ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this research is twofold: to examine how 501(c)(6) organizations, also known as membership associations, utilize the Web through principles of dialogic communication and how they define their unique public relations efforts.

The review of literature defines dialogic communication theory, public relationships and Internet communication. A systematic and objective content analysis was used to quantify how the sample population uses aspects of dialogic communication. Interviews served to further investigate how membership associations perceive their individual Web communication and unique public relations efforts. Membership associations in the East North Central states, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, (Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Ohio) were chosen to further narrow the sampled population.

The results of the content analysis and interviews indicate that while many membership associations are using varying aspects of dialogic communication, the majority have room for improvement. The researcher concluded that tactical aspects of dialogic theory are relatively simple and effective to add to an association’s Web site.