

# **PROBLEMS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS: MISREMEMBERING THE PAST AND IGNORING THE FUTURE**

Michael Kent, University of Oklahoma  
MKent@ou.edu

Maureen Taylor, University of Oklahoma  
MTaylor@ou.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

Technology scholarship is now the biggest area of study in public relations, accounting for more journal submissions than any area—even crisis. This essay argues for a more reflexive approach to social media and new technology in public relations. Using the results of a recent Delphi study of new technology as a guide, this essay explores the implications of some of the trends in new technology and offers suggestions for communication professionals and scholars regarding how to safeguard stakeholders and publics while still moving forward with social media and technology tools as they evolve.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For senior public relations academics and professionals, technological changes seem to have happened so fast that we tend to forget when it was once acceptable to send out professional documents typed on a typewriter, or pick up a telephone rather than sending a text message or email to communicate with someone. The early days of computers and the Internet were filled with critiques and warnings to be cautious about digital technologies. In the early 90s, there were regular discussions questioning how personal information stored in private databases might be used by corporations or the government to undermine democracy and personal privacy (Burnham, 1984; Mosco & Wasco, 1988; Postman, 1993; Vallee, 1982).

Unfortunately, as a study from the Annenberg Center for the Digital Future reports, younger professionals (for example millennials, 18–34 years old), who have grown up immersed in new technology and social media, are more comfortable sharing personal information with corporations and the government than older professionals (University of Southern California, 2013). Younger people are simply more trusting of technology and more willing to share personal information.

As public relations scholars, we view social media as only one relationship building tool among many. As we look at how public relations scholars and industry practitioners treat social media, we are concerned that many scholars are misremembering the past, and ignoring the future. Business and public relations educators have a role in rectifying this situation. This essay tries to

remedy the situation by examining the results of a recent Delphi study of new technology conducted with communication and technology professionals from seven countries.

Only someone who has lived through the halcyon days before social media and the Internet can appreciate the difference. Blind trust in the present, and a belief that technology is a panacea, poses grave dangers for the future. Blind trust in anything is usually a bad idea, and technology—for all the wonders it brings—also includes risks and hurdles. To serve the needs of the majority of stakeholders, stakeholders, and publics will require a more critical and detailed understanding of technology and its role in society.

This essay will first briefly review some of the historical issues of technology and show that in the past a healthy skepticism generally accompanied new technological advancements. Second, the essay reports the results from a Delphi study of technology professionals that identified the implications of some of the trends in new technologies on relationships in society. We offer suggestions for public relations scholars and public relations professionals regarding ways to safeguard stakeholders and publics while still integrating evolving digital communication tools into their communication strategy.

## **QUESTIONING TECHNOLOGY**

Computers have revolutionized almost every aspect of modern life: agriculture, commerce, dating, education, health, mass media, publishing, science, transportation, and war. Similarly, the Internet has shaped almost every aspect of modern life as a result of information sharing and retrieval, connectivity, and ubiquity, making many of our public and private interactions quick and easy. The early discussions about computers and the Internet were filled with critique and warnings, as computer technology evolved over the last half-century. Citizens were warned to be cautious about how we used our technologies. Critics sought to protect individuals' privacy, ensure democracy and political economy, and most importantly, to avoid manipulation (cf., Burnham, 1984; Mosco & Wasco, 1988; Postman, 1993; Vallee, 1982).

Something similar has occurred with the evolution of the Internet and social media as early critics asked questions about our technologies like whether “Google makes us stupid” (cf., Anderson & Rainie, 2010; Carr, 2008) or whether social media friends actually translate into happiness and real-world success (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011; Kross et al., 2013). Historically, advances in technology were accompanied by skepticism of the tools (cf. Mosco & Wasco, 1988), the next issue to be explained.

### **Healthy Skepticism of Technology**

The study of new technologies, in particular computer technologies, goes back almost as far as the “media effects” research about television (almost half a century) to the work of computer scientists, philosophers, and media scholars like Brand (1988), Burnham, (1984), Lasch (1979),

Levinson (1997), Mosco and Wasco (1988), McLuhan (1964), Negroponte (1995), Postman (1984, 1993), and Vallee (1982). Many early technology scholars were truly ahead of their time, understanding the dangers of the vast databases of information that had already been compiled by the early '80s, and warning academics and citizens not to be taken in by the technology snake oil salesmen selling the Internet as a panacea for the ills of society (cf. Stoll, 1995, 1999). Vallee (1982), for example, argued in the early '80s:

...you cannot store information in a computer in the first place! All you can ever store in a computer is DATA, and the relationship between data and information is a fundamental mystery.... it follows that we cannot talk about data bases [sic] in any abstract way. We need to specify exactly what we are doing: what we have in mind to store, how often the data base will change, what the purpose of the system is, who will use it, and what other processes it will affect within the organization it serves and within the society at large. (p. 48)

For more than three decades, we have known that “data” is not trivial, and that the people who control data have an obligation to safeguard it, and not exploit it. Indeed, Vallee drives this point home when he writes: “Real power resides with those who set up the structure for others to think about because they define what is available and what is not, what is recorded and what is forgotten” (1982, p. 87).

More than two decades before the HTML based World Wide Web came online in 1993, computer scientists like Vallee (1982) and Burnham (1984) already understood what was at stake:

The overwhelming influence of computers is hard to exaggerate. Linked computers have become as essential to the life of our society as the central nervous system is to the human body. Industries engaged in the processing of information by computers now generate about half of the gross national product of the United States. The Social Security Administration, AT&T, the Internal Revenue Service, the insurance industry, the Pentagon, the bankers and the federal intelligence agencies could not function without the computer. Access to a computer is one way to define class, with those who cannot or will not plug themselves into a terminal standing on the bottom rung of the social ladder. (Burnham, 1984, p. 7)

Unforeseen by most lawmakers and policy experts today, but well understood for decades, has been the privacy risks from our technologies. Indeed, three decades ago, Burnham described the emergence of the current NSA spying operations:

Privacy, however, is far more than the aesthetic pleasure of Charles Dickens. And the gradual erosion of privacy is not just the unimportant imaginings of fastidious liberals. Rather, the loss of privacy is a key symptom of one of the fundamental social problems of our age: the growing power of large public and private institutions in relation to the individual citizen [p. 9] ...Once a government agency or corporation has invested its expertise and capital in creating a surveillance system to track a single segment of the

population that society agrees needs watching, it is hard to resist the temptation to extend the surveillance to other classes. (1984, p. 33)

The critique of technology is a healthy part of the diffusion of technology in our education, business, and political lives. Understanding the past prepares us for the future. Ignorance of the past is a second problem in our current understanding of technology.

### **History of Diffusion and Cumulative Effects**

The statement “technology moves so fast that no one can know it” is inaccurate at best. As Hannemyr (2013) explained, one of the key academic urban legends about technology is the “how long it took...” story and the often cited (but specious) statistic that “It took 37 years for radio to reach 50 million listeners, 34 years for the telephone to have 50 million customers, 13 years for television to reach 50 million viewers and 4 years for the Internet to reach 50 million subscribers” (p. 111). Unfortunately, the fifty million as a percentage of the population (i.e., diffusion) is not comparable. The U.S. population in 1878 (when the telephone was introduced), was just 38.5 million (a seventh of what it is today). Henry Ford had not invented the moving assembly line yet. No large infrastructure existed to publicize or produce the technology. And no one really needed it (much like the Internet when it was introduced). Thus, as Hannemyr points out, “the early adoption rates for all three media are roughly of the same order of magnitude.... This becomes even more obvious if instead of plotting the absolute number of users, we plot usage as a percentage of the total population” (p. 116).

Understanding the cumulative effect of the diffusion of technologies is not actually very difficult. Cellular telephones, an indispensable multifaceted device today, follow a very straightforward development pattern. The First generation (1G) cellular technology appeared in 1983, the second Generation (2G) cellular technology appeared in 1991, the third Generation (3G) cellular technology appeared in 2001, and the fourth Generation (4G) cellular technology appeared in 2011. While these dates are approximate, we have seen a fairly consistent ten-year cycle for about thirty years (cf. Woyke, 2012).

The cellular phone diffusion example can also be applied to social media. A phone that was “state of the art” in 1991 is considered a museum piece in 2014. Likewise, we argue that the social media tools of today are destined for the museums of the future. It is public relations theories and frameworks that will ultimately influence social relations, not social media tools. Yet, we wonder if public relations scholars are aware of the diffusion of technologies and ready to provide a healthy skepticism of today’s tools? The next section explores how the field of public relations has embraced the idea of social media as a new communication technology tool and asks why so few scholars are critiquing social media’s dominance as a communication tool.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS EMBRACES, NOT QUESTIONS, NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

Kent (2014) noted that “over the last decade, interest in new technology research has increased tenfold, and technology related submissions to *Public Relations Review* now represent one of the top three areas of interest” (p. 1). In public relations, the scholarship on computer technologies is less than 20 years old. Johnson (1997) first asked practitioners in 1995 about how they used the World Wide Web as part of their communication with publics. Her findings foreshadowed many of the issues faced by practitioners today as they seek to use all types of communication technologies to communicate with publics. A special issue of *Public Relations Review* (1998) on Mediated Public Relations, edited by Clare Badaracco, included articles about the use of the Internet in crisis, issues management, and dialogue.

In the late 1990s, public relations scholars’ interest in technology coalesced around the World Wide Web, and today, scholars’ interest is directed toward the newest or youngest communication technologies: social media (Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, Weibo, etc.). In reality, social media are only one tool among many useful communication tools available to organizations for raising their mass media and social media visibility (Yang & Kent, 2013), communicating information to stakeholders and publics, problem solving, collaboration, and increasing sales and brand recognition. Indeed, many tools are more useful than social media. For example, email is still used more than social media, and is a top value for social sharing and as a marketing tool. As Morrison (2014) explains, the per-recommendation value of an email post is significantly higher than other social media:

According to the 2013 Social Commerce Breakdown, a Facebook “like” is worth \$1.41 and a share is worth \$3.58. Twitter and Pinterest are neck and neck with shares worth \$.85 and \$.87 respectively. Shares on “other” networks, which includes sites such as Polyvore and Tumblr, rank lowest at \$.67 in social commerce value. Top value for social sharing goes to email at \$12.10 and Google ranked second with a G+ share valued at \$5.08. (para. 2)

Yet, research on new technology in public relations continues to ignore most other digital technologies. As Zerfass and Schramm (2014) suggest:

The potentials and limitations of online and social media platforms in public relations as well as the actual use in the profession have been a focus of research during the last few decades ...At the same time, consultants, agencies and authors of business books have not rested to propagate the implementation of nearly every channel and technology that has emerged. (para. 1)

Technology scholars in public relations are rarely critical of the tools that they use (cf. Kent 2008, 2010; Taylor & Kent, 2010 for exceptions), and most scholars seem unfamiliar with the extant critiques, or at least rarely cite any critical research in their own studies. In order to address the imbalance of theory and practice and the imbalance in criticism and practice, the next section discusses the results of a recent Delphi study of technology professionals. The findings

have real implications for public relations practice, theory building and the next generation of practitioners.

## **THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY IN PUBLIC RELATIONS: LESSONS FROM A DELPHI STUDY**

Public relations scholars have followed an unreflective approach to the study of new technology and social media, focusing on simple uses rather than on larger issues of communication, community, power, etc. As the discussion about the history of technology criticism above suggested, public relations scholars' approach to research has ignored many of the important social aspects of our new technology and social media tools, such as privacy, personal and professional risks, economic, physical, and psychological harms to stakeholders, creating user friendly, convivial, interfaces (cf. Kent, Saffer, & Pop, 2012, 2013), and the democracy and social capital building potential of new technologies (cf., Kent, 2013). A Delphi study by Kent et al. (2012) was conducted to address these problems.

### **The Delphi Method**

The Delphi method is a research technique originally developed by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s and 1960s. The idea of the Delphi is to engage geographically dispersed experts, as well as to minimize power dynamics and Groupthink errors (cf. Janis, 1982). The Delphi method has the ability to spot trends and identify future issues, make informed decisions about complex, often contentious issues, and build commitment and consensus among participants about an agreed upon course of action. A Delphi study consists of a series of waves, or iterations, of data gathering. In the initial data-gathering step, a survey instrument often gathers open-ended or directed answers, followed by more focused ranking data. Delphi studies often ask experts to make predictions about the future.

Kent et al. (2012) identified a dozen themes and several dozen sub-themes regarding the future of technology. While previous studies have explored some of the major new technology themes, no study has examined the significant sub-themes that predict future public relations opportunities and challenges in technology.

### **Participants and Methodology**

The Kent et al. Delphi study sought the insights of 14 influential technology professionals and academics (cf. Kent & Saffer, 2014). The Delphi group studied included experts with a range of 5-30 years of experience (mean=15) in studying new technology, and who came from 6 countries (Australia, Greece, Finland, Israel, Romania, and the United States). The panelists came from an assortment of professional backgrounds that included technology professionals, academicians,

administrators, and entrepreneurs. Their expertise in new technology included, art, engineering, communication, public relations, professional writing, organizational communication, computer science, and other areas.

The first wave of the Delphi study asked three questions of participants: (1) “What do experts, such as yourself, know about Internet communication technologies or social media that no one else knows?” (Kent & Saffer, 2014) (2) What Internet communication technologies, social media innovations, or trends might prove to be the most important over the next decade and why? And (3) What do technology experts believe will happen with technology over the next 10 years?

As mentioned previously, 12 themes were identified from the answers, and each theme was informed by from 4–11 subthemes. The subthemes are important because they reveal the subtleties of the major themes and point to important questions for public relations professionals to be aware of. All of the themes and subthemes were reported in the Kent and Saffer (2014) article, but only the major themes were examined in detail in the article. Six of the subthemes have been singled out for in-depth analysis in the next section.

## **Toward A More Engaging Use of Technology in Public Relations**

The content of the sub themes can help public relations professionals understand social media better and integrate them into meaningful relationship building. The six themes examined below include: (1) Fragmentation, not integration, will characterize the Internet and society; (2) Remote collaboration technology will be the norm for professionals; (3) The cliquishness of the Internet and social media is making people increasingly partisan and insulating people from the views of others; (4) The democratizing potential of the Internet becomes/or may become, more diluted and less valuable as more people add their voice to the mix; (5) Location and context data will allow us to seamlessly integrate with fellow members of our communities; and (6) Social media has and is changing our perception of what “friends” are. Each theme is explored below.

### ***Theme #1: Fragmentation***

The Delphi panelists predicted that fragmentation, not integration, will come to characterize the Internet and society. One of the early metaphors of the Internet was that it would connect people together (cf. Kent, 2001) because it was a “world wide web.” Indeed, the addressing system for the Internet still uses “WWW...” to connect users to web sites. But research has gradually emerged telling scholars and professionals that the dream of connectivity is not happening. Reports by The Pew Internet and American Life Project have shown that social media do connect people together but only tenuously. The connections mimic cheerleaders or sycophants rather than genuine relationships. Social media users who question the political or social views of their “friends” are simply jettisoned or unfriended (Rainie & Smith, 2012).

Similarly, membership in corporate friend networks like Starbucks' or Nordstrom's Facebook page are comprised almost exclusively of strangers. Indeed, the sheer number of "friends" makes it virtually impossible for members who know each other to interact on the space. Nordstrom has more than 2.4-million likes, while Walmart has more than 34-million likes, and Starbucks has 36-million likes. In reality, these "likes" are meaningless in terms of providing evidence that a relationship exists.

Basically, then, what we have seen over the last decade is a decline in genuine social interaction among human beings communicating in real time and space (Baer, 2012; Twenge, 2014). Virtual social interaction, often among strangers, is taking place in asynchronous time-shifted segments. But, to what end? Important questions are raised from the fragmentation subtheme in terms of online educational experiences (which are increasingly being pushed on students by administrators seeking to increase revenues); job performance (as group interaction increasingly takes place via mediated exchanges and virtual office spaces); and, more importantly, democratic participation (as people no longer identify with coherent ideologies, party labels, or symbols). The fragmentation that we see as technology evolves may be as inevitable as the rising tide, but the important question is what will communication professionals who seek to build relationships do about it?

## ***Theme 2: Collaboration***

The Delphi panelists noted that remote collaboration technology might eventually become the norm for professionals. Remote collaboration is already very common among segments of society. Professionals working in the aid community and government have used tools like Skype for remotely holding meetings with employees for a decade. VOIP (voice over Internet protocol) technology as a means of reducing telecommunication costs has been a common tool for two decades. And many educational experiences are taking place via online, mediated tools. Unfortunately, very little is known about best-practices when it comes to holding virtual meetings, making virtual decisions, and engaging in virtual collaboration. The field of communication has almost a century of experience studying human communication in its various forms, but only about a decade trying to understand how things are different when we use digital/electronic channels.

If the predictions are true about how much professional interaction will take place online, a lot more research needs to be conducted about how those experiences should be structured and organized. If important decisions will be made by people who only engage each other virtually, then organizations need more than a list of "best practices" to guide these decision making interactions.

### ***Theme 3: Cliquishness***

The Delphi panel suggested that cliquishness of the Internet and social media is making people increasingly partisan and insulating people from the views of others. Rainie and Smith (2012) observed that the hope that social media could be a tool for integration has now become the reality that social media is a tool that separates. As people struggle to maintain multiple relationships using dozens of professional and private social networks, they inevitably fall back into tightly knit cliques rather than diverse networks. A typical student or communication professional probably has multiple email accounts (work and private), accounts on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and other social media, as well as an obligation to keep in touch with teachers, organizational members, and external stakeholders and publics. The sheer amount of virtual communication that individuals navigate and engage in on a daily basis dwarfs anything that has ever existed—and expectations for connectivity only keep growing.

Additionally, the abundance of social media and other media mean people have little time left for considering the views of others. In the past, when communication professionals read the major newspapers each day as a means of keeping up-to-date on local, state, and national affairs, some level of journalistic balance existed. This balance was achieved through the editorial staff of major newspapers, and moderated by the ideological prisms that dominated each news source. Although the principle of “balanced news coverage” has probably not existed for at least two decades (Bagdikian, 2004), before the Internet shifted individual citizens into being both news creators and news editors, most people shared similar cultural frames of reference. Today, individuals follow people, rather than parties, groups, or ideas, as we interact in self-selected friend networks, follow individual bloggers, and have control over what new ideas we expose ourselves to. That insularity means reduced access to new or novel ideas (Granovetter, 1973), and a reduced ability to understand long-term issues and trends.

### ***Theme 4: Democratization***

The Delphi panelists also noted that the democratizing potential of the Internet becomes/or might become more diluted and less valuable as more people add their voice to the mix. More voices entering discussions does not mean better quality discussions, as small group theorists discovered decades ago (Janis, 1982).

One of the more compelling comments that emerged from Kent and Saffer’s (2014) Delphi study came from Rob (“CmdrTaco”) Malda, who founded the influential technology blog SlashDot. As Malda explained,

I have a pretty good understanding of how on-line communities form, how to manage them, and better yet, how to build systems that they can use to maximize their collective gains. I think most people tend to oversimplify the problem and sort of miss the point. The first problem is to weed out the noise, and that’s actually not too hard. But after that you need to start raising the best stuff up out of the primordial soup. (2014, p. 574)

In practice, many organizations treat social media as an extension of customer service. The powerful, interactive, social media tools available on the Internet are used as one way, information dissemination tools, or as two-way asymmetrical tools. To our knowledge, they are not being used for planning, decision-making, or relational purposes. The primary reason for this is the assumption that having *more* people affiliated with an organization is inherently better. The belief that more likes on a social media page will translate to more sales, or in some cases, more support following an organizational crisis, is flawed.

The job of public relations is broader than sales, and organizations that use social media as primarily sales tools are taking a myopic focus to social media. The debate over who should have primary control over web sites goes back more than a decade to Grupp and Margaritis (2000) who first argued in *Public Relations Strategist* that public relations should have control over a website that was focused on organizational content, while websites that were used for online sales should be maintained cooperatively by advertising, marketing, and sales staff. At the time of this debate, there were no social media yet except for blogs, and those were still individual, not corporate organs. Organizations can now be visible on any number of thousands of social media sites. Social media have a lot more power than simply another advertising channel.

### ***Theme 5: Location data***

Location and context data will allow us to seamlessly integrate with fellow members of our communities. We may, for example, while looking at a menu in a restaurant, see information about what dishes our friends had and what they thought of them.

Although most people probably do not fantasize about living in an infinitely wired and connected world, the fact is that society and technology are moving in that direction. Public relations professionals should be on the cutting edge of technology, not the trailing edge. When we look around at what kind of research has been conducted in public relations, which primarily focuses on how and whether people use social media, we see a very unsophisticated understanding of new technology in general, and of social media in particular.

Contrast this with the work that is being done in non-communication/public relations areas and we have to ask why our approach is so simplistic. Consider for example recent studies by Mitra and Gilbert (2014) studying “Phrases that Predict Success on Kickstarter,” and Xu, Yang, Rao, Fu, Huang, and Bailey (2014) who studied the value of project updates on crowd-funded campaigns. Consider examples such as Microsoft researchers studying how to diagnose depression using Twitter; Chinese firms studying how to use location-based-services to anticipate the needs of their publics; and health and crisis researchers, cartographers, and meteorologists developing applications to help people communicate during and after crises and natural disasters. Each of these examples suggests that innovative use of social media can help individuals and organizations to better achieve their goals.

But the value of the relationship between information and location has been ignored in public relations' consideration of social media. The examples noted above recognize the link between location and information and are designed to serve the needs of stakeholders *and* publics, rather than solely the needs of organizations. Much of the research conducted outside of professional communication areas represents more ethical and more sophisticated research agendas than trying to understand how to sell more products to consumers. The final theme discussed is related to friendship.

### ***Theme 6: Friendship***

Social media has and is changing our perception of what “friends” are. This last theme gets at the heart of what “social media” really are. On the most basic level, social media are tools that connect people. But, as discussed above, social media are evolving into narcissistic information tools wherein people shy away from contradictory ideologies and are unwilling to confront the views of the very people they call “friends.” Friends who only click on your “like” buttons can hardly be called friends in any technical definition. Indeed, even Webster’s dictionary has a more sophisticated definition of it: “a person who you like and enjoy being with” (Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, 2014). If an individual’s friendship with another person is so tenuous that s/he will unfriend someone over a political comment that questions his/her ideology, clearly the word is being used here in only the loosest fashion.

More importantly, however, we know so little about the overall social, psychological, and political impact of the vast friend networks that billions of people have adopted. Organizations should be concerned. As individual loyalty to other human beings becomes an unfamiliar concept, the kind of identification that organizations hope to engender with their stakeholders and publics will also be threatened.

Public relations scholars and professionals need to expand their awareness of what scholars in other disciplines are doing and begin asking more sophisticated questions. The kinds of issues that are currently being studied in social media have focused on diffusion and media effects theories. Overall, the findings of the Delphi study provide public relations scholars and practitioners with an early warning system of the issues that they will face in the future. The themes provide a reality check as well as a road map for how to use social media to build relationships in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

We are advocates for social media as one tool in the public relations and communication toolbox that seeks to build relationships. Yet we are concerned that many scholars misremember the past as something where technology seemed to already exist in its present form, and in doing so ignore the impact of technology on the future. Two decades from now, what many consider to be the cutting edge of social media will be quaint examples. The diffusion of past technologies and the cumulative effect of their adaption can help us prepare for future technologies, future relationships, and future innovations. A healthy skepticism allows scholars, practitioners, and

students to better understand how communication creates social reality and has the power to build relationships.

By knowing what happened in the past, we can make predictions about the future. One trend that came out in Kent et al. (2012) Delphi study was a sense that the future of technology was unknowable. It is not. As argued earlier in this paper, technology experts in the 1980s saw what was coming today. Professional communicators need to open ourselves up to the bigger picture of technology. We need to consider more than just the latest social media craze and learn to make predictions about the future. We should focus our research on *anticipating* the emerging trends and *creating the tools and trends* that others will adopt. By knowing the past we can build the future for the profession.

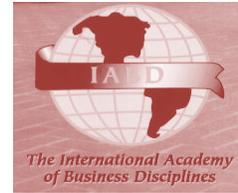
## REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. Q., & Rainie, L., (2010). *The future of the Internet*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2010/Future%20of%20internet%202010%20-%20AAAS%20paper.pdf>.
- Baer, J. (2012). Social media, pretend friends, and the lie of false intimacy. Retrieved from <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-networks/social-media-pretend-friends-and-the-lie-of-false-intimacy>.
- Bagdikian, B. H. (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Brand, S. (1988). *The Media Lab: Inventing the future at M. I. T.* New York: Penguin Books.
- Burnham, D. (1984). *The rise of the computer state*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Carr, N. (2008, July 1). Is Google making us stupid? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868>.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6), 1360–1380.
- Grupp, B. & Margaritis, W. G. (2000). Face off: Who should own the web site. *Public Relations Strategist*, 5(4), 30–35.
- Hampton, K. N., Goulet, L. S., Rainie, L. Purcell, K. (2011). *Social networking sites and our lives*. Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media//Files/Reports/2011/PIP%20-%20Social%20networking%20sites%20and%20our%20lives.pdf>.
- Hannemyr, G. (2003). The Internet as hyperbole: A critical examination of adoption rates. *The Information Society*, 19, 111–121.
- Janis, I. L. (1982). *Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Johnson, M. A. (1997). Public relations and technology: Practitioner perspectives. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(3), 213–236.
- Kent, M. L. (2001). Managerial rhetoric and the metaphor of the World Wide Web. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18(3), 359–375.
- Kent, M. L., (2008). Critical analysis of blogging in public relations. *Public Relations Review* 34(1), 32–40.
- Kent, M. L. (2010). Chapter 45: Directions in social media for professionals and scholars. In R. L. Heath (Ed.) *Handbook of public relations (2nd Edition)*.. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 643-656
- Kent, M. L. (2013). Using social media dialogically: Public relations role in reviving democracy. *Public Relations Review*, 39(3), 337–345.
- Kent, M. L. (2014). Rethinking technology research and social media. *Public Relations Review* 40(1), 1–2.
- Kent, M. L. & Saffer, A. J. (2014). A Delphi study of the future of new technology research in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 40(4), 568–576.
- Kent, M. L., Saffer, A. J., & Pop, R. A. (November, 2012). A Delphi study of the future of new technology research in public relations. Competitive paper delivered to the 98th annual meeting of the National Communication Association (NCA), Public Relations Division, Orlando, Florida.
- Kent, M. L., Saffer, A. J., & Pop, R. A. (2013). Where will technology take us? New directions in social media: A Whitepaper. Retrieved from [http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/Delphi\\_Kent\\_Saffer\\_Pop\\_10\\_25\\_2013.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/Delphi_Kent_Saffer_Pop_10_25_2013.pdf).
- Kent, M. L., & Yang, A. (2013, November). *Unlocking the Secrets to Social Media Visibility*. Competitive paper delivered to the 99th annual meeting of the National Communication Association (NCA), Public Relations Division, Washington, DC.
- King, Z. (2012, May 26–June 1). The goldilocks network. *New Scientist*, 2866, 37–39.
- Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D., Lin, N., Shablack, H., Jonides, J., & Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLOS One*, 8(8), e69841.
- Lahav, T. (2014, in press). Public relations activity in the new media in Israel 2012: Changing relationships. *Public Relations Review*.
- Lasch, C. (1979). *The culture of narcissism: American life in an age of diminishing expectations*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.
- Levinson, P. (1997). *The soft edge: A natural history and future of the information revolution*. New York: Routledge.
- McLuhan, M. (1999/1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary. (2014). Friend [1]. *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/friend>.

- Mitra, T., & Gilbert, E. (2014). The language that gets people to give: Phrases that predict success on kickstarter. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work* Retrieved from <http://diyhpl.us/~bryan/papers2/paperbot/537c4cb93e3047f7a1c9884bf68df195.pdf>.
- Morrison, K. (2014, January 22). Facebook likes might not be as valuable as you think. *SocialTimes: Your social media source*. Retrieved from [http://socialtimes.com/facebook-likes-might-valuable-think\\_b141054](http://socialtimes.com/facebook-likes-might-valuable-think_b141054).
- Mosco, V. & Wasco, J. (Eds.) (1988), *The political economy of information*. Madison Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Negroponte, N. (1995). *Being digital*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Paek, H-J., Hove, T., Jung, Y., & Cole, R. T. (2013). Engagement across three social media platforms: An exploratory study of a cause-related PR campaign. *Public Relations Review*, 39(5), 526–533.
- Postman, N. (1984). *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Postman, N. (1993). *Technopoly: The surrender of culture to technology*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Rainie, L., & Smith, A. (2012). *Social networking sites and politics*. Washington DC: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Social-networking-and-politics.aspx>.
- Schultz, F., Utz, S., & Göritz, A. (2011). Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via twitter, blogs and traditional media. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 20–27.
- Sebastião, P. S. (2013). Portuguese PR consultancy websites: Content and presence. *Public Relations Review*, 39(5), 584–586.
- Spinney, L. (2012, April 28–May 4). All about me. The curse of generation Y. *New Scientist*, 2862, 44–47.
- Stoll, C. (1995). *Silicon snake oil: Second thoughts on the information highway*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Stoll, C. (1999). *High-tech heretic: Why computers don't belong in the classroom and other reflections by a computer contrarian*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Taylor, M. & Kent, M. L. (2010). Anticipatory socialization in the use of social media in public relations: A content analysis of PRSA's Public Relations Tactics. *Public Relations Review*, 36(3), 207–214.
- Twenge, J. (2014). It's a narcissism enabler. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/room-fordebate/2013/09/23/facebook-and-narcissism/social-media-is-a-narcissism-enabler>.

- sUniversity of Southern California. (2013, April 22). Is online privacy over? Findings from the USC Annenberg center for the digital future show millennials embrace a new online reality. *USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism*. Retrieved from [http://annenberg.usc.edu/News%20and%20Events/%20News/130422CDF\\_Millennials.aspx](http://annenberg.usc.edu/News%20and%20Events/%20News/130422CDF_Millennials.aspx).
- Vallee, J. (1982). *The network revolution: Confessions of a computer scientist*. Berkeley CA: And/Or Press.
- Verčič, A. T., & Verčič, D. (2013). Digital natives and social media. *Public Relations Review*, 39(5), 600–602.
- Woyke, E. (2012, January 20). Apple and Google seek to defy 10-year smartphone OS life cycle. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/elizabethwoyke/2012/01/20/apple-and-google-seek-to-defy-10-year-smartphone-os-life-cycle/>.
- Xu, A., Yang, X., Rao, H., Fu, W.-T., Huang, S.-W., Bailey, B. P. (2014). Show me the money! An analysis of project updates during crowdfunding campaigns. Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. Retrieved from <http://web.engr.illinois.edu/~xu26/indexfiles/crowdfunding-xu.pdf>.
- Yang, A. & Kent, M. L. (2014). Unlocking the secret to social media visibility. *Public Relation Review*, 40(3), 562–564.
- Zerfass, A., & Schramm, D. M. (2014, in press). Social media newsrooms in public relations: A conceptual framework and corporate practices in three countries. *Public Relations Review*.
- Zhong, X., & Lu, J. (2013). Public diplomacy meets social media: A study of the U.S. Embassy's blogs and micro-blogs. *Public Relations Review*, 39(5), 542–548.



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2, December 2014

ISSN 2165-3240



**A PUBLICATION OF FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE  
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF BUSINESS DISCIPLINES**

**[WWW.IJIR.NET](http://WWW.IJIR.NET)**