

**The Publicity Club of New York presents  
WEBLOGS: WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW AS PR PROS  
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**Jennifer Cheung, Co-founder - *THE GOTHAMIST***

Hi. I just want to make a point that if you have any news about a Chicago barbecue festival you can send it to me because we have a site in Chicago also. So we gladly welcome any news about barbecue in any city.

I'm really happy to be here because Gothamist is very different from what these people do. I'm not an academic. This is not a professional job, I work in advertising, I have a background in brand consulting and Gothamist just became a hobby that I would do before and after work with another friend. And now it's become just this sort of free-wheeling discussion between other people who are very excited about New York City and want to talk about news, current events, music events, interview people, sports, anything that's interesting happening in New York. It's sort of just like a snapshot of what's going on in New York City every single day. And now we have sites in Chicago, DC, San Francisco, LA, Boston, Seattle, Toronto and London and we're going to be launching a couple of more sites this year. And as Lockhart said, maybe the four of us were reading each other's sites but now it's become something where Gothamist, our network of sites, reaches over two million people as page views per month. So for us, this is a hobby that has grown into something so big that we're getting major advertising deals from American Express, *The New York Times*, and just recently did this promotional opportunity with the New York Knicks where they ran a singles night doing speed dating that got picked up in *The Post* and the publicity and marketing people at the Knicks were so thrilled because some editor had printed up the post that we ran on the Gothamist about this.

It's sort of hard for me to figure out how to approach publicists because I'm a curious person, I'm interested in everything but not everything is right for Gothamist which is really about New York. Will this story have a New York angle? If it's not about New York is there maybe, is the creator of this movie from New York? As Elizabeth said, we're opinion writers and sometimes the best press releases we get from publicists are ones who seem to be people who actually read our site and have a sense of what our readers would be interested in. There's this filter, "Is this something that I would like to do? Is this something that our readers would like to hear about?" Sometimes I'll discuss it with some of our other contributors. We have over 20 people who work on our site on different categories, for example, one of the things that we like to cover is not only New York crime but also law and order. So anything that involves crime and just getting out there. Court TV sent us a press release saying that they were doing tryouts for "Forensic Files" where you could reenact the crime; you could be the body, you could be the perp, you could be the police person, whomever, and that was fascinating. One of our readers actually went to the open casting call and wrote about it on the site. It was an exciting thing that people love and other people wrote saying, "Oh, I wish I'd known about this, it's so great that you have this because I love 'Forensic Files'," blah blah blah.

And it's interesting how our readers are evolving because we recently ran a survey and, as Lockhart said, people aren't just looking at these sites once a day, people are reading it multiple times a day over two-thirds of our readers are reading the site at least three times a day checking to see what's been refreshed and what's new.

Maybe one of these blogs writes about something in your industry, maybe it's about, I don't know, New York car ridership being one of the worst in the country and then you have the story about some new car that's great for New York City streets because it's really tough, it's really small and that might be interesting to us. It's really being able to find certain things that fit well with the site and just knowing the specific site that you're going to because, as Lockhart said, each of the Gawker brands are very niche and they probably do have opportunities for the editors to be slightly more inclined to write or think about whatever you have.

Something that I think is very different from Gothamist is that we are a site made up of just interested New Yorkers. It's not quite a professional site because it's a hobby, it's something that

we're all doing when we can find a spare moment and we actually have comments. So I feel that the tone that Gothamist has with our audience is a lot more intimate, I think that they look to us as a friend and to a degree we're trying to give them a sense of everything that's out there and they're welcome to comment back about something that we might have liked. Like that barbecue festival.

That's all, thanks!