in the industry. More analysis of European and Asian automobile manufacturers might be one way to provide some unique insight into how European and Asian manufacturers are affecting the U.S. automobile market. Building relationships with people or bloggers with expertise in European and Asian car manufacturers to gain further insight would be one way to develop some interesting scoops.

If you conduct your own reviews by driving the cars, this would add tremendous credibility to a new blog for the automobile community. There is a definite opportunity in the automobile industry for more blogs run by someone who is an expert on how to handle cars and give opinions on the drivability of automobiles. In fact, many of the blog posts in the automobile blogging community that review cars appear to be just links to original traditional media publication reviews. A real opportunity in the automobile blogging community exists for good independent reviews of cars. You would have to have contacts with automobile manufacturers to be able to drive their automobiles early; or

conduct more comprehensive reviews once the automobiles have arrived in the dealer's lot.

Communicating with blog readers is definitely a feature of the automobile blogging community. Any blogger should be prepared to engage the readership on their blog by answering comments. Citing and referencing other automobile blogs in your blog would also help to connect with other bloggers in the automobile community. As so many traditional media companies are cited by blogs in the industry, anything you can do to build relationships with traditional media journalists would help a new blog.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE AUTOMOBILE BLOGGING COMMUNITY

Building a justification for starting a corporate blog in the automobile industry would be very easy—there is a large audience with just a small community of blogs as of the end of 2006. Traffic, links, and success would only be a matter of time and effort on the part of company. However, one writer would probably not be enough; having a group of writers makes a lot of sense for this industry. Critical in building a successful blog will be having bloggers who also conduct blogger outreach; such outreach will take more time but will help a blog to get more traffic and links. If a company was in the automobile industry, it would also have to build a writing strategy that included the three foremost topics in the industry: reviews of cars, fuel efficiency, and the debate about American car manufacturers. A company would have to consider how its products fit into these three topics. While you could just state your opinion on the issues. But if a company's products related directly to one of the topics, it would provide more opportunities to put a company's products in the context of the overall industry discussion.

When conducting your own audit of your industry, reading the blogs in the industry is a big task, but one that is very worthwhile. You will learn what the most important topics in your blogging community are, how other blogs handle the resources needed to blog in your community, and if there is a sufficient audience for another blog. Use the audit model to build a justification and help you develop a strategy if you decide to move forward with a blog.

In addition to using currently available tools to measure the standing of different blogs in your community, it is important to keep abreast of the development of blogging measuring services when you conduct an assessment of your community.

Lastly, here is the overview of the automobile blogging community. First, the list of automobile industry blogs, then the timeline of the blogs, and lastly, the automobile blogs listed in order of highest ranking on Technorati.

Automobile Industry Blogs

Name of the blog: Autos Blog for the *Detroit News*

URL of the blog: <http://info.detnews.com/autosblog/index.cfm>

Name of the blogger: Daniel Howes, Scott Burgess, Mark Truby, David Shepardson, Christine Tierney, David Phillips, Brett Clanton, Bryce Hoffman, and Josee Valcourt

System used by the blogger: Custom?

Interaction elements allowed: Limited to comments

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: None

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? Uses the *Detroit News* forum software

Blogger background: All of the bloggers are journalists on the staff of the *Detroit News*.

Does the blogger answer comments? A quick scan through several posts reveals that each journalist blogger does not appear to answer comments on the blog.

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? No, the bloggers do not interact with the rest of the community in their blog posts. From this review, it appears the blog is more of an editorial writing post than a blog.

Writing style: Thoughtful articles on the state of the industry

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Quite high, probably due to the forum

Technorati.com ranking: 8,532 (however, these links represent links to the whole paper)

Name of the blog: The Truth about Cars

URL of the blog: <http://www.thetruthaboutcars.com/>

Name of the blogger: Robert Farago, Jonny Lieberman, Sajeev Mehta, Frank Williams, and Jay Shoemaker

Blog started: November 2001

System used by the blogger: WordPress 2.0.4

Interaction elements allowed: Yes. Also, a reader can sign up for comment email notification and register for the blog's commenting system.

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? Yes

Blogger background: Multiple-author blog, a combination of freelance journalists and enthusiasts

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Not that I can judge from looking back over a month of posts.

Writing style:

Volume of comments received by the blogger: High, the blog is very active

Technorati.com ranking: 9,906

Name of the blog: MotoringFile

URL of the blog: <http://motoringfile.com/>

Name of the blogger: Gabriel Bridger is the managing editor, and the blog is also written by a staff of writers.

Blog started: October 2002

System used by the blogger: WordPress

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: MotoringFile is a blog dedicated to the MINI. Started by Gabriel Bridger, the site has grown to support advertising and a number of contributors.

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: News articles, filler pieces, and scopes on MINIs

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Medium to high

Technorati.com ranking: Not ranked

Name of the blog: Ride

URL of the blog: <http://www.angelfire.com/retro/browsers/>

Name of the blogger: James G. Halmayer

Blog started: September 2002

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Personal blogger

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Filler pieces, video

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 130,332

Name of the blog: Just-Auto.com
URL of the blog: <http://www.just-auto.com/blogs.aspx?>
Name of the blogger: David Leggett
Focus of the blog: Articles about the automobile industry, in depth
Blog started: March 2003
System used by the blogger: D/N
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: Yes, del.icio.us and dig.com
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? No
Blogger background: Former Director of Forecasting for the Economist's Intelligence Unit's automobile sector.
Does the blogger answer comments? Not that I can see
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Did not see any links to other blogs
Writing style: Opinion pieces and investigative articles about the car industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 8,759

Name of the blog: UKPylot's MINI Blog
URL of the blog: <http://miniblog.guapacha.com/>
Name of the blogger: D/N
Blog started: July 2003
System used by the blogger: WordPress
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: Yes
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: A MINI owner
Does the blogger answer comments? Yes
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes
Writing style: Journal style of writing and filler pieces
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low to medium
Technorati.com ranking: 994,759

Name of the blog: Autoguy
URL of the blog: <http://autoguy.blogspot.com/>
Name of the blogger: Rick Todd
Blog started: December 2003
System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:**Commenting turned on:** Yes**Trackbacks allowed:** No**Social networking tools enabled:** No**Comment tracking tools used by the blogger?** D/N**Blogger background:** An American law graduate living in Dubai writes about cars.**Does the blogger answer comments?** Yes**Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?****Writing style:** Thoughtful articles and commentary about the current state of the automobile industry, along with journal articles about his car experiences**Volume of comments received by the blogger:** Low**Technorati.com ranking:** 143,068**Name of the blog:** Cars! Cars! Cars!**URL of the blog:** <http://carscarscars.blogs.com/index/>**Name of the blogger:** Robert Schulties**Blog started:** December 2003**System used by the blogger:** Typepad**Interaction elements allowed:****Commenting turned on:** Yes**Trackbacks allowed:** No, were once turned on**Social networking tools enabled:** No**Comment tracking tools used by the blogger?** D/N**Blogger background:** No details**Does the blogger answer comments?** Did not see any answers**Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?** With links to a lot of blogs**Writing style:** Review of the latest news from the industry**Volume of comments received by the blogger:** Low to medium**Technorati.com ranking:** 57,350**Name of the blog:** Carpundit**URL of the blog:** <http://carpundit.typepad.com/carpundit/>**Name of the blogger:** Anonymous blogger**Blog started:** March 2004**System used by the blogger:** Typepad**Interaction elements allowed:****Commenting turned on:** Yes**Trackbacks allowed:** Yes**Social networking tools enabled:** No**Comment tracking tools used by the blogger?** D/N**Blogger background:** Boston-based lawyer

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Carpundit writes about cars, politics, and the news. Short opinion pieces about cars

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 88,496

Name of the blog: Grant's Auto Rants

URL of the blog: <http://grantsautorants.blogs.com/blog/>

Name of the blogger: Grant W. Repsher

Blog started: April 2004

System used by the blogger: Typepad

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: An automotive marketing and customer relationship management specialist living in Detroit, MI. Grant writes for automotive news and is founder of a car-related website, www.servassistantonline.com.

Does the blogger answer comments? Did not appear to answer comments

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?

Writing style: Thoughtful opinion pieces on using cars and the state of the car industry

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: Not ranked

Name of the blog: Future Cars, Hybrid Cars

URL of the blog: <http://futurecars.blogspot.com/>

Name of the blogger: Amit

Blog started: May 2004

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Engineering and SEO expert

Does the blogger answer comments? Does not appear to answer comments

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?

Writing style: Short articles about hybrid card

Volume of comments received by the blogger: High

Technorati.com ranking: 200,241

Name of the blog: Sir Warrior–S13 Blacktop SR20DET Project
URL of the blog: <http://sirwarrior.blogspot.com/>
Name of the blogger: Kane
Blog started: May 2004
System used by the blogger: Blogger
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: The blogger is writing about their car project
Does the blogger answer comments? Yes
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?
Writing style: Post-by-post description of this bloggers work on building a car
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 1,364,559

Name of the blog: Autoblog
URL of the blog: <http://www.autoblog.com/>
Name of the blogger: Large group of blog authors
Blog started: June 2004, article about the launch <http://bigblogcompany.net/archives/000273.html>
System used by the blogger: Blog Smith
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: Yes, Technorati.com linking blogs
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: Multiple authors
Does the blogger answer comments? Yes
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes
Writing style: Auto articles about cars and the industry, typically based on other media articles
Volume of comments received by the blogger: High
Technorati.com ranking: 29

Name of the blog: AutoMuse
URL of the blog: <http://www.vehicleinfo.com/AutoMuse/>
Name of the blogger: E. L. Eversman
Blog started: July 2004
System used by the blogger: Moveable Type 3.11
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: Yes

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Chief counsel for vehicle information services and a writer for AutoGuide.net.

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Articles on the law about the autos and also opinion pieces on cars in general

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 35,598

Name of the blog: Alternative Energy Blog

URL of the blog: <http://alt-e.blogspot.com/>

Name of the blogger: James

Blog started: August 2004

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: D/N

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Writes about energy-related issues, touches on use of energy by cars

Volume of comments received by the blogger: High

Technorati.com ranking: 16,063

Name of the blog: Jalopnik

URL of the blog: <http://www.jalopnik.com/>

Name of the blogger: Mike Spinelli, Davey Johnson, Ray West, Mike Austin, and Robert Farago

Blog started: October 2004

System used by the blogger: D/N

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: Yes

Social networking tools enabled: Yes, del.icio.us, digg

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? Yes

Blogger background: Multiple-author blog

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Scoops, videos, comments on the industry, cars, and other publication articles

Volume of comments received by the blogger: High

Technorati.com ranking: 379

Name of the blog: Chrysler Weblog

URL of the blog: <http://www.chryslerweblog.com/>

Name of the blogger: D/N

Blog started: October 2004

System used by the blogger: WordPress

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: D/N

Does the blogger answer comments?

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Comments on the cars and the people who make the cars

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Medium

Technorati.com ranking: 151,556

Name of the blog: If It's Got an Engine...

URL of the blog: <http://dorri732.blogspot.com/>

Name of the blogger: Dorrington Williams

Blog started: November 2004

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: Linking

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Interested in cars since early childhood, a car enthusiast who is also a nuclear engineer

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Opinion articles, short fillers about his own cars, automobiles in general, and the industry

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 288,082

Name of the blog: Views on Car News
URL of the blog: <http://carpoint.blogspot.com/>
Name of the blogger: Rashmi
Blog started: December 2004
System used by the blogger: Blogger
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background:
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Short articles on cars, some coverage of the industry, and hybrid cars
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Medium
Technorati.com ranking: 228,488

Name of the blog: General Motors FastLane Blog
URL of the blog: <http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/>
Name of the blogger: Multiple-author blog; principal author is Bob Lutz, a leading General Motors executive
Blog started: January 2005
System used by the blogger: D/N
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: Yes
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: Executives at General Motors
Does the blogger answer comments? Yes, but in posts, occasionally
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?
Writing style: Articles on General Motors cars and events, product feedback is solicited
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Very high
Technorati.com ranking: 3,061

Name of the blog: Tapscotts Behind the Wheel
URL of the blog: <http://tapscottbehindthewheel.blogspot.com/>
Name of the blogger: Mark Tapscott with Marcus MacFarland
Blog started: February 2005
System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: Yes

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? No

Blogger background: Traditional print media journalist turned blogger

Does the blogger answer comments? Do not know

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Car reviews, opinion, and review of the auto blogs

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 17,011

Name of the blog: The German Car Blog

URL of the blog: <http://www.germancarblog.com/>

Name of the blogger: Christian

Blog started: March 2005

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes/no linked to a forum site for commenting

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: Yes, del.icio.us, Technorati linking

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Blogger works for Audi

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Filler articles based on articles published in other media, comments on cars

Volume of comments received by the blogger: High in the forum

Technorati.com ranking: 7,950

Name of the blog: The Auto Prophet

URL of the blog: <http://theautoprophet.blogspot.com/>

Name of the blogger: D/N

Blog started: March 2005

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Engineer working for an American auto company

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Talks about cars and politics, commentary on industry and cars, filler pieces including videos

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Medium

Technorati.com ranking: 35,203

Name of the blog: RaceDriven.com: The Blog

URL of the blog: <http://racedriven.blogspot.com/>

Name of the blogger: Brian Vermette

Blog started: March 2005

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Motor sports and car enthusiast

Does the blogger answer comments? Could not see any

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Articles about the car industry, and car racing

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 168,181

Name of the blog: MyFordDreams2 and MyFordDreams

URL of the blog: <http://myforddreams2.blogspot.com/> and <http://myforddreams.blogspot.com/>, respectively

Name of the blogger: D/N

Blog started: April 2005

System used by the blogger: Blogger

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: Yes

Social networking tools enabled:

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: A man who wanted to comment on the Ford Motor company

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Articles about Ford and the car industry

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 60,205

Name of the blog: TCC Confidential
URL of the blog: <http://www.thecarconnection.com/blog/>
Name of the blogger: Marty Padgett
Blog started: May 2005
System used by the blogger: WordPress 1.5.1.1
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: D/N
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Opinion pieces on cars, the industry, and life
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 83,736

Name of the blog: Auto IT
URL of the blog: <http://auto-it.blogspot.com/>
Name of the blogger: D/N
Blog started: July 2005
System used by the blogger: Blogger
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? No
Blogger background: D/N
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Articles about auto technology and future cars
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 264,898

Name of the blog: The BMW Blog
URL of the blog: <http://bmwblog.net/>
Name of the blogger: Daniel Feies
Blog started: August 2005
System used by the blogger: WordPress 2.0.2
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: Yes

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: A software designer at Microsoft writes about cars and BMWs

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: News and commentaries on BMW and MINI's links to conference speeches

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 287,192

Name of the blog: Left Lane News

URL of the blog: <http://www.leftlanenews.com/>

Name of the blogger: Nick Aziz

Blog started: September 2005

System used by the blogger: WordPress

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Professional blogger

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Reviews of cars and scope on the car world

Volume of comments received by the blogger: high

Technorati.com ranking: 1,210

Name of the blog: Autopia

URL of the blog: <http://blog.wired.com/cars/>

Name of the blogger: John Gartner, Mark Durham

Blog started: September 2005

System used by the blogger:

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Multiple authors

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N

Writing style: Short articles about issues related to the car industry, not very much on the cars themselves

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low to medium

Technorati.com ranking: 6,192

Name of the blog: Straightline

URL of the blog: <http://blogs.edmunds.com/Straightline/>

Name of the blogger: Richard Homan, Michelle Krebs, Steven Cole Smith, and Ken Gross

Blog started: October 2005

System used by the blogger: D/N

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Journalists write auto-related posts

Does the blogger answer comments? D/N

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Mainly mainstream references

Writing style: Short articles on industry news

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low to medium

Technorati.com ranking: 13,838

Name of the blog: Karl on Cars

URL of the blog: <http://blogs.edmunds.com/karl/>

Name of the blogger: Karl Brauer

Blog started: October 2005

System used by the blogger: D/N

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Karl Brauer, is editor-in-chief of edmunds.com

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Commentary on the car industry and reviews of cars

Volume of comments received by the blogger:

Technorati.com ranking: 36,017

Name of the blog: The Driving Woman
URL of the blog: <http://blogs.edmunds.com/women/>
Name of the blogger:
Blog started: October 2005
System used by the blogger: D/N
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: Multiple-author blog
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Articles on cars and the car industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 71,768

Name of the blog: The Car Curmudgeon
URL of the blog: <http://www.stabile.org/autos/>
Name of the blogger: Chris Casarez, Donald Lee, Gregg Hall, Gregory Ashton, James Hunt, Matt Keegan, and Rick Stabile
Blog started: December 2005
System used by the blogger: WordPress 1.5.2
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: Yes
Social networking tools enabled: Yes, del.icio.us
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: Multiple-author blog
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Rants and thoughts related to cars and car driving
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 1,364,559

Name of the blog: MotorAlley
URL of the blog: <http://motoralley.blogspot.com/>
Name of the blogger: David Wassmann
Blog started: December 2005
System used by the blogger: Blogger
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Worked in product development and marketing in the car industry

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Articles on the car industry

Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low

Technorati.com ranking: 144,278

Name of the blog: The Blog for Auto Bloggers

URL of the blog: <http://autobloggers.blogspot.com/>

Name of the blogger: Multiple-author blog

Blog started: December 2005

System used by the blogger:

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Multiple-author blog

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Bloggers discuss what happens on their Auto blogs

Volume of comments received by the blogger:

Technorati.com ranking: 2,060,324

Name of the blog: KickingTires

URL of the blog: <http://blogs.cars.com/>

Name of the blogger: David Thomas, Patrick Olsen, Mike Hanley, Kelsey Mays, Beth Palmer, Eric Rossi, Amanda Wegrzyn, and Joe Wiesenfelder

Blog started: 2006 cars.com

System used by the blogger: Moveable Type

Interaction elements allowed:

Commenting turned on: Yes

Trackbacks allowed: No

Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N

Blogger background: Journalists writing for the blog

Does the blogger answer comments? Yes

Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Yes

Writing style: Reviews on cars and the industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Medium
Technorati.com ranking: 9,000

Name of the blog: Automotive News from Popular Mechanics
URL of the blog: <http://www.popularmechanics.com/blog/automotive>
Name of the blogger: Ben Stewart
Blog started: January 2006
System used by the blogger:
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: D/N
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Articles on cars, reviews, and the industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Medium
Technorati.com ranking: 36,924

Name of the blog: The Auto Blog
URL of the blog: <http://www.partstrain.com/blog/>
Name of the blogger: Rowen Pierce
Blog started: January 2006
System used by the blogger: WordPress 1.5.2
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: Yes
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: D/N
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: Reviews of cars and the industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 86,153

Name of the blog: Automotoportal
URL of the blog: <http://www.automotoportal.com/>
Name of the blogger: blogger names not listed
Blog started: February 2006

System used by the blogger:
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: D/N
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? Could not see any references
Writing style: Articles about cars and the industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 4,553

Name of the blog: AutoblogGreen
URL of the blog: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/>
Name of the blogger: Sebastian Blanco, Sam Abuelsamid, Mike Magda, Derrick Y. Noh, and Bruno Vanzielegem
Blog started: April 2006
System used by the blogger: D/N
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No
Comment tracking tools used by the blogger? D/N
Blogger background: Multiple-author blog
Does the blogger answer comments? D/N
Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community? D/N
Writing style: News articles about the green auto industry
Volume of comments received by the blogger: Low
Technorati.com ranking: 30,214

Name of the blog: The Car Blog
URL of the blog: <http://thecarblog.com/>
Name of the blogger: Mike Rundle, Matthew Oliphant, Paul Scrivens, Jason Fried, Didier Hilhorst, Eric Lorraine, Sage Olson, and Eric Etten
Blog started: April 2006
System used by the blogger: Custom
Interaction elements allowed:
Commenting turned on: Yes
Trackbacks allowed: No
Social networking tools enabled: No

Comment tracking tools used by the blogger?**Blogger background:** Multiple-author blog**Does the blogger answer comments?** D/N**Does the blogger interact with other bloggers in the community?** D/N**Writing style:** Articles on cars and industry issues and opinion pieces**Volume of comments received by the blogger:** Medium**Technorati.com ranking:** 34,705**Automobile Blog Timeline**

November 2001	The Truth about Cars	http://www.thetruthaboutcars.com/
October 2002	MINI Weblog	http://motoringfile.com/
September 2002	Ride	http://www.angelfire.com/retro/browsers/
March 2003	Just-Auto.com	http://www.just-auto.com/blogs.aspx?
July 2003	UKPylot's MINI Blog	http://miniblog.guapacha.com/
December 2003	Autoguy	http://autoguy.blogspot.com/
December 2003	Cars! Cars! Cars!	http://carscarscars.blogspot.com/index/
February 2004	Autoworld	http://autoworld.tblog.com/however,not active
March 2004	Carpundit	http://carpundit.typepad.com/carpundit/
April 2004	Grant's Auto Rants	http://grantsautorants.blogspot.com/blog/
May 2004	Future Cars, Hybrid Cars	http://futurecars.blogspot.com/
May 2004	Sir Warroior-S13 Blacktop SR20DET Project	http://sirwarrior.blogspot.com/
June 2004	Autoblog	http://www.autoblog.com/ (article about the launch: http://bigblogcompany.net/archives/000273.html)
2004	The Truth about Cars	http://www.thetruthaboutcars.com/index.php/
July 2004	AutoMuse	http://www.vehicleinfo.com/AutoMuse/
August 2004	Alternative Energy Blog	http://alt-e.blogspot.com/
October 2004	Jalopnik	http://www.jalopnik.com/
October 2004	Chrysler Weblog	http://www.chryslerweblog.com/
November 2004	If It's Got an Engine...	http://dorri732.blogspot.com/
December 2004	Views on Car News	http://carpoint.blogspot.com/
January 2005	General Motors FastLane Blog	http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/
February 2005	Tapscotts Behind The Wheel	http://tapscottbehindthewheel.blogspot.com/

March 2005	The German Car Blog	http://www.germancarblog.com/
March 2005	The Auto Prophet	http://theautoprophet.blogspot.com/
March 2005	RaceDriven.com: The blog	http://racedriven.blogspot.com/
April 2005	MyFordDreams2	http://myforddreams2.blogspot.com/
	MyFordDreams	http://myforddreams.blogspot.com/
May 2005	TCC Confidential	http://www.thecarconnection.com/blog/
June 2005	At Home Mechanic	http://www.athomemechanic.com/
July 2005	Auto IT	http://auto-it.blogspot.com/
July 2005	MPHBlog	http://www.mph-online.com/blogs
August 2005	The BMW Blog	http://bmwblog.net/
September 2005	Left Lane News	http://www.leftlanenews.com/
September 2005	Autopia	http://blog.wired.com/cars/
October 2005	Straightline	http://blogs.edmunds.com/Straightline/
October 2005	Karl on Cars	http://blogs.edmunds.com/karl/
October 2005	The Driving Woman	http://blogs.edmunds.com/women/
December 2005	The Car Curmudgeon	http://www.stabile.org/autos/
December 2005	MotorAlley	http://motoralley.blogspot.com/
December 2005	The Blog for Auto Bloggers	http://autobloggers.blogspot.com/
2006	KickingTires	http://blogs.cars.com/
January 2006	Automotive News from Popular Mechanics	http://www.popularmechanics.com/blog/automotive
January 2006	The Auto Blog	http://www.partstrain.com/blog/
February 2006	Automotoportal	http://www.automotoportal.com/
April 2006	AutoblogGreen	http://www.autobloggreen.com/
April 2006	The Car Blog	http://thecarblog.com/
	<i>Detroit News</i>	http://info.detnews.com/autosblog/index.cfm
	Brakebias—Tiempo Borré	http://hondakid86.blogspot.com/

Automobile Industry Blogs by Technorati Ranking

Name of the Blog	URL of the Blog	Technorati Ranking
Autoblog	http://www.autoblog.com/	29
Jalopnik	http://www.jalopnik.com/	379
Left Lane News	http://www.leftlanenews.com/	1,210
General Motors FastLane Blog	http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/	3,061

Name of the Blog	URL of the Blog	Technorati Ranking
Automotoportal	http://www.automotoportal.com/	4,553
Autopia	http://blog.wired.com/cars/	6,192
The German Car Blog	http://www.germancarblog.com/	7,950
Autos Blog for the <i>Detroit News</i>	http://info.detnews.com/autosblog/ index.cfm	8,532*
Just-Auto.com	http://www.just-auto.com/blogs.aspx?	8,759
KickingTires	http://blogs.cars.com/	9,000
The Truth about Cars	http://www.thetruthaboutcars.com/	9,906
Straightline	http://blogs.edmunds.com/Straightline/	13,838
Alternative Energy Blog	http://alt-e.blogspot.com/	16,063
Tapscotts Behind The Wheel	http://tapscottbehindthewheel.blogspot.com/	17,011
AutoblogGreen	http://www.autobloggreen.com/	30,214
The Car Blog	http://thecarblog.com/	34,705
The Auto Prophet	http://theautoprophet.blogspot.com/	35,203
AutoMuse	http://www.vehicleinfo.com/AutoMuse/	35,598
Karl on Cars	http://blogs.edmunds.com/karl/	36,017
Automotive News from Popular Mechanics	http://www.popularmechanics.com /blog/automotive	36,924
Cars! Cars! Cars!	http://carscarscars.blogspot.com/index/	57,350
MyFordDreams2	http://myforddreams2.blogspot.com/	60,205
MyFordDreams	http://myforddreams.blogspot.com/	
The Driving Woman	http://blogs.edmunds.com/women/	71,768
TCC Confidential	http://www.thecarconnection.com/blog/	83,736
The Auto Blog	http://www.partstrain.com/blog/	86,153
Carpundit	http://carpundit.typepad.com/carpundit/	88,496
Ride	http://www.angelfire.com/retro/browsers/	130,332
Autoguy	http://autoguy.blogspot.com/	143,068
MotorAlley	http://motoralley.blogspot.com/	144,278
Chrysler Weblog	http://www.chryslerweblog.com/	151,556
RaceDriven.com: The blog	http://racedriven.blogspot.com/	168,181
Future Cars, Hybrid Cars	http://futurecars.blogspot.com/	200,241
Views on Car News	http://carpoint.blogspot.com/	228,488
Auto IT	http://auto-it.blogspot.com/	264,898
If It's Got an Engine...	http://dorri732.blogspot.com/	288,082
The BMW Blog	http://bmwblog.net/	287,192
UKPyloT's MINI Blog	http://miniblog.guapacha.com/	994,759
Sir Warrior-S13 Blacktop SR20DET Project	http://sirwarrior.blogspot.com/	1,364,559

The Car Curmudgeon	http://www.stabile.org/autos/	1,364,559
The Blog for Auto Bloggers	http://autobloggers.blogspot.com/	2,060,324
Grant's Auto Rants	http://grantsautorants.blogs.com/blog/	Not ranked
MotoringFile	http://motoringfile.com/	Not ranked

*However, these links represent links to the whole paper.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.autoblog.com/>
2. <http://carscarscars.blogs.com/index/>
3. <http://www.forbes.com/bow/b2c/review.jhtml?id=7883>
4. New York Times, Micheline Maynard (August 6, 2006), *Toyota Drove to the Bank in a Ford*. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/06/weekinreview/06maynard.html?ex=1312516800&en=8c866413678ec951&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>

