12 COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

12.1 Vocabulary

referring back • introducing quotations/paraphrases

A Study the words and phrases in box a.

1. How does each word or phrase relate to communication in public relations?
2. Check the stress and pronunciation.

B Read text A on the opposite page.

1. What is a SWOT analysis?
2. Look at the highlighted words. Connect each word to the noun it refers to.
   Example: *it* refers to a previously mentioned compound noun *(SWOT analysis)*

C Study the verbs in box b. They can be used to introduce quotations, or paraphrases/summaries.

1. Check the meanings of any words you don't know.
2. Which verbs have similar meanings?
3. Which verbs are **not** followed by *that*?
4. When can you use each verb?
   Example: *accept* = the writer (reluctantly) thinks this idea from someone else is true

D Read text B on the opposite page. Look at the highlighted sentences.

1. What is the purpose of each sentence?
   Example: *PR practitioners need to be aware of the issues, potential and pitfalls of social media = opinion or recommendation*
2. In an assignment, should you refer to the highlighted sentences by **quoting directly** or **paraphrasing**?
3. Choose an appropriate introductory verb from box b and write out each sentence as a direct quotation or a paraphrase. Add the source references.

E Look at the SWOT analysis of social media for public relations practice on page 106.

1. Complete the *internal* audit section with a list of strengths.
2. Suggest an action that the PR organization could take to overcome each of the identified weaknesses.
3. Write a list of opportunities for the *external* audit.
4. Suggest an action the PR organization could take to minimize each of the threats.

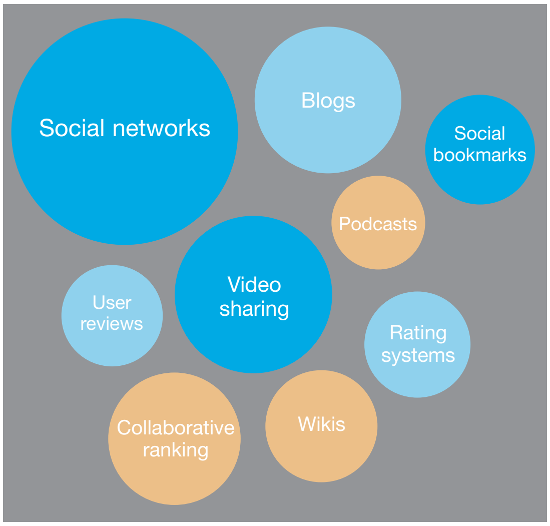
a

asymmetrical blog burnout channel decode dissemination encode interactive media release microblogging podcast pitching receiver social media static HTML wiki

b

accept agree argue assert cite claim concede consider contend describe disagree dispute emphasize illustrate indicate insist note observe point out report show state suggest

Social media



Source: http://eileenll.wordpress.com/2008/11/26/3

A SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis can be used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or business venture. It can also be used as part of a strategic planning process and in message development.

For example, a SWOT analysis could be used by small to medium-sized public relations companies to analyze social media as a tool for public relations practice. Through such a strategic analysis, they could establish where, when and how to get the best use of the new media. This process helps managers to identify objectives, and examine the internal and external factors that are impacting on their ability to meet those objectives. First they carry out an 'external audit' to identify the opportunities and threats of social media compared with those of the traditional media. Secondly, the managers carry out an 'internal audit' of the organization to identify its strengths and weaknesses. If the objectives seem to be generally attainable, they need to assess how they can capitalize on each strength and deal with each weakness.

The results of such audits are presented in a four-box summary of the current strengths and weaknesses of social media, from a public relations perspective. The opportunities and threats which could affect its potential usage in public relations practice are also identified.

Deffren, T. (2008). http://www.pr-squared.com/index.php/2008/06/swot_analysis_for_the_pr_indus

B Social media: Guidelines for use

In January 2009, the CIPR issued updated guidelines for its members on the use of social media. The CIPR points out that as audiences now control the media they consume, [a] PR practitioners must be aware of "the issues, potential and pitfalls of social media". Since pitching to bloggers is commonplace, unsolicited PR e-mails are often regarded as spam. Therefore [b] PR practitioners should ensure that their material is relevant. Openness and transparency were identified as the key elements. [c] Organizations and individuals who fail to disclose full commercial intent when utilizing social media networks "can find themselves criticised publicly". [d] Guidelines on blogging include: respecting copyright and the privacy of others; and avoiding content containing inappropriate (e.g., sexist, racist, homophobic) and abusive language.
[e] Practitioners are advised to abide by the CIPR Code of Conduct and relevant areas of UK law as "There are areas – both legally and in terms of best practice – that are still applicable whether dealing online or offline."

http://www.cipr.co.uk/sites/default/files/Social%20Media%20Guidelines.pdf (January 2009)

12.2 Reading

linking ideas in a text • quoting and paraphrasing

A Discuss the following questions.

1 What does written communication involve?

2 What is the objective of a successful message?

B Survey the text on the opposite page. What will the text be about? Write three questions to which you would like answers.

C Read the text. Does it answer your questions?

D Number the items on the right in order of publication or statement.

E For each paragraph:

1 Identify the topic sentence.

2 Think of a suitable title.

F Look at the underlined words in the text. What do they refer back to?

G Study the highlighted words and phrases.

1 What do they have in common?

2 What linking words or phrases can you use to show:
- addition?
- contrast?
- concession?
- result?
- reason?

3 Write the sentences with the highlighted items again, using other linking words or phrases with similar meanings.

H Read the text on the right. A student has taken some lecture notes, but the quotations and phrases have not been correctly done. Can you spot the mistakes and correct them?

I Write a paragraph for a university lecturer, summarizing the ways PR practitioners can improve communication. Decide whether you should quote or paraphrase the material from the text.

	Seltzer points out that 'shared meaning' assists communication.
	Radical changes were brought about by the development of the world wide web and the Internet.
	Web 3.0 is focused on knowledge.
	By 1997, business e-mail had overtaken regular mail.
l	Although people receive and understand a message, they may still not change or act in accordance with the information.
	Web 2.0 is people-focused.
	Broom & Dozier's co-orientation model of communications suggests that communication is easier if the sender and receiver are in agreement.
	In 2001, Grunig presented a new two-way symmetrical model of public relations.

According to Robinson, as Grunig (2001) explains that communication … is two-way (symmetrical), with the organization and the publics placed in asymmetrical positions at either end, while the middle of the continuum contains a symmetrical win-win zone.

Grunig (2001:25), **quoted in Robinson**, says that when the organization and publics meet in the middle, where there is a two-way win-win zone, they can engage in mixed motive communication.

HADFORD University

Communication and technology

By Jan Robinson

Human communication is a complex process. Basically, it involves a sender, a message, a channel through which the message travels, and a receiver. However, effective communication is difficult to achieve. Oral communication must be encoded into words, transmitted by sound waves and decoded by the receiver into an understanding of the sounds, which can only happen if that person is within hearing distance. For written communication to be understood, the message must be encoded into meaningful typographic characters (e.g., English or some other language), transmitted on a printed page (and/or some other channel, e.g., a computer screen), and decoded by the receiver (assuming that the person understands that language and typographic characters). Individuals and target audiences have to receive the messages, understand them, and retain or remember them. However, as Stamm and Grunig (1977) point out, although people receive and understand a message, they may still not change or act in accordance with the information. Consequently, it can be argued, communication has not occurred. For communication to occur, the messages must have an impact on the receiver's knowledge, attitude or behaviour. In public relations practice, the objective is that the receiver responds to the message. However, some communication theorists argue that public relations mostly involves information dissemination, not communication.

A number of factors impact on communication. Any barrier to communication is referred to as 'noise'. This includes physical barriers, such as other people speaking, and psychological factors, including preconceived ideas or misunderstood meanings due to differences in culture, customs, language or occupation, etc. So, to achieve better communication, public relations practitioners need to reduce noise.

Broom and Dozier's (1990) co-orientation model of communications suggests that the closer the relationship on agreement and accuracy between the sender and receiver, the easier it is to communicate. In other words, if the views of the sender and receiver are similar (i.e., in agreement) and the perceptions of the other person's views are accurate, communication is easier. Seltzer (2006) emphasizes that the nature of the relationship between the parties involved in the communication experience "rests on shared meaning" (p. 13).

Despite the fact that early communications models assumed the direction of communication was one way (asymmetrical), from the sender to the receiver, later theorists have argued that the receiver is not passive. Grunig and Hunt (1984) state that a response to a message can be latent (low involvement), aware or active (high involvement). Grunig developed a number of public relations communication models. In addition, in 2001, he presented a new two-way symmetrical model of public relations. In this model, he illustrated public relations as a continuum, with the organization and the publics placed in asymmetrical positions at either end, while "the middle of the continuum contains a symmetrical win-win zone". Grunig (ibid.) further points out that when the organization and publics meet in the middle, where there is a two-way win-win zone, they "can engage in mixed motive communication" (p. 25). In other words, both parties are actively engaged in communication to negotiate, resolve conflict, and promote mutual understanding and respect.

In the late 1980s, the development of the world wide web and the Internet resulted in radical changes in communication. By 1997, business e-mail had overtaken regular mail. Each development of the web has resulted in improving its functionality. Whereas the world wide web contained non-interactive static HTML pages that limited users to passive viewing of provided information, the focus of Web 2.0 (2003) is open communication, sharing information and user control of website content, e.g., Wikipedia. Components of Web 2.0 include blogs, wikis and web services. This more personal, digital means of communicating has created a challenge to public relations disciplines and skills.

While these changes also present opportunities, they can create possible problems, for example, managing privacy issues, ethical questions relating to web research practices, higher workloads, etc. Whereas Web 2.0 is focused on people, Web 3.0, the trend of the future, is focused on knowledge. It has been referred to as connective intelligence, as the 'semantic web', since it is a project aimed at designing web page data that computers understand. The focus is on using computer systems for searching, aggregating and combining web information without human intervention. Today, many practitioners in the public relations field are being challenged by the explosion in computer-mediated communication and a new range of electronic mass media. As the communication medium constantly changes, it also challenges methods of communication, but the core components, involving a sender, a message, a channel through which the message travels, and a receiver, remain the same.

12.3 Extending skills

research reports: introduction, method, conclusion

A Study the words in the box.

1 Check the pronunciation and grammar.
2 What are their meanings in a research report?

conduct	data	discussion	findings
implication	interview	interviewee	interviewer
limitation	method	questionnaire	random
recommendation	research question	respondent	
results	sample	survey	undertake

B Read the two *Method* paragraphs on the right.

1 Copy them into your notebook. Put the verbs in brackets in the correct form.
2 Identify the original research questions, the research methods and other important information.

C What are the sections of a research report? What order should they go in?

D Read the *Introduction* and *Conclusion* to the report on the opposite page.

1 Why was the report undertaken?
2 What action(s) does the report recommend?
3 What are the elements of a good introduction and conclusion?

Report A: Method

A survey (*conduct*) by the research firm StrategyOne to find out how the Internet (*perceive*) by political assistants as a resource for (*connect*) with local residents and communities. Three hundred and ninety six senior staff members from key capitals in the US and Europe (*interview*). Approximately 34% of the sample (*be*) UK Parliament staff, and 25% (*be*) French Assembly staff.

Source: http://www.edelman.com/Capital_Staffers_Index.pdf

Report B: Method

In order to find out whether multiple repetitions of information about a particular company enhances its credibility, a 30-minute telephone survey (*undertake*) of 4,475 people in 20 countries between November 5 and December 14, 2008. Two different age groups (*investigate*), including 1,075 people aged 25 to 34, and 3,400 people aged 35 to 64.

Source: http://www.edelman.com

12.4 Extending skills

research reports: questionnaires, findings, discussion

A Describe the data in Figures 1 and 2 from the report.

B Look at the first paragraph from the *Findings* section of the report.

1 Complete the spaces with quantity phrases. Put the verbs in the correct tense.
2 Write another paragraph, using Figure 2.

C Look at the notes for the *Discussion* part of the report on the opposite page. Write the discussion paragraph.

D Cover the *Conclusion* section on the opposite page.

1 What should the report writer say in the *Conclusion*? Make some notes.
2 Read the *Conclusion* again and compare.

Report A: Findings

When questioned on methods of communication, a large ______________ of respondents (*say*) they preferred written letters (22%), one-on-one meetings (21%) and telephone calls (21%). The same number of respondents (21%) (*use*) e-mail as their preferred method of communication. Although they (*hear*) about the benefits of social networks, only a fairly small ______________ of respondents preferred to use them. Despite the advantages of blogs and social networking, the ______________ of respondents still (*see*) traditional communication channels as the best method for reaching members.

Report A: Introduction

The global use of social media networks by corporations and organizations is increasing. It is argued that online resources and social media networks are replacing traditional media. It is important to determine the perceived value of the Internet as a tool for policymakers internationally. This report will describe a survey undertaken to find out policymakers' perceptions of the Internet as a tool for connecting with local residents and communities. It will assess the extent of the role which online sources play in informing and shaping the behaviour of staff in key policy positions.

Report A: Conclusion

To conclude, the survey identified the growing importance of digital tools for both communicating with constituents and for constituents reaching their members. Staff are turning to social networks, blogs and microblogs more regularly. However, staff use of online communication channels for personal use far exceeded their use for policy roles. Staff need to make better use of the social media tools they are currently using. For example, training and other means of raising awareness are needed to improve effective usage. If usage continues to be low, or primarily for personal use rather than for work purposes, then the organizations are not succeeding in their aim of connecting with the local community. Many dedicated online sources for policy framing are beginning to emerge. The influence of social media networks is increasing and cannot be overlooked. These need to be included in the mix of tools for communicating about and forming consensus on important policy issues. The better the information is targeted, the better the chances of it being read.

Report A: Findings

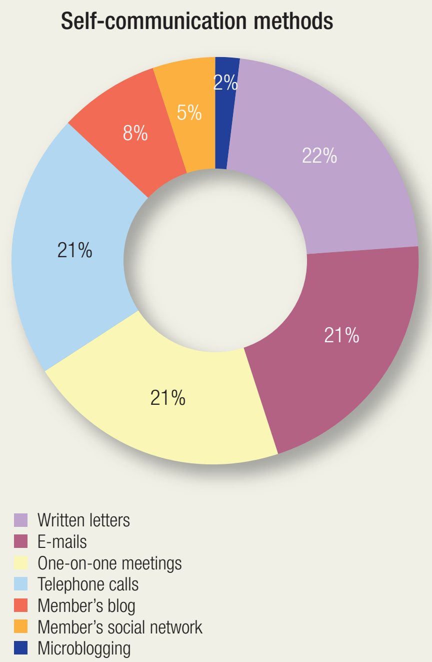


Figure 1: *Preferred communication methods used by senior public affairs staff for reaching members*
(adapted from: http://www.edelman.com/Capital_Staffers_Index.pdf)

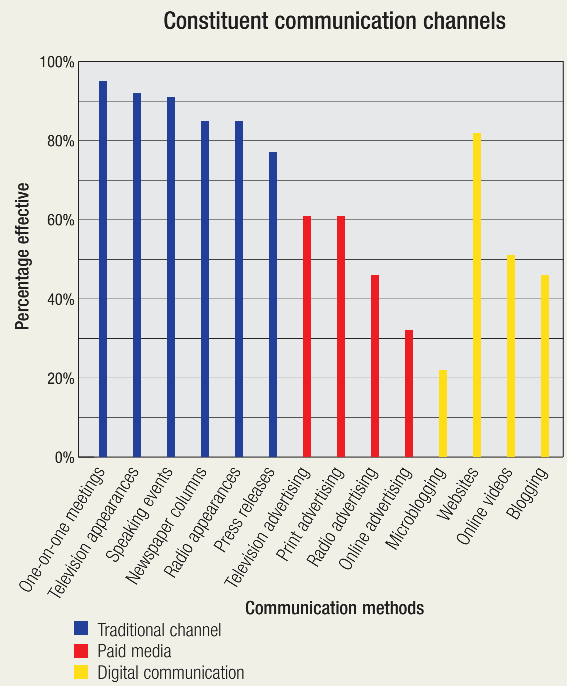


Figure 2: *A comparison of the effectiveness of traditional, digital and paid media as communication channels in public affairs communication*
(adapted from: http://www.edelman.com/Capital_Staffers_Index.pdf)

Discussion

Staff use of traditional and Internet communication methods = mixed

Positives

- social medium use → 60% personal, 96% social policy research

Negatives

- social medium use → 28% to professional colleagues, 21% for reaching constituents

NB: Research limitation: survey sample = senior tenured staffers

Vocabulary bank

Introductory verbs

Choosing the right introductory verb is important. Your choice of introductory verb shows what kind of statement the writer is making.

Seltzer (2006) emphasizes that the nature of the relationship between the parties involved in the communication experience "rests on shared meaning" (p. 13).

Your choice of introductory verb also shows what you think of another writer's ideas. This is an important part of academic work.

Example:

However, as Stamm and Grunig (1997) point out, although people receive and understand a message, they may still not change or act in accordance with the information.

Verb	The writer …
agree	thinks this idea from someone else is true
accept, concede	reluctantly thinks this idea from someone else is true
*consider, emphasize, note, observe, point out, state, suggest**	is giving his/her opinion
argue, assert, claim, contend, insist	is giving an opinion that others may not agree with
cite	is referring to someone else's ideas
disagree, dispute	thinks an idea is wrong
*suggest**	is giving his/her recommendation
describe	is giving a definition/description
illustrate, indicate, show	is explaining, possibly with an example
report	is giving research findings

**suggest* can have two meanings

Linking ideas in a text

Linking words, which join ideas within a sentence or between sentences, convey different meanings.

	Within sentences	Between sentences
Contrast	*but, whereas, while*	*However, In/By contrast, On the other hand*
Concession	*although, despite/in spite of the fact that*	*However, At the same time, Nevertheless, Despite/In spite of* + noun, *Yet*
Result	*so, so that*	*So, As a result, Consequently, Therefore*
Reason	*because, since, as*	*Because of* + noun, *Owing to* + noun, *Due to* + noun

Referring to quantities and group sizes in a report

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">A/An</td><td rowspan="3">overwhelming/large/significant
slight/small/insignificant/tiny</td><td>majority</td><td rowspan="6">(of + noun)</td></tr>
<tr><td>minority</td></tr>
<tr><td>number</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Over</td><td rowspan="2">half
a quarter
a third</td></tr>
<tr><td>More</td><td rowspan="2">than</td></tr>
<tr><td>Less</td><td>x %</td></tr>
</table>

Skills bank

Structuring a research report

A research report is an account of some research which has been undertaken to find out about a situation or a phenomenon, e.g., *What do our customers think of our services? What social media do public relations companies use?*

- Introduction — introduce topic; background information; reasons for research
- Method — research questions; how research was carried out
- Findings/results — answers to research questions
- Discussion — issues arising from findings; limitations of research
- Conclusion — summary of main findings; implications; recommendations; possibilities for further research

Writing introductions and conclusions

Introduction

- Introduce the topic of the report.
- Say why the topic is important.
- Give background information.
- Give an outline of the report plan.

  Note: No substantial information; this belongs in the body of the report.

Conclusion

- Summarize the main points in the report without repeating unnecessarily.
- Make some concluding comments such as likely implications or recommendations.

  Note: No new information; all the main points should be in the body of the report.

Deciding when to quote and when to paraphrase

When referring to sources, you will need to decide whether to quote directly or to paraphrase/summarize.

- **Quote** when the writer's words are special or show a particularly clever use of language. This is often the case with strongly stated *definitions* or *opinions.*
- **Paraphrase/summarize** descriptions and factual information.

Incorporating quotations

- Use an introductory verb.
- Don't forget the quotation marks.
- Make the quote fit the grammar of the sentence.
- Show any missing words with '....'.
- Copy the original words exactly.
- Add emphasis with italics and write '[emphasis added]'.
- Add words which are not in the original but are necessary to fully understand the quotation out of context. Put the extra word(s) in brackets.

Do not quote more than one sentence **within the body** of a paragraph. If you want to quote two or three sentences, put a colon and write the quote as indented text, so that it clearly stands out from the body of your essays.

However, think very carefully before you include a long quote. It is usually better to paraphrase in this case.