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## White House Approves Pass for Blogger

By [KATHARINE Q. SEELYE](#)

**A**nother signal moment for bloggers is to occur this morning, when Garrett M. Graff, who writes a blog about the news media in Washington, is to be ushered into the White House briefing room to attend the daily press "gaggle."

Mr. Graff, 23, may be the first blogger in the short history of the medium to be granted a daily White House pass for the specific purpose of writing a blog, or Web log. A White House spokesman said yesterday that he believed Mr. Graff was the first blogger to be given credentials.

He is being given a press pass as the editor of FishbowlDC ([www.mediabistro.com/fishbowldc](http://www.mediabistro.com/fishbowldc)), a blog that is published by [Mediabistro.com](http://Mediabistro.com), which offers networking and services for journalists.

Increasingly, bloggers are penetrating the preserves of the mainstream news media. They have secured seats on campaign planes, at political conventions and in presidential debates, and have become a driving force in news events themselves.

Mr. Graff said he was inspired to try to seek access to the White House by the controversy over James D. Guckert, who used the alias Jeff Gannon. Mr. Guckert was granted daily passes to White House briefings while writing for a Web site run by a Republican operative in Texas. The episode raised questions about who was a legitimate journalist and how access to the White House was granted.

White House press officials and others said it was relatively easy to get a day pass, prompting Mr. Graff to test that premise. He set about trying to get one and chronicled his attempt on his blog.

He made 20 phone calls and got nowhere. Bigger blogs picked up on his saga, and traffic on FishbowlDC increased tenfold, he said. But it was not until the traditional media joined in, Mr. Graff said, that the White House relented.

"USA Today started making calls on Thursday. CNN mentioned it on 'Inside Politics,' and Ron Hutcheson, president of the White House Correspondents Association, raised the issue with the White House Press Office," he said. "I think a combination of all of that made the White House pay attention and decide to let me in."

Scott McClellan, the White House press secretary, said he had met with the White House Correspondents Association and they had decided to let Mr. Graff in. "It is the press corps' briefing room and if there are any new lines to be drawn, it should be done by their association," he said.

Mr. Graff said he was surprised at the help he received from "real" reporters covering the White House, given what he described as the animosity between some bloggers and the mainstream news media.

Mr. Graff is something of a bridge between those two worlds. Although he is a blogger, he has old-media genes: his father, Christopher Graff, is the chief correspondent in Vermont for The Associated Press; and his grandfather, Bert McCord, was the drama critic for The New York Herald Tribune.

Mr. Graff himself was executive editor of The Harvard Crimson. He said he became a blogger because "it's the newest trend in journalism."

In any case, Jay Rosen, a journalism professor at New York University and specialist in blogging, said Mr. Graff's odyssey was significant for two reasons. First, he showed that it was harder to get a pass than the White House said it was after the Guckert case.

Secondly, he said, Mr. Graff was expanding the definition of what constitutes the press, just as radio and television once pushed those boundaries.

