

Reviewing the Growth and Development of Scholarly, Online Publishing: Forging a New Frontier in Public Relations Research

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This article reviews the prestige, strengths and limitations of online journals, the role they play and the impact they have in a variety of academic disciplines. It suggests electronic publication has become popular not only because it permits scholars and academic libraries to avoid the perils of greatly increasing subscription charges by traditional printed journals but also because online journal articles are available anywhere and anytime beyond the physical space of libraries. While exploring the growth and development of online scholarly publication, the article finds some academic fields appear to value online presentation more than others and the impact and perceived value of electronic publication frequently is based on a variety of factors. The most prestigious online journals have open access to everyone; select their content through a double-blind, peer-review process; have esteemed authors and editorial boards; are sponsored by highly regarded societies; score high on the appropriate article citation indexes; and are favorably regarded in terms of a variety of subjective rankings by groups of scholars. It also reports that professors in a wide variety of academic disciplines believe online presentation and publication eventually will become the main format for scholarly research and reports on recent research indicating online journals are more widely read and cited than printed ones.

Preface

More years ago than he cares to remember, a young assistant professor who taught public relations at the University of Texas (at Austin) faced a significant professional dilemma.

He had conducted some of the first empirical research about social responsibility and ethics in public relations, several accomplished senior-level scholars he admired said his work was both “cutting-edge” and “ground-breaking” and he was trying to determine which academic journal it would be best to get his new research published in. He was a tenure-track assistant professor at one of the nation’s larger journalism and communication schools so the perceived prestige of any journal he might publish in was important. His senior colleagues kept telling him that scholars who publish in journals not perceived as being valuable might never get tenured or promoted. In those days, the “best” places for public relations scholars to publish were *Public Opinion Quarterly*

and *Journalism Quarterly* and those seeking tenure and promotion usually were advised to concentrate their sights on publishing there.

Even though the initial issue of *Public Relations Review*, the world's first blind-reviewed, scholarly publication for public relations research had recently been published, there were concerns about how much prestige publishing in this journal might emulate through the supercilious world of academe. Always one willing to take risks and loyal to his academic discipline, the young professor published his work on social responsibility and ethics in *Public Relations Review*.

Introduction

Predicaments similar to the one described above are faced frequently by developing scholars in every academic discipline. There are three components to a university professor's job – teaching, service and adding to the body of knowledge through research and scholarship. A fundamental premise of the quality of this scholarship involves peer opinions about the value and prestige of the medium through which the research is disseminated.

As Jones and Cook (2000) explain, scholarly publication is important for university professors because they are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge of their fields and faculty publication records play significant roles in decisions regarding promotion and tenure. At many universities, professors rarely receive tenure or promotion unless they publish in prestigious journals.

Although most academic fields have a small number of highly respected journals that enjoy significant readership numbers within specific scholarly communities, Kling and Covi (1995) claim only five to ten percent of the scholars in most fields publish in those elite journals. Karamouzis (1999) says most of these elite scholars are affiliated with top-tier research institutions that have vigorous scholarship orientations and expectations. He claims other academics usually publish their research in lesser-known journals.

This article provides a review of the prestige, strengths and limitations of research scholarship in public relations and other academic disciplines. It also explores electronic distribution as a mechanism for disseminating scholarly publications and the impact this is having in a variety of academic fields.

What is Academic Scholarship?

Universities expect faculty members to contribute to the body of knowledge of their fields by conducting research and disseminating their findings to others. Dissemination is a key word here because, as Karamouzis (1999) points out, peer dissemination is the fundamental premise of scholarly work. Jones & Cook (2000) suggest it is essential for scholars in any field to work rigorously to provide a theoretical base for their practice.

Various methods have been used to disseminate scholarly work over the years ranging from oral communication and scribal manuscripts in centuries past to voice-based messaging and video conferencing today. The most traditional medium for disseminating academic scholarship is the scholarly or academic journal.

A summary of the writings of a number of scholars (Hoffman, 1995; Kling & Covi, 1995; Rowland, 1997; Karamouzis, 1999; Sparks; 1999; Jones & Cook, 2000) suggests academic journals perform a number of functions including providing methods for disseminating information, quality control, providing recognition to authors and archiving information. Jones and Cook (2000) join Rowland (1997) in addressing the reality of the existence of a pecking order for academic journals and the fact that scholars are expected to publish in journals pertinent to and respected within their respective academic disciplines. As such, leading academics – and those who hope to eventually reach that status – are encouraged, perhaps even pressured, to submit their research to academic journals considered the most prestigious.

A major characteristic distinguishing scholarly journals from other publication is the concept known as double-blind, peer review; the practice of placing someone's scholarly research work under the scrutiny of experts in an attempt to make sure authors meet the standards of their discipline. When peer review is double-blind neither the authors nor the reviewers know each other's identity. Keeping authors and reviewers anonymous and independent helps discourage cronyism and helps prevent other criticism. Throughout academia articles published in double-blind peer reviewed journals almost always are held in higher esteem than those distributed through other channels.

In addition to providing ways to disseminate information, the functions academic journals provide in terms of quality control, providing recognition to authors and archiving information also are important. Any appropriate peer review process will maintain quality control of the information published and archiving through various indices will ensure information will be available to those who seek it in the future. The recognition authors receive through scholarly publication is essential for tenure and promotion, as well as future academic employment possibilities.

Academic Journals

For more than two centuries academic, or scholarly, journals have been the main format for research and scholarship in all academic fields. They are peer-reviewed periodicals containing scholarly articles of interest to various academic disciplines and until about a decade ago all of them were printed paper publications.

Karamouzis (1999) points out the earliest scholarly works were distributed through scribal manuscripts before working their way into printed paper journals usually published by university presses because “the technical nature and small audience of

scholarly work made it unattractive to commercial printing and posed a problem to scholars who could not find publishers to publish their work” (p. 2). This led to Johns Hopkins University establishing the first academic press in 1878 (Hawes, 1967). Other institutions were soon to follow with one of their major missions being publishing academic journals.

Paper Journals. Academic presses and the printed journals they produced served as the main distribution vehicle for academic scholarship until after World War II when the federal government provided significant funding for academic research, especially scientific journals. Commercial printing companies capitalized on this opportunity and together with university presses and various professional societies stimulated what Karamouzis (1999) calls “an explosion in journal publications” (p. 2).

This trend appears to be continuing. Odlyzko (1995) claims the number of academic articles published is doubling every decade and predicts educational developments in countries such as China and India will stimulate even greater growth in the future. Apparently there are more than 30,000 academic journals in the world and about 8,000 of them are peer reviewed (McCabe, 2002; Foer, 2004).

This growth in academic publishing coupled with the unique and specialized nature of scholarly publications has developed into an extremely profitable business. Many commercial publishing houses now make huge profits. Although per unit net costs are higher than they are for most other printed materials, publishers have discovered they can realize enormously high profits for printed journals and other academic materials (Jones & Cook, 2000). This can be seen clearly in terms of subscription prices currently charged for many academic journals and the retail prices for textbooks that are often four or five times more expensive than novels. McCabe (2002) suggests the profit margins many academic publishers make are excessive and has suggested some are fringing on anti-trust activities because profit margins this large would not exist in truly competitive markets.

As Karamouzis (1999) explains, this has created tremendous economic pressures on academic libraries and upon students and scholars who want to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in their fields. Lynch (1994) and Kienan (1998) point out, academics and university libraries often cope with these cost obstacles by reducing the number of journals they subscribe to. Unfortunately, this leads to fewer subscribers which results in subscription costs for printed journals increasing even further. McPherson (2003) claims this is a big problem at some universities that upgraded their expectations for tenure and promotion about the same time library budgets could no longer afford to subscribe to all necessary periodicals.

Jones & Cook (2000) say these economic realities are even more dramatic given how infrequently many print format academic journals are used. Butler (1999) reports half of the printed academic journals in most libraries are consulted fewer than 50 times per year and says only 15% are viewed more than 200 times annually.

Electronic Journals. The convergence of these economic realities together with advances in information technologies have led to the emergence of a number of academic journals that are not published in the traditional sense but are distributed electronically via web servers. Electronic publishing began with email and progressed to listservs, newsgroups and eventually web servers. Since the arrival of email, scholars have used various forms of electronic dissemination to distribute and discuss their research.

The world's first online research journal was established in 1990 when Morten Flate Paulsen, a Norwegian professor of online education, introduced the Distance Education Online Symposium. The academic world soon realized the potential of web services as a medium to disseminate scholarly work. Today there are thousands of academic journals "published" online (McCabe, 2007).

The immediate dissemination capabilities enjoyed by online communication provide both advantages and limitations from the scholarly perspective. Advantages are highlighted by the reality electronic publishing can deliver scholarly articles to readers in a much shorter time period than traditional print journals. The major disadvantage is since anyone can disseminate virtually anything via the web, some serious perception problems exist regarding the prestige of online, scholarly publication. Although perceptions about the prestige and value of online journals vary across academic disciplines, all factors being equal, printed journals usually are considered more prestigious than their electronic counterparts.

Sparks (1999) has addressed the confusion that sometimes exists between various kinds of academic electronic publishing. This includes items ranging all the way from prestigious, highly-respected, peer reviewed scholarly journals to someone publishing a non-juried paper on a web site. It also includes what Murray and Anthony (1999) call "webverts," or dual publications available in both electronic and printed formats. Also, it is important to note that a number of non-refereed academic electronic journals have surfaced in recent years. These non-juried publications and other web-based scholarship sometimes have inhibited the reputations of emerging blind-reviewed, online academic scholarship.

There are other advantages to electronic publishing aside from economic pressures and immediate dissemination. These include many technological innovations such as interconnectedness, interactive video, forum-like interaction, motion, animation, simulation, hyperlinking, three-dimensional, interactive, full cover graphics and other features not possible in traditional print journals. In spite of these capabilities, most electronic academic journals rarely use them. According to Karamouzis (1999), this is because many electronic academic journals want their finished products to resemble paper publications in the hopes this will enhance their prestige and reputation within academe. He also says, "the most important reason for operating in 'paper mode' is that the audience of electronic publications expects it" (p. 5).

The *Journal of Magazine and New Media Research*, an online publication of the Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), lists the following advantages of electronic academic publications (Sumner, 2006; Sumner, 2007):

- They are available 24 hours each day, seven days each week and 365 days each year beyond the physical space of the library.
- They are available via remote access anywhere at anytime.
- More than one person can use the same resource at the same time.
- New issues/updates generally are available faster to students and faculty than print copies are.
- They have increased functionality – searching, linking to other resources and ability to email records.
- They have many advantages over interlibrary loans.
- Require less overhead for/from savings in processing, binding, shelf space and storage.
- Their application for teaching and learning is exceptional and they are availability to students in distance education learning programs.

Advantages such as these have the potential to advance the development of scholarship in ways that were unthinkable two decades ago.

Prestige Differences. The prestige, status and reputation differences between electronic and paper academic journals depend upon a variety of factors. Although online publication generally carries less weight in terms of academic tenure and promotion, there are wide discrepancies within disciplines and even more from one university to another. Although business schools at leading research institutions appear to find little value in online publications (Argenti, 2007), the situation is considerably different in some other fields such as physics, mathematics and economics. Some suggest the proliferation of non-peer reviewed publications online has had a negative impact on the prestige of some of the better electronic publications (Chang, 2006).

Editors of electronic journals believe the newness of online scholarly dissemination provides many of their publications with disadvantages particularly when it comes to citation quotients because it takes at least a five-year publication history before any journal will be reflected in citation indices (Cote, 2007). Lance Gunderson (2007) of Emory University and co-editor in chief of *Ecology and Society* says online publications “are gaining in prestige and value” and says some scholars now argue “that online journals are more widely read and cited than those that are not online.” Joseph

Cote (2007) of Washington State University and the founding editor of *American Management Studies Review* claims most of the online journals that have achieved prestigious status are in the science disciplines and most of these were established print journals that migrated into an electronic format.

Chawla (2004) compared the perceived prestige of print and electronic journals and found print versions were more respected. However, this study also said other indicators might be more important than the medium of delivery including the prestige of the editor and editorial boards and the notoriety of the authors publishing articles in these publications.

Karamouzis (1999) points out the prestige of the journals university professors publish their research in plays a significant role in the peer review process at most universities, not only in terms of determining annual raises but also in deciding whether or not professors get tenured and promoted. King, et al. (2006) found electronic journal publication “is perceived among junior faculty as a possible threat to achieving tenure because online publication may not be counted as much, or even at all, in review” (p. 5). Some believe online journals have led to a proliferation of published scholarship making it more difficult for some faculty to comprehend everything being published in their field.

Mark McCabe (2007), the noted economist from the University of Michigan who has conducted considerable research on online journals, also says online journals can enhance their prestige if they are open access and are sponsored by high prestige societies. Open access is a term used to distinguish web-based scholarly material that is free to all users and does not require readers to pay a fee or be a member of any particular organization.

Those named above and others interviewed in the process of writing this article tell us the most prestigious online journals have open access to everyone; select their content through a double-blind, peer-review process; have esteemed authors and editorial boards; are sponsored by highly regarded societies; score high on the appropriate article citation indexes; and, are favorably regarded in terms of a variety of subjective rankings by groups of scholars. Several of these experts also told us that in a number of academic disciplines online journals are more widely read and cited than printed ones. It also is apparent that professors in a wide variety of fields believe online presentation and publication eventually will become the main format for scholarly research.

Public Relations Scholarship

Cutlip (1994) has traced the beginning of public relations education to 1920 when Joseph P. Wright taught a course on publicity techniques at the University of Illinois. He also says Edward L. Bernays taught the first course actually called public relations at New York University 1923 and 1924. The first university degree in public relations was offered by Boston University with its Master of Science in Public Relations program that

began in 1947. The Illinois and NYU courses were short lived but the BU master's degree program, that Bernays later taught in, continues today.

The University of Wisconsin and Ohio State University joined Boston University in creating tracks of study in public relations in the years immediately following World War II. Scott M. Cutlip, who some have called “the father of public relations education” (Wright, 1991), was the leading force in establishing the Wisconsin program, Walter Seifert played that role for Ohio State and although he didn't join the faculty until several years after the program began, Otto Lerbinger was to become the mainstay behind public relations education at BU for half a century before retiring three years ago. Other universities that would later establish a presence during the early years of public relations education were the University of Texas with Alan Scott and the University of Georgia with Frazier Moore. These schools would be followed by Syracuse University with William P. Ehling, Utica College with Raymond Simon, Ohio University with Hugh Culbertson and the University of Maryland with Ray Hiebert.

Many of the early public relations professors did not have Ph.D. degrees and preferred teaching over research. Cutlip, whose highest degree was at the master's level, was an exception. He co-authored what became the dominant public relations textbook for several decades and also developed a global reputation as a scholar for his cutting-edge work in public relations history. Although Lerbinger, Moore, Ehling, Culbertson and Hiebert all had Ph.D. degrees, not all of them entered the scholarly arena with Cutlip-like enthusiasm. Lerbinger, Ehling and Culbertson all authored research that has made significant contributions to the public relations body of knowledge. Moore's major contributions to the literature were writing textbooks and Hiebert would go on to edit the first refereed research journal in the public relations field.

Another interesting aspect about the development of public relations scholarship is the reality there were no Ph.D. degrees in communication, much less public relations, in the early years so universities that wanted to emphasize the scholarly over the practical turned to graduates of other, but related, academic disciplines. For example, some of the earliest academic works about public relations and public opinion research were published by Edward J. Robinson, a Ph.D. in psychology, who taught at Boston University. The same could be said for three of his BU colleagues, Frank LeBart, whose education was in management, Bernard Rubin, a Ph.D. in political science and Albert J. Sullivan, with a background in the humanities, who authored the first research about values that permeated public relations.

Lerbinger (2007), who joined the BU faculty in 1954 after receiving his Ph.D. degree in economics and went on to develop into one of the world's leading public relations scholars, credits the presence of these three colleagues – and the depth of their interdisciplinary interests – for encouraging him to enter public relations education in the first place and then to develop strong interests in research as well as teaching.

Since there were no public relations scholarly journals until the arrival of *Public Relations Review* in 1975, the small number of early public relations faculty members active in scholarship turned to journalism and public opinion publications such as *Journalism Quarter*, *Journalism Monographs*, *Journalism Educator* and *Public Opinion Quarterly* to satisfy their peer-reviewed publication needs. Although they were neither peer-reviewed nor a scholarly publication, some of the nation's leading public relations educators and practitioners published articles in *Public Relations Journal* and *Public Relations Quarterly*, which were the only professional publications in their field until the mid 1970s. Many considered the *Journal* to be the main voice for public relations during the 1950s and 1960s when it was the flagship monthly publication of the Public Relations Society of America (Lerbinger, 2007).

The public relations educators mentioned above were joined by a new breed of professors during the early 1970s that included James E. Grunig of the University of Maryland, Douglas A. Newsom of Texas Christian University, Glen M. Broom and David M. Dozier of San Diego State University and several others with strong research interests. They would precipitate an explosion in public relations research that would necessitate the creation of academic journals that would publish public relations research and commentary. This would provide much needed relief for these educators who had been publishing in management, political science and international affairs journals in addition to publications that had a broad focus on journalism, mass communication and, in some cases, speech-communication such as the *Journal of Communication*, *Human Communication Research*, *Journal of Applied Communication* and *Communication Monographs*.

Public Relations Review arrived on the scene in 1975 as the brainchild of its editor, Ray E. Hiebert, a public relations professor at the University of Maryland, and the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education – now the Institute for Public Relations, but in those days the research foundation of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Hiebert, whose Ph.D. degree is in American studies and who was Dean of Maryland's School of Journalism for many years, originally became interested in public relations research when he wrote his doctoral dissertation about Ivy Lee. He is the only editor the *Review* has ever had.

Several factors stimulated the continued to growth and development of public relations education through the remaining years of the 20th century. These included the creation of several Ph.D. degree programs that provided opportunities to for students to focus doctoral study in public relations and the branching out of a number of very good undergraduate programs to smaller, regional universities. The existence of public relations degree programs at mid-major universities created jobs for an increasing number of Ph.D. graduates who had focused their study in public relations. It also provided opportunities for a small number of mid-to-senior-level public relations educators who were willing to move from larger schools to some of these smaller institutions. A few of these smaller programs soon developed reputations for being some of the nation's best. Few, if any, of these smaller schools offered doctoral degrees and

some of them would become feeder institutions directing their brighter students towards some of the nation's better-known Ph.D. programs. Some of these schools also contributed to the development of public relations education and scholarship by introducing faculty members from other areas of communication to public relations. All of these factors would encourage and enhance research development in the field for years.

Most of the earliest aspects of public relations education took place at large, well known universities that have strong histories of emphasizing research and requiring faculty members to publish it. However, several of today's top-ranked programs are at the smaller, regional institutions that have less rigid faculty research expectations. As a result what's expected from today's public relations educators in terms of scholarly productivity varies dramatically from one institution to another.

The existence of *Public Relations Review* satisfied some of the publication needs of public relations scholars who arrived on the scene during the 1970s, but the continued growth in public relations education and research would create other scholarly publication opportunities. While serving as associate editor of *Public Relations Review*, James E. Grunig perceived a need existed to increase the theoretical aspects of public relations scholarship that sometimes was not being satisfied by the *Review* (Grunig & Grunig, 1989). He also strongly advocated the need for a scholarly journal that would "challenge and extend the field of research in public relations" (Grunig & Grunig, 1990, p. xi).

Arguably the leading researcher in the history of public relations education, Jim Grunig has long believed the best scholarship permits authors to develop and articulate theories behind their theses. He also thought public relations needed an academic publication more committed to developing theories from original research. This led, in 1984, to the introduction of a publication known as *Public Relations Research & Education* that would develop, in 1989, into the first *Public Relations Research Annual* published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates and co-authored by James E. and Larissa A. Grunig. This research annual was published for three years before it developed into the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, first published in 1992. This journal has flourished and developed a solid reputation as a leading contributor to public relations scholarship. It still is published by Erlbaum and is a quarterly publication of the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). In addition to being edited by Jim and Lauri Grunig, the *Journal of Public Relations Research* also has been edited by Elizabeth L. Toth, Linda Hon and its current editor, Linda Aldoory.

While *Public Relations Review* and the *Journal of Public Relations Research* have provided public relations scholars with opportunities to publish their work in the U.S., the *Journal of Communication Management*, published in Great Britain, has provided a strong overseas alternative. Since the development of public relations education has been stronger in the U.S. than in most other countries, this also has been

true for public relations research. While there are a number of well-known public relations scholars in the U.K., Europe, Latin America and in Asia/Australia, many of these people do not hold professorships in public relations but have academic appointments in related fields such as communication, business and liberal arts such as sociology and psychology.

Although public relations research and scholarship has grown considerably during the past sixty years, there is still a fairly large disconnect between some aspects the academic and practitioner communities. Too many practitioners find little value in most of the currently available public relations research studies claiming this scholarship doesn't provide them with information they want or need. Some practitioners believe public relations scholars have developed their own research agendas independent of the needs of the practice.

Reviving the *Public Relations Journal*

Citing a need to introduce public relations scholarship to the world of open access, peer-reviewed, electronic publication, PRSA has decided to revive the *Public Relations Journal* as an online scholarly publication effective with this issue introduced in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of PRSA and the society's 2007 International Conference, October 20-23, 2007, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The revived *Journal* will be presented quarterly and dedicated to the online dissemination of peer-reviewed articles written by academics or practitioners. The *Journal's* content will examine public relations in depth and/or create, test or expand public relations theory. The goals envisioned for this new effort are to support and facilitate an increase in quality public relations research within the academic and professional communities, promote research necessary to grow and build public relations as a profession and earn respect throughout the academic community as a highly regarded scholarly publication. We also hope to try and bridge the unfortunate gap that currently exists between what public relations educators are studying and what practitioners tell us they want and need to know about. In the process, we also plan to do some things that might help change academic perceptions suggesting publishing online – even when it is open access and peer-reviewed – is less prestigious than that in printed journals.

With enthusiastic support from the PRSA Board of Directors and especially the current and incoming President of the society, the board liaison to this project and strategic members of the PRSA staff, *Public Relations Journal* seems to have all the ingredients necessary for it to make an effective impact on public relations research.

Considerable research has been conducted into learning what makes some electronic academic journals better than others and findings have been incorporated into plans for *Public Relations Journal*. In keeping with requirements suggested for improving the prestige and value of online academic publications, the *Journal* will be

disseminated via the web in an open access format. This means it will be available free of charge to anyone, anywhere at anytime. Articles published by the *Journal* will be selected through double-blind review by members of arguably the world's most impressive editorial board for a public relations publication. This board includes many of the nation's most successful practitioners plus noted scholars from leading journalism, communication and business schools. And, the *Journal* is sponsored by PRSA, with a combined practitioner and student membership of nearly 30,000 members and considered by many to be the world's most prominent professional society in the field.

Some of the world's leading scholars and practitioners have agreed to have their articles published in this initial issue of the revived *Public Relations Journal*. David M. Dozier's name has been associated with excellence in public relations scholarship for more than three decades. Many consider Kenneth D. Plowman to be one of the world's brightest emerging public relations scholars. Bey-Ling Sha and Elizabeth Johnson Avery are two young scholars who both are developing national reputations for themselves. Ruthann Weaver Lariscy's name is well known within public relations education circles. The co-authoring roles of Masako Okura and Satina Chiu bring a unique professional perspective to the articles they have worked on. And, having David Michaelson and Sandra Macleod team-up to write an article about measurement and evaluation shortly after Michaelson has joined Echo Research is uniquely special. They are two of the brightest minds in this aspect of the public relations business. The *Journal* is as excited about having them co-author an article for us as their competitors probably are terrified about the prospect of having to go head-to-head with their combined knowledge and competence in the thriving research, measurement and evaluation business.

We encourage readers to return frequently to the online pages of the *Public Relations Journal* and to consider submitting articles to us for publication consideration.

Epilogue

Before this article ends, please permit a brief return to the story told at its beginning. The young professor's work received complimentary reviews shortly after it was published in *Public Relations Review*. His decision to have his work appear there turned out to be a good one and he would publish many other articles there, and in a variety of other scholarly journals, in the decades that followed. He would go on to win some impressive awards for his scholarship and would be tenured and promoted to the associate and full professor ranks. Eventually his career would lead to a distinguished professorship at an elite university.

Today he realizes that if he and other emerging scholars of that day had ignored *Public Relations Review* it probably would not now be publishing in its 33rd year and it definitely would not be considered one of the world's leading scholarly journals in his field. He now sees some similarity between the position *Public Relations Review* was in more than 30 years ago and where PRSA's *Public Relations Journal* is today. He

believes strongly in the need for juried public relations scholarship to move in an open access, online direction and he hopes today's emerging scholars will agree.

During the past few months, he also has come to realize some of the anxieties and difficulties involved with putting together a scholarly publication. He is grateful for the dedicated and enthusiastic support received from so many people while completing the first issue of the revived *Public Relations Journal*. In particular, he wishes to acknowledge the actions of noted public relations educator and PRSA Board Liaison, Vince Hazleton; PRSA National Chair and CEO, Rhoda Weiss; many members of the PRSA staff and especially Christina Darnowski and Randi Mason; Don W. Stacks of the University of Miami; Michelle Hinson of the Institute for Public Relations; his Boston University colleagues; and, Melanie Ensign, one of the brightest and hardest working graduate assistants in public relations education.

And because he is so grateful for this support, because he really believes in the importance of developing appropriate and respected online opportunities for the dissemination of public relations scholarship, and because he hopes his colleagues throughout public education will embrace the revived *Public Relations Journal* with the enthusiasm and respect accorded *Public Relations Review* and the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, he spent several long days, many evenings and most of two weekends writing what you have just read.

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