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Young Bloggers Have Ear of Fashion Heavyweights

By ALICE PFEIFFER
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PARIS — At first glance, Dirrty Glam resembles any trendy online magazine. It features famous faces like Lilly Allen and Sienna Miller on its cover, and combines fashion, film and music reviews with celebrity interviews.

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Helen Zhu

Camille Rushanaedy from the blog Childhood Flames.

There is just one thing: Dirrty Glam's entire team, from editor in chief to public relations manager, is between 19 and 22 years old. The magazine, based in Paris, was started three years ago by Alie Suvelor, then 18 and now editor in chief.

"We're young but this isn't a hobby, this is our full-time job," said Ms. Suvelor, who also serves as stylist and writes for the magazine, which is in its 24th issue and has an English-language version.

The magazine and other fashion blogs and blog networks are helping to give young entrepreneurs an early entry into journalism and winning some of them a place in the notoriously competitive fashion industry. Other sites include TeenUgly, an American-based blog network; the blogs Style Bubble, based in London, and Childhood Flames, from the United States; and Cherry Blossom Girl, a blogger and designer from Paris.

"Traditional fashion publications are all learning to adapt to this new force," said Géraldine Dormoy, the online fashion editor for the French magazine L'Express.

Ms. Dormoy, who is in her 30s, has been on both ends of the fashion media continuum. She created the blog Café Mode five years ago and was later offered a fashion position at L'Express, a widely read weekly. She continues to produce her blog.

That a younger crowd is making its mark in online journalism should not come as a surprise. Tools available on the Web — in addition to the proclivity of younger people to adapt to them — has made it easier to create a Web site, blog or network.

"Today's teenagers never had to discover the Internet," said Tomas Gonsorcik, head of intelligence at the social media consultancy Interaction London. They were "almost predetermined to master the new means of media and communication in a way that is qualitatively much richer than the older generation."

Mr. Gonsorcik said the online projects presented many advantages. Blogging tools offer simple layouts that resemble Web sites, making the blogs and other projects almost indistinguishable from traditional online media, he said.

At the same time, Mr. Gonsorcik said, they "reach out a demographic beyond their own by

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the very ability to sit side-by-side their older competitors in the search engine result.”

And they have been received and recognized by the fashion industry in part because of the value it places on self-training.

“Fashion is one of the few fields which accepts people with little formal training,” Ms. Dormoy said. “Through these blogs, these young girls show their ability to work as stylists or photographers.”

Some of the efforts are attracting advertisers. DirrtyGlam has ads from the clothing retailer Miss Sixty. The online luxury boutique Net-à-Porter has partnerships with DirrtyGlam and Red Carpet Fashion Awards, a blog that comments and rates celebrities’ red carpet outfits.

Alison Loehnis, vice president for sales and marketing at Net-à-Porter, said the new generation of fashion blogs was attractive because it had “a wonderful viral capability” and allowed the company “to connect and interact more closely the potential future audience.”

American Apparel, the sportswear brand, advertises on all the major fashion blogs, like Teen Vogue; and Childhood Flame, produced by a 15-year-old from Portland, Ore., Camille Rushanaedy; or Fashion Toast, by Rumi Neely of San Francisco. It also created a personalized ad for the online fashion journalist Alix Bancourt, the Paris-based creator of the Cherry Blossom Girl blog.

For Chictopia, with more than five million unique visitors a month, the reward has come in the recognition. The fashion-blog network introduced TeenUgly in 2008, which is produced by high school fashion enthusiasts and features offers to share and comment on outfit snapshots.

TeenUgly rapidly met such popularity that the editors, ages 14 and 16, were invited to New York Fashion week in February and reviewed several shows for Chictopia.

Sea of Shoes, a blog from Jane Aldridge, 17, of Dallas, gained such a following that she was asked, in June, to design her own line of shoes for [Urban Outfitters](#).

Similarly, the British blogger Susanna Lau, better known as Susie Bubble, and her blog Style Bubble, has just designed her own line of clothes, produced and sold by the online retailer Urban Collection. Last May, Ms. Lau, 24, was also made commissioning editor for the online edition of the British fashion magazine Dazed and Confused.

Some say that making the move from amateur entrepreneur to worldwide recognition highlights the intuitive aspect of fashion.

“Fashion is subjective,” says Keith Pollock, executive online editor of Brant Publications, which publishes art magazines and Interview, the pop culture magazine founded by [Andy Warhol](#). “There are very respected fashion journalists that can evaluate the state of the market. However I don’t see how a fashion editor’s perspective on a Prada shoe is more valid than that of a teen blogger in Evanston, Illinois.”

Correction: An earlier version of this article misidentified Style Bubble as Susie Bubble, which is the pen name of its creator, Susanna Lau. It also said erroneously that Cherry Blossom Girl is based in London; she is based in Paris.

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