

Jacob Nielsen's latest posting on his website 'Write Articles, Not Blog Postings' is an interesting case of the corporate backlash against blogging. It is well known that global CEOs and 'world leaders' have been cautious utilizing blogs as a PR tool. During the blog craze of 2004 some of them made the step—and still post every now and then (probably written by their assistants and advisers). Usually, politicians stop when the election is over. Jacob Nielsen, mister Usability, tells his clients not to bother at all and not even start a blog. Below you will find some parts that I found interesting, in particular because the entire world of global news media consists of "quickly written, shallow" reports. It is a strange contradiction to see how Nielsen can withdraw himself from the very logic of advertisement as the legitimacy of politicians and CEOs depends on sound bytes and micro TV appearances, not on "thorough, value-added content." This is increasingly also the case for celebrity academics and writers. It is interesting to see how a highly paid consultant manages to move himself away from the crowds (and their 'wisdom') by calling to bail out of "information pollution" practices as if the Web 2.0 hype simply does not exist. Also note that Nielsen is writing this in the year 2007, three years after the blogmania.

Here are some quotes from the posting on his website:

[Write Articles, Not Blog Postings](#)

"To demonstrate world-class expertise, avoid quickly written, shallow postings. Instead, invest your time in thorough, value-added content that attracts paying customers.

I recently served as a "consultant's consultant," advising a world leader in his field on what to do about his website. In particular, this expert asked me whether he should start a weblog. I said no.

You probably already know my own Internet strategy, so it might not surprise you that I recommended that he should instead invest his time in writing thorough articles that he published on a regular schedule. Given limited time, this means not spending the effort to post numerous short comments on ongoing blogosphere discussions.

Weblogs have their role in business, particularly as project blogs, as exemplified on several award-winning intranets. Blogs are also fine for websites that sell cheap products. On these sites, visitors can often be easily converted and the main challenge is to raise awareness. For example, a site

that sells pistachio nuts should post as much content about pistachios as possible in the hope of attracting quick hits by people searching for that information. Some percentage of these visitors will buy the nuts while visiting the site.

(..) Blog postings will always be commodity content: there's a limit to the value you can provide with a short comment on somebody else's comments. Such postings are good for generating controversy and short-term traffic, and they're definitely easy to write. But they don't build sustainable value. Think of how disappointing it feels when you're searching for something and get directed to short postings in the middle of a debate that occurred years before, and is thus irrelevant.

Even if you're the world's top expert, your worst posting will be below average, which will negatively impact on your brand equity. If you do start a blog despite my advice, at least screen your postings: wait an hour or two, then reread your comments and avoid uploading any that are average or poor. (Even average content undermines your brand. Don't contribute to information pollution by posting material that isn't above the average of other people's writings.)"