

Internet blog, the new diary

JESSICA COODY
FOR THE WICHITAN

The days of the diary are dead. No more locks to pick on those hardback little notebooks, full of secrets and wonder. No more hiding keys under mattresses and inside jewelry boxes. The days of beating up your little siblings for snooping through your personal life are over.

Welcome to the days of blogging. Today, tech-savvy students are choosing to put it all out in the open with the push of a button. It seems that secrecy has gone out the window. Although the concept of blogging was first introduced over 10 years ago, it has gained extreme popularity over the last few years.

And it isn't just a forum for students. Many celebrities have joined the blogging craze. Musicians such as John Mayer and Panic! at the Disco are logging on and sharing the details of life on the road. NBC even has a star from the hit show "The Office" writing blogs as his character, Dwight.

So what is it about these online journals that are so appealing? Is it the ability to share your life with millions of people worldwide from the comfort of your living room? Is it a place for artistic expression? Or is it just a way to cure boredom?

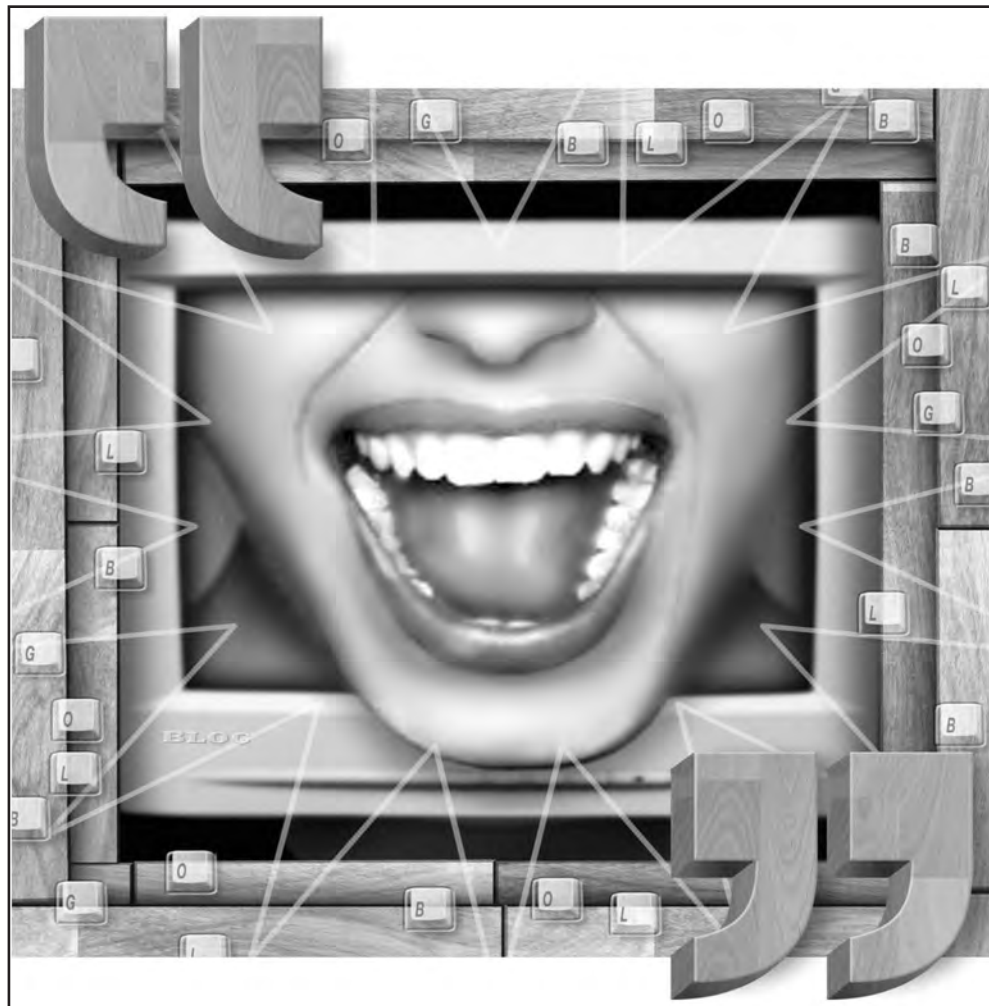
MSU students like Ashley Lawson and Courtney Waldsmith blog on a regular basis, and for much of the same reasons. Lawson, a senior psychology major, explains her reason for blogging as a release.

"For me, it's often a sort of therapy," she said. "It gets my worries or frustrations and other stress out of my mind."

Lawson began writing blogs in 2004, mostly because her friends had gotten into it and she thought it would be fun. While she blogs on a regular basis, she admits she doesn't read all her friends' blogs.

Not all things are meant to be read by all, either. So how do students feel about putting information about their lives out there for all to see? Some have found that it isn't always such a good idea, while others like Lawson don't worry about the candidness of the Internet.

"I don't agree with censorship, and I don't write things that aren't true," Lawson said. "If people get hurt or offended by what I have



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written, it's only the truth and not my problem."

MSU junior Waldsmith, a clinical laboratory science major, also blogs to get things off her mind and out into the open. She began blogging after a move from Missouri to Texas and a breakup with a boyfriend shook up her life.

"I was bored and had a lot going on. [Blogging] helped with the stress," she said.

Her blogging is more for her own benefit rather than anyone else's.

"Things that may be important in my life aren't always important to other people. I have nothing to hide from anyone, so I usually write how I feel," she said.

Using this new form of expression as a way to cope with everyday struggles isn't an uncommon idea. Recently, New York-based

psychologist Bonnie Jacobson appeared on "Good Morning America" and explained the theory of blogging as therapy. She stated that part of the standard treatment for depression is group therapy, and blogging has become the new generation's format of group discussion.

Whether students blog for recreation or for therapy, it is important that they keep in mind what they write is exhibited in a very public format, and that the advice and comments they may receive are also public. When professional help is needed, there is no substitute for the real thing.

Diaries are dead. Those tiny lock-and-key notebooks are ancient.

Welcome to the world of blogging. But proceed with caution.

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Living in the halls with other sophomores and sometimes even with their friends, RAs find themselves faced with many challenges.

Few want to be perceived as over-bearing or inaccessible.

"It's definitely a fine line. You have to find the proper balance. You want to be their friend but have them respect you too," McCall said.

"You are automatically blamed

for everything," Guse said. "They automatically assume it's your fault, whether it be the Internet not working or the laundry card machine down."

Yet they still wouldn't trade the experience.

"I couldn't see myself doing any other thing right now," Magana said.

Guse seconded the opinion. "I absolutely love it," she said.

New Wellness Center at 'divine and price' phase

ANTHONY HORNBECK
FOR THE WICHITAN

MSU is currently in the early stages of an \$11 million Wellness Center construction project, which will be completed by the 2008 fall semester.

The new Wellness Center will be built on the south of campus near Sikes Lake, according to Dr. Howard Farrell, MSU vice president of university advancement and student affairs.

"We are currently in the 'divine and price' phase," Keith Lamb, associate vice president of student affairs, said. "We are trying to decide what layout we want with the architects, and the architects are working out the price [of the project] with the contractors."

Brinkley & Sargent Architects, based in Dallas, is working on the plan. Electra Construction Company, Inc., in Electra, will be doing the construction, while Moody & Nolan, Inc., of Columbus, Ohio, is doing the interior sports layout for the center.

Representatives of Moody & Nolan said they could not comment on the project because they are in the early stages and do not want to release any information.

Brinkley & Sargent and Electra Construction also were contacted for this story but were unavailable for comment.

Site work is set to start in March 2007, according to Lamb.

The site will involve moving Louis J. Rodriguez Drive on the south campus. The road will be moved to the east of where it currently is.

Lamb said the new road will run immediately next to the soccer

fields and behind the restrooms on the south campus.

"They will have to remove the sand volleyball courts that are there on south campus in order to build the road," Lamb said, "but [the volleyball courts] will be replaced at the new Wellness Center."

In addition to the volleyball courts, Lamb said the new Wellness Center will have an outdoor aquatics area, two indoor basketball courts that can be divided into six individual courts, an indoor rock climbing wall and an indoor weight room.

Construction is set to start in April or May after the roadwork is finished, according to Lamb.

Lamb and Farrell said that the idea of having a walkway over Midwestern Parkway was brought up.

They said they had talked to other schools that had walkway bridges, and the schools said students usually take the quickest route to a location, so "having the bridge would be a waste of \$500,000 in construction."

Rather than build the walkway, caution lights will be placed in the area for the students' safety, Farrell said.

A new parking lot will not be built for the Wellness Center, Lamb said.

He said students can use the current parking lot between the soccer fields and the Alumni House at the south of campus, or they can use the other parking lots north of campus and walk across the street.

Overall, the new Wellness Center will be a good addition to the campus, according to Farrell.

"I think it will enrich our students' lives," he said.

Tuition

gation in addition to the tuition increase.

"The continuing reticence of this state to spend money on our education is a problem," Rogers said.

Rogers said \$12 billion of \$14 billion in the state treasury has already been earmarked to lower property taxes. That leaves approximately \$1 billion a year for state-wide budget increases.

"Now that sounds like a lot of money, but that money has to go to prisons, social services, parks, higher education and other services," he said.

He said state social services are in poor shape.

"The economy is good, slowing down some, but so much has been committed in the way of property tax relief that the state finds itself in a fairly tight situation that consequently has great bearing on universities such as Midwestern State University," he said.

In the last biennium MSU has been cut about \$300,000 in its appropriation per year. By biennium, he said he means this past school year and the current school year.

MSU's educational budget is about \$30 million a year, but costs, including equipment that needs to be replaced, utility expenses and fringe benefits of faculty and staff, go up

about \$2 million dollars a year no matter what, Rogers explained.

"We set aside \$1 million in our reserve from last school year for this school year to give our faculty and staff just a cost-of-living raise, three percent," he said.

Rogers said the money set aside for raises in faculty and staff has been spent.

"We raised our standard of living \$2.2 million for the university without knowing that we'd have a source of income to cover it," he said. "It's like taking money out of the bank and raising your standard of living but not raising your salary. We did it in anticipation that the

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state would raise the appropriation to Midwestern State University."

Rogers said the state is expected to appropriate about \$700,000 in new money to MSU.

Rogers said he believes faculty and staff deserve a 3 to 4 percent raise.

"I can cut budgets. I've had to do it many times. But if we're going to have the best equipment, to hire the best faculty and compete with other universities, I know no other way of keeping the quality of this institution up without having the funds to do it," he said.

He said lower quality is unacceptable.

Monologues

ones that have happened to me. It's all about being confident and showing men what we go through. It's really eye-opening."

Carrie Sheets, a 22-year-old sophomore, performs a monologue titled "My Angry Vagina."

"The other characters in the play are actual 'characters.' Me, I'm just up there ranting, basically, for all the women in the audience to hear. I get to stand up and say, 'Hey, tampons and exams suck,'" Sheets said. "We all go through it and it's a chance for all of us to sort of bond over it, as well as enlighten the men in the audience."

Preparing for this role wasn't difficult for Sheets. She said being a woman prepared her.

Even though the play may spark controversy, Sheets insists it is worth seeing.

"It's an important play because it's so funny. As for the controversy, we tell the audience beforehand that there will be explicit language," she

said. "It's funny how people are completely comfortable with saying 'motherfucker,' which I have to say in the play, but then they freak out a little when I have to say 'cunt' as well. I mean, Egyptian queens used to be called cunts."

Sheets said the play gave her freedom to talk naturally about its content.

"The language is intense. People who don't understand walk into that language and think that's degrading women or that it's a put-down," Jefferson said.

Shannon Dietz, a 19-year-old sophomore, performs a monologue titled, "Because He Liked To Look At It."

"My character doesn't have a confessional in the play. She found herself with a man," she said. "I spent a lot of time thinking about myself in preparation for the play. I drew a lot from personal experience."

Dietz said the play deals with a

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lot of common issues that are not talked about too often.

"When I first read the script, I understood what the characters were talking about, like, all these things I'd always thought but never knew other women thought about as well," she said. "It's a way to connect."

All MSU staff, faculty and students with a valid ID will have free admission. General admission is \$7 and \$6 for senior citizens, military personnel, high school students, college students other than MSU and Ex-Students Association members.

Performances will run:
Thursday, Feb. 15, at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 16, at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2:30 p.m.

A question and answer session will be held after every show and will take place in the Fain Fine Arts Center Theatre. For more information, call 397-4399.

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