

**The New York Times**

August 1, 2004, Sunday  
STYLE DESK

## **Blogged In Boston: Politics Gets An Unruly Spin**

By ALEX WILLIAMS (NYT)

Over all, the very nature of the blog -- all spin, all the time -- seemed to suit the coverage of a news event where the drama was carefully scripted, and the nominations were a sure thing. Not that some of the spin wasn't astringent. Patrick Belton, a 28-year-old graduate student at Oxford University in England who contributes to Oxblog, wrote, "I can understand the longing, particularly pronounced among people one generation older than me, to actually have something go massively, extraordinarily, democratically wrong, such that the platform and slate are junked, and the delegates rise up in a Jeffersonian parliamentary fury to junk the nominees presumptive, and instead nominate, say, Peter Jennings."

**The New York Times**

July 26, 2004, Monday  
NATIONAL DESK

## **THE EYES OF THE NATION: THE INTERNET; Year of the Blog? Web Diarists Are Now Official Members of Convention Press Corps**

By JENNIFER 8. LEE (NYT)

"I look forward to the world that exists in the margins," said

Patrick Belton, a 28-year-old Oxford University graduate student who blogs at Oxblog.com and calls himself a "liberal hawk."

"It will be interesting to get around the televised spectacle and see it as a meeting place for the different factions of the party," Mr. Belton said.

*The Washington Post*

## **Boston's Bloggers, Filling In the Margins**

*By Howard Kurtz*  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Monday, July 26, 2004; Page A07

Patrick Belton of Oxblog, an Oxford graduate student and self-described centrist who worked for Bill Bradley in 2000, sees the convention as "a wonderful time to take a snapshot of all different factions, who's on the rise and who's on the relative wane."

Belton has invited his blogging brethren out for a drink because "we have to cultivate a reputation for delightful alcoholism." The former Richmond resident adds: "There's a lot happening on the margins that the more established media, by dint of time and space limits, just aren't able to cover. Blogs don't have word count limits."

**CNN**

**INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS**  
**Critique of Worldwide Media Coverage**  
Aired July 24, 2004 - 21:00:00 ET

SWEENEY: You're watching INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS, here on CNN.

They are witty and outspoken, often irreverent, and now (AUDIO GAP) on the Internet. They are the bloggers, political pundits who provide commentary on their personal Web sites. Both Democrats and Republicans alike are acknowledging their power and for the first time a select few bloggers are getting credentials alongside journalists for the

Democrat and Republican conventions.

I'm joined now in Bost by Alex Jones, director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University. And in New York, Patrick Belton, from OxBlog. Patrick is one of those bloggers accredited to the conventions this year.

PATRICK BELTON, OXBLOG: Hello. Well, a blogger is a practitioner of Internet journalism. What distinguishes a blog from an Internet magazine is the presence of an editor.

So bloggers write in a medium where there is not an excessive startup cost and they write without another presence being in there to filter between them and the reader.

SWEENEY: And Alex Jones, would you agree that blogging falls within the realms of journalism?

ALEX JONES, HARVARD UNIV.: Well, journalism is a sort of blunt instrument. I mean, it covers an awful lot of things. Is public relations journalism? There are some people who think it is. Is blogging a form of journalism? I think you could probably say it is, but I think that there are limits to our vocabulary right now about making distinctions.

I don't think blogging is journalism as most people think of journalism in that it doesn't -- it's not just a matter of an editor, from my perspective. It's a matter of reporting and verifying information, and I think that within the world of blogging, there are some blogs who take great pains to do more of that kind of thing, but for the most part blogging is not about reporting, it's about commentary, and that's a different kind of thing.

SWEENEY: Patrick, do you agree with that? I mean, really, you're giving your opinion about something rather than --

(CROSSTALK)

BELTON: Well, I'm happy to give my opinion about this too.

I think I have a slightly different definition that I'm proceeding from than Alex is about journalism.

What I see us doing is principally, under a fairly established sub- genre of opinion journalism, where your principle duty isn't to report on the world but rather to present original new commentary, new analyses, making explicit and questioning unspoken assumptions and also commenting on the way that reporting happens, and I think that's something that bloggers can really contribute.

Bloggers talk to each other online. They talk to other blogs. They comment on print and broadcast news. So while Maureen Dowd, for instance, doesn't have to respond every morning to what other commentators to the left, to the right, said, and the "New York Times" isn't going to go and reach into Page 8 of the previous day's "Washington Post," bloggers do that, and I think that both tend to make blogging as a unit -- the tally of bloggers a running conversation that tends to be quite polite and evidence driven.

SWEENEY: Patrick, the word anorak comes to mind and that comes from my childhood, but it was where people would have a fixation on a particular thing, it might be radio presenters or people in news or something like that, and they would constantly communicate with each other.

How much as the Internet to do with this in just allowing you to communicate a lot faster? And why do you think it is that you are being taken seriously by the Democrats and the Republicans?

BELTON: Oh, right, well, I guess it would be very bad manners to say it is a lack of taste, so I'm just going to be grateful.

I think that 2004 is really, really very interesting, because this is going to be the blog that represents symbolically more than substantively the fact that there is now this third type of journalism, Internet journalism, that is going to intervene between and connect the public space in which politics is conducted to a domestic space of people's living rooms, closets, bedrooms and offices.

1924 introduced radio and in that year the *Nation* said, well, you know, this is going to be a one-off fad and by 1928 politics will have returned to more solid stuff. In 1952 the Republican Convention introduced television for the first time nationally, and I think 2004 will be remembered for being the convention that introduces Internet journalism as a third medium.

SWEENEY: All right. Alex, there is a point that Patrick is making, that this could be a development that is here to stay.

JONES: I think that there is absolutely truth to what he is saying in the sense that blogging is here to stay. I think that blogging has already established itself as being an important player in the sort of information game.

What I am concerned about, frankly, is that blogging is now going to be needing to find a way to establish itself on a commercial basis, because while a lot of bloggers do what they do right now for love, it's not going to be an enduring way to support a blogging world that is aborning (ph). I think it is just too much power there and too much potential for manipulation and for influence to expect that it's not going to be, you know, approached by people who are going to try to find ways to exploit it.

SWEENEY: Where will it go then? Does this mean our society is becoming more driven towards an opinionated culture? And will only some bloggers survive and some will do it really just for love rather than money -- Alex.

JONES: I think what's going to happen is that there is going to be a range of types of blogs, and some of them are going to be more commercial and some of them are going to be more agenda driven, and the thing that I think is worst about this from my perspective, and I'm thinking as a journalist in the traditional sense, I think that the blogging phenomenon is attractive, it is fun, it's candid, it's witty, it allows people to say what they think and that's always very enjoyable, but I think that in the commercial world of journalism, the kind of journalism I'm talking about is extensive. It requires reporters to go out and look at people and ask questions and confront things, and that I think is something that is going to become increasingly unlikely to be supported by commercial enterprises because blogging is so much cheaper and in many ways maybe much more appealing to a younger audience.

SWEENEY: All right, Patrick, I'll give you a very quick final word, literally 10 seconds.

BELTON: Great, thanks. I think that blogs aren't here to displace print and broadcast journalism. I think they're there to complement it --

SWEENEY: All right.

BELTON: -- and there are things that blogs are good at and there are things that they aren't and I think it's going to be a tripod from here forward.

SWEENEY: All right. There we have to leave it. Thank you both very much, gentlemen, for joining us from New York and Boston, Alex Jones and Patrick Belton.

And that is all for this edition of INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS. Tune in again next time for another look at how the media are handling the big issues.

I'm Fionnuala Sweeney. Thanks for joining us.

END



7/9/2004 7:40 PM

For traditional media, both big political parties generally rely on rules established by committees of journalists for getting passes to cover Congress. No such procedure exists for blogs, and convention staffers had to review each blog and apply subjective criteria.

Belton, 28, a doctoral candidate in international relations at Oxford University, said he was "tickled pink" when he learned by phone Thursday he had been accepted. (Notifications were sent by postal mail, but Belton said he hasn't checked his mailbox in days.)

"It will be great fun to participate in the symbolic first convention of the blog," said Belton, who said he's now "trying to scrape the pennies together" for a flight from England.



## Online pioneers bring convention coverage new audience

*ALEX MASSIE IN BOSTON*  
Wed 28 Jul 2004

Patrick Belton, one of the three co-authors of [www.oxblog.com](http://www.oxblog.com) a centrist current affairs weblog run by three American post-graduate students at Oxford University, returned to the United States to blog the convention.

"I don't see electronic media as a competitor for broadcast and print journalism, but as emerging to complement them by doing things they're not by nature suited to do. There are many things for which blogs are naturally less well-suited than are, say, the New York Times and CNN. So I think before terribly long we're likely to see the three existing as a tripod of mutually complementing media."



## Bloggers Make Debut at Democratic Convention

Mon Jul 26, 2004 07:25 PM ET

As stated by blogger **Patrick Belton** ... "The 2004 conventions will be remembered as the conventions of the blog; just like the 1952 Republican convention was the convention of the television, and the 1924 conventions were the conventions of the radio."