

TALKING ABOUT TECHNOLOGY: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW ACTOR CATEGORY THROUGH NEW MEDIA

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Appendix

Discursive Practices by Categories of Bloggers

	Independent Bloggers							MSM Bloggers		Corporate Bloggers		
	Techmeme Leaders		Techmeme Second Tier		Techmeme Tail		All		All		All	
	Count	%†	Count	%†	Count	%†	Count	%†	Count	%†	Count	%†
Reporting technology news in a journalistic voice	59	18%	45	15%	25	12%	129	15%	94	41%	22	39%
Assuming common interests	26	8%	23	7%	18	8%	67	8%	24	10%	3	5%
Assuming shared knowledge	51	15%	52	17%	52	24%	155	18%	22	10%	13	23%
Directing attention	65	20%	54	18%	35	16%	154	18%	39	17%	0	0%
Stimulating debate	36	11%	41	13%	18	8%	95	11%	12	5%	0	0%
Discussing blogging	53	16%	48	16%	38	18%	139	16%	23	10%	2	4%
Assuming relationship with readers	45	14%	47	15%	44	20%	136	16%	11	5%	22	39%
Inviting reader participation	16	5%	21	7%	17	8%	54	6%	3	1%	6	11%
Demonstrating knowledge of other bloggers' discourse	60	18%	47	15%	27	13%	134	16%	22	10%	1	2%
Engaging in discourse directed at other bloggers	32	10%	14	5%	21	10%	67	8%	7	3%	0	0%
Comparing bloggers' role to journalists	21	6%	15	5%	11	5%	47	6%	9	4%	0	0%

	Independent Bloggers							MSM Bloggers		Corporate Bloggers		
	Techmeme Leaders		Techmeme Second Tier		Techmeme Tail		All		All		All	
	Count	% [†]	Count	% [†]	Count	% [†]	Count	% [†]	Count	% [†]	Count	% [†]
Claiming expertise	39	12%	47	15%	29	13%	115	13%	37	16%	3	5%
Claiming insider access	59	18%	40	13%	24	11%	123	14%	35	15%	0	0%
Establishing bloggers' independence	43	13%	37	12%	22	10%	102	12%	22	10%	0	0%

[†] Percentages represent the percent of posts within a group of bloggers. The percentages in each of the columns will not aggregate to 100% because one post may be coded with up to five discursive practices.

Our analytical interest in this research is in the discursive practices, identity claims, and the changing affordances of new media of independent tech bloggers. We do not assert that these tech bloggers' practices and claims were objectively distinctive from other bloggers, but are interested instead in their *claimed* distinctiveness. However, to further assess our analysis of this group, we compared data on independent tech bloggers with data on other types of tech bloggers in our sample. The descriptive comparison of the frequency of discursive practices was derived from the tech blogger postings we extracted from Techmeme from September 2005, through September 2008, and randomly selected and coded (1,140 posts). Our research focused on independent tech bloggers (854 posts). We also coded posts from tech bloggers posting on technology firm websites (57 posts) and on mainstream or trade press websites (229 posts), as noted in the URL of the post, for comparison. We categorized independent tech bloggers as "Techmeme Leaders" if their posts appeared more than 100 times in the set of roughly 17,500 entries, as "Techmeme Second Tier" if they appeared between 6 and 99 times, and "Techmeme Tail" if they appeared 5 or less times. This rough assessment does not take into account other ratings of tech blogger popularity, such as those performed by blog rating websites such as Technorati. However, the categorization was consistent with our observations of various tech blogging aggregators.

Similarities and differences in the frequency with which various codes appear are suggestive of differences among these groups. We draw the reader's attention to some key observations:

1. Independent tech bloggers were much less likely to report technology news and developments in a journalistic voice than MSM bloggers or corporate bloggers; Techmeme leaders were somewhat more likely to do so than Techmeme tail bloggers. For corporate bloggers, reports were often announcements of upcoming product releases by the blogger's technology firm.
2. Corporate bloggers were most likely to *assume relationships with readers* and *invite reader participation*. This is consistent with Droge et al.'s (2009) study of corporate use of blogging to engage lead users. Independent tech bloggers also enacted these practices regularly: Techmeme tail bloggers did so about 20 percent and 8 percent of the time, more frequently than Techmeme leaders (14percent, 5 percent). MSM bloggers used these practices quite infrequently (5 percent, 1 percent).
3. Independent bloggers used legitimating discursive practices (*comparing bloggers' role to journalists, claiming expertise, claiming insider access, establishing bloggers' independence*) about as frequently as MSM bloggers. The small sample of corporate bloggers indicated they seldom noted their insider access and expertise, perhaps relying on their association with the technology firm.
4. Independent bloggers enacted practices aimed at the discourse of other bloggers and at negotiating blogging practices explicitly (*discussing blogging, demonstrating knowledge of other bloggers' discourse, engaging in discourse directed at other bloggers*) more frequently than MSM bloggers and both groups did so more frequently than corporate bloggers.
5. The relative frequency among the three types of independent bloggers suggests that these bloggers shared discursive practices to a large degree. The Techmeme leader group appeared to be slightly more likely to *report in a journalist voice, demonstrate knowledge of other bloggers' discourse, and claim insider access*. This is consistent with our qualitative analysis of these bloggers' discourse. Techmeme Leaders were slightly less likely to *assume relationships with readers or invite reader participation* than Techmeme Tale bloggers. This is also consistent with our qualitative analysis, but the discursive practices we coded do not account for actual interactions with readers through comments or in other social media. Thus, whether established bloggers do interact with readers less than lesser-known bloggers (as some bloggers claimed) is not clearly evident in our data.

Reference

Droge, C., Stanko, M. A., and Pollitte, W. A. 2009. "Lead Users and Early Adopters on the Web: The Role of New Technology Product Blogs," *Journal of Product Innovation Management* (27:1), pp. 66-82.