

I disagree with the notion that international law blogging—or law prof blogging more generally—will coarsen the dialogue or suffer from the “culture of the amateur.” The medium really is amazingly self-correcting and self-moderating. Mistakes of fact or law are rooted out quite quickly, and the tone, for the most part, remains civil. Those of us who blog have too much at risk—tenure and promotion, reputation, future job prospects, student retaliation, etc.—to be careless, amateurish, or polemical for the sake of polemics. Yes, there is room for humor and the occasional snarky comment, but it is done in the spirit of avoiding taking ourselves too seriously. At least at *Opinio Juris*, we intentionally staffed the blog with contributors from a range of perspectives to overcome the tendency of like-minded blogs to become echo-chambers, and we try to bring in guests on a regular basis to add fresh voices—and old, established voices—to the conversation. For many of the reasons you discuss, law professor blogs are of much higher quality than the average blog, and thus are a net plus within the democratic debate. That said, I don’t think we are anywhere near the stage where a blog can be cited for law. But we are certainly past the stage where blogs can be cited as secondary sources.

My “norm portals” article examining the transnational processes behind the state court decisions in the VCCR death penalty cases started out as a discussion/argument on the blog. Journals, perhaps, become less and less important as signaling devices for quality, and more about documenting and cataloging the work product in a “permanent” form.

I also think that international law gains uniquely from the electronic form because it not only breaks down the boundaries of distance, nationality and school ranking (permitting obscure professors in the Midwest to be part of the “invisible college”!) but it also permits entry into the discussion by less-frequently heard voice. We have yet to see an English-language IL blog that has only developing world contributors, but we have a small but growing readership from outside the US and Europe (which we can track in a way that the readership of *AJIL* cannot be tracked—minutes per visit, pages viewed per visit, etc.) As projects like “One Laptop” bring the internet to the world, the future of the “invisible college” may be limitless.

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