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Public Relations Review 27 (2001) 59–71

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Public  
Relations  
Review

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## Teaching mediated public relations

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### Abstract

This article discusses several approaches to teaching a mediated public relations course. Emphasis is given to the World Wide Web since many public relations professionals are less familiar with it than other forms of mediated communication. Activities described include Web research skills, critical evaluation of organizational messages, and activities for increasing students' familiarity and skills with an assortment of mediated communication tools. Five criteria are suggested for structuring a mediated communication course: (1) learning the strengths and weaknesses of various communication technologies; (2) teaching students the implications of the various technologies on message production and relationship building; (3) teaching students how to construct dialogic/symmetrical communication systems; (4) teaching students to effectively critique mediated communication technology; and (5) teaching students to use new technology to conduct public relations research. © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

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### 1. Introduction

The idea of mediated public relations is not new. With the exception of genuine interpersonal contact with individuals and groups, virtually all public relations is mediated. The printed word was, of course, the first mediated public relations channel and still relied upon today. Indeed, until the twentieth century with the spread of mass and mediated communication channels, the printed word and interpersonal contact were the only tools available. Obviously modern public relations is more sophisticated. Modern public relations, generally traced to Ivy Ledbetter Lee and his declaration of principles, relies on a host of communication media. Lee had only the power of the press and the power of the spoken word at his

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disposal; radio and telephony were in their infancy and television had not been invented yet, nor had sophisticated polling methods.

Modern public relations, by contrast, is heavily mediated and becoming more so every day. Modern public relations regularly utilizes satellite technology, radio and television, telephone/cellular technology, the fax machine, and of course, the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). The complexity of the contemporary media landscape and the speed at which it expands its frontiers make it difficult to be on the cutting edge of technology. Indeed, an “Internet year” is now reckoned to be between two and three months. Thus, while in Lee’s day it may have been relatively easy to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the mediated public relations channels available to a practitioner—there were few—today’s media landscape is more complex. And, it is a mistake to assume that our students really know the potentialities/limitations of the technology they have come to take for granted such as the cellular telephone, the fax machine, and especially, the Internet or World Wide Web.

A mediated public relations course must start from the well-documented assumption that the student—indeed, most citizens—have a limited understanding of technology. That is, just because you can surf the Web does not mean that you understand how it is “surfing” you.<sup>1</sup> Web sites are used extensively by organizations to monitor customers/clients, to influence consumers to purchase products, and to create symmetrical communication networks. To the extent that Web sites are used to sell products the WWW is like television and radio. Indeed, the WWW is currently touted by many politicians as *the tool* to equalize unfair educational opportunities, while radio and television, for decades envisioned as “tools for democracy,” have become passé. This, in spite of the fact that the Voice of America still broadcasts America’s views around the globe in efforts to influence/persuade; and, after 30 years of conclusive research about the affects of television violence on children, the television is still used as the “electronic babysitter” by millions every day.<sup>2</sup> Some argue that the Web is heading in the same direction as television—that is, as a misunderstood and taken for granted medium—and it is for this reason that Public relations students (future practitioners) must be more critical of technology and understand how it is *being* used, how it *can* be used, and how it *should be* used.<sup>3</sup> One way to educate students about the potential of mediated communication is through a course on the subject.

The importance of mediated communication competence cannot be overstated. FitzGerald and Spagnolia point out that, “Internet traffic doubles every 100 days. While it took radio 38 years to establish 50 million listeners and television 13 years to attract 50 million viewers, in four years the internet acquired 50 million users” (1999, p. 12).<sup>4</sup> Radio, television, and the Internet are worldwide phenomena that most citizens take for granted.<sup>5</sup> Not only is technology more pervasive today than in the past, but as suggested above, practitioner adaptation time is diminished by the speed at which technology moves. Beyond the speed at which technology diffuses, lies the fact that journalists are increasingly relying on Webbed sources for newsgathering and story development.

As Middleberg and Ross point out in their most recent study of “Media in Cyberspace,” use of the Web by journalists for information gathering and other purposes is nearly universal now—with 98% on-line in 1998 compared with 63% in 1997.<sup>6</sup> The ubiquity of the Web also means that public relations professionals need to be more aware of what information about their organization resides on the Web—since journalists *will* seek it out. Public relations

professionals also need to be aware of how stories are pitched and for which source—print or broadcast—since each use the Web differently.

Students need to understand mediated communication in order to make effective choices regarding the integration of mediated communication channels into public relations. The recent recommendations of the commission on public relations education, written after the 1998 summer conference on public relations education, suggested that students should develop skills with technology, visual literacy, and new media/message strategies.<sup>7</sup> The report also suggested that students should have a “solid understanding of media, media channels and the societal role of media.”<sup>8</sup> A mediated public relations course could meet all of these imperatives and would bring better-prepared students to the field of public relations.

A mediated communication course might be taught in-between an introductory, Principles of Public Relations course, and Public Relations Writing course; or, mediated communication activities/assignments might be integrated into other public relations courses. The remainder of this article will outline some of the objectives, readings, assignments, and other considerations that might go into a mediated communication course.

## 2. Objectives

At the aforementioned National Communication Association conference on public relations education, the participants made the following recommendations: students should understand new technology, be able to manage communication and information technologies, integrate technology into practice, and keep up-to-date with emerging technology.<sup>9</sup> Each of these recommendations bear directly on the importance of a mediated public relations course and suggest course objectives designed to transmit critical and applied communication skills.

In light of the commission’s recommendations, a mediated communication course would have several (cognitive and behavioral) objectives:<sup>10</sup> *objective (1) to teach students the basic strengths and weaknesses of contemporary mediated communication channels.* Students need to understand, for example, that Web sites are not simply designed to entertain college students. Web sites are widely accessed by media representatives, customers, investors, and others to make decisions regarding groups and organizations. Poorly designed Web sites, or telephone-call routing systems that are not user friendly, work against relationship building and lead many individuals to seek information or services elsewhere.

Students often have trouble deciding on what communication channel might be most appropriate to meet specific needs and given particular audience constraints. Part of the problem is that students do not know what the strength/limitations are of the various technologies they have literally grown up with. Burnham put it into perspective nicely when he explained that “For the fish swimming in the ocean, the comprehension of wetness is impossible. Wet requires the contrast of dry.”<sup>11</sup> Most students do not realize the power of their technology because they have never been taught, and because they take it for granted. Students cannot suggest that an information dissemination problem might be solved with a Fax machine because they do not know about “fax on demand” or “broadcast fax.”<sup>12</sup>

*Objective (2) to teach students the ethical implications of the various mediated communication technologies.* Students need to understand how technology is used to track clients and customers. For example, questions arise concerning such issues as “should ‘cookies’ be used on Web sites to track customer preferences and interests?” “Should employee computer use be monitored?” “Should employees be forbidden from visiting ‘adult’ Web sites using organizational computers?” Students also need to understand what constitutes ethical appeals. For example, “is it appropriate to target children for sales messages so that they may act as ‘vehicles’ for selling an organization’s products/services?” “Should organizations sell client/customer e-mail lists to other organizations/vendors?” “Should damaging information be withheld from organizational Web sites to support organizational goals?” Although ethical questions relevant to mediated public relations contexts are sometimes raised in public relations courses, such questions cannot be explored in great detail if the primary course content—history, theories, writing skills, and so forth—are also to be covered. The mediated public relations course offers a unique opportunity for students to learn about critical and ethical public relations issues and to explore how these questions might effect the practice of public relations.

*Objective (3) to teach students how to use mediated communication channels to foster two-way (dialogic/symmetrical) communication.* The importance of two-way,<sup>13</sup> and dialogic<sup>14</sup> communication in public relations has long been clear. What has been less clear, however, is how to employ dialogue in mediated communication contexts. Given the ubiquity of the Web in public relations contexts, students need to be prepared to draw on mediated technology to foster dialogic organization–public relationships.

*Objective (4) to teach students how to evaluate mediated communication channels with an eye toward making them more effective public relations tools.* If students are to develop mediated communication competence then they need to be able to determine what constitutes effective/ineffective communication. For example, students should have several frameworks with which to evaluate organizational Web sites that include a site’s capacity to meet the needs of customers/clients, the media, investors, and the organizational mission. Similarly, public relations professionals should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of telephone help systems, and other interactive media.

*Objective (5) to teach students how to use new technology, such as the Internet, to conduct research and improve the practice of public relations.* As Middleberg and Ross point out, with each day, the media are coming to rely on the Internet more and more.<sup>15</sup> Organizational Web sites need to serve the needs of more publics than just customers. In times of crisis, for example, the media increasingly turn to organizational Web sites for information. Beyond students having the ability to guide the development of organizational Web sites so that they serve multiple publics, students also need to know how to evaluate the research/information that they acquire from other Web sites, and be able to conduct more effective research.<sup>16</sup> There are many assignments that can be used to accomplish these objectives.

The five objectives of a mediated public relations course are intended to cover the basics. Students who master these objectives will understand ethical issues related to effective media use, how to more effectively employ mediated technology in the day-to-day conduct of public relations, and finally how to evaluate public relations messages/channels and improve practice.

### 3. Assignments/activities

The basic assignments for a mediated public relations course might include some combination of the following:<sup>17</sup>

1. A book review/presentation where students either read a text and give a presentation to the class; or have students read the text, write a book review, and also give a *brief* presentation to the class with key points.
2. A critique of the school's Web site where Web site evaluation criteria are applied to evaluate the site.<sup>18</sup>
3. A "pitching" assignment (this may be coupled with the Web site review) where student groups pitch their ideas for "improvement" of some organizational communication medium—such as the organization's Web site—to "management."
4. An essay where students explore an assortment of issues: ethics, cultural imperialism, technology (each student could be assigned a different mediated technology), media imperialism, print/broadcast credibility, social class, and so forth.
5. A Web site design assignment where students design a Web site based on principles of effective design.<sup>19</sup>
6. A "special seminar" where the class hosts a week long seminar for faculty and students on Web site design, broadcast technology, printing/publishing, new business technology, and so forth).<sup>20</sup>
7. An assignment asking students to evaluate the credibility of several Web sites, corporate/organizational materials, television/radio PSAs, advertisements, and so forth.<sup>21</sup>
8. A Web research assignment (or Web scavenger hunt) where students learn effective Web site search/research skills.<sup>22</sup>
9. A comparative analysis of various mediated technology (telephones/cellular phones, facsimile, e-mail, Intranets/Internets, the Web, etc.). Or, an analysis/critique of industry-specific, organizational messages (students might visit Web sites, learn themes, compare mission/vision statements, etc.).
10. A class might arrange for an assortment of guest speakers: journalists, book/newspaper publishers, industry professionals (public relations, broadcasting, advertising/marketing, graphic design, Web designers).
11. An annotated bibliography assignment where students are asked to review books/journal articles, Web sites, and so forth, present their findings to the class in the form of a presentation, and provide bibliographies for the class covering their readings.

For a basic undergraduate class, assignments one through five are recommended, and some combination of assignments six through eleven to add variety to the class. Alternatives also include selecting combinations of assignments 1–11 and giving exams. Table 1 illustrates how each assignment might be used to meet the objectives of the course—class structure, discussed below, depends upon the focus of the class.

Each of the assignments mentioned above is geared toward meeting the course objectives of (1) learning the strengths and weaknesses of the various communication technologies, (2) teaching students the implications of the various technologies on message production and

Table 1  
Assignments and objectives

ASSIGNMENT	OBJECTIVES				
	1	2	3	4	5
Book Review	*	*	*		
Web site critique	*	*	*	*	*
Pitching exercise	*	*			
Essay on mediated issue	*	*	*		
Web site design	*	*	*	*	*
Special topics seminar	*		*		*
Web evaluation	*	*	*	*	
Web research activity		*		*	
Comparative analysis	*	*	*		

Objectives: (1) To teach strengths/weaknesses of mediated channels (2) To teach ethical implications of mediated technology (3) To teach how to use mediated communication channels (4) To teach how to evaluate mediated channels and (5) To teach how to use new technology to conduct research

relationship building, (3) teaching students how to construct dialogic/symmetrical communication systems, (4) teaching students to effectively critique mediated communication technology, and (5) teaching students to use new technology to conduct more effective public relations research.

Specific assignments such as the Web “scavenger hunt”<sup>23</sup> accomplish many of the five objectives of a mediated public relations course. A Web scavenger hunt involves giving students a list of 7–10 questions to find answers to using the World Wide Web. The purpose of the assignment is to teach students Web research skills, and to teach students how to narrow searches down to manageable amounts of information. Essentially, students are given a list of questions to find on the Internet—without any real discussion of how to use the Internet effectively—and an hour to find the information (potentially this can be done in class if you have access to computer resources). Most students, without guidance on how to conduct effective searches, will find only a few of the items on your scavenger hunt list. Questions should be relatively broad, and likely to result in many hits if proper search strategies are not employed.<sup>24</sup> For example, students are asked to locate information such as “Which University in Ohio was the site of the famous 1993 ‘Sexual Offense Policy’ and what was the first clause of the policy?” Many students will begin a search for a question such as this by typing in “Ohio University,” “sexual offense policy,” or “Ohio University Sexual Offense Policy.” Each combination of words will result in thousands of “hits” since, as Corbitt explains: “The default behavior in most search engines, unless you tell them differently, is that you will get matches on the words in your search as though they were separated by an OR operator.”<sup>25</sup> Once students have conducted their scavenger hunts without guidance—and likely with little success—explain to students the importance of using Boolean logic (AND, OR, NOT, NEAR), quotation marks for “phrase” searches, nested searches, and multiple key words. With these skills, students should be able to complete an 8–10 item scavenger hunt in 30–45 min. Scavenger hunts can be graded, conducted as part of extracredit activities, conducted for prizes, or conducted as in class activities.

Assignments such as the Web site critique (assignments 2 & 3 above) meet nearly all of

the course objectives. To conduct a critique direct students to develop (or provide to students) lists of public relations Web site evaluation criteria.<sup>26</sup> Criteria might include: “ability for publics to communicate with the organization”; “ability of the site to build relationships with publics”; “multiplicity of publics served by Web site”; and “whether the site meets the information needs of interested media representatives.” Criteria might also logically flow from the course objectives mentioned above. Once students have several criteria with which to evaluate Web sites, direct students to visit their School’s own Web site and evaluate the effectiveness of the site as several publics might (students, parents, media, hackers). After evaluating the schools Web site, students might then develop either written issue management “reports” or, as suggested in activity three above, give a presentation to “managers” or “administrators” pitching the weaknesses in the current Web site and making recommendations for improvement.

For the pitching activity, direct students to find ways to “explain,” or persuade, decision-makers of the importance to the organization of making potentially expensive changes to the Web site. Students would be asked to present data to support their claims (rather than simply telling their audience that they read it in *Public Relations Review*); prepare materials to illustrate what changes to the Web site might look like; and use rhetorical forms of support such as comparison, analogy, illustration, restatement and testimony to create interesting and compelling presentations.

For the Web critique, direct students to readings that offer specific criteria with which to evaluate Web sites.<sup>27</sup> Once students are clear about the criteria and have some evaluation heuristics in mind, direct students to write down a public relations related question (or a question related to any aspect of the course content). Then, have students visit three Web sites that they have never been to before but that they think might lead to an answer to their questions. Once students have located the sites, they should download/print the home page and key pages that address their questions (to include with their critiques), and then conduct either a 4–6 page analysis of their sites using the aforementioned evaluation criteria (from their earlier readings), or have students present their finding to the class as part of 10 min presentations. As noted above, students may also do both, preparing overheads and notes using the home pages they download for their presentations and essays. Evaluation should be based on the students’ ability to effectively employ the evaluation criteria assigned without being “wooned” by “slick” Web pages and fancy graphics, as well as the students ability to suggest public relations improvements to the site using the evaluation criteria assigned.

In all cases, classes should be structured so that public relations (however defined) is emphasized rather than the technologies themselves. A mediated public relations class should not be structured as an introduction to the Web, or introduction to mass communication class. Focus should be placed on the mediated role of public relations and not the mass media per se.

#### **4. Evaluation**

Evaluation in a mediated public relations course should focus on students demonstrating competence. The activities outlined above allow students to demonstrate competence and understanding of the public relations technology. Many of the assignments can be useful as

portfolio/resume builders (e.g., the one-week, in class, “seminar,” the Web page analysis, or research on particular communication technologies). That students can memorize theories of information processing or graphic design is less important than students understanding the ethical/social implication of technology and having frameworks or heuristics for evaluating and improving organization–public relationships.

Exams might ask students to evaluate case studies and make recommendations for improving a message/campaign’s aesthetics, performance, cost, effectiveness, or ability to meet multiple publics’ needs. Take-home tests are also particularly useful and allow students to apply critical frameworks or “tests” to printed messages, Web sites, PSAs, or VNRs. Indeed, given that much of the content of a mediated public relations class may consist of discussion, presentations, and independent research, the usefulness of quantitative evaluation (multiple choice, T/F, etc.) is limited unless class size necessitates it.

## 5. Texts

There are many excellent texts for a mediated public relations course depending upon the approach taken to the course. Authors such as Postman have made careers out of critiquing technology’s role in society and are especially relevant to public relations contexts.<sup>28</sup> Stoll, a computer scientist, has written several, very readable, and thought provoking texts on the role of technology in education.<sup>29</sup> Treadwell and Treadwell’s text *Public Relations Writing*,<sup>30</sup> is an excellent resource for teachers and includes discussions of print and broadcast media, and the Internet.<sup>31</sup> Witmer’s text, *Spinning the Web: A Handbook for Public Relations on the Internet*, has several useful mediated public relations chapters.<sup>32</sup> Readings on the media’s use of new technology such as Kent’s “Managerial Rhetoric and the Metaphor of the World Wide Web,”<sup>33</sup> which conducts a critique of the guiding metaphors of the Web and an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, and Middleberg and Ross’ studies of *Media in Cyberspace* are very useful.<sup>34</sup> Journal articles on dialogic communication, especially those that directly relate to public relations include: Botan,<sup>35</sup> Pearson,<sup>36</sup> Esrock and Leichthy,<sup>37</sup> Kent,<sup>38</sup> Kent and Taylor,<sup>39</sup> and others.<sup>40</sup> Readings on public relations and technology include: a recent special issue of *Public Relations Review*, “Technology and the Corporate Citizen,”<sup>41</sup> a regular column (and articles) in *Public Relations Quarterly* on “online public relations” by Marken, and several texts including Witmer’s, mentioned previously, and Marlow’s *Electronic Public Relations*.<sup>42</sup> Other useful texts include Bridges’ *Internet Guide for Mass Communication Students*,<sup>43</sup> and Doyle and Gotthoffer’s *Quick Guide to the Internet for Speech Communication*.<sup>44</sup> Finally, for those interested in “cutting edge” mediated technology issues, dozens of articles appear each week in newspapers worldwide and can be accessed through Lexis/Nexus—at least two or three a day are published somewhere in the world.

## 6. Lecture topics

Lectures would vary depending upon the focus of the class. For example, a class that placed a heavy emphasis on Webbed and other public relations *technology* might focus on

the following issues: specific mediated communication technologies such as the telephone, fax, Internet/WWW, e-mail, or broadcast technology; or technological norms such as e-mail/Web etiquette, telephone etiquette, memo/invitation etiquette. However, a class that placed an emphasis on ethical/cultural issues associated with mediated public relations technologies might focus on issues such as access to technology by individuals/groups, the value of mediated technology to public relations campaigns (i.e., who is reached by particular technology and how can they be effectively integrated into organizational campaigns or message), or how to use mediated communication channels to reach disenfranchised publics or new publics. Finally, a more applied class might focus on how to use mediated technology such as the WWW to research publics, gather information about customers/clients, monitor the competition and chat groups, or influence public policy makers.

As should be clear, the topic of lectures might be quite varied. What should be constant is the focus on public relations rather than just “new technology” or “cultural studies.” An effort should be made to teach students both to be critical of the technology they might employ, and also, to understand how to integrate the various media into public relations contexts. Again, as the Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education noted, students should acquire “competencies” and “skills” with mediated communication and new communication media, not just “exposure” to it. “It is imperative that public relations students have the opportunity to apply the skills and principles they learn to the professional area.”<sup>45</sup>

## 7. Recommendations

When teaching about mediated communication technologies to students it is important not to overestimate their depth of knowledge. Most students *do* know what a fax machine is but they *do not* know about “broadcast fax” or “fax on demand.” Most students *can* surf the Web, but most *cannot* tell you what a meta search engine is or explain how to use Boolean logic. Finally, although *many* students can download music from the Web, *very few* students subscribe to news groups, belong to listservs, or know how to conduct environmental scanning/monitoring using the Internet—and how to do such activities might be integrated into the course content. As the Commission on Public Relations Education suggested, make assignments interactive.<sup>46</sup> That is, whenever possible make students discover how to use mediated public relations technology, and then, in turn, allow students to explain how to use the technology to their classmates.

With only a few exceptions in the case of extremely informed teachers, teaching a mediated public relations course is likely to be as valuable for the teacher as it is for the student. Cultural, economic, and social trends influence the use, production, effectiveness, credibility, and popularity of all our technology: satellite, print, broadcast, telephone, and computer. Just as fashions change so do patterns of media use. As teachers, the time spent refreshing our own grasp of mediated technology will ultimately benefit our students.

Finally, it is worth noting that a mediated public relations course can also be effectively integrated into a graduate class. Students (if pursuing terminal degrees and employed outside of the department) can be encouraged to critique their own organization’s materials/Web

sites, or (if pursuing Doctorates), conduct research aimed at developing conference papers or journal articles. Many of the assignments mentioned above might apply in graduate contexts including: book reviews, critiques, pitching, comparative analyses, and annotated bibliographies.

## 8. Conclusion

There is an apocryphal quotation from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in which Alice asks "Which road should I take?" To which the Cheshire cat replies "Where do you want to go?" Alice responds, "I don't know?" To which the cat replies "Then it won't matter which road you take." Without the aid of insight or understanding, one choice is just as good as the next—although there *are* better and worse choices. Fortunately, public relations is based on planned, strategic, choices and not random chance. For students to make the best decisions for their potential clients requires a thorough understanding of mediated communication. Indeed, the importance of the mediated public relations course for students grows larger each day. While creativity and the ability to write well are still important for students, students must also understand how (and why) messages vary by medium, how the various new technologies work, and how technology can make an organization's messages stronger and lead to better organization–public relationships.

In regard to computer mediated communication, the Internet is still in its infancy, as is research on the Internet. Our students, and indeed teachers and professionals, have the opportunity to get in on the ground floor of what is certainly one of the greatest public relations mediums of the twentieth, and perhaps twenty-first, century and likely to be important for some time to come. If we want our students to leave our classrooms being competent, qualified, and marketable, then they must know how to use all of the public relations research and relationship building resources at their disposal.

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## Notes

1. Cf., Michael L. Kent, "Managerial Rhetoric and the Metaphor of the World Wide Web," *Critical Studies in Mediated Communication*, in press; Carl Botan, "Communication work and electronic surveillance: A model for predicting panoptic effects," *Communication Monographs* 63(4) (1996), pp. 293–313.
2. For an excellent discussion of "the history and future" of information and technology, see, Paul Levinson, *The Soft Edge: A Natural History and Future of the Information Revolution*. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

3. Kent, *Critical Studies in Mediated Communication*, op cit., in press.
4. Suzanne Sparks FitzGerald and Nicole Spagnolia, "Four Predictions for PR Practitioners in the New Millennium," *Public Relations Quarterly* 44 (1999), pp. 12–14.
5. Robert Kubey, "Obstacles to the development of media education in the United States," *Journal of Communication* 48(1) (1998), pp. 58–69.
6. Don Middleberg & Steven S. Ross, *Media in Cyberspace Study [1998: Fifth Annual National Survey]*. (NY: Middleberg and Associates, 1999a), p. 2. Contact Middleberg and Associates at (<http://www.middleberg.com>) for a copy of this report (free to academicians); see also, Don Middleberg & Steven S. Ross, *Broadcast Media in Cyberspace Study 1999: [First Annual National Survey]*. (NY: Middleberg and Associates, 1999b). Contact Middleberg and Associates at (<http://www.middleberg.com>) for a copy of this report (free to academicians).
7. The Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education, *Public Relations Education for the 21st Century: A Port of Entry*, 1999, p. 20.
8. The Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education, *Public Relations Education for the 21st Century: A Port of Entry*, 1999, p. 22.
9. See the National communication Association's Web site for reports of the summer conference on public relations education, "Dialogue on Public Relations Education," held in July of 1998: (<http://www.natcom.org>).
10. Given the relative youth of the Web as a public relations tool, and given the abundance of books/articles on the traditional print and broadcast technology, the majority of my examples will revolve around the Web.
11. Donald Burnham, *The Rise of the Computer State*, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1984). p. 7.
12. Ian Capps, "What the 'New Technology' really means for Communications professionals," *Public Relations Quarterly* (1993), pp. 24–25.
13. James E Grunig, *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992); James E. Grunig and Jon White, "The effect of worldviews on public relations theory and practice," in, James E Grunig, *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992), pp. 31–64.
14. Michael L. Kent, op. cit. In press; Michael L. Kent & Maureen Taylor, "Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web," *Public Relations Review* 24 (1988), pp. 321–334.
15. Don Middleberg & Steven S. Ross, op. cit., 1999a and 1999b.
16. Michael L. Kent, "Getting the Most From Your Search Engine," *Communication teacher*, 15(1) pp. 4–7; Michael L. Kent, "How to evaluate Web site validity and reliability," *Communication Teacher* 13, 1999.
17. Activities are consistent with the Pedagogy Task Team's active learning recommendations: guest lecture/speaker, simulations, games, oral presentations, hands-on work with computers, dialogue/class discussions, group discussions/exercises, case studies, and Web/Internet/Intranet activities ("Dialogue on Public Relations Education," op. cit., 1999).
18. Richard Levine, *Sun on the Net: Guide to web style*, (Sun Microsystems Inc.: 1995),

- <<http://www.sun.com/styleguide/>>; Linda Lemay, *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML 3.0 In a Week, [second edition]*. (Indianapolis, IN: Sams.net Publishing, 1996); Michael L. Kent and Maureen Taylor, op. cit., 1998.
19. Ibid.
  20. Such activities could be facilitated by drawing on college/university resources: computing centers, media relations, and so forth. Students might then be asked to apply what they have learned through the seminar in the form of an analysis/critique, exam, and so forth.
  21. Michael L. Kent, *Communication Teacher*, op. cit., 1999.
  22. Michael L. Kent, *Communication Teacher*, in press.
  23. Ibid.
  24. Ibid.; for information on effective web searching see also, Uttenweiller, W. L. "Working the Web," *Security Management* 43 (1999), pp. 75–78; "Search IQ's" Web site <[www.searchiq.com/directory/](http://www.searchiq.com/directory/)>; or the "Ask Scott" Web site, <[www.askscott.com/tindex.html](http://www.askscott.com/tindex.html)>.
  25. T. Corbitt, "Searching the net" *Management Accounting-London* 77 (1999), pp. 52–53.
  26. Cf., Michael L. Kent & Maureen Taylor, op. cit., 1998, for five dialogic public relations Web evaluation criteria.
  27. Ibid., Kent & Taylor.
  28. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, (Harrisonburg Virginia: Penguin Books, 1984); Neil Postman, *Conscientious Objections*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1988); Neil Postman & Camille Paglia, "Dinner Conversation: She Wants Her TV! He Wants His Book!," *Harper's Magazine* (1991, March), pp. 44–55; Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Neil Postman, *Building a Bridge to the Eighteenth Century* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).
  29. Clifford Stoll *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995); Clifford Stoll, *High Tech Heretic: Why Computers Don't Belong in the Classroom and Other Reflections by a Computer Contrarian* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999).
  30. Donald & Jill Treadwell, *Public Relations Writing: Principles in Practice* (Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 2000).
  31. Note, Treadwell and Treadwell's text would make an excellent supplementary text, and is an excellent public relations *writing* text, however, it is not suitable as a "stand-alone" text for a mediated public relations course.
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