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Web Journals Both a Help And Hindrance

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Blogs can offer teachers and students unprecedented ways to reach new audiences, foster broader discussions and allow both sides to learn from each other.

Still, Jessica Miller is ambivalent about them.

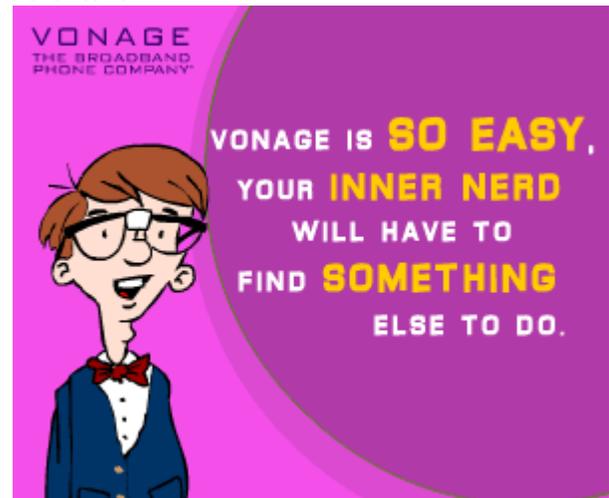
Miller is an undergraduate at the State University of New York's University at Buffalo and a teaching assistant in a class called "Cyberporn & Society." She said blogging in the classroom "can be both detrimental and very useful" to students.

Blogging is often anonymous, which, she said, "makes it easy to post false, offensive and misleading information." That can trip up students who are depending on the accuracy of a classmate's posting.

The anonymity, however, can help shy students express themselves more freely, "rather than raising a nervous/anxious hand in the classroom."

But, she said, the Internet "doesn't allow for emotional undertones." Teachers say they often need to hear how students say things to know whether they actually understand the material.

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