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Building Dialogic Relationships Through the World Wide Web

ABSTRACT: This article provides a theory-based, strategic framework to facilitate relationship building with publics through the World Wide Web. Although many essays on the Web have appeared in professional and technical periodicals, most treatments of the Web have lacked theoretical frameworks. Strategic communication on the World Wide Web can benefit from a consideration of dialogic communication.¹

This article offers dialogic communication as a theoretical framework to guide relationship building between organizations and publics. Five strategies are provided for communication professionals use to create dialogic relationships with Internet publics.

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Each day corporations, political groups, and non-profit organizations tap into an expansive computer network known as the Internet, and utilize the World Wide Web (WWW).² Virtually every industry, product, activity, and public pursuit is referenced somewhere on the WWW, and although not every organization currently maintains a Web site, it is not unlikely that in the near future many will. Indeed, it is estimated that in 1998 the Internet will reach 100 million people and by the end of the decade that number could double.³ This enormous potential for outreach has captured the attention of professional communicators all around the world.

Public relations practitioners and scholars have expressed great interest in the Web. Organizational Web sites and homepages serve such public relations functions as outlets for news releases, opportunities for research of publics, and dissemination of organizational information. These Web sites also offer opportunities for immediate response to organizational problems and crises. But, for all of its public relations potential, the World Wide Web still remains underutilized by many organizations and underexamined by scholars as a tool for building organizational–public relationships.

This article provides a theory-based, strategic framework to guide relationship building through the World Wide Web. To explore the dialogic capacity of the WWW this article begins with an examination of the current literature of public relations and the WWW. Johnson has argued that although many essays have appeared in professional trade journals, most treatments lack rigor and theoretical frameworks.⁴ Strategic communication using the WWW can benefit from a consideration of dialogic communication theory.⁵ The second section of this essay discusses dialogic communication as a theoretical framework that can guide relationship building between organizations and publics. To illustrate how a dialogic framework can create and change organizational–public relationships, the final section of this essay discusses five strategies that communication professionals can follow to develop dialogic relationships through the WWW.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE WWW

Botan⁶ has suggested that public relations is the use of communication to negotiate relationships among groups. The WWW offers a multi-channel environment where negotiation between organizations and publics may occur. Unfortunately, much of the previous research on the WWW has focused on philosophical, metaphysical, and futuristic projection,⁷ rather than on how the WWW might be used to improve relationships with publics. Other scholars have assumed that knowledge of the WWW is already pervasive, or that most, or many, already know how to use the Web.⁸ Few articles have been written about how public relations practitioners can effectively take advantage of this new communication medium.⁹ In short, futurists and technology critics have moved in ahead of communication scholars seeking to explain how to strategically use the WWW's unique communicative features.¹⁰

Articles dealing with Webbed environments are common. There are numerous excellent and comprehensive books, articles, and manuals that provide even novice users with the “know-how” to put together their own Web pages.¹¹ Only a few articles have appeared in the practitioner-oriented journals in the last several years.¹² These essays share a genuine optimism regarding the role of the Web in public relations. Indeed, Capps noted that new technologies need to be learned and applied by public relations professionals to make using them easier and more successful.¹³ According to Capps:

The phrase “new technology” conjures up all kinds of visions for people, depending on how technically oriented they view themselves. PR professionals pride themselves on the personal touch—the relationships between clients, the media and the practitioners—the perfected “human contact.” As off-putting as a technological revolution might be in such a press-the-flesh environment, meaningful technological advances can be integrated to your benefit rather painlessly.... The trick is to realize the technology, at hand and forthcoming, must be used to keep in touch and not to distance ourselves—from clients, peers, the media.¹⁴

The important point is that using technology does not have to create distance between an organization and its publics. Instead Internet communication can include the “personal touch” that makes public relations effective. As Ovaatt¹⁵ and Mitra¹⁶ suggest, entire “communities” of diasporic groups are located in “cyberspace.” These publics who constitute (often-times global) communities unto themselves might otherwise remain disparate were it not for the Internet and the WWW. Thus, the Internet may be one of the only ways to reach traditionally isolated publics.

How can the WWW achieve this potentiality? One answer may lie in an understanding of dialogic communication. The next section discusses the theory of dialogic communication and focuses on the dialogic capacity of the Web.

DIALOGIC COMMUNICATION THEORY

Much of public relations theory and research has been based upon Grunig and Hunt’s four models of public relations—press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical communication.¹⁷ Of these four models, Grunig¹⁸ has argued that the two-way symmetrical model is the most desirable. To fully understand symmetrical communication, however, one must first understand dialogic communication. Karlberg¹⁹ traced the concept of symmetrical communication from historic philosophers such as Plato through such modern thinkers as Jurgen Habermas. In an attempt to reconcile ethical approaches to public relations with the concept of symmetrical communication, Karlberg called for a new research agenda to further develop true discourse between organizations and publics.²⁰ We believe that further discussion of dialogic communication will contribute to the development of true organization-to-public discourse.

The relationship between two-way symmetrical communication and dialogic communication can be seen as one of process and product. That is, two-way symmetrical communication’s theoretical imperative is to provide a procedural means whereby an organization and its publics can communicate interactively. As Grunig and Grunig explain, organizations “must set up structured systems, processes, and rules for two-way symmetrical public relations.”²¹ In contrast, dialogic communication refers to a particular type of relational interaction—one in which a relationship exists. Dialogue is product rather than process.

Although the term dialogue “means many things to many people,”²² a dialogic perspective “focus[es] on the *attitudes toward each other* held by the participants in a communication transaction.”²³ The concept of dialogic theory is often associated with the philosopher, Martin Buber. Buber viewed human communication as an intersubjective process in which parties come to a relationship with openness and respect.²⁴ Dialogue is the basis for that relationship.²⁵ Buber’s conception of dialogue focuses implicitly on ethics. That is, for a dialogic relationship to exist, parties must view communicating with each other as the goal of a relationship. Communication should not be a means to an end, but rather, as Kant’s Categorical Imperative suggested, communication should be an end in itself.

Dialogue has also been a cornerstone of the work of Jurgen Habermas. Habermas relied on the framework of dialogue to examine communicative ethics.²⁶ For Habermas, dialogue occurs when parties agree to “coordinate in good faith their plans of action.”²⁷ Inherent in Habermas’ conception of dialogue is a belief that ethical communication cannot be dominated by one party. Thus, dialogue involves a cooperative, communicative relationship.

Dialog has also been a focus for Communication scholars. Johannesen²⁸ contrasted dialogic communication to the traditional monologic models popular during the early years of communication research. Johannesen characterized dialogue as genuine, accurate empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presentness, spirit of mutual equality, and a supportive psychological climate.²⁹ Arnett also argued that “dialogue is honesty in relation to what is called the rhetorical situation.”³⁰ Stewart further explored the foundations of dialogic communication. Responding to criticism that dialogue was a “touchy-feely” activity, Stewart traced the philosophical roots of dialogical communication and argued that it “can lead to a reconceptualization of the phenomenon which is variously labeled ‘relationship.’”³¹

If relationship building is the foundation of public relations, how can the technology of the Web affect communicative relationships? Technology itself can neither create nor destroy relationships; rather, it is how the technology is used that influences organization–public relationships. As a dialogic medium, the Internet may be viewed as a “convivial tool.” Clifford Christians explored ethics and new technologies and argued that convivial technology was socially responsible because it:

respects the dignity of human work, needs little specialized training to operate, is generally accessible to the public, and empathizes personal satisfaction and ingenuity in its use. Convivial tools are dialogical: they maintain a kind of open-ended conversation with their users. Because convivial tools conform to the desires and purposes of their users, rather than transform human desires to fit the shape of the tools, they can become true extensions of human subjects.³²

Christians’ conception of convivial tools and social responsibility is another dialogic framework to understand the potential of the WWW.

Dialogic communication in this essay refers to any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions. Dialogic denotes a communicative give and take and is guided by two principles. First, individuals who engage in dialogue do not necessarily have to agree—quite often they vehemently disagree—however, what they share is a willingness to try to reach mutually satisfying positions. Although discussants may fail to reach agreement, dialogue is not merely about agreement. Rather, it is about the process of open and negotiated discussion. Second, dialogic communication is about intersubjectivity, and not objective truth, or subjectivity. Because of the nature of dialogic communication and its emphasis on a process of negotiated communication, it is considered to be an especially ethical way of conducting public dialogue and public relations.³³ This essay does not seek to prove that dialogic communication is preferable to, or more ethical than, monologic communication. Such arguments have been made elsewhere.³⁴ Rather this essay will discuss how to effectively use the Web's dialogic capacity.

Recently politicians and educators have implied that computers and the Internet are a panacea for economic, social, and educational inequalities. This remains to be proven. The Web, however, *has* proven to be an excellent information dissemination tool and useful for "getting a message out." Consider, for example, the enormous popularity that the various presidential Web sites had in the last election, hosting thousands of visitors a day in 1996, or the enormous popularity of sites such as NASA's Web site with 300,000,000 "hits"³⁵ in a two week period—fifty to sixty-million hits alone on July 7, 1997, a day after the landing of the Sojourner spacecraft on Mars.³⁶ Such communication, however, is not dialogic and its goal is to disseminate information rather than to create public dialogue. This distinction is important. Public relations literature about the Web has operated under a monologic communication continuum, suggesting that the public relations practitioner's role is primarily one of information gatherer and disseminator.³⁷

There is some confusion about what a two-way relationship between organizations and publics means in an Internet environment. Ovatt viewed the Internet as a great public relations opportunity "you can talk to customers and other audiences directly and get equally direct feedback.... [O]n the Internet, virtually everyone...can afford to communicate without filters."³⁸ Strenski also suggests that the Internet should be "monitored for incorrect information," and that "PR professionals can [then] respond to this by immediately posting accurate information and clarifications."³⁹ While such proactive monitoring activities are important aspects of public relations, terms such as "talk" and "feedback," and "monitoring" and "responding," do not equate to genuine "dialogue" or negotiation of relationships. As Leeper⁴⁰ suggests, ethical public relations is not about "responding" and "talking," but recognizing that meeting publics' needs requires dialogue and understanding.

To create effective dialogic relationships with publics necessarily requires just that: dialogue. Without a dialogic loop in Webbed communication, Internet public relations becomes nothing more than a new monologic communication medium, or a new marketing technology. The Web provides public relations

practitioners an opportunity to create dynamic and lasting relationships with publics, however, to do so requires that dialogic loops be incorporated into Web pages and Webbed communication. The remainder of this essay discusses strategies for successful information exchange and dialogue.

BUILDING PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE WWW

Relationship building is an important yet relatively undefined function in public relations. Broom, Casey, and Ritchey⁴¹ attempted to explicate the concept of relationships and provided ten tentative conclusions and suggestions for how public relations researchers and practitioners can better understand relationships. One conclusion in particular serves as a foundation for this essay: relationship formation and maintenance represents a process of mutual adaptation and contingent response.⁴² Indeed, in a study of technology issues in public relations, Johnson found that both “reach” and “relationship building” were “paramount concerns of public relations practitioners.”⁴³

Relationships between publics and organizations can be created, adapted and changed through the WWW. There are multiple resources for constructing visually appealing and economically successful Web sites; however, less common are strategies for providing public information on the Web and enhancing relationships with publics. 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. Below are five principles that offer guidelines for the successful integration of dialogic public relations and the World Wide Web.

Principle One: The Dialogic Loop

One benefit of new technologies is that they “allow feedback from audiences to be embedded in the [public relations] tactic itself.”⁴⁴ Thus, a feedback loop is an appropriate starting point for dialogic communication between an organization and its publics. A dialogic loop allows publics to query organizations and, more importantly, it offers organizations the opportunity to respond to questions, concerns and problems. For dialogic communication to take place on the Web requires a commitment of resources on the part of Web site providers. It is not enough to have “information” for publics if the organization cannot provide the information that publics need or desire. Moreover, is it not helpful to have published electronic mail addresses for organizational members if these individuals do not respond to their messages and are not committed to or capable of negotiating relationships with publics. Two issues are most relevant here.

First, organizations that wish to create dialogic communication with publics through the Internet need to specially train the organizational members who respond to electronic communication. There is a danger that organizational members who may be technically proficient and capable of creating Web sites may not be skilled in addressing public concerns. Dialogic public relations on the Internet requires the same professionalism and communication skills as is required from public relations specialists who use the more traditional media of print and broadcast. Although direct access to key members of an organization might represent the most dialogic and egalitarian means of providing publics with access to an organization, such an approach might create more public relations problems than it solves. One way to avoid such problems is to designate particular individuals on the public relations staff as Internet contacts. These individuals can be trained to answer questions, explain organizational policy and have the communication skills necessary to handle difficult questions or public concerns.

Second, dialogic loops incorporated into Web sites must be complete. That is, there must be an individual available to respond to public concerns, questions, and requests. As any veteran Web surfer is aware, many organizations do not monitor their Web sites very closely—or at all—operating under the assumption that “presence” is more important than service, access, or content.⁴⁵ Indeed, only recently a colleague was asked to submit a news release to a local newspaper regarding the unforeseen hospitalization of a city mayoral candidate. The press release was intended to explain the candidate’s absence from political debates, and why he had not been returning calls from the local news media. The release was sent via electronic-mail to the newspaper. As it turned out, the newspaper “never checked that electronic mail address.” As a result, timely, important, and relevant political information was never relayed to voters. Anecdotes such as these are not rare in Webspace. If the principles below are to be applied usefully, Webbed communicators must make the commitment to their Web sites that they make to their “customer service” lines and other forms of interactive communication: professional and timely responses. Response is a major part of the dialogic loop, however, the content of the response is also critical for relationship building. The next principle explores information dissemination on the Web.

Principle Two: The Usefulness of Information

Sites should make an effort to include information of *general* value to all publics—even if a site contains primarily industry, or user, specific information. For example, a Web site for a non-profit organization primarily serving a particular public or group of publics, should make an effort to provide “background,” or historical, information about itself. Making available generic or historical information is not new, it is what is behind the idea of “press packets” and “news briefings,”⁴⁶ and many Web sites already include such information. However, as many scholars have recently noted, “content” is what should drive

an effective Web site, and *not* the “smoke and mirrors” and fancy graphics that many Web sites currently rely upon.⁴⁷

Related to the usefulness of information issue is the idea of hierarchy and structure. This is an issue that is covered in any good summary of Web site construction, however, it is often an area that is overlooked in an effort to have “eye-catching” headers and graphics. As Elmer has pointed out, “five of the top ten Web sites (measured by user ‘hits’ or visits) still consist of indexical apparatuses (search engines).”⁴⁸ In other words, the sites are visited because they have something of on-going value to offer visitors. This feature offers the basis for a dialogic relationship because publics come to rely on an organization’s site to provide useful and trustworthy information.

Informational efforts can provide Web site visitors with contact addresses, telephone numbers, and electronic-mail address of organizational members, external experts, share holders, and those holding valid competing/contradictory positions. Other types of information offered might include explanations of how products are produced, or services delivered, lists of ingredients, and explanations of what ingredients are, and their known side effects if any.

In light of hierarchic and structural issues, audience-specific information should be organized such that it is easy to find by interested publics. A Web site serving a public relations function should not only be a well organized information extension of an organization, but also should create positive attitudes by being easily accessible to all publics,⁴⁹ and by providing all publics—both generic and particular—with “useful” information. Making information available to publics is the first step involved in developing relationships with them. Just as the gathering of rudimentary interpersonal information is the first step involved in developing a relationship,⁵⁰ the same is true of relationships between organizations and publics. Publics must have their questions and concerns addressed if relationships are to be built, and, if genuine dialogue is to occur.

Another important consideration is to provide information with value. Information that can be distributed automatically is more desirable than information that must be solicited. Web sites that offer publics an opportunity to sign-up for mailing lists and discussion groups are ahead of competing organizations that require their public to come to their site and “request” information. One caveat: do not “trick” publics into receiving information in perpetuity or under the guise of a “one-shot-deal.”⁵¹

Principle two suggests that relationships with publics must be cultivated not only to serve the public relations goals of an organization, but so that the interests, values, and concerns of publics are addressed. Information is made available to publics not to stifle debate or win their accent, but to allow them to engage an organization in dialogue as an informed partner. How do publics become partners of organizations? The next principle explores ways to create the foundation for long lasting relationships.

Principle Three: The Generation of Return Visits (RV)

Sites should contain features that make them attractive for repeat visits such as updated information, changing issues, special forums, new commentaries, on-line question and answer sessions, and on-line “experts” to answer questions for interested visitors. Sites that contain limited/unchanging information, are no longer useful after one visit and do not encourage return visits. Sites that contain constantly updated and “valuable” information for publics appear credible and suggest that an organization is responsible. Updating information is an easy way for public relations practitioners to create the conditions for dialogic relationships.

Simply updating “information,” or trying to include “interesting” content represents a one-way model of public relations. While such useful information dissemination tools should be one of several strategies used by public relations practitioners, dialogic strategies are more desirable. Interactive strategies include forums, question and answer formats, and experts—such as featuring the company President, CEO, or Department Head on the site once a month—and lead to relationship building between an organization and its publics. While such Webbed public information events have been relatively rare in the corporate world, they take place regularly in academic circles, and several of the larger Internet providers host such discussions regularly. This is one of the unique aspects of the Internet and public relations should take full advantage of this opportunity.

Other tools to encourage repeat Visits include formats for frequently asked questions (FAQs), easily downloadable or mailed information, technical or specialized information that can be requested by regular mail or electronic mail, and referral services or links to local agencies or information providers. All of these “informational” outlets must be accompanied by access to public relations professionals who can guide publics through the site and tailor information to specific public needs. Communication professionals are only one part of generating repeat visits. Sites must also be easy to use.

Principle Four: The Intuitiveness/Ease of the Interface

Visitors who come to Web sites for informational purposes, or even for curiosity, should find the sites easy to figure out and understand. Tables of contents are useful and, as suggested in Principle Two, should be well organized and hierarchical. Users/visitors should not have to follow seemingly “random” links to discover what information a site contains and where links will lead. A great deal of a Web site’s content should be textual rather than graphical—text loads faster than graphics, and well typeset pages can actually be more effective attention getters than a graphic that takes 30 seconds to load. Too many graphics at the beginning of a site may annoy users who are in a hurry and often times the graphics do not add any information. Well formatted/organized text is also easier for information seeking publics to work with than text and graphics combined. The Web *is* designed to be rich in content, however, sites intended to provide information should do it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Sites that contain information which, “theoretically,” could be of use or could be accessed by any individual, should not contain interfaces that exceed the software or computer memory capacity of “slightly-below-average” users.⁵² Thus, it is not desirable to design your site to be accessible only to those users with the “latest,” or “particular,” versions of network software. One increasingly common option is to allow users to select between a “basic” text based site and a “supercharged” site with graphics and/or sounds. The idea of “choice” is key here because it allows publics to interact with the organizations on their own terms and does not engender a feeling of inadequacy or intimidation in users.

The focus of sites should be on the organization, product, or information located there, and not on the “bells and whistles” that accompany it. Just because you can make a whirling, flaming, logo, does not mean you should. Sites should be interesting, informative, and contain information of value to publics. These Web site features should not be overshadowed by “gratuitous” special effects. Although, as noted previously, the WWW is a communication environment that is designed to be rich in content. Graphics and sounds, however, may not be the most useful tools for providing publics with information. As many critics have noted, the newspaper still contains more information on one page than an entire network broadcast.⁵³ Web sites that are rich in ambiance often do so at the expense of content. Dialogic public relations seeks to create lasting, genuine, and valuable, relationships with its publics, and it should not operate merely as a propaganda, marketing, or advertising tool.

Organizational image is an important part of any organization’s communication with external publics. If a Web site ultimately leaves certain publics with a negative image of the organization—that it is fluff, that it does not care about all its publics, that it serves only the technologically privileged—then ultimately the Web site has failed to foster or facilitate dialogic relationships. Content should take precedence over aesthetic considerations. This does not mean that sites should be “boring corporate brochures” as Seybold⁵⁴ suggests. Sites should be dynamic enough to encourage all potential publics to explore them, information rich enough to meet the needs of very diverse publics, and interactive enough to allow users to pursue further informational issues and dialogic relationships. The final principle offers one more tool for fostering relationships.

Principle Five: The Rule of Conservation of Visitors

Designers of Web pages should be careful about links that can lead visitors astray. Some Web design documents actually cite “common courtesy,” or “goodwill” as rationales for including links to other related sites. Web site visitors are to be valued; they are coming to your site for what the site offers and not to “shop for other sites.” Once a visitor leaves your site on a “link,” s/he may never get back. If the goal of public relations in Webbed environments is to create and foster relationships with publics, and *not* to “entertain” them, Web sites should include only “essential links” with clearly marked paths for visitors to return to your site.

Advertising has become a major use of the WWW.⁵⁵ Web designers should place sponsored advertising, or institutional advertising, at the bottom of pages or behind other clearly marked links to avoid the “attractive-nuisance” factor, and the tendency of users to be led astray. Sponsored advertising is one way that visitors are lost. Because Web advertisements, like all advertisements, target particular publics, advertisements in headers and side bars often cause visitors to “surf out”—sometimes never to return. Web advertisements also slow the operation of sites down, even a relatively “lean” site can be bogged down with advertisements. If an organization is trying to provide information, it should either avoid sponsored advertising or use strategic placement that will not distract publics. This principle follows Buber’s⁵⁶ suggestion that dialogic communication should be the goal of the interaction and not merely a means to an end such as marketing or advertising.

CONCLUSION

Dialogic communication created by the strategic use of the WWW is one way for organizations to build relationships with publics. The Web has great potential as a dialogic communication medium. Because of the WWW’s increasing ubiquity, many public relations practitioners will regularly be communicating with tens of thousands (even millions) of individuals and dozens of publics, each with particular interests, at the same time. If for no other reason than the WWW’s omnipresence, public relations practitioners must become skilled in its use.

New technologies such as the Web offer multiple opportunities for public relations scholars and practitioners. As Johnson noted, public relations strategies that use new technologies can include feedback mechanisms as specific tactics.⁵⁷ Of course, dialogic webbed communication cannot be achieved overnight. Rather, creating mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and publics is a time consuming and dynamic process. The principles discussed here provide guidance to practitioners on how to develop Web pages, structure content, organize information, appeal to publics, and most importantly, build relationships with publics. The WWW has enormous potential as a communication tool because, as Marlow noted, “public relations is and always will be about human relationships.”⁵⁸

NOTES

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33. R. Pearson, op. cit.
34. C. Botan, op. cit.; R. Pearson, op. cit.
35. A "hit" refers to a visit to a site. This number represents repeat visitors, short visits, and long visits. In terms of sheer numbers of visitors per day, fifty million hits is a staggering figure and far above the average number of hits per day of the most popular web sites. For more information, cf., <http://www.web21.com/>
36. D. Dubov, (Mars Pathfinder Web master), electronic request for information, Ddubov@Mail1.jpl.nasa.gov (July 16, 1997). Other notable examples include the enormous interest in the Heaven's Gate cult's web site after its mass suicide in 1997, and the interest in the Value Jet web site after its highly publicized crash in 1995.
37. This critique obviously does not apply to the several Public Relations and Communication related essays that provide "background" and explanation of the web.
38. F. Ovaite, op. cit., p. 21.
39. J. B. Strenski, op. cit., p. 33.

40. K. A. Leeper, "Public Relations Ethics and Communitarianism: A Preliminary Investigation," *Public Relations Review* 22(2) (Summer 1996), pp. 163–179.
41. G. M. Broom, S. Casey, and J. Ritchey, "Toward a Concept and Theory of Organization-Public Relationships," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 9(2) (1997), pp. 83–98.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
43. M. A. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
44. M. A. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
45. A. Day, "A Model for Monitoring Web Site Effectiveness," *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy* 7(2) (1997), pp. 109–115.
46. I. Capps, *op. cit.*
47. Guidelines, *op. cit.*; L. Lemay, *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML 3.0 In a Week* (2nd ed.) (Indianapolis, IN: Sams.net Publishing, 1996), chapters 1 and 6; C. J. Silverio, "Why the Web Sucks: II," personal "rant" located on the authors home page, (<http://WWW.spies.com/~ceej/words/rant.Web.html>), (1994), pp. 1–8; T. Spencer, *op. cit.*
48. G. Elmer. *op. cit.*, p. 185.
49. G. Elmer. *op. cit.*, p. 185.
50. G. M. Broom, S. Casey, and J. Ritchey, *op. cit.*
51. Examples of information automatically provided include: airlines, Government information such as the what the Clinton and Dole political camps offered during the 1996 Presidential election, and governmental sites that automatically distribute information to users—such as grant opportunities. For an excellent list of such sites for communication scholars see, T. W. Benson, "Electronic Network Resources for Communication Scholars," *Communication Education* 43(2), (April 1994), pp. 120–128.
52. As C. J. Silverio points out, "Your audience is going to have an assortment of connections that range from 14.4 PPP accounts to T3s to 2400 baud terminal connections" (p. 7).
53. N. Postman, *Conscientious Objections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).
54. P. B. Seybold, "Don't Let PR Control Your Web Site," *Computerworld* 30(15) (April 8, 1996), p. 37 f.
55. E. Marlow, *op. cit.*
56. M. Buber, 1970, *op. cit.*
57. Johnson, *op. cit.*
58. E. Marlow, *op. cit.*, p. 161.