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ON THE NEWS STANDS TODAY



ELECTRIC SHOW New's kid on the blog

Emily New draws online fans with her bringing-up-baby experiences. And she's not the only mummy blogger with a following

By Crystal Abidin

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MOTHERS know best indeed, going by the number of people who are turning to their blogs for advice.

Mummy bloggers - mothers who write about the highs and lows of bringing up children - are becoming sought-after online consultants as their product reviews gain popularity with other parents.

And companies like SK-II, 3M and Disneyland are turning to them to showcase new products.

Take 32-year-old Emily New.

The staff planner has been writing detailed reviews of children's products for a year now and gets up to 500 visitors daily to her blog, ourlittlesmarties.com.

Madam New said that based on her interaction with her readers, she gathers that they are women in their 20s to 40s. Most are like her, a mother with young children.

Madam New told The New Paper on Sunday that when she started her blog in 2007, she did not have a commercial end in mind.

'My blog (initially) served as an online diary... to pen down my son's milestones.'

Added the mother of a three-year-old called Edison Chan: 'Along the way, I received a few invitations to write reviews of products.'

Companies usually liaise with her directly through her 'contact me' page or go through a blog-advertising company which she uses, Nuffnang. Through it, businesses can book ad space on more than 100,000 blogs.

Madam New said that while she does not receive a fee for her services, she is usually given samples and sponsored products to test.

These include strollers, children's shoes educational DVDs and toys.

She also reviews women's products such as cleansing foams and cooling facial gels..

Another mummy blogger who does online product reviews is 34-year-old Leonny Atmadja. The stay-at-home mum started her blog, ourverydaythings.com, in 2005 to document her children's growth.

She claims that it now receives 'just below 1,000 hits a day'.

The Indonesian-born Singapore



PICTURES: KUA CHEE SIONG, JOLEEN SEAM
MOTHER LODE: Madam Emily New started her blog in 2007 as a journal to record her son's milestones. It has since become a go-to place for reviews of children's products.



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permanent resident has a six-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son. On her blog, they're known to readers as Anya and Vai.

SPONSORED:
Blogger Leonny Atmadja and her family were sent on a trip to HK Disneyland to review the attraction and its hotel.
PICTURE COURTESY OF LEONNY ATMADJA TNP

Ms Atmadja is often approached by companies directly or through Nuffnang to review products such as baby shoes, online shops catering to children and reading lamps.

Her blog was a finalist in the parenting category of the Asia Pacific Blog Awards. The product reviews have given her a chance to travel.

Last November, Ms Atmadja and her family went on a sponsored a four-day trip to Disneyland in Hong Kong to review the attraction and the hotel.

The newest mummy on the blog is MsKlessis Lee, a 33-year-old secretary who blogs at jbabiesinthedaisies.com.

She has two daughters, Joey, five, and Jayne, two.

She reviewed her first product - Life Styles Palette's wall decals - on her five-year-old blog this month.

'(The blog) was really more for my own documentation. Then I realised (it) has become a platform for parents to share ideas and learn from each other,' she said.

The three mummy bloggers say they aim to be as fair as possible in their reviews.

Said Ms Atmadja: 'I write (product reviews) from my point of view as a mum of two. I also make it clear to the clients that I will only say or write something that I personally believe in. I'm not out to sell the products.'

'I will not review products that I don't believe in as a mother, even if the company wants to give out free products on my blog.'

She added that she has turned down many requests for reviews, including cartoons with violent content.

Ms Lee agreed: 'It is important to me that I do not recommend products to my readers if I do not believe in them. When dealing with vendors, I also give them my honest feedback...'

Madam New takes the stress of juggling a full-time job, her maternal duties and her blog in her stride.

'I love trying new products and sharing them with my readers,' she said.

She said readers have even written in to thank her for recommending items they have seen, tried and benefited from.

'The main satisfaction comes from knowing that I can share my experiences and ideas with others, especially if they help them solve a certain situation in their own lives,' said Ms Lee.

Mothers The New Paper on Sunday spoke to said such blogs are useful, especially for first-time mothers.

A study by Microsoft Advertising and Starcom MediaVest Group of almost 3,000 women aged between 20 and 49 in eight Asian countries found that 58 per cent of mothers said their most-used sources were online networks of friends, reported The Straits Times last June.

Parenting advice

Ms Sherry Low, a 32-year-old management consultant and mother of a two-month-old daughter, told The New Paper on Sunday that she 'surfs the Internet daily' for parenting advice.

She likes these blogs because 'they usually write about the pros and cons of the products... and advice given is detailed'.

As to whether these reviews are reliable, Ms MieVee Wong, a 29-year-old housewife and mother of a boy who is almost two, said: 'You can usually sense whether they are genuine... If your experience of the product matches their review, their credibility builds.'

Mr Wayne Eo, 27, managing director of online marketing company OOm, told The New Paper on Sunday that bloggers are important as information sources.

'The first place that people turn to for information is the Internet... Since the target group already exists online, it makes sense for companies to target them there,' he said.

'The key fundamental is that people see good content and many viewer hits... It proves the

blogger's credibility.'

Dads write too

IT'S not just for mums. Dads are also getting in on the act.

Well, at this least daddy is.

Mr Edmund Tay (with his family) a 38-year-old social worker, has a blog, edunloaded.com, that gets up to 500 unique views a day. His readers are mostly mothers aged between 25 and 40.

Since starting his blog in December 2007, Mr Tay has reviewed products and services of companies such as Julia Gabriel, GapKids, Drypers and Listerine.

His three children, Nicole, Nathan and Nadine, aged between two and six, have enjoyed trips to the Singapore Zoo and Jurong BirdPark as part of daddy's 'part-time' job.

Apart from 'some freebies', he said he sometimes receives 'a small fee' - between \$200 and \$400 - for his reviews.

While he admits that he feels 'slight pressure' to give good reviews, Mr Tay maintains that he will be honest in his ratings and try to focus on the 'other positive aspects' of the product or service in question.

'Mothers also like to hear from the daddy's point of view, so they are really receptive and encouraging,' he said of his reader feedback.

But he has male fans too.

Fathers he has met are usually 'happy to find out that such 'endangered species' are still around', he joked, referring to daddy bloggers.

'Information is important for us parents. I don't know how my parents did it when there was no Internet (back then).'

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