An Analysis of the Increasing Impact of Social and Other New Media on Public Relations Practice

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Some people are predicting the day will come when social media will replace television as the main news source for Americans. Mike Elgan (2009), a technology writer and former Editor of *Windows* magazine, says that time already is here. He points out recent major news stories about the US Air flight landing in the Hudson River and the terrorist attacks in Mumbai were communicated much more quickly on Twitter and other social media sights than on the television screen.

Since first appearing about five years ago, social media networking sites have become increasingly popular each year. Bill Tancer (2008), the general manager of global research at Hitwise, the world's leading online competitive service, says social media have overtaken pornography as the number one use of the internet.

In our previous research (Wright & Hinson, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d & 2008e) examining the impact new technologies are having on public relations, we found the phenomenon of blogging and other aspects of the social media already are bringing dramatic changes to many aspects of public relations. We have found the development of various new technologies has significantly empowered a wide variety of strategic publics by giving them dynamic new media many are using to communicate effectively with a variety of internal and external audiences.

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Since this is our fourth annual study examining how new technologies are impacting public relations practice, it makes sense to provide a review of what we discovered in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Three years ago we claimed the rise of the blogosphere was significantly empowering employees and had provided a dynamic new medium many were using to communicate with a variety of internal and external audiences. That study also found employee blogging had become a common occurrence and that employees who blog were writing both positive and negative things about their organizations. Although we discovered most agreed it was ethical to discipline employees who write negative things about their organizations on blogs and most also believed it was ethical for organizations to monitor information their employees write on blogs, we found that only a limited amount of this research is being conducted. We also reported there was little, if anything, in the literature discussing the impact the emergence of blogs and other aspects of new technologies are having on the science that is the communication process.

Building off of our 2006 research and using those results as a benchmark, our 2007 and 2008 studies asked a number of the same questions, permitting a comparison of the thinking during those years against what people formerly thought. Findings reported significant increases between all three of those years in the number of public relations practitioners who were aware of situations where employees of their organization (or a client's organization) had openly communicated on blogs.

Although we found that blogging employees were writing both positive and negative things about their organizations, the positive outweighed the negative. We also reported more positive things were being written in 2008 than was the case in 2007, and in that year compared with 2006. There also was a noticeable shift in responses between 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the question asking whether or not it is ethical for employees to write and post on a blog negative statements about the organizations they work for. This shift went in a negative direction with 49 percent saying this was ethical in 2006 with approval dropping to 29 percent in 2007 and 25 percent in 2008.

Since research is such an integral part of the public relations process, all three studies asked questions specifically related to measurement and employee blogs. One of these sought opinions as to whether or not it was ethical for an organization to conduct research that focused

on information employees were writing on blogs. Results showed that a very large majority (89% in 2006, 73% in 2007 and 63% in 2008) believed it was ethical to take such measures. However, in spite of those results, only a very small number of organizations conduct such research or measurement and few predicted we're likely to see changes in this in the immediate future.

Other findings from previous years suggested the emergence of blogs was changing how people communicate. More than half (53% in 2007 and 69% in 2008) said blogs have changed how their companies handle external communications while another fairly solid number (40% in 2007 and 45% in 2008) suggested this also was the case with internal communications. Although there was some ambivalence in terms of whether or not organizations should let their employees blog during regular working hours, more than one-third agreed this should happen. At the same time, nearly two-thirds said employees should ask their organizations for permission to communicate on blogs before doing so during the regular work day. Many respondents to our previous studies said their organizations had no formal policy on employee blogging.

Through these studies, we also have examined the impact blogs and other forms of social media were having on the science that is the communication process. We suggested results of our first three studies enhanced the appropriateness of Lasswell's paradigm asking "Who says What to Whom through which Channel with what Effect." We also said blogs and other social media were in the process of impacting the state of several traditional communication models and theories especially two-step flow theory, the conceptual model, agenda setting theory, spiral of silence theory and excellence theory. We justified those statements by pointing out:

- Many bloggers are themselves becoming "influential's" or "opinion leaders," both crucial components of Lazarsfeld's two-step flow theory process.

- The instantaneous 24/7 nature of blogging brings new meaning to the concept of "feedback" initially introduced to communication theory through the conceptual model.

- Blogs bypass traditional news media and, as such, throw a major wrench in the suggestion that these traditional news media set any agenda for public thought.

- The potential impact for blogs in connection with spiral of silence theory is massive because it provides interesting options and opportunities for minority viewpoints.

- And, the ability of blogs to facilitate two-way symmetrical communication offers tremendous possibilities for the enhancement of excellence theory.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Although our first two annual trend studies in the area of blogs and social media concentrated mainly on how employees communicate via blogs and ethical aspects of this communication, the 2008 and 2009 studies have taken a more broad perspective. Although some of the questions we asked in 2008 and 2009 are similar to measures explored in our 2006 and 2007 studies, a number of new questions were added in each of the past two years. While we still are able to compare current thinking against some of our earlier benchmarks this year's research also provides the opportunity to analyze important new ground.

METHOD

As has been the case with previous reports of this annual trend study, a sample of public relations practitioners from various parts of the world took part in the fourth annual version of this research. Invitations to participate in the study were extended via e-mail messages to random samples collected from organizations such as the Arthur W. Page Society and the International Public Relations Association (IPRA); and from donor, task-force and commission membership lists of the Institute for Public Relations. The study's measuring instrument contained 42 closed-ended and three open-ended questions.

Respondents came from many different parts of the world and represented a good cross-section of a wide variety of segments of the public relations industry. More (25%) worked with small agencies or consultancies than any other area but corporations (20%) and educational institutions (20%) also were well represented. Large agencies accounted for 10 percent of the respondents while seven percent worked in governmental public relations positions, five percent came from the not-for-profit area, five percent were research providers, one percent worked in health care and seven percent responded "other" when asked what kind of organization they worked for.

There was a fairly even split between female (52%) and male (48%) respondents. Most (67%) were based in North America with 15 percent from Europe, ten percent from Asia and Australia, ten percent from Africa, two percent from South America and two percent from "other." Responses were nicely distributed across various age categories with 15 percent being younger than 30, 25 percent were between 30 and 39, 26 percent were aged 40 to 49, 27 percent were 50 to 59 and seven percent were 60 or older. Usable responses were received from 574 subjects.

RESULTS

In our research papers and articles about the impact of new technologies on public relations in previous years, we have reported findings that clearly indicated public relations practitioners believed the emergence of blogs and social media have changed the way their organizations (or their client organizations) communicate. Our 2009 study not only confers with these previous results but also takes this agreement to a higher level.

Although the initial intent for these annual trend surveys was to use the same questionnaire year after year, the reality of the situation is social media has changed dramatically since we initiated this research project four years ago. Consequently, it became necessary to make considerable updates to our measuring instrument each year. In light of that, some of the findings reported in this paper represent benchmarks reflecting differences in answers from previous years while other results are for items we asked about for the first time this year.

As Table 1 indicates 73 percent of this year's respondents agree blogs and social media have changed the way organizations communicate, up from 61 percent agreement one year ago. The change in mean scores on this item grew from 3.3 in 2008 to 3.9 in 2009, all based on a five-point scale where "1" represents "strongly disagree" and "5" indicates "strongly agree."

Table 1

Responses to the question: "Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that the emergence of social media (including blogs) has changed the way your organization (or your client organizations)":

2009						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Communicates?	3%	13%	11%	47%	14%	3.9
Handles external communications?	3%	15%	14%	48%	11%	3.7
Handles internal communications?	5%	24%	26%	27%	11%	3.3

2008						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Communicates?	6%	19%	13%	46%	27%	3.9
Handles external communications?	6%	17%	18%	47%	21%	3.7
Handles internal communications?	10%	25%	28%	33%	12%	3.3

Note: (a) Percentage scores might not always total 100% due to rounding. (b) *Mean scores throughout this report are based on responses to five-point Likert-type scales where "1" = "Strongly Disagree" and "5" = "Strongly Agree." Consequently, the higher the mean score the greater the agreement.*

Agreement increases also were found on questions specifically asking about external and internal communications. In 2009, 68 percent felt the emergence of social media (including blogs) has changed the way their organization handles external communications compared with 59 percent agreement in 2008. Agreement on whether or not social media has impacted internal communications grew from 38 percent to 45 percent during this same period.

Even more agreement was found in both 2008 and 2009 when respondents were asked if they thought social media (including blogs) compliment mainstream traditional media or are in conflict with them. Results in Table 2 show 85 percent believe they complement each other in 2009 compared with 75 percent in 2008. At the same time, those who agree social media and traditional media are in conflict with each other decreased. There was 29 percent agreement on this item in 2008 compared with 26 percent agreement in 2009.

Table 2

Responses to the question: "Do you agree or disagree that social media (including blogs) and mainstream traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television)":

2009						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Compliment each other?	0%	6%	7%	59%	26%	4.1
Are in conflict with each other?	16%	48%	11%	24%	2%	2.5

2008						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Complement each other?	3%	13%	12%	52%	20%	3.6
Are in conflict with each other?	12%	42%	17%	24%	5%	2.8

Results also show there is considerable agreement suggesting blogs and social media have enhanced public relations practice. Table 3 shows nearly three-quarters (72%) of the study's respondents believe social media have enhanced public relations. This is up from 66 percent in 2008. Furthermore, 65 percent feel the same way about blogs, up from 60 percent last year. This table also reports most (92% - up from 89% in 2008) of those surveyed think blogs and social media influence news coverage in the traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) while 76 percent say the reverse also is true (up from 72% a year ago). There is very solid agreement (88% up from 84% in 2008) that blogs and social media have made communications more instantaneous because they force organizations to respond more quickly to criticism.

Table 3

Responses in 2009 to these questions: "Do you agree or disagree that . . ."

2009						
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Social media have enhanced the practice of public relations?	1%	6%	20%	42%	30%	4.0
Blogs have enhanced the practice of public relations?	2%	8%	23%	43%	23%	3.8
Social media (including blogs) influence the traditional mainstream media?		2%	6%	63%	29%	4.2
Traditional mainstream media influence social media (including blogs)?	1%	4%	19%	54%	22%	3.9
Since social media (including blogs) have made communications more instantaneous they have forced organizations to respond more quickly to criticism?		2%	10%	45%	43%	4.3

Responses in 2008 to these questions: "Do you agree or disagree that . . ."

2008						
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Social media have enhanced the practice of public relations?	1%	15%	18%	46%	20%	3.6
Blogs have enhanced the practice of public relations?	2%	16%	23%	45%	15%	3.5
Social media (including blogs) influence the traditional mainstream media?		5%	6%	60%	29%	4.1
Traditional mainstream media influence social media (including blogs)?	1%	10%	17%	54%	18%	3.7
Since social media (including blogs) have made communications more instantaneous they have forced organizations to respond more quickly to criticism?		8%	7%	46%	38%	4.2

In both 2008 and 2009, subjects also were asked a variety of questions about how social

media compare with traditional news media in terms of accuracy, credibility, truth, ethics and so

forth. Results from both years, displayed in Table 4, show respondents think blogs and social

media have a long distance to go before they will be equal to traditional media in these

categories. This table also shows respondents do not give blogs and social media very high

scores in terms of truth telling or advocating transparent and ethical cultures. However, respondents give social media high marks for offering organizations low-cost ways to develop relationships with members of various strategic publics (80% agreement in 2008 and 84% agreement in 2009), serving as a watchdog for traditional mainstream media (61% agreement in 2008 and 71% agreement in 2009) and impacting corporate and organizational transparency (76% agreement in 2008 and 82% agreement in 2009).

Table 4

Responses in 2009 to these questions: "Do you agree or disagree that social media (including blogs) . . ."

2009						
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Are more accurate than traditional mainstream media?	18%	48%	28%	5%	1%	2.2
Are more credible than traditional mainstream media?	12%	49%	29%	8%	1%	2.4
Are a more trusted information source than traditional mainstream media?	10%	40%	31%	18%	1%	2.6
Tell the truth?	8%	27%	53%	12%	1%	2.6
Advocate a transparent and ethical culture?	7%	23%	32%	32%	6%	3.1
Offer organizations a low-cost way to develop relationships with members of various strategic publics?	1%	6%	9%	58%	26%	4.0
Serve as a watch-dog for traditional mainstream media?	2%	9%	18%	56%	15%	3.7
Are impacting corporate and organizational transparency.	1%	3%	14%	57%	25%	4.0

Responses in 2008 to these questions: "Do you agree or disagree that social media (including blogs) . . ."

2008						
Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Are more accurate than traditional mainstream media?	25%	42%	26%	6%	1%	2.3
Are more credible than traditional mainstream media?	19%	45%	26%	9%	2%	2.3
Are a more trusted information source than traditional mainstream media?	16%	35%	29%	18%	2%	2.4
Tell the truth?	14%	24%	49%	13%		2.6
Advocate a transparent and ethical culture?	11%	21%	31%	30%	7%	3.0
Offer organizations a low-cost way to develop relationships with members of various strategic publics?	2%	7%	11%	62%	18%	3.8
Serve as a watch-dog for traditional mainstream media?	4%	10%	24%	46%	15%	3.6
Are impacting corporate and organizational transparency.	1%	3%	20%	58%	18%	3.8

We also investigated whether people have different expectations in terms of honesty,

truth telling, ethics, etc., between social media and the more traditional media. Results are shown

in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

Responses to these questions: "Do you agree or disagree that people who receive information from mainstream media expect these news outlets to be honest, tell the truth and advocate a transparent and ethical culture?"

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
2008	2%	12%	11%	50%	25%	3.9
2009	1%	8%	11%	60%	20%	3.6

Table 5 shows most (75% in 2008 and 80% in 2009) expect traditional mainstream media

to be honest, tell the truth and be ethical. However, results displayed in Table 6 suggest

expectations in these areas are considerably less (44% in 2008 and 41% in 2009) for blogs and

other social media.

Table 6

Responses to these questions: "Do you agree or disagree that people who receive information from blogs and other social media expect these outlets to be honest, tell the truth and advocate a transparent and ethical culture?"

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
2008	3%	27%	26%	36%	8%	3.3
2009	3%	22%	35%	36%	5%	3.2

Since research is such an integral part of the corporate public relations process, all four

of our annual studies have contained questions specifically related to social media measurement.

As reported in Table 7, even though public relations practitioners frequently say research and

measurement is important, few of the subjects in our annual studies have claimed to actually be

conducting this research. We have measured this question from the internal communication over

al four years of this research. Although Table 7 shows only a very small number of organizations

have commissioned or conducted such research or measurement the percentage of those

conducting such measurement has been increasing each year including a ten percent jump from

15 percent to 25 percent between 2008 and 2009.

Table 7

Responses to the question: "*To the best of your knowledge, has your organization ever commissioned or conducted a research or measurement study that focused on information employees communicated on www blogs?*

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Yes	3%	11%	15%	25%
No	77%	62%	55%	58%
Uncertain/ Don't Know	20%	27%	30%	18%

In an attempt to move the focus of this question from internal to external audiences, the

2009 survey asked about research measuring what external publics have communicated about

organizations via blogs or social media. Results reported on in Table 8 suggest there is more

activity measuring external than internal audiences as 39 percent claim their organizations are

actively measuring this area (as compared to the 25% who are measuring internally).

Table 8

Responses to the question: "*To the best of your knowledge, has your organization ever conducted research measuring what members of other strategic publics have communicated about your organization via blogs or other social media?"*

	2009
Yes	39%
No	42%
Uncertain/ Don't Know	19%

While expanding the number of questions we asked about measurement, we also

decided to find out what kind of measurement subjects thought should be taking place and then

compare that with what was actually happening.

Table 9

Responses to the question: *"Do you agree or disagree that public relations practitioners should measure:"*

2009						
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Mean Score**
"The amount of communication that is being disseminated about their organizations (or client organizations) through blogs and other social media."	1%	3%	7%	55%	35%	4.2
"And/or analyze content of what's being communicated about their organizations (or their clients) in blogs and other social media."			4%	55%	41%	4.4
"The impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of other strategic audiences."		2%	5%	58%	36%	4.3
"The impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behavior."		1%	6%	59%	34%	4.3

Table 9 shows subjects in this study strongly believe that a wide variety of research

should be conducted in connection with blogs and social media. As the table reports, more than

90 percent of the respondents to this survey agree this research should be taking place. This includes 90 percent supporting research that measures the amount of communication that is being disseminated about their organizations (or client organizations) through blogs and other social media; 96 percent encouraging studies that measure or analyze content of what's being communicated about their organizations (or their clients) in these new media; 94 percent agreeing public relations measurement should focus on the impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through bogs and other social media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of other strategic publics; and 93 percent in favor of research measuring the impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behavior.

Unfortunately, however, as Table 10 indicates, there is a considerable gap between the kinds of research and measurement this study's subjects agree should be taking place and what's actually going on. According to this table, 55 percent of the companies represented in this survey are involved in content analysis measurement, 44 percent claim to be conducting basic output measures and only about one-quarter actually are using measurement that focuses on outcome research measuring the impact on opinion leaders and/or the formation of attitude, opinion or behavior change.

Table 10

Responses to the question: *"To the best of your knowledge, has your organization (or a client organization) ever measured . . ."*

	No	Yes	Uncertain/ Don't Know
"The amount of communication that is being disseminated about it through blogs and other social media."	39%	44%	17%
"Or analyzed the content of what's being communicated about it blogs and other social media."	29%	55%	16%
"The impact information disseminated about it through blogs and other social media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of other strategic audiences."	51%	26%	22%
"The impact information disseminated about it through blogs and other social media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behavior."	53%	25%	23%

This research also asked several other questions. Table 11 shows responses to the question inquiring about what percentage of their workdays respondents spend with blogs and other social media. Findings indicate most (93%) devote some of their work time to these new media with nearly half (48%) spending between one and ten percent in this area and about a third (30%) devoting somewhere between 11 and 25 percent.

Table 11

Responses to these questions: "On the average, approximately what percentage of your time working in public relations and communications is spent with blogs and other social media?"

None	1% to 10%	11% to 25%	26% to 50%	More than 50%
7%	48%	30%	11%	4%

We also asked if organizations represented in this research had created policies regarding employees blogging or communicating via other social media. Results found 41 percent had developed such policies, 41 percent had not and 15 percent of the respondents were uncertain.

A question inquired about situations in which an organization's legal function impacted how blog or social media communication was managed. As Table 12 shows, more than one-third (38%) reported this happening.

Table 12

Responses to the question: "*Are you aware of any situation in which an organization's legal function impacted how the organization managed any aspects of blog or social media communication?*"

Yes	38%
No	31%
Uncertain/ Don't Know	30%

A follow-up, open-ended question revealed a number of unique sets of tensions exist between legal functions and the public relations or communications function in this area. One

respondent took lawyers to task for "stifling free and honest expression." Another wrote, "Blogs

and social media demand real-time responses and this causes problems for companies that are

required to vet all types of external communications through legal, which is not always easily

done." One respondent suggested, "Applying legal constraints to social media has a chilling

impact on the effectiveness of modern communication." Another pointed out, "Legal never will be

comfortable with social media because social media can not be controlled in traditional ways."

However, some respondents praised the legal representatives in their organizations for being, as

one subject put it, "a positive, proactive partner to us as we have developed guidelines for

interaction with social media."

As was the case in previous years, the current study included several open-ended

questions. Highlights of this year's open-ended responses suggest blogs and social media have

enhanced the practice of public relations. Respondents told us:

- "They provide more opportunities to communicate."

- "They provide a cost-free forum for the expression of ideas, information and opinion."

- "New opportunities for direct interaction with target audiences. Risk can be negative information, but audiences are going to the web so PR must embrace social media whether we like it or not."

- "They increase the immediacy of communication and offer platforms for public opinion on various issues."

- "Blogs have enabled our clients to directly reach their target audiences in a cost-effective manner."

- "They help us reach new, younger audiences that we might not get to through traditional news media."

- "Blogs and social media are how one communicates in today's global world."

- "The new media enable companies to quickly learn what publics and consumers are saying about their products and services."

- "They give ordinary people media to communicate through without gatekeepers."

- "It has helped those with a limited view of what public relations is realize it is more than just media relations. The unfiltered mechanisms within the social media system shift the focus from tools we use to the process of relationship building which is our purpose."

- "There are places for professionals to go to now because of social media, i.e., Linkedin and Facebook."

- Blogs and social media are more personal and they bypass traditional mass media to get to audiences and create dialogue."

- "These new media have changed how we communicate with reporters. For bloggers especially, we now give our clients the freedom to communicate with them personally. We've found that most bloggers hate being "handled" by PR people."

- "Public relations has not yet caught up to the value opportunities here."

SUMMARY

Our fourth annual, international, trend study examination of public relations practitioners (n=574) on the impact blogs and other social media are having on public relations practice once again finds these technologies are dramatically changing public relations and the way it is practiced. Results of this year's study show considerably more agreement in some areas than was the case in previous years.

Last year we reported that 61 percent of our respondents believed the emergence of blogs and social media had changed the way their organizations (or their client organizations) communicate. This year the score on that item is 73 percent. Findings continue to suggest these changes are more prominent in external than internal communications but numbers are up considerably there also. The majority (93%) of this year's respondents spent part of their average workdays with some aspects of blogs and the social media.

Many (85% in 2009 compared with 72% in 2008) believe social media complement traditional news media, and, an even higher number (92% in 2009 compared with 89% in 2008) think blogs and social media influence coverage in traditional news media. Most (88% in 2009 compared with 84% in 2008) believe blogs and social media have made communications more instantaneous because they encourage organizations to respond more quickly to criticism.

Results continue to show that traditional news media receive higher scores than blogs and social media in terms of accuracy, credibility, telling the truth and being ethical. Findings also show most (80% this year and 75% last year) expect traditional news media to be honest, tell the

truth and be ethical. Fewer than half (41% in 2009 and 44% in 2008) hold these same expectations for blogs and other social media.

This year' study also asked a number of questions for the first time. Results of these annual measures find:

- Although more than 90% of the study's respondents encourage the use of research to measure various aspects of how blogs and social media are impacting their organizations, only about one-third (39%) say their companies are conducting this measurement.

- Although there is a very strong agreement (more than 90%) that measurement and evaluation about blogs and social media should focus not only on outputs but also on content analysis and outcomes, in reality most of what's being conducted is directed at outputs.

- Most (93%) of the respondents to this survey report they spend some time working with blogs and other social media during a typical business day. This includes 30 percent who spend between 11 and 25 percent of their time working in these areas and 48 percent who spend between one and ten percent.

- About one-third (31%) of the respondents are aware of situations in which an organization's legal function has impacted how the company manages blog and social media communication.

Highlights of responses to the study's open-ended questions include a recurring suggestion that blogs and social media have had a huge impact moving public relations into the direction of facilitating more two-way communication by opening up direct channels of communications between organizations and their publics. Other comments of note:

- "They provide a cost-free forum for the expression of ideas, information and opinion."

- "They increase the immediacy of communication and offer platforms for public opinion on various issues."

- "Blogs have enabled our clients to directly reach their target audiences in a cost-effective manner."

- "They help us reach new, younger audiences that we might not get to through traditional news media."

- "Blogs and social media are how one communicates in today's global world."

- "The new media enable companies to quickly learn what publics and consumers are saying about their products and services."

- "They give ordinary people media to communicate through without gatekeepers."

- "There are places for professionals to go to now because of social media, i.e., Linkedin and Facebook."

- Blogs and social media are more personal and they bypass traditional mass media to get to audiences and create dialogue."

- "Public relations has not yet caught up to the value opportunities here."

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