This article was downloaded by: *[James Madison University]*
On: *13 October 2010*
Access details: *Access Details: [subscription number 789358210]*
Publisher *Routledge*
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Journal of Public Relations Research
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t775653694

The New Dynamic in Corporate Media Relations: How Fortune 500 Companies Are Using Virtual Press Rooms to Engage the Press

Justin E. Pettigrew[a]; Bryan H. Reber[a]
[a] Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia,

Online publication date: 04 October 2010

To cite this Article Pettigrew, Justin E. and Reber, Bryan H.(2010) 'The New Dynamic in Corporate Media Relations: How Fortune 500 Companies Are Using Virtual Press Rooms to Engage the Press', Journal of Public Relations Research, 22: 4, 404 — 428
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/10627261003801412
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10627261003801412

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Journal of Public Relations Research, 22(4):404–428, 2010
Copyright © Taylor & Francis Group, LLC
ISSN: 1062-726X print/1532-754X online
DOI: 10.1080/10627261003801412

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The New Dynamic in Corporate Media Relations: How Fortune 500 Companies Are Using Virtual Press Rooms to Engage the Press

Justin E. Pettigrew and Bryan H. Reber
Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

This study examines the use of dialogic components of *Fortune* 500 company Web site press rooms. A content analysis of all *Fortune* 500 company press sites examined site content. Results showed that corporations have increased their Web presence, and that dialogic components on the Web are improving for journalists' use. This study also suggests that operationalized elements of dialogic theory as it applies to the Web should be continually revisited as technology develops.

Research has examined how journalists use search engines and government Web sites to gather news (Garrison, 2003), but little, if any, research has looked at how content on corporate Web sites may be used by journalists in their reporting. Journalists have repeatedly said that poor Web site usability could reduce or completely eliminate their press coverage of a company (Nielsen Norman Group, 2001). This means that keeping up with technology and learning to use the Web as a key tool for sharing knowledge, ideas, or corporate information must be an integral part of communications between journalists and corporations. The corporate Web site is also an integral way to enhance an organization's credibility with the media (Horton, 2001).

Correspondence should be sent to Justin E. Pettigrew, 120 Hooper Street, Athens, GA 30602-3018. E-mail: jeppr@uga.edu

Most companies, regardless of their size, are working to create some kind of presence on the Internet, either to improve sales, enhance reputation, or provide more information to their constituencies. Within a framework of dialogic and relationship theories from the public relations literature (Grunig & Huang, 2000; Kent & Taylor, 1998), this study seeks to examine the practices of Fortune 500 companies in using the Web to build and maintain relationships with the press by improving the content of online press rooms. This study will build on previous research to examine the employment of dialogic components in Fortune 500 company Web site press rooms, and attempt to shed new light on how these sites facilitate, improve, or, in some cases, damage relationships between corporations and members of the print media.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND BACKGROUND

The theoretical foundations for this study are drawn from public relations literature because online press rooms should provide journalists access to essential corporate information and, thereby, serve a media relations function for the corporation.

Dialogic Communication

Dialogic theory is grounded in Habermas' concept of the public sphere. According to Calhoun (1999), Habermas called for the democratization of discourse. Such democratization, ideally, is in evidence in the public relations practitioner/journalist relationship that is the focus of this study.

Power is inevitably an artifact of any discursive act. "Foucault (1980) did not conceive of power as only engendered from the top downwards; rather, power was understood to reside in a network of relationships that depended upon the 'production, accumulation, circulating and functioning of a discourse' (p. 93)" (Motion, 2005, pp. 505–506). Motion (2005) further noted that a Foucauldian approach can be characterized by rejection of common power conceptions and an embracing of the discursive. Therefore, tactics that flatten discursive relationships between public relations practitioners and their publics, employ a Foucauldian approach.

Finally, Roper (2005) suggested that symmetrical communication, a highly regarded public relations stance, could potentially lead to greater hegemony for an organization. But, dialogic theory suggests that by focusing on the communicative process rather than an end compromise we are better prepared to discuss realistic corporate/stakeholder interactions.

Dialogic Communication via the Web

Kent and Taylor's (1998) research into the area of dialogic relationships via the Web provides the foundational underpinnings for this study. Their principles serve as a useful means of operationalizing relationship theory concepts.

1. Create a dialogic loop. A dialogic loop allows publics to query organizations and, more important, it offers organizations the opportunity to respond to questions, concerns, and problems (Kent & Taylor, 1998).
2. Information should be useful to all publics. Content is what should drive an effective Web site. Sites are visited because they have something of on-going value to offer visitors. This feature offers the basis for a dialogic relationship because publics come to rely on an organization's site to provide useful and trustworthy information (Kent & Taylor, 1998).
3. Web sites should generate return visits. A Web site must promise and provide updates regularly to generate more return visits (Kent & Taylor, 1998). For journalists, Web site content developers (i.e., PR practitioners) must be even more cognizant of the need to provide up-to-the-minute information and feedback for inquiries.
4. Interface should be easy. Web sites should be arranged intuitively, that is, flow logically from one area to another, and be easy to navigate (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Horton (2001) stated that "users want information in ways that they understand" (p. 80). For journalists, this is particularly important, given the limited time members of the press usually have to search for information.
5. Web sites should conserve visitors. Finally, Kent and Taylor (1998) stated that links should not lead users away from an organization's site to others' sites (Kent & Taylor, 1998). For journalists, the more accurate, timely, and appropriate information they can find on the corporate site, the less likely they are to turn to other sites where they might find less credible information. However, Horton (2001) argued that "placing links from your organization's Web site to outside sites is part of credibility enhancement. It helps users cross-check information. Linking to a story about your organization on an established publication's Web page is particularly powerful" (p. 80).

There are limits to the idea of dialogic communication via a company's Web site with the press. Hon and Grunig (1999) suggested that

> good relationships [between public relations practitioners and] reporters are ones in which both feel they have some degree of control over the reporting

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

> of the organization . . . that they have a communal relationship so each helps the other even though they may get nothing in return. (p. 24)

However, because dialogue suggests equality among parties and the sharing of information, even the most sincere corporation might find it difficult to create a situation of equality in communicating with its various stakeholders, especially reporters (Stoker & Tusinski, 2006). Also, there is always an element of reactivity in public relations, and the timing of an event may prevent corporate practitioners from providing journalists with the information they desire as immediately as they desire it on the corporate press site.

Two key concepts of dialogue are important in examining the online resources made available to journalists by *Fortune* 500 companies. First, as Botan (1997) suggests, "dialogue manifests itself more as a stance, orientation, or bearing in communication rather than a specific method, technique or format" (p. 202). This is combined with Pearson's (1989) idea that ethical public relations should involve a dialogic "system" rather than monologic "policies." Second, dialogue begins with assertion, an action or a statement, and counterstatement. According to Heath (1994), "The dialectic of act and counteract characterizes relationships between companies [and other organizations] and their stakeholders" (p. 235). Communication should not be a means to an end, but rather an end in itself (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Ledingham, Bruning, Tomlinson, and Lesko (1997) found that many factors that influence personal relationships (trust, openness, involvement, investment and commitment) also affect organization-public relationships.

Additionally, Kent and Taylor (2002) noted that if the dialogic process is subverted through manipulation, disconfirmation, or exclusion, then the end result will not be dialogic. For corporate Web sites lacking the dialogic loop in Web communication, the Internet becomes nothing more than a new monologic communication medium (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Existing Research

Garrison (2003) wrote, "Journalists using the Web have expressed concern for the quality of sites when gathering information" (p. 66). He noted that research has shown that journalists demand well-structured and well-attributed sites. And they use Web sites to find elusive and local information. But "journalists did not take advantage of the potential of online research" (p. 66). Garrison found that journalists relied heavily on search engines. Such search engines will likely lead to some corporate press room information, but data on attitudes toward press rooms is lacking.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Past studies have indicated that the majority of the time Web sites have not provided the information that journalists were looking for (Bransford, 2001). Gustavsen and Tilley (2003) found that online sites for journalists were only modestly interactive.

Journalists often reported not finding what they were looking for on company sites, and a few even suggested that their coverage of companies with poor Web presence is skewed negatively, if they cover the companies at all (Esrock & Leichty, 1999). Subsequently, content analyses of company Web sites have been conducted and have confirmed media allegations that these sites are not sufficiently providing information journalists seek, and the content that is provided there is overly difficult to locate (Callison, 2003). In the Bransford study (2001), journalists indicated that they like the immediate delivery capabilities of the Web, and they were likely to visit a corporation's Web site before telephoning a corporate media relations expert. The study concluded, however, that a visit to the company Web page was no guarantee that press releases, corporate information, or contact information would be found.

An experiment with 20 journalists asked them to find basic information on 10 corporate Web sites for a hypothetical story assignment (Nielsen, 2001). Participating journalists searched for a PR practitioner's telephone number, management information, and organizational commitment to social responsibility. On average, the journalists found answers to each of the questions only 60% of the time, and in every single case, journalists said they would have to leave the sites because they failed to deliver the needed information.

Furthermore, a gap exists between the goals that PR practitioners have for organizational Web sites and what those traditional sites are capable of delivering in terms of building relationships between an organization and journalists (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007).

Journalists are reporting that they have less staff to cover the news, and most of them are stating that they have more work to do now than ever before ("What a Journalist Wants," 2000). From a relationship-building standpoint, the Web provides an efficient tool to supplement phone conversations, face-to-face contact, e-mail exchanges, and other interactions between corporations and members of the media. Several researchers have examined how the Web can be used to create and enhance communication between corporations and the media (Callison, 2003; Esrock & Leichty, 1999; Hill & White, 2000; Reber & Kim, 2006; Ryan, 2003; Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007; Shin & Cameron, 2003; Taylor, Kent, & White 2001; White & Raman, 1999). For example, Esrock & Leichty (1999) found that corporate Web sites were used to communicate with investors, journalists, and consumers, but were underutilized in reaching other stakeholders. Relationships

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

can also be adapted and changed through the World Wide Web by including "the personal touch that makes public relations effective" (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 323). With the use of new tools such as blogs, wikis, or RSS technologies becoming increasingly prevalent, the idea of the Internet as the key tool for sharing knowledge, ideas, or corporate information is growing (Alfonso & de Valbuena Miguel, 2006). Web sites also "offer corporations an important impression management tool because they represent a constantly available source of information for an organization's publics, as well as a means to gather information from members of those publics" (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007, p. 345). Although the impact of this new reality on corporate communications in companies and organizations is still not well-defined, it is obvious that the Internet is a rapidly changing environment, and PR professionals should be aware of its importance (Alfonso & de Valbuena Miguel, 2006).

In 2003, Callison conducted a study of all Fortune 500 company press sites examining the presence of online press rooms, what those rooms were actually called on the site, and the material included in such press rooms. Out of 499 sites examined, 195 contained press rooms labeled with names that clearly identified the linked area of the Web site as a media resource (Callison, 2003). Labels for press rooms appearing in his research included "News Room," "Press Room," "Media," "Media Center," or "Media Relations" (Callison, 2003). No other label was used more than 10 times (Callison, 2003). For content, the average press room in the 2003 study contained 6.46 ($SD = 3.62$) different items (Callison, 2003). Press releases were the most common item present, appearing in 189 (97%) press rooms (Callison, 2003). Executive bios or profiles were the next most common item, appearing in 100 (51%) of the sites examined. A public relations practitioner listed by name appeared in 112 (57%) of the sites in his study, with phone numbers appearing in 96% of the press rooms where an individual was the most intimate contact (Callison, 2003).

The results of many of the studies and experiments that have been conducted on public relations practitioners' use of the Web have led researchers to mixed conclusions. Much of the existing research has indicated that many corporate communications and public relations professionals are still ill-equipped to handle changes in communication methods that the Internet is precipitating, and are behind schedule when it comes to Web use (Adams, 1999; Geibel, 1999; Gower & Cho, 2001; Holtz, 1999; Porter & Sallot, 2003). This suggests a need for continuing adaptation of strategic plans to incorporate this new reality, and the necessity of an understanding of online processes beyond simple use (Alfonso & de Valbuena Miguel, 2006). In their foundational research, Kent and Taylor (1998) insisted that, for organizations to create and maintain sites that "enhance interest in their organization,"

"contribute to public dialogue" and "increase public knowledge and awareness," they must construct sites with an understanding of how the Web functions (p. 326). More recent research has suggested that corporate Web sites may also benefit by utilizing the emerging personalization capabilities of the Internet medium to interact with various audiences, thereby enhancing their corporation's image (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007).

Other studies have found that public relations professionals, at least, perceive the importance of a Web site for engaging in interactive communication, and are contributing regularly to their organizations' Web site. A survey of members of the Public Relations Society of America conducted in 2003 reported that 98% of respondents contribute to their organization's Web site, and most post materials directly to their sites (Ryan, 2003). A 2007 study assessed corporate impression management techniques among 110 Fortune 500 company Web sites (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007). The researchers found that all 110 sites utilized a competence (appearing intelligent) strategy, and 63.6% of the sites used an ingratiation (appearing likeable) strategy. All but four Web sites offered an e-mail address for consumer feedback. Nearly 75% of the sites offered an active link to a help desk, and 10% of the sites offered a way for visitors to personalize site content on each visit (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2007). This raises interesting questions about what kinds of, and how much, information is provided by Fortune 500 companies for explicit use by the press. More important for this research, it raises questions about dialogic tools available specifically for members of the media on Fortune 500 company sites.

As a dialogic medium, the Internet may be viewed as a "convivial tool," in that technology, itself, cannot create nor destroy relationships. Rather, it is how the technology is used that influences organization-public relationships (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 324).

Interorganizational Relationships and the Web

Another perspective from the area of organizational theory that could affect the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists, particularly when it comes to the application of Web components for interaction, lies in the idea of Interorganizational Relationships (IORs; Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000). Theoretically, organizations enter relationships because of their dependence on other organizations for resources (Houghland & Sutton, 1978; Van de Ven, 1976). Broom et al. (2000) recast Oliver's (1990) "contingencies of relationship" (pp. 243–246) into characteristics of linkages and exchanges, several of which apply to the IOR perspective of the use of the Web. *Reciprocity* refers to cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among organizations, rather than domination, power, and control (Broom

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

et al., 2000, p. 12). *Stability* affects dialogue through the Web in that these linkages help to achieve orderly, reliable patterns of resource flow and exchanges (Broom et al., 2000, p. 12). *Legitimacy* refers to the interactive component of the interorganizational relationship that lends justification and the appearance of agreement with prevailing norms, rules, beliefs, or expectations of an organization that journalists hold that one hopes adds value to the organization-reporter relationship (Oliver, 1990, pp. 245–246).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the existing research and tenets of dialogic theory, the researchers set out to answer the following research questions.

RQ 1: What relationship-building dialogic components do Fortune 500 companies have as part of their online media relations sites or pages?
RQ 2: Do these Web sites provide easy-to-use features for journalists?
RQ 3: What methods/tools do these Web sites employ to encourage journalists to initially visit them?
RQ 4: What methods do these Web sites have for encouraging return visits by members of the press?

The final research question refers to the application of existing dialogic communication theory to Web-based dialogue between journalists and Fortune 500 company public relations staffs. This research attempts to determine whether the existing typologies continue to stand the test of time or whether they need to be revisited.

RQ 5: Do the existing typologies of online dialogic communication define and encompass current public relations-journalist relationships?

METHOD

Web Site Coding, Sampling Frame, and Coding Instrument

For this study, a coding mechanism using an operationalized construct of Kent and Taylor's (1998) principles of dialogic relationships was developed.

The sampling frame for the Web sites in this study consisted of the rank-ordered Fortune 500 list of companies on the CNN Money Web site (http://www.money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2007full_list/

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

index.html) as of February, 2008. Because the Fortune 500 company list is published only once a year, this meant using the roster of companies from the 2007 report. In all cases, the corporate Web sites had a direct link off of a CNN Money "snapshot" page (http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2008/snapshots), which gave a top-line overview of the corporation.

For content analysis, the Web sites of all 500 companies were randomly assigned to six coders who visited the sites between February 26 and March 22, 2008. In addition to company name, *Fortune* rank, Web address, and industry, each site was systematically coded for content using the deductive operationalization of Kent and Taylor's principles (1988) as developed by Taylor et al. (2001). Data gathered from interviews with 10 purposively selected journalists were also operationalized for coding. The coding sheet included items journalists mentioned they look for in corporate press rooms. This research extends Callison's (2003) study, in that newer technologies such as RSS feeds, blogs, podcasts, streaming video, and the ability to real-time chat were coded. To provide continuity and measure changes or improvements to corporate press rooms, any item that was present in 20% or more of the press rooms in Callison's (2003) study was specifically coded. As in Callison's study, it was expected that some press rooms would not be linked to the homepage. Coders indicated if another term ("Company Information" or "About Us" for example) had to be "clicked through" to enter a secondary page that either served as the portal to the press room or eventually linked to the press room. Coders also recorded how many clicks it took to get from the homepage to the press room. Additionally, the coders were instructed to spend no more than four minutes searching for each press room.

Unlike coding instructions in Callison's (2003) study, coders in this study were instructed to look at the information provided on the main "About Us" or "Company Info" pages and code for the information present on those pages. For example, if company history was not in the press room but could be found on the main "About Us," page, coders were instructed to record it as present. These decisions were justified by the fact that members of the media have become adept enough at Web site navigation to be able to locate such information quickly, even though they had to go slightly deeper into the site (Garcia, 2007). Also, if press releases, financial presentations, or other items that might be useful to journalists were clearly visible on the "Investor Relations" main page, then those items were coded as being present. This decision was based on responses from journalists in the interview portion of this study, as several of them indicated that they frequently visited the "Investor Relations" portion of a corporate site for information. However, if the information was buried further into

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

the "About Us" or "Investor Relations" portions of the site, then those items were not coded as being present. The researchers based this decision on Callison's (2003) idea that, although the information may be present on the site, unless it is readily accessible, it does little to make the journalist's life easier or foster dialogue between the company and members of the press.

Specific contact information for the media was recorded to replicate Callison's (2003) study, with modifications. Whereas Callison (2003) coded for "pager number" and "home telephone number," the researchers concluded that, due to the prevalence of portable e-mail devices, those two items could be omitted from this study. Finally, as with Callison's (2003) study, because media kits often link back to other press room content, current press releases for example, both would be recorded as present.

With the exception of one category (Methods and Tools to Encourage Journalists to Visit the Site First), the Web sites were coded using the categories operationalized by Taylor et al. (2001), such as ease of interface, presence of a dialogic loop, usefulness of information to media publics, conservation of visitors, and generation of return visits.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Intercoder Reliability

The coders for this study were trained undergraduate students in a journalism college. The students used this project to fulfill a course requirement. A sample of 100 sites was randomly selected to test inter-coder reliability. Four pairs separately coded 25 common sites of the 500. Due to low agreement, one set of coders received additional instruction and recoded their initially assigned sites. After this recoding, inter-coder reliability was figured by the Holsti method. The Holsti method of intercoder reliability calculation was used because of its longstanding acceptance as a means of checking reliability (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Intercoder agreement averaged .915 across the 100 sites (i.e., .89, .94, .92, and .91 for the four coder pairs). Because of a coding error and problems with one site loading for a student coder, two sites were revisited and coded 1 week after the coding period. Additionally, random coding checks were performed throughout the analysis of the results to ensure consistency and correctness in data recording.

Dialogic Typologies and the Web

The final question this research addresses is the application of existing dialogic communication theory to Web-based dialogue between journalists and Fortune 500 company public relations staffs. Kent and Taylor's

(1998) typologies, as listed in the literature review, have dominated the public relations literature since the late 1990s, but Web applications have changed dramatically. Therefore, this question attempts to determine whether the existing typologies continue to stand the test of time or whether they need to be revisited. In a series of interviews conducted for another study (Pettigrew, 2008), journalists were asked about their use and opinion of new technologies, what specific new technologies they have found useful on corporate press sites (such as the opportunity for real time chat or online press conferences), and their attitudes about linking or referring readers to corporate sites for blogs, RSS feeds, streaming video, podcasts, photos, or downloadable documents, such as fact sheets. The information gained from their responses was then compared against what Fortune 500 company Web sites are actually providing to determine if the existing typologies should be amended, revised, or shifted to accommodate emerging relationships brought on by changes in journalists' Web use.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

FINDINGS

Of the 500 coded Web sites, only four did not contain an area designated for media or were abandoned after searching the site for at least 4 min. One site was completely password protected and was, therefore, not coded for information. Percentages were computed for the 495 remaining Web sites. Three hundred sixty-one (73%) of the sites had links to a press room labeled with a name ("Press Room," "News," "Media Info," "For the Press," "Corporate News," etc.) directly from their homepage. One hundred thirty-four (27%) of the sites housed their press rooms or press areas under another tab. With few exceptions, this was either the company's "About Us" section or the company's area for investors. Table 1 shows the distribution of where press areas were located. Even when press rooms were located under another

TABLE 1
Where Corporate Press Rooms Were Found

Press room location	*Frequency*	*Percent of total sites*
Company homepage	361	73
"Investor relations" area	62	13
"About us" or "About (company name)"	57	12
"Corporate information"	10	2
"Our company" or "Our firm" or "Our company home"	3	>1
More information	2	>1
Total	495	100

TABLE 2
Password Protected Content on Corporate Web Sites

Protected content	*Frequency*
Photographs	15
Contact information	6
Earnings presentations/calls	6
Financial releases	1
Total	28

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

tab on the homepage, only 39 (8%) sites required two or more *click throughs* to get to press releases or other information useful to the media. Two hundred ninety-five (59%) of the sites contained a general search engine box on their homepage, allowing a journalist to search for information in that manner if needed.

Twenty-eight sites were partially password protected, primarily for photographs and the ability to view Webcasts of financial presentations. Table 2 shows the materials that were password protected on the sites analyzed.

Relationship-Building Components of Fortune 500 Company Web Sites

The first research question considered the components of a Web site that would foster dialogue between journalists and the corporation in question. Table 3 shows the frequency of the items measured in this study. Of the 495 sites examined, 207 (42%) had the ability for journalists to view financial presentations or other live video through a capability of the corporation's Web site. Two (<1%) of the sites allowed the press to communicate with the public relations staff at the corporation through a real-time chat feature, usually available through a third-party application such as Google® or Yahoo!®. Thirty-three (7%) of the sites featured blogs, usually by the company's CEO or other senior executive. One coder noted that a site contained blogs written by outside experts. Another coder noted that a company gave the opportunity for visitors to the site to post to a general consumer blog. RSS feeds were available on 192 (39%) sites, and 296 (60%) of the sites offered some type of streaming video in the form of financial presentations, commercials, short how-to videos or other content. Podcasts were found at 79 (16%) of the sites. Although blogs, RSS feeds, streaming video and podcasts were not always for the explicit purpose of the press, they were available from the site's homepage, press room, "About Us" or "Corporate Information" area or the main investor relations page.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

TABLE 3
Dialogic Components on Corporate Web Sites

Site component	*Manufacturing*	*Retail*	*Technology*	*Insurance*	*Food service*	*Energy*	*Healthcare*	*Banking*	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Streaming video	19%* (63%)**	16% (67%)	11% (57%)	7% (54%)	6% (58%)	6% (66%)	6% (59%)	5% (52%)	296	60
Ability for real-time video	18% (42%)	16% (49%)	12% (45%)	6% (35%)	5% (30%)	5% (35%)	8% (55%)	4% (33%)	207	42
RSS feeds	15% (32%)	15% (41%)	16% (54%)	5% (24%)	6% (33%)	5% (35%)	5% (31%)	8% (56%)	192	39
Opportunity for feedback	14% (14%)	20% (26%)	23% (38%)	9% (22%)	3% (9%)	3% (10%)	2% (7%)	7% (22%)	92	19
Podcasts	14% (12%)	14% (16%)	25% (36%)	4% (8%)	6% (15%)	3% (7%)	8% (21%)	5% (15%)	79	16
Blogs	9% (3%)	12% (6%)	30% (18%)	3% (3%)	3% (3%)	3% (3%)	0	3% (4%)	33	7
Real-time chat feature	0	50% (1%)	0	0	0	0	0		2	>1

*Percentage among the Web sites that had this function (e.g., of the 296 Web sites that had streaming video, 19% of them were in manufacturing Web sites).

**Percentage among Web sites within the industry (e.g., 63% of manufacturing Web sites had streaming video).

Among specific industries, manufacturing sites contributed the highest percentage (19%) to the total number of sites with streaming video. Sixty-seven percent of retail sites had streaming video, the highest percentage of any industry examined specifically in the study.

Easy-to-Use Features for Journalists

The second research question explored the specific items that were included in corporate press rooms. Names of specific PR contacts were found on 284 (58%) sites, with specific phone numbers for them in 254 (51%) press rooms and specific e-mail addresses in 192 (39%). A general e-mail address for press inquiries was found in 251 (51%) of the press rooms visited. Fax numbers for PR staff were included on 65 (13%) sites, with 21 (4%) public relations practitioners providing their cell phone numbers. A general office phone number was available on 369 (75%) sites, with a physical address on 87 (18%) sites. Press releases that had been posted within the past 30 days were found on 457 (92%) sites; press releases that had been updated in the past seven days were found in 325 (66%) press rooms. Two hundred twenty-five (45%) sites contained a press release search engine. Links to SEC documents were found on 458 (93%) sites, either in the company's press room or on the main page for investors. Any downloadable documents, including fact sheets, corporate information, product information, brochures, and financial information were found on 422 (85%) corporate sites. A general company profile was found 383 (77%) times, with a corporate history or backgrounder found on 363 (73%) sites. Three hundred sixty-five (74%) sites contained biographies of executives, and 81 (16%) contained speeches by executives. Table 4 contains all components that were measured and their frequencies.

The manufacturing industry contributed the highest percentage (18%) to the total number of sites with links to SEC documents. But 100% of energy industry Web sites had links to SEC documents; 98% of technology industry sites had such links and 97% of both food service and healthcare industry sites had links to SEC documents.

Methods and Tools Employed to Encourage Initial Visits by Journalists

For research question three, the components of each site that would be an incentive for journalists to visit the press room were examined. Forty-nine (10%) sites allowed members of the press to register with the company, and 283 (57%) sites contained some type of feature or third-party news (i.e., an in-house generated feature or a clipping from a major newspaper or broadcast news source). This also included features written specifically for the corporate Web site itself. Press release archives going back at least

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

TABLE 4
Easy to Use Content for Journalists

Content	*Manufacturing*	*Retail*	*Technology*	*Insurance*	*Food service*	*Energy*	*Healthcare*	*Banking*	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Links to SEC documents	18%* (91%)**	15% (96%)	12% (98%)	5% (65%)	7% (97%)	6% (100%)	6% (97%)	6% (96%)	458	93
Updated press releases (last 30 days)	18% (90%)	14% (93%)	11% (91%)	7% (92%)	7% (94%)	6% (93%)	6% (100%)	6% (100%)	457	92
Any downloadable document	18% (84%)	14% (83%)	11% (82%)	7% (84%)	7% (91%)	6% (79%)	6% (93%)	6% (96%)	422	85
Company profile	19% (80%)	14% (79%)	12% (79%)	6% (62%)	7% (82%)	6% (72%)	7% (90%)	5% (70%)	383	77
General office phone	19% (76%)	13% (69%)	11% (73%)	7% (86%)	7% (82%)	6% (79%)	7% (86%)	6% (82%)	369	75
Executive biographies	18% (70%)	15% (76%)	14% (89%)	7% (65%)	5% (58%)	7% (83%)	7% (86%)	6% (78%)	365	74
Financial presentations	18% (73%)	15% (79%)	12% (75%)	6% (60%)	6% (70%)	6% (72%)	6% (72%)	6% (78%)	364	74
Company history/ backgrounder	21% (82%)	15% (79%)	11% (70%)	8% (78%)	7% (73%)	5% (59%)	6% (79%)	6% (82%)	363	73
Philosophy/mission	21% (80%)	14% (70%)	12% (73%)	7% (68%)	7% (76%)	5% (59%)	7% (90%)	5% (63%)	349	71
Updated press releases (last 7 days)	15% (55%)	13% (61%)	13% (73%)	7% (60%)	6% (61%)	5% (55%)	7% (72%)	6% (74%)	325	66
Photographs of executives	19% (64%)	12% (51%)	14% (77%)	7% (60%)	5% (46%)	7% (69%)	8% (79%)	5% (52%)	306	62
Names of PR staff	19% (59%)	12% (49%)	13% (66%)	10% (73%)	6% (49%)	6% (62%)	6% (55%)	7% (70%)	284	57
Specific phone numbers	21% (57%)	11% (41%)	13% (59%)	9% (65%)	6% (46%)	6% (55%)	6% (48%)	7% (67%)	254	51
Generic e-mail	19% (52%)	14% (49%)	10% (43%)	8% (51%)	7% (52%)	6% (48%)	6% (55%)	6% (52%)	251	51
Press release search engine	18% (45%)	16% (50%)	11% (45%)	7% (41%)	7% (46%)	5% (41%)	5% (38%)	5% (44%)	225	45
Personal e-mail address(es)	21% (45%)	11% (30%)	14% (46%)	9% (46%)	5% (30%)	6% (38%)	5% (35%)	7% (48%)	192	39
Photographs of products	23% (46%)	23% (59%)	15% (48%)	4% (19%)	4% (21%)	3% (17%)	6% (35%)	3% (19%)	180	36
Physical address	16% (15%)	15% (19%)	10% (16%)	10% (24%)	12% (30%)	3% (10%)	5% (14%)	5% (15%)	87	18
Speeches	14% (12%)	11% (13%)	15% (21%)	1% (3%)	3% (6%)	11% (31%)	7% (21%)	6% (19%)	81	16
Fax number(s)	26% (19%)	14% (13%)	11% (13%)	8% (14%)	8% (15%)	3% (7%)	3% (7%)	8% (19%)	65	13
Cell phone number(s)	24% (6%)	14% (4%)	19% (7%)	10% (5%)	10% (6%)	5% (3%)	0	10% (7%)	21	4

*Percentage among the Web sites that had this function (e.g., of the 458 Web sites that had links to SEC documents, 18% of them were in manufacturing Web sites).

**Percentage among Web sites within the industry (e.g., 91% of manufacturing Web sites had links to SEC documents).

3 months were found on 461 (93%) sites. Many sites contained all press releases (that had been posted to the site) for the past several years. At least some important information, such as recent stock price, recent news, general corporate information, or product information appeared on the homepage of 468 (93%) sites.

Methods to Encourage Return Visits

Analysis of items that would encourage return visits by journalists included postings of news releases within the last 7 to 10 days on 325 (66%) sites. A calendar of upcoming events, such as financial presentations, product releases, issuance of quarterly/annual reports, or other information was included on 306 (62%) sites. Twenty-six (5%) sites invited the journalists to bookmark the site for return visits, and 19 (4%) sites contained an explicit statement inviting journalists to return in the future for updates. Table 5 lists the items and their frequencies.

The manufacturing industry contributed the highest percentage (17%) to the total number of Fortune 500 company Web sites that had posted news releases within the last 7 to 10 days. Seventy-four percent of food service industry Web sites had posted news releases within the last 7 to 10 days—the highest percentage of any industry when they were analyzed separately.

Existing Online Dialogic Communication Typologies and Their Application to Current Public Relations-Journalist Relationships

In their 1998 article, "Building Dialogic Relationships Through the World Wide Web," Kent and Taylor stated that, "The Web provides public relations practitioners an opportunity to create dynamic and lasting relationships with publics; however, to do so requires that dialogic loops be incorporated into Web pages and Webbed communication" (pp. 325–326). With this study, the original operationalizations of Kent and Taylor's principles from the study conducted by Taylor et al., in 2001, of activist Web sites were expanded to include newer technologies. Through preparatory interviews with journalists and content analysis conducted for this study, modifications and additions were made to two dialogic principles, and another measure was added.

Principle one: The dialogic loop. Kent and Taylor's (1998) first principle of a dialogic loop "allows publics to query organizations and, more importantly, it offers organizations the opportunity to respond to questions, concerns, and problems" (p. 326). In addition to the opportunity for user-response and offering regular information via e-mail, this study coded for the ability to real-time chat with public relations staff, material presented in

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

TABLE 5
Items Encouraging Journalists to Return to the Site

Item	*Manufacturing*	*Retail*	*Technology*	*Insurance*	*Food service*	*Energy*	*Healthcare*	*Banking*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Press releases 7–10 days	17%* (61%)**	14% (61%)	12% (71%)	7% (60%)	7% (74%)	5% (52%)	6% (71%)	5% (65%)	325	66
Calendar of events	21% (69%)	14% (61%)	12% (69%)	7% (54%)	6% (55%)	5% (48%)	7% (75%)	6% (63%)	306	62
"Bookmark Now" invitation	4% (1%)	8% (3%)	15% (7%)	15% (11%)	8% (6%)	8% (7%)	0	12% (11%)	26	5
Invitation to return	16% (3%)	26% (7%)	5% (2%)	0	11% (6%)	5% (3%)	11% (7%)	11% (7%)	19	4

*Percentage among the Web sites that had this function (e.g., of the 325 Web sites that had updated press releases within the last 7 to 10 days, 17% of them were in manufacturing Web sites).

**Percentage among Web sites within the industry (e.g., 61% of manufacturing Web sites had updated press releases within the last 7 to 10 days).

real-time video (such as financial presentations), blogs, RSS feeds, streaming video, and podcasts.

Principle two: The usefulness of information.

> In light of hierarchic and structural issues, audience-specific information should be organized such that it is easy to find by interested publics . . . [and] create positive attitudes by being easily accessible to all publics, and by providing all publics—both generic and particular—with "useful" information. (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 328)

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

In addition to the items coded for in 2001, this study added the operationalizations based on Callison's 2003 examination of Fortune 500 company Web sites (Table 5).

Methods/tools to encourage journalists' initial visits. This study measured the elements of Web sites that would encourage a visit to the Web site for information that they could acquire easily, including press release archives, the opportunity for press to register with a company, and news published or aired about a company. In dialogic theory, this fits most with the principle of usefulness of information.

In view of past research, press relations on the Web are becoming increasingly sophisticated. This study revealed that 361 Fortune 500 companies now have links to press rooms directly from their main pages, significantly more than the 122 companies in Callison's 2003 study examining all Fortune 500 Web sites. Only 39 sites required more than two click-throughs to reach them, which is also improved from the 73 identified by Callison. However, it should be noted here that any indication of a press room, regardless of its designation as "News" or "Media Information," on a company's main page was not recorded as a click. Therefore, it might not have led a journalist to a specific press room, but it did lead to information that would be useful to the press. It should also be noted that Web sites seem to be moving toward a more integrated approach to media relations on the Web, as this study revealed that much of the information that business journalists desire is now residing into more investor-oriented areas.

DISCUSSION

Relationship-Building Components of Fortune 500 Company Web Sites

The first research question in this study dealt with examining the relationship building components of Fortune 500 companies with the press. These

Web sites seem to be making progress with providing the tools that Kent and Taylor (1998) suggested to encourage return visits, such as easily downloadable information, technical information, financial information, and links accompanied by the information necessary to address a specific journalist's needs. Additionally, the calendar of events providing news of upcoming financial presentations may encourage return visits to a site.

Easy-to-Use Features for Journalists

The second question in this study examined the features of Web sites that would be easy to use. Only one site in this study was abandoned because a coder spent longer than 3 min looking for the press room. Journalists are becoming more adept at maneuvering through a corporate Web site, but there still seems to be an issue of the ease with which information is located. Although press rooms may be clearly marked, information may reside more deeply in the site, resulting in frustration if a journalist is looking for something quickly. Although few of the sites offered an opportunity for the press to register, almost half did include a search engine for archived press releases.

Getting Journalists to Initially Visit the Site and Make Return Visits

The third and fourth research questions asked about methods that corporate Web sites employ to get journalists to visit them initially, and what methods those sites use to encourage journalists to return. Archives going back 3 months were found on 461 sites, with many sites containing press releases for the past several years. Half of the sites contained some type of news other than press releases that had been written or aired about either the company or one of its products or services. However, it would seem that Fortune 500 company sites could do a better job of updating the press releases that are posted on the site, given that 45% of the companies in the study did not have anything posted from the last 7 to 10 days. The indication of important information on 93% of main pages is a positive indicator for journalists to return to the site once they've found the information, provided it is updated regularly.

There are some obvious opportunities for improving the relationship-building function of corporate Web sites with journalists. Fewer than half (45%) of the Fortune 500 Web sites provided a tool to search for press releases. Such a function would dramatically increase the usefulness and friendliness of the website for journalists' research. Although 51% of the sites examined for this study provided personal contact information for members of the public relations staff, there is much room for improvement in this area for the 49% that didn't, as well as for the 61% of sites that did

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

not provide specific e-mail addresses. Such personal contact information would be much more useful for journalists than the more common generic information provided on the sites at the time of this study.

Finally, some industry specific functions that could be increased include podcasts for the insurance and banking industries. Only 8% of insurance industry sites and 15% of banking sites included podcasts. Both these industries seem to be well-suited for regularly scheduled educational podcasts that could serve not only journalists as they do background research, but could also serve consumers. Likewise, blogs seem noticeably underused by retail (only 6% of retail industry sites have blogs), energy (only 3%), and healthcare (no sites). All of these industries could more effectively build relationships with, not only journalists, but a variety of stakeholder groups by adding organizational blogs to their sites.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Existing Online Dialogic Typologies and Their Application to Current Journalist–Public Relations Relationships

Question five dealt with the application of current typologies of dialogic theory to current journalist–public relations relationships. Technologically, Web capabilities have expanded somewhat since the initial operationalization of dialogic principles by Taylor et al., for their 2001 study of activist Web sites. In addition to the variables of offering user-response and offering information via e-mail in the previous study, this work expanded on those variables and examined additional dialogic elements, and added an additional operationalization. Again, although some of these are not truly dialogic in nature, they still are elements of a Web site that would foster a relationship between a journalist and a corporation.

It would seem that, to keep dialogic theory current as it relates to Webbed communication, it will be necessary to revisit existing operationalizations and continually update and test for those technologies and how they are being used in dialogue between members of the press and the companies they cover.

A New Principle, "Relationship Initiation and Enhancement"

Finally this research suggests, in addition to the five existing principles developed by Kent and Taylor (1998; i.e., ease of interface, usefulness of information, conservation of visitors, return visits, creating a dialogic loop), a sixth category should be considered and explored. The sixth principle is *relationship initiation and enhancement.*

This new principle is different from the existing ones because it suggests an avenue for initiating a relationship. Although the existing principles

argue for usefulness and ease of interface, for example, initiation and enhancement characteristics remain undefined. In the process of content analysis for this study, it became evident that certain items coded filled a largely prefatorial role. For example, providing something as simple as specific contact information for public relations staff and press release archives are prefatory to building a relationship. Journalists interviewed in preparation for this content analysis affirmed these findings, and thereby provided an additional rationale for this new principle when they said they would be particularly likely to visit a Web site first if they were unfamiliar with a company.

Past research has not looked at press relations sites in such a way. Existing measures may be moved from current categories to develop the more appropriately described *relationship initiation and enhancement*. For example, Callison's (2003) "link from homepage" measure should be included in the proposed initiation and enhancement principle. Additionally, contact information should be coded as a relationship initiation and enhancement measure. Finally, Kent and Taylor's (1998) measure "important info available on first page" would more correctly exemplify relationship initiation and enhancement than "conservation of visitors" (p. 80)<AV:S+—the principle in which it currently resides. The addition of this sixth principle would further define and provide a more accurate and realistic application of dialogic communication as it occurs between journalists and PR practitioners on a company or organization's Web site.

LIMITATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The first limitation is the generalizability of findings from Fortune 500 industries to smaller companies. It is hoped that Fortune 500 companies would be leaders in making use of newer technologies and communication techniques, although that may, in fact, not be the reality. A study of smaller, newer, or more innovative companies might find that they are making use of a broader range of communication techniques via their Web sites to generate media awareness and coverage than the more established companies in this study.

For this study, there is the consideration of the Web as a medium still in its relative infancy. Although the Internet has experienced explosive growth in the last 10 years, its use as a dialogic medium is only beginning to be explored. That, coupled with the emerging concept of dialogue as it relates to the relationship between journalists and public relations professionals has a huge impact on the speed with which journalists can access corporate information. Although public relations practitioners seem to be realizing

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

that online social media applications are becoming an important tool in the toolbox, our conversations with journalists suggested that they preferred not to use such applications to interact with corporations—yet. This begs for further exploration in future research.

An area for future research lies in a deeper investigation of dialogic components of Web sites across industries. This lies both in the area of public relations and journalism. Do reporters who concentrate on a particular industry, such as technology, desire more dialogic components on the Web sites of the companies they cover? Do public relations professionals in a particular industry, such as media and communications, do a better job of Web site maintenance and keeping their sites user-friendly? More in-depth study is necessary. An additional area of research lies in examining if and how corporate PR departments are using search engine optimization techniques to make reliable information easier for journalists to find.

The idea of a sixth dialogic principle, the principle of relationship initiation and enhancement, should be investigated. Such research would further define the role and characteristics of how relationships are initiated and enhanced via Web communication, and provide context for the Web and its role in ongoing dialogic relationships between journalists and PR professionals. Additionally, the principle should be investigated regarding its application to other relationships with a Web dialogue component. The role that corporate Web sites play in communications between journalists and public relations professionals will continue to change with technology. The results of this study pointed to an addition to the theory of dialogic communication via the Web. The consideration of a sixth principle of dialogic communication may provide further definition and context for Web press rooms in ongoing dialogic relationships, which should be explored with future research.

Finally, future research could examine the communicators and senders themselves. Principles have been identified, examined, and expanded. This study does some initial investigation into which industries excel or fail in which dialogic Web components, but future research could link industries or specific companies to specific principles. That is, what kinds of companies comply with which principles? Are specific types of journalists best reached through specific principles? And are communication methods altered based on circumstance? There remains lots of fertile ground to be plowed in this area.

CONCLUSION

Although there will most likely always be some level of distrust among journalists regarding information they receive through perceived public

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

relations vehicles, it is hoped that with continued dialogue, journalists will come to see corporate Web sites as more credible resources for information. More important, as future studies are conducted that relate to dialogic communication and dialogic theory, it is hoped that both journalists and public relations professionals continue to increase their use of the Web as an important tool in creating and maintaining their dialogic relationships.

REFERENCES

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Adams, B. (1999). Ask the professor. *Public Relations Tactics*, *11*, 3.

Alfonso, G.-H. & de Valbuena Miguel, R. (2006). Trends in online media relations: Web-based corporate press rooms in leading international companies. *Public Relations Review*, *32*, 267–275.

Botan, C. (1997). Ethics in strategic communication campaigns: The case for a new approach to public relations. *Journal of Business Communication*, *34*, 188–202.

Bransford, K. (2001). *Better access, better information, better news: The ten essential elements of an online newsroom.* Retrieved October 13, 2007 from http://www.vocus.com/TenElements/

Broom, G. M., Casey, S., & Ritchey, J. (2000). Concept and theory of organization–public relationships. In J. A. Ledingham & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*, (pp. 3–22). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Calhoun, C. J. (1999). *Habermas and the public sphere,* 6th ed., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Callison, C. (2003). Media relations and the Internet: How Fortune 500 company websites assist journalists in news gathering. *Public Relations Review*, *29*, 29–41.

Connolly-Ahern, C., & Broadway, S. C. (2007). The importance of appearing competent: An analysis of corporate impression management strategies on the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, *33*, 343–345.

Esrock, S. L., & Leichty, G. B. (1999). Corporate World Wide Web pages; Serving the news media and other publics. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *76*(3), 456–467.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977* (C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, & K. Soper, trans.). New York: Pantheon.

Garcia, T. (8 September 2007). Survey: More journalists consult online info. *PR Week*. Retrieved November 11, 2007 from http://www.prweekus.com/Survey-More-journalists-consult-online-info

Garrison, B. (2003). How newspaper reporters use the Web to gather news. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *24*(3), 62–75.

Geibel, J. P. (1999). How digital tools and audiences are changing high-tech PR. *Public Relations Tactics*, *5*, 18.

Gower, K., & Cho, J. Y. (2001). Use of the Internet in the public relations curriculum. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, *56*, 81–92.

Grunig, J. E., & Huang, Y.-H. (2000). From organizational effectiveness to relationship indicators: Antecedents of relationships, public relations strategies, and relational outcomes. In J. A. Ledingham, S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations* (pp. 23–53). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gustavsen, P. A., & Tilley, E. (2003). Public relations communication through corporate websites: Towards an understanding of the role of Interactivity. *Prism*, *1*(1). Retrieved February 25, 2008 from http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/fileadmin/Praxis/Files/Journal_Files/issue1/refereed _articles_paper5.pdf

Heath, R. L. (1994). *Management of corporate communication: From interpersonal contacts to external affairs.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hill, L. H., & White, C. (2000). Public relations practitioners' perceptions of the World Wide Web as a communications tool. *Public Relations Review*, *26*(1), 31–51.

Holtz, S. (1999). *Public relations on the Net*. New York: AMACOM.

Hon, I. C., & Grunig, J. E. (1999). *Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations*. Gainesville, FL: Institute for Public Relations.

Horton, J. L. (2001). *Online public relations: A handbook for practitioners*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Houghland, J. G., & Sutton, W. A. (1978). Factors influencing the degree of involvement in interorganizational relationships in a rural county. *Rural Sociology*, *43*, 649–670.

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (1998). Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, *24*(3), 321–334.

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, *28*(1), 21–37.

Ledingham, J. A., Bruning, S. D., Thomlinson, D., & Lesko, C. (1997). The applicability of interpersonal relationship dimensions to an organizational context: Toward a theory of relational loyalty to a qualitative approach. *Academy of Managerial Communications Journal*, *1*, 23–33.

Motion, J. (2005). Participative public relations: Power to the people or legitimacy for government discourse? *Public Relations Review*, *31*, 505–512.

Nielsen, J. (2001). *Corporate Web sites get a D*. Retrieved March 21, 2008 from http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20010401.html

Nielsen Norman Group. (2001). *Designing Websites to maximize press relations.* Retrieved January 27, 2008 from http://www.nngroup.com/reports/pr/summary.html

Oliver, C. (1990). Determinants of intraorganizational relationships: Integration and future directions. *Academy of Management Review*, *15*, 241–265.

Pearson, R. (1989). A theory of public relations ethics. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio University.

Pettigrew, J. (2008) *The new dynamic of corporate media relations: Engaging the press through dialogic components of world wide web sites.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Georgia, Athens.

Porter, L. V., & Sallot, L. M. (2003). The Internet and public relations: Investigating practitioners' roles and World Wide Web use. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *80*(3), 603–622.

Reber, B. H., & Kim, J. K. (2006). How activist groups use websites in media relations: Evaluating online pressrooms. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *18*(4), 313–333.

Roper, J. (2005). Symmetrical communication: Excellent public relations or a strategy for hegemony? *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *17*(1), 69–86.

Ryan, M. (2003). Public relations and the web: organizational problems, gender and institution type. *Public Relations Review*, *29*, 335–349.

Seltzer, T., & Mitrook, M. A. (2007). The dialogic potential of Weblogs in relationship building. *Public Relations Review*, *33*, 227–229.

Shin, J., & Cameron, G. T. (2003). The interplay of professional and cultural factors in the online source–reporter relationship. *Journalism Studies*, *4*, 253–272.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010

Stoker, K. L., & Tusinski, K. A. (2006). Reconsidering public relations' infatuation with dialogue: Why engagement and reconciliation can be more ethical than symmetry and reciprocity. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *21*, 156–176.

Taylor, M., Kent, M. L., & White, W. J. (2001). How activist organizations are using the Internet to build relationships. *Public Relations Review*, *27*, 263–284.

Van de Ven, A. H. (1976). On the nature, formation, and maintenance of relations among organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *1*, 24–36.

"What a Journalist Wants." (2000, August). *Public Relations Tactics*, *7*.

White, C., & Raman, N. (1999). The World Wide Web as a public relations medium: The use of research, planning and evaluation in web site development. *Public Relations Review*, *25*, 405–419.

Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2000). *Mass media research, 6th ed.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Downloaded By: [James Madison University] At: 13:29 13 October 2010