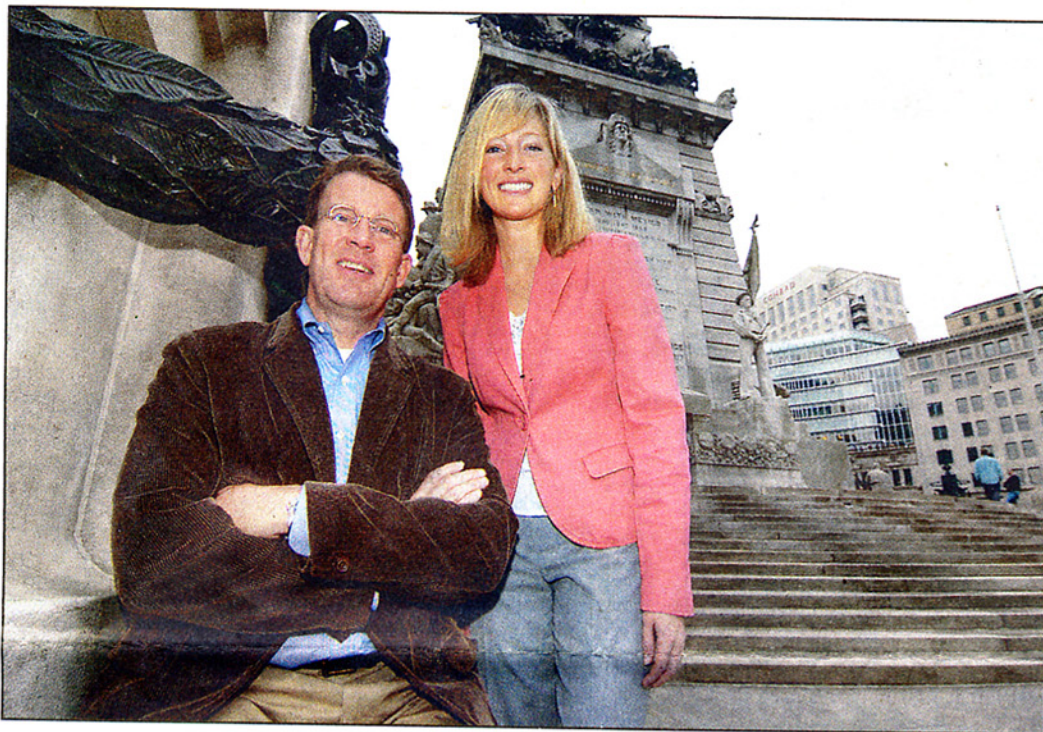


# THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

*"Blogs have reached the same crossroads that e-mail reached less than a decade ago. Companies know they should be utilizing blogs, but many are uncertain of the best way to start one, let alone grow and develop it into a viable business tool."*

Chris Baggott, co-founder of startup Compendium Software



ALAN PETERSIME / The Star

**THE WRITE STUFF:** Chris Baggott (left), co-founder of e-mail marketing powerhouse ExactTarget, and business partner Ali Sales are leaders of Compendium Software, a blogging and search-engine marketing software company.

## E-mail marketing exec is now blog-bound

### ExactTarget's Baggott launches software company

By Erika D. Smith  
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Yeah, yeah. You've got mail. But what about a blog?

An increasing number of companies are using blogs for marketing, to communicate with their employees and customers, and to give their Web sites more visibility on search engines, such as Google.

That's why Indianapolis entrepreneur Chris Baggott is putting aside his work at ExactTarget, the e-mail marketing company he co-founded in 2000, to focus on a new venture, Compendium Software.

Baggott and business partner Ali Sales, formerly of search-engine startup ChaCha.com, hope to turn Compendium into a top provider of blogging and search-engine marketing software.

"We firmly believe that every or-

#### COMPENDIUM SOFTWARE

◆ **Founders:** Chris Baggott, co-founder of e-mail marketing firm ExactTarget, and Ali Sales, former director of online marketing for search engine ChaCha.

◆ **What it does:** Develops and sells blogging and search-engine marketing software for companies of all sizes.

◆ **The name:** From the term "compendium," meaning a concise, yet comprehensive, compilation of knowledge.

ganization of every size will be implementing blogging in the near future," Baggott said.

Blogging by individuals is nothing

new. Millions spout off every day about anything and everything from Anna Nicole Smith to electronic voting machines.

But for companies, blogs remain largely untapped territory.

Joe Wikert, vice president of John Wiley & Sons, is a rare executive in Central Indiana in that he has been blogging publicly for more than two years. His blog isn't posted on the Fishers book-publishing company's Web site, but it generates business nonetheless.

"I probably would have stopped more than a year ago if it weren't for the fact that I get so many inquiries from authors for prospective projects," he said. "This translates into real products that generate real revenue."

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# Blog

◆ 175,000-plus new blogs are created every day.

## From C1

The Pew Internet & American Life Project found last year that of the 25 million to 35 million blogs in United States, only 5 percent were business-related. But more than 175,000 new blogs are created every day, according to blog search engine Technorati.

"Businesses are starting to get it. These are wonderful collaborative tools that give employees a way to express themselves, to connect with customers," said Debbie Weil, a corporate blogging consultant. "It's not that it's cool, but it's a really useful tool."

Compendium Software, which has no customers, expects to launch the test version of its software by the end of April.

The startup received initial

funding through 12 local angel investors. Baggott said he will seek another round of investment in late spring or early summer.

Compendium Software will find itself competing with several other blogging products. Many of them are free or "ridiculously cheap, like \$5," Weil said. She was skeptical of what Compendium Software could offer that would get more companies to blog.

Wikert said one reason top executives don't blog is they don't have the time — the time to write, the time to respond to readers and the time to tweak the content so it gets good traffic.

Blogs, managed correctly, can rank high in search-engine results because they are updated frequently and contain links to several other Web sites.

"Anyone who can't spare several hours a week for this probably shouldn't bother," he said.

Baggott said Compendium Software can help with that time-management issue, especially the

time it takes to optimize a blog so search engines like it.

"We're creating the product in the mentality of a user with average technical knowledge," Baggott said.

The product will be distributed via a "software-as-a-service," or "pay-as-you-go," model that's easier on businesses with small budgets.

It's the same model that ExactTarget uses to sell permission-based e-mail marketing software to companies big and small.

"Blogs have reached the same crossroads that e-mail reached less than a decade ago," said Baggott, who was ExactTarget's chief marketing officer and remains a shareholder and board member.

"Companies know they should be utilizing blogs, but many are uncertain of the best way to start one, let alone grow and develop it into a viable business tool," he said.

★ Call Star reporter Erika D. Smith at (317) 444-6424.