years. “I found this way of telling stories that didn’t have a filter, and it worked,” says Winer, who went on to found UserLand Software Inc. of Los Altos, California, which makes Web-publishing products, and to launch an even better-known blog, Scripting News. After arriving at Harvard in early 2003, Winer quickly adapted his blogging software, Manila, for the University’s Weblog community and launched the program in March.

Blogs are public online journals, written in reverse chronological order, with the most recent entries at the top. Unlike most graphic-rich Web sites, they consist primarily of unabridged text and links to other sites, although serious bloggers also upload photographs, audio, and video. Blogs usually present a single author’s voice, but increasingly groups and organizations are using the format as well: the law school’s LL.M. class of ‘04, the library at Harvard’s Rowland Institute, and the Berkman Center itself, among others, maintain Weblogs.

All are part of a fast-growing worldwide community dubbed the “blogosphere.” About five million blogs now exist, according to Perseus Development Corporation; the Braintree, Massachusetts-based market-research firm expects that number to double before 2005.

What draws people to blogging? First, of course, they have something to say. “I blog to talk, to let it out, to experiment with words, to be heard,” The Redhead writes. “I miss standing onstage in plays I believed in; I miss projecting my voice across a thousand seats. I’m loud for a reason. I have a lot to say, and a strong set of lungs, and passion. And maybe out there, someone’s got a question I can help answer.”

In addition, blogging is refreshingly simple; requiring virtually no technical design know-how, or special software. Harvard users simply go to the project’s website (http://blogs.law.harvard.edu), where they can create a blog in two or three minutes by following the instructions. From there, they can post text, links, and photographs as easily as they send e-mail messages.

Blogging is also a cheap—or, in the Berkman Center’s case, free—form of publishing using existing space on University computers. And from a user’s perspective, it’s wonderfully liberated from editorial interference. “You know that old saying that freedom of the press belongs to whoever has the press?” Winer asks. “Now everybody has the press.”

As Harvard’s diverse blogger population illustrates, “everybody” isn’t the stereotypical bored, barely literate teenager. Today lawyers, librarians, and researchers use on-line journals for networking and sharing information; entrepreneurs use them for marketing and customer service; college professors and students use them to extend in-class discussion. They’re increasingly popular among journalists, too. Several correspondents (and at least one Iraqi citizen) maintained high-profile blogs at the height of last year’s war in Iraq, and Harvard’s Nieman Foundation for Journalism devoted a chunk of the fall 2003 issue of its quarterly magazine to examining the role of blogs in newsrooms. Politicians are adopting blogs as well. By late 2003, nearly every presidential candidate had one, though most real blogging was being done by campaign staff members.

At Harvard, as elsewhere, blog styles are as different as the people behind them. Many are on-line diaries, often featuring an on-line persona or alter ego. The Redhead—who by mid-November hadn’t missed a single day of blogging since the project’s launch—writes about anything on her mind: her job, a class, a party, a conversation, an observation. “I try to make sure there’s a point,” she says. Sometimes she prepares a single long entry first thing in the morning or late at night; sometimes she writes several and posts quick-hit entries—one or two sentences on a single topic, written as rapidly as an e-mail message—throughout her day. (Fortunately, The Redhead, a.k.a. Wendy Koslow, is program coordinator for the Berkman Center, where occasional on-the-job blogging...