



UNIVERSITY OF  
TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION  
Jim Macnamara PhD, FAMI, CPM, FPRIA, FAMEC  
September 2011

U.S.

THINK.CHANGE.DO

# SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

Gaps, risks and opportunities

# CONTENTS

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Existing research on social media governance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>8</b>
> Sampling frame	8
> Methods	8
> Data analysis	9
<b>Key findings</b>	<b>10</b>
> Main types of social media used by organisations	10
> Responsibility for organisation social media strategy and management	10
> Social media knowledge and expertise in organisations	12
> Social media governance in organisations	13
> Control	16
> Objectives for social media communication	17
> Measurement and evaluation	17
> Varying attitudes to social media	17
> Digital/social media consultants	18
<b>Case studies of social media governance</b>	<b>19</b>
> Cultural institutions	19
> NSW Department of Education and Communities	20
> Victorian Department of Justice	20
> Corporate examples – Sun Microsystems and Dell Computer	20
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	
> Some organisations with social media policies or guidelines	24
<b>References</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>The author</b>	<b>28</b>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- > **More than 65 per cent of private and public sector organisations have no specific policies or guidelines** in relation to social media use by employees.
- > **23 per cent of organisations have no social media policy or guidelines for employees at all.**
- > **67 per cent of organisations provide no training** for employees using social media in relation to work.
- > **Almost half (46.7 per cent) of organisations do not monitor social media regularly.** More than 38.4 per cent monitor only in an ad hoc or occasional way and 8.3 per cent do not monitor social media at all. A further eight per cent monitor only specific issues.
- > **36 per cent of organisations do not analyse social media content at all** and a further 22.4 per cent review only quantitative data (e.g. number of views, visits, etc). Only 12.5 per cent of organisations analyse social media qualitatively including identification of issues, messages and tone or sentiment.
- > **This lack of social media governance exposes organisations to significant risks**, including accidental or intentional release of confidential information or trade secrets, public embarrassment through employees commenting inappropriately online or engaging with inappropriate content (e.g. 'flaming', denigrating others, racist or sexist language, cyberbullying, pornography, etc).
- > While a substantial and growing number of organisations are using social media for internal and external communication tactically, **few organisations have a social media strategy** with clear objectives, integration with other public communication and evaluation.
- > **Public relations/corporate communication practitioners have a key role in managing social media**, according to respondents, with marketing and advertising focussed on specific sales-orientated applications and IT/Web services playing a support role.
- > PR/corporate communication practitioners claim 'intermediate' to 'advanced' knowledge of social media, but social media specialists dispute this and argue that **the knowledge level of PR/corporate communication practitioners is generally low.**
- > **Social media specialists recommend an open approach** to employees using social media at work and in relation to work **managed within a sound governance framework.** They say that bans and "clamping down" are unlikely to be effective in restricting comment and risk, but that governance is essential.
- > **Social media governance is identified as comprising** (1) clear **policy** at an organisational level; (2) specific **guidelines** (including dos and don'ts and tips for staff); (3) **training** of staff authorised to comment online about work matters; (4) **monitoring** of social media; and (5) **qualitative content analysis** of social media comment (e.g. messages communicated and tone/sentiment). In addition, **editing services** are useful to help technical staff communicate effectively online (e.g. in writing blogs).
- > Beyond risk management, **employees can be developed as 'ambassadors' and 'evangelists' for organisations and brands** through open approaches, encouragement and a strong governance framework.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

What organisations are doing well	What organisations are not doing well
Identifying potential benefits of two-way interactive capability of social media	Utilising <b>two-way interactive</b> capability (i.e. using social media for research, listening and engagement)
Experimenting with social media	Developing a social media <b>strategy</b>
Avoiding <b>'turf wars'</b> over social media. So far no clear 'owner' of social media has emerged	<b>Integrating</b> social media with other communication, as part of social media strategy
Adopting <b>mostly open</b> approaches for staff to engage in communication through social media	Providing clear <b>policies</b> to guide staff
	Providing specific <b>guidelines</b> on what to do and not do, tips, etc
	<b>Monitoring</b> social media comprehensively
	<b>Analysing</b> social media content qualitatively to identify messages, tone and issues
	Providing <b>editing services</b> (e.g. copyediting and proofing) to help technical staff and managers communicate online (e.g. write blogs)
	<b>Evaluating</b> results of social media use

**Table 1.** Summary of key findings in relation to what organisations are doing well and not doing well in social media.

# INTRODUCTION

The use of social media is being widely cited as enabling of, if not transformative for, public relations as it is conceptualised in Excellence theory in which two-way interaction is key (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002) and contemporary relational and dialogic models (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Ledingham, 2006). For instance, in *New Media and Public Relations*, Vince Hazelton, Jill Harrison-Rexrode and William Kennan claim that public relations is “undergoing a revolution” (2008, p. 91). Deidre Breakenridge (2008) has argued that, in the era of Web 2.0, public relations has evolved to ‘PR 2.0’. In the foreword to Breakenridge’s book, Brian Solis (2008) stated: “Welcome to what just may be the greatest evolution in the history of PR” (para. 1). He claimed that with the shift from PR to PR 2.0 “monologue has given way to dialogue” (para. 19). In the title of their 2009 book, Breakenridge and Solis (2009) claim that Web 2.0 is “putting the public back in public relations”.

Some scholars are more cautious in their assessment of the impact of social media and point to lack of research in this still-emerging field. For instance, in analysing the use of blogs in public relations, Michael Kent (2008) noted that there is “very little scholarly research in communication or public relations about blogging” (p. 34). Australian researchers Karl Herger and Gwyneth Howell (2007) concluded more broadly that “from a public relations perspective, there has been limited investigation and understanding into the nature of cyberspace as a communications medium” (p. 93). A 2009 study by Donald Wright and Michelle Hinson in the US claimed to be “the world’s first extensive examination of how social media are being implemented in public relations” (Wright & Hinson, 2009, p. 1). This and other studies suggest that public relations is at an early stage in adopting interactive Web 2.0-based media referred to as social media. Wright and Hinson concluded that “meaningful gaps exist when measuring differences between what is happening and what should be happening in terms of ... social media” (p.19).

In two of very few qualitative studies of social media use in public relations, Kate Fitch interviewed 10 practitioners in Singapore and Malaysia in 2006 (Fitch, 2009a) and undertook a follow-up study in 2009 based on interviews with three social media practitioners employed by multinational public relations consultancy firms in Singapore (Fitch, 2009b). In her first study, Fitch reported one practitioner saying that “the internet is the Wild West, right, anything goes. There are no rules”. Emphasising the unregulated and largely unmanaged practices of social media use, another said “we’re really writing the rule book as it is. There are no rule books, no textbooks to learn from” (2009a, p. 5).

As recently as mid-2011, international consultancy firm KPMG drew a similar conclusion from a study of social media use by business, saying: “the bottom line is that it’s just new for everybody ... there are no rules, there’s a lot of trial and error, there’s a lot of testing, a lot of learning, and then applying it” (KPMG, 2011, p. 4).

One of the reasons for uncertainty and some confusion surrounding practices in social media is that they are social spaces that traverse both the *private sphere* (Chartier, 1989; Hansson, 2007; Papacharissi, 2010) and the *public sphere* (Habermas, 1989, 2006) which have been viewed as fundamental divisions in Western social, political and economic thinking (Gal, 2005). Increasingly, scholars challenge the separation of a private sphere (individuality, personal relations and home life) and the public sphere of society (communities, politics and work). For instance, Dena Goodman (1992) says that “the public sphere articulated by Habermas is a dimension of the private sphere delineated by Chartier and his collaborators” and she concludes that “the false opposition between them can be collapsed” (p. 2). Contemporary scholars further argue that globalisation, network society (Castells, 1996, 2000) and the open nature of and widespread use of the internet have put paid to any sustainable separation between private and public spheres – although Sonia Livingstone (2005) notes that public and private mean different things

## INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

in different contexts and forms of privacy can exist on the internet. Nevertheless, in her 2011 analysis of relationships and voice, Leslie Baxter proposes a “reworking” of “the false binary of public/private” (2011, p. 8) and such a reworking aids understanding of the overlapping activities in employees’ use of social media.

A second reason for uncertainty and nascent strategies in relation to social media is the widespread recognition of blogs, microblogging sites, social networks and photo and video sharing internet sites as “new media” (Lister, et al., 2009; Flew, 2008; Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002, 2005). While this author has challenged the concept of ‘new media’ as a useful and durable description (Macnamara, 2010a), these media constitute relatively recent and quite substantial changes in the mediaspace that governments and organisations are still adapting to and learning to use.



# EXISTING RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA GOVERNANCE

In this emergent social media environment, a very limited amount of research has been conducted into social media governance, defined by Stephen Fink and Ansgar Zerfass (2010, p. 5) and Zerfass, Fink and Linke (2011, p. 3) as “a formal or informal regulatory framework for the actions of members of the organisation in the social web” (p. 5). More specifically, drawing on extensive social science literature on *governance* (e.g. Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden, 2004), Fink and Zerfass identified social media governance as involving strategies, guidelines for staff, monitoring tools, and a range of support to inform and guide social media use including training (p. 49). In the *European Communication Monitor 2011* produced by the European Association of Communication Directors (EACD) and the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA), Zerfass, Verhoeven, Tench, Moreno and Verčič (2011) refined and confirmed their description of social media governance as comprising:

- > Social media guidelines for communicating in blogs, Twitter, etc;
- > Tools for monitoring stakeholder communication on the social web;
- > Training programs for social media; and
- > Key performance indicators for measuring social web activities (Zerfass et al., 2011, pp. 92–95).

These key elements, as well as the following identification of the role of policies, were used for identifying social media governance in this study.

A study by Jana Hrdinová, Natalie Helbig and Catherine Stollar Peters (2010) for the Center for Technology in Government at the University at Albany, SUNY, reported in relation to social media use in government:

Developing a social media policy can be an important first step for those government agencies considering using social media and can ultimately serve as a key enabler for responsibly and effectively leveraging social media tools. Yet, many governments are struggling with what such a policy should encompass and convey. Not surprisingly, given the emergent nature of social media, relatively few US governments actually have a formalised set of policies to guide their own efforts, as well as for others to draw on or learn from (p. 2).

Hrdinová et al. (2010) differentiated between social media policies and guidelines, describing them as follows:

In general, guidelines provide advice on how to best use social media tools to achieve a desired result, such as eliciting citizen engagement or providing suggestions for creating interesting content. Policies, on the other hand, represent official positions that govern the use of social media by employees in government agencies, such as detailing what constitutes acceptable use or outlining official processes for gaining access to social media sites (p.3).

These researchers found a mixture of ‘policies’ and ‘guidelines’ used by the 32 government communication professionals who they interviewed. Of 26 documents reviewed, they reported 10 were official social media policies and 12 were social media guidelines, with four being a mixture of both. Based on this definition and experience, policies and guidelines can be seen as inter-related and both should be considered as part of governance.

The Brand Science Institute in Germany reported in 2010 that only 11 per cent of companies had social media policies or guidelines in place. Furthermore, 76 per cent do not moderate social media projects accurately, if at all, and 86 per cent “do not have a clue how to handle a social media backlash” such as that suffered by Nestlé over its use of palm oil which resulted in a social media campaign that rebranded its Kit-Kat chocolate bars as “Killer Kat” (Brand Science Institute, 2010).

A similar situation in relation to governance was found by Fink and Zerfass (2010) in their survey of 1,007 companies, government institutions and non-profit organisations in Germany. They found that 90 per cent of organisations had no explicit regulatory

## EXISTING RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA GOVERNANCE (CONTINUED)

framework or governance in place (p. 6). From a follow-up survey involving more than 2,000 PR and corporate communication practitioners across Europe, Zerfass, Tench, Verhoeven, Verčič, & Moreno (2010) reported in *European Communication Monitor 2010* that less than 30 per cent of organisations had social media guidelines, just 28 per cent had tools for monitoring social media, and only 20 per cent had training programs for staff in using social media (p. 79).

Social media governance is an important issue worthy of study, as lack of governance in relation to employees' use of social media exposes organisations to significant risks including:

- > Release of confidential information or trade secrets;
- > Public embarrassment through employees commenting inappropriately online or engaging with inappropriate content (e.g. 'flaming', denigrating others, racist or sexist language, cyberbullying, pornography, etc);
- > Reputation damage through any of the above;
- > Legal actions for defamation or damages (ISACA, 2010, p. 7; Zerfass, Fink & Linke, 2010, p. 6).

There are signs of improvement in social media governance. Research by Zerfass et al. (2011) published in the *European Communication Monitor 2011* found that 40 per cent of PR professionals report the existence of social media policies and/or guidelines in their organisations and around 33 per cent have tools for monitoring social media. However, despite this apparent increase in governance compared with previous studies, it still means that around 60 per cent of organisations admit having no guidelines or policies in place and two-thirds of organisations do not monitor what is said about them and their interests in social media. Zerfass et al. (2011) concluded that "overall, governance structures for social media are still underdeveloped and can be seen to be missing from most communication departments across Europe" (p. 91).

Broadly in line with the findings of Wright and Hinson (2009) in the US, Zerfass et al. (2010) and Zerfass et al. (2011) found that social networks, microblogging sites, video sharing sites and blogs were the main types of social media used and Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were the leading social media sites. The Fink and Zerfass (2010) and Zerfass et al. (2010) European studies also found that PR/corporate communication is the function or unit primarily responsible for social media in organisations – albeit based on self-reporting by this cohort of practitioners.

But what is the situation in Australia and Asia Pacific countries? While no scholarly research could be found on this topic in Australasia, a 2011 KPMG study reported that 42 per cent of Australian businesses are using social media and identified that, looking ahead, "defining policies to control/manage social media use" was the most highly rated priority in businesses, cited by more than 70 per cent of respondents. "Clearly defining a social media strategy" overall was the second most cited priority, followed by measurement of the impact or success of social media use (KPMG, 2011 p. 14). This suggests that similar concerns, gaps and risks exist in Australasia as in Europe in relation to social media governance.

This study set out to identify current organisational practices in relation to social media use and governance in Australasia (Australia, New Zealand and select SE Asian countries) to establish localised understanding and contribute to international knowledge about this important emerging field of public communication practice. Specifically, this study set out to explore the following four research questions:

**RQ1: What social media are mostly used in Australasian organisations?**

**RQ2: Who is primarily responsible for social media in organisations?**

**RQ3: What level of social media knowledge and expertise exists in organisations?**

**RQ4: What governance is in place in organisations in relation to social media?**



# METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken between February and August 2011 in two stages using a mixed method approach. In consultation with Ansgar Zerfass, principal researcher and author of previous German and European studies in relation to social media governance, the first stage was designed to provide comparable data with the international research. Therefore, it used an online survey research instrument based on the European studies. This also provided criterion validity for the quantitative stage of research.

## Sampling frame

The sampling frame for the online survey was professional PR and corporate communication practitioners in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong who engage with social media at least to some extent as part of their work. These three countries and one territory<sup>1</sup> were selected as major developed markets likely to be most comparable with the US and Europe. PR and corporate communication practitioners were selected as respondents based on the finding of Fink and Zerfass (2010) and Zerfass et al. (2010) that PR/communication departments and units are primarily responsible for social media in organisations. Practitioners in this category were identified as accredited members of the following organisations which supported the survey.

A census was conducted among members of the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA), the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ), the Institute of Public Relations of Singapore (IPRS), the Hong Kong PR Professionals Association (HKPRPA), and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) in Australia by gaining permission to access the membership lists of these organisations. An invitation to participate and the link to the online survey, along with reminders, were sent by e-mail and e-newsletters exclusively to members of these professional bodies which maintained the integrity of the sample to a high degree.

## Methods

The survey used a structured questionnaire with 25 closed-end questions, seven of which had an option for open-end comments, and one fully open-end question, administered through SurveyMonkey Professional edition.

The survey yielded 221 responses by the close-off date (31 August), a response rate of just five per cent. This was somewhat disappointing, but as many practitioners are not yet actively involved in or competent with social media as demonstrated in this and other research, this response rate is perhaps not surprising. While not having high statistical reliability, the survey nonetheless provides useful insights into the views and practices of PR practitioners in the Australasian region.

Respondents were well distributed across government, the corporate sector, PR consultancies and non-government organisations, as shown in Figure 1, and also across age groups – albeit most were aged 25–35 (40.7 per cent) or 36–45 (30.3 per cent), with 19 per cent aged 46–55, 13 per cent over 55 and just 4.1 per cent under 25.

In its second stage, this study sought to (a) test the claims of PR practitioners obtained as self-reporting in the survey and (b) identify and explore the views of leaders and ‘experts’ in social media. This involved depth interviews with a purposive sample of 14 social media specialists in Australia (8), Singapore (1), Hong Kong (2) and in regional roles (3). For the purposes of this study, social media specialists were defined as practitioners employed specifically in social/digital media management roles within organisations and specialist consultants in social/digital media. Interviewees included the heads of digital media for several leading companies and several well-known and respected social media consultants.

## METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

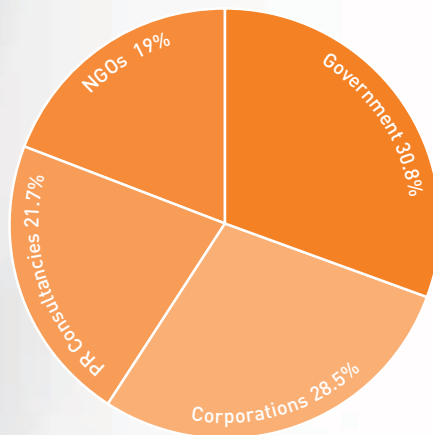


Figure 1. Survey responses distribution (n = 221).

A by-product of the study was that a number of case studies were identified as illustrative of trends and some of these are cited as they further inform future directions and practices.

### Data analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis of survey data was undertaken to produce data tables and charts reporting responses to each question. Interview transcripts were produced from digital recordings and analysed using two levels of coding – *in vivo* (or open coding) to categorise comments into main themes and topics and then *pattern* or *axial* coding to identify predominant views (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Punch, 1998, p. 205). The predominant views of specialists were compared with the generalised views of practitioners as part of validating findings and used to gain deeper insights into current methods of social media use, management and governance.

Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts very quickly reached ‘redundancy criterion’ – also known as information saturation, information redundancy, thematic redundancy or diversity exhaustion (Morrison, Haley, Sheehan & Taylor, 2002, p. 118) – a point where the same information and views recur in each interview. This afforded a high degree of confidence in the qualitative analysis.

Preliminary findings were presented by the author in a paper at the International Communication Association (ICA) annual conference in Boston in May 2011 (Macnamara, 2011), along with findings from Europe presented by Professor Ansgar Zerfass and US research reported by Professor Donald Wright. This afforded an opportunity for comparative analysis and also for feedback and critique to refine the final stages of the study.

# KEY FINDINGS

A number of findings with important implications for senior management as well as PR and corporate communication practitioners emerge from this study. Key findings of quantitative and qualitative analysis are reported together and integrated, as they complement to provide an understanding of how social media use is undertaken and managed – or not managed – in organisations.

## Main types of social media used by organisations

The types of social media most used in Australasia are highly consistent with the US and Europe as reported by Wright and Hinson (2009) and Zerfass et al. (2011)<sup>2</sup>. Australasian organisations mostly use social networks (72.9 per cent); microblogging (55.2 per cent); video sharing (51.1 per cent); blogs (47.5 per cent); photo sharing (23.5 per cent); and wikis (20.4 per cent). A much smaller number use podcasting and only a very small proportion use virtual worlds or vodcasting. Under 'other', a number reported use of applications such as Yammer, Slideshare and "internally created knowledge management platforms".

The specific social media and networks most used are shown in Table 2. This usage is also very consistent with practices in the US and Europe. Other sites not listed in the 'top five' which are shown in the table included Flickr, LinkedIn, Yammer and Google Maps. Also, a number of respondents reported offering interactive social media, networks and communities within their own proprietary Web sites and intranets.

Social media/network	% of Organisations Using
Facebook	73.7
Twitter	54.1
YouTube	52.7
Corporate/organisation blog	46.8
Podcasting (e.g. of speeches)	19

**Table 2.** Social media and networks most used by organisations (n = 221).

## Responsibility for organisation social media strategy and management

Like Fink and Zerfass (2010) and Zerfass et al. (2010), this study found that PR/corporate communication practitioners claim to be primarily responsible for social media in organisations. In Australasia, 57.9 per cent of PR and corporate communication practitioners say they take the lead in advising on, planning, and managing social media in their organisation, compared with just 14 per cent who say marketing staff perform these roles, 6.3 per cent who identify IT/Web managers as responsible, and 5.9 per cent who say specialist digital media departments or agencies are mainly responsible for social media.

However, this finding is contrary to that of a study by Jeremiah Owyang (2010) who reported that 41 per cent of social media programs are managed by marketing and 30 per cent by corporate communication (pp. 14, 16). It is also inconsistent with the findings of a study of corporate blogs by Tom Kelleher (2009) who reported that blogging is "distributed" and performed "by a wide range of people representing an organisation" who "do not think of themselves as public relations people" (p. 185). Another 2009 study reported that PR practitioners mostly use blogs for personal reasons and deploy blogs as a professional communication medium at low levels (Porter, Sweetser & Chung, 2009).

## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

There are two possible explanations for this variation. It may be over-statement in the self-reporting by PR/corporate communication practitioners responding to the online surveys. Owyang's study was based on a mixed methodology involving interviews with 51 social media strategists and analysis of job descriptions, as well as 140 responses to an online survey of "enterprise-class social strategists" (Owyang, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, it relied less on self-reporting and could, on this basis, be more reliable. On the other hand, Owyang's study focussed on US companies. The findings of this research and European studies may signal significant regional differences between the US with a heavy focus on social media for marketing, and Europe and Australasia with a PR and communication focus. Most Australasian social media specialists interviewed confirmed that they observed PR/corporate communication practitioners taking primary responsibility for social media in organisations. This study also confirmed Owyang's finding that only six per cent of organisations are turning to a separate department or unit to manage social media (p. 14), although he pointed to the rise of "social strategists" as a new kind of specialist in organisations (p. 4).

Social media specialists interviewed in Australasia also distinguish between developing and implementing a *social media strategy* and day-to-day tactical and operational practices of social media use. Several of those interviewed stated that few organisations have a strategic approach to social media with clear objectives, integration with other media and communication activities, and evaluation of results. This view is supported by the relatively low levels of organisational knowledge about social media reported next (see Table 3) and the lack of monitoring and media analysis reported under 'Social media governance in organisations' (see Table 6).

In the 2011 study of social media use in Germany, Fink, Zerfass and Linke (2011) reported that "two-thirds of surveyed organisations have social media communication strategies". However, they noted that most of these (43.8 per cent) focus only on individual platforms. "Only two in 10 organisations have strategies that are related to the entire organisation" (p. 6).

A useful clarification that may further explain the contrasting findings of Owyang in the US and Australasian and European studies in relation to who leads in social media management is segregation of *earned media* (free coverage on others' blogs, social networks, etc), *paid media* (Google ads, paid search, etc) and *owned media* (organisations' own blogs and communities). The CEO of a leading Hong Kong PR consultancy investing heavily in social media said PR/corporate communication practitioners "definitely lead in earned media" on social media platforms and "play a key role in owned media". However, she added: "it is likely that marketing or advertising departments lead in relation to paid media and IT/Web services play a key role in owned media". She said 'turf wars' can occur, but "organisations that have a collaborative culture are in a good position to integrate social media and draw on all areas of expertise" (Anon, personal communication, August 26, 2011).

Director of Corporate Communication for the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC)<sup>3</sup> and prominent social media advocate, Tracey Sen, said "the key to PR/corporate communication taking the lead in social media is developing a high level of technical competence in the digital environment". Sen issued the department's communication team with iPads so they could experience and interact with social media in a mobile context and invested in training of staff as well as innovative governance initiatives outlined later. Along with most social/digital media specialists interviewed, she agreed that integration of social media with other corporate and organisational communication is important (Sen, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

### Social media knowledge and expertise in organisations

Three-quarters of PR/corporate communication practitioners (74.2 per cent) claim to have 'intermediate' or 'advanced' knowledge of social media. In contrast, only 14.5 per cent describe themselves as a novice/beginner, while 11.3 per cent leave social media to others in their organisation.

Just over one quarter of senior management (26.2 per cent) reportedly has 'intermediate' or 'advanced' knowledge of social media, compared with 27.1 per cent of senior managers who are novices/beginners and almost 15 per cent who "don't know anything" or "don't have a clue", according to PR/corporate communication practitioners. On the positive side, practitioners believe that 31.7 per cent of senior managers, while leaving social media to others currently, are willing to learn.

Social Media Knowledge	Management %	PR %
Advanced	9.1	32.6
Intermediate	17.2	41.6
Novice / beginner	27.1	14.5
Don't know anything / don't have a clue	14.9	-
Leave it to others, but willing to learn	31.7	11.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

**Table 3.** Organisations' approaches to social media policies and guidelines (n = 221).

However, social media specialists challenged the claimed level of knowledge among PR practitioners, particularly at a strategic level. Most rate the average level of knowledge of social media as "low" or "intermediate". One PR consultancy CEO said of practitioners generally: "Most have low levels of expertise. They are broadly familiar with social media, but most don't have specific knowledge of how to develop a social media strategy or technical expertise to implement" (Anon, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

PR/corporate communication practitioners claim that they are engaged extensively in making recommendations, monitoring, giving advice, producing content and analysing social media, as shown in Table 4.

Role of PR/corporate communication	%
Making recommendations to senior management	75.4
Monitoring social media	70.0
Giving advice on social media	68.6
Writing and distributing social media content	63.3
Analysing social media content	44.9
Writing guidelines on social media use	42.5
Writing guidelines on social media use	42.5
Organising and/or conducting social media training	29.5

**Table 4.** The role of PR/corporate communication practitioners in relation to social media (n = 221).



## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Other findings of this survey suggest that a number of these claims are over-stated. For instance, the lack of social media strategies cited previously, a lack of policies and guidelines on social media use by employees (see Table 5), a lack of monitoring of social media mentions of the organisation (see Table 6), and the lack of training and support provided to staff engaged in social media in most organisations (see Figure 2) are inconsistent with the knowledge and role claims of PR/corporate communication practitioners. The following findings related to the central focus of this study indicate that those who claim to be primarily responsible for social media in organisations are not addressing a number of key management requirements.

### Social media governance in organisations

More than half the organisations surveyed (51.5 per cent) allow only a few approved individuals to comment about the organisation and work-related issues in social media (e.g. organisation bloggers). A further 10.9 per cent authorise only specialist social/digital media consultants to comment and 6.9 per cent of organisations allow only senior management to comment in social media on behalf of the organisation. While, on one hand, this is somewhat restrictive, it means that almost half of the organisations studied (49.5 per cent) permit either everyone or most employees to discuss the organisation and work-related issues in social media. This makes governance all the more important for those organisations, but this study found governance lacking or very limited in most organisations.

An overwhelming majority of Australasian organisations (72.9 per cent) believe that “broad guidelines should be provided” to employees on social media use at work, including key dos and don’ts and, beyond that, organisations should trust their staff. A further 10 per cent believe that “common sense will prevail”, while 3.2 per cent believe that organisations should let staff do as they wish with no guidelines or controls. Overall, only 14 per cent of organisations believe that “strict controls should be placed on who can comment” about work matters in social media.

This indicates a quite open attitude towards social media use in most organisations which is commended by those who advocate Web 2.0 as an open participatory environment (e.g. Jenkins, 2006). Avoidance of very restrictive and rigid approaches is also recommended in a commercial report released during the period of this study by KPMG titled *Social Media: The Voyage of Discovery for Business*. KPMG (2011) recommends that organisations should “guide employee use, rather than developing extensive formal rules that restrict it” (p. 6). Respondents in the KPMG study stated that “clamping down was likely to result in more, rather than less, misuse of social media”. In its key conclusions, the study stated: “Very few employees want to do the wrong thing – if they do, there are probably deeper cultural issues in play” (p. 1).

However, a lack of any substantial governance framework leaves organisations exposed to significant risks as identified by Zerfass, Fink and Linke (2010) and the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA, 2011). Social media specialists interviewed support an open policy, but all argue that this must be backed by a strong governance structure comprised of guidelines, training, and monitoring at a minimum. Some go further and recommend provision of editing services for organisation staff who have specialist expertise but may need help with communication (e.g. engineers, scientists, software programmers, etc).



## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

There are some distinct differences between countries and between private and public sector organisations. While the small number of responses from some countries did not allow statistical comparison, survey and interview data indicated that Singaporean and Hong Kong organisations are stricter in guiding or controlling employees' social media use, while Australian and New Zealand organisations are more liberal and, in some cases, laissez faire. As could be expected, government departments and agencies generally have stricter policies and controls on social media use than private sector organisations. These are increasingly included in Public Service or Civil Service policies.

However, a senior Singapore government communication manager said "we do have guidelines in place ... we're increasingly moving in the right direction, but we're not there yet" (Anon, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

Most organisations allow employees to use social media for personal use during working hours, "with common sense to apply" (44.8 per cent). A further 15 per cent allow personal use of social media during lunch time and breaks. However, 22.2 per cent of organisations have a total ban on personal social media use at work. How this is monitored or enforced is unclear. Few organisations were willing to talk about whether they monitor employees' online behaviour and, as reported later, many organisations do not monitor social media at all.

Examination of the types and forms of policies and guidelines informing social media use in organisations reveals that slightly more than a third (34.8 per cent) of Australasian organisations have specific social media policies and/or guidelines which means, in turn, that almost two-thirds of organisations do not have specific social media policies and/or guidelines. This accords with recent European research findings. For example, Zerfass et al. (2011) found that 40 per cent of PR professionals report the existence of social media policies and/or guidelines in their organisations and, despite an apparent increase in governance compared with previous studies, 60 per cent of European organisations admit having no such policies or guidelines in place.

Organisation Approach	%
Specific social media policy or guidelines	34.8
No social media policy or guidelines at all	22.6
Social media guidelines in general staff policies	20.4
Verbal instructions only	14.0
Occasional management memos/e-mails	5.0
Don't know	3.2
TOTAL	100.0

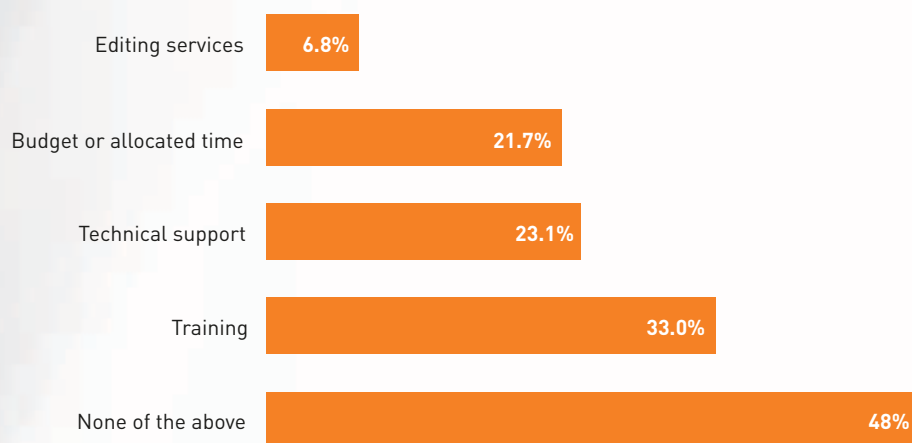
**Table 5.** Organisations' approaches to social media policies and guidelines (n = 221).

Of particular concern, according to social media specialists interviewed, is that almost 23 per cent of organisations have no social media policy or guidelines at all and a further 19 per cent rely on verbal instructions to staff or occasional management memos and e-mails. Such an open, unregulated approach is foolhardy in the view of most social media specialists interviewed.

## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Furthermore, risk is exacerbated because more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of organisations do not provide any training for staff using social media, only 23.1 per cent provide technical support and only 6.8 per cent provide editing services. This lack of management and a governance framework is starkly illustrated in Figure 2 which shows that almost half of all organisations provide none of the governance support recommended in the literature – training, editing services, or technical support to assist staff in using social media appropriately.

These findings are supported by previous research conducted by the author into PR practitioners' use of social media which found that most use social media in rudimentary ways (Macnamara, 2010b) and Wright and Hinson's US study which reported that "gaps exist ... between what is happening and what should be happening in terms of ... social media" (p.19).



**Figure 2.** Support provided to staff in organisations for social media use (n = 221).

Monitoring of social media, another important element of social media governance identified by Zerfass et al. (2011) is also only patchily undertaken in most organisations. As shown in Table 6, almost half of all organisations (46.7 per cent) either do not monitor social media mentions related to them or their products or services at all, or monitor only in an ad hoc or occasional way. Only 20 per cent of organisations monitor all relevant mentions in social media. This is broadly similar to the European finding that only 33 per cent of organisations have tools for monitoring social media (Zerfass et al., 2011) and indicates that many organisations are unaware of what is being said about them and their products or services in social media by employees or others.

Monitoring of social media	%
Monitors in an ad hoc or occasional way	38.4
Monitors all mentions in a selection of social media	25.0
Monitors all mentions in all social media	20.4
Does not monitor social media at all	8.3
Monitors only specific issues in social media	7.9
TOTAL	100.0

**Table 6.** How organisations monitor social media (n = 221).

One social media specialist was adamant "if you don't monitor ... you are crazy" and he emphasised that "even if your company isn't into SM [social media] you are still being talked about elsewhere – not just on your own platforms" (Anon, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

It can be argued that, in addition to monitoring of social media, content analysis also should be undertaken to identify the issues and topics being discussed, sources quoted, and the tone of content – that is, whether it is positive or negative for the organisation. Quick identification of negative social media content seems an obvious part of environmental scanning, issue management and reputation management – core areas of public relations and corporate communication practice. However, this study found that 36 per cent of organisations do not analyse social media content at all and a further 22.4 per cent conduct quantitative analysis only focussed on volume of mentions, visits, views, and other statistical metrics. Thus, 60 per cent or more of organisations do not know whether negative comments are being made about them or their activities online.

All social media specialists interviewed support an open rather than a restrictive approach to staff use of social media. Even Deloitte Digital which has a 30-page global social media policy and has lawyers on its Social Media Committee, advocates an open approach to employees using social media. CEO of Deloitte Digital, Peter Williams, says it comes down to a simple rule: “don’t embarrass us; don’t embarrass yourself; we trust you” (personal communication, September 30, 2011). A number of social media specialists go further than permitting staff to comment about the organisation online and call for organisations to proactively develop staff as “ambassadors” and even “evangelists” for their organisations. They argue that the spontaneously expressed views of staff are usually far more authentic and credible than organisational communication distributed through centrally-controlled departments such as public relations and corporate communication. However, they recommend clear guidelines, thorough training, comprehensive monitoring, and sometimes editing services to situate social media communication within a governance and management framework.

### Control

“Loss of control over messages and image building” was cited as the major risk and challenge in using social media, nominated by 57.9 per cent of practitioners, followed by the difficulty of meeting response time expectations (43.4 per cent) and wasted staff time spent on social media (34.4 per cent). This is consistent with the findings of Fink and Zerfass (2010) in Germany where 66.2 per cent of practitioners rated the greatest risk as “difficulties to control the communication process” and 64.1 per cent cited meeting response time expectations (p. 18). Interestingly, “breaches of security or confidentiality” was rated as a major risk by only 30.3 per cent of Australasian practitioners and very few identified other risks such as reputational damage arising from inappropriate online content or behaviour.

Social media specialists echoed the view that social media could not be controlled and most argued that organisations should not attempt to control content and interaction, as this runs counter to authenticity and dialogue which are hallmarks of social media communication. (One referred to control, but used the term to denote management through sensitive and appropriate engagement.) A number pointed out that corporate and organisational communication have never been able to be controlled because publics interpret information and always remain agentic – a view also expressed in public relations and communication literature by Jim Grunig (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 2010) and Johanna Fawkes and Anne Gregory (2000, p. 122) who have critiqued the “illusion of control” that deludes many PR practitioners as well as senior management.

## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

### Objectives for social media communication

PR and corporate communication practitioners surveyed cited their main reasons for using social media at work as “another channel for marketing and promotion” (82.2 per cent), followed by “two-way engagement with key stakeholders/citizens” (70.3 per cent). This focus is evident in survey respondents’ comments such as “it’s seen as fun and cool, but mostly an inexpensive alternative to other marketing activities” (Anon survey respondent comment, March 25, 2011). Only 40.6 per cent said they use interactive social media for research and listening and just 20.3 per cent use social media for collaboration. On being told this finding, one social media specialist said: “It’s sad ... it’s not just a push tool. This shows [that] people just don’t understand the full benefits of it” (Anon, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

This research indicates that, to a significant extent, Web 2.0 social media and networks continue to be used for one-way information transmission as shown in previous studies by Wright and Hinson (2009) and Macnamara (2010a, 2010b), as well as in a study of politicians’ use of social media during the 2010 Australian federal election (Macnamara & Kenning, 2011).

### Measurement and evaluation

Irrespective of reasons for use and objectives, evaluation of the outcomes of social media use was raised as a concern and unmet challenge by many respondents to the survey and several interviewees. While noting that online media afforded basic quantitative metrics such as the number of visitors, views and downloads – often automatically and at low cost – a number of respondents cited “how to measure ROI [return on investment]” as the “big question”.

One comment which reflected the views of a number of respondents in relation to objectives and measurement was: “[It’s] difficult to measure value of social media – we do it because you can’t not do it rather than because of benefit” (Anon survey respondent comment, March 25, 2011).

### Varying attitudes to social media

The relative ‘newness’ of social media is reflected in varying viewpoints expressed by participants in the study. Some PR and corporate communication practitioners remain quite sceptical and negative towards social media. For instance, one commented: “I have very little interest in social media, as its relevance to our organisation would be highly questionable (and indeed, I think it is highly overrated and long-term future questionable)” (Anon survey respondent, April 26, 2011). Another reported: “The organisation is in the early throes of adopting social media holistically” (Anon survey respondent comment, July 29, 2011). One PR consultant recounted: “Generally speaking, clients view social media as either geeky or for teens and are reluctant to put money into it” (Anon survey respondent comment, April 7, 2011).

However, others revealed enthusiasm and at least anecdotal evidence of results such as one non-government organisation communicator in the mental health field who reported: “We’ve embraced social media as a small NGO and it has been an overwhelmingly positive experience for us” (Anon survey respondent comment, April 7, 2011).

## KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Government departments and agencies are among the most enthusiastic adopters of social media, despite innate conservatism and traditionally restrictive policies in relation to staff making public comment. While implementation varies, a number of public sector organisations are among exemplars identified by social media specialists interviewed. Both the survey and interviews revealed what appeared to be a genuine interest in and commitment to citizen engagement and consultation within the public sector in all countries studied.

### Digital/social media consultants

While few organisations report specialist digital or social media consultants being primarily responsible for social media strategy or implementation in organisations (just 5.9 per cent), a number of such consultants and some in-house PR and corporate communication practitioners see specialist consultants as valuable and necessary in implementing and integrating a social media strategy. Consultants can bring specialist knowledge to an organisation and also work impartially with multiple departments and units to integrate social media communication.

One experienced social media advocate and pioneer in government prepared to be identified, Tracey Sen at the NSW Department of Education and Communities, reported benefits from working with an external digital/social media consultant. However, she warned that “many so-called digital media specialists are quick to jump on the bandwagon of social media”. She also cautioned that even among those who are technically expert in social media, many “don’t have an understanding of their application across a large and complex organisation” (Sen, personal communication, August 24, 2011). This indicates the importance of organisation management taking responsibility for overall social media strategy, while calling on technical skills as needed.

# CASE STUDIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA GOVERNANCE

This study did reveal that, despite an overall gap in public relations and reputation management in relation to social media use by employees, some organisations are pioneering and innovating in this space.

The Social Media Governance web site published by business technology consultant Chris Boudreaux (2011) lists 117 government and non-government organisations worldwide which have established social media policies and/or guidelines for staff, including a number of Australian and New Zealand government agencies, several public relations firms and industry bodies, and large companies. No doubt there are more, but the relatively small number of organisations listed in this researched database illustrates that nascent state of social media governance.

Australian social media specialist, Laurel Papworth, posted a list of around 40 public and private sector organisations with guidelines on employees using social media in her blog in 2009. This list contains many of the same organisations as Boudreaux's database – although some are now out-of-date and some links are broken.

Organisations mentioned in these lists were not studied as part of this project. However, some of the major public and private sector organisations known to have social media policies and/or guidelines are listed, with up-to-date links, in Appendix A for further information. Organisations that were identified and described as exemplars by participants in this study are briefly discussed in the following concluding section.

## Cultural institutions

Some notable examples identified in this study include a group of 11 Commonwealth cultural institutions in Canberra working together as part of the Cultural Management Development Program (CMDP) 2010. Participants in this initiative include:

- > Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies;
- > Australian War Memorial;
- > Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities;
- > National Archives of Australia;
- > National Film and Sound Archive;
- > National Gallery of Australia;
- > National Library of Australia;
- > National Museum of Australia;
- > National Portrait Gallery;
- > Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House;
- > Questacon (Australian War Memorial, 2010).

These cultural institutions have developed a draft set of protocols for Commonwealth government employees that seek to align social media use with the Australian Public Service (APS) Values and the Code of Conduct provided by agencies such as the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), its Ethics Advisory Service and the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), as well as meet the requirements of audit and governance agencies such as the Australian National Audit Office.

A number of these government agencies have their own specific policies and guidelines and some of these continue to be expressed in traditional bureaucratic language and legalese. For instance, the National Library of Australia Social Media Policy issued in December 2010 begins with a discussion of 'compliance requirements' and 'control definitions' and, under 'controls', has a long list of 'musts', 'must nots' and 'should nots'. The policy document is also devoid of graphics, photos or video.

The following examples cited by participants in this study illustrate recent initiatives to communicate with staff in user-friendly, simple and engaging ways.



## CASE STUDIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA GOVERNANCE (CONTINUED)

### NSW Department of Education and Communities

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (2011) has published *Social Media Guidelines* to “promote our employees’ responsible use of social media, in line with the standards set out in the Social Media Policy” (n.p.). The department’s guidelines are surprisingly open and flexible for a government body. While pointing employees to the department’s Code of Conduct, the guidelines go on to provide a number of encouraging tips and suggestions such as:

- > Be aware that ... the lines between your personal and professional lives are blurred in online social networks; as are what might be considered ‘public’ versus ‘private’ boundaries;
- > Be transparent and identify yourself when discussing department-related topics or issues
- > Use discretion;
- > It’s a conversation so be human;
- > Play fair: be polite, be considerate ... don’t be afraid to be yourself but do so respectfully;
- > Admit your mistakes (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2011).

The department’s four-page social media policy and guidelines which are publicly available on the Internet are supported by a longer Social Media and Technology Guide for Staff available on the department’s intranet.

### Department of Justice, Victoria

The Department of Justice in Victoria uses a simple four minutes 20 second video to explain social media and its social media policy which it states is to protect employees and the department. The video, available on YouTube, acknowledges that “almost all employees use social media” and that “the lines between our professional and personal lives are blurring”. The video provides a good example of how social media policies and guidelines can be explained in ways other than ‘heavy’ official printed documents which many staff are likely to ignore or not understand (Department of Justice, Victoria, 2011).

### Corporate examples – Telstra, Sun Microsystems, Dell Computer

Several social media specialists interviewed in this study pointed to Australia’s largest telecommunications company, Telstra, as an exemplar in using social media in an open engaged way, but with a governance framework in place. Telstra launched a social media policy in April 2009 titled *Social Media – Telstra’s 3Rs of Social Media Engagement*. Telstra’s “3Rs” are advocated for staff using social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity. The staff policy states:

We ask that when engaging in social media you be clear about who you are representing, you take responsibility for ensuring that any references to Telstra are factually correct and accurate and do not break confidentiality requirements, and that you show respect for the individuals and communities in which you interact (Telstra, 2009, para. 4) [original emphasis].

## CASE STUDIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA GOVERNANCE (CONTINUED)

In a play on the old education adage of 'reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic' (and/or the Jack Johnson song about 'reduce, re-use, recycle'), Telstra's 3Rs emphasise representation, responsibility and respect. However, the policy goes beyond rhetoric, requiring all staff who wish to speak on behalf of or about Telstra online to undergo training and achieve social media accreditation (Clause 4.2). Telstra's Head of New Media, Mike Hickinbotham, who was instrumental in developing the policy, also has championed Telstra's use of Twitter for customer engagement, its Facebook presence and other social media initiatives.

Other Australian companies have not been so far-sighted – and, ironically, media companies have been among the slowest to adapt to new/social media. In 2009, Fairfax Media's *Australian Financial Review* issued a nine-page Editorial Ethics Policy which, along with some sound advice on ethical issues such as share trading and handling sensitive market information, prohibited staff from using social media and networks for anything other than personal purposes. Freelance journalist and pioneering blogger, Margaret Simons (2009) noted that this policy was introduced "at a time when many journalists are increasingly using Twitter and Facebook to promote and take part in debate on their stories" (para. 3).

Internationally, some corporations are demonstrating sophisticated social media governance approaches. Sun Microsystems (now part of Oracle) was a pioneer in encouraging and empowering employees to use social media, with more than 3,000 employee blogs giving voice to the company interests and views during the early 2000s. Company executives and staff were encouraged to blog about company issues, technologies and products but, rather than being left to their own resources, the corporate communication unit provided guidelines, practical tips, training and support such as editing services (Andy Lark<sup>4</sup>, personal communication, February 10, 2011).

After a shaky start including the online fiasco referred to as 'Dell Hell' (*BuzzMachine*, 2005), Dell Computer has become an exemplar in using social media with initiatives such as *IdeaStorm* which invites customers to contribute ideas to the design of new computers. In August 2010, Dell decided against centralising social media communication and set up a 'social media university' to train employees across all its divisions and business units. As at early 2011, 9,000 Dell employees had taken its basic course in how to use social media and 1,000 have completed all four courses the company requires for employees to become 'certified' social media communicators (PR *Newswire*, 2011, pp. 6–7). Dell's social media policy is available online (See Appendix A).

It is recognised that many other corporations, government departments and agencies and NGOs are active in social media, but the scope of this study and this report does not allow inclusion of all cases.

# CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded from this analysis that most private and public sector organisations now use social media for work-related purposes and PR and corporate communication practitioners have a strong interest in social media. PR and corporate communication practitioners see themselves as increasingly knowledgeable about social media and primarily responsible for social media in their organisation.

However, there are inconsistencies between the claims of PR/corporate communication practitioners and the views of social media specialists – and the latter are supported by empirical findings of this study. Despite the knowledge and role claims of PR and corporate communication practitioners, there is a lack of management and governance in most organisations in relation to social media use by employees. Specifically, almost two-thirds of organisations do not have policies or guidelines to inform staff, very few provide training or support to staff, and almost half carry out no or little monitoring of social media.

Zerfass et al. (2011) concluded that “overall, governance structures for social media are still underdeveloped and can be seen to be missing from most communication departments across Europe” (p. 91). This study found this also to be the case in Australasia. Lack of governance, including lack of policies and guidelines informing social media use by employees, lack of training, and lack of monitoring of social media pose significant security, reputational and legal risks to organisations which should be addressed.

With the rapid growth of user-generated content on the internet which is predominantly produced and distributed through social media and social networks, social media governance has become imperative. IDC has estimated that, in 2010, 70 per cent of the ‘Digital Universe’ was “generated by users – individuals at home, at work, and on the go” (Gantz & Reinsel, 2010, p. 10). In its 2011 study of the internet, IDC updated this to report that “75 per cent of the information in the digital universe is generated by individuals” Even more significantly, from the perspective of organisations, IDC estimated that “enterprises have some liability for 80 per cent of the information in the digital universe at some point in its digital life” (Gantz & Reinsel, 2011, p. 1).

Furthermore, PR and corporate communication practitioners engaged in social media are, to a significant extent, focussed on the wrong issues, such as attempts to control information distribution, brands and reputation instead of decentralising communication to organisational ‘ambassadors’ and ‘evangelists’ cultivated and managed within effective governance frameworks and enabled by support such as training which is the recommendation of social media specialists. Also, while recognising the unique characteristics and capabilities of interactive social media and networks to engage stakeholders and citizens, most PR and corporate communication practitioners see social media as “another marketing and promotion channel” with less focus on two-way engagement, listening and collaboration. Thus, the unique benefits of Web 2.0-based social media and networks are not being fully realised.

An overarching conclusion of this analysis that incorporates a number of the specific findings is that organisations need, but most currently lack, a *social media strategy* – an overall framework of objectives, performance indicators, and management processes to achieve these including training, governance, monitoring and measurement. While Fink, Zerfass and Linke (2011) reported that two-thirds of surveyed organisations have social media communication strategies, they noted that most of these (43.8 per cent) focus only on individual social media platforms or individual business units, with only 20 per cent of organisations having social media strategies that relate to the entire organisation (p. 6). A 2010 report on digital leadership by one of the world’s leading executive search firms, Spencer Stuart, listed as the first of its “10 suggestions for thriving in a digital world ... building a comprehensive digital strategy that is shared broadly and repeatedly across the organisation” (Nadherny et al., 2010, p. 1).

## CONCLUSION (CONTINUED)

The development of social media strategies incorporating policies, guidelines, training of spokespersons to create organisational 'ambassadors' and 'evangelists', monitoring and evaluation of social media activities are major opportunities for PR and corporate communication practitioners to contribute value in their organisations.

PR and corporate communication practitioners should be engaged at the strategic as well as tactical level in social media management, as a broad socially-sensitive approach to strategy is required. Management notions of strategy that privilege the objectives of the organisation at the expense of stakeholders' and societal interests are likely to encounter conflict in the open, two-way, collaborative environment of social media. More inclusive and socially-sensitive notions of strategy are required, such as those proposed by Kirk Hallahan and colleagues (Hallahan, et al., 2007) and more recently by a number of researchers including Priscilla Murphy (2011), Simon Torp (2011) and Jesper Falkheimer and Mats Heide (2011) at the 2011 International Communication Association pre-conference on strategic communication.

There are also opportunities and a need for senior executive management as well as communication practitioners in organisations to engage in the emerging practices of *digital leadership* and *digital citizenship*. Digital leadership incorporates strategic thinking and planning as discussed, as well as effective governance and ethical conduct, while digital citizenship refers to the opportunities for organisations to engage dialogically and responsively in conversations about important social, cultural, political and environmental issues, rather than simply promoting their own interests, products and services. These are important areas for further research.

# APPENDIX A

## Some organisations with social media policies or guidelines

### Public sector

- > Australian Public Service Commission Protocols for Online Participation – <http://www.apsc.gov.au/circulars/circular096.htm>
- > Department of Finance & Deregulation, Canberra *Social Media 101: A Beginner's Guide for Finance Employees* – <http://agimo.govspace.gov.au/files/2010/04/social-media-101.pdf>
- > New Zealand State Services Commission Principles for Interaction with Social Media – <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/guidance-social-media-use>
- > New Zealand State Services Commission Guide to Online Participation – <http://www.e.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/agency-guides/participation/guide-online-participation>
- > Queensland Government Official Use of Social Media Policy (2010) and Official Use of Social Media Guideline – <http://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/qgcio/architectureandstandards/qgea2.0/Pages/Business.aspx>
- > UK Ministry for Defence Online Engagement Guidelines – <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/MediaandPublicCommunicationPublications/OnlineEngagementGuidelines.htm>
- > United States Airforce *New Media and the Airforce* – <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090406-036.pdf>
- > US Navy Command Social Media Handbook – <http://www.slideshare.net/USNavySocialMedia/navy-command-social-media-handbook-web>

### Private sector

- > BBC Editorial Guidelines – Social Networking, Microblogs and other Third Party Websites: Personal use – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/page/guidance-blogs-personal-summary>
- > BBC News Social Media Guidance – [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/14\\_07\\_11\\_news\\_social\\_media\\_guidance.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/14_07_11_news_social_media_guidance.pdf)
- > Cisco Social Media Policy, Guidelines and FAQs – [http://blogs.cisco.com/news/cisco\\_social\\_media\\_guidelines\\_policies\\_and\\_faq/](http://blogs.cisco.com/news/cisco_social_media_guidelines_policies_and_faq/)
- > Coca-Cola Online Social Media Principles – <http://www.viralblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/TCCC-Online-Social-Media-Principles-12-2009.pdf>
- > Daimler AG Social Media Guidelines – [http://www.daimler.com/Projects/c2c/channel/documents/1895107\\_Social\\_Media\\_Guidelines\\_eng\\_Final.pdf](http://www.daimler.com/Projects/c2c/channel/documents/1895107_Social_Media_Guidelines_eng_Final.pdf)
- > Dell Computer Global Social Media Policy – <http://content.dell.com/us/en/corp/d/corp-comm/social-media-policy.aspx?c=us&l=en>
- > IBM Social Computer Guidelines – <http://www.ibm.com/blogs/zz/en/guidelines.html>
- > Intel Social Media Guidelines – <http://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/legal/intel-social-media-guidelines.html>
- > Microsoft Channel 9 – <http://channel9.msdn.com/About/>
- > Oracle Social Media Participation Policy – [http://blogs.oracle.com/otn/entry/the\\_oracle\\_social\\_media\\_partic](http://blogs.oracle.com/otn/entry/the_oracle_social_media_partic)

### Professional

- > Chartered Institute of Public Relations *Social Media Best Practice Guide 2011* – <http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/social-media-guidance>
- > Hill & Knowlton social media principles – <http://www.hillandknowlton.com/principles>
- > Ogilvy PR *Empowering Communicators Via a Social Media Policy* (2010–2011 draft) – <http://blog.ogilvypr.com/2010/02/empowering-communicators-via-a-social-media-policy>
- > Public Relations Institute of Australia Social Media Policy – <http://www.pria.com.au/newsadvocacy/prias-social-media-policy>



# REFERENCES

- Australian War Memorial. (2010). Protocols for social media participation in Commonwealth cultural institutions: An investigation of issues relevant to establishing social media or Web 2.0 guidelines within Commonwealth cultural agencies. Canberra: Author.
- Baxter, L. (2011). *Voicing relationships: A dialogic perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA and London: Sage.
- Bourdreaux, C. (2011). Social media governance: Policy database. Retrieved from <http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies.php>
- Brand Science Institute. (2010). Why social media project fail: A European perspective. Research report, 17 August. Retrieved from [http://www.slideshare.net/Insidebsi/why-social-media-projects-fail-a-european-perspective?from=ss\\_embed](http://www.slideshare.net/Insidebsi/why-social-media-projects-fail-a-european-perspective?from=ss_embed)
- Breakenridge, D. (2008). PR 2.0: *New media, new tools, new audiences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, Pearson Education.
- BuzzMachine. (2005, July 11). Dell hell: Deaf and dumb. Blog post. Retrieved from [http://www.buzzmachine.com/archives/cat\\_dell.html](http://www.buzzmachine.com/archives/cat_dell.html)
- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Castells, M. (2000). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Chartier, R. (Ed.). (1989). *A history of private life: Passions of the renaissance* (A. Goldhammer, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
- Department of Justice, Victoria. (2011). Social media policy. Video. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ws3Bd3QINsk>
- Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2011). Participatory strategic communication: From one- and two-way communication to participatory communication through social media. International Communication Association 2011 pre-conference, 'Strategic communication – A concept at the center of applied communications', Boston, MA, 25 May.
- Fawkes, J., & Gregory, A. (2000). Applying communication theories to the internet. *Journal of Communication Management*, 5(2), 109–124.
- Fink, S., & Zerfass, A. (2010). Social media governance 2010: How companies, the public sector, and NGOs handle the challenge of transparent communication on the internet. Research report. Leipzig, Germany: University of Leipzig and Fink & Fuchs PR. Retrieved from [http://www.ffpr.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF-Dokumente/Social\\_Media\\_Governance\\_2010\\_-\\_Results-final.pdf](http://www.ffpr.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF-Dokumente/Social_Media_Governance_2010_-_Results-final.pdf)
- Fink, S., Zerfass, A., & Linke, A. (2011). Social media governance 2011: Expertise levels, structures and strategies of companies, governmental institutions and non-profit organisations communicating on the social web. Research report. Retrieved from <http://www.ffpr.de/index.php?id=1035>
- Fitch, K. (2009a). Making friends in the wild west: Singaporean public relations practitioners' perceptions of working in social media. *Prism*, 6(2). Retrieved from [http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/global\\_pr.html](http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/global_pr.html)
- Fitch, K. (2009b). The new frontier: Singaporean and Malaysian public relations practitioners' perceptions of new media. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 10, 17–33.
- Flew, T. (2008). *New media: An introduction* (3rd ed.). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Gal, S. (2005). Language ideologies compared: Metaphors and circulations of public and private. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 15(1), 23–37.
- Gantz, J., & Reinsel, D. (2010). The digital universe decade: Are you ready? IDC research report, Framingham, MA, May. Retrieved September 19, 2011 from <http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/idc-digital-universe-are-you-ready.pdf>
- Gantz, J., & Reinsel, D. (2011). Extracting value from chaos. IDC research report IDC research report, Framingham, MA, June. Retrieved September 19, 2011 from Retrieved September 19, 2011 from <http://www.emc.com/collateral/demos/microsites/emc-digital-universe-2011/index.htm>
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Goodman, D. Public sphere and private life: Toward a synthesis of current historiographical approaches to the old regime. *History and Theory*, 31(1), 1–20.
- Grunig, J., & Grunig, L. (2010, October). Public relations excellence 2010. The Third Annual Grunig Lecture Series, Public Relations Society of America [PRSA] Conference, Washington DC. Retrieved from [http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Third\\_Grunig\\_Lecture\\_Transcript.pdf](http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Third_Grunig_Lecture_Transcript.pdf)



## REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

- Grunig, L., Grunig J., & Dozier D. (2002). *Excellent organisations and effective organisations: A study of communication management in three countries*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. (Original work published 1962)
- Habermas, J. (2006). Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research. *Communication Theory*, 16(4), November, 411–426.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication, *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1), 3–35.
- Hansson, M. (2007). *The private sphere: An emotional territory and its agent*. New York: Springer.
- Hazelton, V., Harrison-Rexrode, J., & Keenan, W. (2007). New technologies in the formation of personal and public relations; Social capital and social media. In S. Duhe (Ed.), *New media and public relations* (pp. 91–105). New York: Peter Lang.
- Herger, K., & Howell, G. (2007). The good, the bad and the blogger: The public relations challenge of the noughties. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 8, 91–108.
- Hon, L., & Grunig, J. (1999). Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations. Institute for Public Relations, Gainesville, Florida. Available at <http://www.instituteforpr.org/topics/measuring-relationships>
- Hrdinová, J., Helbig, N., & Peters, C. (2010). Designing social media policy for government: Eight essential elements. Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY), May.
- ISACA [Information Systems Audit and Control Association]. (2011). Social media: Business benefits and security, governance and assurance perspectives. White Paper. Retrieved from <http://www.isaca.org/Knowledge-Center/Research/Pages/White-Papers.aspx>
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kelleher, T. (2009). Conversational voice, communicated commitment, and public relations outcomes in interactive online communication. *Journal of Communication*, 59, 31–40.
- Kent, M. (2008). Critical analysis of blogging in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 34(1), 32–40.
- Kent, M., & Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 28, 21–37.
- KPMG. (2011). *Social media: The voyage of discovery for business*. Research report, July. Sydney: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.kpmg.com/au/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/Pages/social-media-the-voyage-of-discovery-for-business.aspx>
- Ledingham, J. (2006). Relationship management: A general theory of public relations. In C. Botan & V. Hazelton (Eds.), *Public Relations Theory II* (pp. 465–483). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lievrouw, L., & Livingstone, S. (Eds.). (2002). *The handbook of new media*. London: Sage.
- Lievrouw, L., & Livingstone, S. (Eds.). (2005). *The handbook of new media* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Lister, M., Dovey, J., Giddings, S., Grant, I., & Kelly, K. (2009). *New media: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, Oxfordshire, UK and New York: Routledge.
- Livingstone, S. (2005). In defence of privacy: Mediating the public/private boundary at home. London: LSE Research Online. Retrieved from [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/505/1/ch7\\_Intellect05.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/505/1/ch7_Intellect05.pdf)
- Macnamara, J. (2010a). *The 21st century media (r)evolution: Emergent communication practices*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Macnamara, J. (2010b). Public relations and the social: How practitioners are using, or abusing, social media. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 11(1). Retrieved from <http://www.pria.com.au/journal/area?command=record&id=78&cid=14>
- Macnamara, J. (2011). Filling the gap at the centre of social media strategy and management: Qualitative insights from Australasia. Paper presented to the Public Relations Division panel on Social Media Governance, 61st Annual International Communication Association conference, Boston, MA, 29 May.
- Macnamara, J., & Kenning, G. (2011). E-electioneering 2010: Trends in social media use in Australian political communication. *Media International Australia*, 139, 7–22.

## REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

- Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morrison, M., Haley, E., Sheehan, K., & Taylor, R. (2002). *Using qualitative research in advertising*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Murphy, P. (2011). Contextual distortion: Strategic communication vs the networked nature of nearly everything. International Communication Association 2011 pre-conference, 'Strategic communication – A concept at the center of applied communications', Boston, MA, 25 May.
- Nadherny, C., Wade, D., Harper, J., & Duncan, G. (2010). *Talent 3.0: Solving the digital leadership challenge – a global perspective*. Spencer Stuart. Retrieved from <http://www.spencerstuart.com/research/articles/1441/>
- NSW Department of Education and Communities. (2011). Social media guidelines. Sydney: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/technology/communication/socmed\\_guide.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/technology/communication/socmed_guide.pdf)
- Owyang, J. (2010). The career path of the social media strategist. Research report. Retrieved from [http://www.slideshare.net/jeremiah\\_owyang/career-social-strategist](http://www.slideshare.net/jeremiah_owyang/career-social-strategist)
- Papacharissi, Z. (2010). *A private sphere: Democracy in the digital age*. Cambridge, MA: Polity.
- Porter, L., Sweetser, K., & Chung, D. (2009). The blogosphere and public relations: Investigating practitioners' roles and blog use. *Journal of Communication Management*, 13(3), 250–267.
- PR Newswire. (2011). Mastering public relations in social media. White Paper. New York: Author. Retrieved from [http://promotions.prnewswire.com/LP\\_SM102\\_PressRelease\\_20110517.html](http://promotions.prnewswire.com/LP_SM102_PressRelease_20110517.html)
- Punch, K. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage.
- Simons, M. (2009, September 17). No Twitter for AFR staff: New ethics policy. Crikey. Retrieved from <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/contentmakers/2009/09/17/no-twitter-for-the-afr-staff-new-ethics-policy>
- Solis, B. (2008, April 28). PR 2.0: Putting the public back in public relations. @BriansSolis, Blog post. Retrieved from <http://www.briansolis.com/2008/04/pr-20-putting-public-back-in-public/>
- Solis, B., & Breakenbridge, D. (2009). *Putting the public back in public relations: How social media is reinventing the aging business or PR*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press/Pearson Education.
- Telstra. (2009). Social media: Telstra's 3Rs of social media engagement. Corporate policy. Retrieved from <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/download/document/social-media-company-policy-final-150409.pdf?red=/at/m/d/smcpf150409pdf>
- Torp, S. (2011). The strategic turn: On the history and broadening of the strategy concept in communication. International Communication Association 2011 pre-conference, 'Strategic communication – A concept at the center of applied communications', Boston, MA, 25 May.
- Van Kersbergen, K., & van Waarden, F. (2004). Governance as a bridge between disciplines: Cross-disciplinary inspiration regarding shifts in governance and problems of governability, accountability and legitimacy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(2), 143–171.
- Wright, D., & Hinson, M. (2009). Examining how public relations practitioners actually are using social media. *Public Relations Journal*, 3(3), Summer. Public Relations Society of America. Retrieved from [http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/PRJournal/Summer\\_09/](http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/PRJournal/Summer_09/)
- Zerfass, A., Fink, S., & Linke, A. (2011). Social media governance: Regulatory frameworks as drivers of success in online communications. Paper presented at the 14th Annual International Public Relations Research Conference, Miami, Florida, March 9–12.
- Zerfass, A., Tench, R., Verhoeven, P., Verčič, D., & Moreno, A. (2010). Online Communication and social media. *European Communication Monitor 2010*, pp. 74–96.
- Zerfass, A., Verhoeven, P., Tench, R., Moreno, A., & Verčič, D. (2011). Social media: Governance, skills and activities. *European Communication Monitor 2011*, pp. 90–105.

1 Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

2 Zerfass et al. (2011) found that European organisations mostly use social networks (49.8 per cent); online video (39.5 per cent); microblogs (32.5 per cent); blogs (28.3 per cent) and photo sharing (27.9 per cent).

3 Formerly the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET).

4 rosystems and largely responsible for Sun's social media strategy working in concert with former CEO Jonathon Schwartz.

# THE AUTHOR



Jim Macnamara PhD, FAMI, CPM, FPRIA, FAMEC is Professor of Public Communication at the University of Technology Sydney and Co-director of the Australian Centre of Public Communication, positions he took up in 2007 after a 30-year professional career spanning journalism, public relations and media research. He is the author of 12 books including *The 21st Century Media (R)evolution: Emergent Communication Practices* published by Peter Lang, New York in 2010 and *Public Relations Theories, Practices, Critiques* published by Pearson Australia in 2011.

© Copyright, 2011

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

University of Technology Sydney

PO Box 123, Broadway, NSW, 2007, Australia

[www.acpc.uts.edu.au](http://www.acpc.uts.edu.au)

*The author thanks and acknowledges the Australian Centre for Public Communication at the University of Technology Sydney for research assistance funding and Dr Phyllis Sakinofsky who worked as Research Assistant on this project helping collect and analyse interview data.*

