

# User-Generated Content: Where Does it Fit?

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The Gilbane Group

*The Changing Face of Content*

# First the good news

Anyone can publish anything, in most  
any format, at any time

# The bad news?

They will

# A few terms first

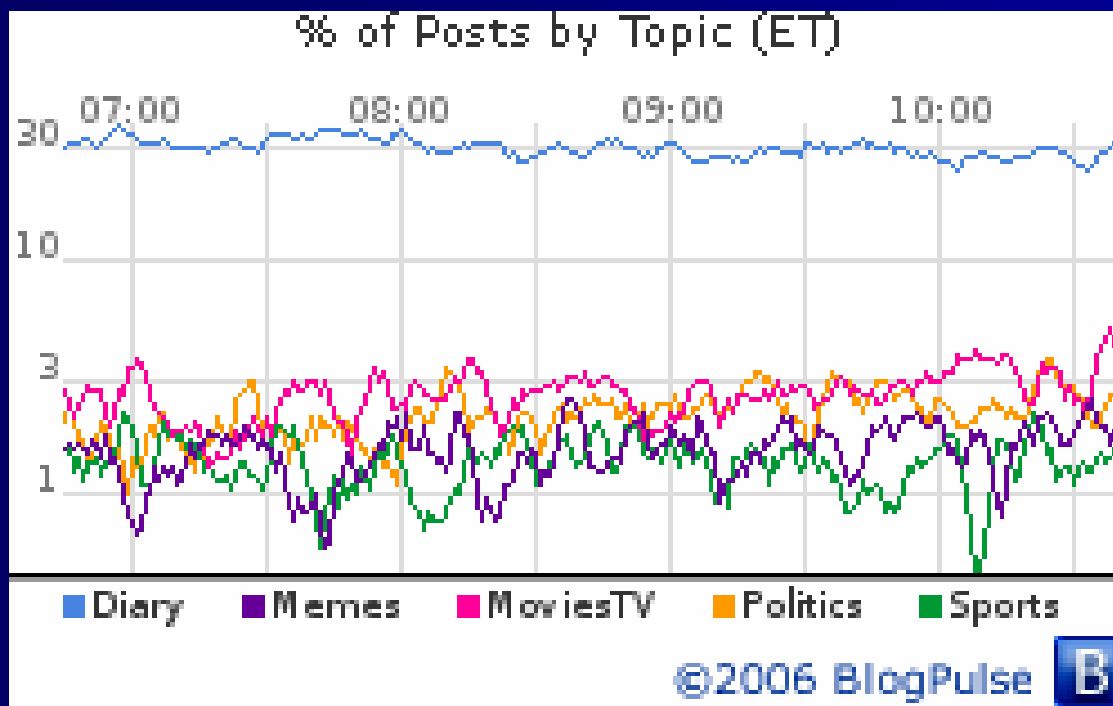
- Blogs
  - Largely single-author, but can be multi-author
  - Many personal or focused on a single topic
  - Can allow comments
- Wikis
  - Spirit of collaboration
  - *Everyone* is an author/peer
- Mashups
  - Content from multiple sources blended into a single application
  - e.g., a Google Map with a nightclub review with a music sample with a ticket agency “buy now” box

# I blog, therefore I am...

- Blogpulse.com tells us
  - (As of 6/1/06 at 10:45 AM EST)
  - 28,641,494 blogs
  - 48,641 new blogs in the previous 24 hours
  - 643,833 new posts indexed in the previous 24 hours

# To what end?

- Um, er, well, anything really



# The bad news—bad can be really bad

- Members of political wiki *Little Green Footballs* commenting on the recent assassination of Iraqi tennis players, reportedly for wearing shorts
  - “Islam is like a bad 1930's movie or some dark comic book...You people live in a twilight zone world.....You are like five year old children with guns and bombs....**Mohammad was nuts....why do you follow a nutty child abusing killer....he was a thief... an adulter...and a liar...wake up....GROW UP.**”
  - “If loathing these people makes me a bigot or a hater then so be it. There is no room in this world for this anachronistic, medieval, and just plain evil religion. I will not excuse the actions of these brutes with moral equivalence or "it's their culture" BS, and anyone who does is a candy ass who refuses to face reality.”

# Or bad can be just ignorant, or mediocre

- An Amazon.com reader commenting on Hillary Clinton's book, *Living History*

*4 of 22 people found the following review helpful:*



**What were you thinking???**, July 13, 2005

- Reviewer: - I didn't think that any book could be worse than My Life: Bill Clinton, but this book takes the cake. WOOOOOO!!! This book sucks!! I mean, Living History, LIVING HISTORY, honestly Hillery, you are living history, no one is going to vote for you in 08. Congratulations Hillery, you've written the only book in existence worse than your husband's!

# Or, bad can be libelous

## ■ From the Wikipedia entry on John Seigenthaler, Sr.

- *“John Seigenthaler Sr. was the assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy in the early 1960's. For a brief time, he was thought to have been directly involved in the Kennedy assassinations of both John, and his brother, Bobby. Nothing was ever proven.”*
- Completely baseless
- Stayed online for almost five months with only a typo being fixed
- Was syndicated to two other high-traffic sites
- Seigenthaler himself wrote of the incident, *“At age 78, I thought I was beyond surprise or hurt at anything negative said about me. I was wrong.”*

# But good can be very good

- U. of Chicago Faculty Law Blog
- More than 20 contributing faculty
- Faculty member posts, people ask questions and post comments
- Has been very active since it was launched in 2005
- Note the tone

# Professor Randy Picker posting, “Do We Overcompensate Tort Victims?: Reading *Stumbling on Happiness*”

## ■ Original post

- Over Memorial Day weekend, I read Daniel Gilbert’s new book [Stumbling on Happiness](#). Gilbert is a Harvard psychology professor and the book isn’t a how-to—that would be a big seller—but is instead on the “science” of happiness. In econ grad school, I learned that we maximize utility subject to constraints. It is a long, long way from that to knowing how people do that or—another step—how people actually experience happiness. Gilbert’s book is an effort at situating a great deal of serious research on happiness and is well worth reading...

## ■ Someone posts a question

- Can you offer more of an explanation as to why we should use subjective measures of happiness as a basis for calculating damages? Perhaps this is an obvious point, but it seems the happiness argument ignores significant justifications for damages (deterrence, in particular)...

## ■ The professor answers

- Thanks for the comments... Let me start with (anon’s) first comment about deterrence. I think that James’s response was right: if we take this literature seriously, we shouldn’t want someone to spend \$10,000 to prevent an “accident” that causes no harm, where harm is measured by reported happiness levels....

# Good can also be outstanding: MIT's Open Courseware

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## 6.542J / 24.966J / HST.712J Laboratory on the Physiology, Acoustics, and Perception of Speech, Fall 2005

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X-ray of person speaking taken from the lab assignment on cineradiographic motion pictures.

**Staff**

Instructors:  
Dr. Joseph Perkell  
Dr. Stefanie Shattuck-Hufnagel  
Prof. Kenneth Stevens

**Course Meeting Times**

Lectures:  
Two sessions / week  
1 hour / session

Labs:  
Two sessions / week  
2 hours / session

**Level**

Graduate

**Feedback**

Send [feedback](#) about OCW or this course.

### Highlights of this Course

This course features a full set of [lab exercises](#) for exploring the human speech process. In addition, a large [lab database](#) of speech samples, formatted for use with Klatt Speech Analysis software, including links to other freely available compatible software, are provided.

» View an older version of this course [en Español](#) or [em Português](#) courtesy of [Universia](#). Please note that since our last publication, the translated version may not have the most current content that is available on the MIT OCW site.

### Course Description

Find: **foot** Find Next Find Previous Highlight Match case Phrase not found

Done

Start Volume Control 2 Microsoft O... 8 Firefox 2 Microsoft O... Microsoft Outlo... Search Desktop 10:51 AM

# Rich, varied resources

MIT OpenCourseWare | Electrical Engineering and Computer Science | 6.542J Laboratory on the Physiology, Acoustics, and Perception of Speech, Fall 2005 | Lab Database - Mozilla Firefox

http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Electrical-Engineering-and-Computer-Science/6-542JFall-2005/LabDatabase/index.htm

bioinformatics wiki

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## Lab Database

Special software is required to use some of the files in this section: [.zip](#), [.m](#), and [.mat](#).

This page contains digitized media files for use in the labs. Most of the files are audio data, but there are also image files and other types of data. For some of the labs, you are asked to record your own voice. If you do not have the tools for making such recordings, example utterances are provided as spoken by both a female speaker and a male speaker. The audio files are given below under the heading of the relevant lab.

### Lab Data

[1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [10](#) | [11](#) | [12](#) | [13](#) | [14](#) | [15](#) | [16](#) | [17](#)

#### Lab 1: Recording Speech in a Sound-Treated Room, and Spectral Analysis and Waveform Editing by Computer

In Lab 1, you will record a database of speech utterances for use throughout the semester. Below are links to sample databases recorded by two speakers, one female (HH) and one male (KS).

Note that although these files have a `.wav` suffix, they are in Klatt format, for use with the Klatt speech-analysis tools (`xkl`); they are **not** Microsoft® `.wav` format. (If there is a desire to use these files with analysis tools that require MS `.wav` format, we may consider providing both formats in the future.)

You can download zip archives of an entire database here:

Female Sample Database ([ZIP - 13.6 MB](#)) (Courtesy of Elisabeth Hon. Used with permission.)

Male Sample Database ([ZIP - 8.3 MB](#)) (Courtesy of Daryush Mehta. Used with permission.)

The following utterances were recorded by both male and female speakers:

A. English Vowels

| # | SPEAKERS |     |
|---|----------|-----|
| 1 | beat     | bit |
| 2 | bait     | bet |

Find:  Find Next Find Previous Highlight Match case Phrase not found

Done

Start Volume Control 2 Microsoft O... 8 Firefox 2 Microsoft O... Microsoft Outlo... Search Desktop 10:52 AM

# Why so many blogs and wikis?

- Easy to do!
  - Can be up and running in minutes
  - Publishing is then near-instantaneous
  - No training
    - Type, click a few buttons, and submit
- Little overhead compared with other technology
- Typical workflows can be made routine
  - Comments or not, approvals for comments
  - Adding authors
  - Providing for approvals

# Compare with earlier, traditional web publishing

- Expensive
- Lengthy time to market
- Designed in advance for certain features
  - Features can grow stale
  - Launching new features can be prohibitively expensive and complicated
- Complex mix of skills
  - Including programming, graphic design, user experience, editorial, audience development

# Tools

- Widely used tools include Word Press and Movable Type
- Easy to install and configure
- Most can provide sufficient workflow, approvals
- Most support tagging for subject, other facets
- Most allow relatively easy maintenance, content management

# Example of user-oriented facets

 **TimesSelect**

## **Times File**

The simple way to save your favorite articles from The Times and other Web sites.

Times File makes it easy to save, organize and search your favorite Web pages for quick reference at any time, on any computer.

### **How it works:**

- Save and organize New York Times articles. Store them by category and add your own comments.
- Create a personal Reading List to save articles to read at a later date.
- Save any page from around the Web.
- At any time, locate your Times File pages from any computer with a simple search.
- Save your favorite articles from [The Archive](#) and [News Tracker](#).

# Technology is not the limiting factor

- Popular features are easy to implement
- Reasonable workflow is easy to implement
- You can control user behavior explicitly (workflow) or implicitly:
  - Attractiveness of the content can drive behavior (HarperCollins *FirstLooks*)
  - Lack of anonymity can drive behavior (what if Wikipedia required registration?)
  - Setting the right tone also helps (U. of Chicago)
- RSS (Really Simple Syndication) allows your readers to decide how they want to consume your content

# So...

- Try something!
- Pilot, evaluate, enhance
- Monitor user behavior
  - 95% or more of my traffic is direct to the RSS feed
  - Users also were looking for an Atom feed
    - 200 “404s” a day against a missing Atom feed
    - So I added one!
- Don't over-promise
  - Cautionary podcasting tale

# Contact Information

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