

■ LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Technology Section Members,

We're gearing up for the annual T3PR PRSA Technology Section Conference again — it seems like we just had one but it's been more than six months since the last event. The content was really valuable and I still hear attendees referring back to our speakers from 2009.

As a reminder, the Conference is open to PRSA members and non-members alike. It provides networking opportunities and professional development seminars on the issues that matter most to public relations and marketing practitioners. Attendees typically include communications professionals who work in the technology sector, as well as practitioners from other vertical markets who seek expertise on the public relations challenges of the digital age.

In the news section you'll find information about the Call for Presenters and sponsorship. Even though the T3PR Conference is months away, we're looking for input to make this event even more valuable for attendees. We look forward to your feedback and participation!

Sincerely,

Amy Fisher, APR

Editor

afisher@psbpr.com

Join our community on Ning
<http://prsatech.ning.com>

Follow us on Twitter
<http://twitter.com/prsatech>

Join our LinkedIn group
<http://tinyurl.com/prsatech-group>

PRSA TechConnect Summary



■ LETTER FROM THE EDITOR | page 1

■ PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS | page 1

Making the Web your Brand's Domain — Heather Read

12 Social Media New Year's Resolutions For 2010 — Greg Finn | page 3

■ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | page 4

I Don't Have Time For This! — Shelli Ryan, APR, Fellow PRSA

Public Relations and Social Media Tips for using Facebook and Twitter — Part 2 — Debra Dixon | page 5

■ PRSA TECHNOLOGY SECTION NEWS AND BUSINESS | page 6

■ PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

Making the Web your Brand's Domain



Heather Read,
hread@afillias.info

The practice of public relations is evolving and encompassing more ways to engage an organization's key publics online whether through Web site development and marketing, social media engagement, or through traditional media outlets. As more and more print media suffer under our economic conditions, the Internet continues to proliferate as not only the destination for news but for company branding.

Your online media strategy today likely involves driving traffic to your current Web site, where you can merchandise your products or build communities to interact with your customers. Hopefully, if your organization is old enough or has a unique enough name, you have a Web site name (a.k.a. domain name) that users can intuitively remember to find you.

While search engine marketing and links from media coverage are important, ultimately you want the user to remember your name and your brand on a Web address where they can

either experience or buy your products.

Today there are over 80 million .com domains already registered. This is of a total universe of over 180 million domains registered worldwide across more than 280 top-level domains (TLDs). TLD's are the highest level of the Internet's naming system — whatever is to the right of the last “dot”, e.g.: .com, .org, .info, .us, etc.

With many of these domains already registered, the likelihood that you will find a domain name that immediately conveys your brand is small. New ventures often need to come up with a seemingly obscure name to fit an available domain name and many companies with competing trademarks have had to modify their name with hyphens and corporate designations when the name was previously registered by another brand with a trademark.

In 2010, **ICANN** (the organization that oversees the addressing system) will open the Internet's addressing system and allow anyone to obtain their own TLD. The opportunity: you will now be able to own your own corner of the Internet where you control the rules of how users experience your brand.

While some skeptics argue that more Internet name space will just make it more difficult to protect intellectual property on the Internet, others see the expanded opportunities that arise from owning their own TLD. Companies should contemplate this opportunity and potential new revenue stream related to developing customized services, Internet applications, or electronic communications systems that can interact with customers in a new way.

Some examples:

- **eBay** could offer custom .ebay addresses to its auction sellers.
- **MLB** could sell special .baseball or .MLB fan pages.
- **BMW** could offer a high-end consumer service giving its car owners a branded .bmw. e-mail address that could communicate service updates directly to the vehicle.
- **IBM** could use .IBM strictly as a private Internet zone, deploying security technologies like **DNSSEC** to secure their electronic communications system that depends on the DNS.

The cost? Currently, ICANN is expected to charge \$185,000 to submit an application for your desired TLD, with competing applications going to auction. While this is a significant cost, consider that earlier this year Toys R Us bought Toys.com for over \$5 million.

If you do consider applying for your own TLD, here are a few tips to help

you through the process:

- 1) **Seek industry expertise:** The world of domain names is a very specialized industry focusing on international policy, detailed registration policies, and a specialized distribution market. There are a number of experts that have been in the business of launching new TLDs for nearly a decade that can help put you on the right path for vetting your idea and plans.
- 2) **Realistically examine your start up costs:** You should expect that in addition to your application fee, there will be a significant amount of internal time or consulting services required to develop the appropriate business plan and negotiate the legal contracts with ICANN. An applicant should reasonably have about \$500,000 - \$1 million of capital available for a new TLD project.
- 3) **Use proven technology:** Mistakes in running a TLD mean that you can break the Internet or worse, become victim to massive attacks like Conficker which targeted TLDs earlier this year to spread malware. There are a selection of registry services and Managed DNS providers that can help you launch your TLD, make it available to the existing distribution market (a.k.a. domain name registrars), and manage the Internet's traffic to all Web sites that will be registered under your TLD. Adding one of these providers will make your application strong and reduce necessary start up costs.
- 4) **Consider the effect of new technologies:** The domain name industry is currently evolving to include new technologies such as support for IPv6 addresses, registration of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) in non-English languages, and new security measures like DNSSEC that will prevent DNS hijacking of your Web site. You should consider how your TLD will utilize these technologies and how they fit into your business plan.
- 5) **Check out your competition:** A number of individuals and companies are already publicly touting their interest in seeking a TLD, from Wolfgang Puck's reported interest in .food to cities like Paris or New York requesting .paris or .nyc. ICANN is already working on rules to resolve trademark disputes in awarding TLDs, however, if you have an idea for a generic name as a TLD you should look at who else is already likely to bid against you.
- 6) **Seek a sponsored community and support:** Particularly in the case of generic or geographic names the ICANN process will require specific proof of community support. For so called “community” TLDs this proof will be a requirement for being awarded the name. Even if you are a company with a compelling brand that would make sense to

run the TLD, you will need to court the support of other organizations that can present a strong proposal to ICANN.

ICANN is expecting to begin accepting applications in the first quarter of 2010. You can follow the new TLD process on the [ICANN Web site](#).

Heather Read is senior director, communications at [Afilias](#), a domain name registry services and DNS provider.

■ 12 Social Media New Year's Resolutions For 2010



Greg Finn,
[10e20](#)

There are so many issues in the social realm that this list could be endless, but I chose the 12 most important items to work on in social media in 2010. As you may know, there is no right answer in social media; each company is different, but each of these points can be adjusted for any company. Hopefully this will work as a guide on how to create a better social media presence in 2010!

1) **Spend more traditional ad budget on customer service.** So many problems could be proactively averted if companies would simply treat customers as they should. In today's social realm, word of mouth travels far and above the vintage physical conversation, and can truly influence users across the globe. By supplementing your products with excellent support and a pleasant experience, you will create brand advocates that will help, rather than hurt you. Imagine if United had cut back on a few TV commercials and **actually helped their customers out**. This seems like a no-brainer, but it is amazing to see the sheer number of companies that continue to treat their customers poorly, then try to fix by spending more dollars on advertising. In a McKinsey report, **67% of consumer sales are directly influenced by word of mouth** (PDF), and the best form of reputation management is not needing to manage your reputation at all. Treat your customers properly, and you will see the results in social media and your bottom line.

2) **Create sound company social media strategies & social media policies.** The problem with most companies is that there is a lack of social media strategy and they are engaging because they think they have to. Sit down and put together a list of goals, then work to find a strategy that will work to accomplish them. Don't just Tweet because you saw it on CNN, and don't make a Facebook page because your competitor did. Come up with a list of goals and a strategy to achieve

them. Tactics and strategies are crucial in social media, as Sun Tzu eloquently stated: "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."

3) **Train & educate workers.** Recently, there have been some social media meltdowns based on the lack of knowledge of some individuals acting on behalf of a company. Policies should be set forth to ensure that workers are not breaking terms of use, acting inappropriately, providing inaccurate information or a handful of other impending dilemmas. In addition, anyone who is allowed to speak on behalf of the company should have extreme comprehension of the networks, how they work and the overall company strategy. When executed poorly, social media has the power to severely harm a brand, and education is the fundamental factor that can prevent these problems.

4) **Make a better effort to track mentions.** One of the toughest aspects of Social Media Marketing is tracking the conversations that are occurring "in-the-wild." Research and find a solution that will help you and your company achieve your social media goals. There are a number of good tracking systems on the market, the trick is to test drive them and see what will work for you. In addition to tracking mentions, tracking broad keywords and engaging customers who are looking for help can be a very profitable portion of your social media marketing campaign. When looking for tools, those that allow the archiving and exportation of data is something that can be a big help as you make your internal cause for social media.

5) **Be proactive, protect your brand names.** If you have a trademarked term, you can almost always stop name squatters from hijacking your brand name, but why wait for that to happen? Services like **KnowEm** allow you to reserve usernames across hundreds of sites and prevent those from stealing your brand. Taking a few minutes and a few dollars now can save you a lot of time and money to get it back later, so get out there and protect your brand.

6) **Take the time to look your best.** Use your social media profiles as extensions of your brand and of your Web site. Take the time to make **custom backgrounds for Twitter** or create **rich Facebook tabs** that support your current marketing initiatives. Just because your profile isn't on your site, doesn't mean that you shouldn't spend money trying to make it look good.

7) **Really promote your social profiles off-site.** Many times, simply slapping a social media badge in your footer is simply not enough. Analyze options on how you can leverage real estate on your site to accomplish your social goals. Whether it be a **Digg Widget** in your sidebar to help promote some upcoming stories on your site to **Fa-**

cebook Fan Boxes along with calls to action on a post-conversion.

8) **Advertise your social profiles.** One of the hardest things to justify in Internet marketing is spending money without sending visitors to your Web site. Much like investing in design and development for social profiles, you should be securing budget for advertising on social media sites as well. For example, advertising Facebook pages is a quick and easy way to let targeted users know that you are participating in the conversation. While you may be able to leverage your site to gain some loyal fans/followers (see above), spending money for exposure to targeted audiences could be much more profitable in the long run.

9) **Give people a reason to join in.** “If you build it, they will come” doesn’t work in social media, or online in general. You should give users a reason to follow you and become a fan. Whether it is sweepstakes, breaking news, giveaways, sales or company updates, you should offer users something beneficial in exchange for their loyalty.

10) **Reward loyal fans with exclusives.** By offering fans items that are exclusive to the social audience, you can “demonstrate value” and make them feel good about following you. Not only would they get an exclusive deal/song/download/game, they also get the feeling that they are getting a special connection that not everyone has.

11) **Explore more outlets.** While Twitter and Facebook are making the biggest splash on the news scene, there are hundreds more social sites out there – many of which can help you achieve company goals. Look into other social media outlets that you may not be currently engaged in. From social news sites like Digg to social bookmarking sites like the new StumbleUpon to smaller niche social media sites, there are many outlets that could work for you, so give ‘em a try!

12) **Don’t neglect your site.** While all of the above points speak mainly of tactics that work off of your site, one of the biggest things to remember is that you can be social on your site. Things like blogs and forums were the original social media, so make sure to maintain and cultivate them and create good content that will perform well in social media. At the end of the day, your site is your ultimate sales tool, so take care of it! Where applicable try to bring social media in with things like Facebook Connect or Digg or Twitter’s API to harness the benefits of these sites on your own.

And that’s it! Try to work on these resolutions in 2010 and watch your social presence flourish.

*This article is reprinted with permission from Greg Finn. **Greg Finn** is*

the director of Internet marketing for 10e20, a publicity company that specializes in social media and search marketing services. He has been in the Internet marketing industry for over five years and specializes in Social Media Marketing. He writes in-depth about social media and Internet marketing on the 10e20 blog.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I Don’t Have Time For This!



Shelli Ryan,
Shelli@AdHocCR.com

We all know how media relations is supposed to work: research the company, the product, the publication/blog, the reporter/blogger, the competition and a dozen other things. Only then are we supposed to head into the world and make the pitch. But life doesn’t always work out that way. Sometimes the client demands action right now. You don’t always have time to prepare and pitch the textbook way.

Here are a few tactics that will yield quick returns when you are pressed for time:

- **Push back.** (Yes, I’m serious.) You were hired for your expertise. If you truly believe an extra week would bring a bigger payoff, say so. Be polite, of course. Say, “I very strongly recommend ...” and then back it up with a solid argument for an approach you think would yield better results for the client. Let the business goal drive the marketing goal. If your contact is a mid-level manager whose boss is breathing down his neck, offer to draft a memo to send up through the proper channels. Naturally, the client can reject your advice. And as long as you are not being asked to do something unethical, you should support what you client insists on doing. In fact, the client may even be right. So...

- **Start now.** By “now” I don’t mean the day that the client demands you start pitching ideas. I mean start NOW. Start putting together a spreadsheet of tech bloggers and reporters and publications. Have columns noting what they write about and how they like to be pitched. Most of you have access to media databases such as Cision or Vocus. When you have to roll into action quickly, you won’t have to stop to figure out who covers cloud computing and who is only interested in technology stocks. Also keep notes on your own browsing. If you check TechCrunch regularly, jot down what various bloggers are writing about. It only takes a few minutes a day. Comment on their blogs to open a communications channel before you need to use it.

- **Get social.** I'll be the first to admit that I don't use social media heavily, but I have colleagues who get good results from it. Twitter hashtags can show you who is tweeting about your topic. That tells you who is passionate about that topic and wants to get new news. Twitter offers lists that can get pretty granular, such as Silicon Valley reporters at daily newspapers. Earlier this year, Cision started offering JournalistTweets sorted by areas of interest. Likewise, search the Q&A forum on LinkedIn.

- **Search engines are your friends.** Don't forget to use Google News and Google Blogsearch to see who has written most recently about your topic or your client's competitors. Multiple key words are a fast way to trim down the number of results. Don't forget to use the advanced search options to limit the results to a certain range of dates.

- **Mix it up.** Offer the story idea in a couple of different formats. Give the hard news they can put on their site right away, but also offer to contribute bylined content even if it is going to come out a couple of months later.

- **Think small.** Let's say you are pitching an e-commerce product aimed at the airline industry. You might want to skip the major tech trade pubs for now and pick a smaller pond like an airline e-commerce today outlet. In many cases, the smaller the niche, the more the publication needs contributed content. Layoffs at traditional print publications only increase their need for outside help.

- **Use some of your scant minutes to hone the pitch.** Don't just pitch your expert or your product. Journalists want to show how a real person benefited from what you are pitching. Use specific examples. If you can, offer these real life users as interviews in addition to what you are pitching. Third-party validation adds a lot of strength.

- **Get some quick backup at Grader.com.** Run your item through the Press Release grader, the Gobbledygook Grader, or one of the other graders. It can help you spot a problem before you press "send."

- **Tweet the pitch.** Some people prefer it because you are limited to 140 characters, so they won't have to wade through a lot of PR-speak. You only have time for the key point and a link.

There's no substitute for thorough research. You'll still get the best results by building time into your schedule to do some thorough prep work. But in a pinch, you can use these tips to deliver some extra "wow" when you are up against the clock.

Shelli Ryan, APR, Fellow PRSA, has more than 20 years of experience in public and analyst relations in the B2B technology and telecommunications sectors. She is the president of Ad Hoc Communication Resources (www.AdHocCR.com)

■ PR and Social Media Tips for using Facebook and Twitter: Part 1



Debra Dixon,
lightofgoldpr@gmail.com

To kick off the year, Debra offers up some new tips on working with popular social media platforms, and how you can get up to speed quickly.

Facebook

- Updated stats as of June 2009: According to Nielsen, Facebook leads all social networking sites with 87.3 million unique visitors in June 2009.
- Quickly growing its video reach from 2.4 million unique viewers in June '08 to 12 million in June '09.

How can you start using Facebook?

- Now that you have put together a simple and effective profile page (making sure you are descriptive and clear about you do and what you offer) what's next?
- After you have joined groups related to your business, remember to reach out and connect to your friends and members of the groups.
- Send direct customized notes and messages of introduction about your business and see if they would like to set up a phone meeting or a face-to-face one if they are in your city. (Use safety rules by researching the company or individual prior to meeting or just set up a phone meeting first).. This should be the same thing you would be doing if you were following up with your contacts after meeting them at an actual networking function. This is social networking, and in order to really engage with your Facebook connections, you have to follow similar rules.
- Offer discount specials and/or free products or services to your friends on their birthdays by sending them a Happy Birthday note with a link to your Web site . You can also do the same thing seasonally, during holidays or special times of the year.
- Special Tip: Don't forget to set up your own username on Facebook. It's FREE and allows you to own part of Facebook's digital real estate. Just go to <http://www.facebook.com/username>. You will be asked to login to Facebook first, and then will be guided through the steps

of selecting a username (which should be the same as your current name in Facebook). You can use the url with your new username on your business cards, Web site, blog, etc.

I already use Twitter, now how can I REALLY maximize it?

- Updated stats according to Nielsen as of June 2009: Twitter grew a massive 1,928 percent in the US from June '08 to June '09, reaching a total of 21 million monthly unique visitors!
- Twitter users spent an average of 31 minutes, 17 seconds on the site in June. You can use Twitter tools like TweetDeck and Seesmic Desktop which are more graphical free software interfaces that you can install. They allow you to navigate easier, tweet, direct message, etc.
- A "tweet" is a post in 140 characters or less that can be advice, information about an event, a product or service, etc.
- Tweet useful and relevant information that would make people want to follow you.
- Build your follower base by following people or putting a "Follow Me on Twitter" link on your e-mails, business cards, Web site, etc.
- Make sure that you register your Twitter account into special Twitter sites and tools like wefollow.com and twellow.com (Twitter Yellow Pages). Using keywords that are relevant to your business will allow you to be found by people looking to connect to your business.
- Look through your Twitter Followers for individuals or businesses that you can connect and do business with. Send them a Direct Message (DM) introducing yourself with a link to your Web site and see if they would like schedule time to chat on the phone or meet in person if they are in your city.
- Safety first. Unfortunately not everyone on Social Media Sites are who they say they are so you should do some research on the company or individual on Google first, or set up a phone meeting prior to meeting face-to-face.
- Special Twitter tip: Geofollow.com allows you to connect to your Twitter account and follow people by location and city. Plus you can add and list your own Twitter account (for FREE!) by the tags that apply to you, your business or profession, and search for people that fit the same criteria.

Light of Gold PR, Marketing, and Consulting LLC (www.lightofgoldpr.com) with offices in New York and Atlanta, specializes in public relations, marketing, promotions, media relations, branding and event planning, workshops, webinars, teleseminars, emphasizing new media such as webcasts, podcasts, social media and online communities. Light of Gold PR is certified by New York City as a M/WBE, a Minority Woman-Owned Business Enterprise.

PRSA Technology Section News and Business

Theory, Tactics & Technology for High-Tech Public Relations Conference Overview

The PRSA Technology Section conference, T3PR, is a one-day conference of networking, panel discussions and presentations designed for public relations leaders specializing in business and consumer technology. With the rise of Web 2.0, many public relations professionals have sought to position themselves as influencers in the realm of social media. This year's conference "**Strategic Views on Technology and the Changing PR Landscape**" is dedicated to helping public relations professionals stand out in this crowded space. Experts will demonstrate how to facilitate effective online engagement through shifts in strategic thinking.

You'll walk away with:

- The latest tools to create successful PR campaigns.
- New skills, tips and techniques on navigating the social media landscape.
- Key contacts with industry colleagues and top tech media.

T3PR Speaking Opportunities: Applications due Feb. 19, 2010

Share your expertise with others and gain industry recognition. T3PR's **Speaker Guidelines** and **Application** (Word 97-2003) are now available! All information must be submitted via e-mail no later than Friday, Feb. 19, 2010.

T3PR Sponsorship Opportunities

Become a conference exhibitor and generate new business opportunities. For more information, contact Malia.Moore@prsa.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following PRSA members joined the PRSA Technology Section, Sept. 2009 through Dec. 2009. We are glad to have you on board!

<i>NAME</i>	<i>COMPANY</i>
Aurora Don Arlet	VISITECH PR
Mark Avera	Porter Novelli
Laura A. Borden	Microdesk
Beverly Brown	SAS Institute Inc.
Tracy Calabrese	The MWW Group
Claire Ann Celsi	PRP Communications
Therese Fennig	
John R. Hallock	athenahealth
Jason Jansky	Downing Street Communications
Jennifer Deeb Kluge	
Jennifer Allyson Langford	Schneider Electric, North American Operating Division
Steven L. Lubetkin, APR, Fellow PRSA	Lubetkin Communications /Professional Podcasts
Amanda Denton Manna	Largemouth Communications
David Keith Miles	McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations
Katherine Ann Patterson	Websense
Michael M. Pierson	Front Range Public Relations
Anand G. Poola	Marsh Inc.
Carolyn S. Russell, APR	Russell Public Relations
Anne M. Santori, APR	CareTech Solutions
Vicki Stearn	Think Out Loud Media, LLC.
Frances A. Stephenson	Rackspace Hosting, Inc.
Thomas A. Stites, APR	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Mary Ellen Swetits	Rhodes Communications
Greg Thomas	LSI Corp
Glen Turpin	First Data
Allison Marie Vance	American Health Information Management Association
Glen Watkins	ETS-Lindgren

[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.org/networking/sections/technology