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**This Blog**

About

Email

Jul	August 2006						Sep
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
30	31	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

**Search**
 **Go**
**Archives**

September 2006 (9)

August 2006 (26)

July 2006 (25)

June 2006 (36)

May 2006 (29)

April 2006 (30)

March 2006 (39)

February 2006 (41)

January 2006 (26)

December 2005 (26)

November 2005 (8)

October 2005 (6)

September 2005 (2)

August 2005 (7)

**News**

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Canada's Association of Information Technology (IT) Professionals

**Resident Bloggers**

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**Richard Giles' Biggest: Online Challenges; Issues Facing Bloggers and Technical Communities; and Predictions of Future Trends**

This is the next interview in the [continuing series](#) of Computing Canada's (CC) [Blogged Down \(BD\)](#) which is featured here "first" in the [Canadian IT Managers \(CIM\) forum](#).



**In part 6 of this blog series, we continue our talk with Richard Giles, an industry leading authority and pioneer in blogging, podcasting and new media (Web 2.0). Richard is also the founder of Clique Communications.**

**Today I put these questions to Richard:**

**Stephen:** What are the biggest challenges to this online revolution, and their solutions?

**Richard:**

**CHALLENGE 1:** Telecommunications companies exploiting the law to co-opt the Internet. Read Doc Searl's article for examples, <http://www.linuxjournal.com/article/8673>

**Solution:** Everyone should use resources like the EFF to protect our rights online.

**CHALLENGE 2:** Government myopia, not understanding legal ramifications of some laws on technology.

**Solution:** Everybody should be aware of their government's actions, and how it'll affect their use of technology. The EFF is a great resource for this.

**CHALLENGE 3:** Geek-speak

**Solution:** We're at the cusp of introducing a new way to build global communities, but we as technologists have a way of making it sound intimidating for the majority of the world to use.

**CHALLENGE 4:** Greed

**Solution:** But that's been around since the dawn of time and we seem to work around it eventually.

**Stephen:** What are the biggest issues facing bloggers in 2006, and in 2007? How can they be addressed?

**Richard:**

**ISSUE 1:** Censorship, especially in China. However, we need to be diligent, because there are other aspects to censorship. There are plenty of people being sued for blogging (possibly the wrong thing).

**Solution:** Be sensible about what you blog, but also pay attention to what laws the government is proposing. Again, the EFF is a great resource.

**ISSUE 2:** Spam, or as they call it splogs and comment spam.

**Solution:** Some measures have been taken to stop splogs, or spam blogs. Splogs are essentially blogs that are used for affiliate marketing. They either increase another sites page rank or they make money from advertising, but no real content is produced. In many instances they are automatic. The search engines devised a nofollow html tag that stopped their systems indexing referrals and hence no benefit from a search perspective is achieved. However, like all spam, we haven't yet figured out a way to completely eradicate it.

Anyone starting a blog should look to something like Akismet to help comment spam issues. When a weblog becomes moderately popular, it is certain to encounter comment spam.

**Stephen:** What are the biggest issues facing technical communities today and what are your recommendations for meeting these challenges?

**Richard:**

1. Being too insular. It amazes me when I attend certain conferences and the discussion mostly centers on the technology, and doesn't bridge the gap to the rest of the population. We technology folk need to continually consider what it is like for the general population and hopefully help them to use the technology to better their lives. If we can accelerate that, we'll all be better off.
2. The law and governments misunderstanding of the implications. As I mentioned earlier, the government is constantly demonstrating it's misunderstanding of how certain laws will affect our rights - everyone who understands technology need to be diligent about communicating the repercussions.

**Stephen:** Provide your predictions of future trends and their implications to bloggers?

**Richard:**



Barnaby Jeans  
IT Pro Advisor  
Microsoft Canada  
[Linked in profile](#)



John Oxley  
Director Community  
Evangelism  
Microsoft Canada



#### Guest Bloggers



#### Navigation

- Home
- Photos

#### Post Categories

- Partners (1)
- Training (4)
- Val Matison (4)
- Mitch Tulloch (4)
- Newswire (2)
- DJ Dunkerley (5)
- David Canton (4)
- Jing Chen (2)
- Jacqueline Hutchinson (4)
- Career Tips (8)
- Live Services (4)
- IT Manager Interviews (4)
- Downloads (6)
- CIPS (4)
- Interviews (50)
- CC Blogged Down (25)
- MS News (27)
- Graham Jones (26)
- Industry Perspectives (19)
- Adam Cole (7)

Richard.

#### TREND 1:

I think there will be a lot more advertising that shifts to the Internet.

**Implication:** Many companies are predicting a large growth, but I think all the numbers are underestimated. When video and audio shifts online the Internet will become people's primary source of entertainment. The only issue is making this simple for the general public.

Blogging is rapidly becoming a business model, and I think we'll see that trend strengthen when more advertising dollars shift online.

#### TREND 2:

Bloggers will increase their collaborative power.

**Implication:** Currently the mainstream media has the largest share of the communities' mindset. This is set to shrink when more people look to bloggers to provide news, views, and opinion.

#### TREND 3:

The lounge room will connect to the Internet, probably through something like the Xbox 360.

**Implication:** People will begin to see the Internet as a method of distribution and communication, and less as a technology. Hopefully this will see a growth in consumer products, making it easier for everyone to connect. Blogging will just be a way for people to interact and the focus will shift away from it being just for techies and more for the general population to interact.

#### TREND 4: Attention

**Implication:** What people pay attention to and for how long, will play an important part. This means that people won't have to sift through endless streams of information; the most relevant things will be presented. Google is already doing this with its search history feature.

**Stephen -- FINAL COMMENT:** Richard, we will continue to follow your many significant contributions to the business and technology community. Thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

**Richard:** Thanks very much for the opportunity.

I encourage you as CIM readers to share your thoughts here on these interviews or send me an e-mail at [sibaraki@cips.ca](mailto:sibaraki@cips.ca).

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Thank you,  
Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P.

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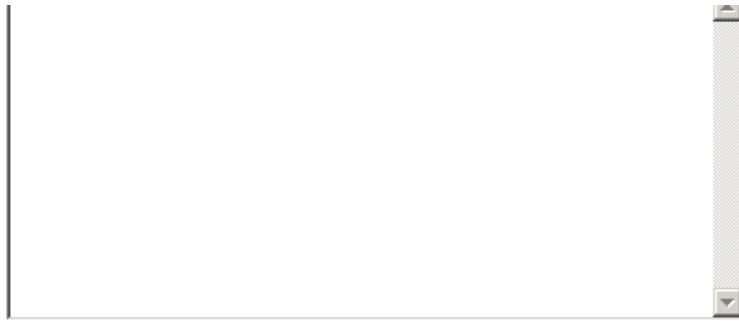
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Events (24)



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