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JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MULTIMEDIA RELEASES AND ONLINE  
NEWSROOMS

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## **ABSTRACT**

The growth of the Internet has radically changed the manner in which individuals interact with businesses. Specifically, with the rise of social media platforms, press release distribution services, and online newsrooms, journalists are no longer restricted to a pencil and a piece of paper. The goal of this study was to examine journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases and online newsrooms. Do journalists prefer multimedia releases to traditional press releases? Why? Online newsrooms were also examined to find out what journalists expected to see as well as the types of features they may find helpful. Findings will allow public relations professionals' to better meet journalists' needs.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Multimedia and Its Effects.....	3
Chapter 2 Review of Literature.....	6
One-Way Communication .....	6
The Press Agency Theory .....	7
The Public Information Model .....	8
The Asymmetrical Model .....	10
Two-Way Communication .....	10
The Symmetrical Model .....	11
The Symmetrical Model Versus The Asymmetrical Model.....	12
Grunig’s Excellence Theory .....	13
The Dialogic Theory of Public Relations .....	14
Research Questions .....	17
Chapter 3 Methodology .....	20
Recruitment Procedures .....	20
Participants .....	20
Additional Demographics .....	21
Measures .....	21
Updates and Pitches .....	22
Use of Multimedia.....	23
Use of Social Media and Search Engines .....	23
Organizations’ Online Newsrooms .....	23
Chapter 4 Results .....	25
Chapter 5 Discussion .....	28
Limitations and Future Directions .....	31
Conclusion .....	32
REFERENCES .....	33
Appendix A Survey Measures .....	40
Appendix B IRB Approval Letter.....	49

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Historically, a public relations specialist's toolbox included a pen and paper to get clients in the news (Hoffman, 2014). With these tools, public relations practitioners would draft press releases, or "news announcements," in order to inform outsiders about a person, company or subject matter (Conner, 2013). In 1905, Ivy Ledbetter Lee and George Parker founded Parker and Lee, the first public relations firm in the United States, with the mission of "Accuracy, Authenticity, and Interest" (Morris, 2014, p. 1). Statements produced by Lee and Parker were genuine and truthful, greatly differing from the "biased publicity handouts of the day" (Morris, 2014, p. 1).

Lee is credited to be the first person who sent out a press release via the U.S. postal service after a train crash in 1906 (Hoffman, 2014). When the train crash occurred, Lee advised the Pennsylvania Railroad to allow the media access to the scene instead of hiding information from the reporters (Morris, 2014). Many of the journalists did not believe press releases were different from advertisements, claiming the material was really just for publicity, as most of the material at the time were (Morris, 2014).

In response to the train crash as well as numerous other events, such as the coal trust strike in 2006, Lee distributed his book, *Declaration of Principles*, to New York City editors (Russell & Bishop, 2009). In essence, this explained the purpose of Lee's work was to supply accurate news for public knowledge (Russell & Bishop, 2009). Lee argued for transparency of information between the client, the press, and the public (Morris, 2014).

In the mid 1990s, the way to tell a client's story dramatically changed with the rise of computers, the Internet, and press release distribution services. Press releases have become

available to a wider audience, and not only journalists (Hoffman, 2014). In 2013, press release distribution services, including PRNewswire, Business Wire, and Marketwired, distributed around 642,000 press releases, or 1,759 press releases each day (Hoffman, 2014).

Dumenco (2010) states the future of press releases is uncertain. “Early PR man Ivy Ledbetter Lee issued the very first press release in 1906...*The New York Times* printed it verbatim...If the same thing happened today, we’d all be looking for @nytimes to RT @PennsylvaniaRR’s real-time spin” (p. 1). Instead of waiting days to hear news, billions of people are instantly made aware of information and communicate it with others worldwide through the Internet (Blatt, 2004). In essence, the Internet is a major contributor to two-way communication (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Scott (2007) explains public relations practitioners should not only reach out to journalistic gatekeepers. “Instead of spending tens of thousands of dollars per month on a media relations program that tries to convince a handful of reporters at select magazines, newspapers, and TV stations to cover us, we should be targeting the plugged-in bloggers, online news sites, micro-publications, public speakers, analysts, and consultants who reach the targeted audiences who are looking for what we have to offer” (Scott, 2007, p. 35).

With the advancement in technology, public relations practitioners are able to include more multimedia in their releases. Najjar (1996) defines multimedia as “the use of text, graphics, animation, pictures, video, and sound to present information” (p. 129). When media, such as images and video, is utilized, press releases are considered multimedia releases (Bahr, 2006). Many researchers (Bahr, 2006; Levine, 2013; Conner, 2013) suggest including links to the company’s homepage or to another site in order to increase company awareness and benefit the

viewers. Bahr (2006) and Levine (2013) also suggest utilizing keywords to improve search engine optimization.

Blatt (2004) argues anything interactive and easily able to open is much more pleasing to the journalist's eye. Blatt (2004) cites a survey by Bennett & Company, a PR firm based in Orlando, which found 59 percent of journalists surveyed agreed multimedia affects whether or not a story is run. Blatt (2004) states multimedia, such as photographs, well-produced videos, clever graphics, corporate logos, and informative audio recordings, is more likely to gain journalists' attention. In turn, Blatt (2004) suggests this material is more likely to be utilized by the media. Additionally, companies should display multimedia via the Internet instead of sending as email attachments because many fear these attachments may be spam and may lead to viruses (Blatt, 2004).

Contently, a company that has experience working with many reputable brands, noticed the need to switch to multimedia. As a result, Contently has 100 multimedia experts dedicated to incorporating more multimedia in campaigns for clients. Shane Snow, a co-founder of Contently, states "we're getting more inquiries around infographics and videos and photos... There's more than one way to tell a story. Often the best way to tell a story is not through the [written word]" (Taintor, 2013, p. 1).

### **Multimedia and Its Effects**

Multimedia releases are around five times more likely to be clicked by viewers (Business Wire, 2014). Additionally, according to a study by PRNewswire, multimedia releases increase views by 77 percent (Falkow, 2012). The study found by incorporating multimedia in blog posts, press releases, and articles, views increase substantially (Falkow, 2012). With text only press

releases, views reach 14 percent (Falkow, 2012). However, with text, photographs, videos, and other multimedia, views increase to 77 percent (Falkow, 2012).

Research conducted by RealWire, a news release distribution agency, concluded interactive content is rarely used in press releases. Out of 3,000 releases reviewed for the purpose of the study, 71 percent of these releases only included text and the company logo. Two percent incorporated video or audio. No other form of multimedia communication was included (Hay, 2010).

A study by PRNewswire examined corporate newsrooms and websites. The findings suggest companies rarely utilize multimedia in their press releases posted on online newsrooms. Instead, most of the press releases are made up of text (Falkow, 2012). Company websites are more likely to use multimedia. This is because these companies have the ability to post information themselves without relying on outside public relations practitioners. In addition to using images, 85 percent of company websites incorporate video (Falkow, 2012).

PR News and PR Newswire conducted a study in 2013 in which 452 communications professionals were asked about the use of multimedia in social platforms and press releases. Thirty-eight percent of them fell in the “sometimes” category of how often they used multimedia in press releases. Seventy-nine percent said video is not utilized as often as it should be in their public relations platforms. Additionally, 76 percent indicated their use of visual storytelling would increase in 2014. Researchers also found photographs (37.2 percent) drive the most engagement in social channels, followed by videos (25.9 percent), articles (24.3 percent), infographics (6.4 percent), and audio (1.1 percent). In essence, although multimedia is not often utilized, research shows that the use of multimedia tools helps drive engagement.



The purpose of this study is to study journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases as well as how these journalists value and interpret these forms of communication. The ultimate goal of this study is to compare journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases to traditional press releases. Which do they prefer? Why is this the case? What factors led to these decisions? Understanding journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases will help determine if the public relations professionals' goal of using more multimedia will be acceptable. The current study also asked journalists about corporations' online newsrooms in order to gain a better understanding of their expectations.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

There are many ways to examine the flow of information between organizations, public relations specialists, and the public. The models this study examined include the Press Agency Model, the Public Information Model, the One-Way Asymmetrical Model, and the Two-Way Symmetrical Model, also called the Dialogic Theory of Public Relations. While the Press Agency Theory is a one-way form of communication, the Dialogic Theory of Public Relations is a two-way form of communication.

#### One-Way Communication

Coombs and Holladay (2013) state the one-way communication model mirrors the “sender to receiver model,” which is also called the uni-directional model. In this model, the speaker addresses the publics but does not allow for feedback or a chance for dialogue (Coombs & Holladay, 2013). One-way communication in public relations is any type of communication released without a place for response or feedback (Seletzky & Lehman-Wilzig, 2010).

Coombs and Holladay (2013) further define one-way communication stating “in the one-way view of communication, a sender (the PR professional) is seen as sending a message to receivers (stakeholders, the public) who supply no feedback on their reactions. The communication functions as a monologue” (p. 48). News releases and video news releases are one-way forms of communication. They critique the receiver, or the public, as “rather passive and gullible” (Coombs & Holladay, 2013, p. 48).

One-way communication is also considered a “closed-systems orientation,” which means “communication is one-way – outward from the organization to traditionally defined publics or to an amorphous ‘general public’” (Dozier & Grunig, 1992, p. 404). Two examples of one-way

communication include print newsletters and magazines (Seletzky & Lehman-Wilzig, 2010).

One model of one-way communication studied in public relations is press agency.

### **The Press Agency Theory**

The Press Agency Theory is a model of one-way form of communication. Through the introduction of press agents, press agency was synonymous with one-way communication.

Phineas T. Barnum, also known as P. T. Barnum, is credited to be the “master of press agency” (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2011). Barnum used the model of press agency to encourage people to come to his events in the entertainment industry, such as the circus and the theatre.

*The London Times* considered Barnum to be the “harmless deceiver,” as he “used publicity to make money, pure and simple” (Lattimore et al., 2011, p. 28). Barnum argued “there’s no such thing as bad publicity” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 28). In turn, this was the ideology for all press agents. Due to Barnum’s utilization of this theory in the entertainment industry, many people argue this way of communication encourages manipulation in order to gain attention (Russell & Bishop, 2009). However, one-way communication is not always manipulative.

The Press Agency Theory dates back to the 1830s, although historians such as Alfred McLung argue these agents have been around as long as newspapers (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Lee, 1937). Around this time, “formal public relations specialists,” called press agents, “began to practice their trade” and use press agency (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 27). With the rise of big businesses in the late 1800s and early 1900s, corporations needed publicity to counter the attacks from the government and labor groups (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Like Barnum, press agents were highly manipulative in the entertainment industry. Russell and Bishop (2009) state “corruption

and manipulation” were at the heart of the press agency model (p. 93). In order to obtain free passes for entertainment events, including the circus and theater, public relations professionals were bribed into providing positive press coverage. As a result, this coverage was extremely biased and misleading.

Washburn (1937) states “there may be some to question, but the press agent has become as important as the lawyer” (p. 4). Washburn (1937) compares press agents to public relations counsel. Washburn (1937) suggests the situation could be anywhere from a theatrical production to toothpicks. Washburn (1937) concludes “all that matters in America is winning” (p. 4).

With the Press Agency Theory, the main goal is to gain publicity (Black, 2014). Information is distributed in order to convince the audience about a specific view (Black, 2014). Dozier (1992) states “publicity/press agency model organizations spread favorable propaganda about the organization with only moderate regard for information accuracy” (p. 345). Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, and Lyra (1995) conclude the Press Agency Theory accounts for “propagandistic public relations that seeks media attention in almost any way possible” (p. 169).

### **The Public Information Model**

During the 1900s, there was a wide distribution of wealth (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). As a result of mounting criticism, publicists were hired to control the relationship between the organization and the public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Grunig and Hunt (1984) state “opponents of business learned that publicity could be an effective weapon against the excesses of big business” (p. 31).

During this time, muckrakers were prevalent in New York City (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). These journalists exposed fraud and corruption among large corporations. Their stories were published in magazines and produced as books (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In response, “established

institutions needed a new kind of public relations to respond to the publicity war against them, something more than the whitewash of press agency or the silence of the-public-be-damned approach” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 31). Lee fulfilled this need and is credited to be the first PR practitioner of the Public-Information Model. His motto was to tell the truth (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Grunig and Hunt (1984) state “the idea was simple: tell the truth about an organization’s actions; if that truth was damaging to the organization, then change the behavior of the organization so the truth could be told without fear” (p. 31). Differing from the Press Agency Theory, which used propaganda, the Public-Information Model is known to “disseminat[e] only favorable information” (Grunig, 1992, p. 18). In World War I, when George Creel was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson as head of the Committee on Public Information, he used “standard tools of the public-information model” to raise public morale for the war (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). He also used propaganda techniques, therefore also using methods of the Press Agency Model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The success rate of press releases all depends on the model (e.g. the Public Information Model) that is utilized (Seletzky & Lehman-Wilzig, 2010). Findings show the Public Information Model, which is a one-way form of communication, is superior (Seletzky & Lehman-Wilzig, 2010). Furthermore, their findings suggest “there exists a hierarchy of success variables,” with news substance, including importance, as the strongest, journalistic elements, such as writing, in the middle, and public relations agency characteristics as the weakest (Seletzky & Lehman-Wilzig, 2010, p. 260).

## **The Asymmetrical Model**

The Asymmetrical Model suggests the relationship between the public and the organization is unequal (Stacks & Watson, 2007). Grunig and Hunt (1984) compare those who practice two-way asymmetrical public relations to press agents or publicists. Dozier and Grunig (1992) state with this model, research and scientific persuasion are utilized to find messages that will boost public morale without altering the actions of the organization.

Stacks and Watson (2007) propose the Asymmetrical Model “suggests that the balance of the relationship is tipped toward one of the relational parties. This is found in the traditional superior-subordinate organization communication literature...or in a one-up/one-down relationship in which some form of power...establishes inequality among participants” (p. 67-68). This is a one-way form of communication as the relationship is unequal and one of the parties has more power than the other. In order to have a one-way form of communication, the parties must be imbalanced. One party has more control than the other party, leaving the two unequal.

## **Two-Way Communication**

Two-way communication involves an audience and a place for discussion. Coombs and Holladay (2013) describe the use of two-way communication between an organization and its stakeholders. “Two-way communication implies an interaction between sender and receiver where the roles may switch. The receiver at least provides feedback to the sender about the message. Two-way communication involves both speaking and listening to stakeholders” (Coombs & Holladay, 2013, p. 46). There is “mutual influence” between the stakeholders and the PR professionals (Coombs & Holladay, 2013).

Dozier and Broom (2006) further define two-way communication stating “two-way communication means that the public relations function acts as the eyes and ears of the organization, as well as its official voice” (p. 154). With this two-way form of communication, both the audience and the organization have the ability to interact with one-another, with neither side having more power than the other.

Two-way communication has not always been readily available. Forty years ago, the use of two-way communication was dedicated to academia, the government, and the military (RoAne, 2013). Now, however, virtual communication is “de rigueur” (RoAne, 2013, p. 73). Especially today, this form of communication is essential as it’s utilized for customer-service related inquiries (RoAne, 2013). RoAne (2013) states “managing our actions and behaviors in the virtual room is as important as how we behave in the ‘real’ rooms we visit” (p. 74). Two-way communication is essential in forming relationships. Without two-way communication, it would be nearly impossible for companies to communicate with their publics.

Black (2014) concludes crowdsourcing is the “ultimate in two-way communications... the practice of gathering intelligence from the public and using that information to complete organizational tasks. Crowdsourcing expands the available pool of skills and talents and also allows organizations to gain insight into their audiences and stakeholders” (p. 22). The most noticeable example of two-way communication is social networking (Korzynski, 2014).

### **The Symmetrical Model**

Grunig and White (1992) state “with the symmetrical model, both the organization and publics can be persuaded; both also may change their behavior” (p. 39). The Two-Way Symmetrical Model involves an even distribution of dialogue among an organization and its publics (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Grunig and Hunt (1984) state “practitioners serve as mediators

between organizations and their publics. Their goal is mutual understanding between organizations and their publics” (p. 22).

Both the organization and its publics are incorporated into the Two-Way Symmetrical Model. As a result of this, it is often considered the most effective form of communication (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Stacks and Watson (2007) suggest “a symmetrical model represents a balanced flow of communication whereby all parties are communicating with each other as equals, seeking to maintain a relationship based on mutual understanding and needs” (p. 67).

Dozier and Grunig (1992) state “the two-way symmetrical model uses bargaining, negotiating, and conflict-resolution strategies to bring symbiotic changes in the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of both publics and the organization” (p. 404). This type of model incorporates morphogenesis, or “the alternation of the organization’s internal operations and structures in response to the environment” (Dozier & Grunig, 1992, p. 404). Grunig (1992) states in order to have symmetrical communication, there must be negotiation, listening, dialogue, and conflict management.

### **The Symmetrical Model Versus The Asymmetrical Model**

Dozier and Broom (2006) explain the difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical in one sentence: “whereas asymmetrical public relations practices seek to manipulate publics to go along with what the practitioner’s organization wants in a zero-sum game, symmetrical public relations seeks mutually beneficial outcomes that sustain stable, long-term relationships in a positive-sum game” (p. 153). Two-way symmetric and asymmetric public relations require an “open-systems orientation,” where practitioners gather and distribute information (Dozier & Grunig, 1992, p. 404).



Grunig and Hunt (1984) state for both the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical practitioners, there is an open flow of communication from the organization to the public. However, there is a difference between the two models. With the Symmetrical Model, both parties are balanced. With the Asymmetrical Model, the parties are not balanced. The Asymmetrical Model is more favorable to the organization than to the publics. Instead of the organization changing, the organization tries to change the attitudes and behaviors of the public.

While the Two-Way Asymmetrical Model incorporates a source and receiver, the Symmetrical Model does not. With the Two-Way Symmetrical Model, there is a source, a message, a medium, and a receiver. Within this model, feedback is present. Although there is feedback, the source is in control of the communication that is taking place. “If one of the persons, groups, or organizations communicating is a source and the other a receiver, it suggests that communication always originates with the source” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 24). On the other hand, with the Two-Way Symmetrical Model, there is no source and receiver. Instead, Grunig and Hunt (1984) suggest labels such as Person I or Person II or Group I and Group II should be utilized. “The individuals or groups communicating interact, changing so rapidly from source to receiver and back again that it becomes clumsy to talk about source and receiver” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 24).

### **Grunig’s Excellence Theory**

Grunig et al.’s (2002) Excellence Study helped form the basis of the Excellence Theory, which is “...[a] general theory that begins with a general premise about the value of public relations to organizations and to society” (p. 54). Grunig et al. (2002) state the Excellence Theory incorporates numerous “middle-range theories” that have to do with numerous factors,

including the performance of the public relations program, the association of the public relations function, and the ecological and managerial framework of excellent public relations.

Dozier and Broom (2006) state "...excellent public relations involves striving for tactical advantage (an asymmetrical orientation) that does not jeopardize the stability of long-term relationships" (p. 153). They further argue, "to be excellent, the public relations department must have the expertise to enact the manager role and perform operations research... To be excellent, the public relations function must be present... when the dominant coalition makes strategic choices that affect relationships with publics" (p. 162).

Grunig et al.'s (2002) Excellence Theory concludes symmetrical communication is most effective for developing relationships with organizations and their publics. Additionally, Grunig et al. (2002) state symmetrical communication is also imperative for building relationships within the organization, as employees should have access to higher-level management and other employees within the company. The Excellence Theory helped lay the foundations that formed both the Press Agency Theory, a one-way form of communication, as well as the Dialogic Theory of Public Relations, or a two-way form of communication.

Vasquez and Taylor (1999) conclude "...American practitioners continue to practice one-way models of public relations even when their organizations may not dictate one-way communication with publics" (p. 433). The most notable model that practices two-way forms of communication is the Dialogic Theory of Public Relations.

### **The Dialogic Theory of Public Relations**

The Dialogic Theory of Public Relations is symmetrical and relies on two-way forms of communication. The Dialogic Theory of Public Relations is when both the organization and its public participate in the conversation (Black, 2014). It is a two-way form of communication.

“Each party – the sender and the receiver – is willing to alter messages – and even behaviours – to accommodate the other’s needs” (Black, 2014, p. 21). The organization researches the audience with absolutely no intention of manipulation. The key to this research is the understanding of this audience (Black, 2014). “As one writes one must not forget the possibilities offered by numerous textured insights left unengaged, particularly as one examines the ongoing influence of dialogue” (Arnett, 2011, p. 50).

Buber is credited to be the father of the Dialogic Theory of Public Relations. Buber’s main goal was equality within communications. “Buber’s work is based on reciprocity, mutuality, involvement, and openness” (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 22). With the Dialogic Theory of Public Relations, dialect and ethics are vital to an organization and its publics. Hence, public relations tried to move from a one-way form of communication (the Press Agency Theory, for example) to a two-way, interactive, form of dialogue that incorporated feedback.

A study by Kent and Taylor (1998) reported the Internet, or the World Wide Web, positively contributed to an increase in dialogue. Kent and Taylor (1998) state five principles that guide effective dialogue on the Internet. These principles include “dialogic loop,” “usefulness of information,” “generation of return visits,” “intuitiveness/ease of the interface,” and “rule of conservation of visitors” (p. 326 – 327, 329 – 330).

The dialogic loop involves the full inclusion of dialogue. The company is not only displaying information, but it is also allowing a place where viewers can connect with the company (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Usefulness of information describes how companies should include all relevant and valuable information, including background of the company as well as contact information (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Generation of return visits involves including information on the website to influence viewers to visit again. Providing interactive content,

including online forums, as well featuring high-level executives in the company, allow for a relationship to develop (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Intuitiveness/ease of the interface is pretty self-explanatory: companies should include only useful information that is easy to understand and represents the company in a positive image (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Lastly, the rule of conservation of visitors discusses companies should use links only if they are necessary, as it transfers visitors away from the site. If links are utilized, they should include an easily navigated button to return back to the company website. If advertisements are displayed, they should be below all of the information at the bottom of the pages or behind “clearly marked links” in order to minimize distraction (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Kent and Taylor (2002) state “dialogue as an orientation includes five features: *mutuality*, or the recognition of organization-public relations; *propinquity*, or the temporality and spontaneity of interactions with publics; *empathy*, or the supportiveness and confirmation of public goals and interests; *risk*, or the willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms; and finally, *commitment*, or the extent to which an organization gives itself over to dialogue, interpretation, and understanding in its interactions with publics” (p. 24 & 25). Mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment are some of the many factors that influence dialogue.

A study by Pettigrew and Reber (2011) suggests there should be a sixth principle in Kent and Taylor’s model. This sixth principle, titled “relationship initiation and enhancement,” allows for a relationship to evolve. Pettigrew and Reber (2011) argue Kent and Taylor’s (1998) principles do not define “initiation and enhancement characteristics...the addition of this sixth principle would also further define and provide a more accurate and realistic application of

dialogic communication as it occurs between journalists and PR practitioners on a company or organization's website" (p. 424).

Taylor and Kent (1998) discuss factors leading to successful relationship building. One-way forms of communication, such as mediated messages and the Internet, as well as two-way forms of communication, such as interpersonal communication and organizational relationships, are some factors that lead to successful relationship building (Taylor & Kent, 1998).

Pettigrew and Reber (2011) argue journalists prefer traditional mediums of communication rather than RSS feeds, videos, and blogs. Pettigrew and Reber (2011) state most journalists preferred traditional methods of communication, such as telephone and email, to connect with an organization's public relations staff. Of the ten journalists surveyed, ages 22 to 61, six preferred phone, two favored e-mail, and two did not have a preference of either, stating they would use either email or phone, but they preferred direct phone contacts.

Additionally, Pettigrew and Reber (2011) found journalists stated they would not visit the company website if they had a relationship with the public relations staff. However, all ten journalists agreed they would visit the website instead of direct contact if there was no previous relationship with the public relations professional.

### **Research Questions**

According to PRNewswire's study, multimedia releases increase views by 77 percent (Falkow, 2012). The study found views increase substantially by incorporating multimedia in blog posts, press releases, and articles. (Falkow, 2012). With press releases only made up of text, views reach 14 percent (Falkow, 2012). However, with photographs, videos, other forms of multimedia, and text, views increase to 77 percent (Falkow, 2012). According to PR News and PRNewswire (2013), 76 percent of the 452 communications professionals surveyed indicated

their use of visual storytelling would increase in 2014. If public relations specialists are going to use more multimedia in the future, it's worth investigating whether journalists prefer multimedia over traditional releases. As a result, the following research question is predicted:

**RQ1:** What are journalists' attitudes toward multimedia and traditional press releases?

Anything interactive and easy to open is more pleasing to the journalist's eye (Blatt, 2004). Blatt (2004) found multimedia, such as photographs and informative audio recordings, is more likely to gain journalists' attention.

PR News and PR Newswire (2013) found journalists wanted photographs, infographics, and other forms of graphics. This study asked if journalists still prefer these forms of multimedia. Therefore, the study poses the following research question:

**RQ2:** Which multimedia elements do journalists prefer?

There is a positive correlation between the Internet and dialogue (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Kent and Taylor (1998) state "relationships between publics and organizations can be created, adapted and changed through the WWW... If practitioners are to create and maintain sites that enhance interest in their organization, contribute to public dialogue, and increase public knowledge and awareness, then practitioners must strive for sites that are constructed with an understanding of how the Web functions" (p. 326). Providing interactive content, including online forums, as well featuring high-level executives in the company, allow for a relationship to develop (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Public relations professionals can push information out via the organization's website to promote a dialogue with journalists. This study asks what forms of information are preferred by journalists.

**RQ3:** What do journalists expect to see in online newsrooms and which types of features do they find helpful?

Many times, multimedia elements are incorporated into two-way forms of communication. One example of two-way communication is social networking (Korzynski, 2014). “Contrary to traditional forms of media where communication flows in a linear manner, online social networking (OSN) platforms enable individuals to interact with each other, thereby making communication a two-way process” (Korzynski, 2014, p. 460). Using social media is another way to promote a dialogic relationship with key publics – one of those publics being journalists. As a result, the following research question is predicted:

**RQ4:** What forms of social media do journalists use to gather information about an organization?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This study examines journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases compared to traditional press releases. It also examines the needs an organization's online newsroom needs to meet. The goal is to understand which form of releases journalists prefer and the information wanted online so that public relations practitioners can better target this key audience.

#### **Recruitment Procedures**

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained before starting the study. A recruitment email was sent to the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association and other professional associations (e.g., American Copy Editors Society). Member directors sent the link to their member list serves and included the link on their online bulletin boards.

An online questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics. The survey link was included in the recruitment email. The journalists answered a list of questions. After completing the survey, they were thanked for their time and response. Participants had a month to complete the survey from January 30, 2015 to March 4, 2015. Respondents were told the study would take roughly 10 minutes to complete.

#### **Participants**

Nineteen ( $N = 19$ ) individuals participated in the online survey. Forty-seven percent participants (47%,  $n = 9$ ) were women. The average age was 47.29 with a standard deviation of 15.59 and a range of 23 to 67 years of age. The majority of participants (94.7%) were Caucasian. Fifty-five percent (55%) had earned master's degrees, and 35% had earned bachelor's degrees. The average amount of years at their current organization was 10.36. The average number of



years as a journalist was 20.31.

### **Additional Demographics**

General questions asked about the news organization they worked at (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2007). “How many full-time news and editorial people are employed at your organization?” Responses indicated a mean of 14.20 staff members at the participants’ organizations. When asked “During the past few years, has the size of your news staff grown, shrunk, or remained about the same,” 38.9% of participants said the size of the organization had remained the same, 27.8% said staff size had shrunk, and 11.1% said it had grown. When asked, “Which title most closely resembles your title;” eight participants considered their job title an “editor/editorial staff,” five participants said they were freelance journalists, and four participants were reporters. When asked, “Which industry is your primary beat,” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014) answers varied. Specifically, 30% of participants said education was their beat, followed by health care (10.0%).

### **Measures**

**Attitudes Toward News Releases.** Attitudes toward public relations materials were measured using six, bipolar adjective pairs created by Burgoon et al. (1978). Adjective pairs were measured on a seven-point, scale: unacceptable/acceptable; foolish/wise; unfavorable/favorable; negative/positive; bad/good; and wrong/right. The questions were presented for basic news releases ( $\alpha = .91$ ,  $M = 4.71$ ,  $S.D. = 1.04$ ) and multimedia releases ( $\alpha = .95$ ,  $M = 4.45$ ,  $S.D. = 1.26$ ).

**Use of Press Releases and Story Ideas.** Two items examined the use of press releases. Questions included: “When did you last use (viewed, referenced, sourced, or gathered) information from a press release to put a news item together?” (Business Wire Media Survey,

2014). Most journalists could not remember (42.9%) the last time they used information from a press release. However, 23.8% had relied on information from a press release in the last week, 14.3% in the last three months, and 9.5% in the last 24 hours.

When asked, “What do reporters want in a press release,” (Ehrlich, 2014), journalists stated they are mostly looking for stories about breaking news (76.2%), supporting facts (71.4%), interesting story angles (61.9%), quotable sources (61.9%), company background information (52.4%), industry trends (23.8%), and multimedia components (19.0%). More than 60% of participants (61.9%) said they’d prefer public relations specialists to send the story in the body of an email, and 23.8% preferred the story to be sent as a Microsoft Office document.

Another group of questions was adopted from Viswanath et al. (2008). Questions were placed on a scale ranging from 1 = not at all, to 5 = all of the time. One question asked “Where does the initial story idea come from:” press conferences (42.1% reported often), wire services (52.6% said occasionally), assigned by the editor (36.8% said often or frequently), suggested by a source (36.8% said frequently), suggested by a colleague (33.3% stated frequently), or personal experience (31.6% said frequently).

### **Updates and Pitches**

Journalists were asked, “What is your preferred method for receiving breaking news from an organization?” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Journalists prefer to learn about breaking news from an email alert (60.0%), followed by a press release (20.0%), social media posts (10.0%), or text messages (10.0%).

Another question asked, “Which of the following is your preferred method for receiving a story pitch?” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Journalists preferred public relations

specialists to send an email alert or a press release (42.9% for each) rather than call them (14.3%).

### **Use of Multimedia**

The next section of the survey examined the use of multimedia in press releases. One question asked about use of multimedia, “Are you more likely to review a press release if it provides multimedia elements (logos, images, audio files, video files)” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Another question asked, “Which type of multimedia elements do you prefer to be offered along with a press release” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Journalists could indicate if they use: photographs, infographics, and other forms of graphics. Video, logos, and audio files were also options.

### **Use of Social Media and Search Engines**

One question asked, “Which social media network do you use primarily for work-related research and activities” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Journalists were also asked about additional ways to research an organization. They were asked, “Where do you look when researching an organization” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Journalists could indicate if they use: Google, Bing, Yahoo, the organization’s website, the organization’s online newsroom, the organization’s social media accounts, Wikipedia, the organization’s spokesperson, trade publications sites, or organization’s blogs.

### **Organizations’ Online Newsrooms**

The next section of the survey examined the content journalists would like to access in an organization’s online newsroom. Questions asked, “Do you prefer press releases within an online newsroom/media center to be in an HTML/text format or a PDF format,” and “How often

should an organization update their online newsroom/media center?” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014).

Journalists were asked, “Which types of content do you want to access in an organization’s online newsroom/media center” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Content included: contact information (email or phone) breaking news information, fact sheets, executive biographies, history/timelines, high-resolution graphics, an FAQ section, events, case studies, crisis communications, logos, interview request forms, location/facilities list, press kits, and audio files were also asked about.

Another question asked, “Which features do you expect to see and/or use in an organization’s online newsroom/media center” (Business Wire Media Survey, 2014). Features a journalist could choose from included: the option for a journalists to sign up to receive emails related to their beat, the ability to search content by type and/or date, the ability to access the online newsroom via a mobile device, ability to view content by category/topic, feature the ability to download and re-use content, feature the ability to access embargoed content, ability to access content in one click, feature a form to request more information, ability to share or email content from the newsroom, feature a password-protection area, and the ability to view the materials in multiple languages. Additional features journalists looked for in an organization’s online newsroom were the ability to access code to allow them to embed content and the ability to chat online with a media contact.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The purpose of this study was to examine journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases and online newsrooms. A survey was disseminated to professional list serves and a snowball sampling method was employed. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions.

Research Question 1 enquired about journalists' perceptions of multimedia and traditional news releases. Journalists are a bit more positive toward traditional news releases ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $S.D. = 1.04$ ) more so than multimedia releases ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $S.D. = 1.26$ ). Journalists are not extremely positive or negative toward press releases. The scale ranges from negative attitudes to positive attitudes, and the 4 would indicate neutral stance.

Research Question 2 asked what types of multimedia journalists like to use from news releases. Most journalists are not more likely to use a press release if it included multimedia components (66.7%). Journalists responded they are more likely to use photographs (61.9%), infographics (61.9%), and other forms of graphics (57.1%) included with press releases. Video (23.8%), logos (19.0%), and audio files (19.0%) were less likely to be used by journalists.

Research Question 3 questioned what journalists expect to see in online newsrooms as well as the types of features they'd find helpful. The most important item in an organization's newsroom is contact information (email or phone). Every participant indicated that type of info was necessary. This was followed by: breaking news information (81.0%), fact sheets (66.7%), executive biographies (57.1%), history/timelines (52.4%), high-resolution graphics (47.6%), an FAQ section (42.9%), events (38.1%), case studies (33.3%), crisis communications (28.6%),

logos (28.6%), and interview request forms (28.6%). A location/facilities list (23.8%), press kits (23.8%), and audio files (23.8%) were also useful.

Journalists are more likely to access the online newsroom from their desktop computers (50.0%), than their smartphones (33.3%), or tablets (16.7%). Respondents indicated they prefer content in the newsroom to be offered in both HTML/text format and PDF format (38.1%). They expected the organization to update the online newsroom every day (42.9%) or at least weekly (19.0%).

When asked about the features an organization's online newsroom should include, journalists had many expectations. Online newsrooms should provide the following features: the option for a journalists to sign up to receive emails related to their beat (76.2%), the ability to search content by type and/or date (66.7%), the ability to access the online newsroom via a mobile device (52.4%), ability to view content by category/topic (52.4%), feature the ability to download and re-use content (42.9%), feature the ability to access embargoed content (38.1%), ability to access content in one click (38.1%), feature a form to request more information (33.3%), ability to share or email content from the newsroom (19.0%), feature a password-protection area (14.3%), and the ability to view the materials in multiple languages (9.5%). Additional features journalists looked for in an organization's online newsroom included the ability to access code to allow them to embed content (9.5%) and the ability to chat online with a media contact (4.8%).

Research Question 4 asked what forms of social media journalists might use to find out more information about an organization. When they do use social media for work-related research, journalists rely on Twitter (38.1%) or Facebook (28.6%).

Journalists were also asked about additional ways to research an organization. Journalists used Google most often (95.2%) when researching an organization. This was followed by: the organization's website (90.5%), the organization's online newsroom (47.6%), the organization's social media accounts (47.6%), Wikipedia (38.1%), the organization's spokesperson (28.6%), trade publications sites (23.8%) or organization's blogs (23.8%). Journalists also relied on Bing (14.3%), press releases' boilerplate information (9.5%), or Yahoo (4.8%).

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases and their use of online newsrooms. The ultimate goal was to compare journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases to traditional press releases. Which do journalists prefer? What factors led to these decisions? Having an understanding of journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases will help public relations professionals understand if using more multimedia will benefit journalists.

Research Question 1 asked about journalists' attitudes toward multimedia and traditional press releases. Findings indicate journalists are more favorable toward traditional press releases than multimedia releases. When asked about releases that include multimedia elements, one journalist responded, "I get tons of these things and photos and videos and audio just clog up my inbox... I'm not going to spend time viewing or listening to them. If we need them, we can get them later." Another journalist stated, "Multimedia items take away from the news I'm looking for in the release. It seems like people are trying too hard and put too much work upfront."

Another question asked "Are you more likely to review a press release if it provides multimedia elements?" One journalist wrote, "Multimedia captures the reader, and I know I will need something if I run a story." Another journalist stated, "There are fewer of them, so they stand out as demonstrating more work and attention by the creator." This is supported by PRNewswire (2015), which found utilizing multimedia elements will make your story stand out.

When asked why do journalists like multimedia elements in a press release, one journalist wrote, "If they [multimedia elements] help tell the story and can be grasped quickly – not as attachments – then they are helpful in deciding whether to forward or assign the story to a reporter." Another journalist stated, "These are the sorts of elements that might encourage me to



dig deeper and find out more on my own. Things like audio, video, and photographs are the sorts of things a journalist should collect on his/her own in the reporting of a story.”

Research Question 2 asked which multimedia elements journalists prefer. Most journalists are not more likely to use a press release if it incorporates multimedia components. Journalists will use photographs, infographics, and other forms of graphs included with a press release. This study confirms the previous study by Business Wire (2014). When asked “Which type of multimedia elements do you prefer be offered along with a press release,” photographs (73.0%), graphics (42.7%), and infographics (32.1%) were journalists top three responses (2014 Business Wire Media Survey).

A survey conducted by TEKGROUP (2015) found photographs are also one of the most important multimedia elements found in online newsrooms. Of all of the journalists surveyed, 96% of journalists said it was important to access photographs from online newsrooms, making photographs one of the top five features journalists find important in newsrooms.

Research Question 3 examined what journalists expect to see in online newsrooms and which types of features they find helpful. The most important item in an organization’s newsroom is contact information (email or phone). Every participant indicated that type of information was necessary. This study confirms the previous study by TEKGROUP (2015), which found 98% of the journalists surveyed agreed it is essential to be able to find public relations contacts in organizations’ newsrooms. Contacts were one of the top features journalists look for in newsrooms (TEKGROUP Online Newsroom Survey Report, 2015).

Journalists also expect to find breaking news information, fact sheets, and executive biographies in online newsrooms. Callison (2003) found of all of the *Fortune* 500 Company website newsrooms examined, 96.9% included press releases and 51.3% included executive

biographies. Glenn (2015) states TEKGROUP's Online Newsroom Survey Report (2015) found press releases, breaking news, and public relations contacts "are content elements that are the cornerstone of any online newsroom" (p. 1). The current study supports the conclusion by TEKGROUP.

Multimedia elements, including audio and video, are rarely utilized in online newsrooms (Alfonso & Miguel, 2006). Out of all of the newsrooms examined in Alfonso and Miguel's (2006) study, none included a high-quality video that could be utilized by the media. Furthermore, out of the 100 companies examined, only seven utilized audio in their newsrooms. The main content that should be found in newsrooms are press releases (100%) and backgrounders (59.5%) (Alfonso & Miguel, 2006).

Journalists are more likely to access an organization's online newsroom from their desktop computers. They prefer the content to be offered in both PDF format and HTML/text format. They expected the company to update the online newsroom every day. Alfonso and Miguel (2006) found only 39.6% of the 120 corporate websites analyzed update their online newsrooms daily. Journalists agree corporate websites are not updated as much as they should be (Hachigian & Hallahan, 2003). This is troublesome as many journalists rely on the information provided in organizations' online newsrooms.

When asked about the features an organization's online newsroom should include, journalists had many expectations. The three most popular features include: the option for a journalists to sign up to receive emails related to their beat, the ability to search content by type and/or date, and the ability to access the online newsroom via a mobile device. These findings are supported by the TEKGROUP Online Newsroom Survey Report (2015), which found 92% of journalists prefer receiving information by an email alert rather than a text message, tweet, or

phone call. Additionally, 75% of journalists prefer to receive news related to their specific beat, rather than all news. Furthermore, most journalists agreed it was essential to be able to access online newsrooms via mobile devices. Seventy-five percent of journalists said it was important to be able to obtain news on a mobile device from an online newsroom. Overall, the TEKGROUP Online Newsroom Survey Report (2015) found search functionality was the most important feature in newsrooms for journalists, with 98% of journalists agreeing it was important to be able to search archived information and 95% of journalists agreeing it was important to categorize news releases by the type of news.

Research Question 4 asked what forms of social media journalists prefer to use to gather information about an organization. When using social media for work-related research, journalists usually use Twitter or Facebook. This is supported by Waters, Tindall, and Morton's (2010) study that found journalists are finding story ideas and collecting sources through Twitter. Furthermore, when journalists were asked about additional ways to research an organization, most stated Google was most often used when researching an organization, followed by an organization's website.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

With every research study comes limitations. This particular study found one limitation, which was the small sample size. The sample was assembled via a snowball sampling of current journalists. They were asked to forward the survey through their list serves to other journalists who may be interested in completing the study. Only 19 journalists filled out the entire survey. More than 35 journalists who started the survey did not complete it or did not answer many of the questions.

The findings in this study suggest maybe public relations professionals should spend

more time making sure online newsrooms are updated with accurate and current information rather than incorporating multimedia in their press releases. Their online newsrooms should include contact information, such as an email address or a phone number, as well as the option for a journalist to sign up to receive emails related to their beat. Findings suggest multimedia releases are not very important to journalists, and therefore traditional press releases should be used. Public relations practitioners should spend more time making sure their information is accurate and up to date and spend less time adding multimedia elements into their press releases and online newsrooms.

### **Conclusion**

The rise of the Internet, social media platforms, online newsrooms, and press release distribution services has many individuals wondering the best way to meet journalists' needs. The goal of this study was to examine journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases compared to traditional press releases and newsrooms. Many public relations professionals believe multimedia is the key in garnering journalists' attention. However, findings suggest journalists are not clear on their use of multimedia since some like multimedia and others do not. While these findings are important to consider, journalists' perceptions of multimedia releases should be further investigated so public relations professionals can better target this key audience. If researchers are able to determine why journalists prefer traditional methods of press releases, the public relations industry will be able to use this knowledge to their advantage and customize the press release structure accordingly.

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## Appendix A

### Survey Measures

Overall attitude toward BASIC NEWS RELEASES you receive via email. A basic news release is just a story without any additional information included.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unacceptable:Acceptable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foolish:Wise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfavorable:Favorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wrong:Right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall attitude toward MULTIMEDIA releases you receive. A multimedia release includes embedded graphics, logos, videos, etc.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unacceptable:Acceptable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foolish:Wise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfavorable:Favorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wrong:Right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you prefer to receive public relations materials?

- As a word attachment to an email
- As a story copy and pasted into the email
- You'd rather obtain the information on your own

When did you last use (viewed, referenced, sourced or gathered) information from a press release to put a news item together?

- In the last 24 hours
- In the last week
- In the last month
- In the last 3 months
- In the last 6 months
- In the last year
- Too long ago to remember

What type of story information do you look for in a press release? Select all that apply.

- Breaking news
- Company background information
- Interesting story angles
- Quotable sources
- Supporting facts
- Multimedia
- Trending industry topics
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which type of multimedia elements do you prefer be offered along with a press release? Please check all that apply.

- Audio
- Infographic
- Graphics
- Logos
- Photographs
- Video
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which social media network do you use PRIMARILY for work-related research and activities?

Check One.

- Facebook
- Google+
- Twitter
- YouTube
- I do not use social media networks for work-related research and activities
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you look when researching an organization? Select all that apply.

- Organization's blog
- Organization's corporate site
- Organization's online newsroom
- Organization's social media networks (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)
- Organization's spokesperson
- Press release boilerplate
- Search engine – Google
- Search engine – Bing
- Search engine – Yahoo
- Trade publication sites
- Wikipedia

From which platform do you PRIMARILY access an organization's online newsroom/media center? Select one.

- Desktop
- Smartphone
- Tablet
- Wearable technology (i.e. Google Glass, etc.)

Which types of content do you want to access in an organization's online newsroom/media center? Select all that apply.

- Newsletters
- Past editorial coverage ("In the News")
- Polls
- Press kit
- Press releases
- Product specifications
- Reader/site visitor comments
- RSS feeds
- Social media content feeds from Twitter, FB, YouTube
- Stories written and/or provided by the organization
- Stories written and/or provided by readers/site visitors
- Subject matter experts
- Suggested story ideas/abstracts
- Transcripts
- Video files
- White papers

Which types of content do you want to access in an organization's online newsroom/media center? Select all that apply.

- Advertising/marketing campaigns
- Audio files
- Awards received
- Blog
- Breaking news
- Case studies
- Contact information (email/phone)
- Crisis communications information
- Events
- Executive biographies
- Fact sheets
- FAQ (Frequently asked questions)
- History/timeline
- Images (high-resolution)
- Information/interview/media credentials request form
- Locations/facilities list

- Logos

Which features do you expect to see and/or use in an organization's online newsroom/media center. Select all that apply.

- Ability to access an online newsroom via a mobile device
- Ability to access code to allow you to embed content
- Ability to access related content in one click
- Ability to chat online with a media contact
- Ability to download and re-use content
- Ability to participate in polls and surveys
- Registration to receive select email alerts targeted to my beat
- Registration to access content secured by password-protection
- Ability to register to access embargoed content
- Ability to request information via an information form
- Ability to search content by type and/or date
- Ability to share or email content from online newsroom
- Ability to view content by category or topic
- Ability to view content in multiple languages



Do you prefer press releases within an online newsroom/media center to be in an HTML/text format or a PDF format?

- HTML/text format
- PDF format
- Both HTML/text format and PDF format

How often should an organization update their online newsroom/media center?

- Hourly
- Daily
- Several times a day
- Weekly
- Several times a week
- Monthly
- Several times a month
- Only when they have breaking news

What do reporters want in a press release? Select one.

- Breaking news
- Supporting factors
- Story angles
- Quotable sources
- Company background
- Trending topics
- Supporting multimedia

Where does the initial story idea come from?

	Not at all	Occasionally	Often	Frequently	All the time
Press conference or press release	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wire service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assignment by the editor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestion by a source	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestion by a colleague	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal experience with a topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How many full-time news and editorial people are employed at your organization?

During the past few years, has the size of your news staff grown, shrunk, or remained about the same?

- Grown
- Remained about the same
- Shrunk
- Don't know

Which title most closely resembles your title?

- Correspondent/columnist
- Editor/editorial staff
- Freelance Journalist
- Reporter/writer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which industry is your PRIMARY beat? Select one.

- Agriculture
- Automotive/Transportation
- Business
- Communications
- Energy/Utilities
- Electronics
- Entertainment
- Finance
- Food/Beverage
- Government/Politics
- Health/Fitness
- Healthcare
- Law
- Real Estate
- Retail
- Sports/Recreation
- Technology
- Travel/Hospitality
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest academic degree you have earned?

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate
- High School
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been at this organization?

How many years of total experience do you have as a journalist?

What is your race?

- African-American
- Asian- or Pacific islander
- Native American
- Caucasian
- Spanish or Hispanic Origin
- Multi-racial or mixed race

Gender

Age

## Appendix B

### IRB Approval Letter

PENNSTATE



Vice President for Research  
Office for Research Protections

The Pennsylvania State University  
The 330 Building, Suite 205  
University Park, PA 16802

Phone : (814) 865-1775  
Fax: (814) 863-8699  
Email : [oprprotections@psu.edu](mailto:oprprotections@psu.edu)  
Web : [www.research.psu.edu/orp](http://www.research.psu.edu/orp)

#### EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

**Date:** January 13, 2015

**From:** Joyel Moeller, IRB Analyst

**To:** Jennifer Weintraub

Type of Submission:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Journalists' Perceptions of Multimedia Public Relations
Principal Investigator:	Jennifer Weintraub
Study ID:	STUDY00001637
Submission ID:	STUDY00001637
Funding:	Not Applicable
Documents Approved:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FinalQuestionsJennifer.docx (0.01), Category: Data Collection Instrument</li> <li>• Protocol (0.01), Category: IRB Protocol</li> </ul>

The Office for Research Protections determined that the proposed activity, as described in the above-referenced submission, does not require formal IRB review because the research met the criteria for exempt research according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations.

Continuing Progress Reports are **not** required for exempt research. Record of this research determined to be exempt will be maintained for five years from the date of this notification. If your research will continue beyond five years, please contact the Office for Research Protections closer to the determination end date.

Continuing Progress Reports are **not** required for exempt research. Record of this research determined to be exempt will be maintained for five years from the date of this notification. If your research will continue beyond five years, please contact the Office for Research Protections closer to the determination end date.

Changes to exempt research only need to be submitted to the Office for Research Protections in limited circumstances described in the below-referenced Investigator Manual. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please contact the Office for Research Protections.

Penn State researchers are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual ([HRP-103](#)), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within CATS IRB (<http://irb.psu.edu>).

This correspondence should be maintained with your records.

## ACADEMIC VITA

### JENNIFER TESS WEINTRAUB

215-870-5181 · 1560 Grasshopper Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006 · Jweintraub92@gmail.com

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

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##### Aspiring public relations professional with:

- Three years of experience working on public relations campaigns
- Experience creating press kits, collaborating with media outlets and utilizing social media platforms
- Strong writing skills, including professional experience writing press releases, newsletters and advertisements

#### EDUCATION

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##### The Pennsylvania State University, Schreyer Honors College

Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations with minors in Business, International Studies, History  
Dean's List

Graduation: May 2015  
University Park, PA

**Honors and Awards:** Kappa Tau Alpha, Schreyer Honors College Scholarship, Donald W. Davis Mass Communications Scholarship, CEA Study Abroad Academic Excellence Scholarship Awarded with Distinction, Huntingdon Valley Women's Club Scholarship, Lower Moreland Township Police Benevolent Association Scholarship, Valley Youth Center Award

#### COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE

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##### Spoon University

Writer & Photographer

- Published articles, including recipes as well as restaurant reviews, for an online food magazine
- Increased awareness by promoting articles on social media platforms

October 2014-Present  
University Park, PA

##### Brian Communications (A Brian Tierney Company)

Public Relations Intern

- Assisted clients in securing press coverage by pitching stories to national and local news outlets
- Drafted pitches, wrote backgrounders, created competitor analysis reports, monitored media, produced media coverage reports, researched potential speaking opportunities and contributed to newsletters
- Researched background for a request for proposal on a prospective client and drafted reports for new business opportunities

May 2014-August 2014  
Conshohocken, PA

##### Valley Magazine

Public Relations Team Associate & Writer

- Organized promotional events and utilized social media platforms to promote Penn State's student-run life and style magazine
- Contributed stories from Italy for spring publication
- Collaborated with team members on magazine distribution

September 2013-May 2014  
University Park, PA

##### AMC Delancey Group Inc.

Communications Intern

- Collaborated with WPVI, Philadelphia's ABC affiliate, in coverage of a building opening
- Worked with Jessica Scott LLC, an events and marketing agency, with the planning and execution of the building opening party
- Directed social media outreach, created advertisements and assisted in generating financial reports

May 2013-August 2013  
Philadelphia, PA

##### Happy Valley Communications

Account Associate

- Created media lists and obtained media coverage to help local clients reach broader audiences
- Aided in developing press kits and managing social media outreach, wrote press releases, created newsletters and planned events

September 2012-May 2013  
University Park, PA

##### Phi Mu Sorority

Alumnae Relations Chair, Public Relations Committee

- Managed a blog and communicated with alumnae to inform them of Penn State community events
- Collected and organized alumnae contact and employer information to assist active members in locating internship opportunities
- Trained succeeding Alumnae Relations Chair to develop and distribute a monthly alumnae newsletter

January 2013-December 2013  
University Park, PA

#### SPECIALIZED SKILLS

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Communication skills: Press kit development, press release/newsletter writing, event planning, fundraising, public speaking, social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Hootsuite, WordPress, MailChimp, YouTube, etc.)

Software skills: Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), Cision, LexisNexis, TVEyes, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Minitab