



## Research Reports, Blogs and Whitepapers – “Oh My”

by *Maurene Caplan Grey*

**15 December 2006:** This summer I started the “E-Communications & Community” blog (<http://www.grey-consulting.com/blog>). I've found that blogs reach a larger audience than do research reports. Plus, a blog's conversational style of writing is often easier to read.

The informality of blogs doesn't mean that they are any less credible than traditionally published research – at least from bloggers with a traditional industry analyst or media background. This distinction is a volatile area that has yet to be resolved.

Within three years, blogs will be categorized as business, media or personal – with some overlap. The distinctions will align with legal, legislative and regulatory precedents.

Blogs are already becoming a social communicative media, which are bundled within a team room or other virtual gathering place. The infrastructure of the gathering place may be a wiki, traditional content management, Web conferencing or other foundational structures. The blur between infrastructure elements will only matter to the IT system engineers at the consumer's or business's service provider. For example, do you, as a consumer user, care about the underlying technology of SecondLife (<http://secondlife.com>)?

As Grey Consulting research reports have been provided at no cost, I had to ask myself...How can I reach a larger audience? How can I best build community? How can I leverage community to develop business partnerships? How can I best leverage my expertise for my clients?

That said, I am continuing to write commissioned whitepapers for clients, which -- with the client's permission -- will continue to appear on this site. Other client services, e.g., Webcasts, on-site consulting, facilitating user workshops, on-stage presentations, core research, events assistance, and similar services will continue – but with a fresh emphasis on building a client's collective knowledge -- and revenue-generating activities.

## What You Need To Do Now

- Visit the Grey Consulting site ([www.grey-consulting.com](http://www.grey-consulting.com)) for the latest news from the messaging, collaboration and social media markets.
- Subscribe to “E-Communication & Community,” which is now hosted by ZDNet. You can subscribe from either from the Grey Consulting site or from the ZDNet blog site ([blogs.zdnet.com](http://blogs.zdnet.com)).
- Stay informed. Whether you work in such fields as:
  - Information Technology
  - Records Management
  - Marketing, Public Relations, Analyst or Media Relations
  - Events planning
  - Legal Council or Compliance Management

There are communities through which you can learn from and share with your colleagues. If you don't know where to look, get in touch with us. If we don't have the answer, we'll know who does.