PRSA Public Relations Society of America

TechConnect

A Quarterly Newsletter for the Technology Section

Oct 08

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Technology Section Members,

Thanks to all of you who attended the T3 PR 2008 Conference: Theory, Tactics and Technology for High-Tech Public Relations. We had another great conference this year with about 125 participants!

If you missed George Wright, marketing director, Blendtec, blend an entire broom handle in a blender, you can view it from the **PRSA Technology Section site** or at Doug Simon's **vlog**. Doug also interviewed a number of other speakers at T3 this year, which are posted on both Web sites.

We also have some of the presentations from T3 posted on the **PRSA Web site**. You can log in to access them **here**. Have a great fall season, everyone, and keep an eye on the Section Web site as we launch more Professional Development sessions soon!

Sincerely,
Amy Fisher, APR
Editor
afisher@psbpr.com

PRSA winners up on the big screen at Times Square.

PRSA TechConnect Summary

PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

A Checklist for Establishing a Successful Analyst Relations Program

Renato A. Graziano, RAGMANGUY@att.net

Since the mid-1990s, the practice of industry analyst relations (AR) has played an increasingly important role in marketing for technology companies. The focus of AR is not stock pickers from Merrill Lynch or Goldman Sachs, but reviewers of technology trends and products from firms such as Gartner, Forrester and Yankee.

Analysts function as expert sources on technology questions for general and business media. More importantly from a marketing perspective, several firms have established strong roles consulting with corporations worldwide. Their advice plays a big part in how technology budgets are spent. As a result, these analysts have an active pipeline to both key influencers and decision makers.

According to William Hopkins, founder and CEO of the Knowledge Capital Group, corporate commitment plays a big role in getting an analyst relations program off on the right foot.

Gain Executive Sponsorship — Analyst relations requires commitment of time by top executives in the corporate suite and at the division level. If these groups don't believe there is a bottom-line impact from AR, the program will drift. One or two key "champions" of analyst relations can reduce roadblocks and add momentum.

Set Clear Goals and Objectives — In an environment of increased financial scrutiny, having a solid roadmap can keep AR from falling into the pile for "non-strategic" programs during budget review.

Educate Stakeholders — Successful analyst relations involves deeper and more ongoing interactions between executives and analysts than is common with outreach to business and trade reporters. By taking the effort to explain analyst relations "how" and "why" to stakeholders, greater cooperation will result.

With a self-sustaining corporate culture in place, Hopkins recommends building a foundation for analyst outreach. By starting with these keys, practitioners can ensure that analyst relations provides maximum business and profit impact.

Know the "Buy" Side vs. "Sell" Side Analysts — A big part of AR is separating analyst groups that provide more research to end users of technology (buy side) from those offering reports mostly to industry competitors (sell side). Firms like Gartner, Forrester and Yankee (specifically their telecom group) have strong relationships with end users. Because of their greater influence on sales, more time and resources should be devoted to dealing with this group.

Triage Effectively — In larger corporations, requests by analysts for information, and particularly executive time, may strain organizational resources. In most programs, the top 10 percent (or less) of analysts provide 90 percent of the market impact. It is important to remember this "10/90" rule when setting up briefings, booking executive road shows and placing executives in trade show conferences.

Build a Strong Elevator Pitch — Technology analysts have all the time constraints of traditional media. In addition, pressures for profitability can create brutal travel/meeting schedules that further compress the time analysts can deal with corporate AR types. In this environment, key messages must be streamlined and moved forward in both written and verbal communications. Be able to outline what your company is and does in four or five sentences and keep features lists down to three to five bullets of one sentence each. Remember, your company may be only one of four or five your analyst will talk to in a day.

Get Feedback — Because analysts deal with your competitors and customers each day, they are a vital source of intelligence on general market trends and dynamics of your particular segment. Specifically, analysts can provide great insights on customer issues and priorities and are a useful sounding board throughout the product development process.

Analysts can also provide information on the effectiveness of corporate AR and public relations efforts. Practitioners should get in the habit of ending meetings by asking what the analyst will say about the company the next time they are asked.

Track the Bloggers — In the past few years, bloggers have become a guerrilla source of corporate information and sometimes disinformation. Operating independently of traditional editorial channels, bloggers often bypass corporate public relations and AR channels for information to fill their slice of cyberspace.

Search tools such as Google and Technorati can point to where your industry's bloggers reside on the Internet. The key is finding the online writers that either influence decision makers directly, or are major sources for the analyst community. This requires ongoing detective work: reading, telephone calls, tapping contacts.

In this case, remember the "10/90" rule! The job of AR is to find the very small number of bloggers that actually influence your customers, and work with them. This top group gets special treatment, including interviews with the CEO and tours of facilities. The rest should receive their information like standard trade media — e-mailed releases and interviews with marketing and public relations personnel when needed.

All along, the AR practitioner should be wary of bloggers attemping end-runs around themselves or public relations executives to deal with corporate leaders.

Build a Tight Presentation — As noted earlier, analysts have time constraints that other media may not. An hour session with an analyst should include at least 30 minutes for their feedback. To ensure two-way communication, a presentation should not exceed 15 to 20 slides.

Make the Demo Optional — Unless a product is truly revolutionary, insisting on a demonstration where one is not needed will only serve to put off an analyst.

Say Thank You — An analyst's time is extremely valuable. Show you are grateful when it's given.

With a proper structure in place, analyst relations can provide a tangible boost to corporate marketing. That lift can be a dynamic force in helping both new products and corporate positioning.

Renato A. Graziano *has more than 20 years of experience in public and analyst relations in the technology and telecommunications sectors. He is the founder and managing partner of Graziano Public Relations (www.grazianopr.com).*

William S. Hopkins *is a former Gartner research director with more than 20 years of technology industry experience. Since founding Knowledge Capital Group (www.knowledgecap.com) in 1998, his firm has trained more than 3,000 professionals from 700 corporations in analyst relations.*

Turning the Tables: Virtual Strategy Magazine

Erica Fenik,
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***Carryl Roy**, senior editor at Virtual Strategy Magazine, recently sat down with Erica Fenik of Kulesa Public Relations, to discuss her role, her background and her "PR pet peeves." Read on to find out how to make your pitch "a big gift with a bow" to Virtual Strategy Magazine.*

Erica Fenik: You are currently a senior editor with *Virtual Strategy Magazine*. What does your role entail?
Carryl Roy: Might be an easier question to ask what it doesn't! As an independently owned magazine, we wear a lot of different hats. My main duty, above all else, is to make sure there is content on the page. We are an online-only publication — we receive submissions of contributed articles from industry analysts, as well as companies within the industry who write agnostic pieces for us. My job is really to make sure we have everything in hand in advance of specific months, because we do have a special section every month for editorial calendar items. I also make sure that we're covering the things that are needed in the industry. I need to keep my ear to the ground, to see what's coming up next, address any rumors … and I also do a lot of interviews. In addition, I work with the advertisers to make sure they're satisfied, and execute on that, as well as act as a liaison for our sales folks when they have editorial questions from their customers.

EF: Is the editorial calendar available online?
CR: Actually it isn't — but it will be. We will be releasing our entire calendar for 2009 at the beginning of November, which will be available online. This is the first time we've ever had an editorial calendar. A print publication has to have an editorial calendar, because they have to choose what their cover story is going to be and what the focus is going to be. We never felt that we needed one, until we decided that we wanted to have these specific topics covered and highlighted throughout the year. That just started in June, but I'd be happy to send you the calendar for 2008 — just ask!

EF: How long have you been with *Virtual Strategy Magazine*?
CR: Just over a year. We've grown leaps and bounds and made many changes since I've come on board — not that I can claim credit for all of those, but definitely working as a team, we've been able to make some great strides. We released a new Web site, a redesign, in February. Pretty much since then, every month we've added a new section or feature or aspect to our Web site. And it's been very well received.

EF: Can you tell me how — prior to *Virtual Strategy Magazine* —you got started with technology and writing?
CR: Well, the writing came a lot earlier than the technology did. As a child, I always wanted to be a writer ... I wanted to write young adult novels and children's books. In college, I was a communication major with an emphasis on print journalism. It gave me a chance to work on the newspaper and see how journalism works, because writing for fun and fiction is one thing. Writing in a journalistic style is a completely different animal. There are rules for writing a news article, whereas when you're writing for fun, you can write pretty much whatever you want. So, it's a whole different world.

The technology came as a fluke. I happened to have gotten a job at a technical consultancy about eight years ago. They hired me because I had no experience in tech. The consultancy was a Microsoft partner and they did implementations of Microsoft Exchange and other offerings. My job was to edit every document that went out the door, whether it was a contract or other deliverable — a letter, anything. I was the filter. Nothing left that office without going through me. So I got a chance to really see what it was like for these consultants, who are the folks who have their hands on this technology, and to get my first taste of it. I was hooked, naturally, because I do like to satisfy my "inner nerd."

The writing goes hand in hand with that. Editing is a bit different, but at the same time, if you're not a writer you really can't edit for anything besides spelling. They do go together. For a while I did that, with the consultancies. Because I have a gregarious personality, I also did sales for a while, but my heart is really in the editorial: the media, the journalism, the writing and the covering, which is how I came to *Virtual Strategy Magazine*. It's been a nice merging of the two.

EF: It does seem to be a good fit for you! What are your particular public relations pet peeves? Do you have a public relations horror story you'd like to share?
CR: While I would love to regale you with tales of public relations horror stories, I really don't have too many. The public relations folks that I deal with are very respectful. My one pet peeve is — as I outlined in your first question — I'm very, very busy with all aspects of helping *Virtual Strategy Magazine* be the best publication it can be. So, I may receive an e-mail at nine o'clock in the morning my time and if I don't get to it by four o'clock, I don't need to have gotten three phone calls and a follow-up e-mail wondering why I haven't responded. Obviously, if it's a fire item, I make sure to address it, but otherwise that's my one pet peeve. I promise I've read your e-mail. I promise I'll respond to you in some fashion. Just let me take a breath!

EF: It seems like that's a common concern that I've heard. You appreciate the enthusiasm, but you're human too and can't quite filter everything public relations folks send your way all at once.
CR: Absolutely. Coming off an event, such as VMWorld, where you have sixteen- to twenty-hour days of constant work, socialization, being "on," writing stories, posting stories … it's even harder to look at something that's not necessarily related to the event until you're done with the event. It's a good mutual understanding to have. Again, for the folks that I've dealt with … I've let them know, I've apologized for the delay. You know I'll definitely get back to you. If I know I won't be able to get back to someone promptly, I always try to give him or her a heads-up so they don't have the opportunity to become a pet peeve.

EF: What is your preferred pitch method? What could public relations people do to hand you a pitch that is a "big gift with a bow on top"?
CR: Well, the preferred pitch would really be: "Here's who I am, here's the company I'm representing, and here's why they're a company of note." Don't use a whole lot of marketing and PR-speak. Facts are always best for me. "This company is announcing this type of product, in your industry, and this is why it matters." I've worked in a marketing department — I know what's marketing and what's real. (No offense to marketing folks reading this!) But generally, it just helps if you are very direct, especially in what you are looking for from me. Are you looking for me to take a briefing? Looking for me to write an article? If so, give me a compelling reason why. Not marketing, but real. That's really my preference … for you to just be direct in what you're asking for, rather than glossy.

EF: I recently heard a quote about pitching, suggesting that public relations people review their pitches and remove all adjectives from them. It was basically on the premise that the facts are the interesting part, the facts are what is truly compelling.
CR: Absolutely. I can appreciate the marketing side of it, having worked as a marketing liaison and assisting the director of marketing — you know, in my spare time between editing documents back at the consultancy. So give me the facts. It will make it much more clear-cut and also will help with the fact that everyone's busy. You want to be respectful of the time. So, rather than take up a person's time spinning, say instead: "Here you go. Here is the 'bow' on the facts. Here is your 'gift'."

EF: Thanks so much for taking the time to talk to PRSA members. Hopefully this will help your public relations interactions to continue to be positive ones!
CR: Thank you, and I appreciate all that PR people do to keep me in the loop! I can't be in every loop, all the time, so public relations definitely has a role in my work!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Monitoring 2.0 (with excerpts from "PR 2.0")

Deirdre Breakenridge,
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As a public relations professional, you're considered the brand and message police. And, as an enforcement officer, one of your major functions has always been to create meaningful messages on behalf of your company and its products and services — and then carefully monitor those messages in the market. It's definitely a challenge to control the message after it's released to the public. However, in traditional public relations, you would work through a third party endorser, such as the media, who in some cases might allow you to fact check and review stories. Then, your favorite reading or clipping service would gather your editorial, whether it was in hard copy or an electronic format. Oh, if it were only that simple in 2.0 and the social networking environment.

When PR 2.0 surfaced, there was a buzz about the "dangers" of brands communicating directly to consumers. Conversations take place in Web communities and communications teams would have little, if any, control over what's being said or spread. That's a scary proposition for professionals who want to be the brand/message police. However, these conversations will take place with or without your company speaking directly to the market. If your brand is not joining in the conversation, then the conversation will simply surface about your company in the form of opinions (sometimes uninformed), without a chance for you to engage in the dialogue and comment appropriately.

When brands decide to participate in social media, it's a step in a forward thinking direction. As a communications professional you should be encouraging valuable and meaningful conversations with the confidence that there is PR 2.0 monitoring available to track the threads of conversations and keep your communications team abreast of the positive or negative perceptions in the market. That means monitoring well beyond the clipping service and even digital clips of online publications. You are now ready to evaluate real conversations between real people in the blogosphere, in real time.

The industry has made great strides in gathering content from blogs, so that brands know what conversations are taking place daily. However, it's up to those brands to decide if they want to do something with the information and what resources they will designate to the monitoring process. I interviewed many professionals for my book, "PR 2.0, New Media, New Tools, New Audiences," and feel that Natural Language Process sets us in the right monitoring direction. I believe PR 2.0 monitoring is ready for prime time. In my book, I discussed how most blog monitoring is done electronically through advanced artificial intelligence; and the key term here is Natural Language Process. All that really means is that the computer is reading the story more like a human being than like a computer and, as a result, you can move beyond just gross impressions and a reading service that provides you with a bunch of editorial clips.

Today, through the Natural Language Process, you can evaluate the tonality of a story, whether it's positive, negative or neutral. The computer is going to be scoring the same way day in and day out. It's going to be doing it in an unbiased fashion. The computer will do it more quickly than you could do it as a human being. No more waiting two weeks for the reading service to send your clips by mail. With the Natural Language Process, you can differentiate between a negative subject and a negative tone, which really allows you to analyze how the market perceives your brand. The best part of advanced 2.0 monitoring is that you react quickly to the intelligence and focus your communications on squashing any negative comments that can be damaging to a brand.

The traditional clip book served a purpose for quite a long time. Believe it or not, I still have clients who want their monthly or quarterly clips. However, now many want digital books. There are many service providers who monitor and compile information for brands. For instance, I interviewed PR Newswire in my book. Its service, eWatch, is a system of tracking key words that the company provides on hundreds of thousands of articles each and every day. Key words usually are the company's name, a product name or service, and key spokespeople.

Of course, the tracking goes well beyond gross impressions, which was as in-depth as the interest went pre-Web 2.0. The Web universe is so sophisticated now that it requires you to go beyond the pure number or mentions. A great example is the deal that PR Newswire signed with Technorati (www.technorati.com), one of the leaders in blog tracking, to provide more complete monitoring for the company's clients. Technorati provides PR Newswire customers with the ability to track online conversations triggered by news releases. Today, both B2C and B2B companies are realizing the importance of monitoring conversations and can rely on blog monitoring to know how their brands are being perceived in the market.

I interviewed Mark Vangel, a research manager at Delahaye, and he shared some of the challenges and solutions with 2.0 monitoring. I asked Vangel a question regarding how quickly companies use the information they receive from 2.0 monitoring. He shared his insight in the following response:

"It depends. There were times when we did daily reports. We've analyzed blogs or discussion forums for certain issues and for tone, and we've produced a report every day. That's not always the case. In fact, that's more for a crisis situation. In one instance, there was a rumor spreading about one of our clients, so they wanted daily information about where it appeared. For something like the long wait at Starbucks, it's definitely communication they'd want to keep on the radar — weekly or monthly anyway. As far as how frequently we provide reports, for traditional media reports we often provide quarterly reports. That obviously would be much too long a time to wait for customers who are monitoring blogs. We have self-service portals, as well, where clients can scan information themselves.

We have had clients who have acted online to clear up misinformation or point individuals to some background data. Offline changes, such as changing product features or company processes, often take longer. With the Starbucks example, the company can dispatch people to stores, to key locations, and monitor the wait times. They can also survey the public, or place comment cards in their stores, although those might take a little too long to yield answers. If they're wondering, 'Is what I'm seeing in the blogs representative of what the public feels?' they can conduct a survey or other research methods. With awareness, there's an opportunity for a company to fix the problem or to change a product or service to make it better. Without it, you might be blindsided as criticism grows."

Of course the question looms: How is monitoring going to change in the next ten years? As companies become more involved in monitoring and measurement (we see this already with smaller companies outsourcing these tasks as a result of low cost, effective options), they will want more complex, technologically advanced products. These products must be able to deliver the data instantaneously. Lastly, because the accountability model in public relations has changed over the years, having those 25 clips in a clip book isn't good enough. We need monitoring that meets the challenges of a Web 2.0 world and, thankfully, today's public relations monitoring is changing with the times.

Deirdre Breakenridge *is president and director of communications at PFS Marketwyse, a marketing and public relations company whose clients include Catalent, JVC, Michael C. Fina and RCN Metro. An adjunct professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University, she is author of "Cyberbranding and The New PR Toolkit." She has 20 years of experience as a public relations practitioner. For more information about Deirdre Breakenridge, go to* ***www.deirdrebreakenridge.com*** *or* ***www.pfs-marketwyse.com.*** *For more information, or to purchase "PR.20," visit* ***Amazon*** *or* ***Barnes and Noble****.*

Annual T3 Technology Conference: A Bit Hit in the Big Apple

"I'm new to 'new media' so it was a good intro to the tools out there to communicate with readers." — Evaluation from a T3 attendee

The PRSA Technology Section's annual public relations gathering — "T3: Theory, Tactics and Technology for High-Tech Public Relations" — again made its mark on the technology public relations community with an intellectually stimulating, fully engaging and fun conference held in New York City.

More than 125 attendees from corporate, nonprofit, government and agency organizations participated, representing the international (Lagos, Nigeria; Ottawa, Canada) and domestic (California, Colorado, Kentucky, South and North Carolina, New Hampshire and more) appetite for information on the latest trends in technology communications. The all-day event, held at the headquarters of the nonprofit Lighthouse organization, kicked off with a somber reminder of the day's infamous events on Sept. 11, 2001.

Keynoter Paul Gillin, a veteran technology journalist (*Computerworld, Tech Target*) and author of "The New Influencers" (his next book due out fall 2008 is called "Secrets of Social Media Marketing"), delivered a riveting talk on navigating the new world of technology media. His talk, which underscored how the power has shifted from traditional media to consumers and customers of a brand, was chock full of anecdotal examples of the new media world order. His talk clearly resonated with the audience — our post event survey revealed that 93 percent rated Paul's presentation as "good" or "excellent."

A second keynote session, "It's not Web 2.0, It's Not Web 3.0, It's LIFE," featuring Peter Shankman, author of "Can We Do That? PR Stunts," CEO of The Geek Factory and developer of Help a Reporter Out (HARO), lit up the audience. Peter's anecdotal tales of dating, traveling, taking on the establishment and leveraging new media tools to make things happen or hold organizations accountable often left the group in stitches. There wasn't a sacred cow in the audience that didn't relate — or squirm — during Peter's reality storytelling and embedded lessons.

"Too much good stuff. Would have attended both tracks if possible." — Evaluation from a T3 attendee

The morning's "mixer" event was literally just that. George Wright, marketing director for appliance manufacturer Blendtec, discussed how his organization took an internal blender test and went "social media" with it, videotaping the result of "blending" all sorts of things — iPhones, glow sticks, cell phones and even cans of Coke — to demonstrate how powerful and sturdy their blenders really are. The videos, uploaded to YouTube and BlendTec's own site, have attracted an audience in the hundreds of millions of viewings and are credited with stirring up exponentially explosive sales for the previously relatively unknown company. The coup de grace was the "blending" of a broom handle for the T3 audience. We're not making this stuff up!

"It was great to find out what journalists look for in story ideas and what they expect from public relations people." — Evaluation from a T3 attendee

During lunch, we presented the 11th annual Awards for Excellence in Technology Journalism. (See article in this issue.) Photos of the winners accepting their trophy were transmitted to Times Square for display on a giant outdoor display courtesy of sponsor PR Newswire.

The afternoon featured breakout sessions on an array of topics designed to teach or enhance skills or interact with the media. The sessions were "Meet the Media: Leading Tech Bloggers," "Igniting PR with Video Tools," "Methodology and Measurement," "Tech PR & Social Media: New Skills & Opportunities for PR Pros," "Meet the Media: Leading Tech Magazine Editors," "Meet the Media: Leading Tech Reporters at National Dailies," "Return on Participation: Measuring Social Media

Strategies in Tech PR," "Stitching It Together: An Integrated Look at Technology PR" and "Micro Media PR: Best Practices in Leveraging Microblogs for PR."

"I really appreciated hearing that social media isn't always right for everyone. I've been told nothing but that if you're not blogging, etc., you're going to be left behind. I didn't feel that any kind of social media would apply to my job, but it was nice to hear it from the pros." — Evaluation from a T3 attendee

A wine and cheese reception capped the day, allowing for the tech elite and new technorati to share a "byte" and engage in old-fashioned social (media) networking. Six sponsors came forward to support the entire event, despite economic storm clouds. Thanks to Radian6, the event's gold sponsor; PR Sourcecode and PR Newswire/MultiVu, both silver sponsors; DS Simon Productions, technology sponsor; and Orbius and BusinessWire, sponsors.

Many thanks to conference co-chairs Sandra Fathi, Affect Strategies, and Henry Feintuch, KCSA Strategic Communications, as well as other members of the Technology Section executive committee including Joel Strasser, APR, Fellow PRSA (journalism awards), Dawn Yankeelov, Glen Turpin, Rich Teplitsky, Siobhan MacDermott, Mark Meudt, Richard Lee Goldberg, Amy Fisher, APR, Patrick McLaughlin, APR, Kerry McClenahan, Shelli Ryan, Allan Schoenberg, APR and Glynn Young, APR, Fellow PRSA. PRSA professional staffers Melissa Yahre, Don Bill, Denise Mojica and James Abel also provided tremendous help and support.

A sign of the day's success? Some 40-50 conference attendees tweeted throughout the day, sending out some 300-400 tweets that were read and followed by some 30,000 recipients. With positive feedback — and some constructive suggestions on how to make the conference work with greater digital precision — conference planning is already underway with a target of June 2009 in New York City. Volunteers will be sought for committee activation shortly.

EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY JOURNALISM WINNERS

This is the 11th year that the PRSA Technology Section has hosted our competition for Excellence in Technology Journalism. The rules are fairly simple. Journalists, or their representatives, are asked to submit exemplary pieces of writing published during the previous calendar year — in this case, during 2007.

Entries were submitted in two categories — general and business media, and the technical/trade/professional. In all, 77 journalists — 28 general and business, and 49 trade/technical/professional — were judged by a panel of their peers, all 39 of whom are editors, journalists and writers themselves.

The judges were asked to score each entry on the basis of three criteria: **1)** the importance and significance of the subject matter in terms of innovation; **2)** the value of the information in the article to the reader; and **3)** the clarity of communication and the explanation of the technical concepts for the writer's target audience.

Two entries stood out, earning a grand prize of $1,000 each, plus a first place crystal trophy for their personal office, and duplicate trophy for permanent display at their corporate or publisher's office. The awards were presented at the T3PR Conference 2008, held on Sept. 11, 2008, in New York, by Joel A. Strasser, APR, Fellow PRSA.

Steven Levy, Newsweek
http://www.newsweek.com/id/70983

Our winner in the business/general media category is Steven Levy, senior editor of *Newsweek* magazine. His article, "The Future of Reading," published as the cover story in *Newsweek*'s Nov. 27, 2007, issue, results from his experience as the first journalist to get his hands on Amazon's newest technology marvel, the Kindle, which he likens to the first improvements on "The Book."

Consider, as Steven says, that the book is so perfect an invention that it can't be improved upon. It is instant-on and requires no batteries. It's a more reliable storage device than a hard disk, and it sports a killer user interface. No start-up guide, instruction manual or "For Dummies" guide will ever be needed. But Steven recognized that this was exactly that, a major improvement on "The Book." Working directly with Jeff Bezos, he tried to put it into words:

"Quoting Bezos, he notes that 'we have to look for things that books can't do.' It must project an aura of bookishness; it should be less of a whizzy gizmo than an austere vessel of culture. Therefore, the Kindle, named to evoke the crackling ignition of knowledge, has the dimensions of a paperback, with a tapering of width that emulates the bulge toward a book's binding. Unlike a laptop, it does not run hot or make intrusive beeps. A reading device must be sharp and clear, so the Kindle's six-inch screen posts readable pages."

Then come the features that your Mom's copy of "Gone With the Wind" can't match. You can change font size; and aging baby boomers will appreciate that every book is instantly a large-type edition. The handheld device can hold several bookshelves worth of books — 200 onboard, hundreds more on a memory card, plus an unlimited number at Amazon.com. The Kindle lets you search within a book for a word or phrase. The battery has to last — the Kindle gets 30 hours of reading on a charge, then recharges in just two hours. The Kindle's real breakthrough includes a feature that predecessors like the Sony Reader never offered — wireless connectivity. It works anywhere, not just in WiFi hot-spots.

Steven's *Newsweek* story takes both technology and physiology a lot further than you would think, remarking that there are 550 years of technological development in the book. His story includes uses words and pictures to show the analogy between the human and the electronic process that converts printed and pictorial screen images to data that translates to thoughts and ideas. Through his superior technology journalism, Steven proved to our judges that his vivid descriptions of the Kindle, as a device that can subsume consciousness in the same way as a print book, can take the reader down the rabbit hole of involvement and understanding just as the first "always-on" book.

PRSA **Rita Pyrillis, FedTech**
http://fedtechmagazine.com/article.asp?item_id=277

In this day and age, it's rare to see technology and cultural hurdles overcome through a major IT initiative for and among American Indians. Our judges found the story of a unique networking approach among the Navajos in New Mexico sufficiently inspiring to merit this year's award in trade/technical/professional publications.

Our winning article is temptingly titled "IT Across the Navajo Nation," which appeared in the May 2007 issue of *FedTech* magazine, published by The Magazine Group, and written by Rita Pyrillis.

Rita's story begins with a Navajo purchase of computers in 2000 with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and efforts to teach the tribal elders in New Mexico how to use the new machines.

Navajo librarian Jeannie Whitehorse had the tough job of trying to sell the use of computers to her tribal elders. While this may sound a bit like teaching your aging boss about the merits of computing, or getting your grandchildren to bring you up to speed on e-mail, it wasn't nearly that easy.

For starters, there are no Navajo words for computer, keyboard or Internet. Many Navajo speak no English and live in remote areas without telephones, electricity or running water. Navajo is the primary language for 75 percent of all Navajo, a nation larger than 10 of our 50 United States.

Jeannie wasn't getting anywhere until she started teaching a group of Navajo women how to design their rugs — an established Navajo art form — using an online paint program. Only then did things start to click.

After that, they were hooked and those women began to spread the word. Classes grew from three or four students to nearly 18 at each of the 100 centers or chapter houses. Jeannie finally got the hint that technology without cultural relevance was meaningless to Navajo elders.

Today, Jeannie logs hundreds of miles each week traveling between chapter houses to teach computer skills and prepare residents for the next technology wave — and this one is a tsunami.

Now, the Navajo Nation is building the largest and most complex wireless mesh network in American Indian country, and possibly the entire country. In Rita's landmark article, she tells how today, the Navajo see limitless opportunities for economic development, telemedicine, distance learning, research, emergency services, language and cultural preservation — all possible through a network designed, owned and operated by their own people.

Thanks to our sponsor!

Finally, PRSA would like to acknowledge the sponsorship of PR Newswire, represented at the awards banquet by Andrew Meranus. We appreciate the support of PR Newswire for our annual Excellence in Technology Journalism awards.

PRSA Excellence in Technology Journalism Award winners are shown following acceptance of this year's awards, including (l to r) Richard Creighton, publisher, FedTech magazine; Joel Strasser,APR, Fellow PRSA, Journalism awards chairman, and founder of PRSA's Technology Section, and president, Joel Strasser & Associates, Brick, N.J.; Steven Levy, senior editor, Newsweek magazine; and David Jefferson, Los Angeles Bureau Chief and West Coast senior editor, Newsweek.

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PRSA **Susan Garcia,**
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When Matt Nagel isn't busy cheering on the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets, he puts his professional cap on and becomes the day-to-day spokesperson for the academic side of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Matt began working in public relations at Georgia Tech in late 2004 as a media relations specialist before being promoted to spokesperson in 2007. Now he handles media relations, media training, identifying public relations opportunities, and maintaining the school's online content. He also tackles creating and implementing strategic communication plans for units across the Georgia Tech campus.

While pursuing his undergraduate degree at the University of Toledo, Matt was a member of PRSSA. He's been in the field of communications for his entire 12-year career, having worked in local television, both behind and in front of the camera. He moved on to public relations at Ruane Communications in Roswell, Ga., before settling at his current home as the media relations specialist at Georgia Tech. It was here that Matt joined the Atlanta PRSA Chapter in early 2004.

"I enjoyed being a small town television reporter because it allowed for a lot of freedom that I wouldn't have had in a larger market," Matt says. His production experience comes from WTVD in Raleigh, N.C., while his reporting experience was at WKAG in Hopkinsville, Ky. "If I could work normal hours and cover the stories I wanted, then I'd love to work as a television reporter again," Matt says of his career in broadcasting.

PRSA has been an influence not only in Matt's professional life, but in his personal life as well. Matt and his wife Teri met at a PRSA event in Atlanta and were married in September of 2006. They enjoy spending time with friends, family and their one-year-old lab. A self-proclaimed "sports nut," Matt also spends his time rooting for Toledo, Michigan and Georgia Tech in college football.

Matt's contentment in the communications industry shines through in his enthusiasm while giving advice on the public relations career path. "Surround yourself with the best people you can. If you have the right people around you, you'll do great work and enjoy the time you spend at the office."

Erica Fenik, Account Executive, Kulesa Public Relations

PRSA **Abram Shanedling,**
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Like many others in the field, Erica Fenik didn't always envision a job in public relations but she did know that something with technology or communications might be on her horizon. Maybe it was because her dad was a technology analyst, or maybe it was because her aunt led marketing teams for various technology companies. Either way, Erica had the foundation for what would prove to be an exciting and fulfilling career.

For the last year and a half, Erica has worked at Kulesa Public Relations — an agency recognized by the *Silicon Valley Business Journal* as one of the top 10 public relations firms in the area. As an account executive, Erica is responsible for extensive media relations, technology research, writing press releases and developing a wide array of creative content for her many clients. Erica says the most exciting part of her job is learning about the different companies and their technological innovations, which for Erica can run the gamut from data security to software development to systems management.

But working at a successful boutique public relations firm was not always the goal for Erica. Majoring in both business management and animal science at the University of California-Davis, Erica once planned to be a veterinarian — something that may have arisen from her deep love for horses.

Erica grew up riding and working with horses from a young age. At college, she rode on the school's equestrian team and also worked as a student veterinary technician. She even used her veterinary talents and business education to found a start-up to provide alternative therapy products for injured racehorses.

Today, when she's not engrossed in her job at Kulesa, Erica volunteers at local horse shows in the Bay Area, working with various trainers and teaching horseback riding to kids. "It's just a way for me to keep in touch with horses and volunteer my time for a real passion of mine," Erica says.

A PRSA member of the Silicon Valley and San Francisco Chapters, Erica credits a small fraction of her communication skills to an addiction to Scrabble — a game she avidly plays both online and with friends and family. "It really helps a lot with communication because it expands your vocabulary and makes you think on your feet," she says. "It's a great game to start kids on early to help them become better communicators."

Erica says the best piece of advice she ever received was from her father, "At the end of the day, it's only money. You have to love what you do in order to be happy." For Erica, her work at Kulesa is a "dream job" that fuels her love of technology and gives her the freedom to fulfill her equestrian dreams.

PRSA AND TECH SECTION NEWS AND BUSINESS

Make Your Connections and Learn With Technology Professionals

The PRSA Technology Section will be in Detroit ... will you? Join us in Motown for the **PRSA 2008 International Conference**, October 25–28. Not only will you hear about strategies and techniques for the hottest public relations topics such as social media, emerging technologies, green marketing, reputation, branding and integrated communications, you will also be able to take advantage of special programming and networking for technology public relations professionals, including:

Technology Section Workshop:
Digging Into New Tech Topics: Where and How to Maximize Web Research
Monday, October 27, 3:30–4:45 p.m.

Dawn Yankeelov, president, ASPectx
David Gordon Schmidt, vice president, public relations services, Smith-Winchester

Whether you're examining a new category for a client pitch or the focus has simply changed, you need information, and in short order. Google is an obvious choice, but there are other facets to Google and today's search tools that offer the latest in drilldown. Get a revealing look at the latest helpmates on the Web that help you maximize your research time. Also learn where to sift and sort the messages in blogs, vcasts, commentary, forums and audio podcasts.

Plus:
- True Tales From the Social Media Measurement Trenches — Using Research to Learn and Improve Your Programs
  Sunday, October 26, 2:30–3:45 p.m.
- Bringing a Corporate Blog to Life, Gaining Traction and Communicating Directly with the Consumer
  Sunday, October 26, 4:15–5:30 p.m.
- What Every PR Professional Must Know About Copyright Compliance in the Digital World
  Monday, October 27, 10–11:15 a.m.
- How to Derive ROI for Interactive Communications
  Monday, October 27, 10–11:15 a.m.
- Master Class: The Strategist and Social Media
  Monday, October 27, 1:45–4:45 p.m.
- e-Bay Innovation: Shaping the Future of Commerce
  Monday, October 27, 3:30–4:45 p.m.
- PR on Steroids: Using Technology to Pump up Your PR Power
  Monday, October 27, 3:30–4:45 p.m.
- The Great Mash Up: Digital New Media and the New Communications Landscape
  Tuesday, October 28, 9:45–11 a.m.

Technology Networking Event
OnStar Center Tour & Dinner at Tom's Oyster Bar
Monday, October 27, 5:30 p.m.–9 p.m.
Spend the evening with colleagues at GM's OnStar Command Center and take a peek inside the sprawling facility where the Center monitors performance of its OnStar call centers, critical communications and operating system infrastructures, and provides comprehensive information based on severe weather conditions and national news. Afterward, enjoy dinner at Tom's Oyster Bar and order up some of the best fresh fish, surf and turf, and seafood in southwestern Michigan from a menu that has received high praise from restaurant critics and customers. The restaurant also features an extensive wine selection as well as popular American and imported microbrew beers. Tickets are $55 per person.

Swing by the Professional Interest Sections Lounge!
Network and relax with colleagues over refreshments. Connect with a nationwide network of public relations professionals in your specific field of interest. Learn about all of the great benefits and programs Professional Interest Sections have to offer, including 2009 Spring Conferences. Enter daily raffles for a chance to win exciting prizes. Be sure to join us!

Lounge Times:
Sunday, October 26, 2–5:30 p.m.
Monday, October 27, 9–11:45 a.m.; 1:15–5 p.m.
Tuesday, October 28, 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

For complete details on all of these events and to register, please visit the PRSA 2008 International Conference Web site.

P.S. Do you have colleagues who might be interested in attending the PRSA 2008 International Conference in Detroit? Click here to send them an invite.

PRSA Technology Ning — Join Our Community!

The PRSA Technology Section has a Ning — an online community site. The social network has been created as a platform for public relations practitioners specializing in technology to keep in touch. Each PRSA Ning member has their own profile, can participate in our discussion group, read our blog, upload photos and videos, and more. The Ning includes event listings and is designed to keep our members up-to-date with our Section's activities, as well as provide an opportunity to network. To join the PRSA Technology Section Ning, please visit http://prsatech.ning.com.

PRSA Technology Group Twitter

Do you Twitter? Stay connected with up-to-the-minute information from the PRSA Technology Section and its members by "following" and contributing to the group's Twitter account. To check it out and sign up, click here.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following PRSA members joined the PRSA Technology Section, June through August 2008. We are glad to have you on board!

NAME	*COMPANY*
Lisa Allen	Nelson Bostock
Leah Bott	DISA/JMO Coalition Warrior Interoperability Demonstration
Chris Collins	DavisDenny
Stan Faryna	Faryna & Associates, Inc.
James H. Gill Jr., APR	Continental
Kerry Lee Gregg	
Paul C. Heayn	AFGE
James Kerr	Unisys Corp.
Stephen W. Loudermilk	Alcatel-Lucent Services Business Group
Shannon Maureen McPhee	
Mei Lin Ng	mig33
Lee Odden	TopRank Online Marketing
Kirsten Alden Paragona	HCL America, Inc.
Jennifer Macleid Qotb	Young & Associates
Tiffany Richardson	Dow Jones
Diane S. Thieke	Dow Jones

Visit the Technology Section

Web site: **prsa.org/networking/sections/technology**

For more information on Tech Section events and specialized resources for Tech Section members!

PRSA Public Relations Society of America

prsa.org/networking/sections/technology