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# Vatican: Bloggers are churchís 'public opinion'

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**VATICAN CITY** -- The pope may not be ready to start a blog or a Twitter account, but the Vatican is taking note of the unruly world of the blogosphere, recognizing its potential and the value of online ?conversations.?

That much was clear on Monday at the Vatican?s first-ever bloggers? convention organized by the Vatican?s Pontifical Councils for Social Communications and for Culture.

The 150 invited bloggers were mostly Catholic, picked from among 750 applications. Orthodox Catholic commentators were alongside skeptical observers and priests who became Internet celebrities for their posts on ?Star Wars.?

In his opening remarks, the Vatican?s top spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, conceded that he himself was not a blogger but that his life has ?changed? since he started receiving an ?informal? digest of Catholic blogs every morning.

Lombardi said the Vatican will launch a multimedia news portal (http://www.news.va) in the coming months to harness the potential of expanding social networks. Catholic bloggers, he added, are influential because they give voice to ?the public opinion in the Church.?

Vatican correspondent and blogger Paolo Rodari wrote that an ?important Vatican personality? told him during the meeting that ?some bloggers? views? have a great impact on the appointment of bishops.

But Monsignor Claudio Maria Celli, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, remarked after the summit that some bloggers? ?aggressive language? is ?astonishing.?

For some Catholic bloggers, their voice is a necessary counterweight to a perceived anti-Catholic bias of traditional media. ?The Internet is the land of he who speaks louder. So we have to shout too,? noted one French blogger, Francois Jeanne-Beylot.

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