

**Knallgrau**

**Corporate Blogospheres  
as hubs of social interaction**

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## Abstract

Most (if not all) **Intranets deploy dusty patterns: few employees produce** helpful content, most **others standby** and consume.

*Maybe and if you're lucky.*

With each expensive relaunch, management repetetively hopes everyone will jump in, collaborate and make the best from corporate assets.

**Humans want to talk and want to be actively listened.**

Knallgrau showcases SIEMENS global employee blogging and demonstrates how a global blogosphere helps to initiate a cultural change, fresh corporate communication and barrier-free collaboration.

Unfortunately humans do not follow corporate tactics: Intranets most often stagnate and **„heard-at-the-watercooler“-habits** quickly supersede complicated middleware.

## Agenda

- » Intranets thrive with active participation
- » Internal Blogs as a social space
- » Collaborative corporate learning
- » Why Blogs make a difference
- » Blog scenarios
- » Blogs in corporate communication
- » Case study: SIEMENS employee blogging
- » Knallgrau (shameless self promotion)

## Intranets thrive with active participation

Knallgrau understands social media as webservices and platforms to collaboratively exchange musings and experiences utilizing the full spectrum of today's rich media environments.

In a perfect world, **Intranets** would be **corporate learning platforms** leveraging **assets** and **employees' skills** – ultimately resulting in a High-Performance Workplace<sup>1</sup> by:

- » **transparent conversation** within and across **individual spaces**
- » **pull over push** utilizing decentralized distribution

Contemporary platforms are built with **social software** hence ...

- » fostering the management of information, identities, and relationships
- » driving a massive **paradigm change** from task-oriented software towards **people oriented relation management**

## Internal Blogs as a social space

Blogs connect two essential aspects of knowledge management:

**codification** and **personalization**.

Each blog entry **exposes explicit knowledge** that has been implicit before.

The **subjective exposure of individual insight** links these learnings with a person. The more individuals interact within an internal blogosphere, the more implicit items are revealed<sup>2</sup>.

The **conversational character** of blogs as open, individual spaces renders them as a suitable instrument for **collaborative learning and knowledge management**.<sup>3</sup>

„K-Blogging“ („K“ for knowledge) comprises aspects of **identity-, relationship- and information management**.

## Collaborative corporate learning

Social networks within a company internal blogosphere generate **social capital** to the individual employee that effectively can be used for successful processes in learning and knowledge management.

Focussing attention within a corporations' topical domain **boosts dissemination** of information and creates **visibility** for topics. Using blogs, individuals may mutually comment and reference colleagues' postings

**broaden scope** and enhance **decision making processes**.

With repeated interactions, **communities of practice** emerge into (comparatively stable) **social relationships**<sup>4</sup>.

Within an internal blogosphere a steady flow of information, relations and feedback **enables the individual to actively participate beyond hierarchical barriers**.

## Why Blogs make a difference

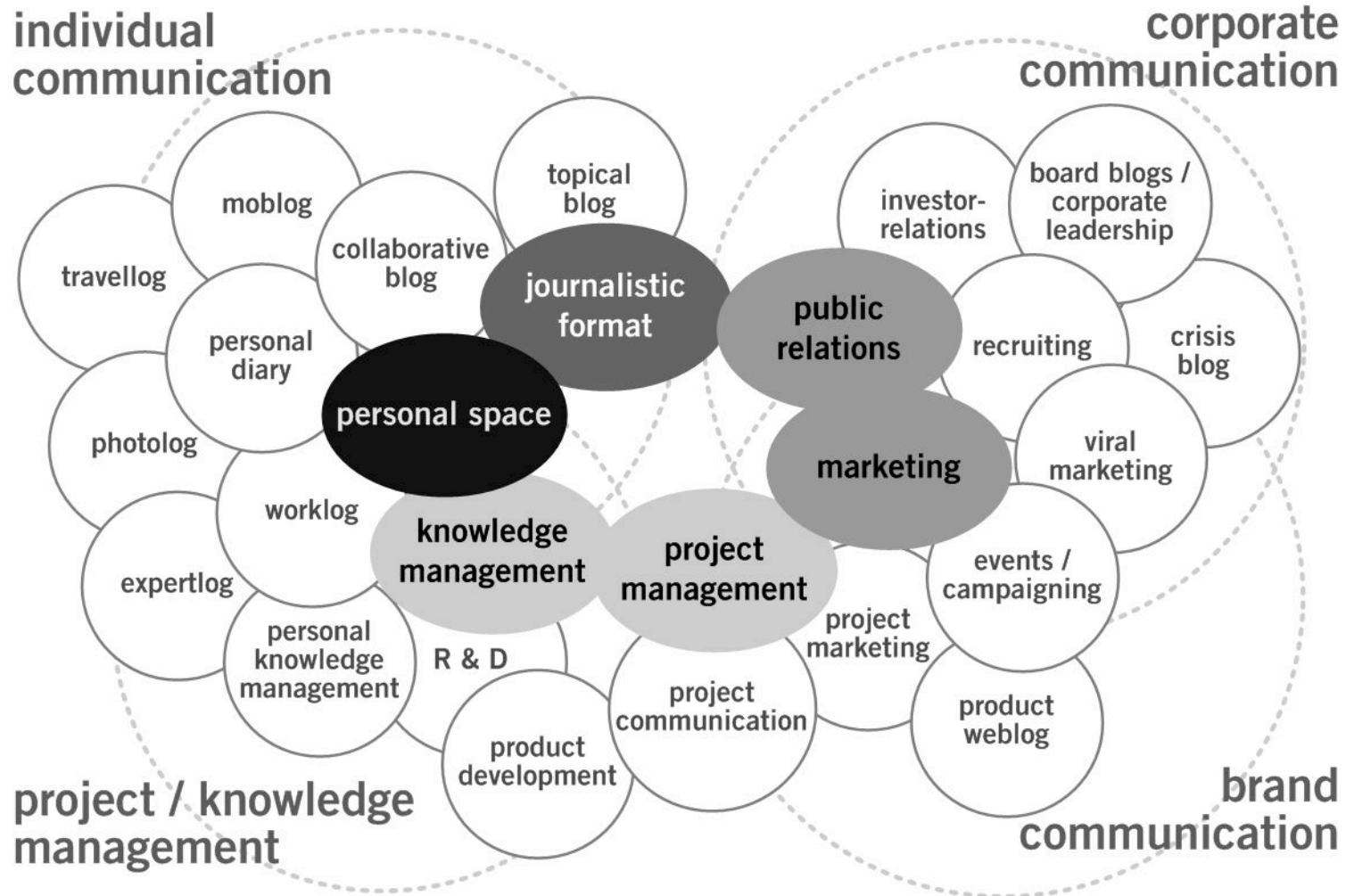
The blogosphere doubles every 5 months<sup>5</sup>, 50.000+ new postings/hr are generated: blogs are the fastest growing media format ever<sup>6</sup> and start to hit corporate universe:



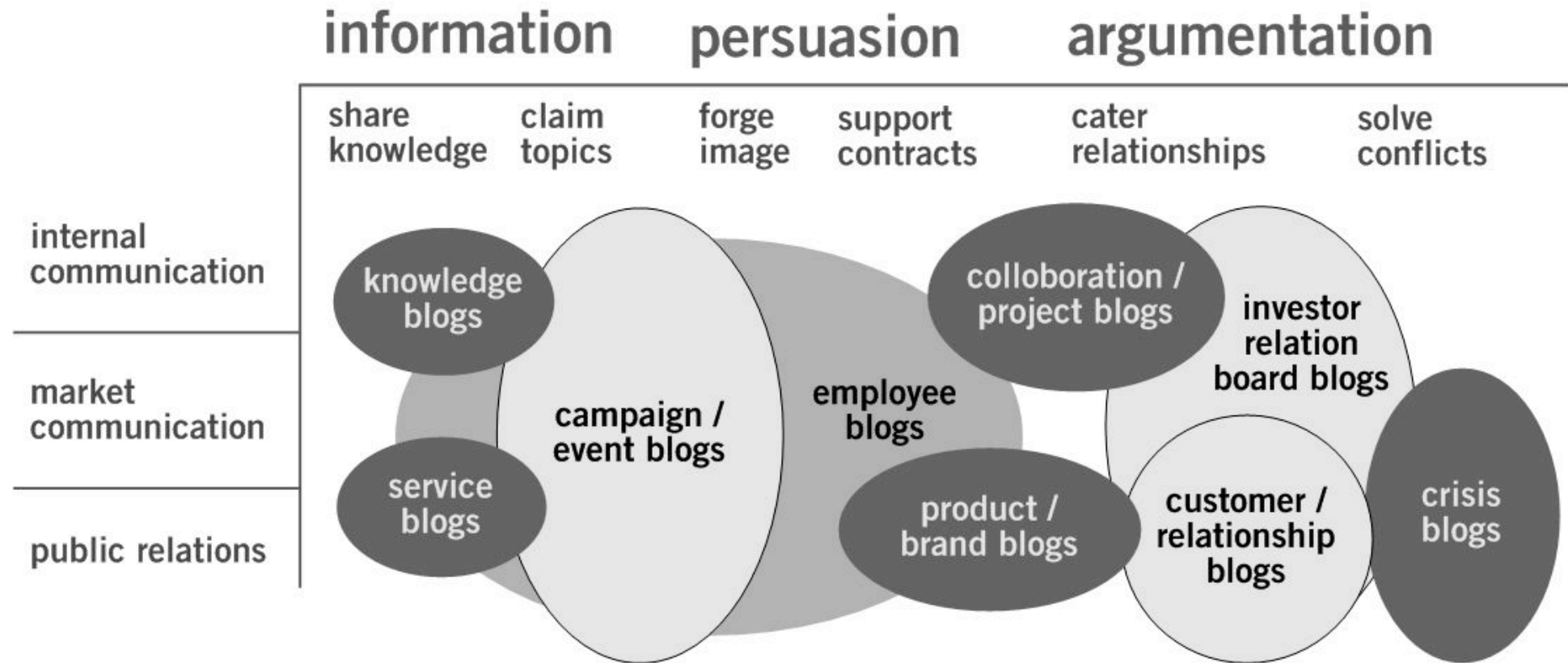
Obviously, there is some value:

- » blogospheres are an **organical system** without central control (big brothers: beware!)
- » blogospheres are a **reputation economies**: relevant and original postings raise individual reputation and authority (information hidiers: beware!)
- » **push substitutes pull** and enhances viral spreading of relevant information

# Blog scenarios



# Blogs in corporate communication



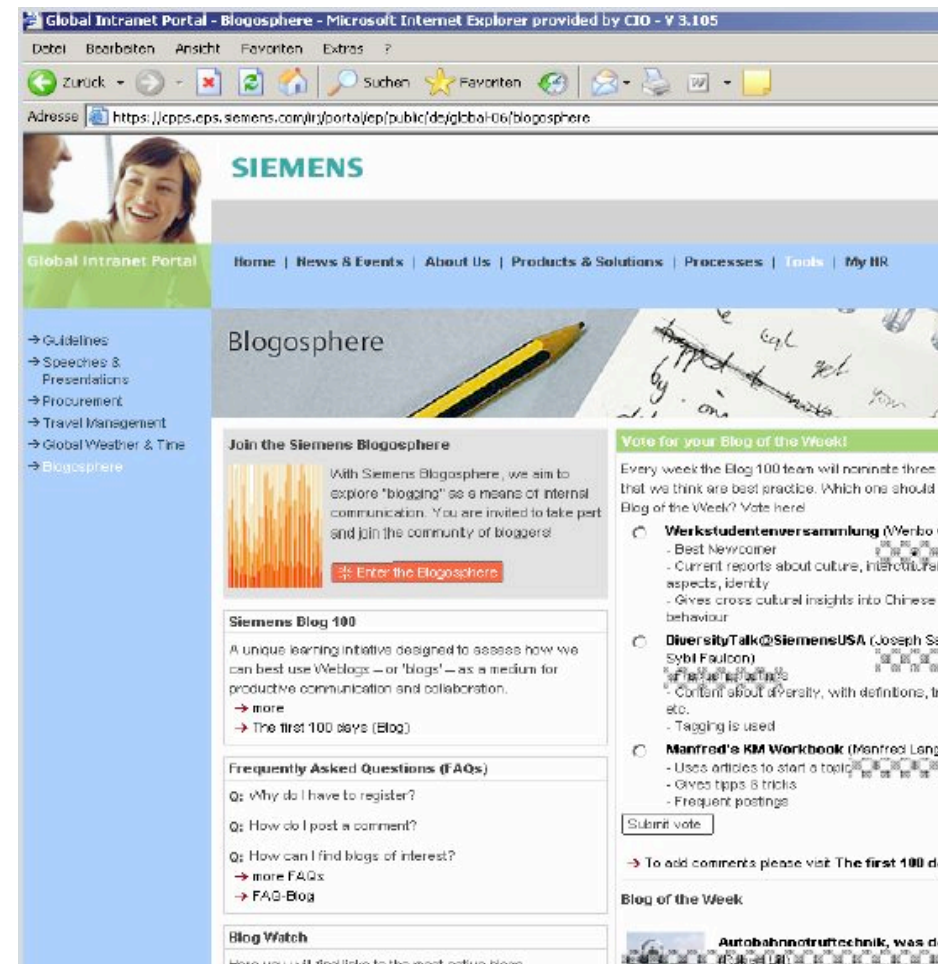
source: based on „Ansgar Zerfaß, MFG Baden-Württemberg/Universität Leipzig“, see [www.meinungsmacherblog.de](http://www.meinungsmacherblog.de), in: W&V 20/2006, p66

## Case study: SIEMENS employee blogging

- » SIEMENS blogosphere
- » Roll your own in three easy steps
- » Usage, Users and Topics
- » Learnings and Challenges

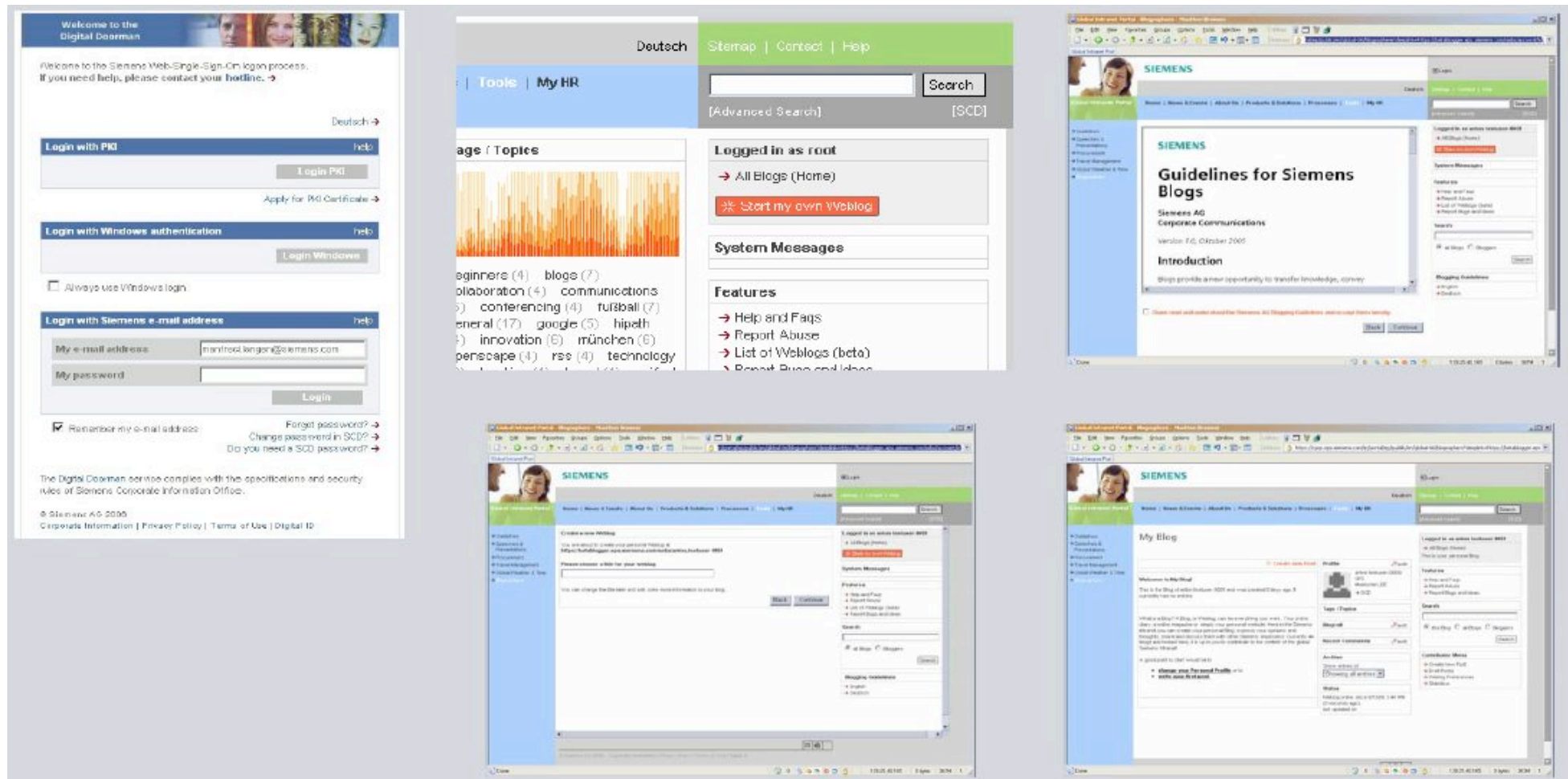
# SIEMENS Blogosphere

- » internal application in global intranet
- » open for all employees, login via SSO
- » every employee may start an own blog
- » workflow in three easy steps
- » simple, intuitive blogging
- » guidelines and „code of conduct“



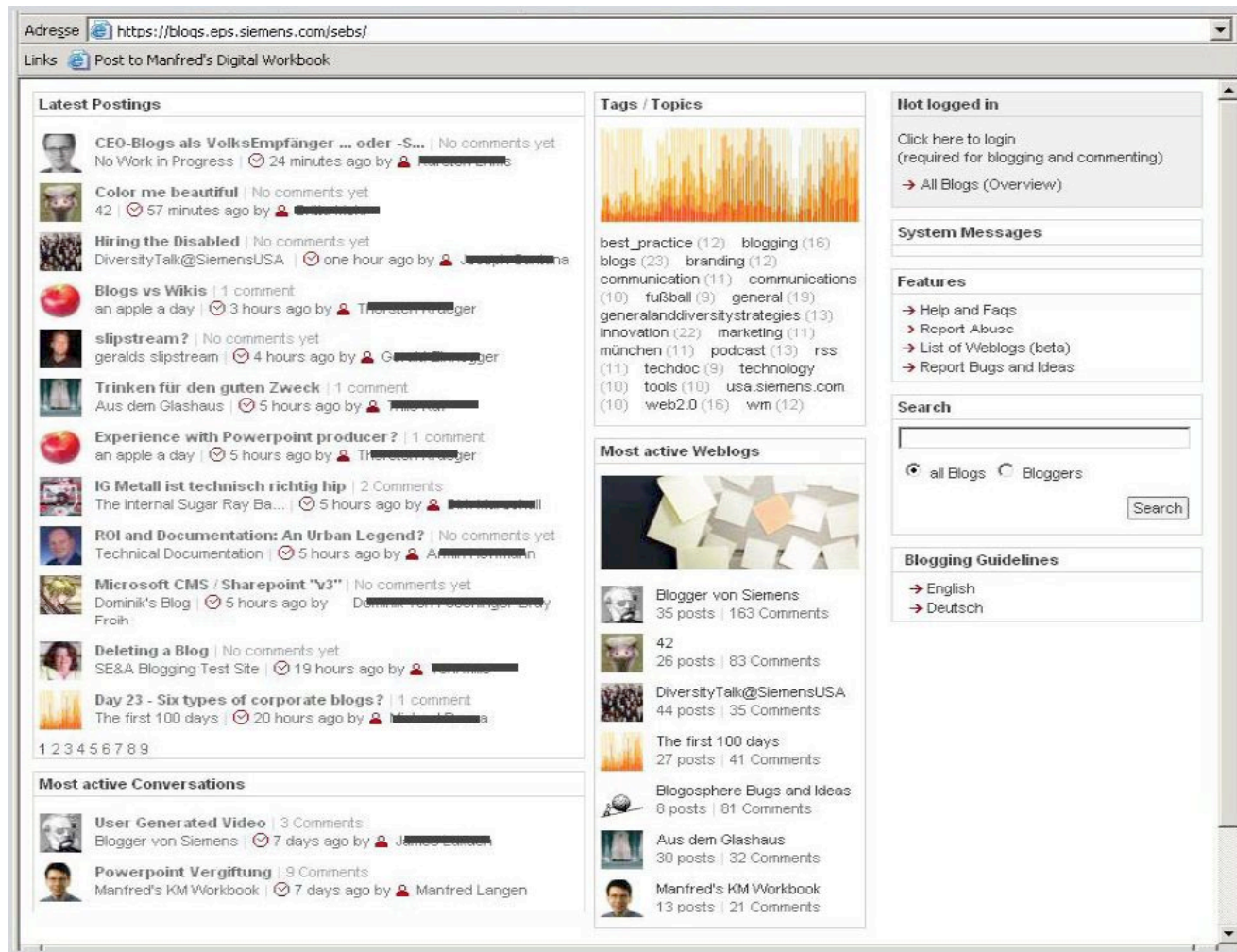
source: SIEMENS, Karsten Ehms, Corporate Technology

# Start an own blog in three easy steps



source: SIEMENS, Karsten Ehms, Corporate Technology

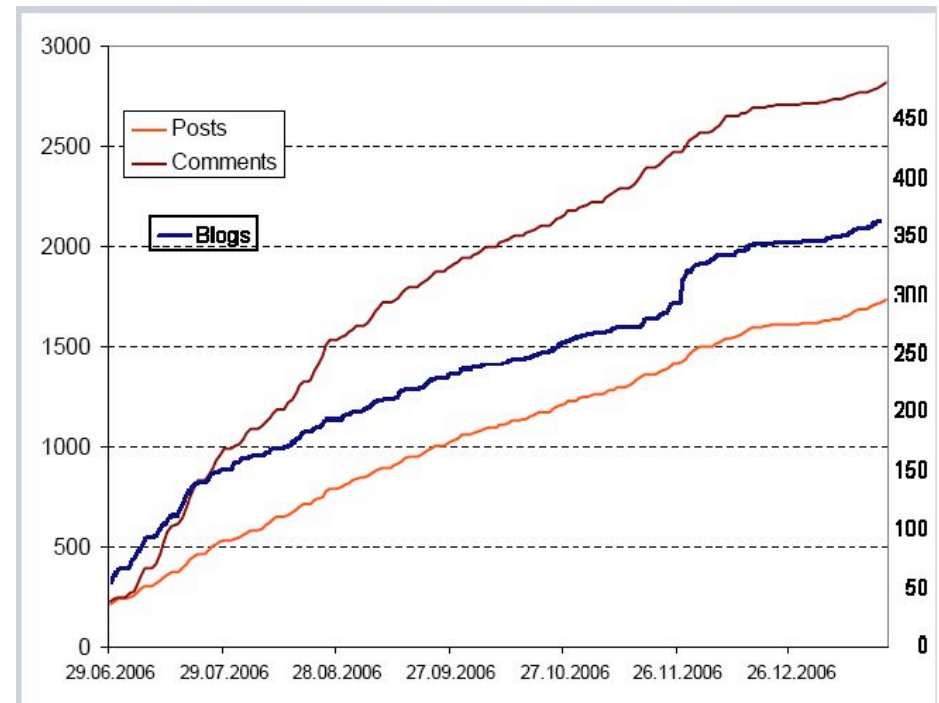
# The internal SIEMENS blogosphere



source: SIEMENS, Karsten Ehms, Corporate Technology

## Usage (as of Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 2007)

- » 387 blogs
- » 1734 postings
- » 2816 comments
- » 1370 different tags
- » 963 regular users
- » reach: approx. **15,000 worldwide employees**



source: SIEMENS, Karsten Ehms, Corporate Technology

## Users and topics

SIEMENS-Bloggers come from:

- » diversity managers
- » engineers
- » service technicians
- » knowledge managers
- » marketing staff
- » technical documentation
- » strategic sourcing

Frequently used topics:

- » collaboration across departmental borders
- » blogs as a media format
- » news
- » management and business
- » tools
- » trends and ideas
- » culture and sports
- » technology

source: SIEMENS, Karsten Ehms, Corporate Technology

## Learnings and challenges

- » **evolutionary approach**, few internal marketing, a „controlled experiment“ to **offer personal spaces** within the corporation:
- » **internationally accepted**: not a single case of fraud until today
- » new forms of collaboration emerge with tagging and RSS
- » differentiation to other collaboration tools: group blogging heavily requested
- » „Networking is working“ – proven by comments and linking

A **change in corporate communication culture** starts to happen, the **intranet becomes writeable**.

Blogs might turn out to be a barrier for „non communicators“.

## Knallgrau (shameless self promotion)

- » company, customers, team
- » universe
- » answers

Knallgrau

## Knallgrau New Media Solutions a full service New Media agency

- » founded 2001, 25 people, DE/AT/CH, based in Vienna
- » **social software** since 2002
- » open and commercial **platforms**:  
blogr.com, twoday.net, moday.at  
and mindestenshaltbar.net
- » conceptualization, design, development, implementation and management of platforms for several thousand users
- » **Twoday Media** as a middleware for industry neutral social software: blogs, podcasts, vodcast for both internal and external communication

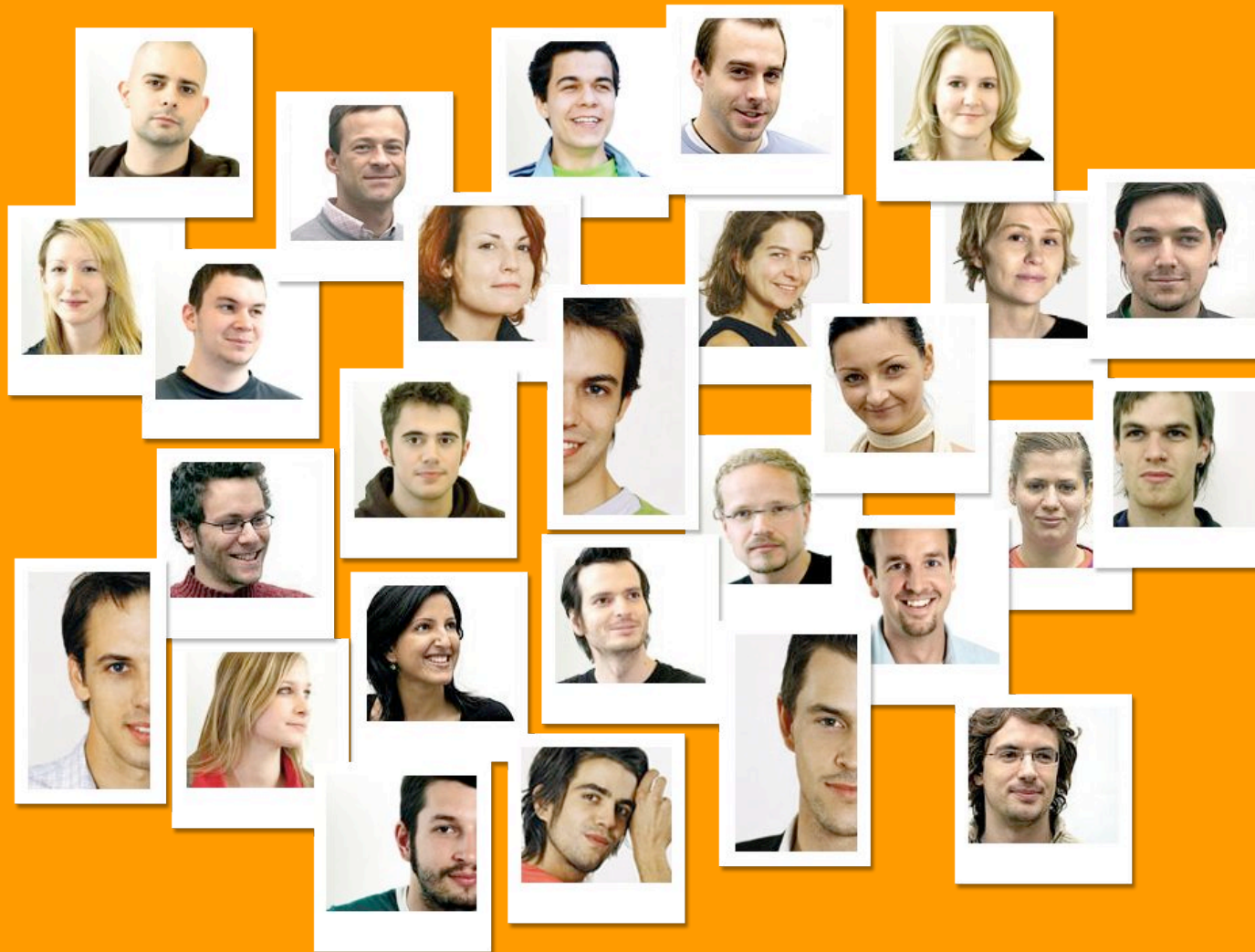
Knallgrau

# Knallgrau | customers



Knallgrau

# Knallgrau | Team



## answers

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## References

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- 2 Kaiser, Stephan/Gordon Müller-Seitz (2005): Knowledge Management via a Novel Information Technology – The Case of Corporate Weblogs. In: Journal of Universal Computer Science, Special Issue: Proceedings of I-Know '05: 5th International Conference on Knowledge Management, S. 465-473.
- 3 „Wer nutzt Weblogs für kollaborative Lern- und Wissensprozesse?“, Ergebnisse der Befragung 'Wie ich blogge?!' aus 2005, veröffentlicht Mai 2006 von Jan Schmidt / Florian Mayer; Berichte der Forschungsstelle „Neue Kommunikationsmedien“, Nr. 06-02; <http://www.fonk-bamberg.de>
- 4 Reichmayr, Ingrid (2005): „Weblogs von Jugendlichen als Bühnen des Identitätsmanagements. Eine qualitative Untersuchung“. In: Schmidt, Jan / Schönberger, Klaus / Stegbauer, Christian (editors): „Erkundungen des Bloggens. Sozialwissenschaftliche Ansätze und Perspektiven der Weblogforschung“. Sonderausgabe von kommunikation@gesellschaft, Jg. 6. Online-Publikation: [http://www.soz.unifrankfurt.de/K.G/B8\\_2005\\_Reichmayr.pdf](http://www.soz.unifrankfurt.de/K.G/B8_2005_Reichmayr.pdf)
- 5 David Sifry in „State of the Blogosphere“, 6.2.2006; <http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000419.html>; current data see <http://technorati.com/weblog/2006/11/161.html>
- 6 graphic by David Sifry in „State of the Blogosphere“, 7.8.2006; <http://www.sifry.com/alerts/Slide0002-6.gif>