

## 'Bridget Jones' blogger fire fury

**British secretary in Paris becomes Online 'cause celebre'**

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**LONDON, England (CNN) -- A British secretary working in Paris who says she was fired because her Paris employer objected to her Weblog has provoked an old and New Media storm.**

Unmarried mother Catherine Sanderson -- "La Petite Anglaise" to 3,000 regular readers of her Internet diary -- is launching legal action in France, claiming unfair dismissal against accountancy firm Dixon Wilson, British media reports say.

The "old fashioned" firm was never named in her blog. Sanderson, 33, also remained anonymous -- except for her photograph on her Web site.

Now Sanderson claims to have been "dooced" -- the New Media term for getting fired for what you write in a blog after a Web designer lost her job for writing about her job and colleagues on her site, Dooce.com.

The rise and fall of "La Petite Anglaise" has added a new dimension to her tales of life with "Mr Frog", the French father of her three-year-old daughter "Tadpole" and office life with her "old school type" boss in the firm and other senior partners with "plummy Oxbridge accents," the UK's Press Association says.

Sanderson told the Daily Mail she was "made to feel like a naughty schoolgirl called up before the head" when Dixon Wilson suspended her.

Sanderson claims she was dismissed for "gross misconduct" because her blog, clearly carrying her picture, risked bringing the company into disrepute. She was also accused of using office time to write her blog.

Among references to her work at the accountancy firm was, under the heading "Titillation" the moment she revealed her cleavage during a video conference and descriptions of the office Christmas party.

At this event she revealed that her boss had committed the "unforgivable faux pas" of pulling a Christmas cracker before the senior partner.

One boss she describes as "very old school... He wears braces and sock suspenders (although I don't have any firsthand experience of those), stays in gentlemen's clubs when in London, and calls secretaries 'typists.'

"When I speak to him, I can't prevent myself from mirroring his plummy Oxbridge accent. His presence at this precise moment is both unhelpful and potentially embarrassing."

As news of Sanderson's dismissal was revealed, her blog "hits" more than trebled to 10,000, PA said.

On Wednesday more than 220 followers of her Web site recorded their comments on her dismissal. Most condemned her employers for targeting the world of the blogger and urged Sanderson to keep fighting.

But a few warned her that being online carried the same degree of responsibility as any other form of communication.

Now the course of her legal challenge -- one of the first involving bloggers' rights -- can be followed by a global audience if she chooses to continue her Bridget Jones-style saga, PA reported.

Originally from York, northern England, she has always worked in Paris, saying she started her Web site on a whim one day, after reading The Guardian's guide to Weblogs "and becoming engrossed in the adventures of Belle de Jour."

According to the British media reports she is now fighting for compensation from a French industrial tribunal of more than £54,000 (\$98,000) -- two years' pay.

Dixon Wilson refused to comment on the case but according to the Daily Mail one senior partner at the firm was said to have been "incandescent with rage" about what she had written about him.

### **'Matter of principle'**

Sanderson says she is fighting the case as "a matter of principle" to establish her private right to blog.

On Wednesday Daily Telegraph Paris correspondent Colin Randall, who first wrote about the plight of "La Petite Anglaise," used his own blog to ask whether print journalism is about to be smothered by the online age and "the march of the New Media."

One blogger responded: "I find it interesting that bloggers claim to be 'the New Media' and then complain about being terminated from their positions at companies for being bloggers: would you expect to be terminated if you 'moonlighted' for the traditional media?"

"Say you worked for a large corporation, and in your spare time you wrote an anonymous 'insider's view' column for the Financial Times. Would you expect anything less than termination upon discovery?"

But another asked: "Where does the influence your employer has on your day-to-day life stop?"

On Sanderson's own Web site the vast bulk of correspondents supported her, but one blogger warned: "You do have to be so careful with publishing these days, and it's a mistake to think that blogging, because it is so easy, is any different."

Another wrote from Canada: "I do not intend for this to sound mean-spirited, but seriously, did you not see this coming?"

Sanderson told the Daily Mail she planned a book and had had "already worked out some proposals for publishers."

One of her supporters wrote encouragingly on her Web site: "You, Petite, are about to become infamous!"