

## Blog08

By Natasha Cloutier

# POPULARITY IS EVERYTHING

The world's top bloggers came to remind everyone of their power.

Blog08, a one-day conference on blogging and vlogging (video blogging) at Pakhuis De Zwijger last weekend, came to its rockin', first edition conclusion with Gabe Mac, world-renowned 'bad mother vlogger' of Mobuzz.tv telling us that blogging about tech blows and everyone should be vlogging, making cash and scoring babes. Even Dutch pop star Bas Kennis (Blof) took part in a live, onstage vlogging session with Mac, as a nice surprise for the Dutch audience.

But at this fest, billed as 'rock stars of the web', all the other inspiring international speakers were surprisingly down to earth, casually dressed Amsterdam-style and, with one token exception, all male—an irritation that women in attendance communicated to one another telepathically.

Pete Cashmore—yes, it's his real name—of world famous tech blog Mashable, kicked off the day with top tips about online visibility, based on his own story about 'building something you love'. His 'blog, eat, sleep and repeat' was definitely something the entire audience could relate to.

Dutch online personality Nalden of Nalden.net spoke about making the unlikely transition from blogging to rich media consultant and how he likes to turn lawsuits into money making collaborations—a businessperson's wet dream.

And just like at any big rock show, some of the acts didn't perform as well as expected. A last-minute addition to the programme, D66 politician Boris

van der Ham got off on the wrong foot by claiming he answers comments on his blog, but failed miserably to answer questions from the audience. However, Van der Ham's faux pas was trumped by a panel featuring Tim Overdiek of NOS News, Paul Bradshaw of Online Journalism Blog, Piet Bakker, Hogeschool Utrecht professor and the only woman to remedy the painful lack thereof, Clo Willaerts of Sanoma Magazines Belgium.

Within the first ten minutes, the panel managed to alienate much of the audience with their 'blogging isn't journalism, but makes for a good source', which pissed off the entire back channel (people micro-blogging using the Twitter application on their mobile, being projected live on a big screen for all to read). Overdiek even admitted that only 40 of his 400 NOS colleagues are active bloggers. Their only moment of common sense was Willaerts explaining that the Flemish blog is in English rather than Dutch so that it gets noticed internationally.

Bakker expressed his disgust at the audience and talent in one-upmanship by actually signing on to Twitter and 'twittering' that videographer Loren Feldman (1938media.com), Gabe Mac and comic strip artist Hugh MacLeod (Gaping Void) were basically clowns with no content. Amusingly enough, by using Twitter, which he obviously learnt to use thanks to Blog08, Bakker reminded us that the medium really is where the power lies.

When it came to local serial entrepreneur Boris Veldhuijzen van Zan-

ten, the audience didn't quite get where he was going with his mild-mannered presentation, but the idea of trying to be more like god (omnipresent and all that) definitely kept folks intrigued. And since clowning around was in the air, showing us he could ride a high unicycle was pretty cool. The story goes that Veldhuijzen van Zanten lovingly coached the two young organisers, Edial Dekker and Ernst-Jan Pfauth, who, in turn, made sure everyone understood that the Einstein generation (young social communicators) knows what it's doing.

Pfauth once mentioned over coffee to internet entrepreneur Patrick de Laive—hosting the show—that his goal is to blog for a living. Ironically, when Cashmore asked the audience 'who wants to make money with their blog?' only four people raised their hand, which came as a big surprise. In the US, the entire room would have raised their hands, he explained.

This successful first edition of Blog08 also attracted visitors from abroad including a London woman who won a ticket to the conference and promised to wear clogs the whole day (and did), and a young blogger from Estonia who drove 2000 kilometres with his family to attend the conference. It all ended in rock 'n' roll fashion, with beer drinking in an abandoned bunker in Amsterdam-Noord and the spontaneous visit of some 40-odd people to Cafe Noorderlicht, who had no qualms about all of us bum rushing the restaurant in search of soul food.

Should a Blog09 (and onwards) become a staple in Amsterdam's conference calendar? If we're to believe the hype, it could be called Tweet09 (after Twitter) or something 'micro-bloggy', since that was actually the number one topic of the day after 'do what you're passionate about'.

#### More info at:

www.blog08.com  
www.mashable.com  
www.twitter.com

I blog. Therefore I am. And now I vlog to be.

Illustration by Ivo Sprey



## Google this...

'lokfiets'

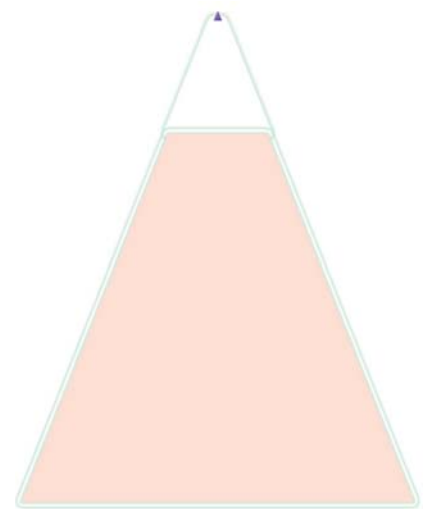
## Amstergraph

### Genetic background

of the population in NL

78% - Stone Age hunter-gatherers / 19.5% - Neolithic farmers / 2.5% - More recent immigration, mostly Asia.

Source: The Genographic Project



Graph by Nicole Martens

## A quick bike fix

By Pete Jordan

### Let's Ride

Recently, while on vacation visiting family and friends in the US, I had a good time—well, for the most part. We were in the 'bike-friendly' cities of Portland and San Francisco, though the reception from motorists wasn't always friendly while I biked. And worse, I found myself reluctantly driving borrowed cars.

'Pete,' my son said (he's three years old but insists on calling me Pete, as if he's my roommate and not my son), 'are you sick of driving?'

I don't know what tipped him off. Maybe it was the pained look on my face as we sat stuck in traffic on the motorway. He pointed to the breakdown lane on the side of the freeway and said, 'If we were on a bike, we could ride over in the bike lane.'

'No, we can't ride a bike on the motorway,' I told him.

'Why not, Pete?' he asked.

'It's too dangerous.'

'Oh,' he said, sounding disappointed. 'Okay.'

But then, flying into Schiphol, I was excited to spot from the plane a bike path cutting through pastures of the Haarlemmermeer. A couple of cyclists were riding in the rain. The sight of them made me glad to be back home.

At the apartment, I quickly loaded the boy onto the back seat of my bike and said, 'Let's ride.'

'Yeah,' he said, 'let's ride.' Then he added, 'let's ride *real fast!*'

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