

Having said that, no company has actually been sued for content appearing on an employee Web log. Free speech protects the rights of employees to have blogs at all and most of what they post on that blog — but that doesn't mean the company's hands are tied. Consider these situations:

- ✔ Michael Hanscom, then a contract employee of the Microsoft print shop, came across a truck loaded with Apple G5 computers in a company delivery bay, took a photo, and posted it to his blog along with some text, as shown in Figure 12-3. Microsoft objected for security reasons, and Hanscom lost his job over the photo.
- ✔ Joyce Park, then a Web developer working for the social network Friendster, was fired in August 2004 for posting about the company on her personal blog, Troutgirl.



Figure 12-3:
Michael Hanscom posted this photo from a Microsoft delivery dock on his blog and lost his job.

Significantly for both bloggers, they both attempted to do the right thing. Hanscom deliberately shot the photo to exclude a view of the building the loading bay was in, and Park claims to have said nothing that wasn't already publicly available. Both companies took a great deal of flack from the blogosphere over the firings, right or wrong, and coverage was extensive in the media as well.

A company blogging policy could have helped prevent both situations or at least provided a set of guidelines under which the personnel actions could have been governed. But no policy can protect you completely.