The end of June is always an especially lively time at the Law School. Classes have been over for a couple of weeks and graduation will have come and gone—usually with good weather. Exams are graded if all has gone well. Lunch becomes even more interesting than usual in late June as the Supreme Court rushes to the end of its current term. At lunch you can be confident that you will learn what the Supreme Court has done and where the Court has missed the mark.

This past June, in anticipation of the decision in MGM v. Grokster, I decided to try a new, temporary group blog as an experiment: the Picker MobBlog (find it at http://picker.typepad.com). Grokster was widely expected to revisit the Supreme Court's important 1984 opinion in Sony v. Universal Studios which addressed the circumstances under which a third party could be held liable for copyright infringement. The Grokster opinion was eagerly awaited by the copyright community and by much of the online world. (Just so you know, the opinion took off in another direction entirely by adding inducement liability to copyright law.)

A blog (short for weblog) is just a website run by special software that makes it easy to update the site. Blogs reflect the infinite variety of the Internet, from the purely personal, to the acerbically political, such as Wonkette! (www.wonkette.com) written by University of Chicago College graduate Ana Marie Cox, to the virtual water cooler, such as Texas law professor Brian Leiter's. Leiter's Law School Reports (http://leiterlawschool.typepad.com/) devoted to law school gossip (the reader wouldn't find it interesting perhaps, but

Randal Picker, '75, is the Paul and Theo Leffmann Professor of Commercial Law at the Law School, and a senior fellow at the Computational Institute of the University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory.
In mid-August, we did our second mobblog. Fred von Lohmann of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, an intellectual property advocacy group, presented a paper that he had recently published on darknets (file-swapping areas of the internet.) For this conversation, we were joined by law professors, computer science professors, and industry participants.

The blog workshop has distinct advantages. Location of the participants is irrelevant. Tim Wu, who had visited at the Law School last year, was in Japan during the Grokster mob, and we had law professors from one coast to the other. It is also easy to be cross-disciplinary, to have technologists talk to law professors, or to cross the even steeper divide separating the law school world from the real world by having academics talk to nonacademics.

We will continue to experiment with this medium.

During the early days of radio, the University launched the University of Chicago Round Table as a serious discussion of ideas in the ether. The Law School has just started a general faculty blog (visit uchicagolaw.typepad.com to see what we are talking about now and to tell us where we have gone wrong.) I expect to incorporate a blog into my Spring seminar on antitrust and intellectual property policy.

And we will mob again at the Picker MobBlog. As a participant in a mob, you need to commit to paying attention during the period of the blog, but there is no single hour when you have to be there. This as a weak synch requirement, and that makes it easy to fit the mobblog into busy schedules and yet still have a meaningful discussion. The permanent participants at the mobblog—me, Doug Lichtman, Rebecca Tushnet (of Georgetown law) and Tim Wu (Columbia law)—have a range of interests, but we tend to focus on intellectual property, antitrust, network industries and media issues. If you would like to join us or think you have a great topic, email me at r-picker@uchicago.edu. But you can also just drop by—virtually, of course—and see what we are reading and discussing.

The Law School recently launched The Faculty Blog—find it at http://uchicagolaw.typepad.com. In launching this blog, Dean Saul Levmore hopes to bring new ideas from the Law School's faculty to the wider world, and see them improved with reader's responses. Each week a new faculty "leader" will post, and everyone is welcome to participate in the ongoing discussions. Postings in the early weeks have included musings on "Legislating from the Bench" by Cass Sunstein, "The Myth that Judges Change on the Bench" by David Strauss, and "Why are Hedge Funds so Successful?" by Todd Henderson. The blog includes links to other blogs and sites of interest, ranging from the serious (the OpEd page of the New York Times) to the amusing (Did you know that Judge Richard Posner is a fan of Mortal Kombat?). Log on and join the discussion.