

Tracking How Social and Other Digital Media are Being Used in Public Relations Practice: A Twelve-Year Study

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Abstract

This paper reports on the results of a twelve-year longitudinal analysis trend study involving more than 5,500 public relations practitioners. Findings have found that the use of social and other digital communication media in public relations practice has continued to increase each year. This has provided unique opportunities not only for those who practice public relations but also for a wide variety of strategic publics who have been given dynamic new communication vehicles many are using effectively with a variety of internal and external strategic audiences. Results of this 2017 study include benchmark comparisons reflecting the opinions of those who practice public relations – and an analysis of how these opinions have changed during the past twelve years. During the past five years results have highlighted the increasing use of Facebook and Twitter in public relations practice. That's the case once again in 2017 with Facebook increasing its lead over Twitter as the most used social medium in the public relations industry. The paper also reports on the monitoring and managing of social and digital media in organizations, how much time public relations practitioners spend working with social and digital media and how social and digital media use in public relations is being measured.

Introduction

This is a report on results of a twelve-year longitudinal analysis studying how social and other emerging technologies are being used in public relations practice. Beginning in 2005 and

continuing every year since, this research has included annually conducted surveys measuring the impact social and other emerging technologies are having on public relations (Wright & Hinson, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2015a & 2015b, 2016, 2017). Also see DiStaso, McCorkindale & Wright, 2011).

As reported in greater detail elsewhere, these studies show that various new, emerging and social communication media have brought dramatic changes to many aspects of public relations practice. Results across all twelve years of this study suggest that the development of various new and emerging technologies has significantly empowered a wide variety of strategic publics by giving them dynamic ways to communicate with a variety of internal and external audiences.

This twelve-year body of research follows several of our earlier research efforts that examined corporate communication policy and the internet (Wright, 1998) as well as the overall impact of the internet on public relations, journalism and the public (Wright, 2001).

Impact of Social Media on Public Relations

Frequent research studies conducted by the Pew Research Center (2005, 2008, 2015a, 2015b & 2017) track the sources Americans use for news. Results of these studies used to report most people blended online and traditional news sources in their search for information about what's going on in the nation and the world. However, the most recent of these studies now report dramatic increases in the role social and digital media – especially Facebook and Twitter – now play in news dissemination. While this fact is most prevalent for audiences younger than 30 (Pew Research Center 2015a, 2015b & 2017), some studies suggest even older audiences are turning to social media for information about some news stories (American Press Institute, 2014).

This Pew Center research found only 10 percent of American adults were using the internet in 1995 compared with nearly 90 percent today. In 2016 the Pew Research Center reported that only 13 percent of US adults do not use the internet. All of this makes the US one of the world's largest online markets. Additionally, the Pew Research Center recently reported on a survey of more than 1,500 American adults that found more than half of those who use social and digital media in the US turned to social media for news about the 2016 presidential election (Greenwood, Perrin & Duggan, 2016).

This study also reported Facebook now is the most popular social networking platform in the US by a considerable margin over Twitter. More specifically, 79 percent of online Americans now use Facebook as compared to 24 percent who use Twitter. Counting all Americans (not just those who are active online), this study found 68 percent use Facebook compared to 21 percent who use Twitter. Other usage totals are: Instagram 28 percent, Pinterest 26 percent and LinkedIn 25 percent. Furthermore, Pew Research Center totals for Twitter use by Americans only grew from 23 percent in 2015 to 24 percent in 2016.

Greenwood, Perrin & Duggan (2016) also found more than half of the Americans they surveyed reported using a multiple array of social media platforms. However, they called Facebook “the starting platform for social media use,” also noted that 88 percent of those who use only one social medium use Facebook and found most who use social media sites other than Facebook also are active on Facebook including 93 percent of Twitter users, 95 percent of those active on Instagram and 92 percent of Pinterest users. They also noted the increasing popularity of Americans using messaging apps to connect online with others.

Although internet use generally correlates with age, education and household income, huge increases in internet use have been reported in recent years in virtually all of these demographic categories. For example, nearly half of all Americans over the age of 65 currently use the internet and many of these users are extremely active including 86 percent of them with e-mail and 34 percent with social networks. The Pew studies continue to find younger Americans use the new technologies more than their older audiences and younger users also are considerably more likely to use the internet for things such as downloading music and movies, etc.

As indicated in previous annual reports about this longitudinal analysis research, our studies about how new technologies and emerging media are impacting public relations practice come at a significant time for traditional news media, especially newspapers. Paid circulation figures for daily newspapers in many large American cities continue to decline resulting in the death in recent years of major city dailies such as Denver's *Rocky Mountain News*, the *Baltimore Examiner*, the *Cincinnati Post*, the *Albuquerque Tribune*, the *Oakland Tribune*, the *San Juan Star*, *Tampa Tribune* and the *Honolulu Advertiser*. Perhaps the best information source for tracking the changing landscape of the American newspaper industry is the Newspaper Death Watch website (www.newspaperdeathwatch.com) that recently reported another emerging trend with U.S. daily newspapers continuing to publish print editions but only two or three days each week. In most cases the newspapers publish online versions on the other days.

Initially this latest trend only became operational with newspapers in mid-sized communities such as Ann Arbor and Flint, Michigan; Madison, Wisconsin; Birmingham, Alabama; Syracuse, New York, etc., but the trend is now prevalent in major cities. The major city dailies that have moved in this direction include the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Detroit News/Free Press*, *Portland Oregonian*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. In spite of a century-long tradition of excellence, the *Christian Science Monitor* stopped publishing as a daily in March 2009 in order to concentrate on publishing a weekly print edition and refining its online offerings. According to *Boston Magazine* (2009) the *Monitor's* circulation had slipped 75 percent between 1969 and 2009.

Experts who monitor these changes, including those at the USC Center for the Digital Future (2011), predict these trends will continue. Some of these predictions suggest there might be fewer than a dozen daily print version newspapers in the U.S. by the end of the current decade.

Similar changes also have taken place with some of the trade magazines that serve the public relations industry. In 2009, *PR Week*, considered by many to be the nation's most dominant public relations trade publication, changed its weekly print edition into an online format, although it does produce a printed magazine each month. Some other public relations trade publications appear to have been impacted recently, including *PR News* which now offers nearly as many public relations short courses and seminars as it does publications and *Bulldog Reporter* that has created a series of training courses it offers under the name of "PR University."

As Argenti and Barnes (2009) have pointed out, new media have "changed the rules of the game in every part" of strategic communication. They also claim that over the past decade these new communication vehicles have not only turned upside down everything people knew about communication but also have dramatically changed the business of managing relationships. Findings of the noted *Authentic Enterprise Report* of the Arthur W. Page Society (2007) give the new communication media credit for dramatically changing the ways in which stakeholders are empowered. The Page Society's most recent report – *Building Belief: A New*

Model for Activating Corporate Character and Authentic Advocacy (2012) – examines how the roles and functions of chief communications officers of major companies are changing given advances in new technologies among other things.

Social media are being utilized on an ever-increasing basis by corporations and other organizations according to McCorkindale (2010) who reports more than two-thirds (69%) of the current Fortune 2000 companies are using social networking sites. Laskin (2010 & 2012) has addressed the effective use of social media in investor relations. Bortree and Seltzer (2009) have reported on how advocacy groups are advancing their public relations agendas via Facebook. Bowen (2010) has studied the importance of ethics and stakeholder management in connection with top corporate websites. DiStaso (2012) has researched the importance for organizations to make certain Wikipedia correctly portrays information about them.

Other recent studies include Liu's (2010) research about differences between how elite newspapers and A-list blogs cover crises; Coombs' (2012) work detailing the phenomenal potential new and emerging media provide for crisis communication practitioners; Gainey's (2012) research about new media use during crises in the public sector; and a study by Ruh and Magallon (2009) about the U.S. military using social media for some of its internal communication campaigns. Paine (2009a, 2009b, 2009c) was one of the first to point out many organizations now are trying to measure the effectiveness of their social media communication efforts.

As we have pointed out previously, another measure of the growth and development of social media in public relations is the level of social media activity currently displayed by various professional societies active in the field. In addition to web pages and e-mail communication, social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and others all have pages organized by organizations such as the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the Council of Public Relations Firms, the Arthur W. Page Society and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

According to Kelly (2009) and Eberwein (2010), the micro-blogging site Twitter frequently is the first source to provide news seekers with information about major news events including the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India; the massive 2010 earthquake in Haiti; and the US Airways flight landing in the Hudson River on January 15, 2009. This trend has continued during the past few years with disaster events such as the assassination attempt of U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords on January 8, 2011; the massive earthquake that devastated Japan on March 11, 2011; the series of tornadoes that swept through six states in the American south in April 2011; the January 2012 capsizing of the Italian cruise ship *Costa Concordia* off the Tuscan coast on January 13, 2012; and the plane crash in a crowded neighborhood of Lagos, Nigeria, that killed more than 150 people on June 3, 2012. While he was Editor of *PR Week*, Keith O'Brien (2009), pointed out "there has been great progress in the use of social media to reach various constituencies."

Recently, Wang and Yang (2017) reported on how both for-profit and nonprofit organizations are using social media to establish relationships with their publics. Via a content analysis of more than 6,000 tweets, they reported significant relationships exist between dialogic principles and the interactions of Twitter followers.

Purpose of the Study

Even though a number of research studies have explored public relations practice and social and/or digital media, our annual study continues to be one of the few pieces of research that actually examines how public relations practitioners actually are using these new media. The twelve-year tracking of social and digital media use in public relations practice reported about in this article provides one of the most extensive examinations of how social media are being implemented in public relations practice. In addition to measuring how social media are being employed in the practice of public relations, this study also explores actual social and digital communication media use by individual public relations practitioners.

Additionally, since there are few longitudinal analysis studies in the scholarly literature of public relations, this study's longitudinal analysis of a larger-than-usual number of research subjects also has the potential of enhancing the credibility of scholarly research in public relations. As Dougall (2006) explains, the lack of a significant number of panel and trend studies in the public relations literature does not reflect positively on our field when the public relations body of knowledge is compared with research productivity in the traditional social sciences and other professions.

Also, since far too many of the survey research projects in the public relations literature contain reports about studies involving fewer than 350 respondents, and more than two-thirds of these studies have usable responses from fewer than 250 subjects, the larger-than-usual number of participants in the study at hand is a plus for public relations research. This study has benefitted from having more than 5,800 respondents since our first published report in 2006; more than 4,300 since the questionnaire was dramatically revised in 2009; and, more than 3,700 since we started asking questions about Facebook and Twitter in 2010.

Social Media Activity in the USA

According to the Pew Research Center (2016) in the USA, Facebook as the most active social media platform in the USA with 7.96 million users. This includes roughly eight-in-ten online Americans, up seven percentage points from 2015. Additionally, Pew claims 79% of online American adults (68% of all Americans) use Facebook. Facebook is followed by Twitter (6.37 million users), Instagram (5.41 million), Google+ (4.77 million), and LinkedIn (3.50 million). In terms of social chat applications and messengers, WhatsApp is used the most (8.59 million users) followed by Facebook Messenger (6.37 million), Skype (4.45 million) and Snapchat (4.41 million).

Additionally, Greenwood, Perrin and Duggan (2016) found a majority of Americans now receive news via social media including half of US social media users who turned to social media for news about the 2016 presidential election.

In a 2016 survey of 1,520 American, the Pew Research Center (2016) found Facebook to be the most popular social networking platform in the USA by a large margin. Results found 79% of online Americans currently use Facebook more than double that of Twitter (24%), Pinterest (31%), Instagram (32%) or LinkedIn (29%). Accounting for Americans who do make any use of the internet, 68% of all Americans are Facebook users with 28% using Instagram, 26% using Pinterest, 25% using LinkedIn and 21% using Twitter. Additionally, this study reported women (83%) in the USA are more likely to use Facebook than men (75%) and young Americans (especially 18-to-29 year olds) report using Facebook at higher rates than older users. However, Facebook usage for all age groups continues to increase dramatically. For example, the Pew Research Center reports Facebook use by Americans aged 65 and older increased 14-points from 48% in 2015 to 62% in 2016. Twitter continues to be used much less than Facebook by

overall internet users in the USA. Pew Research Center usage totals for Twitter by Americans grew from only 23% in 2015 to 24% in 2016. Twitter continues to be more popular with younger Americans and among the highly educated. Note: 29% of Americans with university degrees use Twitter compared with 20% of those with high school diplomas or less.

This Pew research reported many Americans use a multiple array of social media platforms with more than half (56%) using more than one of these media. Pew calls Facebook the starting platform for social media use noting that most (88%) of those who use only one social medium use Facebook. Additionally, most who use social media sites other than Facebook also are active on Facebook. This includes 93% of Twitter users, 95% of Instagram users and 92% of those active on Pinterest. This study also found Americans are connecting with others online via a variety of messaging apps. Specifically, 29% of American smartphone owners use messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Kik while 24% use Snapchat. These messaging apps are more popular among younger smartphone owners.

Method

The study's methodology consists of a trend analysis combined with an extensive web-based questionnaire. In light of many changes in the new or emerging technologies since we started this research in 2005, a good number of our questions have changed over the years. That's why the longitudinal analysis reported on in this paper does not include our survey results prior to 2009. We have been asking many of the same questions annually since 2009, some every year since 2008 and a few each year since 2005.

When we initiated this online research project in 2005, public relations practitioners enthusiastically completed our questionnaire because we were among the first to use online surveys for public relations scholarship. However, as the novelty of filling out online questionnaires dissipated, it became necessary for us to eliminate some questions in an attempt to shorten the measuring instrument and encourage more subjects to respond. Additional modifications were made in the 2017 questionnaire that included 33 questions. Most (24) of these were closed-ended questions of substance. There were five open-ended questions and four demographic measures. The current questionnaire is about half as long as was the case nine years ago.

The majority of the longitudinal analysis reported on in this article is based upon responses to the study's web-based questionnaire by nine different, large, purposive samples of public relations practitioners who took part in this survey research study in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. Invitations to participate by completing the study's web-based questionnaire were extended in 2009 and 2010 via e-mail messages to purposive samples collected from membership rosters of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the Arthur W. Page Society and the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). Additional subjects were gathered from donor, task force and commission membership lists of the Institute for Public Relations (IPR). During the three years prior to 2009 we conducted annual surveys of public relations practitioners measuring their use of new technologies. However, since most of the questions we asked in 2006 required significant revision before being asked again in 2009 and beyond, the research team decided to limit the longitudinal data analysis to the last seven years. In those few cases where data exist, results covering more than seven years are reported.

Subjects in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2017 were selected via a random sample of PRSA members who received e-mailed invitations to participate. The first e-mail

invitation for the 2017 study was distributed on December 29, 2016 and a reminder invitation was circulated on January 13, 2017. There were 556 usable responses in 2017. When response rates from PRSA members started declining in 2013, it became necessary to reach out to groups of practitioners who might not necessarily have been part of the random sample. These groups have included those named above as well as practitioners who have completed questionnaires for this study during previous years.

The longitudinal analysis reported on in this article is based upon a grand total of 4,306 respondents (n=574 in 2009, n=563 in 2010, n=479 in 2011, n=622 in 2012, n=378 in 2013, n=393 in 2014, n=329 in 2015, n=412 in 2016 and n=556 in 2017) an average of 478 respondents each year.

Demographics

Most (more than 90 percent) of this study's subjects are from North America, other respondents have come from many different parts of the world representing a good cross-section of the public relations industry.

Of the 4,306 respondents over the nine years data were gathered for this study's longitudinal analysis, 26% were employed with public relations agencies (5% with large firms and 22% with small or mid-sized agencies), 17% worked in corporate public relations, 16% held non-teaching positions in education, 18% came from non-profit public relations, ten percent worked in government settings, six percent came from health care communications, three percent were research services providers and five percent answered "other" or did not respond to the demographic questions.

The 2017 respondents included 22% who worked with public relations firms (20% with small or mid-sized agencies and two percent with large firms), 17% holding positions in corporate public relations, 11% in governmental public relations, 18% from the non-profit sector and another 12% holding non-teaching positions in education (six percent held teaching positions). Seven percent of this year's respondents worked in health care communications, fewer than one percent were employed by research provider companies and seven percent answered "other" or did not respond to this demographic question.

Responses were nicely distributed across various age categories in all of the years. The overall average of respondents for all nine years was 38.6 and the seven-year gender breakdown was 67% female and 33% male. The study had more male respondents in earlier years as 48% of the 2009 respondents were male compared with 31% in 2017.

Results

As Table 1 indicates our 2017 findings show public relations practitioners agree more strongly than ever that social and other emerging media are changing the way public relations is practiced. Mean scores on this item dipped slightly in 2013 but rebounded strongly in 2014 and have continued to increase each year since. The 2017 results represent the highest mean scores in the twelve years we have been asking this particular question. This result includes all three branches of this question including how new technologies have impacted the way organizations communicate, how organizations communicate to external audiences and how they communicate to internal audiences. As has been the case in all twelve years we have been asking this question, this impact continues to be much more pronounced for external than internal audiences.

Our major finding for the past five years involves the use of Facebook and Twitter in public relations practice. As Table 8 shows in detail, we first started asking about the use of

Facebook and Twitter in 2010 and Facebook was clearly used more than Twitter each year between 2010 and 2013. Twitter use slightly exceeded that of Facebook in 2014 but Facebook was found to be used more frequently for public relations purposes in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Additional results of this analysis can be found in Tables 9 through 15.

Even though Twitter use was found to be greater than Facebook in 2014 and only slightly less than Facebook in 2015, Facebook use increased significantly in both 2016 and 2017. Table 8 shows these mean differences. For the first time in 2016 we provided subjects with a list of social and digital media and asked them to identify anything on the list they do not use. Results are shown in Table 15. In 2017 only 4.4 percent said they don't use Facebook while 4.46 percent told us they don't use Twitter.

Measuring Facebook and Twitter use also becomes complex and difficult given the reality many respondents who use both of these media tell us they frequently distribute the same messages over both of these media platforms. Additionally, it is important to note this question focuses on how frequently subjects access specific new media sites as part of their work in public relations. Respondents were specifically asked not to count personal use of these new media sites.

On the topic of which organizational function is responsible for monitoring and managing social and emerging media communication in organizations, a clear majority of nearly two-thirds (64% in 2017) said this is the responsibility of communications and public relations in their organizations. When asked whose responsibility this should be, 75 percent answered public relations and communications. As Tables 3 and 4 indicate, results involving these questions have remained relatively constant over the past five years.

We continue to ask questions about research and measurement. Results of these questions are articulated in Tables 5, 6 and. In 2015, more than half of our respondents (52%) told us their organizations (or their clients) are measuring social and emerging media use. Unfortunately, that number dipped to 49 percent in 2016 and to 48 percent in 2017. Of the measurement actually taking place, most of it involves content analysis but mean scores continue to rise for research focused on impact and other outcome measures. Clearly, however, the public relations industry has not embraced measurement as much as it should have.

Table 2 displays answers to the question asking "approximately what percentage of your time working in public relations and communications is spent with blogs and other social media?" Results show very few (2%) don't use social media at all and only another small number (4%) spend 75% or more of their workday with social media. As Table 2 shows, most of the use is clustered in the 11%-to-25% category that attracted 43 percent in 2015, 36 percent in 2016 and 38 percent in 2017.

Summary and Conclusions

Our twelfth annual survey measuring how social and other digital media are being used in the public relations industry found practitioners continue to agree strongly that these new media are changing the way public relations is practiced. This impact continues to be much more pronounced for external than internal audiences. Results in 2015 contain the highest mean scores in the nine years we have been asking this question.

As has been the case for the past five years, our major finding in 2017 involved the use of Facebook and Twitter in public relations practice. We first started asking about the use of Facebook and Twitter in 2010 and Facebook was clearly used more than Twitter each year between 2010 and 2013. Twitter use slightly exceeded that of Facebook in 2014 but Facebook was

found to be used slightly more frequently for public relations purposes in 2015 but the margin widened between Facebook and Twitter in both 2016 and 2017. LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube continue to rank up a distant third, fourth and fifth in this tally. Our 2017 results also suggest the percentage of time public relations practitioners spend with social and other digital media during their workdays is leveling off.

Two of the study's items during the past seven years have been concerned with which organizational function is responsible for monitoring and managing social and emerging media communication in organizations. Results show that although a clear majority believe this should be the responsibility of communications and public relations, the emergence of digital and/or social media departments has lowered that percentage.

2017 TABLES

MEAN COMPARISON TABLES

These tables compare mean scores of various questions asked each year.

Table One

Mean analyses of responses to the question: “Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that the emergence of social and other emerging media has changed the way your organization (or your client organizations)”:

	2006 n=482	2007 n=476	2008 n=496	2009 n=574	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393
Communicates?	3.27	3.38	3.44	3.81	4.02	4.10	4.24	4.14	4.27
Handles external communication?	3.23	3.35	3.40	3.69	3.97	4.06	4.18	4.17	4.30
Handles internal communication?	3.01	3.06	3.06	3.22	3.05	3.14	3.21	3.08	3.17

	2015 n=329	2016 n=412	2017 n=556
Communicates?	4.35	4.37	4.44
Handles external communication?	4.37	4.37	4.44
Handles internal communication?	3.27	3.30	3.45

Note: Mean scores throughout this report are based on responses to five-point Likert-type scales where “1” = “Strongly Disagree,” “Very Unimportant,” “Very Infrequently,” etc., and “5” = “Strongly Agree,” “Very Important,” “Very Frequently,” etc.,” Consequently, the higher the mean score the greater the agreement, importance, frequency, etc. Additionally, tables reporting on percentages might not always total 100% due to rounding.

Table Two

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

	None	1% to 10%	11% to 25%	26% to 50%	51% to 75%	More Than 75%
2009	7%	48%	30%	11%	4%	dna
2010	4%	38%	34%	17%	7%	dna
2011	3%	36%	34%	19%	7%	dna
2012	3%	29%	34%	21%	10%	4%
2013	1%	30%	34%	16%	14%	4%
2014	1%	28%	39%	21%	8%	3%
2015	1%	27%	43%	19%	6%	4%
2016	1%	25%	36%	24%	12%	2%
2017	2%	21%	38%	26%	10%	4%

dna = Did not ask

Table Three

Responses to the question: “Which organizational function IS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE for monitoring and managing social and emerging media communication in your organization?”

	Comm. or PR	Human Resources	Marketing	Digital/ SoMedia	Legal	Technology or IT	Don't Know	Not Assigned	Other
2009	64%	4%	20%	dna	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%
2010	81%	1%	21%	dna	2%	6%	3%	8%	7%
2011	83%	1%	23%	dna	1%	4%	2%	5%	9%
2012	85%	3%	26%	dna	1%	5%	7%	4%	6%
2013	69%	0%	10%	8%	0%	1%	2%	2%	8%
2014	64%	0%	15%	12%	0%	2%	4%	4%	4%
2015	65%	1%	16%	11%	0%	1%	2%	1%	4%
2016	64%	0%	14%	10%	0%	7%	1%	3%	8%
2017	63%	0%	15%	12%	0%	0%	1%	1%	7%

Note: Totals in years 2009 through 2012 equal more than 100% because respondents were permitted multiple responses in those years. Respondents were restricted to only one answer for this question in 2013. Additionally, the option of “Digital/ Social Media” function was first listed on the 2013 questionnaire and received a response of 10%.

Table Four

Responses in 2012 to the question: “In your opinion, which of the following functions SHOULD BE PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE for monitoring and managing social and other emerging media communication in your organization?”

	Comm. or PR	Human Resources	Marketing	Digital/ SoMedia	Legal	Technology or IT	Don't Know	No Function	Other
2009	85%	5%	22%	dna	4%	6%	3%	2%	7%
2010	94%	14%	20%	dna	4%	4%	1%	0%	3%
2011	93%	4%	19%	dna	4%	4%	0%	1%	13%
2012	92%	4%	22%	dna	4%	3%	0%	1%	6%
2013	74%	0%	4%	14%	1%	0%	0%	1%	5%
2014	77%	0%	4%	13%	0%	2%	0%	2%	4%
2015	75%	0%	5%	15%	0%	0%	0%	2%	5%
2016	68%	0%	8%	14%	0%	1%	1%	1%	7%
2017	75%	0%	4%	15%	0%	0%	0%	1%	5%

Note: Some percentages total more than 100% because subjects could select multiple responses

Table Five

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

Table		2009 n=574	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393	2015 n=329	2016 n=412	2017 n=556	Six
Mean	Yes	39%	38%	42%	43%	43%	46%	52%	49%	48%	
	No	42%	46%	45%	39%	42%	41%	32%	37%	37%	
	Uncertain/ Don't Know	19%	16%	13%	17%	15%	13%	16%	14%	15%	

analysis of responses to these questions asking subjects if they agreed or disagreed that public relations practitioners SHOULD measure:

	2009 n=574	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393	2015 n=329	2016 n=412	2017 n=556
The amount of communication that is being disseminated about their organizations (or client organizations) through blogs and other social media.	4.20	4.26	4.20	4.28	4.27	4.29	4.23	4.32	4.26
And/or analyze content of what's being communicated about their organizations (or their clients) in blogs and other social media.	4.37	4.36	4.35	4.41	4.39	4.46	4.40	4.46	4.43
The impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of other strategic audiences.	4.27	4.28	4.27	4.32	4.32	4.38	4.35	4.40	4.40
The impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behavior.	4.25	4.28	4.27	4.36	4.32	4.38	4.32	4.39	4.39

Table Six

Percentage of respondents answering “Yes” to the question asking, “To the best of your knowledge, has your organization (or a client organization) ever measured . . .”

	2009 n=574	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393	2015 n=329	2016 n=412	2017 n=556
The amount of communication that is being disseminated about their organizations (or client organizations) through blogs and other social media.	45%	51%	52%	54%	61%	58%	61%	62%	59%
And/or analyze content of what's being communicated about their organizations (or their clients) in blogs and other social media.	55%	54%	56%	55%	54%	52%	59%	59%	58%
The impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of other strategic audiences.	26%	29%	30%	30%	22%	28%	30%	27%	28%
The impact information disseminated about their organizations (or their clients) through blogs and other social media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behavior.	24%	28%	29%	26%	22%	26%	28%	26%	26%

Table Seven

Mean Analysis Comparisons between responses to the question: “Please tell us how frequently you access each of the following social networking, micro-blogging and video sharing sites as part of your work in public relations.” Note: Subjects were asked not to count time spent for personal use.

	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393	2015 n=329	2016 n=412	2017 n=556
Facebook	4.31	4.30	4.13	4.09	4.09	4.15	4.32	4.36
LinkedIn	3.44	3.63	3.34	3.31	3.60	3.65	3.58	3.60
My Space	1.38	1.19	1.12	1.11	1.22			
Google+			2.15	1.92	2.17	2.38	2.67	2.30
Twitter	3.58	3.52	3.92	4.05	4.14	4.13	4.19	4.26
Tumblr			1.57	1.62	1.76	1.74	2.13	1.70
YouTube	3.35	3.36	3.39	3.44	3.48	3.47	3.48	3.25
Flickr					2.13	2.02	2.48	2.05
Pinterest			2.06	2.06	2.31	2.12	2.63	2.17
Foursquare			1.65	1.74	1.70	1.52		
Sideshare					1.69			
Scribd					1.37			
Reddit					1.60			
Digg					1.49			
Instagram					2.53	2.59	3.39	3.39
Hootsuite					2.79	2.76		
Screenr					1.34			
Yammer					1.47	1.45		
SpringPad					1.29			
Evernote					1.60			
Snapchat					1.36		2.10	2.25
Social Bookmarking Sites (e.g. Delicious.com)					1.40			
prSpace			1.15	1.16	1.34			
PRnet			1.31	1.39	1.44			

Table Eight

Responses to the question: “Please tell us how frequently you access each of the following social networking, micro-blogging and video sharing sites as part of your work in public relations.” Note: Subjects were asked not to count time spend for personal use.

2017						
	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	1.5%	6.6%	4.8%	25.7%	57.1%	4.36
LinkedIn	6.1%	14.5%	14.7%	30.0%	25.8%	3.60
Google+	21.2%	13.0%	9.2%	7.1%	4.8%	2.30
Twitter	2.6%	6.9%	5.4%	26.0%	54.7%	4.29
Tumblr	20.5%	9.0%	5.7%	1.5%	0.2%	1.70
YouTube	6.2%	20.2%	19.6%	31.5%	11.6%	3.25
Flickr	22.4%	10.4%	9.1%	5.1%	1.9%	2.05
Pinterest	17.65%	14.0%	10.4%	6.1%	2.5%	2.17
Snapchat	18.4%	9.5%	7.8%	7.4%	2.5%	2.25
Instagram	9.1%	12.1%	8.5%	22.8%	17.4%	3.39

2016						
	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	3.4%	6.0%	5.2%	26.0%	59.5%	4.32
LinkedIn	6.8%	16.1%	16.4%	34.2%	26.5%	3.57
Google+	23.5%	26.8%	20.2%	18.0%	11.4%	2.67
Twitter	5.4%	8.6%	4.8%	23.9%	57.4%	4.19
Tumblr	38.7%	26.8%	21.1%	9.8%	3.6%	2.13
YouTube	8.0%	19.4%	14.7%	32.7%	25.2%	3.48
Flickr	29.8%	24.1%	21.2%	18.4%	6.5%	2.48
Pinterest	25.4%	24.2%	21.3%	21.3%	7.9%	2.62
Snapchat	43.6%	22.0%	18.8%	11.8%	3.8%	2.10
Instagram	16.4%	14.3%	12.2%	27.9%	29.3%	3.39

2015						
	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	5.9%	6.8%	6.2%	28.9%	52.2%	4.15
LinkedIn	9.7%	9.0%	18.1%	33.3%	29.9%	3.65
My Space	dna	dna	dna	dna	dna	dna
Google+	35.8%	21.5%	20.3%	14.0%	8.1%	2.38
Twitter	6.5%	5.0%	7.8%	30.2%	50.5%	4.13
Tumblr	56.1%	19.8%	19.1%	4.4%	0.6%	1.74
YouTube	6.6%	16.6%	20.9%	35.6%	20.3%	3.47
Flickr	47.6%	19.6%	19.6%	9.5%	3.8%	2.02
Pinterest	46.4%	18.1%	17.1%	14.0%	4.4%	2.12
Foursquare	67.8%	15.6%	13.1%	3.1%	0.3%	1.52
Sideshare						
Scribd						
Reddit						
Digg						
Instagram	36.4%	13.8%	16.9%	20.1%	12.9%	2.59
Hootsuite	37.9%	9.4%	13.2%	17.6%	21.9%	2.76
Screenr						
Yammer	75.2%	8.9%	12.4%	2.9%	0.6%	1.45
SpringPad						
Evernote						
Google Keep						
Social Bookmarking Sites (e.g. Delicious.com)						
prSpace						
PRnet						

2014						
	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	5.2%	6.7%	10.0%	30.5%	47.6%	4.09
LinkedIn	8.6%	13.1%	16.8%	33.2%	28.4%	3.60
My Space	88.0%	4.9%	5.6%	0.4%	1.1%	1.22
Google+	43.6%	20.3%	15.4%	16.5%	4.1%	2.17
Twitter	4.5%	4.85%	11.6%	30.2%	48.9%	4.14
Tumblr	57.2%	18.2%	18.2%	4.6%	1.9%	1.76
YouTube	6.8%	12.8%	24.4%	37.2%	18.8%	3.48
Flickr	43.2%	20.5%	20.5%	12.1%	3.8%	2.13
Pinterest	39.1%	20.3%	17.3%	17.3%	6.0%	2.31
Foursquare	63.9%	13.5%	13.9%	6.4%	2.3%	1.70
Sideshare	63.5%	12.4%	16.2%	7.5%	0.4%	1.69
Scribd	78.3%	8.0%	12.6%	1.1%	0.0%	1.37
Reddit	67.6%	11.7%	14.7%	5.3%	0.8%	1.60
Digg	72.8%	19.4%	13.6%	4.2%	0.0%	1.49
Instagram	38.4%	13.9%	15.4%	20.7%	11.7%	2.53
Hootsuite	34.6%	12.2%	12.9%	20.5%	19.8%	2.79
Screenr	81.1%	4.9%	12.5%	1.5%	0.0%	1.34
Yammer	77.2%	5.7%	11.8%	3.4%	1.9%	1.47
SpringPad	82.9%	5.7%	10.7%	0.8%	0.0%	1.29
Evernote	72.6%	6.5%	12.9%	4.2%	3.8%	1.60
Google Keep	79.9%	6.1%	12.9%	0.8%	0.4%	1.36
Social Bookmarking Sites (e.g. Delicious.com)	73.0%	8.4%	14.8%	3.42%	0.4%	1.50
prSpace	79.9%	6.1%	14.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.34
PRnet	75.0%	7.6%	15.9%	1.1%	0.4%	1.44

Note: 2014 was the first year Instagram, Hootsuite, Screenr, Yammer, SpringPad, Evernote and Google Keep were included in this question. 2012 was the first year Google+, Pinterest and Foursquare were included in this question. “prSpace” and “PRnet” do not exist and were asked only in an attempt to gauge the integrity of the answers. Although Flickr was not included in this list of questions, responses to the survey-open-ended questions confirm considerable use of Flickr in public relations practice.

2013						
	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	7%	6%	7%	32%	49%	4.09
LinkedIn	12%	17%	14%	40%	16%	3.31
My Space	94%	2%	3%	1%	0%	1.11
Twitter	8%	6%	8%	33%	46%	4.05
YouTube	6%	16%	23%	39%	16%	3.44
Google+	56%	19%	8%	11%	6%	1.92
Tumblr	66%	14%	13%	5%	2%	1.62
Pinterest	54%	12%	13%	16%	5%	2.06
Foursquare	66%	12%	8%	11%	4%	1.74
prSpace	90%	6%	4%	1%	0%	1.16
Prnet	80%	7%	6%	3%	1%	1.39

2012						
	Never	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	5%	8%	7%	26%	54%	4.16
LinkedIn	10%	18%	18%	34%	19%	3.34
My Space	92%	6%	2%	1%	0%	1.12
Twitter	8%	8%	11%	28%	45%	3.92
YouTube	6%	17%	25%	36%	16%	3.39
Google+	42%	28%	11%	11%	8%	2.15
Tumblr	68%	17%	9%	4%	2%	1.57
Pinterest	54%	15%	11%	12%	8%	2.06
Foursquare	70%	11%	7%	7%	5%	1.65
prSpace	92%	3%	3%	1%	0%	1.15
Prnet	83%	7%	6%	3%	1%	1.31

2011						
	Never	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	3%	8%	7%	21%	61%	4.30
LinkedIn	4%	12%	23%	39%	22%	3.63
My Space	84%	13%	2%	0%	0%	1.19
Twitter	12%	18%	13%	22%	36%	3.52
YouTube	3%	18%	29%	40%	10%	3.36

2010						
	Never	Infrequently	Neither Frequently nor Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean Score
Facebook	4%	6%	7%	21%	62%	4.31
LinkedIn	8%	15%	22%	37%	18%	3.44
My Space	72%	21%	15%	1%	1%	1.38
Twitter	12%	15%	12%	23%	38%	3.58
YouTube	4%	18%	28%	38%	12%	3.35

Table Nine

Mean Analysis Comparisons between responses to the question: “Please tell us how frequently you access each of the following social networking, micro-blogging and video sharing sites as part of your work in public relations.” Note: Subjects were asked not to count time spent for personal use.

	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393	2015 n=329	2016 n=412	2017 n=556
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LinkedIn	3.44	3.63	3.34	3.31	3.60	3.65	3.58	3.60
My Space	1.38	1.19	1.12	1.11	1.22			
Google+			2.15	1.92	2.17	2.38	2.67	2.30
Twitter	3.58	3.52	3.92	4.05	4.14	4.13	4.19	4.29
Tumblr			1.57	1.62	1.76	1.74	2.13	1.70
YouTube	3.35	3.36	3.39	3.44	3.48	3.47	3.48	3.25
Flickr					2.13	2.02	2.48	2.05
Pinterest			2.06	2.06	2.31	2.12	2.63	2.17
Foursquare			1.65	1.74	1.70	1.52		
Sideshare					1.69			
Scribd					1.37			
Reddit					1.60			
Digg					1.49			
Instagram					2.53	2.59	3.39	3.39
Hootsuite					2.79	2.76		
Screenr					1.34			
Yammer					1.47	1.45		
SpringPad					1.29			
Evernote					1.60			
Snapchat					1.36		2.10	2.25
Social Bookmarking Sites (e.g. Delicious.com)					1.40			
prSpace			1.15	1.16	1.34			
PRnet			1.31	1.39	1.44			

Table Ten

Percentage of subjects who claim they DO NOT USE each of the following.
Note: This question was asked for the first time in 2016.

	2016 n=412	2017 n=551
Facebook	4.2%	4.36%
Twitter	6.5%	4.60%
LinkedIn	8.7%	9.21%
You Tube	9.1%	11.09%
Instagram	27.2%	30.28%
Google+	31.0%	44.89%
Flickr	37.6%	51.32%
Pinterest	39.0%	49.62%
Tumblr	50.1%	63.26%
Snapchat	52.7%	54.41%

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