Using social media in Public Relations

Greg Smith, 2011

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About this book

The lightening really is out of the bottle for PR. The analogy is that PR today is no longer about controlling (or bottling up) your organisation's messages, plans, activities and/or crises. It's about engaging with your "publics" in an era when anyone can be a global commentator.

This is not a how-to book, but a series of lectures (slightly rewritten) intended to provide broad guidance and insight into the world of how to incorporate social media into public relations. As with all university lectures, the information within is merely a signpost, pointing students in the right direction to expand their knowledge.

The 11 chapters were lectures delivered to third-year students in the Marketing and PR Degree at The University of Notre Dame Australia in 2011. I designed the unit in 2009, at a time when social media was truly entrenched as a way of communicating with more than friends. Rather than teach DTP (which is the realm of designers anyway) I thought it better to introduce a form of PR that is pure communication.

Because these are lectures, the writing style tends to be somewhat informal and does tend to be brief at times (particularly when I've copied and pasted dot points from slides). The material comes from a large number of sources, for such is the nature of social media. In reality, it's probably more of an essay. Because of this, the work is free. For the most part, I have referenced. The course was written from week to week (and in between my fulltime Monday to Friday job) so it's possible I've overlooked something. If so, please contact me at theprdoctor@gmail.com and I will rectify the problem.

Three things I'd like to emphasise:

- Social media in itself is not a total solution for PR. It is one component.

- Not every campaign is suited to using social media.

- You shouldn't just use social media for the sake or it, or because everyone is doing it. You still need a reason, a goal. Heck, it sure is a powerful tool.

Remember, PR is still about Publics and Relationships: it's just the methods have changed. As colleague Kim Harrison said: "I'm still doing the same things I did 30 years ago, just differently, and faster."

About me

- Former daily newspaper journalist at The Daily Mirror, The Daily Telegraph, The Australian and The West Australian.

- Worked in communications for the Sydney Olympics and Department of Defence (Army PR Officer for 17 years – Regular and Reserve) and national sports bodies.

- Masters Degree in Communication through Edith Cowan University, 2004.

- PhD from Central Queensland University, 2007.

- Lectured fulltime at Edith Cowan University in 2006 and Notre Dame in 2009, and part-time at Griffith University in 2005 and Notre Dame in 2011.

- Qualified personal trainer (not that this is relevant to PR).

"At least one of my children was doing something creative," (Mum) complained. "I had some hopes for you, Juliet, when you did that Media Studies degree. I thought you might go into television. Of course, I have no hopes for you now," she added cuttingly. "I gave them up when you started in public relations."

– *My Lurid Past*, by Lauren Henderson

Introduction by Phillip Young (University of Sunderland)

I want to start with a few questions. Here's an easy one (or maybe not): What is PR? I am not going to give an explanation, I am going to show you an object.

My iPhone. This is PR.

Never before have we been able to hold up one object and say "This is PR".

Now I can find out all I want to know about the world, I can tell other people what I know and think. I can see and hear what they – you – think, individually or in groups.

I can use it to manage my relationships with the people and the organisations that matter to me ... and other people. You can use it to find out about me – my reputation – and shape our relationship.

How many people here have used the internet? How many have mobile phones that can do so?

Of course, I could have framed the question the other way round? How many of you haven't? If I had asked that in UK the answer would have been nine million (note: there are twice as many non-users in the UK as there people living in Croatia, pop. 4.5m). The latest stats I could find suggest about half the population of Croatia uses the internet. So at least half don't.

That may be an odd way of starting a chapter that argues "today all PR is online".

Of course, online isn't the ONLY way to reach stakeholders (despite the number of people out there who'd have you believe that).

I am saying an online component is an essential part of all PR.

Online is no longer a sub discipline of PR – it is part of the very fabric of all PR activity. Today within PR consultancies there are people who just specialise in online PR.

At its core, PR is about reputation management. In this world, organisations have to be aware of their online reputation because in many cases that will be the most visible thing people will see.

This argument operates on two levels – search and visibility, or what people find out about you and how easy it is to find that information. Crucially, visibility may have very little to do with <u>intentional</u> communication on behalf of the organisation.

There is a more fundamental argument, too. PR is about Relationship Management – the interaction between organisation and stakeholders/audiences. Increasingly, that relationship is shaped in an environment where the relationships between stakeholders have become heightened to an unprecedented degree. At micro and macro level, time and geography have disappeared.

The complexity of relationship has multiplied

We have real friends, Facebook friends, Twitter follower etc. Casual visitors, readers etc. However, the shift has been in the visibility, the connectivity of those relationships. We can see the connections, we can aggregate them in what we can call reputation. In its simplest form, do a Google search = lots of results!

(Remember, people have always spent more time talking to their friends and colleagues than they have 'engaging' in dialogue with brands, ideologies, organisations).

Many of the results lead to content not created by the organisation visitors were searching for. A senior V-P for integrated marketing communications and capabilities at Coca-Cola presented at the AdAge conference in April 2011, saying it was a revelation to discover that of the 150 million views the brand has amassed on YouTube, only 25 million to 30 million of those views could be attributed to content Coca-Cola had put into the marketplace (Boris, 2011).

The surprise is that they were surprised. They should appreciate that communication has changed from organisation to public. It is now people-to-people.

That was one of the key arguments of the book, Online Public Relations 2ed (Phillips and Young, 2009) in which their "argument today is that books like Online Public Relations are becoming redundant.

Yes, the tactics need to be understood, and theoretical insights need to be incorporated into core theory ... but this is more than absorption."

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CHAPTER 1 – Overview

E-PR has become a new addition to our constantly expanding vocabulary, which also includes buzz words such as e-commerce, e-mail, e-business, and e-HR. The "e" simply means "electronic". It includes the internet and its associated tools, but also other forms of electronic PR, such as video and audio.

The first definition of e-PR was made in 2001 by David Phillips, author of *Online Public Relations*.

"E-PR is the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the practice of PR" (Phillips, 2001).

In an internet-mediated world, where every activity is directly or indirectly mediated by the web, every form of PR requires an element of ICT. Through time, more PR activities will depend on ICT.

This means that practitioners need the to have ICT tools available and know how to use them. In this they will be no better equipped to be effective than many others. The tools and skills do not need great learning or expertise.

This is more a how-to course from my perspective, with you applying your knowledge of the practice and principles of PR to modern methods of communication.

As with all university courses, lecturers exists to provide the guidelines and the signposts. Students then apply mostly self-gained knowledge to show their understanding of the topic.

For readers of this book, know that students in this unit have to do the following:

– Research and monitor trends and or news
– Be able to use various electronic tools, both online and in-hand (video and
   sound recording)
– Write well, regularly and to deadline.
– Present professionally, verbally, visually and in person.

The unit looks at how social media is used within the context of PR, or how PR can best use some of the forms of social media.

Why is it called social media?

It's an exchange of information. We share, we "chat". It's social and it's informal, yet for PR people it still has to be professional.

You're living in exponential times. Technology is outpacing our thought processes and ability to keep up with information. The communications challenges are many (and varied). The pace will only get quicker.

When you get the CEO of News Limited Australia talking and thinking about new media, then you know something's happening.

John Hartigan runs Rupert's operations here (well, he did until he retired in November 2011, just as I started this book). Harto, as he's known, once was a knockabout journalist carving his name in the wooden press gallery at Balmain courthouse. He's witnessed a rapid transformation of the media landscape in his 40 years in newspapers.

He recognises, as should you, that the news cycle is changing, and what the various forms of media now do. He summarised it thus:

- my mobile to alert me;

- the internet to tell me;

- TV to show me and

- print to explain it, give it context and tell me what it really means.

In a newspaper article (an extract form the book, *Advance Australia – Where?*) noted Australian social researcher and commentator Hugh Mackay, who is also a qualified psychologist, questioned where we're heading with communication, or more particularly with the way we communicate. Mackay has asked questions of the country for more than 25 years.

Like, McKay, just how we are communicating is also something that has concerned me for some time. Hopefully, it will concern you, as possible future communicators.

In his article, Mackay questions whether we are missing out on something, despite all the methods at our disposal to impart information. Is the "humaness" being taken out of communication?

If nothing else, keep in mind during this course that you consider just what we can achieve by using the latest communication techniques. Are we simply confusing data transfer with human communication, or are we using tools that help foster understanding and assist in the way we practice sound PR?

Current thinking is that media is being "socialised". By media, we are now referring to "new" media (the Internet). The Internet is now THE media. People now have control of what gets published and broadcast. One term for it is citizen journalism. Whatever the pros and cons, it is here to stay.

As you would all be aware, the traditional media (print, radio, TV) are under threat. Established media companies the world over are rushing into Cyberspace, as witnessed by Rupert Murdoch's ill-fated purchase of MySpace. The 2008 Beijing Olympics had four hours a day telecast by Channel 7 via Yahoo.

So the socialisation of media is simply people are populating the Internet with information. We form social groups according to our interests. We facilitate social interaction, whether it's by words, or pictures, both live and recorded.

Though his famous *Conversation Prism* (2009) Brian Solis demonstrates the way communication has developed is that "monologue has given way to dialog". That's a good thing. People are communicating both ways. Social media has created a new layer of influencers. It is the understanding of the role people play in the process of not only reading and disseminating information, but also how they in turn, share and also create content for others to participate. This, and only this, allows us to truly grasp the future of communications.

Social media is about putting the "public" (or the people in society) back in Public Relations and realising that focusing on important audiences and influencers will have a far greater impact than trying to reach the masses with any one message or tool.

The exciting thing is that this trend is only just developing, and you will be part of it. However, most people around the world have yet to embrace it and participate. Please keep in mind that when we talk about the proliferation of all these techniques, we are talking about only those countries that have developed IT infrastructure; for the world is not equal when it comes to It and social media.

The internet – a brief history

These dates demonstrate how recent the Internet is and how quickly changes occur.

- 1978 – First e-mail. The computers were next to each other.
- 1978 – BBS data exchanged over phone lines. First copies of web browsers (Usenet). Still used today (news or user groups). Big in Taiwan.
- 1994/95 – Geocities, The Globe.
- 1997 – AOL instant messaging (the forerunner of SMS) & Six Degrees (Profile creations, friends listed)

Some current usage statistics

On 21 March 2006, Jack Dorsey launched Twitter. Seems like yesterday.

- Twitter reached 1 billion tweets in 3 years, 2 months and 1 day. Now Twitter users send 1 billion tweets per week.

- A year ago, users sent an average of 50 million tweets per day. Today, that average is 140 million. The number is growing: There were 177 million tweets sent out on 11 March 2011.

- At the start of 2011, Twitter users in Japan set the tweets per second record at 6,939 tweets per second, 4 seconds after midnight in Japan on New Year's Day.

- The average number of accounts created per day is 460,000. Over half a million (572,000) accounts were created on Saturday 12 March 2011.

- There was a 182% increase in Twitter mobile users in 2011.

- Twitter has grown from eight employees in January 2008 to 400 employees today.

- Google Plus secured 10 million users in two weeks. (http://techcrunch.com-
  12 July 2011). Google was founded in 1998.
- Facebook was "born" in 2004.

The changing face of PR

Phillips and Young (2009) call this "the new PR". It's a space where "almost every aspect of the discipline needs to be rethought". This, of course, won't matter much to students just learning the craft, as for them, it is how it is now. So, this unit doesn't dwell too much on what might have been. It matters not that we used to use typewriters and fax machines. I'd ague that PR today is only "new" compared to what we did yesterday. It's moving so fast, that the relevance of yesterday means little. PR today is for the forward thinkers. Onwards.

A game-changer

While many marketing and PR people understand that media releases sent over the wires appear in near real-time on services like Google News, very few understand how they must dramatically alter their media release strategy in order to maximise the effectiveness of the media release as a direct consumer-communication channel.

The Web has changed the rules. Many "publics" read your media releases directly and you need to be talking their language.

This is not to suggest that media relations are no longer important. Mainstream media and the trade press must be part of an overall communications strategy. In some businesses, mainstream media and the trade press remain critically important and, of course, the media still derives much of its content (estimated by Prof. Jim McNamara of the University of Technology Sydney) to be up to 85%) from releases.

Your primary audience is no longer just a handful of journalists. Your audience is millions of people with Internet connections and access to search engines and RSS readers. There are some simple rules to ensure your news gets out:

- Don't just send press releases when "big news" is happening; find good reasons to send them all the time.
- Instead of just targeting a handful of journalists, create media releases that appeal directly to your target audiences.
- Create links in releases to deliver potential customers to landing pages on your Web site.
- Optimise media release delivery for searching and browsing.

Blogs

First up, we will be looking at one of the most common forms of social media, blogs.

A blog is simply website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.

"Blogs" were (up to about 2 years ago) the fastest-growing online phenomenon. There's said to be from between 12 to 35 million blogs on the web. The thing is, nobody knows.

- "Blog" is short for "web log". It describes a website that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer.
- "Moblogs" (mobile phone blogs) are blogs that are regularly updated using of the text and camera facilities of mobile phones.
- The "blogosphere" refers to the universe of blogs, bloggers and blogging and is essentially an online community where information, opinions, and influence are spread by online word of mouth.

Features of blogs

- Blogs are essentially online journals of thought and commentary.
- They may combine aspects of diary, rant, noticeboards, and photo galleries, and most blogs include archives of past entries, lists of other blogs favoured by the author, and a facility for reader input.
- Blogs are characterised by a personal and conversational writing style, subjective points of view and a sense of egalitarianism and empowering the voice of the individual.
- Although on the surface blogging is about one individual putting their thoughts on the web for all to see, another fundamental aspect of blogging is its facilitation of communication and connections between like-minded people.

Who uses them?

Originally blogs were written by individuals, but there are now a growing number of blogs being set up by companies, organisations and the mainstream media. Microsoft, for example, encourage its employees to blog.

As such, bloggers (the people who write blogs) are a mix of amateur and professional writers.

As the internet is now often the first stop for people looking for the 'real' story, successful bloggers (as measured by pageviews of their blogs) can become well-known commentators on a particular topic to the network of people interested in that area and can therefore become very influential.

Are blogs practical?

For entrepreneurs, the question boils down to: Will my organisation benefit from it?

The objective, as always, is to facilitate the exchange of information and do so in a manner that'll attract attention to your products, services or messages.

Blogs provide a platform to introduce new voices into national or international debates on particular issues and to transmit content that doesn't get a run in mainstream media. The blogging community adds depth, analysis, alternative perspectives, foreign views, and occasionally first-person accounts that can contravene reports in the mainstream press (and sometimes scoop them).

Issues that start online in blogs and resonate with audiences can eventually cross over and gain coverage in the mainstream media. For example, Apple was forced to change the battery in its iPods after two consumers started a blog to expose the fact that the batteries only lasted 18 months and could not be replaced.

Are blogs credible?

Yes. They can do all the above, to varying degrees. But are they credible?

Blogs have emerged as a powerful alternative to the mainstream media; as mentioned – a new form of journalism, open to anyone who can establish and create a website. So they ARE a form of media.

They represent a fundamental shift in power as compared to other media, because blogs enable individuals to play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, sorting, analysing, and disseminating news and information, a task once reserved exclusively for the media.

As mentioned, Blogs have been known to publish news before the traditional media reports on it and media are increasingly scanning blogs for tips, sources, story ideas, and perspectives on current issues.

However, the idea of bloggers as the new media raises some interesting questions as to their legitimacy.

On one hand, bloggers are like editorial writers or columnists, since they apply the filter of their opinion. On the other hand however, bloggers may not have any formal writing skills, are not bound by a journalistic code of conduct, are not subject to an editing process, and may be pushing a personal agenda.

Implications for PR

It is essential that communications professionals are aware of the blogs relevant to their organisations so they can monitor what is being said about their organisation and its products and services. Blogs can:

- provide early warnings of impending issues or potential crises),
- provide competitor information (through competitor blogs),
- contribute to a better understanding of the concerns, challenges and interests of different stakeholder groups.

Communications professionals should also note the media outlets and journalists on their target lists who have their own blogs. These can be monitored for the journalist's personal areas of interest, and new stories that the journalist may be thinking of or working on.

Journalists' blogs can be a helpful source of background information when pitching article ideas. The Sydney Morning Herald, for example, lists a number of journalists with blogs.

Another implication of blogs on PR and marketing communications is the potential to be utilised as a tool by the organisation to communicate with stakeholder groups.

Practical uses

Blogs can be used as part of an integrated communication strategy to enhance and complement the rest of an organisation's communications activities.

Blogs provides a bottom-up, basic method of sharing information about organisations through the web. They can be used to:

1.   Generate interest about the company and/or its products and services among current and potential customers, partners, resellers, media, and industry influencers.

2.   Build buzz and positive word of mouth promotion for the company and/or its products and services.

3.   Spark informal conversations about the organisation and/or its products and services.

4.   Position executives or R&D teams as thought leaders.

5.   Offer an outlet for news and information not important enough, or even suitable for a press release, but still worthy of being communicated.

6.   Differentiate an organisation from its competition.

7.   Provide an alternative to one-to-many email broadcasts.

8.   Enhance internal communication.

9.   Target very specific groups - people with specific demographics, opinions, perspectives, worldviews, and interests.

10.   Reach audiences that may be difficult to reach through conventional communication channels - e.g. tech-savvy audiences.

11. Monitor public opinion and sentiment.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

What we now have is not social media, it's social networks. This is the environment PR people have to work in.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social networks as:

> "…web-based services that allow individuals to….

> 1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system;

> 2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection;

> 3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site."

PR people have to be able to identify social networks – those highly-specialised groups (publics) that make up the online social universe.

Examples of social networks are Facebook, MySpace. There are many others, including those for people who have pugs as pets, and so on. We'll look briefly at some facts on Facebook and Twitter, which should demonstrate the importance of why you need to "be there".

- Research company Nielsen (2009) showed 67 per cent of the global online population now visit a social network site, and this sector accounts for 10% of all Internet time. (Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, and Italy are the fastest-growing segments.)
- Social networks and blogs are now the fourth most popular online category – ahead of personal Email.
- Member sites now account for 1 in every 11 minutes online.
- Twitter is and it isn't a social networking site. Current research shows it is used more by professionals.

Like all things on the internet, you have to be wary of your sources. Fake accounts abound, and this is also the case in corporate life, where these types of site have resulted in an increase in what's known as astroturfing. The goal of such a campaign is to disguise the agenda of a client as an independent public reaction to some political entity. It's called astroturfing because AstroTurf (artificial grass) is a metaphor to indicate fake grassroots support. This could be regarded as pure propaganda.

- Facebook is a social networking website that was originally designed for college students, but is now open to anyone 13 or older. Facebook users can

create and customise their own profiles with photos, videos, and information about themselves. Friends can browse the profiles of other friends and write messages on their pages. (TechTerms.com).

- Orkut.com in Brazil (operated by Google) has the largest domestic online reach (70%) of any social network anywhere in the world, whereas Facebook has the highest average time per visitor among the 75 most popular brands online worldwide. The amount of time spent on Facebook.com increased by more than 566% in only one year. (Nielsen, 2009).

TIPS:

Use academia.edu – a Facebook-like application

Use Facebook Groups – create a class-centric group

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging application that is more or less a combination of instant messaging and blogging.

Twitter is the flavour of the moment, with regard to spreading on-line (and beyond) messages. I say beyond, because like so much of social media now, it is now mobile. Facebook, You Tube, MySpace and Twitter can now be run from mobile phones, whereas only recently they were restricted to web-based applications. When I say recently, I mean two years ago. Despite the fact few people from your age demographic use it, Twitter remains a tool of choice for communication among communications professionals. You will have to learn to use it if you work in many professions.

Following brands on Twitter has its rewards, as Jetstar demonstrated (August 2009).

Jetstar held a Twitter-only giveaway of 3000 seats on its new Melbourne Tullamarine-Sydney service. Considering that was how many followers it had at the time, those odds were pretty good for those who moved fast before the retweeting kicked in.

When a mainstream offer of $19 went live later in the day, the Twitter account also proved useful for the brand to apologise to punters (and blame Telstra) after the server crashed.

The Twitter giveaway was the second time Jetstar tried that type of initiative. Earlier in the year, it offered its Twitter followers 1000 seats for 1c each.

Any online giveaway can also have a downside. At the time of writing, QANTAS failed miserably with an online promotion and was hammered through Twitter, as it immediately followed the airline's shutdown. This will become a classic case to study over the next few years.

Summary: We now live in an age where we're continually connected. Action is immediate.

Google

For PR professionals, Google is a one-stop communications centre, allowing you to run your office from anywhere, without a laptop (if need be).

What began as a search engine now encompasses all of these components:

– e-mail
– video (You Tube)
– e-blogger
– calendar
– Photos (Picasa)
– Reader (RSS)
– Documents (conduct surveys)
– Search (images, scholar)

Everything is interlinked. It's a social network, just with many tools, some more "social" than others. Chapter 5 deals solely with Google.

The future

The existing news release format has been in use for more than 50 years and is unlikely to be superseded quickly. However, the past several years have witnessed an increased use of multimedia and interactive content in news releases. The top newswires, for their part, anticipated this trend and are fully equipped to distribute such material. The best PR tactic for you is to be aware of what's available and not be too cautious to try different techniques and formats. After all, these are just more tools.

The key – and this remains the most important factor in getting visibility for your news – is the quality of the content in your communications, regardless of the format. Writing a strong release with newsworthy information should always be foremost in your mind. Finding the best format for your content should follow. Unless the story is really newsworthy, journalists and bloggers won't pay any attention to it. SMRs are just a new format and do not represent a tool that enforces a story into the news. As with traditional press releases, you should focus on what is really important; answer the basic journalist questions, and supplement the story with ready-to-use declarations from the CEOs and other business representatives, relevant documents and other data. This is what the new SMR puts in your hands: a tool that enables the journalist to get to the heart of the story, fast.

In conclusion, the way we do public relations is changing. If we don't continually adapt to (and adopt) these changes and new technology we are going to be out of the game.

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CHAPTER 2 – Using e-PR tools

Now is the end (and beginning) of PR as we know it. Well, as I know it.

Here are some examples of how social media is changing the practice of PR:

- The Australian Department of Defence considers Twittering and other forms of social media critical to national security. They conducted an enquiry into SM (after the video sex scandal at the Defence Force Academy). Coincidentally, the PR company tasked with the review was found to have breached online standards of decency on its own web site.

- A WA boutique winery found new markets in Europe through its web site.

- The National Wildlife Fund in the US increased wildlife spotting, as well as members, through its Twitter account.

- The Red Cross measures the effectiveness of Twitter through lives saved and harm avoided.

- IBM receives more leads, sales and exposure from a $500 podcast than it does from an ad.

What's PR about now?

It's always been about listening. Now it's about the new art of listening? Now there's more to listen to. This is because there are more channels. This is audience fragmentation. It's been happening for years.

There's still all the basics, like research, reputation. It's just that managing them is constantly evolving. You're right in the middle.

Some things have changed drastically, rendering much of what we have learned about PR obsolete. Things such as:

- Impressions are impossible to count in social media
- Who cares about impressions when you can measure brand engagement?
- Who cares about reach when you can measure revenue?

Wouldn't you rather be closer to your target groups?

Rules to harness social media in PR

Leading US social media measurement expert KD Paine (2009) outlined seven key things to focus on when approaching social media. This is a broad overview of what SM to incorporate into PR and incorporates seven steps to social media success.

Firstly, you (or the organisation you work for) needs to be able to overcome resistance to social media. This involves overcoming any trepidation about the medium. So …

1. Don't fear social media

This applies to you being able to convince your bosses that the sky won't fall in because you're about to surrender control of your messages.

2. Set clear, measurable objectives

This really should go without saying, as it's part (or should be) of any PR plan. I the first instance, ask if you even need to be using social media. Some organisations just don't need it (some government departments, for example, that just deal with one another). Where you have a limited audience that doesn't really need to take action, then you probably don't need it. Don't do it if it doesn't add value. Of course if you do, make sure you know:

3. Check with your stakeholders

- Should you blog or Twitter?
- Don't ask me, ask your audience
- What's important to them?
- Where do they go for information?
- What do you want them to know?

4. Start listening

> Search for relevant topics
> Monitor those topics
>> www.socialmention.com
>> Google Alerts
> Join Twitter
>> Search.twitter.com
> Tweetdeck

5. Dive in

Start following people (provide list) and anyone else who interests you

6. Follow the rules

There's a wealth of knowledge out there on how to use social media. Like formal and traditional communication, online communication has etiquette. Even among the chaos, there's good reason for having rules in social media. Here are some of them. They'll save you from embarrassment (and being ignored).

DOs	DON'T's
• Be interesting • Share things that excite you • Ask advice • Join the conversation • Comment on blogs • Reply to Twitter	• Talk about boring stuff • Scream about your "stuff" • Be a narcissist • TWI

7. Build communities

Organisatons today aren't (outwardly at least) about "selling stuff. They want people to belong and achieve this by building loyalty by creating "communities" (groups of people who feel the same way about them).

Fan pages, such as on Facebook (Tasmanian Devils, above), grow camaraderie. They link people with a common viewpoint and outlook or objective. So when you develop these spaces:

• Share your knowledge
• Create buzz for events / campaigns
• Expand your exposure with Facebook ads

8. Engage

Twitter includes others in ongoing dialogue. Broadcast your message by letting your community contribute through their voice. You can do this through YouTube and Flickr.

9. Evangelise

By letting go, you can make others make your brand their own. If you make people feel a part of something, they will become "evangelists" for you. They will spread the word.

A social media evangelist is a person who uses social media tools and services to engage a given audience around an idea.

EXERCISE: Think of companies that do this online?
What people do this?

10. Evaluate

Yes, you still have to do that. We'll look at that in more detail later.

This diagram (above) only refers to web analytics (how many people have visited your site over the past month, how many times they visited your site, and all the pages they viewed in just a few clicks. From the usage data the options are limitless).

What you are looking for in PR is more than just that.

Here are some of the things you'd want to know from an online campaign?

- Behaviour (what action did people take?)
- Revenue (was there an increases in sales – if that was an objective).
- Increase in members
- Positive/negative comments

11. Learn more

Almost same as point 5 (take the plunge), but this slides just provides some name of people you should follow. Some were set up in the ND Twitter feed and in the RSS feed on our Google group.Tweiner

EXERCISE: Find the following people. Follow them on Twitter or blog.

• KD Paine
• Brian Solis
• Joseph Jaffe
• David Meerman-Scott
• The PR Doctor

The importance of goals and metrics

As with all PR, in SM you need to know what problem you need to solve and make sure you set measurable goals (what you want to achieve). In PR, you should be driven by goals, which are based on your reputation and your relationships.

In turn, goals drive metrics (what you measure) and metrics drive results, so you will need to consider the following in your measurements:
- Relationship scores
- Recommendations (third-party endorsements, positive comments)
- Positioning (the space are you occupying, or the places you are sending your messages)
- Engagement (just how much you are interacting with your audience).

Reference:

Paine, K. D. (2009). 7 steps to measurable success in social media. Retrieved 19 November, 2011, from http://www.slideshare.net/kdpaine/7-steps-to-measurable-success-in-social-media.

CHAPTER 3 – Blogging: PR's main messenger

This chapter is not just about blogs, though that will form a main part of it. It's about writing for many forms of social (digital) media.

What are they and why should you care?

Blogs are regularly updated Web sites, usually featuring comments and links.

Blogs are now a standard source of news and info. According to Technorati (look them up):

• 77 million+ Americans visit blogs.
• 346 million blog readers worldwide.

Blogs are a two-way street for PR people:

• Lead the discussion on your blog.
• Join the discussion on theirs.

Why students have to blog (apart from the fact it is a PR tool and you should have familiarity with it)

- Your blog becomes your CV (resume).
- Blogging is a great way to learn from others.
- It helps you develop writing and technical skills.
- It allows you to 'meet' people and develop a network (blogroll).
- Your blog can be assessed as PR practice coursework

A brief history of the Internet/Social Media

1967 – Internet is born
1971 – First email
1979 – First discussion boards
1992 – First Web site
1994 – First online diaries
1997 – Term "WebLog" is coined, AOL Messanger
1998 – Open Diary becomes the first WebLog tool
1999 – "Weblog" becomes "blog"
1999 – LiveJournal
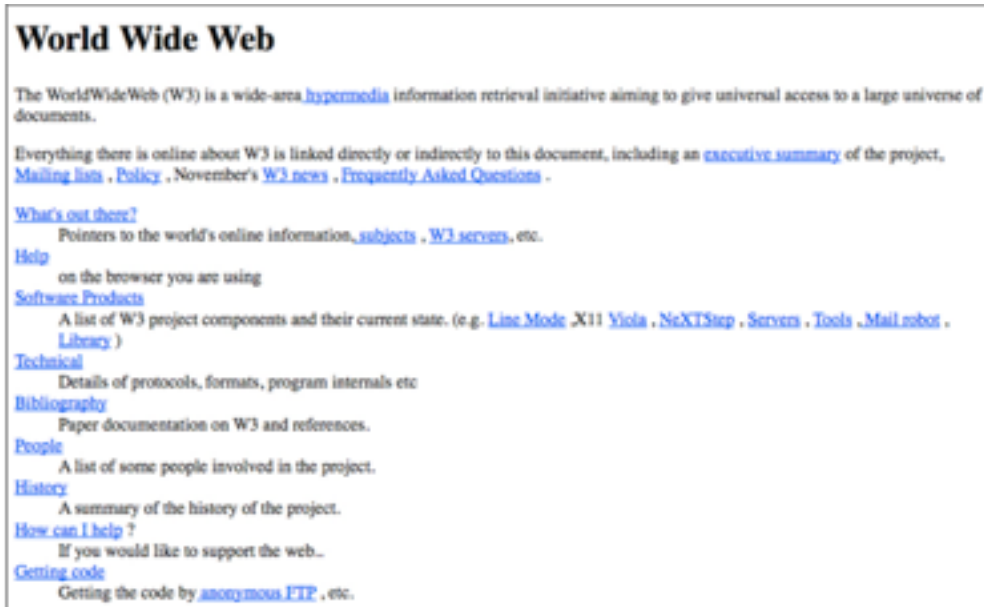1999 – Blogger
2001 – Movable Type
2003 – WordPress, MySpace

2004 – Facebook

2006 – Twitter

2011 – G+

Above: An early blog

Why blogs were a big deal

- Blogs changed the way people saw the Web.

- You could create, react, communicate quickly.

- For the first time ever, anyone could make content for a global audience.

Current state of the blogosphere

Technorati (you looked it up, right?) conducts an annual review of what happening on all things online, including blogs. It's interesting to compare 2008 with the most recent report in 2010.

- 51,938 new blogs created in the last 24 hours
- 80 per cent of bloggers use Twitter ... to promote their blogs
- 87% use facebook ... but only 34% use it to promote their blogs. Most don't link the two accounts.
- Increase in use of mobile devices to write blogs.
- Rise in niche topics (as discussed in previous lectures) = the Long Tail. E.g., Mom Bloggers who also focus on fitness.

Blogging etiquette

Before doing anything else, writing, or looking at what makes good and bad blogs, let's just remember one thing. Just one rule.

Just because you're free to say whatever you like doesn't mean it's always a good idea. (What answer should you give if a friend asks: 'does my bum look big in this?') In practice, there are legal and cultural constraints on free speech.

To provide some context, let's take a look at the Hippocratic Oath, written by Greek physician Hippocrates (460BC-370BC), that has been of use to doctors since the time of the Ancient Greeks. Derived from this, our student blogging code has only one point, plus some clarifications:

First, seek to do no harm

- Avoid damaging your own reputation, or the university's, or anyone else's
- Tell the truth, and wherever possible check your facts
- Respect confidentiality (not everything you hear is for public information)
- Retain some privacy ('safety first')

The good and the bad of blogs

It's simple really. Blogs are:
- Easy to start.
- Hard to develop and maintain.

The most read blogs (as of November 2011):

1. Huffington Post.
2. Mashable.
3. TechCrunch.
4. Business Insider.
5. TMZ.com.

What makes them readable? Go have a look. I should preface this by saying this list is update daily (that's how quickly things change on the Internet).

How business uses blogs

The following information is taken from the article, *15 Tips: How to Manage Your Business Blog*.

- Developing and updating your blog will require an investment of both time and thought, so before you get started, consider whether you can stick to a regular update schedule.

- Keeping your content fresh will help show your readers that you're serious about your business. Your posts don't have to be long, but you'll want to keep them interesting with up-to-date news, facts and figures, commentary, and other useful information.

- Make a schedule for yourself, and dedicate time each week for brainstorming, researching article ideas, and writing your posts.

- Become THE expert. When you write on a topic and the reader learns something, you have just become an expert. Then, the next time your reader has a thought or question about your industry, he'll come to you as the business that can give him the solution or information he's looking for.

- A blog is NOT a brochure. Brochures can be boring and are rarely read from beginning to end. Your blog is a place to share useful content. Instead of "We're the best at XYZ", show your readers how your skills actually helped someone, how your product solved a problem or how your expertise saved a client time or money.

- Be sure that your small business blog focuses on the relevant keywords in which you are writing. If you own an office supply store, you'll want to focus your text on the various products you sell and the solutions they offer.

- Don't just talk about how you've won "Best Auto Repair Shop in Franklinville, MN" for 10 years running. I recommend a 90/10 ratio of interesting content to self-promotion.

- Be sure that your business blog focuses on consistent, fresh, and relevant content. Be up on the latest trends in your industry. That shows that you are current, involved in the latest industry trends and serious about what you do.

- How often should you blog? I'd recommend writing at least once a week, on a regular basis. If you have the staff or time, it would be best to blog 2-4 times a week. But the most important word is CONSISTENCY. If you blog 10 times in two weeks and then wait 4 months before you blog again, your SEO will not benefit and your readers may think you're 'fly-by-night'.

- Make it easy for your readers to contact the blog author. Be sure that your pages have an email link included.

- Who should write for your blog? You need someone who is invested in the business and has good, all around knowledge of what you do and why it's beneficial. For a very small business blog, the owner or lead sales associate might be a good fit. For a larger business, the Marketing Team would most likely oversee the blog. Also, good business blogs allow the perspectives of various employees shine on that blog. Let them share their personal stories and experiences with your readers. Also, don't forget to choose people who can write well.

- Be sure to use social media to promote your blog. Post your blog links on Facebook and Twitter. Share photos on flickr or videos on YouTube. Throw a flier in your shopping bags or on your counter to let people know your blog exists.

Work smart. Maximise your time and effort. If you're in a particularly prolific mood, don't write just one post, but several. Then, if you use WordPress or even other blogging software, you can set your post to publish later. That way you can write numerous posts, or start posts to finish later and not worry about having incomplete content showing up online.

References:

(2011). Technorati Top 100. Retrieved 20 September, 2011, from http://technorati.com/blogs/top100.

(2011). 15 Tips: How to Manage Your Business Blog. Retrieved 15 August, 2011, from http://www.santaclaradesign.com/15-tips-on-how-to-manage-your-business-blog.

Also read: http://www.santaclaradesign.com/why-your-business-should-have-a-blog

CHAPTER 4 – Online ethics and not-for-profits

"Every economic decision has a moral consequence."

– Pope Benedict, 2010

The reason I have combined these two topics is because at Notre Dame I always strive to incorporate an element of ethics into most of the units I teach. Ethics are particularly important in the context of social media, given that it is so easy to defame someone online. Most of us would be guilty at some stage of pressing the button before we think. Remember what Hippocrates wrote: "do no evil". The reason non-profit organisations are woven into this chapter is because (a) Notre Dame does a lot of work with NFPs, and one would expect a high degree of ethics when operating a NFP.

As part of the readings for this lecture, I asked students to familiarise themselves with two professional bodies' codes of ethics – the PRIA and the Australian Journalists'' Association. It would help if you went on line and sourced the material before reading further.

What do the codes tell you about what ethics is? For me, the codes say ethics are guidelines or rules.

In the context of doing social media in PR for NFPs, you would have to pay constant and close scrutiny and attention to these four aspects of ethics:

- Disclosure
- Transparency
- Authenticity
- Trust

Dangers of social media

We're in the business of persuasion. Some call it propaganda.

There are various techniques that are used, with all involving the written word, particularly when it comes to social media.

The unfortunate thing about social media is that it is all too easy to present information that is false, or not thought out (making it incorrect, but not intentionally false).

There's a slight difference between the two.

• False information (intentional) was called logic fallacies by the ancient Romans. This was because it was both illogical AND deceptive.

• Incorrect information can be intentional, but for the most part if unintentional.

As highlighted in the previous chapter week, at the end of the day, everything in PR gets back to reputation. It's at the heart of any program. Just as issues and crisis management (part of reputation) have their own lifecycles, so too does "social reputation", as shown in the following diagram by leading Sydney PR practitioner Laurel Papworth.
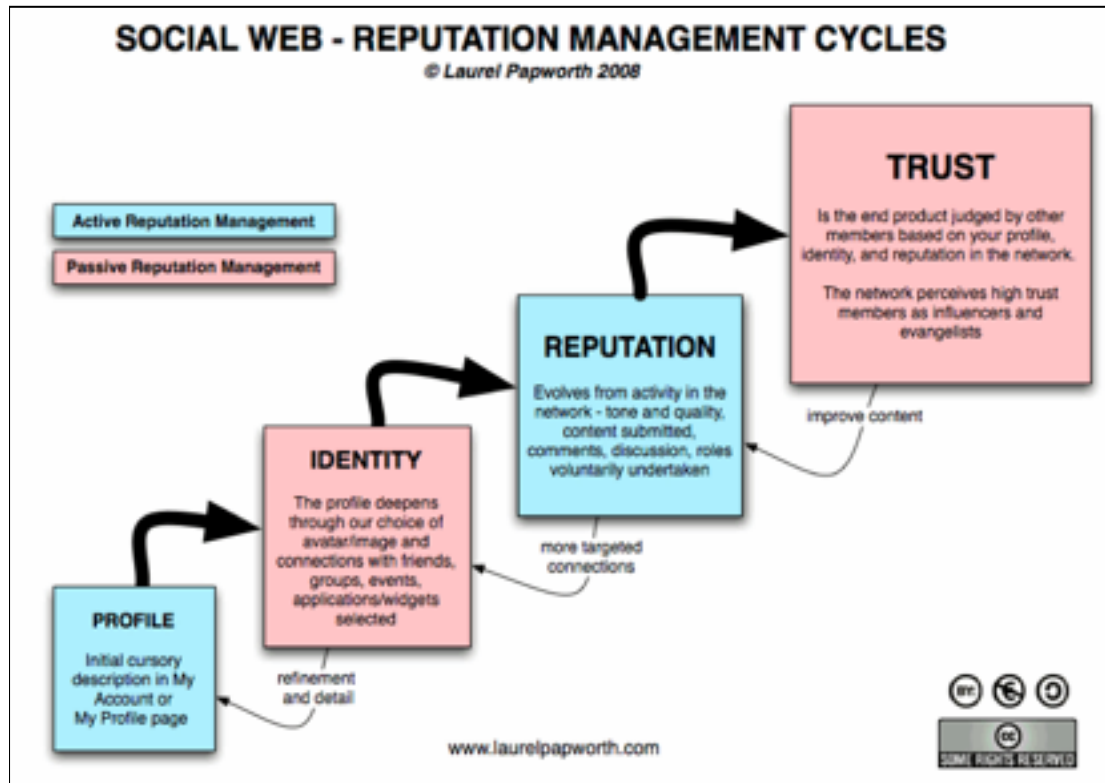
Who cares about reputation?

The answer is: anybody or any organisation who is keen to protect their image and continue to operate successfully. However, given the constant number of breaches of trust (recent examples include QANTAS, WA government Minister Troy Buswell) it's clear people, companies and governments continually ignore reputation.

Unethical practices

Here are some of the unethical practices that can take place in both marketing and PR:

- Unsolicited emails. This is where it all started and it's still a huge problem (SPAM).
- False reviews about products and services on web sites, blogs, Twitter. You name it.
- Company blogs to promote services.

- Paid search engine marketing.

PR Newswire surveyed 242 practitioners in 52 countries and listed the following as dubious practices:

- Cash for editorial (especially in Southern and Eastern Europe, Central and South America). Journalists are paid by companies. Amounts to bribery. Here it is milder (gifts). Codes of ethics supposed to protect against this.
- Advertorials. This is where advertisements are presented to look like standard editorial pages. Most publications carry a disclaimer.
- Advertising/editorial linkage. This is where editorial space on a particular topic will appear next to a related advertisement. There was a case where swimmer Ian Thorpe advertised a prestigious watch, and the supporting story was about his swimming exploits.
- Pay-for-play journalism.
- Anonymous Internet posting, "flogs" and viral marketing.
- Front groups.
- Disclosure of payment of expert commentators.
- Overstating charges or compensation for work performed.

Unethical techniques (false)

Of course, these are just techniques. There's plenty of them (Bivins, 2008). Other more common ones (falling into the false information category) are:

- Cause and effect – because one thing follows another, it must be fact, or one thing is a result of the other. Politicians use it. A Police Minister will say crime figures dropped when he came into the job when they were dropping near the end of the last government's term.
- Personal attack – Discredit the source of the message, in spite of the message. So it's personality assassination, which is how politics is often run today.
- Bandwagon – Or popularity. An organisation will says "billions sold", and people want to be where the action is. Tends to be a sales techniques.
- Inference by association – An illogical argument which many in the population fall for. So for example, chemical weapons are evil, X company makes chemical weapons, X company is evil (maybe not). Better to say doughnuts are bad for you, X company makes doughnuts, so X company is making the population unhealthy.

Unethical techniques (incorrect)

Some of the most common ones (falling into the false information category) are:

- Plain folks – We deal with people who are like us. The speaker is just like the listener (politics). Man of the people (Tony Abbott, Julia Gillard with babies).
- Testimonials – Celebrity uses the product, when it's not true.
- Transfer – Using symbols that are positive when they are not connected to what's being promoted. Example: religious or patriotic symbols, a heavenly choir.

Policing PR practices

PR ethics codes are probably neither proper nor practical for the profession. He pointed that it does not reflect public relations' specific professional ethics. Second, there is no way to ensure that non-members do not violate these ethics guidelines. Public relations practitioners are not required to join a professional association such as PRSA and only one in five practitioners holds membership. Therefore, the inherent problem of such ethical codes lies in their lack of enforceability.

Examples in Perth:

- One large PR company falsely represented builder Len Buckeridge (brickworks near airport). Buckeridge fined $5000. PR company got off scot-free.

- Company twice found guilty of channeling money through various accounts and acting as a front organisation. No action taken.

A solution: self regulation?

Establishing ethics codes within public relations firms can offer a solution to the enforceability issue that comes with professional organisations' ethical codes.

By defining its own ethics code, a firm can clearly express the core ethical values it strives to uphold. Also, the code reflects a firm's supportive environment for promoting ethical public relations practices.

Trouble is. They police it themselves.

Facebook

Let's look at some specific ways in which unethical practice can take place. The first is on Facebook.

The most common form of unethical (probably more immoral) practice is cyberbullying. This, of course, doesn't occur in PR practice.

There have been many famous PR cases (Edelman in 2006 Walmart) and Edelman (again) in first Gulf War (please read about these cases).

However, when a big player in social media (Facebook) is accused of dirty tactics, it's another new level. (This was a reading. Ref: Halliday, J. (2011). Facebook paid PR firm to smear Google. Retrieved 7 August, 2011, from http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/may/12/facebook-pr-firm-google).

PR certainly cops a "black eye".

Called "surreptitious, sleazy, underhanded, unethical".

DISCUSSION:
What type of campaign was this? Smear?

Was this unethical or not?

What part of the PRIA code of ethics cover this?

Did you read link to PR Week article? Thoughts?

Ghost blogging and tweeting

Another dubious practice, which also extend to Twittering. Politicians more often than not, do not do their own tweets. They have a staff do it for them. On the occasion they do tweet, they place their initials at the end. One could argue that people are directly employed by politicians ... but. Former PM Kevin Rudd does write his own tweets.

Also includes ghostwriting – speeches, letters, annual reports. Is it ethical?

Maybe consider:

- What is the communicator's intent?
- Does the originator use the writer to make themselves appear to have qualities they do not have? So are they witty, when they're not?
- The circumstances surrounding the writing – Is it because of time constraints?
- What level of involvement does the originator have in forming the message?
- Do the originator take responsibility for the message?

Legal aspects of PR writing

Defamation is what happens most easily. This is when you cause someone to be the focus/subject of contempt, hatred, ridicule or scorn.

There are two types of defamation.

1. Verbal = slander.

2. Written = libel.

Privacy

Breaches of privacy can happen easily. Example: as editor of the in-house magazine you can't just use a pic of an employee you might have on file, or divulge information about them without permission. There are picture release forms for everything today.

Copyright

This is protection of original works. So if you use something, as I do in my lectures, give credit.

Facebook – whose content is it?

There are issues with Facebook "owning" (having copyright) over the images uploaded to its site. This is part of what you agree to when you sign up.

1. Does it have the right to do that, particularly when the images are mostly personal to begin with?

2. If it's legally enforceable, is an organisation signing away its property?

3. Should government be allowed to post pictures (paid for by the taxpayers) to Facebook? What are the ramifications?

Opinions/comments. Got one? Are you sure about that?

Here is an example of written defamation, or libel.

"It's good pizza ... don't expect to be born again or anything."

On first glance you'd think not much wrong with it. But it calls into question the quality of the pizza and was the subject of a lawsuit.

Is there any quality?

Today, anyone can have an extremely public opinion and dress it up as being almost "legitimate". By this I mean they can set up a web site and become a publisher, an expert, or guru on anything they want. This has spawned what Andrew Keen (2007) called The Cult of the Amateur". Resulting from an essay he wrote for the Weekly Standard, the book is a critique of the enthusiasm surrounding user-generated content, peer production, and other Web 2.0-related phenomena (Wild Wild Web" by Patt Morrison, LA Times, February 26, 2009, http://snipurl.com/djomk, The "Wild West is now the Internet").

Here's another area you should be wary of: when making comments with company names/links: Should you, or should you not?

- Yes, if it's considered acceptable by the "community" (Digg, Delicious, forums, blogs, etc.)
- No, if you believe you'd be sacked for saying so.

In class, we looked at Yelp – a web site with user reviews and recommendations of restaurants, shopping, nightlife, entertainment and services. The site, so the lawyers say, is "literally the cyberspace equivalent of scrawls left on a men's room wall."

Let's look at one case in which a man detailed a billing dispute with chiropractor. He concluded he'd found a "better, honest chiropractor." The sequence of events:

- First chiropractor asked patient to remove review for "unjustly" portraying him as "unethical and dishonest."
- Patient refused.
- Chiropractor got a lawyer
- Patient did take down the post
- Chiropractor sued anyway.
- Settled out of court (so far…).

E-pinions. Who's posting? Can you tell if it's your competitor or not?

Of course, how do we really know who's who (if people are who they say they are) on the Internet? Examples include opinion sites, blogs, and comments on news sites (e.g., Perth Now).

Twitter and beyond. Who are you?

Indeed, who am I? You can be anyone.

That's nothing unusual. We all have multiple personalities. The way you present yourself at work is probably different from how you are at home or in front of your friends.

Social media and NFPs

Time ran away in the lecture and I didn't really get the chance to touch much on using social media in non-profit organisations. I encouraged students to research some examples of how it can be used. However, in brief:

- Facebook – an ideal tool for fundraising.
- Twitter – for creating awareness.

Twitter should not (and probably can't) be used as direct tool for donations. It's just for creating and building relationships.

NFPs are great places to do some good and get experience in SM. Many Notre Dame students do internships with NFPs.

Reference:

Bivins T, 2008. Public Relations Writing. The Essentials of Style and Format. 6th ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

CHAPTER 5 – Using Google in PR

If you work in PR you have to be passionate. Similarly, the people who "evangelise" about social media are passionate; none more so than those who espouse the benefits of Google. I thought it apt to introduce week five's lecture by looking at The Church of Google (http://www.thechurchofgoogle.org).

Their words speak for themselves.

"We at the Church of Google believe the search engine Google is the closest humankind has ever come to directly experiencing an actual god (as typically defined). We believe there is much more evidence in favour of Google's divinity than there is for the divinity of other more traditional gods.

"We reject supernatural gods on the notion they are not scientifically provable. Thus, Googlists believe Google should rightfully be given the title of "God", as She exhibits a great many of the characteristics traditionally associated with such Deities in a scientifically provable manner. "

As you are aware, Google is more than just a search engine. It's what I'd describe as the Swiss Army Knife of social media. You name it, Google can do it. Certainly google is always in our lives.

As of writing, Google's empire had just expanded, having bought Motorola, indicating a move into wireless communications.

The Church of Google may be a bit of fun from a group of people who admire the company. But Google is a deadly-serious piece of kit for PR people. Forget the e-mail and the search. What about if you want to do a research survey? You can do it (for free) through Google. Google is a one-stop communications centre, allowing you to run your office from anywhere, without a laptop (if need be). Here's some of Google's tools:

- E-mail
- Calendar
- video (You Tube)
- e-blogger
- calendar
- Analytics
- Alerts
- Photos (Picasa)
- Reader (RSS)
- Documents (conduct surveys)
- Search (images, scholar)
- G+

And they're all linked.

It's impossible to look at and learn all the tools that comprise Google. You could do a unit just on Google (one per week). Primarily we'll look at the applications I consider most relevant to PR:

- Blogger

- Analytics and Alerts

- Reader

- Docs, and the relatively new (July 2011) tool

- G+

 Blogger

Blogger is a stand-alone application, but part of google. You can set up a separate account for it, or use your standard gmail address. But it has to be a gmail address. You are pretty much all familiar with it.

But, apart from posting your blogs, you have also been spreading a feed. In your cases, blogger automatically allows people to follow your blog (and others) in one central place. This is done by an RSS feed. The feed google has set up is an Atom feed.

 Docs

Docs is a brilliant (if not somewhat misnamed application). You an set up word processing, spreadsheets with a view to sharing them on line. This is great if you have something that's being worked on by several people in remote locations. For example, you may be putting together a PR pitch with your office in Singapore. Both you and the people in Singapore can access the document.

The best part of Docs is the online survey instrument. You can conduct surveys and your results are automatically and instantly collated, along with graphs and charts. Remember, it's free, and you are not limited to a set number of questions, unlike other free software. Like all programs, there's a learning curve, but if you've used SPSS or even Survey Monkey, you won't have many problems.

 Reader

Stay up to date with what's happening on line, whether it's news or blogs. Google Reader constantly checks your favourite news sites and blogs for new content.

This is an RSS (Really Simple Syndication). You set up Reader to follow the sites you want (if they have an RSS feed, which most major news organisations do). You can categorise news feeds in folders and follow the either through Google, or in stand-alone news reader programs. There are also many free RSS readers for smartphones.

Share with your friends. You can use Google Reader's built-in public page to easily share interesting items with colleagues, friends or family.

This is what a collection of RSS feeds (in this case new and PR blogs) looks like in Google Reader.

Alerts

Google Alerts is another simple way to follow key issues, based on keywords you define. You can set up any number of alerts based on your topic/s of interest and Google will send the results to your email.

EXERCISE: Students had by this stage created a blog. Go to your blog page. Open one of your blogs. Look at the bottom and find the Atom Feed. Click on it. What happens?

This service generates detailed statistics about visitors to a web site. It is aimed more at marketers/PR people, as opposed to webmasters and technical types. It tracks visitors from all "referrers", including search engines, display ads, pay-per-click networks, email marketing and links within PDF documents. Clearly there is much to learn about analytics, but PR people have to be aware of it.

Picasa

This is a photo-sharing service. For organisations, it enables them to post photos of corporate product, senior managers and news items. Ideally it is suited to the small enterprise or NFP, which may not have a large web storage space. The advantage of placing pictures here is that photos can be quickly found using Google's search engine. There's also an image editor associated with the stand-alojn application (as opposed to the web browser version). Picasa's opposition is Flickr.

As of July 2011, Google Plus is the newest social media tool. It's a mix of Twitter (though not constrained to 140 characters) plus news feed, live video chat, search and photos. To achieve all that, there are "apps" within the "app". These are:

1.Circles
2.Hangouts
3.Sparks
4.Stream

Students in the 2011 class didn't take to G+, and it still seems to be the domain of the more IT literate, though is gaining a solid following Unfortunately, it's hard to find out how many people are using it. Best estimates via various monitoring services are between 8-10 million users. Google has not released figures.

1. Circles

Understanding Circles is essential to mastering Google+. The search giant has opted not to let you simply 'Friend' your friends, like you do on Facebook, or 'Follow' different people as you would on Twitter. Instead, Google+ gives you more control over who sees your content.

Circles allows users to 'drag and drop' their friends into different friend groups, which categorises them. This allows you to put your mom in your 'Family' circle, your boss in your 'Business' circle and your best friend from college in your 'Friends' circle. You can create as many circles as you'd like.

So why should you create circles in the first place? The answer is simple: You want to share different things with different friends. Google+ Circles gives you the ability to have this kind of control over both what you share and what content pops up in your stream.

You choose which groups to share information with, allowing for greater privacy and control over the flow of information.

Businesses can easily use circles to identify demographics and to target information and marketing.

Promotions can be advertised to only those users who would find them most relevant, making marketing strategies more efficient.

2. Hangouts

Hangouts are the best way for you to say, 'I am online and want to hangout!' Hangouts are video chat groups that allow you to talk to up to 10 friends at once.

Lets you:

• Chill with friends that are scrolling through the web, just like you!

• Use live video chat that puts you in the same room together!

• Coordinate plans, whether it's working on a project or meeting up for coffee.

Maybe you're bored. Start a hangout, invite your circles, see who's around.

Video chat options provide a great opportunity for businesses to connect directly with customers.

One-on-one video chats would be ideal for resolving customer conflicts, allowing businesses to offer a more personalised approach.

Group video chats offer great opportunities to conduct exclusive workshops or to roll out exclusive promotions to VIP customers.

3. Sparks

Use Sparks to get a constant feed of material you're interested in, and share it with friends. It finds the most relevant and interesting articles and videos on almost any subject you can imagine. The user suggests news stories, videos, photos, and more to specific users or groups, rather than automatically posting it to everyone.

This allows for targeted marketing opportunities by focusing on those users who would find your content most useful.

Having said that, the Sparks hasn't actually worked well, so for now you're probably better off sticking with RSS and Google alerts.

4. Streams

Google Plus has its 'Stream' feature which is a direct function adaptation from Facebook's 'news feeds' which shows up comments and photos shared by your friends. Like Facebook, Google+ automatically detects the content of the links you share and allows you to choose a thumbnail from that link.

In summary, Google+ is already winning praise for its increased security and privacy controls. For example, you are automatically signed in to an https server (as apposed to a http server) ensuring a more secure connection.

This is extra security for those businesses that handle sensitive information or that handle credit card payments or donations.

Privacy is also more assured, as you have more control over who sees what information. Photos and videos are automatically marked private until you select who can see them. This is especially useful for businesses by giving them greater control over their brand and their messaging.

Summary

Like all social media tools, it is a matter of trying each to see what meets your needs and what can produce the desired outcomes. There's also an element of "what you like" as well. But as a PR professional you simply have to keep abreast of what's happening in social media.

CHAPTER 6 – Twitter: novelty or necessity?

What is Twitter?

- A social network where you post short bursts of thoughts and information.

- A free micro-blogging application (140 characters)

- Teaches you to write concisely. To express clear thoughts, ideas.

- Stark … like the design in this presentation. Your thoughts laid bare, because there's no time for waffle. You have to get to the point.

- It's a cross-communication channel. Not only text, but pics and links too. You can use it as you would SMS, email and blogging.


Why it's good for PR

- Real-time results. We've all heard examples of how breaking news spreads immediately on Twitter. Because of Twitter's real-time search engine, you can get a quick pulse of public opinion.

- Wide reach. Twitter is useful to many different types and sizes of businesses.

- Direct feedback. You hear what people are saying as they say it.

What was it originally based on?

Answer: The question … what are you doing?

How relevant is that today? Is that relevant to PR?

It's a place for conservations between ….
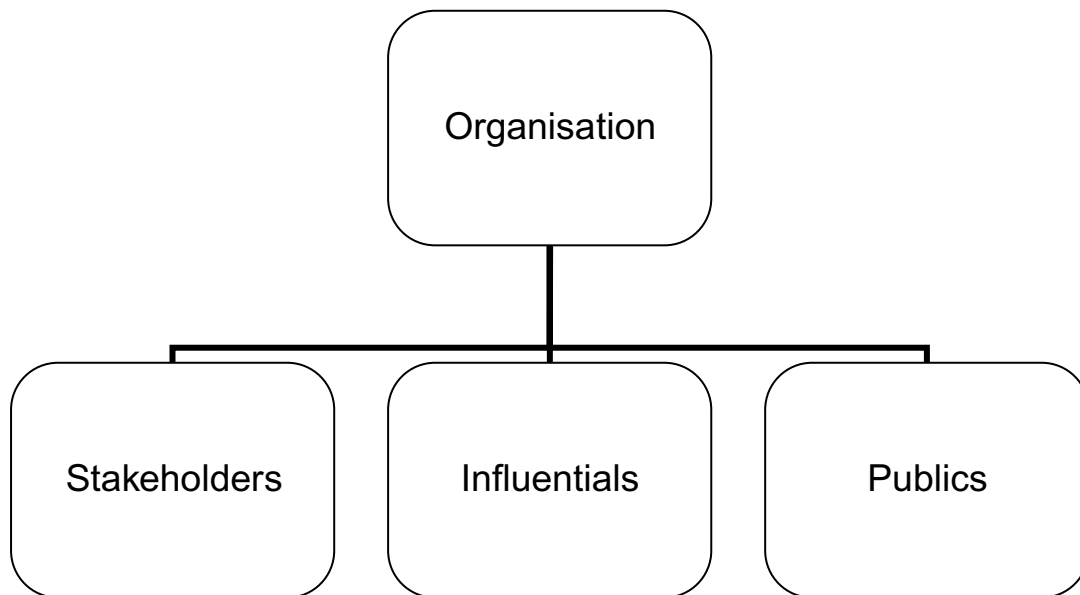
And they all talk to one another. There are no boundaries. You connect to whoever you want to.

Learn the lingo

As you've probably worked out, Twitter has its own language.

- tweet - a message of 140 characters or less
- hashtag - tweets that start with a # (tracking)
- tweme - same as hashtag (twitter meme)
- tweetup - twitter meetup
- tweetchannel - add #channelname at start of tweets
- tinyURL - for URLs longer than 30 characters
- DM - direct message (private)

What is it good for?

- Tracking / Monitoring
- Live-reporting
- Journalism
- Activism
- Political Communication
- Crisis Communication

In Moldova, 2009. (above) organisers used Twitter to rally opposition to a Communist victory in legislative elections. At least 10,000 protesters gathered and police fired water cannon but were unable to stop the crowd from breaking into the buildings.

Monitoring

The first use within PR is to monitor reputation, buzz, opinions, trends

Use keyword tracking ("Track keyword")

Monitor and respond to what's being said about your organisation

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EXAMPLE 1:

Heart Foundation

EXAMPLE 2:

Optus example

To begin wading through the tweet-o-sphere and measuring the direct impact of your efforts, consider the following tools and best practices:

• Set goals – Decide on your goals, use them to shape your content stream. For example, if your goal is to build relationships, the types of tweets you post will be very different than if you are looking to drive traffic to your corporate site, or to increase sales

• Track click-throughs – To track the number of followers who click on the URLs that you tweet. You use URL-shortening applications (e.g, Bit.ly)

• Keyword strategies – Twitter is a mini-search engine unto itself. There are easy ways to incorporate keywords directly into your shortened links

• Number and type of followers – Somewhat difficult to gauge, given the fact Twitter is full of anonymous users. You could categorise people based on their profiles. However, this is a time-consuming task.

• No. of replies – Not the ideal measurement, but does indicate the level of activity.

• Track re-tweets – The RTs you get will give you a good impression of what types of posts deliver results and are creating interest.

And tying it all together, just so you know who's saying what, when and how often, there's an array of monitoring tools within Twitter.

Social ranking service (and current 'flavour') Klout has begun offering Perks to social influencers in Australia. Klout Perks work by companies partnering with Klout to offer deals to individuals who have a Klout score (or influence ranking) over a specific value. The idea is that those of us who are very social active, like to discuss things. By putting product or services in the hands of influential people, its likely those people will discuss the experience with their audience, therefore resulting in a social recommendation rather than a traditional marketing message.

This is big business. One of the reasons for Facebook's enormous valuation is this same reason. Recommendations from a friend or someone you trust is multiple times more likely to result in a sale than any other type of advertising.

Until now, Klout perks had been reserved for those in the US, well today Australians get their first Klout perk from Red Bull.

Other monitoring tools within Twitter include:

Twazzup, TwitterGrader,Twitscoop, TweetBuzzer, TweetEffect, TweetPsych, MicroPlaza, Twittercounter, Twitter Analyzer, Twitturly, Tweettronics, Twitalyzer, Tweeps, Monitter, Spy, TwiBuzz, Emotionstream, Klout, Web2express, BackTweets

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"Our Twitter account is ... making ourselves available in an environment where are customers already live – again not focused on marketing – but real interaction: less billboard, more information booth. We track Twitter mentions of our brand through various services from the internal "track" function on Twitter to external tools like tweetscan.com or quotably.com that are freely available to all users. Many allow near immediate notification of mentions." – Morgan Johnston, Corporate Communications, JetBlue Airways

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Live reporting

Increasingly we are seeing journalists using Twitter to file their reports using Twitter. In most cases, this is breaking news. The first Australian journalist to do this (as far as I'm aware) was The Australian's Caroline Overington, who tweeted paragraph-by-paragraph from the Black Saturday fires in Victoria in February 2009.

Above: Twitter relayed breaking news when this airliner crashed into New York's Hudson River in January 2009.

Other examples of how Twitter is used "live" include:

• Live TV program tweets (SBS Dateline)

• Conferences

• Uni lectures

• Activism – student parliamentary protests

• Advertising parties

What do they all use? Hashtags.

What else could it be used for in a live setting?

Twitter specific to PR

• monitoring conversations

• participating in conversations

• starting conversations

• providing product or service info - Whole Foods example (http://twitter.com/wholefoods)

• promoting stories, news through twitterfeed

• feeds a blog to twitter

Twitter in politics

Barrack Obama is the most followed person on Twitter. How many followers does he have?

You can use Twitter in political communication for:

• Interacting with constituents

• Increased transparency in the political process (debatable).

In Australia … Prime Minister Julia Gillard (@JuliaGillard), Kevin Rudd (above), and Malcolm Turnbull were among early adapters. Most are on it, in varying degrees.

Twitter in a crisis

Web sites may not be best answer. Servers can crash due to overload and people seeking information. Sites like Twitter or Facebook however run at such a huge capacity already, that the increase of that size can be coped with.

Also, official sources often lag behind the public. After all, they are the first ones affected (and in the middle of an event).

• Twittering during a campus lockdown (e.g., gunman on rampage)

• Twittering about disasters. During bushfires (location, speed of fire, winds), Red Cross: providing statistics & directions, plane crash.

The other advantage is that data coming in can be "mined". For example, in last year's UK snowstorms, the information came in and was collated using the #uksnow hashtag. It allowed people to see where the main dumps (problems) were.

Using Twitter for research
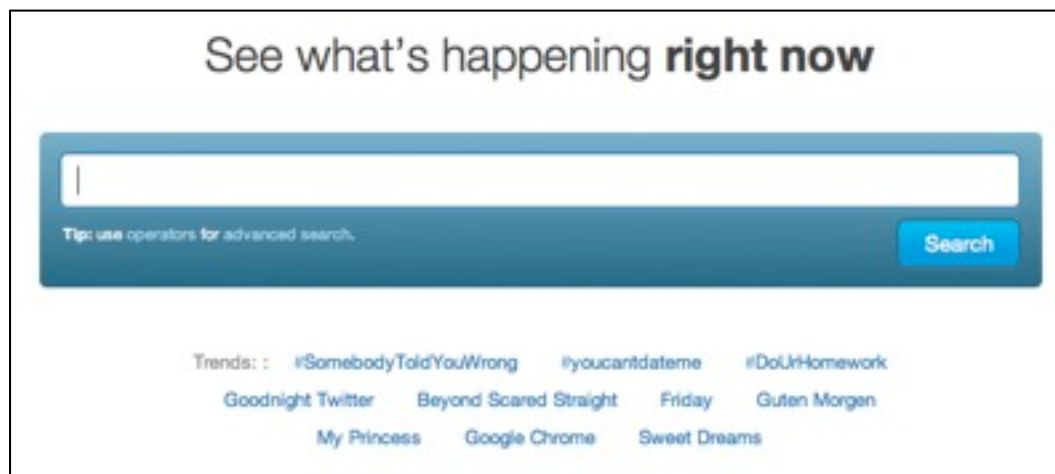
You can research topics on Twitter just by searching on http://search.twitter.com for your topic. You'll see stuff happening live, reported by the people seeing it first hand. It might be an event, a global issue, or a viral spreading. You can also find people that are into specialist areas - you might be a manufacturer of non-drip tea pots, and you'll find all those people who are teapot geeks twittering away on Twitter. They might also be bloggers, podcasters, manufacturers or journalists. Twitter's a window into other online worlds, not just a network of its own.

Networking with Twitter

Find people you know or who you would like to know and Twitter's a great way of networking with them online. You can help a journalist with a story, find common interests with industry peers, and see who's going to what events so that you can network better in real life. Just make sure you follow all the right people. Twitter lets you do this by uploading your address book, searching, or seeing your friends' friends.

Promotion

First. How many followers does Virgin Blue have? (Use Google, or your Twitter account to search for it).

The success of using Twitter for promotion, depends what you want to promote – your tweets, or a product or service. In other words, what's your arim/goal?

If you are doing the PR for a product that people would like to follow news about, then get it up on Twitter. But There's an etiquette to it, so don't spam. Get a feel for the community (audience) and roll with it. Try typing a few brand names into Twitter Search and you'll get an idea. Sites like TwitterFeed will convert RSS into Tweets for you to help automate things if you think that's the right way to go, and FriendFeed is good for this too.

Don't ruin the conversation. Don't sell - converse, listen, be helpful

> EXAMPLE:
>
> An airline gave away 1000 round trip tickets in three locations that required people to follow their "guidance" on Twitter to know where to go and what to show up with. In AUstralia, Virgin claims to have run the first Twitter promotion (2008). it partnered with a radio station to send contestants to Los Angeles for three days or, 4320 minutes of tweeting, the short messages used on the network. Jetstar's forays into Twitter include the sale of 1000 seats for 1c in 2009, and an offer of 10,000 free fares on the contested Sydney-Melbourne route.

"Floating" ideas

"The phenomenon of corporations creating goods, services and experiences in close cooperation with experienced and creative consumers, tapping into their intellectual capital, and in exchange giving them a direct say in (and rewarding them for) what actually gets produced, manufactured, developed, designed, serviced, or processed." – Business Week, 13 July 2006.

If you have an idea, try it out on your Twitter friends. It's called crowdsourcing. You'll find the instant feedback makes your idea better in the end. Or if you need help on a story, ask over Twitter. You might need an extra spokesperson from a complementary brand, and Twitter's your window into other places so that you don't need to know precisely where to look before you start digging.

As author James Surowiecki described it: "The widsom of the crowds". Hey, presto, instant focus group (and often a large one).

Pitching

Some journalists or bloggers might prefer you contact them through Twitter. If so, do it. It's not for everyone, but it's growing in adoption. You can either 'direct message' your contact or '@' them with a story. If they know you and trust you, then this system works well at cutting information overload.

Recruting

You can seek help and find ideas. This is a bit like networking. If you need help on a project, ask Twitter. You might find your contacts pass your message on even further. Whether you need some specialist help, a new full time recruit, or whatever, try using your network. Plenty of people do this. They ask others for leads, ideas. Eg., "anyone know where I can get someone to comment on faulty wiring".

Twitter's growth

Started 2006. Biz Stone & Evan Williams, creators of Blogger.com, and Jack Dorsey, software architect.

At one point it had 100 competitors. What were they? Where are they now? Why did it happen?

• Originated the concept
• Kept things simple
• Lots of venture capital
• Consistent buzz
• Better name
• Grew 1382% in 2009

So why the fuss?

Social media is about human contact. It's new, it's fun. It's how we get our information today … in short, sharp bursts (my theory: the age of diminishing concentration). We are preoccupied with information and being "seen".

Is it the future? No. It's the now. It is the be all and end all?

Probably not, but it has it uses, like ..

finding a job. Or new clients.

Or garden tips. Or muffin recipes.

How to use Twitter

This is where I'd start telling you how, but most of your have the basics down pat. The rest is just practice. These are just general tips.

• Talk first, follow later

• Start with friends, expand slowly

• Don't bother going 'private'

Post consistently and you'll get it

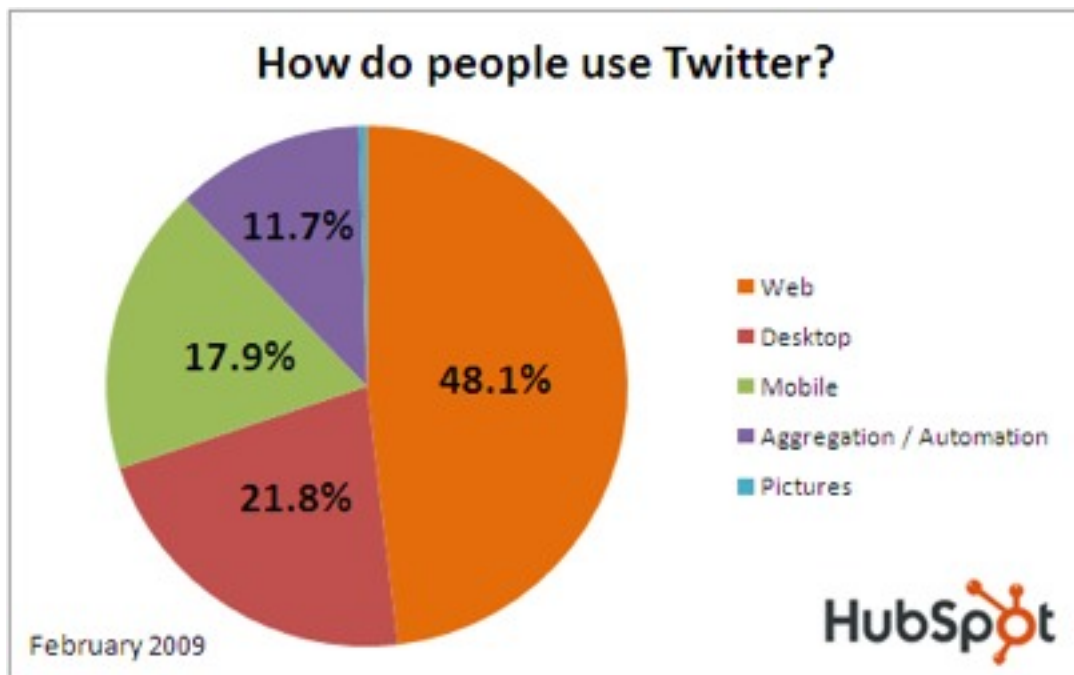| What to say	What not to say
• News in your industry • Helpful tips • Links to your new blog posts • What's going on in your life	• What you ate for lunch • Politics • Your travel schedule • 'Figuring out Twitter' – got to so it yourself. Don't come across as a dork.

Who's using it?

Gender: 53% female, 47% male.

Education: 46% Uni, 37% No uni, 17% Grad School.

Ages: 47% 18–34, 31% 35–29, 21% 50+

How it can help business

- Raise awareness
- Offer proactive customer service
- Answer questions
- Promote events, products, services

Refrerences:

The material in this chapter was based on presentations by
Dr. Corinne Weisgerber, St. Edward's University & Dave Griner, Luckie Co.

CHAPTER 7 – e-PR campaigns

This chapter looks at Facebook, and its role in PR and the notion of The Social Corp.

Social networks in every country might live on the same Internet, but that doesn't prevent differences in online customs and culture from developing along geographic borders.

I compared the penetration rate of Twitter and Facebook in countries. Here, is a more general graph of the trend. 43% in Australia.
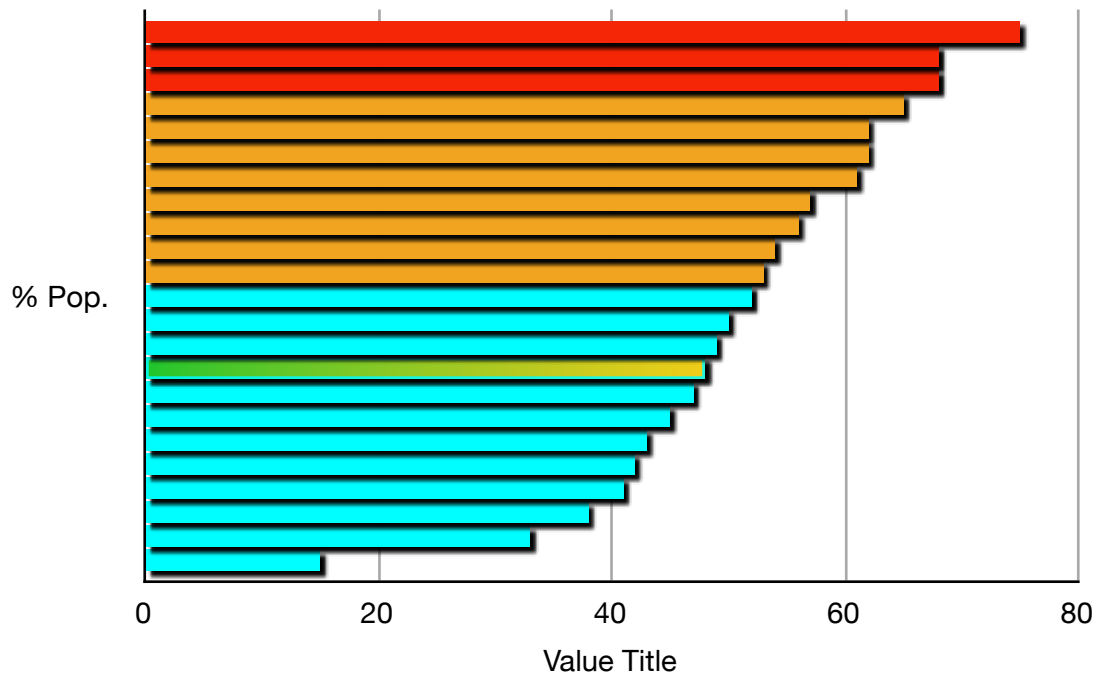
What does that mean for PR?

That you're not going to be reaching everyone with SM, so it's not going to be the answer to your problems for many campaigns.

MySpace, Flickr and Bebo are in decline, according to these figures from Nielsen. Interesting international variations are seen, both in the amount of time Facebook users spend on the site each month and in the competing networks' popularity in different countries.

Facebook may have more users at the moment but we all know that Twitter is the future of Social Networking as it is the only true social networking site. It allows you to contact and discuss subjects with people you do not know and are highly unlikely ever to meet (and just celebrities all you nay-sayers out there). Whereas Facebook appears limited to people you either already know, in which case what is the point of chatting on Facebook to them when you can pick up the phone.

The ups and downs of social networking around the world
Unique audience, millions

June 2009 June 2010

Going up | Going down

Facebook | Twitter | Orkut | Linkedin | MySpace | Flickr | Bebo | Friends Reunited

Note: Global data includes US, UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Brazil and Australia
Source: The Nielsen Company, June 2010

Top five social networks by country
Unique audience, millions

US
Facebook — 127m
MySpace — 46.5m
Twitter — 19.7m
Flickr — 13.4m
Linkedin — 11.3m

UK
Facebook — 24.2m
Twitter — 3.7m
Flickr — 2.9m
MySpace — 2.7m
Linkedin — 2.1m

Brazil
Orkut — 28.7m
Facebook — 11.6m
Twitter — 11.4m
iG Comunidades — 5.9m
UOL Comunidades — 5m

Australia
Facebook — 8.7m
MySpace — 1.4m
Twitter — 1.3m
Flickr — 1.1m
Linkedin — 0.8m

Germany
Facebook — 12.6m
VZnet Netzwerke — 8.5m
Staytriends — 7.7m
Wer-kennt-wen — 5.8m
Xing — 2.6m

Spain
Facebook — 15.2m
Tuenti — 6.6m
Flickr — 2m
Twitter — 1.8m
MySpace — 1.7m

Italy
Facebook — 16.4m
MySpace — 1.9m
Flickr — 1.4m
Badoo — 1m
Twitter — 0.9m

Source: The Nielsen Company, June 2010*

Time spent on Facebook in June 2009 and 2010 by country
Hours spent per person per month

US
2009 — 04:39:33
2010 — 06:02:59

UK
2009 — 05:41:20
2010 — 06:09:32

Brazil
2009 — 00:32:24
2010 — 01:15:53

Australia
2009 — 04:11:16
2010 — 07:07:49

Source: The Nielsen Company, June 2010
* Nielsen do not class Flickr and Twitter as social networks but in response to user feedback the BBC has included them in this graphic

Ongoing market research service Global Web Index mapped these cultural differences, as represented in the infographic above (click it to enlarge).

The research, run by London-based consultancy Trendstream, has conducted six waves of surveys about global consumer adoption of the Internet and social media in 36 markets. It used data from its February 2011 surveys of between 750 and 2,000 online users in each market.
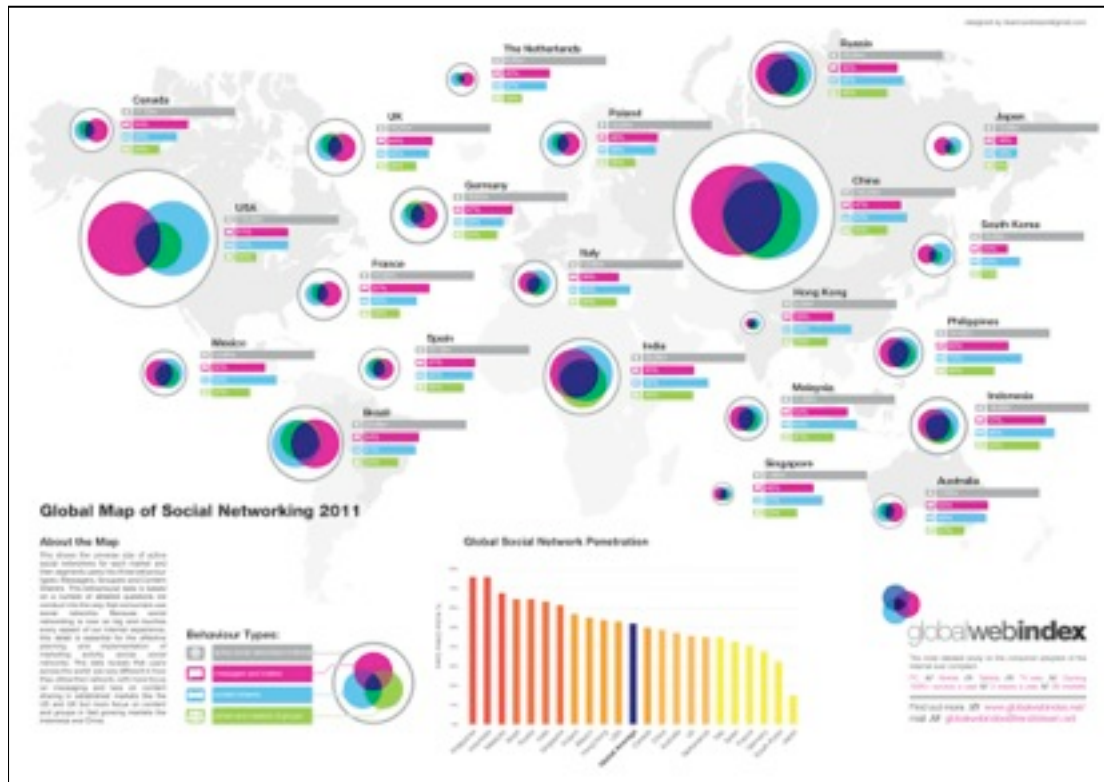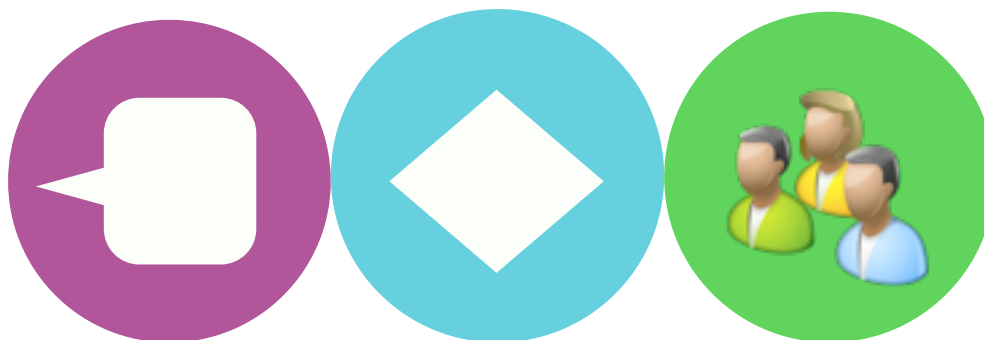
Global Map of Social Networking 2011

The map (above) shows the universe size of active social networkers for each market and then segments users into three behaviour types:
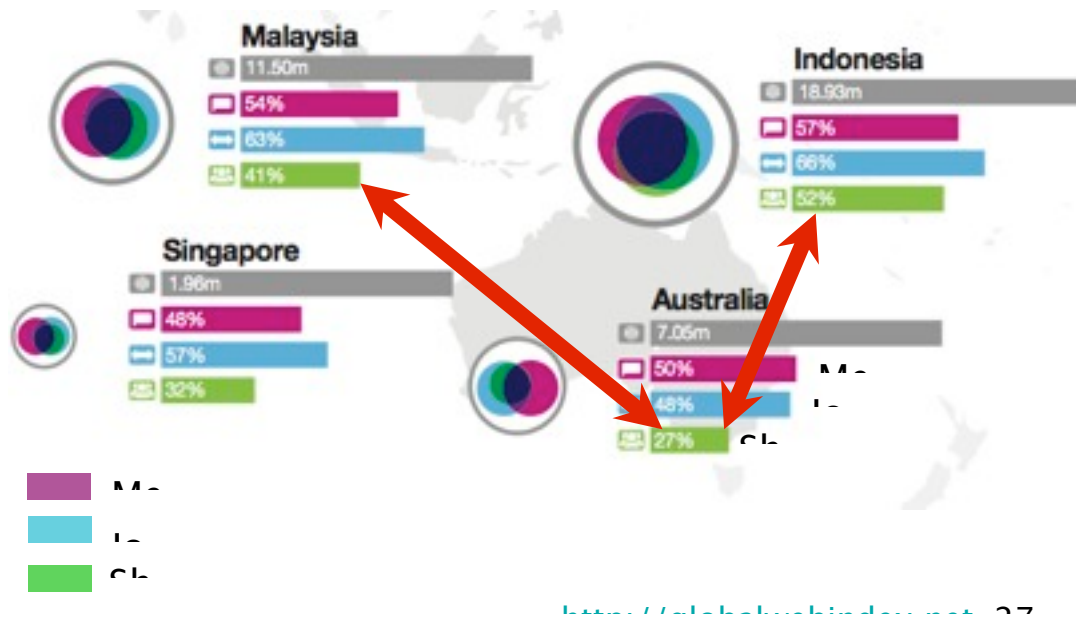
- Messagers,
- Content Sharers and
- joiners/creaters (or groupers).

In some countries, many of them Asian, most people were focused on content sharing. Others, like the UK and Canada, had more people who put a greater emphasis on sending messages.

Trendstream also used data from the survey to map social network penetration in each country that it surveyed.
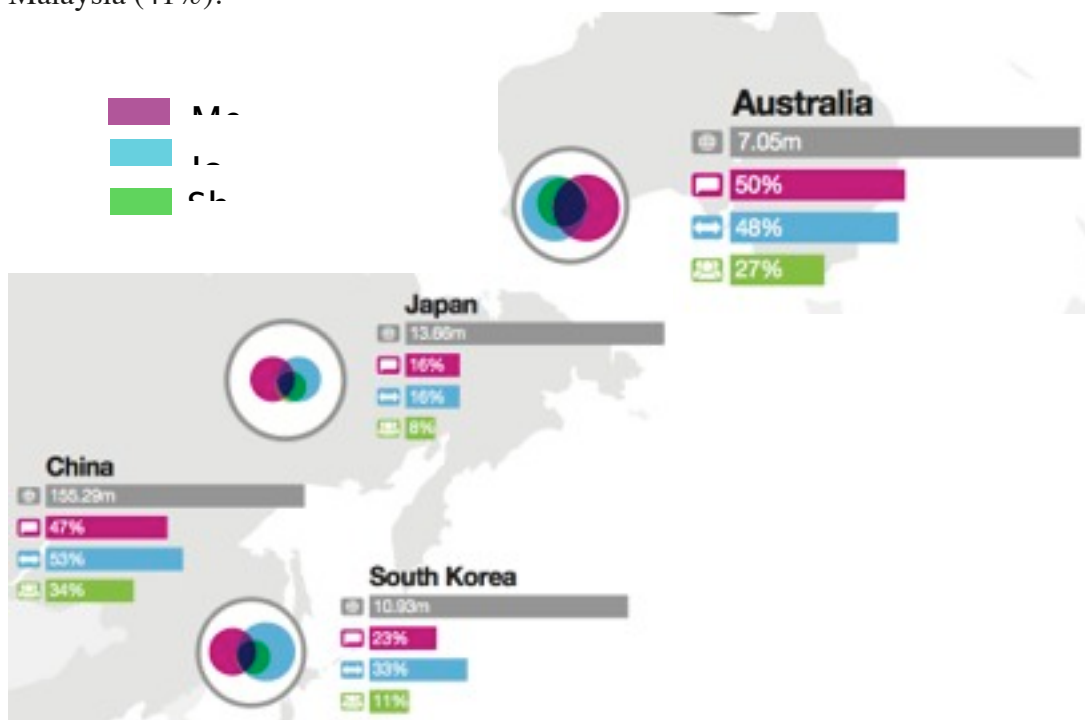
Does the way any country uses social networks surprise you?

Malaysia
- 11.50m
- 54%
- 63%
- 41%

Indonesia
- 18.93m
- 57%
- 66%
- 52%

Singapore
- 1.96m
- 48%
- 57%
- 32%

Australia
- 7.05m
- 50%
- 48%
- 27%

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http://globalwebindex.net 27

If we focus on the Asian market (four countries) we see the grey circles indicating the overall SM penetration (market), which is broken down into the respective behavioural types.

This data reveals that users across the world are very different in how they utilise their network, with more focus on messaging and less on content sharing in established markets like the US and UK but more focus on content and groups in fast growing markets like Indonesia and China.

So not so many sharers (27%) in Australia, but plenty in Indonesia (52%) and Malaysia (41%).

Me
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Australia
- 7.05m
- 50%
- 48%
- 27%

Japan
- 13.66m
- 16%
- 16%
- 8%

China
- 155.29m
- 47%
- 53%
- 34%

South Korea
- 10.93m
- 23%
- 33%
- 11%

How might this influence how we do social media? If Australians prefer messaging over sharing, what might that mean in a SM campaign? What tools would we be using?

The "Social Corp" (the reshaping of cultures)

Refer to Postman reading, Chapter 5 (Postman J, 2009. *Social Corp. Social Media Goes Corporate.* Berkley: New Riders). This covers mostly examples of business and how they use SM.

What is a social corp?

Companies that are taking advantage of the power of social media to reshape the relationships with customers, journalists, bloggers, analysts, shareholders, employees and business partners more often, in larger numbers, more intimately and more effectively than ever before.

This applies both internally and externally. It also involves giving people within organisations a "voice", though just how loud that can/or should be is open to debate.

Here is a rundown of some of the areas that can be embraced by the "Social Corp".
•Employee engagement – Used internally, but also externally by allowing employees to have a say. We look at this next page.
•Analyst & Investor Relations – another specialist area. Anaysit relations blogs (Csco and Hill and Knowlton have them). They use them to annouce aquisitions, floats and other IR material.
•Blogger relations – bloggers treated as influentials, so companies have people who deal with this group. Same as journalists: get to know them first.
•Customer service, support & engagement – More personalised service, ability to reach customers where the "hang out", and in one place (rather than have them visit several places). Twitter even being used for one-on one customer support. QANTAS does this via Twitter.
•Workplace collaboration - wikis (groups) and blogs free employees from traditional fixed office location. CIA's A-Space (2007) also known as Spyspace, Spookbook, and MySpy. the intelligence community's first (?) foray into social networking. After 9/11 there seemed to be only one thing that the IC could agree on – that the IC didn't interact enough with each other. Speculation is rife that the CIA's A-Space will also allow spies to swap photos, flirt and throw virtual food at each other.

Facebook's role

Should you use Facebook for PR? Can Facebook be used for PR? Zappos (below) uses it and is cited continually as a company that fully embraces SM.

There are a number of aspects to PR, so we'll look at each one and how they can be applied using Facebook. These are:

• Media relations (inbound and outbound)
• Promotion
• Community outreach
• Brand affinity

The following information is based on material by Jeremy Porter,
http://www.blog.journalistics.com

Facebook and media relations

Outbound

I tend/try to keep things pretty personal on my Facebook profile, so I have some bias here. I can't imagine an instance when I would reach out to a journalist for the first time through Facebook. However, a good number of my Facebook friends happen to work as journalists or bloggers, so I might reach out to them through Facebook – provided I have an existing relationship.

Facebook is best used for media relations outreach when you have an existing (preferably personal) relationship with a journalist or blogger. If this is your first time reaching out to the journalist, use a different medium – such as phone, email (the most preferred channel by journalists), Twitter or LinkedIn. I prefer this order of priority.

If you also have a lot of personal relationships with journalists, **Facebook can be an excellent medium for brainstorming story angles** with your media (or PR) friends. Beyond that, I'd steer clear of any formal media outreach through Facebook.

Inbound

While I recommend against proactive pitching and "first time" pitches, Facebook can be an excellent way for you to promote yourself to journalists and bloggers looking for your expertise. If you want to use Facebook for professional use, update your profile accordingly. Provide information on your organisation and your role, along with the clients you represent and the types of stories you can serve as source for.

You should also regularly share information about your work through your status updates, and you just might find that journalists and bloggers will reach out to you for stories. This approach to inbound media relations is becoming more effective as more journalists and bloggers use social networks to research sources for stories.

More than 70 percent of journalists use social networks to assist with reporting, so it's more important than ever that your organisation have some presence on sites like Facebook – particularly if you have an active media relations program.

While I'll touch on the benefits of **Facebook Groups** and **Facebook Pages** throughout this post, you should also consider sharing your news, story ideas and other relevant company information through these channels. Consider these sites mini versions of your online newsroom. You never know which journalists or bloggers will discover you on Facebook.

Facebook and promotion

Unlike the old group, the New Facebook Group makes it easy for you to build a space for a selected category of people. Unlike the previous one, this feature helps you to add them, not invite them, to the group after the group is created.

Facebook Groups are an excellent way to manage membership relationships for a group or organisation. If you're just starting a group, or looking for a more cost-effective tool for managing communications to your members, posting an events calendar, or providing additional networking benefits for your members, Facebook Groups is an excellent option – and it falls in the "PR" category.

If you work as part of a corporate communications team, you might consider starting your own Facebook Group around a particular industry topic – particularly if there are no groups in your local area. For example, let's say you work in non-profit PR and you want a group dedicated to topics of importance to non-profit PR professionals, you could start one.

Similarly, if you're a startup entrepreneur, you could start a group to help entrepreneurs connect and exchange ideas. Of course, before you start one, search to make sure one doesn't exist already in your area.

There are a lot of reasons Facebook Groups can be a powerful tool for marketing and growing your group. For starters, it's free. There are more than 350 million active Facebook users around the world, so chances are pretty good there are other users with similar interests who would be willing to join your group.

Other services like [MeetUp](), [Upcoming]() and [EventBrite]() provide some similar (and some alternative) options – depending on your needs, you may want to check out other options.

Community outreach

Facebook Groups and Facebook Pages are both great applications for cause marketing efforts. If you currently work in cause marketing, I'd be surprised if you weren't already using Facebook to mobilise support for your cause, and share more information on how individuals can get more involved.

A great example of a Facebook Page used for community outreach, is the **American Red Cross Page**. This Page has more than 150,000 fans and serves as a vital channel for communicating with the organisation's most active supporters. This is an especially timely example, as the American Red Cross is posting regular updates on its efforts surrounding The Haiti relief effort.

Of course, you don't have to be a non-profit to use Facebook for community outreach. There are thousands of local groups and organisations that use Facebook to expand their reach and support in your community. I currently live in a suburb of Atlanta and am actively involved with several local groups dedicated to causes in my local community.

Don't overlook these easy-to-use and free tools for building stronger relationships around your causes. The best part of Facebook Groups and Facebook Pages is they are integrated components of the world's largest social network – you can quickly garner support for your cause in a fraction of the time it would take to create a website.
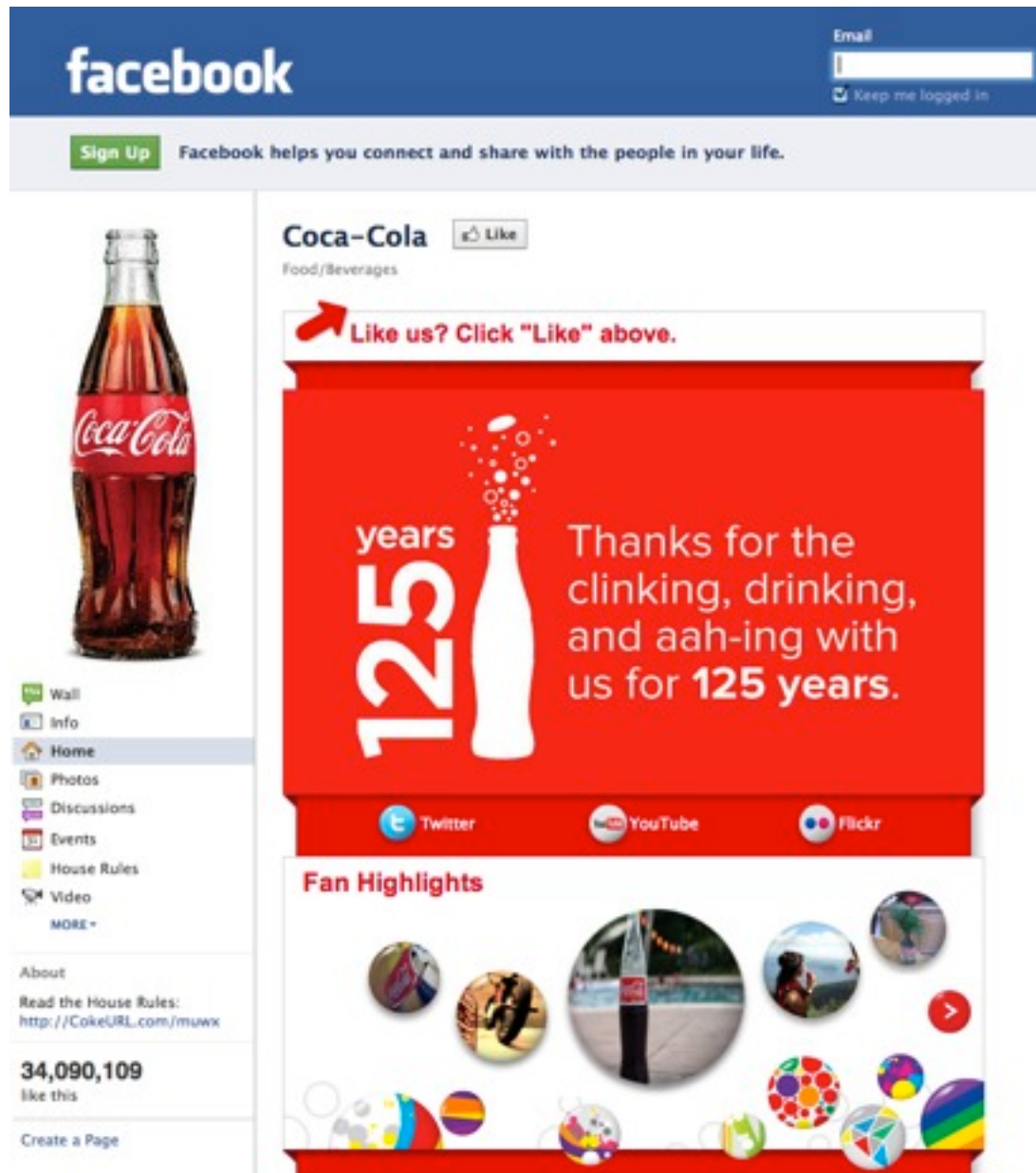
Facebook Pages (a.k.a. "Fan Pages") is one of the most brilliant ideas to come out of the Facebook camp. Create a page around your organisation, product, service, group, artist, etc. and manage all your marketing through this channel. You'd be hard pressed to find a brand without a Facebook Page these days. If you have a brand, you need a Facebook Page.

Can you think of a better investment (remember, it's free) to organise your most loyal consumers around your brand? If you regularly share information with – and interact with – your fans through a Facebook Page, you'll learn more about your organisation, products and services than through any other channel.

Rather than ramble on about my ideas, here are three great Facebook Pages from leading US brands:

Coca-Cola Fan Page
The New York Times
Georgia Aquarium

Thanks you, Jeremy, but that's American stuff. What about in Australia?

Australian researcher Cara Pring (http://www.thesocialskinny.com) said that of the top 50 Australian brands, only 48 per cent were using Facebook (as of September 2011).

> EXERCISE: Research major Australian brands using Facebook and compare their efforts.

In summary, Facebook Pages are powerful tools for building affinity with your consumers, providing a direct link between them and your brand.

Facebook and campaigns

Perth trains stop at 2am. The Transport Minister, Troy Buswell, agreed to meet the people behind an online petition calling for Perth trains to run throughout the night on weekends. The petition gathered almost 20,000 supporters in just over 48 hours after it was launched.

Cup win: Beckie Williams, co-founder of Busts 4 Justice, with a bra outside a store branch in Brighton. Picture: Associated Press

A British department store (above) changed the way it priced underwear after almost 13,000 people signed an online protest against its policy of charging customers more for oversized bras. The campaign on Facebook was started by Beckie Williams, 26, who wears a 30G bra, after Marks & Spencer did not respond to her complaints about the £2 ($4) extra charge on bras bigger than a DD cup.

Facebook pages can also serve as the epicentre for complaints when you mess up. This is one of the top reasons organisations choose to stay away from social media. Don't make this mistake. If your consumers are unhappy about something, use your Facebook Page as a place to talk about it with them. Make things right, and build stronger relationships.

Along this line, you'll want to monitor what's being said about you in Facebook (and all other social channels). Don't be surprised if happy (or unhappy) customers create their own pages about you. Don't send a "cease and desist" letter from legal – engage with your audiences and let them know you're listening and care (hopefully you do).

The bottom line

No longer can you rely on your website, press releases or blanket pitches as your PR power tools. Everyone is overwhelmed with information. You're better off reaching audiences where they are most likely to respond (social networks like Facebook are ideal for this), or where they will be looking for your information when the timing is right.
Facebook is only one of many social media channels you should consider part of your PR arsenal these days. Hopefully these suggestions provide some information you can use to begin exploring more PR opportunities through Facebook.

Key link

This is facebook's site for discussion using using it in your PR campaigns.

http://www.facebook.com/pr

Your SM strategy

Remember, strategy (what to do) isn't the goal. It's the path you plan to take to get there.

Begin with the end in mind. So in other words: what's your goal/s ... what do you want t achieve? Once you decide that, all other things will flow, like how you're going to achieve what you want to do.

Sample goals

✓ Increase customer base.
✓ Generate leads.
✓ Drive sales.
✓ Build awareness.
✓ Make money from your content.
✓ Establish thought leadership.
✓ Educate.sCustomer service
✓ Reach new customers.
✓ Improve internal communication.

But before you go too far down any one path, ask some questions:

• Are your customers likely to be online? Plenty of people are online these days, but it might be that you have a product or service that isn't as frequently purchased via the web. What's your story?
• Are you ready to handle negativity? Platforms like blogs and videos allow for negative comments, and some company cultures aren't ready to engage with those opinions.
• How will you incorporate this into people's daily jobs?
• How will you measure results?
• How long are you willing to give it a try?
• What's your willingness to experiment, take risks, and adjust your plans?

Just those answers might tell you a bit about your business, whether or not you decide to go forward with building a strategy using social media tools. Remember, it's a lot easier to NOT listen to customers and just blast your messages out with no regard to how they're received.

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CHAPTER 8 – Tomorrow's PR pro: here today

This is a more about making you think about the future ... and your future in PR (if that's where you're heading). Some of the early material in this section is adapted from a PR Daily article by Arik Hansen.

Employers today are looking for a new kind of PR candidate: media producers. Gone are the days when all you did was just write a media release and maybe produce a brochure. Today, you need knowledge of a myriad of media: podcasting, web sites, CRM databases, blogs, video, Twitter, Facebook, RSS, analytics – and how they all connect and work together

Think about it. What's the one thing most companies will need in mass amounts in the months and years ahead? Content. When it comes to content, the demands are increasing. Each day.

- Text content.
- Audio content.
- Video content.
- Photo content …

    with many combinations of the four.

What does that (technology) mean for you?

Because there's so many components to communications today, that's where companies tend to struggle. Organisations typically have different specialists or contractors for each type of content – video specialists, writers, photographers. They're all in silos.

That should change somewhat in the not-so-distant future, if not already. So we see may see PR people moving from being just a writer of media releases to writing video scripts, podcasts ... and producing them, just like you'll have a shot at in your group work.

Why? For one, economics. Many companies cannot afford to specialise any longer when it comes to content. Sure, they need quality, but not at a high cost (and not for every project). At the same time, the talent pool is changing.

Younger PR pros are far more adept at photography and video technologies than their older counterparts. And, technology has significantly levelled the playing field the last few years.

All this points toward the notion that companies will be looking more and more for a professional with storytelling skills. And photography skills. And video producing and editing skills. These people exist–just not in big numbers quite yet.

I already mentioned them, but let me give you a sense for the specific skills I'm talking about and how they might play out in today's PR landscape. we'll look at the four major ones.

Producing stories via photo

The ideal candidate knows how to frame a photo–and I'm not talking about taking pictures at your nephew's t-ball game. The candidate will be comfortable with many forms of technologies, including camera phones and editing tools. And, they'll know the basics about photography including lighting, framing and filters. Think Instagram, not Canon.

Producing stories via text

An obvious skill that all PR pros need to have. But, consider the fact that you'll be competing against former journalists more and more down the road. These are people who know how to put a story together. To be the media producer of the next generation, you need to understand how to write a headline that will get clicks. At the same time, you need to know how to write a compelling lead, while using bullets and other devices to make the article/post more scannable for your readers. Think WordPress, Posterous, Tumblr and Google+, not news the traditional form of news releases.

Producing stories via video

Know how to shoot video using basic tools, how to conduct an interview, and how to set up a shoot. That doesn't mean you have to be an expert. The demands on video quality have softened over the years (although not as much as previously predicted by the Flip-cam rush). Now, it's easier than ever to record video on the go with smart phone devices that have pretty solid cameras built in (I've shot a number of client videos with my iPhone camera. There's a chap in the US, Tom Martin, who produces some amazing (digital conversation) material (see talkingwithtom.com) and shot entirely with his iPhone). You should learn how to use basic editing software like iMovie. Learning these video production skills will make you more marketable, because at present PR people need to outsource it. If you can handle the basics, that means less outsourcing. Which means less cost. Which usually means a happy boss or client. Think iPhone and iMovie, not TV-studio-style production.

Producing stories via audio

This one's probably not as key as the three above, since audio is a bit more niche, but still a skill worth exploring. You should understand how to run an audio interview, including how to produce a podcast, how to conduct an interview and some of the basic technical skills of audio production (sound booth recording on the cheap for example). Familiarise yourself with tools like Garageband and Audacity. Start by subscribing to a few podcasts to hear how the experts do it.

The "e" in e-PR

That's the PR pro of the future–media producer. It's happening right now in spots, but I see this trend accelerating rapidly in the years (even months) ahead. The demands on content (and on efficiencies and cutting costs) continue to grow. What about you? Do you see this as an emerging trend for employers? The thing is: what are you going to do about it?

For example, do you know how to publish a web site (not from WordPress)? Have you have used ftp?

What we'll look at briefly are just two components of PR that you should seriously consider becoming familiar with. I'm also talking about you doing some more study, because work is now about continual learning. You have to be able to keep up with things. Remember the video Shift Happens? Well it happens, and you don't want to be left behind, not if you want to remain in communications. (You should look up and watch this video on the internet. There are many versions. Make sure you get a current one and go for the one with most views).

The two main methods are vidcasting and podcasting.

1 Vidcasting

YouTube is where it's at ... Mostly (81.9%). As you can see the download statistics on it are impressive (35 hours every minute). Where does it all go? There are other options, though. Vimeo (8%), for one. Once again, up to you to discover the one that's right for your purposes.
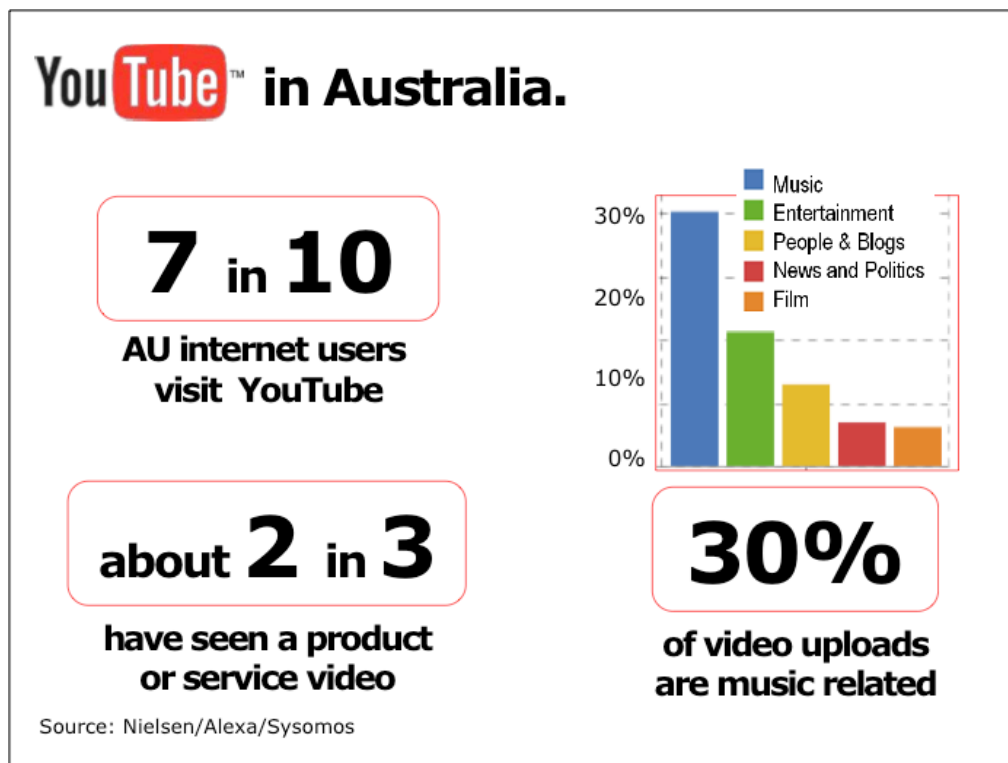
The chart (above) speaks for itself. Most tellingly, two in three people have seen a product or service video.

Video-sharing can achieve the following:

* Extend brand website
* Build personality
* Build community
* Provide feedback

What you should deliver

Above all, your content should be great. What's great? Depending on the client. It's one or all of being ...

- Entertaining – viral
- Informative – strategic

You will also have to make a decision on whether you want it to be:

- Viral - instant and has to be consistent
- Strategic - longer term, also consistent

Video is like any PR tool

While it may seems cute and fun, when it comes to PR, your video has to be strategic. There has to be a purpose.

You still have to ask yourself the questions:

- Is video right for this project?

- What do we want to achieve?

- How will it work with other channels?

- What parts of the organisation can it help or support?

- Who will manage it?

- What do you want to say?

Like any part of the PR plan, video in it own right should have a plan. Here's simple four-step guide:

1. Develop strategy
2. Create content
3. Implement and manage
4. Measure and evaluate

Of these, measurement is (as in any PR program) vital. There are a wealth of tools to measure. You just have to find and use them.

In class I used the example of Natalie Tran, a video blogger from Sydney. She has an amazing amount of followers, but she's doing SM right. Where does she get the time?

Seven basic rules when providing digital content:

i. Engage your community
ii. Links your tools
iii. Think long term
iv. Focus on what you do best
v. Honesty
vi. Keep it punchy
vii. Update regularly

2 Podcasting
- Definition: Downloadable long-form audio/video posted online for listening. Also applies to video as you can get it on your iPod.
- Program-oriented (i.e., regular channel) and featuring a recurring theme.
- Most common file format MP3.
- Variations: Slidecast.

Why podcast?

Engagement – You have direct connection to audience, although not as personal as video. Hopefully it gets the listener to take measurement action (moves/changes behaviour). And hopefully, like using any PR tool, the result can be measured. How? Subscriptions, playbacks, downloads, email questions, purchase (ultimate engagement).

Expertise – Podcasting asserts a level of expertise, so you can establish and enhance your reputation.

- Gives you recognition as an expert.
- Hosts are seen as trustworthy.
- Creates a lasting resource.

You express and 'exhibit' yourself in a podcast. Like video, it's personal. You get to tell your story in a voice that's convenient for the listener. You also get to control the message. But it's one-way traffic (maybe not truly social in the dialogic sense).

Demographics

As with any PR program, research into your audience is essential. Research has shown there are discernable differences between podcast and video users.

Edison Research (2008) showed podcast users are:

- Well educated

- Live in higher-income households

- Active social networkers

- Smarter consumers

Where are podcasts?
- iTunes
- Podcast Alley
- Podcast Directory
- PodNova

Technical stuff

I won't go into the specifics of podcasting and vidcasting. However, you should in your spare time (as part of your study) familiarise yourself with the basic tools that enable video and audio editing. I am a Mac-centric person, and you will find that most PR agencies are, too.

Podcasting – Audacity is an audio editing tool. However, for a complete solution to podcasting, use Garage Band. Not sure if you can get this for PC.

For video, there are many free editing programs. Apple's iMovie is adequate. For PC there's Avid Free, or Microsoft Movie Maker.

You'll need access to royalty free music. Again, there are quite a few sites that provide music in different categories.

References:

Hansen, A. (2011). PR hiring trend: employers want media producers. Retrieved 10 September, 2011, from http://www.prdaily.com/Main/articles/8944.aspx.

(2008). The Podcast Consumer Revealed. Edison Research, Retrieved 4 December 2011, from http://www.edisonresearch.com/2008_Edison_Arbitron_Podcast_Report.pdf

Recommend textbook

Deltina Hay's book, A *Survival Guide to Social Media and Web 2.0 Optimization: Strategies, Tactics, and Tools for Succeeding in the Social Web*, was published in 2011 and covers all apsects of how to "do the technical stuff" but always with a PR/marketing focus.

CHAPTER 9 – Measuring SM and its ROI

Just as in PR, though even more so in SM, monitoring and evaluation is at the heart of social media.

But we could spend all day, every day, monitoring social media. There is so much chatter online, so many conversations going on at any one time, that it's virtually impossible to keep up. We want to know what's being said about our clients – their brand, their product, their service – it's an essential part of our job, but we really don't want to spend every waking moment 'watching' social media with the aim of presenting reports on what its doing for our organisation: what's it's returning.

Also, making sense of how to measure and what to measure can be confusing.

Traditionally, business expects a Return On Investment (ROI) on whatever it does. Social media is no exception. The traditional ROI equation goes like this:

ROI is a business (or financial) metric, not a media metric. You are not measuring media success, but how much value what you do for the business in monetary terms.

An alternative view

In line with that, rather than look at social media in terms of ROI, I think it far better to adopt the views of Falls and Decker (2011) who state:

> "The problem with trying to determine ROI for social
> media is that you are trying to put numeric quantities
> around human interactions and conversations, which are
> not quantifiable" (p.8).

They say the notion is "bothersome". They ask people not to think of SM in terms of ROI, but rather "what social media marketing can do for your business".

The theory goes like this. Social media is a pure form is conversation, and so is talking. But you don't measure the financial value of talking. Just the same as you don't measure how much value a receptionist adds to a business. You just have to know that it's important. If you have a lousy receptionist, what happens? In the same way, if you are having poor conversations with your audiences, your organisation will suffer (in many ways).

Many bosses, however, will still probably want to stick to the ROI. After all, social media does cost money to implement.

The costs include:

<div align="center">

People – Time – Technology

</div>

If that's the case, then perhaps you may have to be ready with being able to provide several types of measurement to demonstrate the worth of social media strategies.

1. Establish a baseline for measurement

Determine what you are measuring. You measure it before your social media program is introduced, during and afterwards. In fact, continual measurement is possible online, which is important in PR, as evaluation should (ideally) be undertaken consistently in order for changes to be made in your plan.

2. Create activity timelines

Set out who'd doing what and when. This helps later when you correlate the results (steps 3 and 4). For example, if you started tweeting halfway through the plan and your measurement chart showed a sudden spike in activity at that time, then you could summise that tweeting affected the activity.

3. Overlay all timelines

Correlate your activity timeline with sales (or any other outcome you wish to achieve). Remembering that these have to be measurable (new customers, number of transactions)

- o Look for patterns (see, for example, if increases in sales are linked to discount activities or special offers).
- o Prove relationships (there has to be evidence that links exist between actions taken and outcomes).
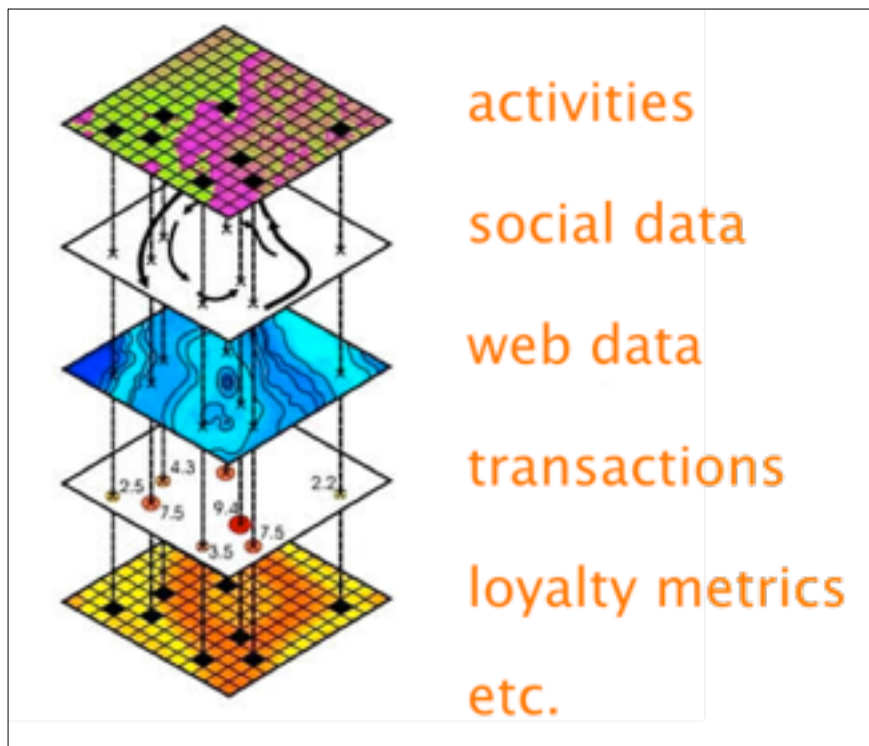
Types of non-financial impact

You can be really up against it in social media. There's a multitude of things associated with SM that have little or no impact direct on finances. Sure, some things like visitors to your site may translate into an action (a sale, membership or congratulatory note). Equally, complaining customers may result in some loss of sale or a decline in membership.

<div style="border:1px solid">

Website Visitors   **Customer complaints**

Impressions

Click-throughs **Positive press**

YouTube views

Retweets **Coupons distributed**

Positive WOM **Visitors to a brick & mortar store**

Delivered emails

Negative WOM **Negative press**

Employment applications

FaceBook friends

Blog comments

Twitter followers

Social mention

</div>

Good metrics

Unfortunately, many businesses are simply not applying good metrics to their SM.

Earlier this year (2011) Duke University's Fuqua School of Business (fuqua.duke.edu) and the American Marketing Association published the results of their annual Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Survey. Among the findings, we learned how executives are applying traditional metrics to new media to measure performance. The survey compared the current trends in measurement to last year to get a view into how businesses adapted measurement against new opportunities.

At the top of the list, traffic (hits/visits/page views) was the most important metric, increasing from 47.6% to 52.2% in one year. Repeat visits ranked second at 34.9%. However, a less important metric, the number of followers or friends, commands the third spot at 34.1%. This represents a huge jump from 24% the year before.

As Brian Solis (2011) observed, clicks to action were surprisingly positioned in fourth with 29.3%, up from 25.4%.

In the following passage, Solis (2011) captures how social media is rapidly transforming business, but that business is still lagging when actually implementing what they should be.

> "Business leaders are seeking input into the insights and corresponding metrics necessary to listen, learn, engage, and adapt in a new era of empowered consumerism.

> "One common metric is the reduction of inbound customer inquiries as a result of automated knowledge bases (you go on line and ask for help and it walks you through a series of procedures for different problems). The thinking is: "if the customer can answer their own questions, they won't need us". My experience is that usually you end up looking for a phone number.

> "That same metric is carrying over to social media. If a Tweet can resolve a problem, the company has succeeded in reducing the inbound burden to the contact centre. But there's a contradiction. At a time when executives claim that getting closer to customers is a top priority for 2012 and beyond, how is it that we can employ metrics that continue to do what businesses have done so well over the past couple of decades – the ability to move further away from customer engagement through barriers of technology?

> "Customers just want to hit "0″ to talk to someone live. The same is true for new media. Customers are in control of their own experiences, what they share, and how they make decisions. Businesses can either accept this and develop a collaborative business model of co-creation, or simply choose to not be part of the long-term equation."

Metrics tools

You will come across a myriad of tools to do the job. They change monthly, so try to keep up. At the time of writing ...

Edelman's TweetLevel and BlogLevel are two purpose-built tools for the PR industry that aim to be a GPS for navigating influence. At its heart is an algorithm that seeks to measure who is important within each social media channel.

However, they don't fully automate the identification or measurement role. This is intentionally done, as a human mind always needs to validate the results.

While there are hundreds of tools and services available for PR professionals wanting to monitor online conversations, the most effective of these are often expensive and require clients to sign-up to the service for 12 months or more. Moreover, even the most widely used services, such as Radian6, have significant limitations for PR professionals. Using web crawlers to collect online conversations means your dashboard can often be flooded with international voices. Also, using algorithms to evaluate sentiment means the overall tonality of these conversations can be way off, unless you go through them manually (which would defeat the purpose of paying for the service).

Brandtology is one service that has designated monitors (real people) who evaluate the relevance and sentiment of each conversation. As such, the reporting and analysis is much more accurate. However, the evaluation process takes time, meaning there can be a lag between the conversation taking place and it appearing on the dashboard, thus limiting your ability to respond.

Broadcasting v Engaging

Much as we would like to engage with every relevant person, the truth is that most people do not have the time or resources to do so. We therefore need to prioritise which people to focus on. This process explains how to find them.

Popularity does not equal influence

The above statement is bold and almost 100% true. I am not naive that if you are popular then by default you are more likely to be influential. However, this is just one factor that can measure how important someone is. The numbers of followers someone has is interesting to me but not as key as how somebody engages in relevant conversations or create ideas that then resonate through the social web.

Engagement is not the same as activity

People have long understood the difference between broadcasting and engaging. As communication channels become more dynamic and interactive, true influence is derived by having two-way dialogues, asking questions and by posting interesting and informative content.

A simple guide to monitoring

As I said at the start of the chapter, you could spend all day, every day monitoring social media. However, there are three ways to monitor and quantify conversations that occur on social media:

1. Manually – Searching Twitter, Facebook, Google, etc. for specific keywords and responding to direct enquires.

 Pros: Results are tailored to the user and sentiment is accurately evaluated based on client objectives.

Cons: Can be time consuming and all analysis and reporting has to be carried out separately.

2. Free tools – Using free online aggregators, such as Addictomatic and Samepoint, of social media networks and their content to keep track of conversations in real time.

 Pros: They're generally simple to use and set up like a dashboard to allow you to watch multiple conversations from a range of social networks.

Cons: Analysis and reporting capabilities are limited and it's difficult to drill down into Australian-only conversations.

3. Paid-for service – Signing up for a social media monitoring service, such as Radian6, Brandtology, JitterJam or Dialogix, which use web crawlers to seek out online conversations containing pre-programmed keywords.

 Pros: Collects a comprehensive database of conversations that can be analysed and extrapolated for reporting back to the client.

Cons: The dashboard provided can be inflexible when it comes to reporting, many services also often pick up international conversations and their use of algorithms to determine sentiment can be problematic as most don't account for sarcasm or colloquialisms.

The best monitoring

What's the best way to monitor social media? It really depends on your objectives and what you're trying to do with the information (i.e., whether you want to engage with people and/or whether you just want to know what's being said about your client. Are you after the 'big picture', including trends in conversations, issues and competitive share of voice?

For me, the most useful social monitoring tool or service would:

1. Collect all relevant online conversations occurring on social networks.

2. Limit the results to Australian-only conversations.

3. Accurately evaluate the sentiment of each conversation.

4. Automatically contact the user with red flag issues or direct enquiries

5. Provide a robust dashboard-style system, which:

- Allows you to arrange the data based on individual social networks, topics, products or conversation trails.
- Allows for easy, flexible reporting into a variety of formats including PDF and Excel files .
- Allows you to input key announcements or events that have impacted the volume/sentiment of conversations.

6. Identify the most influential and most active voices

We've come a long way

It would make sense for an ongoing collaborative approach to be taken between social media monitoring services and PR professionals to ensure that the tools and analysis provided aligns with our varied client objectives. However, we have come a long way in the past few years. A decade ago, we wouldn't have had the capabilities to monitor and see, in real time, what audiences thought about our brands, products and services. This, in itself, is a significant advancement for public relations, and has greatly improved how we understand our audiences.

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With thanks to Oliver Blanchard, thebrandbuildermarketing.com

CHAPTER 10 – Social Media, journalists and PR

This chapter focuses on mainstream and traditional media. It is somewhat abridged, as we had a guest speaker, Louise Burke, the Social Media Editor from The West Australian

 Today it's important to recognise two types of media:

1. Traditional – mainstream (Press, radio, TV)
2. Social – Mainstream and Independent (blogs, Twitter, etc. Any site that produces an opinion. So that could include facebook, You Tube. The list goes on).

Today the media are prevalent in every society and in a myriad of forms. With traditional and social media, there are four types of media:

* Press

* Radio

* TV

* Social (internet, phone-based – i.e., SMS). And of course this all gets somewhat blurry; hence the term convergence. But we get back to the premise of the first lecture, that PR is your phone. You can all of the above on your phone.

Breakdown of traditional media

o PRESS
   ▪ Newspapers, magazines (specialised)
o RADIO
   ▪ AM (talkback, news sport), FM (Music), Community (eclectic/specialist)
o TV
   ▪ Commercial models (Free, Cable, Community)
o SOCIAL
   ▪ Blogs, Newsgroups, Twitter. On-line or phone.

The media's importance

* Media are the main "public". They are still the method by which most people get their information, whether it's the print version of the local paper, or the online version.
* The media reaches other publics. his is particularly the case with specialist media (e.g., fishing, surfing, cooking or aviation magazine). Remember, the media is highly fragmented and that you should know who you're pitching to.
* The media sets agenda (still). While this has diminished in recent years, the media still determines what is news and what isn't(subjective as this may be).
* The media builds awareness. That goes without saying.

Apart form being and doing these things, the media increases the importance people attach to issues, and determines the priority of issues. The media shapes our perceptions and beliefs, especially when we have little direct contact with the issue.

However, while it can set the agenda (decide what's in the news) traditional media can't tell people what to think, but it's very successful at telling them what to think about.

Media's functions

Despite what you may think about it, the media performs many valuable functions in society. "Journos" are the public's eyes and ears. They seek the truth and put it into perspective, so therefore they are never entirely objective. Among the main roles the media plays are:

Facilitating the functioning of the political system by providing a forum for news and debate (i.e., opinion pieces, letters to the editor). It informs the public.

It's a watchdog against government and corporations and can act as a protector of rights

The media facilitates economic exchange via advertising.

What is the media?

The Fourth Estate is a term which you may hear, particularly if you work in communications.

During the Middle Ages, there were three "estates of the realm" that comprised society – the clergy, nobility and commoners.

The Fourth estate describes the Press. It was used as far back as 1828 and possibly extends to the time of Louis XVI who called for a meeting in Versailles of the Estates General. Several years later, after the French Revolution, a British MP, mentioned the term "Fourth Estate" sitting "up there in the press gallery". This was recorded by Thomas Carlyle in his book On Heroes and Hero Worship (1841).

Interestingly, Baistow (1985) refers to PR as the fifth estate, due to its growing influence. This could be even more relevant today, as PR exerts more influence over a rapidly-shrinking journalism workforce.

Making and maintaining media relationships

This chapter is somewhat abridged, due to a guest speaker, I would like to first cover the basics of journalism, the media and how they relate to public relations.

Central to any PR campaign is an organisation's ability to interact with it key audiences. As the PR Manager, you will be the one who represents your organisation's persona and policies. You'll also be the one who has to form a professional relationship with the media, which still provides most people with their primary sources of information.

You will be in charge of what's called media outreach.

Perceptions of the media

What are some common impressions PR have of the media?

Yes, it's true: fear and ignorance abound. However, the same view of PR people is often held by journalists.

In fact, most journalists are decent, ethical people who are simply doing their job, much the same as most PR people.

As in life, there is always a percentage of people who spoil it for the majority and give that profession a "bad wrap".

Role of the media in Australia

What is the purpose of the media?

The media, of course, operates everywhere – in both democracies and in dictatorships. Obviously the roles of the media in different political environments will vary greatly.

Everybody hears about our free press. We should all know what that means ... that the media is free to report on mostly anything (some matters of national security aside). But in countries such as China, the media is not free in that sense.

So we'll just focus on democracies and leave comparative debates on government systems and the media for another unit.

1. In Australia, as in the US, UK, Canada, the media is essentially a business. Understand that first up.

Newspapers, radio & TV stations exist to make money for their shareholders/owners, and to pay the salaries of employees, whether they be journalists, sales or technical staff.

2. Secondary to that role, particularly when we talk about the news media is that they are there to report the news. In that sense they are also entrusted with providing unbiased reports. Of course, there are different aspects of journalism which can provide opinion (e.g., editorials and some forms of feature writing).

Remember that the media is a business. It's primary purpose, like any business, is to make a profit.

Those relationships

- We all have professional, external relationships. The media is just one other.
- Most relationships have "ups" & "downs"
- You seldom terminate a relationship on the basis of one "down"
- Some days you are the pigeon……
- ….on other days you are the statue … meaning some days you are flying high, and on others you are being crapped on from above.

Journalists and PR people have a lot of contact. News organisations use a lot of PR material (though they would not admit if you asked them).

McNamara (2001) cites "a survey of 417 journalists and editors in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra undertaken as part of a Masters Degree by research in 1992, found 86% reported 'Very Frequent' contact from PR practitioners. More than 74% reported receiving 20 or more PR communications (news releases, phone calls, faxes, etc) per week.

> "In the same period, 150 news releases from 27 different companies and organisations were obtained and content analysis was undertaken of the media in which the journalists were employed over a 12 months period. Articles were identified using a national press clipping service which provided 2,500 articles on the topics of the news releases from the selected media.
>
> "The study found:
>
> - Of 768 stories **(31%) were wholly or partly based on the news releases** (including exact extracts or facts and figures without alternative attribution). While 360 (47%) of these were published in trade or specialist media, 245 stories (32%) of PR- based stories were published in national, State or capital city media;
> - **Up to 70% of the content of some small trade, specialist and suburban media was PR-sourced**;
> - Only nine news releases out of 150 tracked **(1.2%) were not used at all** by the media;
> - The average usage rate of news releases was **seven times** each;
> - One news release (on a Lindeman Wines product) was published in **69 newspapers**, many with a photograph provided by the PR firm."

You have to remember that these figures come from a time when there were far more journalists working, far less space to fill and not many online outlets. The point is that PR's role is expanding, as journalists come under more pressure to fill the spaces.

Journalists and social media

Online social networks are essential tools for journalists. They make it possible to build extended networks, search for story ideas, build contacts and dig up information.

More importantly, SM helps shake up the relationship between individual journalists and the people formerly known as the audience.

But journalists are like anyone. Many of them don't know how to get the full value from online social networks. Unlike everyone else, they have to be do more than just sign up; they have to be engaged and active within their networks. And that means they need to carefully think about what image they want to project of themselves, to a group of watchers that might include both personal friends and business colleagues.

There is one fundamental question for journalists in social networks: Who is it you want to reach? Or to put it another way, what kind of conversation do you want to engage in?

To a large extent, this will be determined by the type of reporter they are, or what round, or rounds, they cover. So who would out guest speaker today want to reach? One for the classroom. What social media does she use?

For example, if they were a financial writer they would want to reach ….. Stockbrokers, bankers, financial planners, investors, accountants, and so on. This group is relatively conservative. Maybe it is not a good idea to befriend them on Facebook in the same way as you would befriend your "real friends," showing those funny pictures of that crazy party... But at the same time you do want to talk to these bankers in an informal, human way, without putting them off. So as a journalist you could use FB's privacy features, or G+ Circles, to customise what you want to show to whom.

Three for the road

In the context of working with the media, we'll now look at three aspects of social media that are important when practising PR. These are:

- o The social media newsroom. This is in fact covered in the week's reading (postman).
- o Twitter as a news breaker.
- o The 10 commandments of social media outreach.

All of these are relevant to journalism and PR.

Social media newsrooms

Journalists need news. It's their jobs. And who better to give it to them than you. Working for your organisation, putting out your messages.

What is a SM newsroom? ... Simply a place where all of your information is stored. It can be a secure place, accessible only by media with passwords. But that seems a bit restrictive.

Some of the things is contains are:

- Press
    - Pics, words, logos, bios, financials (graphs), quotes
- Radio
    - Words, sound grabs
- TV
    - Video (action, interviews)

In many ways, the online newsroom is today's equivalent of the media kit. But it's a lot more effective and cost-effective.

What types of material should it contain?

Answer that by asking another question. What types of media are there (press, radio, TV) Ask yourself what do each of them need. Their requirements are different, so your newsroom will have quite an array of material. Of course, some of the material found in the press listing can also be used for TV (i.e., graphs, logos).

So if you're doing a product launch, rather than getting 30 copies of your media kit with CDs, DVDs, photos, backgrounders, and so on, just give the journalists a one-pager, or some novelty with a link to your newsroom.

EXERCISE: Compare and contrast the online newsrooms of Apple, Google, facebook and Microsoft. Find three things you like about each. See if you can find one things that could be improved. Why, and how?

Using Twitter for breaking news

Leading SM practitioner Brian Solis (a keynote speaker at this year's PRIA conference) says "news no longer breaks, it tweets". It's news from a hashtag today.

Matt Rosoff of BusinessInsider further explains: "Twitter was faster, more accurate and more entertaining than any other news source out there [in terms of breaking news about Osama bin Laden's death]".

As PR practitioners this greatly affects the way we do business, particularly when it comes to issues and crisis management. Today it's more important than ever to have your strategy in place (and that includes a SM newsroom, which can be "activated" at any time). The newsroom, however, will work in synch with Twitter. Your Twitter feed should be connected to your web site anyway.

For example, if you work for QANTS and there's a crash, Twitter can provide the instant updates, with more background material being placed as it's collated.

The 10 commandments of media outreach (by Gordon Platt), or some guidelines to follow when practising media outreach.

1. Thou shall tell a story. Reporters don't write announcements; they write stories. Too often, press releases and pitches are proclamations or simply announcements. It's hard enough to sell your pitch without having to make a reporter come up with the story, too. And on those occasions, when they do, it may not be the story you want them to tell.

2. Thou shall make news. Is your announcement really news? And is it new or does it simply rehash old information? Imagine yourself taking a look at the day's headlines as an average news consumer. Would this story interest you? Remember it's a reporter's job to sell stories ... first to his or her editor and then to you, the public. If you wouldn't read it, it's not a story.

3. Thou shall recognise the forest and the trees. It's all about context. If it's your company or your client, each and every announcement may be of crucial importance and interest to you, and that's the way it should be. However, it may not be of monumental importance to the world or even your industry. What's news to a trade publication may not be news to The Wall Street Journal. Take a deep breath; be as objective as you possibly can, and gauge your outreach—and your expectations—accordingly.

4. Thou shall know what's happening in the world. In the media, as in life, timing is everything. What might make the papers on a slow August day will not make the cut on an August day when the stock market is crashing. If there's major national or international news and your story can wait, hold it. If not, well, that's sometimes the breaks.

5. Thou shall target your media. From a reporter's perspective, there is almost nothing more unprofessional than getting a story that's not relevant to his beat or publication. In those cases, it's obvious that the caller or sender didn't do his homework. Believe me—a reporter will hold this against you and possibly your client. Care enough to research the outlet you're going to pitch before you hit send.

6. Thou shall know the difference between persistence and harassment. You should be persistent. Maybe a reporter was too busy to read your first email or there's a relevant angle that she may have overlooked. It's OK to follow up. It's not OK when they have made it clear that they're not interested. And this leads directly to the next rule …

7. Thou shall know that the Internet works. There's a very good chance that the reporter received your first email. There's almost a 100 percent chance that they received your email and/or your follow-up call or email. Voicemail and the Internet work. If you don't hear back from them, they're not interested. Read rule No. 6 and move on.

8. Thou shall know and respect deadlines. If I didn't "make" air as a television producer, I would be looking for a job the next day. If a reporter is on deadline, he or she doesn't have time to listen to your pitch or to respond to your email. Try to be aware of the best time of day to call. If you do reach them at a bad time, quickly apologise and ask whether you can call later or the next day.

9. Thou shall realise the media is not a cure-all. A news story, even a major news story, will almost never be enough to launch you into the stratosphere or to save you from catastrophe. That's especially true these days when there are so many sources of information, audiences are fragmented, and the news cycle is continuous. At most, your sales or your stock will get a nice little bump and then fall back to Earth.

10. Thou shall embrace social media. A story in WA Business is great, but does it sell product? If you're working with a company that sells particleboard, I may (or may not) read that story and then quickly go on to the next thing. I read WA Business, but I don't buy particleboard. Conversely, I'm sure that there are many people out there who don't read WA Business but do buy particleboard. Those are the people you need to reach, and these days you can reach them directly through blogs, Twitter, Linkedin, and Facebook. It's time to reevaluate and ask whether the time and money spent pursuing traditional media may be better spent and put to better use on social media.

The future

Twitter, blogs, Facebook, etc. also provide the opportunity for all journalists to come out from behind the institutional voice of the media organisation -- a voice that is less and less trusted -- and to become human. Of course, they should mix business and pleasure.

It's probably a question of survival. Just as in any corporation (and in PR), people will have to learn to come out from behind their institutions and to speak in a human voice … to engage in genuine conversations. And we're seeing that. Ask our guest.

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CHAPTER 11 – Crisis, what crisis?

Our goals:

1. Learn to identify risk and uncertainty in media relations

2. Understand the importance of managing risk and uncertainty.

3. Managing crises online

How do you do all that?

Well, for the first two, it is a case of observation, gained by experience. The third aspect (online management) … well, you should be on your way to at least implementing SM crises strategies through your issues and crisis management unit and knowledge of online tools.

I have included the media in this mix for the simple reason that it is difficult to separate them from social media, given the attention news organisations pay to monitoring online activity (as Louise Burke pointed out last week). This is in part driven by fewer staff, but also because SM is so pervasive today and will be even more so tomorrow.

What's an issue?

I usually start with definition when introducing a topic. In this case, students will have covered this in detail in another unit, so it assumes previous knowledge.

> noun
>
> an important topic or problem for debate or discussion

In PR terms:

Something that prevents an organisation from operating effectively. Example: The current Murray-Darling Basin plan.

What's a crisis?

> noun (pl. -ses |-sēz|)
>
> a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger (e.g., the current world economic crisis – particularly in Europe.

In the context of PR …

Both issues and crises are something of concern to "publics" and/or stakeholders. The difference is the level of concern. Issues start small, build, then morph into crises if not managed (hence the term issues management).

Know that both are inexorably linked with reputation.

Issues lead to crises, which in turn lead to a range of negative impacts including, loss of confidence, trading and profit losses, and so on.

According to the PR firm Edelman (2011), issues and crisis management communication (or reputation management) "helps organisations properly manage issues before they emerge or escalate into critical problems."

Harrison (2008) offers a pretty sound definition of issues management, saying: "Issues management is really a form of risk management. It reduces the risk of the organisation being worse off than it would be if it hadn't dealt properly with the issues."

Differences between issues and crises

There's no organisation that understands issues and crises better than the Army. Using the US Army's (2007) public affairs handbook, "an issue is an external or internal factor, usually lasting over a mid-to-long timeframe, and usually involving an organisation within an industry, topic or situation. It can represent a serious obstacle to achieving the organisation's objective and cause damage to not only its reputation, but its fundamental business, if not managed well."

A crisis is an actual event or occurrence. It usually happens quickly, thereby putting an organisation and its methods of operation under intense public and media scrutiny and which can, if not handled properly, materially impact on the business.

In simplistic terms, it is often the case that an issue is an implied or potential event which can be proactively managed, while a crisis is an actual event or occurrence which requires a reactive response.

How an organisation responds to an issue or crisis can often have more impact on public awareness than the event itself. That's why it is important to develop a plan for dealing with both issues and crises.

The aim is to have strategies and tactics in place that will allow your organisation to always be perceived not only to be in control of the situation but also sensitive to the concerns of key stakeholders and others with a legitimate interest in the matter.

With regard to the use of SM in a crisis, even when you're not actively participating in the social web, a negative story can emerge online, which is why understanding how social media works is critical for dealing with a crisis on the Web.

Here's a summary of the differences between issues and crises.

An issue	A crisis
Long-standing, slowly developing, or predictable, that impacts on an industry or product category	An emergency or event that is unforeseen or seen as only a remote possibility, that impacts on a single organisation
Something that can be identified, monitored and managed as it emerges	Short-lived (although a crisis such as product tampering or extortion can last for several weeks)
Brought into the public arena (or at least fuelled) by protagonists or activists and reported on by media	Attracts significant - and sometimes hostile - media attention. In extreme cases, the crisis can be 'championed' by media

Some examples:

An issue	A crisis
Impact of new technologies e.g. genetically modified foods, stem cell research	Accidents that kill, maim or injure people e.g. industrial accidents, fire, explosions, plane/train crashes, food poisoning
Alleged side-effects of products e.g. food products that cause obesity or IT products that emit radiation	Environmental concerns e.g. discharge of waste, not meeting environmental standards, OH&S practices leading to injury or death
Industry-wide corporate practices e.g. director or management corporate remuneration	Organisational-specific corporate malpractice e.g. fraud, embezzlement, anti consumer practices

According to American risk management expert Dr Peter Sandman, it's about two things:

    o Scaring people.
    o Calming them.

- Scaring is actually alerting them to the situation (maybe even attempting to steer them to a suitable level of outrage, given the level of hazard. In some ways this can be seen as educating them).
- Calming is reassuring them things will be okay.

PR's role

PR has three roles to play when it comes to crisis communication.

1. It manages the outcomes. Of course, "manages" is not an ideal word, insofar as crises are virtually impossible to manage. Of course things such as the media can be "managed" in a sense, in that they can be kept up to date with information. But the end result of their reporting can not be controlled.
2. The management takes the form of lessening the damage.
3. Guarding reputation is linked with how successful a crisis communications program is. Some organisations in a crisis can emerge with reputations often enhanced, despite the serious nature. For example, the September 11 attacks in the US. Fire 7 rescue authorities emerged with reputations enhanced, but intelligence agencies were criticised for not cooperating to prevent the attacks.

These are the things you'll have to keep in mind as you negotiate the crisis communications minefield:

* Engage and support management
* Plan for crises
* Identify and monitor issues (scan)
* Assess risk and probability
* Communication with stakeholders
* Manage the media

Using technology

Way back earlier, we touched on this. Issues and crisis management as changed markedly in only one area: technology. You probably won't notice it, because you have grown up with it. But these days, it's not enough to read the paper and watch the TV.

Most of your job will be "information in". PR is probably 90 per cent info in and 10 per cent info out.

The skill for you as a PR professional is in deciphering the relevant material ... i.e., what's garbage and what's not.

And to manage the information out flow: that 10 percent of what you want to impart to your audiences.

All of which leads us to getting your message out, in this instance to the media and by social media.

Two important things to consider when doing that:

* PR practitioners must build on traditional issues and crisis management strategies to effectively deal with technology and new media.
* The electronic environment has created new and very real threats for organisations – and they can move very quickly.

The media and crises

For the media, a corporate or government crisis is like a red rag to a bull. It signals "attack" the legitimacy and credibility of the organisation.

The media thrive on crisis, emergency and disaster. Even in local media, things like a tree falling on a car in a storm will generate many column centimetres, probably attacking the local authority for not being vigilant and pruning the trees. (A local paper I worked for at Gosford on the NSW Central Coast made a front-page story and picture due to a power pole being too close to the road).

According to Regester (2008) research has shown the media to be the most credible source of information throughout the western world (p.192). Because of the "believability" the media act as the most important conduit to help shape people's beliefs and behaviour.

> o They're not about to get it wrong, because If they don't get it right, they go out of business.
>
> o It is the media's duty to investigate and report natural and unnatural crises and emergencies (Stanton, 2007).
>
> o Crises are played out in the media, with organisation being subjected to public scrutiny through it. And most people still get their news through traditional channels.

For these reasons alone, you need a strategy to deal with this aspect of PR.

It's a fact of life. Crises attract public scrutiny through news coverage. Of course these days, "news" can come via tweets or blogs. But when we talk of news, for the most part I mean mainstream media.

The goal for PR people is to be able to handle (sorry, manage) the media in a crisis

There are techniques for doing this. For example, media conferences re often held on the crisis site (e.g., a factory for food poisioning). Most times you have no choice, as the crisis determines the location.

But before we get into the social media side of crisis management, we still should know about what we're trying to achieve as PR people within this sphere.

PR objectives

For the PR practitioner, especially those in media relations, first and foremost a balance must be reached in knowing the following:

• What will divert an organisation from its course? In other words, what types of scenarios and events will have an impact on an organisation's operations ... its ability to carry out its normal functions. Example: a bank robbery will prevent the bank from serving its customers.

• What can be done to manage these "diversions"? In the case of the bank robbery, probably not much. You might be able to advise customers of a nearby branch.

From this we should assume the PR person is part of the crisis management team, which will have worked out all the possible things that can go wrong. It's the PR person's job to negotiate a way through the media minefield ... to provide answers.

Differentiate

There are two types of crises, natural and man-made. The media will differentiate between these. There's a subtle difference between the two.

• Natural crisis = disaster

• Man-made event = crisis

Because of the differences, the media will treat each differently. How? Media will be more sympathetic in the disaster scenario (at first). However, after the initial reporting they will look for other angles, and this usually involves apportioning blame (classic case: the Margaret River Bushfires).

The type of crisis will also influence how your organisation responds.

Once again, at the core of the crisis outcome is the effect the crisis has on "organisational capital"

Loss of capital

If you're the central "player" in a crisis, you will have core problems, whereas if you're a bit, or peripheral player, there can be benefits. Certainly the pressure will differ. For example, the organisation that provides relief during a disaster (Salvation Army, Red Cross, bush fire fighters) build reputational capital with many stakeholders, including the media. An organistion that fails to invest in the diversion of a disaster, say the outbreak of bird flu, loses reputational capital - first with the media.

Natural disaster are always first reported as straight news and from a humanitarian angle. But eventually the focus changes to investigative reporting, looking for causes and effects, shifting blame, what wasn't done right, etc. This then is your classic case of crisis communication.

Here are some examples of crises:

- Sydney-Hobart deaths, 1998
- Thredbo, 1997
- Arnotts extortion, 1997
- Italian earthquake
- Qld. Floods
- WA Hills bushfires

During the crisis

During a crisis, organisations do the following:

• Explain – what has occurred and why

• Deny – often they do deny

• Justify – their policies and existence

      ... usually to the media

Managing the crisis (enter social media)

In order to manage a crisis in the media, speed is essential. While the following procedures are not directly media-related, they will ensure that all areas are covered. Once the media has exhausted information from the primary source, they will turn to other sources (victims, employees, suppliers) so it's important they are communicated with.

The procedures for doing this successfully are:

1. Deal with the cause – Ensure you are clear about what happened and why (though statements in this regard have to be carefully worded, as there are legal implications if you admit fault, when none may be there).

2. Assist the victims – This is getting back to WA Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghans' three-point mantra.

3. Employees – Because they are your greatest asset (in PR terms) you have to ensure they know what's happening and are on side with the actions you are taking.

4. Other stakeholders

Crises and reputation

I have touched on how reputation is linked to issues and crisis management. But how does it play out in the media. Certainly it is almost always a matter of reputation (something gone wrong and causing damage). Think of (and this assumes you dread some case studies):

- Bindeez Beadz
- Ribeena
- Share prices fall
- Legislation fails
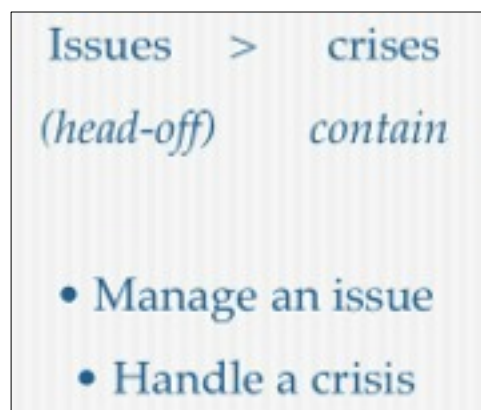- NFP CEO embezzles funds

Now cast your minds back (if you've been there) to your study of the various lifecycles of issues and crises. I'll use Fink's (1986).
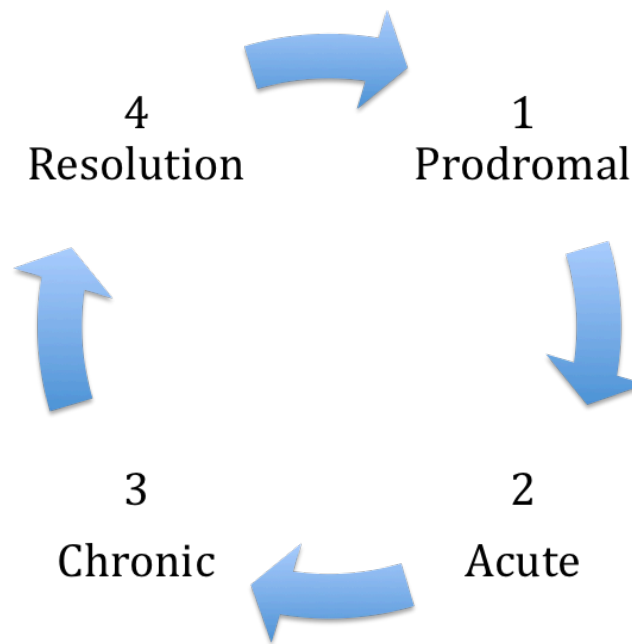
Nothing much has changed since that time to alter the sequence of events in a crisis. Or has it? What is it?

It's the speed at which crises develop. What is the cause? Answer: technology.

Your role

Just to recap, the main difference between them is that you can manage and issue, but only handle a crisis. With an issue the aim is to head off an ensuing crisis. With a crisis the key word is to contain its impact. So that's what your aim is ... to contain or limit damage.

If the aim is to head off crises, you will have to be aware of issues before they become crises. It's about anticipating issues.

How to do this

Environmental scanning (or monitoring) is now the fastest growing category of public relations research.

What is environmental scanning?

"The monitoring, evaluating and disseminating of information to key decision makers within an organisation."

Clearly within PR, there are a myriad of tools to assist in that. Here are some:

* Google
* Media monitoring
* Blogs
* Speeches
* News forums
* Customer service feedback
* Employee feedback
* Stakeholder satisfaction surveys
* Radian 6

The crisis plan

As with all things in PR, you require a plan to handle media relations. Traditionally, there are three things you need to ensure:

1. Have a credible spokesperson. Has to be "human" and good "talent".

2. The spokesperson will be your public focal point and become the organisation's "face" of the crisis. Equally important, is to have a physical focal point – a location and/or set up (procedures) for distributing information. This may be a certain place and time (media conferences), or web updates. It's important to establish the organisation at the centre of the crisis as the single authoritative point for information.

3. Your processes for issuing information must be clear. Who does what, when and how? What methods will you use. Who needs to know? who has to sign off?

4. Today, a social media strategy needs to be incorporated into media management in crises, because the first thing the media will do is go to your web site and hone in on hashtags (#) related to the organisation and the incident. As with point 2, it's essential to have a central SM presence.

Your nerve centre

That central SM presence is the company web site, which in turn leads to other elements of information-based social media. Part of the web site is the SM crisis centre, or the SM newsroom.

The social media newsroom

Holtz (2011) outlines the following six ways to construct your online newsroom.

1. Include your social content. Your latest blog posts, tweets, and other social content should be available from your newsroom. For examples, see Cisco Systems, BASF or Hitachi Data Systems.
2. Make it sharable. The easier it is for people to share your assets, the more likely it is your assets will get shared. The Electrolux newsroom features sharing options for every story and every release. You can also make your assets sharable by adding embed codes, easily done by using file sharing sites like YouTube, SlideShare and Scribd to archive sharable versions of your material.
3. Let conversations happen. Commenting should be enabled on every press release and other content. Reading an interesting comment thread is often the inspiration people need to let others know about your company's content.
4. Make it navigable. Tag clouds, useful search engines, clear categories (like on the Cisco Systems site) and other techniques can make it easy for reporters, editors, bloggers and others to find the material they're looking for.
5. Make it easy for people to connect with you. Unbelievably, some companies don't even include phone numbers in online press releases. You should include a variety of contact methods, accommodating the means by which people connect, from email and Skype to the phone and Facebook.
6. Make it easy for people to stay connected. RSS feeds, email updates, SMS subscriptions and other options should allow people to opt in to get your news delivered to them.

The action plan

This week's reading, "Damage control in the digital age" (Barefoot and Sabo), gave students an overview of what the public expects when something goes wrong (page 132).

One important point from the reading is that the web can hasten and fuel a crisis by spreading it faster and wider than any regional newspaper or radio program can. Here's the kicker: even if you choose not to write a blog, use social networking sites,

or build relationships with new influencers, the Web will still impact on your crisis.

As mentioned, the Web also allows you to respond quickly: no more necessary delays while media releases are drafted or press conferences organised.
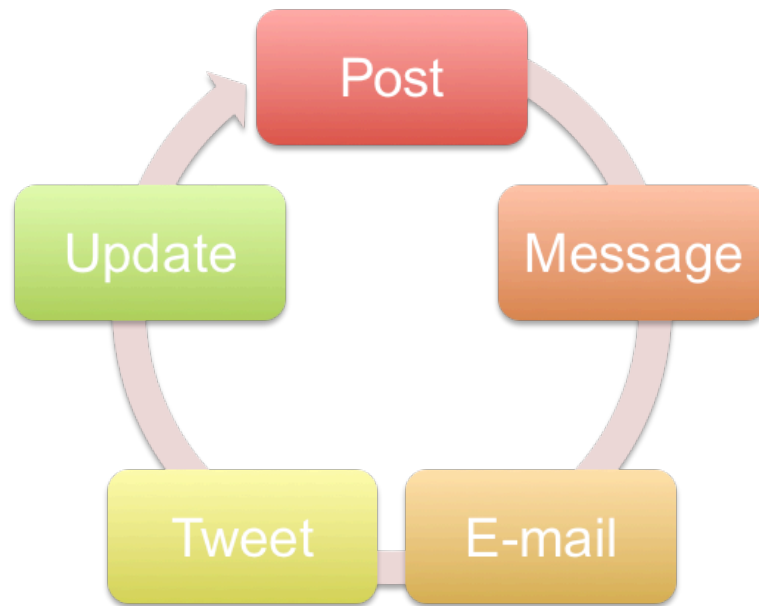
Here are some simple rules to develop your content and then choose from a variety of channels to circulate your response to stakeholders immediately:

- o Post to your blog.
- o Message your Facebook group.
- o Send an email announcement to your newsletter subscribers,
     or tweet a link to your blog post from Twitter.
- o Update your web site ... Constantly, with new releases, video and podcasts.

By publishing your who, what, when, where, why, and how before the media does, you stay ahead of the news cycle and squash rumors that spread when the press and public try to fill in the blanks on their own.

Finally, six easy rules to follow to keep the Web on your side during a crisis.

1. Don't 'hide' (be out there and up front, take the lead on topics).
2. Use your blog.
3. Monitor the web.
4. Clean up your mess (act quickly to correct mistakes).
5. Use ads to be found (if you can afford it).
6. Occupy dedicated online space.

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Conclusion

I hope this has give you some insight into how social media should be used in PR. As I said at the beginning, it's not a how-to manual, but a primer to focus your thoughts on likely causes of action and the wide range of tools which can be used to conduct PR programs in the social media space/s.

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