

# BLOGGING *and* PODCASTING:

*Emerging technologies expand legal discourse*

Long known as a place where people who love ideas come to work, to study, and to discuss, the Law School is becoming known for its innovative use of new and emerging technologies.

## BLOGGING

The Law School has launched two new blogs. The first of these is the Faculty Blog, which allows alumni and other interested readers from all over the world to participate in discussions started by faculty members. It can be found at [uchicagolaw.typepad.com](http://uchicagolaw.typepad.com).

“As a faculty, we always have been relatively active in unconventional channels,” explains Professor Douglas Lichtman. “We write newspaper editorials, appear on radio and television, and in other ways try to connect our intellectual efforts back to more on-the-ground audiences and mediums. The blog has fit well as a natural extension of those other efforts.”

Started in October of last year, the Faculty Blog is unique among such sites because it is the only web log of a collective faculty officially sanctioned by a school. Faculty members may begin dialogs on any law-related topic without the formal preparation necessary for an article for a legal journal. Alumni, students, and other readers may then post responses.

“I have run into alumni and even strangers who are fans and avid readers,” notes Dean Saul Levmore. “I suspect that more people have read some of our ideas on this blog than in all the law reviews put together. That is scary but possibly true.”

Such currency is the strongest characteristic of the Faculty Blog. The faculty and their ideas are available to those who haven't been to the school itself in years. Interested readers can contemplate Supreme Court decisions and NSA surveillance any time of day, practically anywhere, on their computers or PDAs.

In fact, regular review of the blog neatly reflects its subjects. From Hurricane Katrina to Google to consulting foreign law, well-constructed arguments appear daily. “The blog posters and many commentators bring an excellent, but nonpedantic intellectual curiosity to the topics of exchange,” said Kimball Corson, ’71. “While foolishness is jumped on aggressively by many, there is a sort of open, free-wheeling,

let's-think-about-this tenor to the blog that is very refreshing, unpretentious, and very, very Chicago.” The exchanges lead to an assortment of benefits for the faculty, the alumni, and other readers. Professors can throw out ideas they are considering for legal articles and other writings and see which ones get enthusiastic responses. They can also post arguments and ask for commentary from educated, interested readers that can ultimately help them construct stronger, more incisive articles.

Professors can also bring up topics they simply find interesting, subjects that they would like to discuss, but which they do not have the time to expand into a journal article. Before the inception of sites like the Faculty Blog, attorneys around the country communicated their ideas exclusively

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through review journals. While the professors may not choose to write full-fledged articles about some of their selected topics, others reading the blog, including alumni and current students, may choose to take up those subjects for formal inquiry themselves.

“My guess is that there would have been some clucking had we rolled out a more traditional blog,” explains Professor Lichtman. “But the blog as is really reflects our institution. We talk about substance, and we try to do it with some detail and nuance, but we see substance in everything around us rather than just traditional legal topics—and that combination has been very well received. It's an exciting and still-evolving project for us.”

The second blog focuses on global law issues. Current LLM students are the main posters, but LLM alums and JDs with international experience and interest are encouraged to participate. It can be found at [chicaglobal.typepad.com](http://chicaglobal.typepad.com).

“I do think that new media present opportunities for scholarship and especially for the dissemination of ideas,” Levmore added. “And that's our business after all. I like the idea of using new media as they become available. I think

our blog is pitched at a pretty good level. It is of interest to colleagues but also to alumni and students. It reminds me of lunchtime conversation at the Law School, and that's the idea."

#### PODCASTING

Twenty-first century additions to the Law School do not stop with the blogs. Podcasts, the distribution of audio files for listening on mobile devices or personal computers, make lectures and special events available to listeners around the world. From Justice Breyer's description of a day in the life of a Supreme Court Justice to Douglas Baird's discussion on the nature of the firm, a wide variety of talks and discussions are available for download. Information about how to access these files can be found at [www.law.uchicago.edu/podcastinstructions.html](http://www.law.uchicago.edu/podcastinstructions.html) or through the link on the Faculty Blog.

Students are especially excited about the podcasts, as many

of them are recordings of special lectures which not all students have the opportunity to attend. "What makes podcasts especially enjoyable to me—compared to radio or other traditional media—is that it offers the listener unadulterated access to the speaker's presentation," said Cory Hojka, '07. "Unlike radio, there's no need to reduce the content to a few minutes of soundbites. As a result, one has the otherwise rare opportunity to enjoy these speakers discussing their interesting views on topics as they were originally presented."

Because of the podcasts' popularity, the Law School is working on having videotapes of older lectures and series digitized and turned into videocasts that can also be downloaded. This will make an enormous amount of scholarly material available for research and reflection to anyone, anywhere. These resources will continue to expand as technology advances, helping educate, provoke, improve, and nurture the law community.

### AVAILABLE PODCASTS INCLUDE:

Professor Douglas Baird's presentation of a Chicago's Best Ideas lecture entitled "Coase's Journey."

Justice Stephen Breyer's presentation of the 2006 Schwartz Lecture, "Judicial Activism: Power Without Responsibility?"



Stephen Breyer

Professor Emily Buss's presentation of a Chicago's Best Ideas lecture entitled "Turning Best Ideas into Practice, Chicago's Policy Initiative on Foster Care."

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's presentation of "Foreign Law and Constitutional Interpretation."

Professor Bernard Harcourt's presentation of a Chicago's Best Ideas lecture entitled "Language of the Gun: A Semiotic for Law & Social Science."

Dean Saul Levmore's presentation of a Chicago's Best Ideas lecture entitled "The Wisdom of Groups and the Use of Experts."

Professor Douglas Lichtman and Professor Randy Picker on Grokster.

Professor Martha Nussbaum's presentation of a Chicago's Best Ideas lecture entitled "The Roots of Respect: Roger Williams and Religious Fairness."



Lior Strahilevitz

Professor Geoffrey Stone's presentation of a Chicago's Best Ideas lecture entitled "Sexing the Constitution."

Professor Lior Strahilevitz's presentation of the 2006 Ronald Coase Lecture in Law and Economics, "Information Asymmetries and the Rights to Exclude."

### ACCESSING THESE NEW MEDIA:

Podcasts are audio files that can be listened to while you are online, or they can be downloaded and listened to on a personal audio device such as an mp3 player or an ipod. Detailed instructions on how to listen to podcasts can be found at: <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/podcastinstructions.html>

Blogging refers to posting news, comments, articles, thoughts, or whatever else on a web log—a website with software that makes updating the site simple and easy. To check out the Law School's blogs simply type <http://uchicagolaw.typepad.com> to locate the Faculty Blog, or <http://chicagoglobal.typepad.com> to locate the Chicago Global into your internet browser. We hope you will join the on line conversation.