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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The French blogosphere is growing fast<sup>1</sup> and its importance as a key way for people to learn about brands and communicate with each other is confirmed**

France is one of the leading 'blogging' countries outside the USA and its blogosphere<sup>(a)</sup> is growing fast. The first wave of BaroBlogs™ in France, an exclusive cmmetrix study, provides insights into how blogs<sup>(b)</sup> impact brands and business overall.

More than one-quarter (26.7%) of the French online population<sup>2</sup> visit a blog at least once a month. One in five (18.8%) have posted a comment on a blog and 8.1% have created their own blog. Thanks to blogs, Internet users can become 'co-creators' of the Web and, subsequently, of the world, as online users agree that blogs enable the greatest freedom of expression (92.2%), are both reactive and interactive (81.3%), create a closest possible relationship between people (75.7%), and are considered more critical than any other source of information (62.9%).

*"Thanks to blogs, the Internet has become a primary source of information for French Internet users," say Laurent Florès, CEO of cmmetrix. "Now considered more critical and more interactive than other forms of interconnectivity, blogs bring people closer. This marks a significant move from "interruption marketing" to "conversation marketing", where listening and conversing become critical for brands and organizations as a source of listening to and learning from what people are saying about them."*

French Internet users who consult blogs regularly do so to get information (74.4%), to share experiences (57%), and to look for advice (56.7%), and the phenomenon crosses age groups - 70.3% of 16-24 years olds and 40.5% of 35 years olds have visited a blog to get information.

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<sup>1</sup> « BaroBlogs »: "the Barometer of the Blogosphere", an exclusive study from cmmetrix, a leading customer-listening company, conducted from June 26th to June 28th, 2006, with a sample of 795 respondents from cmmetrix's online panel and representative of French Internet users. The next edition of the "Barometer Blogosphere" is planned for the second fortnight of September 2006, when USA data will be available as well. The first results will be available at the beginning of October 2006. For any information, please contact Laurent Florès or Nigel Roth at (201) 617 92 99.

<sup>2</sup> As of April 1st, 2006 France counts 26.52 millions Internet users (source : Médiamétrie – L'observatoire des usages Internet – Avril 2006)

## Blog subjects

The top three subjects for French Internet users are “news” blogs (54.2%), while 46.2% refer to music blogs and 41.6% to cinema blogs. The whole list is shown below.

| In general, when you go on a blog, what are the subjects you are interested in ? | TOTAL %     |
|--|-------------|
| <b>News</b>  | <b>54,2</b> |
| <b>Music</b>   | <b>46,3</b> |
| <b>Leisure</b>   | <b>43,8</b> |
| <b>Cinema</b>  | <b>41,6</b> |
| Travels  | 32,7        |
| Sport  | 32,5        |
| Gastronomy (dining, cooking, food)   | 27,4        |
| Photography  | 26,4        |
| Television   | 25,6        |
| Games  | 24,9        |
| Technology   | 24,1        |
| Fashion  | 23,5        |
| <b>Brands</b>  | <b>22,0</b> |
| Medical  | 21,0        |
| Science  | 20,3        |
| <b>Politics</b>  | <b>19,4</b> |
| Books/ Comics/ Mangas  | 18,9        |
| Art  | 15,4        |
| Marketing /Trade   | 12,3        |
| Law  | 11,6        |
| Religion   | 10,7        |
| Industry   | 8,7         |

Source: crmmatrix, “BaroBlogs”: “the Barometer of Blogosphere June 2006

*“It is interesting to note that brands are right there too”, say Guillaume Weill, Managing Director of crmmatrix Europe. “Nearly one quarter (22%) say they consult blogs to get brand information. Clearly, brands need to be listening, to be in line with ever-changing brand perception and image. And as the blogosphere in France grows, this will become even more important for brand managers to track.”*

BaroBlogs™ also shows that men and women are gravitating to different subjects. Sport blogs? Men (44.6%), women (17%). Medical blogs? Women (32.8%) and men (11.7%). Differences are also seen for age groups. Music is especially interesting for the 16-24 years old (61.4%) and less for the 50+ years old (27.4%).

*“The diversity of interests confirms the richness of blogs as an information tool. It’s a safe bet to say that the next French presidential election in 2007 will involve the Internet and blogs to an unprecedented level,” adds Laurent Florès, CEO of crmmatrix. “Indeed, news subjects already interest more than 50% of blogs readers, and this independent of their age or gender. Blogs with political content are for the moment more consulted by older men, but more than 80% of general blog readers judge the information credible”.*

## The most consulted blogs

Blogs truly represent Web 2.0 - personal information is produced by and exchanged constantly - and personal blogs are by far the most consulted (90%), followed by group and association blogs (46.3%) and media blogs (38.2%).

| What kind of blogs do you consult ?                                  | TOTAL %     |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Personal blog : passionated, diary, travel book, photo-blog</b>   | <b>90,0</b> |
| <b>Association's blog</b>  | <b>46,3</b> |
| Media blog : journalists, news, etc.                                 | 38,2        |
| Brands blog  | 29,9        |
| Political blog   | 20,8        |
| Professionnal blog : internal communication tool / external business | 13,7        |
| blog e-commerce  | 13,6        |
| Top executive blog   | 7,4         |

*Source: crmmatrix, "BaroBlogs": "the Barometer of Blogosphere" June 2006*

## Brands blogs

Nearly one-third (29.9%) of French blog readers have visited a brand's blog. They see blogs as a great opportunity to open dialogue with the brand and engage with the brand on a new level.

| What I'm expecting from a brand's blog ...   | TOTAL %     |
|--|-------------|
| <b>That I can express myself when that I had bad experience with the brand</b>                               | <b>82,8</b> |
| <b>That I can test the new products launched by the brand</b>  | <b>74,8</b> |
| <b>That I can consult the opinion of the other visitors on the brand, products, services</b>                 | <b>70,3</b> |
| That I can inform and find advices on the products, services of the brand                                    | 62,0        |
| That I can express myself when that I am happy of my experience with the brand                               | 61,4        |
| That one gives me the possibility of exchanging my opinion on the products, the brand with other visitors    | 58,4        |
| That the brand answers my questions more quickly   | 57,8        |
| That I take part in the creation of new products   | 54,8        |
| That one allows me to collect information, councils on various subjects related to the universe of the brand | 50,7        |

*Source: crmmatrix, "BaroBlogs": "the Barometer of Blogosphere" June 2006*

Brand blogs offer brands managers an incredible opportunity to dialogue and exchange with their customers, and even if they want to express dissatisfaction, almost all (98%) consider this can have a strong positive influence on the brand image:

| Do you think a brand blog can influence the image you have of the brand? | TOTAL %     |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Yes, somewhat</b>   | <b>46,9</b> |
| <b>Yes completely</b>  | <b>35,5</b> |
| No, not really   | 13,9        |
| No, not at all   | 3,6         |

Source: crmmatrix, "BaroBlogs": "the Barometer of Blogosphere" June 2006

| And this influence the brand image ... | TOTAL %     |
|--|-------------|
| <b>In a somewhat positive way</b>      | <b>74,4</b> |
| <b>In a really positive way</b>        | <b>23,6</b> |
| In a somewhat negative way             | 0,7         |
| In a really negative way               | 1,3         |

Source: crmmatrix, "BaroBlogs": "the Barometer of Blogosphere" June 2006

Laurent Florès concludes, "The first results of BaroBlogs™, the Barometer of the Blogosphere testify to the opportunity for brands, companies, and other organizations to better listen and understand their customers. For brands 'to be in the conversation' speaking to them is not enough any more – it is fundamental to first listen! Check in again at the beginning of October 2006 to see what **US Internet users** are saying about the power of blogs."

#### **About crmmatrix**

crmmatrix is a leading provider of customer-listening solutions that build relationship and drives innovation. Founded in 2000 by marketing professionals, crmmatrix focuses on three specific areas: the effectiveness and the optimization of online marketing strategies, the innovation and the optimization of products and services, and listening to customer conversations on Internet. It counts more than forty executives in New York, Paris, Singapore and Mumbai and works typically with worldwide Fortune 500 clients in North America, in Europe, and Asia.

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## **Definitions**

<sup>(b)</sup> Blogosphere : Blogosphere is a term that designates the whole bloggers and/or blogs' creators.

<sup>(a)</sup> Blogs : A blog is a personal web site that allows its author to express himself by creating written notes or audio / video contents (podcast type) that he submits to the other Internet users in a public or private way. These notes can be commented on by other internet users. On a blog, notes are archived by inversed chronological order and it is possible most of the time to subscribe thanks to RSS flow's technology.