

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY FORUM

The World of Healthcare/ Pharma Blogging

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April 9, 2008

Ed Silverman, a business journalist, is editor and founder of Pharmalot (www.pharmalot.com), a healthcare blog owned by the *Star-Ledger* that focuses on the pharmaceutical industry and policy-related issues. Silverman leveraged his reputation as a journalist and his industry contacts to help found Pharmalot in response to a general lack of coverage of this area in the blogosphere.

Pharmalot's purpose is to "provide a more insightful view of healthcare," specifically, the pharmaceutical aspect, and to disseminate current information. As blogging has become an increasingly viable medium for the exchange of information, it is critical that the content is reliable and credible, particularly concerning topics related to healthcare. Silverman employs traditional journalistic standards, befitting his relationship with the *Star-Ledger*. One Forum audience member posed to Silverman that professionals and consumers, seeking assurance of a blog's integrity, would liken such affiliations (ie, with newspapers) to a "seal of approval."

As Pharmalot's sole writer and editor, Silverman chooses the blog's content, and noted that keeping current in the field and updating the blog in real time is a non-stop challenge.

Pharmalot is not yet a viable business model, says Silverman; it is supported in minor part by advertising, mostly by conference companies.