

## Social Media and PR: A Practical Primer

All too often, the practice of PR has focused on 'Press Relations'. The PR tactic somehow became the PR objective - transmit a message, perspective, or information as widely as possible. The journalist became the target, the conduit and the gate-keeper. They had the reach. They had the audience. They had the final say about what stories made the cut. Aside from advertising, they were the only controlled path to the public for many years.

There are a few assumptions in there worth exploring.

- \* Who is 'the public'?
- \* Where did the real PR objective go?
- \* Is mass communication the only path?
- \* Is control possible? Desirable?
- \* Is dialog more interesting than oration?

### The 'Public' is social.

Since the advent of the consumer Internet around 1995, the dynamic has changed pretty dramatically. People aren't just passively consuming media. They're participating, remixing and contributing in a global conversation about everything and nothing. The public now has unprecedented access to information gathering, tagging, aggregating and publishing tools. Free. And they're using them.

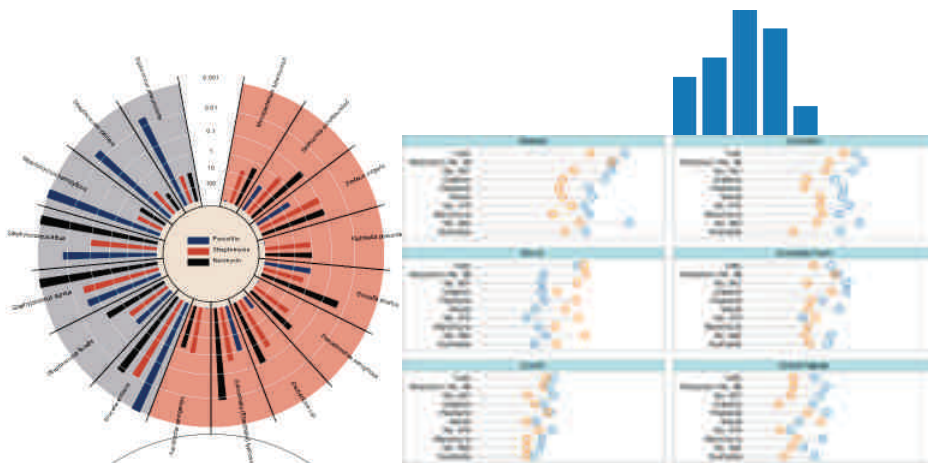
The first generation of media was about one-way communications and mass markets. The social media era is about completely decentralized bi-directional and many-to-many dialog; individuals, niche markets, microcasting. Not as a replacement for the traditional press - but in addition to it.

Not all news or information passes the 'mass market' test of the journalist, but it might be perfect for an important and influential group of bloggers, or it could even reach your target audience directly. Social media opens up opportunities for a return to the fundamental objectives of public relations:

- \* Help people who actively care to find you and locate content of interest
- \* Give fans and enthusiasts materials they need to help spread the word to others
- \* Tell the story in your own words
- \* Educate, inform, persuade

### Talk back

Activating social media channels takes a little commitment, and some initiatives require more effort than others. We have presented a few pragmatic starting points here in order to help you get started.



## Glossary of Terms (via Wikipedia)

### Blog

A blog (Web log) is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.

Blogs often provide commentary or information on a particular subject, such as technology, politics, or news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic

### Microblogs

Micro-blogging is a form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micromedia such as photos or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, email, digital audio or the web.

### Podcast

A podcast is a media file (usually mp3 audio) which is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds, for playback on portable media players and personal computers. Videocasts are like podcasts, only uh...video.

### RSS / Atom Feed

Commonly used by news websites and blogs, a feed is a data format used for serving users frequently updated content. Often XML-based, feeds contain content items with web links to longer versions. The two main web syndication formats are RSS and Atom.

### Social Media

The online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives with each other. A few examples include Wikipedia (reference), MySpace (social networking), YouTube (video sharing), Second Life (virtual reality), Digg (news sharing), and Flickr (photo sharing). These sites typically use technologies such as blogs, message boards, podcasts, syndication, tagging, wikis, and vlogs to allow users to interact.

### Tags

A tag is a (relevant) keyword or term associated with or assigned to a piece of information (e.g. picture, blog entry, press release, article, or video clip), describing the item and enabling keyword-based classification of information it is applied to.

## Pragmatic ways to get started

By starting a blog or by making some relatively simple design, RSS and tagging tweaks to existing communications resources, companies can distribute a good deal of relevant content directly to interested, highly engaged individuals. By opening these new channels, it's possible to start new dialogs, increase brand presence and influence the search results on key topics.



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## Manage Your Search Presence

Search is often the first place many people turn to research or verify information, and in some cases it may be the first place users will encounter your brand. By ranking well, you can influence what content people do and do not see when searching for your brand and related terms.

**Online Newsrooms** – Include a variety of content for search engines to index, and ensure those assets are optimized for search. In addition to press releases, consider adding blog posts, multimedia assets, and presentation and interview archives. Also include social media sharing and tagging features.

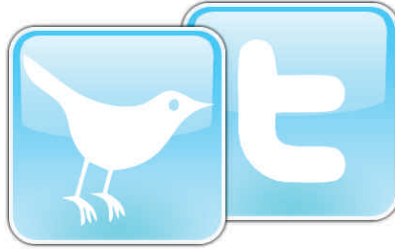
**Press Releases** – By optimizing press releases and boilerplates with high-value keywords and links, this content is more likely to be found. Any syndicated pickups are then likely to include these high-value words, and can help these stories to outrank those of your competitors.

**Your Website and other assets** – Optimize your main corporate site, company blog, video, audio, imagery, and social media profiles (YouTube videos, Facebook groups, Twitter, etc), so that they work to support your search strategy.

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## Twitter / Microblogging

Microblogging is increasingly growing in popularity, and it presents a variety of opportunities for brands willing to take the time to engage their communities directly. Twitter is by far the most popular microblogging platform, but also consider others such as Tumblr, homegrown tumblelogs, and to some degree Facebook.



When it comes to Twitter, we like to think of it as 'asynchronous group chat'. While it has been called a microblogging service, its true power comes from the conversations it empowers (though many also use it as somewhat one-way promotional tool, almost as a substitute for RSS feeds).

**Learn basic Twitter etiquette first** - Educate yourself on @replies, #hashtags, re-tweeting, and other basic etiquette before starting. <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/> is a great place to start.

**People follow people, not companies** - Rather than create a corporate Twitter account, find an evangelist or spokesperson who can represent your company on Twitter instead.

Beyond communicating with users, use Twitter search (<http://search.twitter.com/>), TwitScoop (<http://www.twitscoop.com/>), or the Facebook Lexicon tool (<http://www.facebook.com/lexicon/>) to mine the thought-streams of people in near real-time. These tools allow you to identify trends, monitor consumer sentiment about your brand, and guide your responses to issues based on actual user feedback.

## The modern communications landscape is a continuum.

Social media purists have argued that the world has flipped from a top-down, traditional media driven landscape to a bottom-up, social driven landscape. There is some truth to this, however it is more than offset by the influence the traditional media has over the social realm.

People tweet about what they encounter in the mass media, and the mass media reports on memes that first evolved in the social media world.

It's a continuum - the modern communications landscape ranges from real-time microblogs and status updates to long-lead print and broadcast.

While the platforms remain relatively distinct, the content, links and thoughts regularly ricochet between them in a mix of original reporting, iteration, discovery, sharing and conversation.

Grassroots-up tends more toward short real-time communications, where top-down can take days, weeks or months. Mainstream press delivers mass audience, while individuals may reach a small group of highly interested others. A Twitter post can trigger broadcast coverage of a breaking issue while an article in a daily regional newspaper may spread worldwide through blogs and social networks.

People. Press. Brands. Perception. It's all interconnected now, and most everything is searchable.

## Measurement can be tough, but ignoring it is tougher.

With the whole web becoming social, measurement has become somewhat amorphous as there are now a near infinite number of channels to monitor. What do you measure? Which metrics matter?

In short...it depends. A video with 100,000 views on YouTube, but which results in zero impact on your business, might be less valuable than a single Twitter message that leads to a highly positive blog post that ranks well in Google.

When measuring social media, quantitative measures are very useful to measure total reach and exposure to a message, but be aware of the widely disparate quality of such measures. YouTube counts a view whether a user watches a video over and over, or simply surfs away after ten seconds. Conversely, web analytics on a corporate blog can be very granular and paint an accurate picture of user interaction on your site.

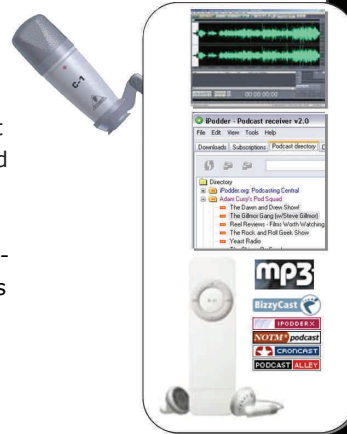
Qualitative measures should also be factored in - media attention, user sentiment, or customer interaction may be some of the most important benefits of a campaign.

# AtomicPR

## Video and Multimedia

Develop a series of short video clips to inform or entertain, and submit to industry outlets, video sharing sites, and potentially use for broadcast. Or, document your events and edit them down into short highlight reels to be used internally and externally.

When measuring success, remember to look beyond the quantitative measures such as view count. While more exposure is good, the qualitative measures of a piece of media are often more important. Does it influence consumer opinion of your brand, drive sales, impress customers, or garner your company media attention?



## Advanced Social Media measurement - beyond the basics.

Anyone can log onto YouTube and see how many times a video has been viewed, but what about tracking conversations across the blogosphere, Twitter, social networks, and message boards? Then how do you synthesize all of that information and determine ROI?

Atomic has a long track record of measuring media with a tool we developed in house. ComContext™ is Atomic's own Web-based media and blog analytics application. It provides deep visibility into the communications dynamics between sets of companies and products, surfacing keen insights for shaping strategy and channeling creativity toward achieving business objectives.

We've taken this analytics and measurement know-how and applied it to the social media realm by employing tools and methodologies to track mentions, sentiment, and trends in near real-time. This enables our clients to measure, understand, and quickly respond to conversations across multiple social media channels, including blogs, microblogs, message boards, social networks, and photo/video sharing sites.

## Atomic Digital Ops

Atomic's Digital Ops team specializes in social media, search, web marketing, multimedia, and video. We've executed for clients such as Mint.com, Verizon Wireless, Bebo, Ingres, Coupons.com, Southern Methodist University, SixApart (Movable-Type), Vertical Response, and LinkedIn.

Our Digital Ops team members have strong backgrounds in all these activities, with past life experience including a Gold Addy Award for a Gap Kids video campaign, CBSNews.com, SEO for clients such as Ford and GM, paid search for large e-commerce retailer Red Envelope and Boeing, and web development, analytics, and design expertise.

Need help? That's what we're here for. Feel free to reach out to us - we're happy to assist with execution or advice.



## Blogging

Designate a small team of key executives or other qualified employees to contribute several times weekly to a company blog. But don't just pen a 'corporate blog'. It's great to share company news when appropriate, but remember to showcase other aspects of your personality.

For example, are you a good writer? Is your commentary on industry news particularly poignant? Have you built a track record of commentary on a particular topic? All of these elements can lead to contributed articles, build readership, and help entrench yourself as an influencer and thought leader.

Quantitative measures of blogging success include things such as traffic to the site, links to the site, and comments on your blog. Watch for qualitative benefits also, such as media interest, thought leadership, and customer interaction.

## It's easy to get started. We can help.

There are many ways to start small, and many ways to go big. On your own, or we're happy to help.

Atomic has staff that can help implement or advise on any or all of the ideas presented here. If you'd like to explore more, please feel free to get in touch. We're friendly.



## Atomic Public Relations

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# AtomicPR

## Alternative PR Energy

Atomic PR was created in 1999 to drive a higher level of communications impact in the post-Internet era. Taking our cue from leading tech brands, we embraced analytics, community technologies, transparency, automation and streamlined workflows to create the kind of opportunities and solve a new generation of PR challenges many companies are now experiencing for the first time.

Our unique approach has driven improvements of 100% and often more across numerous measures of online and offline PR program performance for a wide range of well-known technology, social media, consumer and entertainment brands. Plus stronger linkage between objectives and results, and an easier management experience all around. Often at lower cost. Atomic has offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York and London plus affiliates across Europe, Asia Pacific, China and Japan.

## Concentrated tech experience: from deep geek to pop culture

Over the past 10 years, Atomic has worked alongside a number of brands that have re-defined existing categories and created entirely new ones in the technology, and tech-related consumer and entertainment industries.

## Technology & Enterprise Technology

Actional, Brightmail, CMP Media, Copan Systems, FalconStor, Fujitsu Computer Products, Hitachi Data Systems, Infinera (NASDAQ: INFN), JPMorgan Xign, Maxtor, Mentor Graphics, Netbooks, Olympus, Oracle, Salesforce.com, OuterBay Technologies, Sanera Systems, Savvion, SGI, Splunk, Telsima, Toshiba (TAEC), Tumbleweed, Vontu, Vurv, Webify

## Consumer & Internet Technology

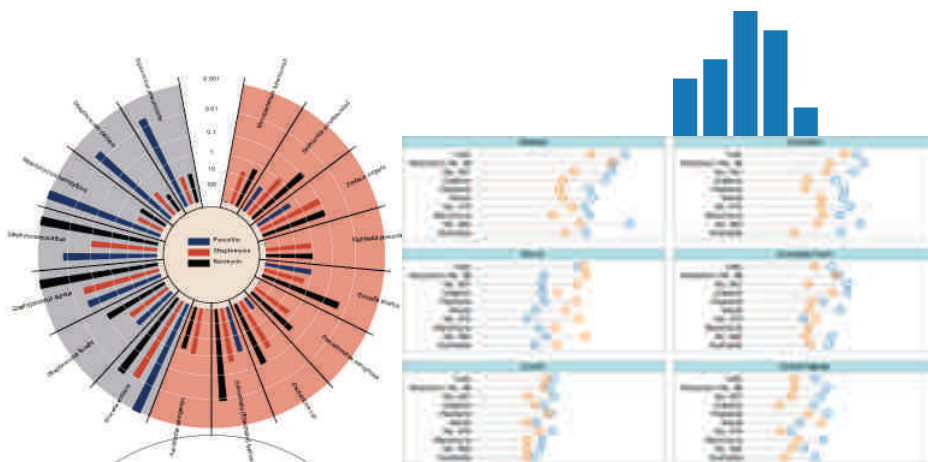
9 Squared, Anti-Phishing Working Group, Blurb, Boston Acoustics, Canon, Cox Communications, Dial Directions, Earthlink, GameReady, Giant Killer Robots, GeekSquad, Hi5, LinkedIn, LookSmart, Nokia, PhotoBucket, Splunk, Walk of Game Awards, Yahoo!

## Consumer

American West Airlines, Coldstone Creamery, Federal Express, Flock, Hershey's, Home Shopping Network, imeem, Powerbar, Shakers Vodka, The North Face, The Point, Whole Foods

## Entertainment

Blink Digital, Fine Line Features, Giant Killer Robots, IMAX, Mobile Entertainment Forum, NBC Entertainment



## At a glance

- Founded 1999
- Offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and London
- Partnerships across Europe and Asia
- 60 people and growing
- #31 on the Price Waterhouse Coopers List of Fastest Growing Bay Area companies

## Cross section of recent experience

### BitTorrent

World's most popular file sharing technology, newest digital entertainment competitor to iTunes

### LinkedIn

The premiere professional networking site boasting 8 million users

### PhotoBucket

Leader in online sharing and publishing of visual digital content

### Flock

Web 2.0 browser that makes it easy to share media and connect to other people online

### Hi5

Global urban social network with 50+ million users

### Sigma Designs (NASDAQ: SIGM)

Leader in chips powering the HD and IPTV revolution

### Callidus Software (NASDAQ: CALD)

World leader in systems for managing global incentive compensation plans for the world's largest sales-driven brands

### FalconStor (NASDAQ: FALC)

Leader in continuous data protection solutions

### Echelon (NASDAQ: ELON)

Smart control technology for buildings, systems, meters, utilities, municipalities

### CMP Media Electronics Group (UBM.L)

World's leading publisher and event company for the embedded systems industry

### AmberPoint

Comprehensive SOA runtime governance solutions

### Savvion

Pioneer in Business Process Management

### Xign

Leading A/P automation company and business settlement network

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