MEDIA RELATIONS AND THE INTEGRATION OF NEW MEDIA:
IS NEW MEDIA AFFECTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC
RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS AND JOURNALISTS?

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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Introduction

Over the past decade, social media and the use of the Internet have increased significantly. More and more public relations professionals are using social media in their strategic communication plans as tools to communicate with their publics. Along with public relations practitioners, media outlets and media professionals are using social media, like Twitter and Facebook, to correspond with their stakeholders. Social media is an easy way for journalists to communicate with their audiences and to look for new story ideas. The more social media is used, the more stories are found through people tweeting and communicating through new media about accidents or newsworthy situations.

Media relations has been a main part of public relations practitioners work and efforts in strategic communication. Press releases, pitches to journalists and media kits are standard strategies for public relations professionals. With the growing number of public relations professionals and journalists using Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., are these strategies and best practices changing? Are formal relationships out the door and informal techniques now being used because of social media? Public relations professionals commonly send press releases through e-mail or call up a journalist to pitch a story about their client or business. If using social media, a public relations professional could “at-tweet” a journalist information on a story the media professional might be interested in or send a link of a press release through the different social media websites.

By surveying both public relations practitioners and media professionals,
quantitative and qualitative data can be obtained to show the trends of social media in their professions and how they feel this great phenomenon is affecting their workforce and their correspondence with each other. In-depth interviews conducted on a handful of media professionals and public relations practitioners will explore a qualitative and comprehensive look at the topic and question at hand.

After conducting the different methodologies and researching both social media and media relations thoroughly, this research paper will be able to show how new media is affecting the relationship between public relations professionals and journalists and if media relations best practices will be changing because of this ever-evolving and dominant area of communication.

Section II
Literature Review
“Research has been an important part of public relations for more than half a century. In many ways, it's the research component that sets strategic public relations apart from simplistic, publicity or press agentry (Wright & Hinson, 2005).”

Now introduce the World Wide Web and social media to public relations, and lots of things are going to change (Wright & Hinson, 2008). The Internet has changed so many things about our society, from our economy to even government institutions, and allowed everyone to have a chance to introduce their creative side (Weinberger, 2002). Weinberger says when we use the Web, we are “recreating ourselves” because we have a shield of a computer screen blocking us from our audience. People find the strength to say what they believe and shout out their opinion to the world on the World Wide Web (Weinberger, 2002). The Internet brings individuals together through a “web public” where everyone is connected through communications on the Internet (Weinberger, 2002).

Results show professionals think communications are better from mixed media approaches. It is not about regular public relations and news relations anymore. People prefer a mixture of print and the Internet (Freitag & Pichert-duthler, 2008). There is a need for public relations practitioners to research and watch all blogs, social media sites and Internet websites (Cho & Walton, 2009). Consumers can use these sites as sources for pressuring an organization they are unhappy with to make differences in a corrupted product or unsatisfactory services (Cho & Walton, 2009).
When it comes to public relations practitioners, their potential number one tool in communication is the Internet because there is no other tool that can build relationships between organizations and their publics like the web can (Pavlik & Dozier, 2009). “The web has become completely integrated into every role and practice in public relations (Sallot, Porter & Acosta-Alzuru, 2004).” Christ predicted that social networking sites would force public relations practitioners to rethink how they approach relationship development with their stakeholders. Practitioners have been exploring the interactive elements of social networking and experiencing benefits for their organizations (Christ, 2005).

There are many different functions websites are using to communicate to their publics and stakeholders. They even provide information to the media in a much quicker way than before this type of media was introduced (Hill & White, 2000). Public relations professionals see websites as a way for an organization to enhance their appearance to the public; their competitiveness is shown and can make the organization look more professional (Hill & White, 2000). They use the Internet to place news releases on their website and let the media access them that way.

Key says it is “critical” for public relations practitioners to keep on top of the new media. News releases, video media releases (VMRs) and b-roll being handed out to news outlets are being contested with news from different forums or news from different blogs and email lists (Key, 2005). Public relations practitioners need to embrace these new tactics and move past the old ways of doing things. It is a new digital age, and the public relations profession needs to encompass this new model (Key, 2005). The need for a new public relations agency is upon us bringing together
different entities of the new digital age. Along with the need for public relations professionals to adapt the social media skills, there is also need to make sure “technologies don’t dehumanize communication (Kelleher, 2007).” The entities include the brightest minds from search marketing, technology, content development and even, traditional public relations (Key, 2005). Breaking away from the old and embracing the new is the way for public relations practitioners to succeed in the business world of today.

PRSSA members see this is true also. At a PRSA board of directors meeting they discussed what the future of public relations looks like, and the topic of social media was discussed in full (Jacques b., 2009). Social media should not be looked at as a strategy but as part of one (Jacques b., 2009). They are the applications that can be used when sending messages to our publics and stakeholders. Public relations practitioners need to be one top of how their audiences are changing and make sure to adapt to those changes because this is the best way to reach an audience (Jacques b., 2009). When it comes to social media, “the role of communications will now be engaging with those communicators in a way where they can help shape, determine and influence the message (Jacques b., 2009).”

Media Relations

The definition of media relations is the relationship between public relations professionals and journalism that is not developed through random meetings (Supa & Zoch, 2009). Public relations professionals have strategic and calculated reasons for contacting journalists and working towards building relationships with those professionals. “The activities of media relations, including pitching content to
reporters, are staples of the public relations industry” (Waters, Tindall & Morton, 2010).

Media Relations is mostly one-sided where public relations practitioners work continuously to provide news-related information to the journalists (Larsson, 2009). Journalists claim the public relations practitioners are usually not successful in landing their ideas in newspapers and magazines, while the public relations professionals say they do. The media professionals do admit when nothing is going on and are low on news, they will resort to materials provided by the public relations practitioners (Larsson, 2009). The relationship between the two can be identified as a “mutually dependent, exchange relation (Larsson, 2009).” “Mutually beneficial and relationship” can be used in the definition of media relations, but it is almost always the public relations practitioner calling up the journalist to build a relationship or initiate a correspondence between the two (Supa & Zoch, 2009).

For over 20 years, the relations between journalists and public relations professionals have changed very little (Supa & Zoch, 2009). Public relations practitioners depend on the media because it is cost-efficient and more credible than advertising (Larsson, 2009). Journalists do not depend on public relations practitioners and have certain distrust towards strategic communicators. Journalists find the information PR practitioners are providing is not beneficial and worthwhile for the news (Supa & Zoch, 2009). The value of the information PR professionals are providing journalists hasn’t changed in the past twenty years either, and the media doesn’t see the importance in most of the information disseminated by the practitioners (Supa & Zoch, 2009).
Larsson sees some value in the news contributed by PR professionals. “By serving the media with news material, the activities of PR actors have caused their industry to move towards taking on the shape of a news desk located outside the media. In this study, one interviewed managing director of a PR consultancy in fact went so far as to suggest that PR firms ‘really are about being a satellite news desk’” (Larsson, 2009).

There is a “new era of media relations” upon us because of the new media that is becoming more predominant everyday and more PR professionals start to recognize this (Waters, Tindall & Morton, 2010). “Media catching has become a new term within media relations, and it means

“Rather than having practitioners contacting lots of journalists, broadcasters, and bloggers in hopes of gaining media placements, thousands of practitioners are being contacted at one time by journalists and others seeking specific material for stories, blog postings, and Web sites with upcoming deadlines (Waters, Tindall & Morton, 2010).”

In conclusion:

“Public relations, including media relations, cannot fall into a routine of producing static programming; instead, practitioners should seek out new communication channels and possibilities for engaging all of our stakeholders. Failing to do so could result in organizations and practitioners being labeled
outdated and irrelevant (Waters, Tindall & Morton, 2010).”

The best practices are established for media relations, but are they changing because of the use of social media? I want to look into the relationship between public relations practitioners and the media and find out if it is changing due to the abundant amount of social media that is being used by the two professional groups. My research will show if the relationship is changing or if the use of social media is being kept separate from the interaction between the two. The research I conduct will answer a number of questions obtaining to the affects social media is having on relationships between public relations practitioners and journalists.

RQ1: How is social media affecting the relationship between public relations professionals and traditional media practitioners?

RQ1a: Has it been a positive or negative affect on media relations?

RQ2: Has social media made it easier for correspondence between the two professional groups?

RQ2a: If yes, how so?

RQ2b: Or has it been kept separate from their interaction?

RQ3: Will Social Media change the best practices of media relations?

RQ3a: If yes, how so?

RQ3b: If no, why not?

Section III
Methodology
Social media has changed how both journalists and public relations practitioners practice in their workforce. Regular people are now able to divulge information online or break stories quicker than traditional media outlets because of the real-time advantages of certain social media applications. This could change the correspondence between public relation professionals and the media.

For the research being conducted on the affect this new media is having on the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners, there is information on how journalists are using new media and how public relations practitioners are using social media, but there is not a lot of information on how they are using it between each other.

The study being conducted will consist of finding out how social media is affecting the correspondence and interaction of public relations practitioners and traditional media professionals. The main goal is to find out how it is changing the relationship between the two professional groups and by how much. The questions being asked will determine if it’s for the positive and if it will take over all communications and if it will last.

The best way to research this topic is by studying the professionals within the two fields, especially traditional news. The study will consist of a triangulation of surveying and conducting in-depth interviews amongst two different groups of subjects. From the surveys, quantifiable data will be obtained and from the interviews, qualitative data will be obtained and answer the researcher’s questions. There will be two different surveys conducted in the research. One survey will be sent to traditional media professionals and the second survey will be sent to public
relations practitioners. The surveys will be sent through a survey engine called esurveyspro.com. When conducting surveys, a sample of people will need to be chosen who is best fit to answer the research questions and who will give you the best information relevant to your research questions.

Surveys have a lot of advantages as a research methodology. A researcher can find quantitative data from surveys, which most methodologies only provide researchers with qualitative data. Surveys are not as time consuming or costly as other types of methodologies. When it comes to the results of surveys, the information gathered is easy to look back on to evaluate and analyze. To answer the research questions, the researcher will need to easily evaluate and analyze the information, so there is measurable data to formulate conclusions within the study.

For the second methodology, in-depth interviews will be used on five journalists and five public relations practitioners to determine their take on the world of traditional media and public relations and how social media is affecting it. In-depth interviews have the advantage of finding lots of information that can contribute to an investigator’s research. There is a great amount of information obtained through in-depth interviews, and if the interviewer doesn’t understand the information or wants to know more about what the respondent is saying, they are able to question and probe for more from the respondent. The Principal Investigator will conduct the interviews over the phone.

With every methodology, I will need to choose a sample of people from a certain population and decide how I will conduct the in-depth interview, send out the surveys and conduct the focus groups. For the in-depth interview, I have chosen top
officials at different public relations firms across the country. The in-depth interview will be conducted via phone.

Section IV
Results
Using SPSS and running descriptive analysis on both surveys, many questions were answered regarding new media and how it is affecting the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists. The survey for public relations practitioners was sent to 249 practitioners in the state of Indiana, and 236 journalists from Indiana were surveyed. 72 of the 249 public relations professionals responded to the survey, giving a 28.9 percent response rate. Regarding the journalist survey, 64 of the 236 journalists completed the survey, giving a 27.1 percent response rate. Both response rates are well over the acceptable rate of 7-10 percent response rate.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS SURVEY RESULTS**

For the first question, it asked how public relations practitioners correspond with journalists in a professional manner. The practitioners were asked to choose all of the modes of communication they use. A majority of practitioners use phone and email, with 95.8 percent of professionals using email to contact journalists and 91.7 percent of them use the phone. When corresponding with journalists through social media, it is not as prominent. Twitter is most used with 45.8 percent of the practitioners surveyed using the micro-blogging site. Facebook comes in next with 20.8 percent of journalists using the site to communicate professionally with the media.

When asked what mode they use the most with journalists, social media was not among the top. 68.1 percent of practitioners use email and 18.1 percent use the phone to talk with journalists. Only one person said they used Facebook, and one other person said they use Twitter the most.
There isn’t much difference in the outcome when asked what is the one way they would choose to communicate with journalists. Email is still at the top with 65.3 percent of practitioners choosing the mode, and phone is next with 16.7 percent of practitioners. There were three people who would choose Twitter. One respondent chose “other” as their answer and added they “would not choose one because in this world, you have to be diverse.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents who chose "other" said they use Business Wire and PR Newswire to send press release to journalists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When choosing "other," the public relations practitioners surveyed stated they use the phone and even instant messaging to pitch their ideas to the media.

Regarding sending press releases to the media, a vast majority chose email as the primary mode they use with 91.7 percent. This is regarding public relations
practitioners who almost half correspond with journalists on a daily basis and a 27.8 percent more communicate with the media weekly. Almost half of these practitioners only send press releases on a weekly basis, 23.6 percent of the practitioners surveyed send press releases monthly.

**Question 7. I use the following social media sites for professionals use (check all that apply).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Tumblr</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents are also using Flickr, YouTube, eNewsletter and Quora for professional use.

**Question 11. I am connected with journalists through the following social media sites (Check all that apply).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Tumblr</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of the public relations practitioners who were surveyed use social media on a professional basis on a daily basis. Another 20.8 percent of the practitioners use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. on a weekly basis. When it comes to never using social media, there are 10 public relations practitioners surveyed who do not use social media to correspond for business needs.

The second section of the survey consisted of a likert scale to indicate the level of agreement each public relations practitioner had with the given statement.
The first statement read, “I have seen a difference in my professional relationship with journalists because of the integration of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn, etc.).” Over half of the public relations practitioners who completed the survey “Strongly Agreed” and “Agreed” to the statement. There were 21 practitioners (29.2%) who “Neither Agreed nor Dis agreed” to the relationship changing. Only eight respondents picked “Dis agreed” or “Strongly Dis agreed.”

In regards to social media helping the relationship between public relations professionals and journalists, there were 68.1 percent of respondents who “Strongly Agreed” and “Agreed.” Only three practitioners “Dis agreed” that social media is helping the relationship between the media and public relations professionals.

According the respondents, the statements, “I use less voice interaction professionally with journalists because I am using interaction through social media” and “I do no communicate professionally through email with journalists as much as I do through social media” are unfounded. There were 44.5 percent of practitioners who “Dis agreed” and “Strongly Dis agreed” they are using less voice interaction, and there was a vast majority (84.7%) who did not agree they were using email as much as they were using social media to correspond with the media. The majority of public relations practitioners also disagreed with the statement “I only communicate professionally with journalists through social media.” A majority of 87.5 percent practitioners do not just communicate with the media through social media.

**Question 17. I only communicate professionally with journalists through social media.**
The public relations practitioners surveyed are in agreement with the two statements, “The way I professionally communicate with journalists has changed since the integration of social media” and “I have seen the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists change for the better because of social media.” Almost half of the respondents see their communication with journalists has changed because of social media. Another 19.4 percent “Neither Agreed nor Disagreed” with the statement. For the relationship changing for the better, nearly half of the respondents “Strongly Agreed” and “Agreed.” Only seven of the practitioners didn’t agree with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the respondents, social media is not affecting the number of the practitioners’ pitches and press releases being used or being sent to journalists. There are 34.7 percent of practitioners who have “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” to the increase in their pitches and press releases being used compared to a 20.9% of the respondents who “Strongly Agree” and “Agree.” According to over half of the

**Question 20. I communicate more often with journalists regarding professional matters because of social media.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the respondents, social media is not affecting the number of the practitioners’ pitches and press releases being used or being sent to journalists. There are 34.7 percent of practitioners who have “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” to the increase in their pitches and press releases being used compared to a 20.9% of the respondents who “Strongly Agree” and “Agree.” According to over half of the
practitioners, they are not sending out more press releases and pitches to journalists because of social media. Only 11.1 percent of the public relations professionals “Agreed” with the statement.

For “I choose to connect with journalists on a professional basis through social media sites,” the respondents were in agreement with 48.8 percent and disagreement with 29.1 percent.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>For-Profit</th>
<th>Non-Profit</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in PR</th>
<th>1 to 5 years</th>
<th>6 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 to 20 years</th>
<th>21 to 29 years</th>
<th>30 + years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
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<td>20.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Region</th>
<th>Indianapolis Area</th>
<th>Ft. Wayne Area</th>
<th>Northwest Indiana, including Gary</th>
<th>North Central Indiana, including Muncie</th>
<th>Southeast Indiana, including Bloomington</th>
<th>Lafayette Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JOURNALISTS SURVEY RESULTS**
The results for the survey for the journalists are slightly different than the results for the public relations practitioners’ survey.

**Question 1. I correspond with public relations professionals in a professional manner through ____________ (check all that apply).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>In person</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The one journalist who chose "other" said they text with public relations professionals in a professional manner.

A majority of journalists use email as their main mode of communication with public relations practitioners. The next would be the phone with 14.1 percent journalists calling public relations practitioners to talk professionally. Email is also the number one way they choose to communicate with practitioners. There are 70.3 percent of respondents who prefer to correspond with practitioners through email and 11 percent who prefer the phone.

**Question 4. I receive press releases from public relations practitioners through ____________ (check all that apply).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The journalists surveyed that chose "other" stated they receive some press releases from public relations professionals in person.

**Question 5. I receive story pitches from public relations practitioners through ________ (check all that apply).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>98.4%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main response to choosing "other" was receiving pitches from public relations practitioners by phone.

**Question 6. I use the following social media sites for professional use (check all that apply.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Tumblr</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the correspondence with public relations professionals, half of the journalists surveyed said they professionally communicate weekly with practitioners. Another 31.3% communicate daily with public relations professionals. There were no journalists surveyed who said they never correspond professionally with practitioners.

A great majority of the respondents receive press releases from public relations professionals on a daily basis. Only six said they receive them on a weekly
basis, but no journalist responded to never receiving press releases from public relations practitioners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Tumblr</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half of the journalists surveyed said they use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and LinkedIn professionally on a daily basis. A quarter of the journalists use social media for their job weekly. Seven journalists said they never use social media for professional use.

Like with the survey for public relations practitioners, there was a likert scale to read the level of agreement the journalists had with statements regarding social media and how it was affecting the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners. The first statement said, “I have seen a difference in my professional relationship with public relations practitioners because of the integration of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, etc.). Almost half of the respondents “Disagreed” and “Strongly Disagreed” with the social media affecting the relationship. Only 14 journalists who completed the survey “Agreed” there has been some changes with the relationship.

When it came to the integration of social media helping the relationship between the media and public relations practitioners, there were 40.6 percent of
respondents who “Neither Agreed nor Disagreed” with the statement. In agreement, 35.9 percent of journalists think it is helping the relationship. In disagreement, 20.3 percent chose “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree.”

The statements: “I use less voice interaction professionally with public relations professionals because I am using more interaction through social media” and “I do not communicate professionally through email with public relations professionals as much as I do through social media” were not agreed upon by the journalists surveyed. The statement: “I only communicate professionally with public relations professionals through social media” was disagreed upon by the journalists who completed the survey. 39 of the respondents “Disagreed” and “Strongly Disagreed” to using less voice interaction with the practitioners. 12 journalists “Strongly Agreed” and “Agreed” to the statement. A great majority (92.2%) was not in agreement with not using email to communicate with the practitioners because of social media. Only two of the respondents “Strongly Agreed” upon the statement. With the statement about only communicating through social media, almost 90 percent did not agree with the statement, while two respondents did so.

The majority agrees they only communicate with public relations professionals through phone and email with a 61 percent majority. While 31.3 percent of the respondents “Disagreed” and “Strongly Disagreed” with the statement regarding phone and email as the only mode of communications with public relations practitioners.

When it comes to the statement that read, “The way I professionally communicate with public relations professionals has changed since the integration of
social media, almost half of the journalists surveyed are not in agreement. There are 17 journalists who “Agreed” with the statement, and another 17 journalists who “Neither Agreed nor Disagreed” with the above statement.

As for social media helping the relationship between public relations professionals and the media for the better, the majority “Neither Agreed nor Disagreed” with 45.3 percent being neutral to the statement. There were 32.8 percent respondents who “Agreed” and another 20.3 percent were not in agreement with that it has changed for the better.

The journalists surveyed do not think public relations practitioners are sending out more releases or contacting them because of the social media. Over half of the respondents “Disagreed” and “Strongly Disagreed” public relations professionals are contacting them more, and there are only nine respondents who “Agreed” and “Strongly Agreed” to the statement.

The final question in the likert scale portion of the survey stated, “The amount of times public relations practitioners are contacting me on a professional basis through social media does not bother me.” The majority “Neither Agreed nor Disagreed” with 51.6 percent, while 34.4 percent of respondents agreed public relations professionals don’t bother them when contacting through social media. There were seven respondents who are bothered by practitioners contacting them through social media.

DEMOGRAPHICS
### Field Agency

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<th>Percent</th>
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<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 to 20 years</th>
<th>21 to 29 years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<th>Southeast Indiana, including Bloomington</th>
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<tr>
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### Gender

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### In-Depth Interview

Some media professionals and public relations professionals also engaged in in-depth interviews with the researcher. Below are some experts from the interviews.

- **Journalist**- “I would rather get an email. That way I feel like with email or a phone conversation I feel like I am discussing that situation with just that person. I feel like I would get better results quicker. I wouldn’t have to wait until their Facebook or Twitter or whatever.”

- **Journalist**- “I think there has probably been for a number of younger reporters and editors [who use social media to communicate with public relations
practitioners], but I think the older ones prefer to either meet directly or talk on the phone.”

- Public relations practitioner- “I think [social media] is good for the profession. I think it’s bound to be a little testing on the individual and anyone who wants a balanced life. It (balanced life) might be a thing of the past.”

- Public relations practitioner- “I don’t really find journalists reaching out in a story sourcing way but what is happening at least in my involvement and engagement with them is that they are sharing a lot of things about themselves as individuals which I think is bound to have ripple effects on your professional relationships with people if you know of and see each as whole human beings.”

- Journalist- “While I tend to see more PR people getting on social media, they seem to still e-mail press releases or call with news tips before they post anything on social media. So in my opinion, the primary means of communication between me and the PR people I work with really hasn’t changed.”

- Journalist- “From what I understand, a lot of PR people are on Twitter to keep the general public informed about a particular company or elected official, not necessarily to break a story to the news media.”

- Public relations practitioner- “Well, I think [social media is] today’s medium, which with the speed these things have come into being and become useful to people tells me there is no such thing as permanency, and I think they are here until the next new thing comes along and replaces them.”
• “I’m at the tail end of the new generation of people using those modes of information. I’m not against it. I think it’s a good thing.”
There is no denying that social media exists and is used in the public relations field for many different things, like communicating to stakeholders, promoting events, helping out during crises and to a certain degree, corresponding with the media. In regards to the media, there is also no denying it plays a big part in breaking a story or communicating with readers. From the responses in the surveys and in-depth interviews, both the journalists and public relations practitioners acknowledge there is communications through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., but there is an agreement that it is not the number one way to communicate amongst each other.

Both journalists and the public relations practitioners surveyed chose email and phone as their top ways to communicate professionally with each other. As one public relations practitioner stated, it’s easier to get details across when using email and phone, rather than using Twitter. Although, it was evident that public relations practitioners are more accepting of using social media than journalists. The practitioners strongly agreed social media is helping the relationship between public relations professionals and the media, but the journalists didn’t have much of an opinion on the topic. The majority of journalists were neutral to it helping or not.

Is social media going to change the best practices of media relations? It doesn’t look that way. Journalists want to see traditional communications stick around. Social media is such a great phenomenon right now, so both journalists and practitioners have to know how and when to use it. As of right now, it’s just not affecting the relationship as much as it is affecting how public relations practitioners communicate with consumers and journalists relay information to their readers.
Almost 70 percent of the journalists surveyed use Facebook for professional use and over 30 percent use Twitter for their job. When it comes to public relations practitioners, over half use Facebook and Twitter for professional use. No one can deny social media is being used. It’s just not the most important form of communication between the media and public relations professionals. Traditional communications is still winning over social media.

When analyzing the data, there was a correlation with the number of years the professional has been working to the use of social media. The fewer years the professional has been working the more they use social media for their job and to correspond with each other. For the respondents who have been working 30 plus years as a journalist or public relations practitioner, they do not use social media very often, and some answered "never." This could mean as the years pass and the younger generations start their professional careers, social media might have more of an affect on the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists then it does right now.

This doesn't mean it's not different in different parts of the country and different markets across the nation. These surveys and in-depth interviews were reserved to the state of Indiana. If this survey was sent to public relations practitioners and journalists in big cities like New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, etc., the results have a great possibility of being different. For future research on this topic, surveys should be sent to the bigger cities and to the biggest public relations agencies and media outlets. There should be in-depth interviews conducted on top reporters and top public relations professionals who live in the bigger cities across the
country. By only surveying one part of the country, it limits the findings. CNN, the New York Times and the Washington Post are very active on Twitter and Facebook. Top public relations professionals like Mark Ragan and Katie Paine are constantly tweeting about the public relations field and the hot public relations topic of the day.

In the state of Indiana, traditional communication, like email and phone, still reigns as the number one way public relations practitioners and journalists communicate. They recognize social media is here to stay -- for now, but the public relations practitioners would rather stick to picking up the phone to pitch a story or sending a quick email with a link to a press release, and the journalists would rather hear from the practitioners through the phone and email. Looking at the results from both surveys, the public relations practitioners in Indiana are more accepting of new media and see it as helping their relationship with the media. The journalists in Indiana were neutral on if it was changing their relationship with public relations practitioners for the better.

The next step for this research is to survey the bigger markets across the country. Because like fashion, the Midwest is slow on grasping new trends. The relationships among public relations practitioners and journalists in bigger cities and different parts of the country could very likely be affected by the integration of new media.

Section VI
References


