

Should professional journalists blog privately?

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2008/06/10/should-professional-journalists-blog-privately/

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Should journalists employed by a company have to ask permission to blog privately? A small survey by US online analyst [Simon Owens](#) finds that about half of the regional paper editors he contacted thought that they had a right to restrict their employees out of hours online expression.

As [Simon](#) explains this is a hot issue in the States:

“Chez Paziienza, a former producer for CNN, [was fired](#) from his job in February because he wrote for Huffington Post and other high-profile blogs. His superiors cited a CNN policy that any outside writing required prior approval. In April, Michael Tunison was fired from the Washington Post after he [revealed](#) that he wrote for the sports blog Kissing Suzy Kolber. His bosses [told him](#) that he had brought “discredit to the paper” through his blogging.”

Simon’s survey appears pretty thorough, although the response rate wasn’t great:

“To complete the survey, I sent emails to editors and publishers of 250 newspapers — five for each state — containing this question:

Question: Would you allow your staff writers, without prior approval, to blog during their free time after work as long as they don’t write about the beats they cover for your newspaper?

To provide clarity, I added this example:

EXAMPLE: A staff writer for your newspaper covers the local courts and cops beat and then goes home and writes in his personal blog about the national presidential election. He does this without asking for your permission. Would you be fine with this?

Of the 250 surveyed, 39 responded. Twenty-two — 56% — said they wouldn’t mind if writers blogged on non-beat issues without obtaining permission. The remaining 17 — 44% — either required disclosure of the blog, issued caveats over what subjects couldn’t be covered, or had outright bans on having personal blogs at all”

I don’t think is particularly onerous. If I was paying someone to play football I would want to know if they were playing other sports in their spare time. I suspect that in the UK we are even more relaxed. Does anyone know of ANY clashes between journalist day jobs and personal ‘hobby’ work?

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