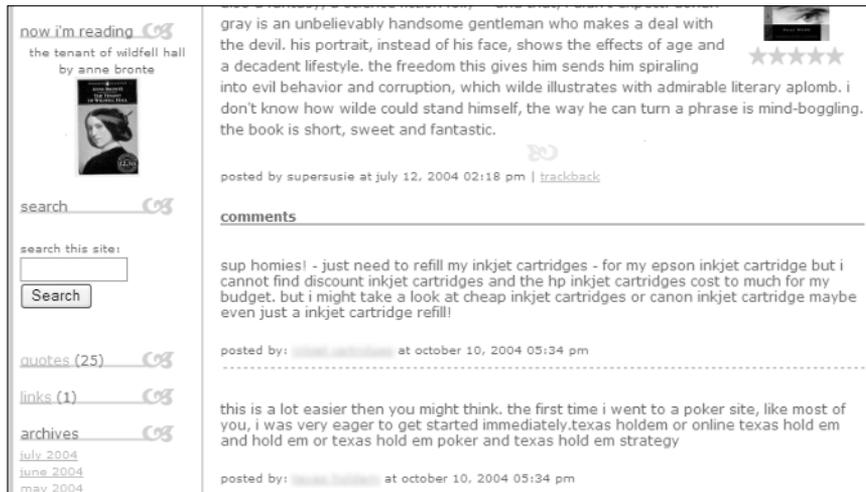


but the links provided send readers somewhere they probably don't want to be. The most common types of comment spam are porn Web sites, pharmaceutical products, online gaming, and unbelievable weight-loss opportunities. You can see how comment spam looks on my personal blog in Figure 12-2.

**Figure 12-2:**  
These comments regarding inkjet cartridges and online poker are off topic and inappropriate.



This kind of posting, besides being off topic and distasteful, is probably something that your company shouldn't be associated with. The questionable legality of some online gaming, for example, means that you probably don't ever want to let messages about poker games stick around on your site. Making a good-faith effort to remove such messages should take care of any suggestion that you endorse — or simply don't mind — such activity. There is no current legislation that suggests you are liable for such spam commentary on your blog, but as a responsible publisher it's your job to get rid of it.

I don't mean to sound alarmist — most of your comment dialogue will be valid, fruitful, and useful. You just need to do some policing to make sure it stays that way.

Blogging software that permits comments nearly always permits comment editing, which means that you can delete comment spam when it shows up. Some of the independent blogging software packages include plug-ins and functionality meant to deal directly with comment spam by notifying you when it occurs and letting you prevent future postings that include the offending URL. It's not a perfect solution and requires that you remain vigilant. Because you should be reading all the comments that come into your blog anyway, you can delete spam easily.