

K1, P2, QWERTY. Is it the sound-alike clicking of knitting needles and keyboards that makes knitting and computers such natural companions? Or are knitters just natural typists? Whatever the connection, knitting is thriving online. And it's not a new phenomenon—active stitching communities have flourished on the Internet since its inception.

And thanks to the exponentially growing blog and podcast cultures, more and more knitters and crocheters are spending significant amounts of time online, talking patterns and projects with like-minded crafters who want to create, to share work and to be inspired to create more—an excellent cycle.

BLOGS

Though knitters and crocheters continue to gather at local yarn shops in record numbers, a goodly number of knitting circles have gone virtual. Join up with far-flung crafters by setting up a blog template and uploading photos of your work to share with new knitting buds around the world. (Check out typepad.com and blogger.com for user-friendly interfaces.)

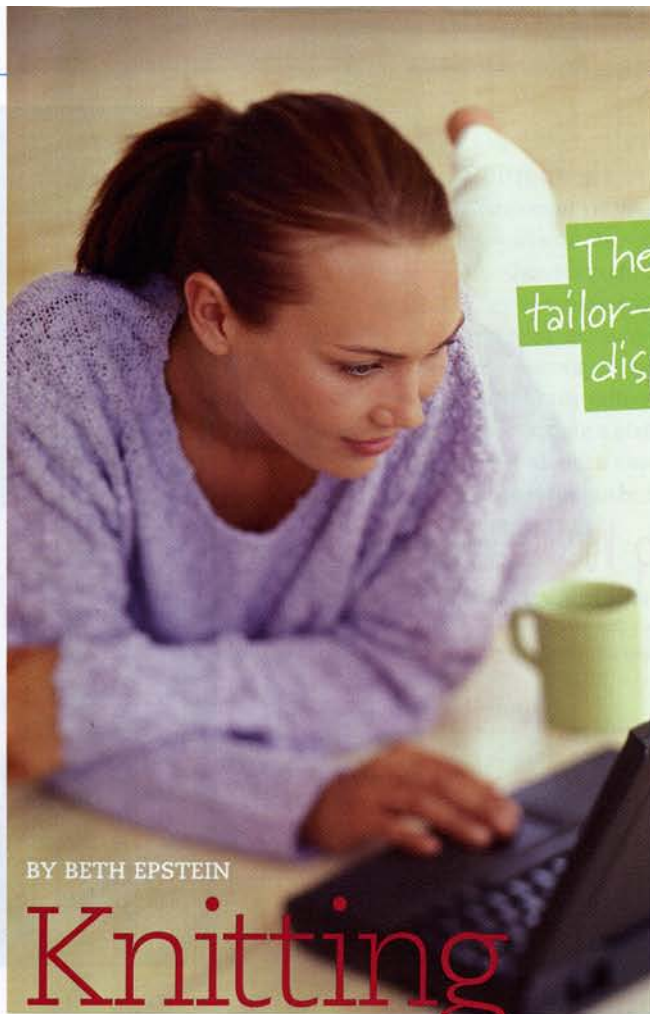
By the time you read this article, hundreds of new blogs will have made their Web debuts. Here, as of press time, are a few of our favorites:

Anny Purls Canadian Anny, a knitter, suburban babe and new mom, writes about her projects and supplements her text with gorgeous photos—many of her cutie-pie baby sporting the great gear she's made for him. annypurls.blogspot.com

Knit and Tonic It's knitting with a splash of bitters: Wendy Bernard's funny, sassy bits about her latest projects complement her lovely patterns (on sale through her site). knitandtonic.typepad.com/knitandtonic

Knitting Iris This Montana mom, a talented sock guru who learned from her mom, features multitudes of intriguing creations on her site. knittingiris.typepad.com

Mason Dixon Check out the latest collaborations of Kay Gardiner and Ann Shayne, authors of the wildly popular book *Mason-*



The Net seems tailor-made for displaying FO's

BY BETH EPSTEIN

Knitting Online 101

Knitters and computers go together like k2tog and ssk.

Dixon Knitting, at masondixonknitting.com.

Mim's Knitting Frenzy Utah resident Mim Felton creates dazzling lace shawls that are simpler to knit than you might think, and her Joe the Caterpillar is a pure delight. Excellent pattern detail and support make this site one to watch. mimknits.com/wordpress

Red Shirt Knitting The saga of Erika Barcott, who created this year's pattern heard round the blog world. Her tree sweater (yes, you heard us right) made the cover of Seattle's alternative paper *The Stranger* and earned Barcott blogging infamy and a MySpace page. Barcott is a good writer with lots of clever patterns to share; we look forward to seeing future FO's. erika.fisherking.org

Vickie Howell Hostess of the DIY Network's *Knitty Gritty*, Howell has given knitting a cool, hip face. Check out her blog for project updates and where in the world (literally) to find her. vickiehowell.com

Whip Up A collective of mostly Australian crafters combined forces to launch this wide-ranging blog. These women have amazing taste, and their projects and ideas are best-of-the-Web quality. whipup.net

Yarn Harlot How could we not include the patron saint of knitting blogs, Stephanie Pearl-McPhee, author of the books *Yarn Harlot*, *At Knit's End* and *Knitting Rules?* Visit her site for her latest WIPs, tour info and free patterns. yarnharlot.ca/blog

Yarnstorm Inspired by a passion for books and art, this blog showcases delightful creations (Jelly Bean pillows, among others) beside their artistic and natural inspiration. It's a thrill to see a 19th-century still-life alongside photos of hollyhocks and a matching embroidery project. yarnstorm.blogspot.com

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ONLINE PUBLICATIONS AND PATTERNS

The Internet has spawned an entire cottage industry of online-only publications. Ranging from newsletters to full-fledged magazines, these publications fill an important niche and provide instant gratification for those who just can't wait for the arrival of their favorite print pubs.

Drops Design Established in 1985, this catalog has placed a large archive of free patterns online.

The best part? The comprehensive search function on the home page that zeroes in on projects by style, yarn type and desired tension. garnstudio.com/lang/en/kategori_oversikt.php

Knitter's Review Clara Parkes's review guide, newsletter and forum have fostered an impressive worldwide community of knitters. Visit for information on everything from the season's newest yarns to finding a long-lost pattern. knittersreview.com

Knitty Arguably the mother of all online knit 'zines, this Canada-based quarterly offers free patterns for the entire family. Designs range from traditional sweaters to fascinating sea creatures (find them in the Spring 2006 issue). Knitty also provides superb tips for dealing with troublesome stitches. knitty.com

MagKnits Knitty.com alum Kerrie Allman launched her own online magazine and blog in 2004. Like Knitty, this small-scale site provides lovely free patterns. And talk about multitasking: Allman also runs HipKnits and sells wool online. magknits.com

Spun Magazine This quarterly has articles on a variety of fiber-related topics and free patterns. Its to-die-for clutch from Issue #4 would make a great gift. spunmag.com

The AntiCraft The goal of this bimonthly pub devoted to the dark arts of crafting? Taking the cute out of today's knitwear designs. Scared? Don't be. Skulls may abound,

but the styles are surprisingly attractive. theantcraft.com

RETAILERS

If you're anything like us, you'll never give up trips to your favorite LYS, but buying online does have its advantages. Below we've highlighted sites that are easy to navigate and include clear photographs of yarn they sell. Many bricks-and-mortar retailers also have online sites but don't always post

Patternworks This company sells tons of yarn online and will mail you a free catalog with patterns and highlighted products. patternworks.com

The Naked Sheep This Vermont-based store carries patterns, yarns, tools, accessories and more. Check out its wide array of Christmas stocking patterns in designs ranging from modern to traditional (\$5.99 each). nakedsheep.com/index.html

Webs A recent upgrade to the site has



These blogs clearly show why knitters love the Net: They display stitches, colors and textures beautifully, as well as pics of your bebeh in a finished sweater—and a pie that happened to get baked. From left: knitty.com, annypurls.blogspot.com and knittingiris.typepad.com.

photos; visit those sites if you know exactly which yarns you want. And remember: These guys want you to buy their goods, so they often post free patterns.

Black Water Abbey This small-scale retailer sells worsted-weight, 2-ply yarns from Ireland. The selection may be limited, but the colors are rich and deep—perfect for winter. Send your address for a free color card. abbeyyarns.com

Elann This yarn retailer posts free patterns for limited amounts of time, so print immediately if you see something you like. elann.com

Garthenor Organic Pure Wool Feeling all-natural? Go organic with this U.K. retailer of unprocessed sheep's wool. Sweaters are just crying out for the chunky browns, black and creams. organicpurewool.co.uk

Habu Textiles Looking for something unusual? How about fiber made from bamboo? This New York store sells Japanese and other Asian yarns. Note: The site is peppered with caveats warning that colors on screen will be slightly different than the real thing. To be on the safe side, order a yarn sample book (\$23). habutextiles.com

made this major vendor much more user-friendly. Plus: Debbie Bliss Merino DK for a closeout price of \$3.29? Yes, please! Want to touch the wools? You can buy a sample book of ten lines for \$25. yarn.com

TNNA Retailer Search Ready to become a regular fixture at a local yarn shop near you? Go to The National NeedleArts Association's site to search for all the shops in your area. (tnna.org; the store finder is at www.e-offinger.net/tnna/dir/retail_search.cfm?sess_id=).

PODCASTS

For those who aren't quite sure what a podcast is, a quick primer: Basically, it's a radio or video show that can be downloaded onto your computer or MP3 player. You can listen to or watch it live or save it for a future date. Got it? Cool.

Cast-On One of the first knitting podcasters, host Brenda Dayne examines the craft from all angles—every week focusing on a new theme and often inspired by a different muse. Some examples: Clio, Muse of History, kicks off a conversation about the knitting legacy, and Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, inspires a silly riff on knitting

useless things (cute crafty cupcakes, anyone?). cast-on.com
Creative Mom This one focuses on ways to inspire mothers of young children to keep clicking—and ways to involve the kids. Topics include collage and color.

creativemompodcast.com

It's a Purl, Man Actually, it's a boy. This is the aural diary of a male knitter, or, as Guido describes himself, "a guy in Boston with yarn issues." His podcast is getting raves for its humor, candor and uncommon perspective.

itsapurlman.com

Knitcast Launched in February 2005, this one is an industry leader. U.K.-based creator Marie Irshad interviews yarn-y experts from patternmakers to shopkeepers. knitcast.com

KnitTunes "Songs to Knit By" includes selections from Death Cab for Cutie, Mountain Mirrors, Sam Boxleitner, Alice Marie, They Might Be Giants and many more. knittunes.net

Knitty D and the City The motto of bloggers Wendy (of knitandthecity.blogspot.com) and Christina (of knittyd.blogspot.com): "Two girls, four sticks, three beagles and not enough yarn in the world!" The Pennsylvania-based duo frequently interview yarn-industry insiders (store owners and the like) and focus frequently on lace.

knittydandthecity.blogspot.com

CHARITIES

When you've completed all the *amigurumi*, hats, scarves, doll sweaters and afghans your family and friends can handle, consider knitting for a cause.

About The folks at about.com point the way to instructions, photo demos on stitches, and free patterns and list locations in the U.S. that accept knitted donations. Some samples: a soup kitchen that distributes hats and gloves to children in New Jersey; a neonatal unit in Missouri that takes preemie-sized hats, booties, sweaters and blankets. Go to about.com (knitting.about.com/library/blabccharity.htm) for more information; all donations must be made through contacts via e-mail.

Charitable Crafters This organization donates quilts, blankets, and adult's and children's outerwear to shelters, preemie caps to neonatal units and more. Most charity recipients are local to the group's Duluth, Minnesota, home base, but some are national (American Cancer Society).

charitablecrafters.org

Kaps4Karing A small-scale Texas-based organization that is currently seeking grant status. Operators Nancy Overland and Michelle Brides accept and pass along knit and crocheted caps for chemotherapy patients. The site has links to free patterns as well as a form to make requests for caps.

kaps4karing.com

Project Linus Handmade blankets are the claim to fame of this well-known children's charity. Established in 1995, Project Linus has provided sick children with more than 1.5 million blankets through hundreds of U.S. chapters.

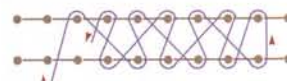
projectlinus.org



www.morethananyarn.com



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