

Use of Social Media in PR: A Change of Trend

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Abstract : The use of social media has become more defined. It has been widely used for the purpose of business. More marketers are now using social media as tools to enhance their businesses. Whereas on the other hand, there are more and more people spending their time through mobile apps to be engaged in the social media sites like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and others. Social media has even become common in Public Relations (PR). It has become number one platform for creating and sharing content. In view to this, social media has changed the rules in PR where it brings new challenges and opportunities to the profession. Although corporate websites, chat-rooms, email customer response facilities and electronic news release distribution are now viewed as standard aspects of PR practice, many PR practitioners are still struggling with the impact of new media though the implementation of social media is potentially reducing the cost of communication. It is to the point that PR practitioners are not fully embracing new media, they are ill-equipped to do so and they have a fear of the technology. Somehow that social media has become a new style of communication that is characterized by conversation and community. It has become a platform that allows individuals to interact with one another and build relationship among each other. Therefore, in the use of business world, consumers are able to interact with those companies that have joined any social media. Based on their experiences with social networking site interactions, they are also exposed to personal interaction while communicating. This paper is to study the impact of social media to PR. This paper discovers the potential changes of PR practices in a developing country like Malaysia. Eventually the study reflects on how PR practitioners are actually using social media in the country. This paper is based on two theories in its development of this research foundation. Media Ecology Theory is to support the impact and changes to PR. Social Penetration Theory is to reflect on how the use of social media is among PRs. This research is using survey with PR practitioners in its data collection. The results have shown that PR professionals value social media more than they actually use it and the way of organizations communicate had been changed due to the transformation of social media.

Keywords : new media, social media, PR, change of trend, communication, digital culture

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