

How to Get a Million Hits on Your Blog in Less Than a Year

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Having promised an appropriate [celebration of passing the 1-million-visitors Site Meter threshold](#) Friday, I will do so by sharing the secret of my success. It's the [Underpants Gnome](#) Theory of Blogging:

- Phase 1: Get a Blogspot account.
- Phase 2: ?
- Phase 3: One million visitors!

Obviously, the key here is Phase 2, which has been exceptionally disorganized. Some guys work smart. Some guys work hard. Some guys are just incredibly lucky.

The perceptive blog consumer will notice that posts here don't have all those little thingies (Digg, etc.) the way some other blogs do. This is not because I disdain such methods of traffic enhancement, but because I'm such a primitive Unfrozen Caveman Blogger I can't figure that stuff out. It's the same reason I'm still on a Blogspot platform, rather than switching to a custom-designed Wordpress format. Blogspot is so simple that even I can figure it out, and if they'd just offer a few more templates -- hey, guys, how about a template with variable-width sidebars on *both* sides? -- I might be able to fake that custom-designed elegance, too. I understand basic HTML, but Javascript no can do, and I'm too cheap to shell out the bucks for geek services.

Lacking advanced, sophisticated technological gee-whizzery, I have been forced to employ astonishingly crude Web 0.1 methods of traffic-enhancement, namely:

- Write stuff people might want to read; and
- Compulsively e-mail my posts to bloggers who might possibly consider linking me.

Astonishingly crude, but also surprisingly effective. And so we come to Rule 1, the Prime Directive so to speak:

- **1. Shameless Blogwhoring.**

I'm amazed that [Instapundit](#), [Michelle Malkin](#), [Ace of Spades](#) and the [Hot Air](#) crew haven't declared a fatwa against me for the way I relentlessly fill their inboxes with blogwhoring e-mails like [Arnold Horshack](#) trying to get Mr. Kotter's attention: "Ooh! Ooh! Ooh!"

However, the smart newcomer to the 'sphere doesn't just suck up to big-traffic bloggers who can throw him major traffic (although he does that with a single-minded fanaticism), he also sucks up sideways and downward, to bloggers who might not be able to throw 10,000 hits a day, but who are nonetheless valued contributors to the blogging community.

[Little Miss Attila](#) is my favorite example of the "valued contributors" category. Her best recent month was [24K visits in October](#), but she's been around the 'sphere a long time, is much beloved, and it is *bad karma* not to link her. Every so often, while on the hunt for good stuff to blog about, I'll go over to LMA, find something good she's blogging about and link it. Why? Because, among various non-kharmic reasons, she has done the same for me, which brings me to Rule 2:

- **2. The Full Metal Jacket Reach-Around**

Maybe you're not a fan of Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, and I'm not saying you should be. But the psychotic drill sergeant gives a notorious rant in which he colorfully expresses an important life principle: *When someone does you a favor, find an opportunity to return the kindness.*

Reciprocal linkage is the essential lubricant that makes the blogosphere purr with contentment. If somebody's throwing you traffic, you should either (a) give them a link-back update, or at a minimum (b) keep them in mind for future linkage. Because you don't want to end up on the wrong end of a karmic unbalance in the 'sphere, where you're always taking and never giving.

Every beginning blogger confronts the *Zero Hour*. You've been blogging steadily for a week or two, sending around e-mails, trackbacking where you can, trying to develop some kind of regular traffic. And then, late one night, you think you might have finally composed your first Instalanche-worthy post and you e-mail it to [Glenn Reynolds](#). You go to bed like a 7-year-old kid on Christmas Eve, then wake up at 4 a.m. and check your Site Meter to discover that your latest hourly traffic is . . . *ZERO*.

At which point, you want to swallow a handful of sedatives, wash it down with a quart of bleach, slit your wrists and stick your head in the oven. You are a complete and utter failure.

I've never forgotten the Zero Hour, and if I've become slightly less conscientious about reciprocal linkage since then, God forgive me, but I do try. In the midst of a traffic upswing, not all linkage is noticeable on Site Meter, so I check [Technorati](#), which shows linkage regardless of traffic level. And thank you [Dad29](#), thank you [Joe Kristan](#), thank you, [Andrea Shea King](#), thank you [Jimmie Bise](#), thank you [William Teach](#). Damn my lazy thoughtlessness, but please don't doubt my gratitude.

Now that we've scratched the surface of *technique*, let's address the tricky little subject of *content* with Rule 3:

- **3. Memeorandum**

Did somebody say "lazy thoughtlessness"? The easiest place to find blog fodder is [Memeorandum](#), which has an algorithmic formula that automatically updates to tell you what the hot topics are in the 'sphere.

I especially like their "Featured Posts," sort of a random grab-bag of stuff that will occasionally feature some lefty shooting off his mouth in pure idiotic moonbat mode. Grab that sucker by the neck and give him the Mother Of All Fiskings, with enough vitriolic *ad hominem* to make sure he never forgets it. Because buddy, the lefties will turn right around and do it to you if you ever rate "Featured Post" status, and there's nothing like a vicious flame war to earn your spurs in the 'sphere. Which brings me to Rule 4:

- **4. Make Some Enemies**

We'll have none of your "bipartian civility" around here, you sissy weaklings. This here is the Intertoobs, and we're As Nasty As We Wanna Be. The fact that [The Moderate Voice](#) has turned into a reliable vessel for DNC talking points should tell you all you need to know about the fate of bipartisanship in the blogosphere.

At the same time, however, don't confuse cyber-venom with real-world hate. Maybe [Ace of Spades](#) really *would* like to go upside Andrew Sullivan's head with a baseball bat, I don't know. But at some point you understand it's just blogging about politics, and you start wondering if maybe it shares a certain spectator-friendly quality with pro wrestling. For all we know, Ace is spending weekends at Sully's beach shack in Provincetown. (*Next on Blogging Heads TV: Can "Bears" and Ewoks Be "Just Friends"?*)

Some readers might remember when I first [kicked Conor Friedersdorf in the knee for "insufficient cynicism."](#) Conor is, in real life, a nice guy. But he's also (a) young, and (b) as earnest as John Boy Walton. So I got into a habit, when he was at Culture11, of kicking him in the knee with some regularity. It's the Fraternity Initiation Principle: Pledges must be abused by their elders, and learn to be properly respectful, or else one day the ambitious little monsters will strangle us in our sleep. (*Cf.*, my suggestion that [George Freaking Will should be air-dropped on Jalalabad from a C-130](#).)

A couple days ago, hunting around for a reason to link my friend [Russ Smith's SpliceToday](#), I happened upon a column by Russ's young minion, Andrew Sargus Klein, offering [a particularly insipid argument for federal arts funding](#). Now, having been born and raised a Democrat, and arguably having never outgrown my obnoxious youthful arrogance, I can actually relate to Klein's insipid argument. Stupid is as stupid does, and when I was 25, I might well have written something equally stupid. But the boy will never outgrow his stupidity unless he gets whomped on the head some.

Easy as it would have been to ignore Klein, I hit upon the delightfully fun idea of laying into him in Arkansas knife-fight mode: *If you're going to cut a man, eviscerate him*. So I quickly composed a hyperbolic *ad hominem* rant, with the thoughtfully civil title, "[Andrew Sargus Klein is an arrogant elitist douchebag](#)." I forward-dated the post for Friday morning, and sent Russ an e-mail to the effect of, "Hey, hope you don't mind me abusing your office help a little bit. Nothing like a flame-war to build traffic. Don't let on to Klein that I'm just funnin' around with him."

I'd hoped to bait Klein himself into a response. However, before that could happen -- as if intent on illustrating how to make a fool out of yourself by taking this stuff too seriously -- [one of Klein's friends offered up a comment](#):

Andrew Klein may be arrogant and elitist but he could craft logical arguments around your bumbling hypocrisy all day and night.

Of course I never bother "craft[ing] logical arguments," sweetheart. *It's a freaking blog*. If you want logic, [subscribe to a magazine](#) or [buy a book](#). Pardon my *double-entendre*, [Lola Wakefield](#), but people come here for the [cheesecake](#). Logical arguments are a dime a dozen on the Internet, but [sexy hotness](#) . . . well, that reminds me of Rule 5:

- **5. Christina Hendricks**

Or [Anne Hathaway](#) or [Natalie Portman](#) or [Sarah Palin bikini pics](#). Rule 5 actually combines four separate principles of blogospheric success:

- **A. Everybody loves a pretty girl** -- It's not just guys who enjoy staring at pictures of hotties. If you've ever picked up *Cosmo* or *Glamour*, you realize that chicks enjoy looking at pretty girls, too. (NTTAWWT.) Maybe it's the vicious catty she-thinks-she's-all-that factor, or the *schadenfreude* of watching a human trainwreck like [Britney Spears](#), but no one can argue that celebrity babes generate traffic. Over at [Conservative Grapevine](#), the most popular links are *always* the bikini pictures. And try as I might to make "logical arguments" for tax cuts, wouldn't you rather watch [Michelle Lee Muccio make those arguments?](#)
- **B. Mind the MEGO factor** -- All politics all the time gets boring after a while. Observant readers will notice that the headlines at [Hot Air](#) often feature silly celebrity tabloid stuff and News Of The Weird. Even a stone political junkie cannot subsist on a 24/7 diet of politics. The occasional joke, the occasional hot babe, the occasional joke about a hot babe -- it's a safety valve to make sure we don't become humorless right-wing clones of those Democratic Underground moonbats.

- **C. Sex sells** -- Back when I was blogging to promote *Donkey Cons* ([BUY TWO!](#)), I accidentally discovered something via SiteMeter: Because the subtitle of the book is "Sex, Crime, and Corruption in the Democratic Party," we were getting traffic from people Googling "donkey+sex." You'd be surprised at the keyword combinations that bring traffic to a political blogger who understands this. Human nature being what it is, the lowest common denominator is always there, even if it's [sublimated](#) or [reverse-projected](#) as puritanical indignation, which brings us to . . .
- **D. Feminism sucks** -- You can never go wrong in the blogosphere by having a laugh at the expense of feminists. All sane people hate feminism, and no one hates feminism more than smart, successful, independent women who've made it on their own without all that idiotic "Sisterhood Is Powerful" groupthink crap. And if you are one of those fanatical weirdos who takes that Women's Studies stuff so seriously that you're offended by [Stephen Green's sexist objectification of Christina Hendricks and her mighty bosom](#) -- well, sweetheart, to paraphrase [Rhett Butler](#): "You should be offended, and often, and by someone who knows how."

So, there you have it: Five Rules For Getting a Million Hits On Your Blog. There are probably another two dozen rules, but I'm too lazy to think of what they are right now. And to be honest, if it weren't for that old [picture of me in a Speedo](#), I'd probably still be 20,000 hits shy of the million mark. Some of us are just . . . blessed with exceptional modesty. And [some guys get the steak knives](#).

UPDATE: Probably special mention should be made of [Kathy "Five Feet of Fury" Shaidle](#), who never heard of a fair fight. She's one of those people you don't want angry at you. A ninja blackbelt in Rule 4, when she goes at an antagonist, it's a knee in your groin and an elbow in your eye. However, she also keeps the customers satisfied with some [naughty pinup hotness](#). (Rule 5!) That rare creature: A Canadian we like.

UPDATE II: [Linked at Conservative Grapevine](#).