



## Where are the women in media? They're blogging!

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1050 17th St., NW Suite 250 Washington, DC 20005 t: 202-293-4505 f: 202-293-4507 [ywtf@ncwo-online.org](mailto:ywtf@ncwo-online.org)

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It is well known that women have historically been under-represented in mainstream media due to a variety of reasons, including discrimination, gendered perceptions about who is authorized to speak about politics and news, and work/family conflicts. Yet while women, especially younger women, have made great strides in entering mainstream media, at the same time many women are challenging the limits of media by both creating and reading blogs and other alternative media sources.

### What is a Blog?

A weblog, or blog, is a personal journal on the web. A blog can be personal or they can cover any number of topics, from culture to politics to feminism to good parenting. Some blogs are edited by a single individual; others are collaborations of two or more people with related interests. Blogs and online journals gained popularity in the late 1990s and become increasingly popular – many politically-oriented blogs have been recognized for their influence over public opinion and politics. According to a study by the Pew Foundation, 44 percent of adult Internet users (more than 53 million individuals) have contributed their thoughts and their files to the online world – meaning that they posted pictures, writings, artwork, and/or commentary to websites.<sup>i</sup> Technorati estimates that there are approximately 70,000 new blogs created every day!<sup>ii</sup>

### Do Women Blog?

A 2004 study found that women are actually more likely than men to start and keep blogs.<sup>iii</sup> The study found that women created the majority - 56 percent - of surveyed blogs. Blogging is unique because anyone with a computer and an internet connection can start a blog and post their thoughts for all the world to read. There are no editors, and you do not need a degree in journalism or a job as an op-ed columnist to share your opinions and analysis. In a recent New York Times article, blogger Virginia Postrel stated that blogging is friendly to women because “you don’t have to be part of quite literally an old boys network.”<sup>iv</sup>

Unfortunately, female-run blogs and blogs addressing feminist issues are often less widely linked and read than male-run blogs. The mainstream blog world tends to focus on a very small number of male bloggers, and female bloggers who write about political issues are often taken less seriously than male bloggers.

### Who Are the Top Women Bloggers?

There are a number of female bloggers who are widely read and recognized. Generally, the popularity of blogs is measured in terms of the number of times that other sites link

to the blog. Technorati lists the top 100 blogs based on the number of weblinks. A number of women, including Xenia Jardin (of [BoingBoing](#)), Arianna Huffington ([The Huffington Post](#)), [Michelle Malkin](#), and Jessica Coen (of [Gawker](#)) are listed in the top 20. Another well-known female blogger is Ana Marie Cox (aka [Wonkette](#)).

## How Do I Find Out About Female Bloggers?

A good place to start finding female bloggers is to check out the list at [Feministing.com](#). Feministing is a blog run by four young women whose mission is as follows: “Young women are rarely given the opportunity to speak on their own behalf on issues that affect their lives and futures. Feministing provides a platform for us to comment, analyze and influence.” On the right sidebar of the page, there are links to over 100 blogs (although not all are edited by women, many are). [What She Said!](#) also has a long list of links to progressive women bloggers. [Blog Sisters](#) is a group blog of over 100 women.

There are also a number of blog search engines - three of the best are [Technorati](#), [GoogleBlogSearch](#), and [BlogStreet](#). And of course, since many blogs by women/feminists are less well linked than the mainstream blogs, make sure to look for links in the women-run blogs that you like.

## How Do I Start a Blog?

It’s easy! There are a number of sites, including [Blogger](#) and [Typepad](#), that will take you step by step through creating your blog. [WikiHow](#) also has a guide to starting a blog.

If you aren’t ready to start your own blog, you can also post your comments on already existing blogs – you can either create a personal account or post your comments anonymously.

## What Is YWTF and How Do I Get Involved?

The Younger Women’s Task Force (YWTF), a project of the National Council of Women’s Organizations, is a nationwide, diverse and inclusive grassroots movement dedicated to organizing younger women and their allies to take action on issues that matter most to them. By and for younger women, YWTF works both within and beyond the women’s movement, engaging all who are invested in advancing the rights of younger women.

For more information or to get involved, please visit [www.ywtf.org](http://www.ywtf.org).

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<sup>i</sup> Pew Internet and American Life Project. “Reports: Online Activities and Pursuits.” [http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/113/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/113/report_display.asp).

<sup>ii</sup> Technorati. “Technorati: About Us.” <http://www.technorati.com/about/>.

<sup>iii</sup> From a study conducted by Perseus Development Corp., a Web-based market research firm based in Braintree, Massachusetts.

<sup>iv</sup> Lisa Guernsey, “Telling All Online: It’s a Man’s World (Isn’t It?)” *The New York Times*, November 22, 2002.