Teaching blog management: Preparing professors for the opportunities and challenges of teaching Web 2.0 in the classroom

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Abstract

As the impact of blogging continues to grow, public relations practitioners must be prepared to develop and manage constituency relationships by managing and responding to blogs. Journal articles and trade publications encourage academics to introduce blogging in the classroom; however few examples outline the opportunities and challenges that instructors may face during blogging assignments. Using a case study methodology, this paper reports on the professional and personal concerns that students (n = 28) expressed during and after a six-week blog management assignment at a large journalism college in the United States. An awareness of these concerns can prepare other public relations educators for what they may encounter while teaching blogging.

Introduction

In 2005, the Pew Center found that 30 percent of Internet users regularly read blogs (Pew Center, 2005). The web log, or 'blog' as it is more commonly known, is a key example of how new media are impacting society every day. With more than eight million active blogs in existence by 2006 (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006), they play a significant role in education, entertainment, and influencing the content of news (Lowery, 2006). There are now estimated to be more than 133 million blogs comprising the 'blogosphere' (Technorati, 2008), ranging from traditional personal blogs to those written by media and, increasingly, organisations. The latter group has used blogs for activities ranging from guerrilla marketing (Barbaro, 2006) and attacking competitors (Lyons, 2005) to identifying key stakeholders (Dearstyne, 2005) and communicating key information to these audiences (Secko, 2005). Given this level of growth and significance, public relations practitioners must understand blogs and how strategic management of this new tactic can impact organisations.

Because of the growth of social media's prominence, Edelman and Weber Shandwick hired experienced bloggers in advertising and public affairs to better serve their clients (AdAge.com, 2006). With the industry acknowledging the blog's power, a question for academics looms: How and where should students turn for lessons on blog management? The Edelman Digital Bootcamp is designed to expose students and faculty to the application of blogging and other social media within public relations scenarios. But, according to Solis and Breakenridge (2009), most public relations programmes aren't teaching students how to use social media for organisational purposes, even though blogs are changing the way traditional public relations is being practised (Wright & Hinson, 2008). Fortunately, case studies and articles are emerging to provide academics insights into how blog management can be taught (O'Neil, 2006; Duke, 2009).

In efforts to better prepare students for the changing dynamics of public relations practice, the authors of this paper chose to introduce blog management into a public relations writing course in 2006 after having a guest speaker present the topic to a student organisation on campus. Engaged in active-learning, the students had to maintain their own blog on a public relations topic while also responding to blog postings on other students' blogs. Using a

triangulated research methodology, this article discusses the professional and personal issues that students expressed when blogging. The purpose of this article is to present those topics so others can anticipate the challenges and opportunities that exist when seeking to prepare students for working in a Web 2.0 environment. This case study complements the James (2007/2008) study on the academic of evaluation of blogging in the classroom by examining the issues students have about blogging that impact life beyond the classroom.

Public relations and the Internet

For several years, students have been learning about the importance of online communication and the conversion of traditional public relations tactics to a digital format, such as newsletters and e-newsletters, in textbooks (Boynton & Imfeld, 2004). These tactics, however, fail to take advantage of the interactivity that the Internet provides. Even though most institutional web sites provide feedback forms or links to send someone an e-mail, these sites are not helping organisations build relationships with key publics (Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003). Blogs are one method to overcome this challenge.

Blogs, or web logs, are online diaries of posts that are sorted in reverse chronological order that allow readers to offer feedback and comments to the original author (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Blogs typically are focused on specific subject matter based on the interest of the author (eg, politics, technology), and blogs often are "weeks ahead of the mainstream media when reporting stories on their own industry/profession" (Kent, 2008, p. 33).

The modern blog evolved from an online diary in the early 1990s as authors invited others to read and respond to their personal, day-to-day experiences. However, as political topics written on blogs were creeping into mainstream media, political consultants and strategic communicators began to re-examine the outlet as a means for organisational communication (Jensen, 2003). Scholars have suggested that blogging has a strong potential for relationship-building (Seltzer, 2005; Kelleher & Miller, 2006) because of the potential for facilitating ongoing exchanges of ideas with key stakeholders. Kent and Taylor (1998) note that the goal of this kind of dialogue is not necessarily simple agreement; instead it is a series of open discussions designed to foster relationship growth. Though dialogue has often been suggested as the most ethical form of public relations, Grunig (2001) said that organisations are still far from becoming symmetrical.

Blogging conducted dialogically may provide opportunities to achieve communication excellence. As Taylor, Kent, and White (2001, p. 265) note, "given the field's shift to a more relational approach to public relations, the concept of dialogue may now best capture the process and product of relationship building". The principles behind blog management, however, do not rest solely in engaging with publics about organisational positions. Even though an organisation may have a blog, its public relations practitioners must also engage in environmental scanning to monitor the Internet discussion about the organisation. Blog management requires practitioners to engage in active listening to all of its Web-based publics – not just those who visit the organisation's own blog. Through subscription to free monitoring services, such as Technorati or Google Reader, organisations can monitor blog-based conversations about their reputation, policies and actions.

Blogs have gone mainstream, and organisations cannot afford to ignore their impact. Fortune 500 companies have begun hiring employees to monitor the blogosphere to see how organisations can best address their publics' concerns (Barnes & Mattson, 2009). Public relations firms have also hired bloggers to ensure they are capable of offering the most up-to-date communications management services (Lim & Yang, 2006). Given the growing attention blog management is receiving, public relations students need to be exposed to the concept during their studies. Indeed, Richard Edelman confirmed the importance of learning blog management. In a

posting on his own blog, Edelman said "students need to blog and join conversations, not just to write for the newspaper and to create PR campaigns for local businesses. Faculty can lead the way by starting their own blogs … to discuss their projects and learnings" (Edelman, 2006, ¶ 11). Following the advice of Edelman and other leaders in the public relations industry, this project sought to answer the following research question: What concerns do students express when challenged to blog in the classroom?

Methodology

At a large journalism college at a public university in the United States, the authors conducted a six-week blog management project that required students to blog on a topic of their choosing and respond to comments and enquiries made regarding their posts. The structural details of the assignment have been previously published in the *Teaching Public Relations* monograph series (Waters & Robinson, 2008). In the curriculum sequence of this public relations department, the third-year undergraduate students who participated in this project had already taken an introductory public relations course, public relations strategy, public relations research, and mass communication law. During the semester of the blog management project, nearly half of the students had also taken an elective in public relations.

In the two 'Public Relations Writing' courses, 28 students participated in the assignment. Students were told at the beginning that this was a 'new' assignment for the course and that the two instructors wanted to document their experiences, good and bad, to help other professors understand how they could improve teaching blog management. Given that it was a graded component of the course, students were required to complete the six-week assignment to learn about blogging and online communication writing; however, in accordance with ethical clearance from the University, students were given the option to withdraw from participating in portions that were not related to the students' final grade for the assignment. Students voluntarily completed the written questionnaires. Additionally, those who chose to have their comments omitted from any assignment analysis were included in classroom discussions as part of the learning process, but their ideas and comments were not used for this paper.

Throughout the assignment, the instructors asked students to provide feedback either through verbal communication (eg, class discussions or face-to-face conversation) or through written comments, which were collected over e-mail and through informal questionnaires that were administered at the beginning and ending of the assignment. It should be noted that verbal comments were not recorded, and instructors did not attempt to remember them verbatim to protect the students who chose to have their comments excluded from the study. Instead, verbal comments were used to create the written questionnaire. All quotations that appear in the results are from the written comments.

Results

Before educators think about ways to incorporate blogging into their syllabi, there are several issues they need to be prepared to discuss. After leading students through a six-week assignment on blog management, the authors of this paper reviewed students' comments about the project and blog management's role in public relations. The students posed several interesting questions that had not been anticipated by the authors during the assignment. Further reflection on these topics during classroom discussions and written self-reflective questionnaires provided insights that may be helpful for other educators interested in introducing blog management into the public relations curriculum. After analysing the results of the interviews, 10 main issues emerged as concerns for the students. These issues could be broken down into two distinct types: professional and personal.

Professional issues raised by students during the blogging assignment

Given the incredible growth rate of blogs and their impact on organisational communication, educators must understand how to incorporate blogs into the existing educational framework and understand the impact they make on the curriculum. Blogs are substantially different in nature to traditional print communication tools to warrant their being taught in every public relations programme. In addition, blogs provide an intriguing way to teach other topics using a pedagogical style focused on student-centred learning. Indeed, many of the key concepts required in a public relations accredited curriculum (The Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006) are raised in new ways with blogs. The following are some of the professional and personal issues that were raised by our students as we brought blogs into the classroom.

1. Blogs raise cutting edge questions about ethics in public relations

As public relations practitioners become more familiar with blogs and how to use them effectively, the chequered history of the tactic raises several important ethical questions for students. For example, students frequently challenged the ethics and the decision-making process individuals go through when they are speaking for a company or when work-related information is shared using their personal identities on a blog. Specifically, they wondered what an employee can say: "My ethical concern is where to cross the line. As an employee, you cannot really say what you feel if it is negative about the company. So, when can I talk about my feelings?"

One student highlighted the blog of a female Delta Airlines employee, who was fired over posting pictures of herself in the company's uniform on her blog. As one student stated, "You have to realize you still represent an organisation even if you write about personal issues. Your attitude reflects on the organisation. It is not always easy to stop and think about how it will impact your company." Another expression of the same view is that "A practitioner writing a blog for an organisation must represent the thoughts and sentiments of the organisation. They must leave their thoughts out of it."

A second ethical issue surrounds releasing corporate information through a blogger as a way of generating discussion about the organisation. As practitioners begin to explore this new tactic for gaining publicity and building relationships with loyal publics, the rules for ethical use of the medium are being established. One attribute that is important in the blogosphere is the genuineness of the postings. One student questioned the sincerity of blogs promoting corporations:

> "I worry about the nature of some blogs. Walmart recently got busted for offering trips to headquarters to bloggers who gave favorable coverage. I see value in reaching out to the Internet community – but organisations that try to buy positive coverage will just ruin it for those of us trying to incorporate blogs in an ethical manner."

2. The personal, not corporate, nature of blogs raises legal issues

One of the mandates for public relations curricula is to prepare students to understand the legal implications of various strategies and public statements. In discussing blogs, our students asked questions about the use of pictures in the blog. Creating and managing a blog allows the students and the educator to raise issues such as the legality of using a corporate logo when referencing a particular company in the blog. It allowed us to discuss, for example, the degree to which practitioners freely use organisational logos, trademarks, and slogans on blogs about issues where you reference the organisation.

Similarly, many students wondered how sarcasm and humour would be perceived on the Internet and blog postings. One student asked, "Can a blogger representing a company make fun of a competitor given the less formal nature

of the blog? If so, who can be held responsible for the post – the individual, the organisation, or both?" The teaching opportunities arising from these questions are invaluable. The educator and other students can discuss libel law and its application in new media, especially since the Securities and Exchange Commission monitor corporate blogs and microblogging accounts, such as Twitter, to ensure they follow corporate communication guidelines (Tuna, 2009). In this particular example, students who were also enrolled in the Media Law course added to the conversation, wondering how criteria for libel in the blogosphere reflected malicious intent and other legal criteria in the non-digital world.

Finally, given that students were encouraged to link to other web sites to boost their credibility, students wondered about the proper procedure to link to another site? Students expressed concern over the proper etiquette on a blog. One student said "I felt a little odd mentioning people by name (or organisations) on the blog without their knowledge." Another continued this thought further by wondering:

> "Should I ask for permission to link to other personal sites or even other organisational and business sites? What if I do link to another site and they ask me to remove it, do I have to? Who has power in this situation – how can other bloggers really enforce their request?"

3. Professional communication writing style and blogs: professional conversation?

The traditional tone of professional writing that is adopted in media releases, annual reports and other organisational communication outlets does not apply to blogs. Yet, a professional representing an organisation cannot take on a completely informal tone either. The challenge of the blogosphere where authenticity and individual voice is very important is to have organisational representation that is authentic. Students maintained that they struggled to

master this different writing style that let the writer develop an individual persona, that was conversational in style, and yet was not personal or classical organisation speak. When responding to a question about the writing style, students responded that it was challenging and different. In one of the focus groups, one student summarised the viewpoints others had shared:

> "The nature of blogs, with their simple structure, strong language networks, fresh content appeal and potential audience of millions of people who use newsreader software, render this communications medium an important tool for public relations practitioners to use and understand. It is important for practitioners to use a conversational method of writing when addressing the blogging public that is traditionally taboo in public relations practice."

The less formal writing tone is one that needs discussion among professional organisations and practice in public relations writing classes. Initially, students were told that their blog postings had to be researched; however many misinterpreted this instruction to mean that they had to go to scholarly journals to find items to discuss. Some initial postings even used the APA style to reference material that was researched. While this style is appropriate for communication plans and original research that is conducted in their other classes, the students had a difficult time grasping that blogs had a level of informality to them. One student responded that writing for blogs "forces you to really look at an issue or industry. You want to be perceived as credible and knowledgeable so you scour various sources to get the whole picture. I think it is more difficult."

4. Two-way dialogue in the blogosphere

As the conversational style of blogs is different to traditional organisational communication, it has implications for models of relationship building. Previous research has talked about web sites as providing dialogic loops and

feedback mechanisms. However, the open, transparent nature of a blog enhances the dialogic nature of the interaction as it is both real-time and available for anyone to see. It is a published communication that responds to the comments of the public. Comments such as "if an organisation used blogs the right way, it really can provide transparency and a real conversation with stakeholders," and "blogs let organisations communicate directly with those who are hugely invested in the organisation," demonstrate that students recognised this concept.

The dialogic potential of a blog creates questions about how to engage in that conversation to the mutual advantage of both the organisation and the blogging public, rather than falling into the pattern of just transferring information or making it more accessible in a new format on a web site. In addition to listening to the public, the students felt that a blog could be more honest communication. For example, "A blog implies an open forum where no one knows who you are or what you look like. This makes it easier for some people to truly speak their minds. It uncovers truth that may have otherwise remained hidden." However, some picked up on the fact that it only engages a public that is aware of the blog:

> "The publics must be aware of the blog, know where to find it and how to participate. You only capture a segment of the population. I'm not sure this is a tactic that I'll ever be able to use to launch a campaign but it does seem that it would help me tap into that core group of supporters."

5. *How do blogs impact strategic decisions?*

A key skill in public relations is how to release information strategically to key publics and maintain relationships with those groups. The value of a public to the organisation can be reflected in when and how information is released. Loyal bloggers of an organisation are an increasingly influential public, especially as the general media increasingly monitor blogs to find

stories. As a tactic, blogs raise questions about not only what to post, but when to post to which audience. This leads to ethical and strategic questions around the use of blogs as a strategic tool to generate newsworthiness:

> "When I was writing my blog, I kept thinking about what do I really want to share and this was just in class. I can only imagine as an organisation that it would be much more complicated. It is impossible to limit it just to your supporters. Your competition also has insight into your organisation, so you really have to be careful about what you do write on the blog."

This issue was raised for the authors while explaining the impact of blogs on the media agenda and how to tap into its strategic potential. We wondered whether information should first go to the bloggers or through traditional media relations channels. Case studies has demonstrated that a media story can be introduced in a blog, such as the Kryptonite U-lock example or Jeff Jarvis' experience with Dell computers, or the blog could be used to respond to media stories, such as President Bush's supporters following the CBS story on the President's service in the reserves. One student noticed that organisations cannot ignore the online community:

> "If any of the companies that routinely get bashed in blog chatter would just acknowledge the concerns of these people, then I think they are much more likely to have neutral – if not positive – stories come out in the media. By ignoring your web publics, you just make them angrier, and they'll start a grassroots effort to make sure the media know you're doing something wrong."

Another student raised the impact of releasing an announcement simultaneously to the online and traditional media communities. In addition to raising relationship management strategy, these questions allowed the educators the opportunity to raise theoretical topics, such

as the agenda-setting impact of either form of the media: Do discussions on blogs drive media content, or does media content impact what bloggers discuss? One student responded by saying:

> "Blogs can be used as a strategic tool to enhance transparency and build loyalty from the targeted publics. Depending on the depth or seriousness of the information would depend on whether or not to go straight to the media or inform the opinion leading bloggers first. If it was about a new line of clothing or a new goal for the company, telling the bloggers first would probably get them excited about it and use word of mouth (or Internet) to influence others. Obviously, something illegal or possibly harmful to the reputation of the organisation should go to the media first."

6. Familiarity is related to professional expertise

Literacy in any medium depends on critical appraisal of products in that format. Blogs are one arena where familiarisation and literacy are important skills for emerging practitioners because not all blogs are created equal. Distinguishing the well-written commentary from mere posturing and rumour milling is a skill that should be cultivated in public relations students. Currently, they are taught to craft well-written media releases and feature stories or well-designed brochures and newsletters. These documents can be evaluated based on the strength of their leads, use of organisational quotations, proper formatting, professional tone or visual design. But the conversational tone of the blog is a different communication style that makes it more difficult to identify a credible one.

Students need to gain exposure to different blogs and read the commentary from different bloggers to be able to identify which ones are credible and worthy of organisational monitoring. "Since anyone can start a blog, it makes it difficult to find really credible information. Exactly which blogger am I supposed to believe?" As one student noted, organisational blogs may face a bigger challenge in becoming a credible source if they continue to be misused: "Companies' blogs have much credibility right now. If companies reward those who write positive things about them on blogs, then it tarnishes the reputation of everyone attempting to blog ethically because there's always a level of suspicion." Another student noted that "It is hard to find good, reliable info in searches. With so many blogs on the Internet, can an organisation's blog really stand out? Credible information from an organisation's blog will just get mixed in the search engine's results."

Blogs are increasingly being monitored to see how the organisation is being discussed online. This parallels the industry's use of environmental scanning and clipping services, which are monitored by many public relations interns and entry-level practitioners. As a component of the blogging assignment, students are taught and encouraged to sign up for various blog monitoring services using tools such as RSS feeds, Netpinions, or CyberAlert. Even students who did not see blogging as a tactic public relations should be concerned with recognised the potential of monitoring blogs:

> "I still do not think that organisations will really be writing blogs in the near future. It just doesn't seem feasible. But, I do think that any PR practitioners that ignore how the company is being discussed on the Internet are setting themselves up for disaster. You have to monitor the blog discussions regardless of how you feel about bloggers."

Personal issues raised by students

In addition to the questions that students raised about professional issues, many expressed some concern over key personal issues. When the assignment was first announced to the class, most were generally interested in learning more about blogging and how the industry was using blogs. However, when students were informed

that they would be required to write their own opinions and share those opinions with others in the class, they became less receptive to the assignment. For this reason, educators need be prepared to address a number of personal issues that students may have about blog management.

1. Students aren't sure they can maintain a blog covering a specific topic

While some responded to the assignment immediately with timely posts on relevant professional and industry issues, others said that they were not sure where to start with their blog. For these students, educators need to remember that the goal is to give the student a chance to become an expert in one specific aspect of public relations. Ultimately, the goal is to create public relations writers, not just writers. So, students need to gain experience researching an industry or client and then decide how they would communicate about that topic on a blog.

This was consistently one of the more difficult parts of the assignment. It would be easy for them to do a personal blog on a topic of their choice, such as football or fashion. However, by having them track an industry and make timely, relevant comments on communication or business trends in that industry, the students maximise their professional development in both the area and their blogging expertise. Educators can point them to numerous resources for information such as industry publications, other blogs about public relations, and mainstream media. One student reflected after the assignment that finding the content was the most difficult part of starting the blog:

> "Researching was the hardest part about writing a blog. If it's just an opinion, then who cares? But when a blog shows facts and uses examples, it is more interesting. It was difficult to know what people wanted to read and what was irrelevant to my company. Finding an angle to write from was also difficult – is it first person? Third person? Am I just informing? Do I want to influence? Or both?"

Students generally wrote on specific topics, such as political public relations or special event planning; however other students focused on an organisation and blogged on their operations. One student, who blogged entirely on press releases, reflected that "the experience really made me look at how to best write press releases. I wrote on good and bad examples, and I really think I'm better off for doing it that way." Educators should encourage students to narrow down the topic of their blogs so they can truly focus on that issue. As the student becomes more comfortable with the issue, they can reflect how it pertains to broader trends in the industry.

2. Time required to complete the project

Blog management does require students and educators to dedicate a significant portion of time to the assignment outside of the normal class period because of the required number of postings on their own and others' blogs. One student "liked the assignment and really learned a lot from it, but I wish it didn't take so long." When asked what took the most time with the project, students answered that "researching for ideas took a while because you want to make sure you have something new to talk about" because blogs should be very timely with their content.

> "The hardest part was learning how to write in the style necessary to be taken seriously in the blogging community. Once this technique is mastered, the time commitment becomes less of an issue. However, to maintain an extremely effective public relations blog that receives a lot of 'hits' and a high Google ranking would take significantly more time. It is a technique to learn which buzz words Google best responds to and which topics bloggers would be most interested in. To maintain a great blog requires diligent monitoring of daily news and at least one, if not multiple, posts per day."

Educators can relieve some stress regarding time management by emphasising that blogs are somewhat less formal in tone. Though they should still follow the basic rules of public relations writing, they require monitoring current events rather than the academic research required for formal papers.

3. *Maintaining student privacy while sharing personal thoughts*

The authors quickly discovered that students were hesitant about commenting and going public. "I am concerned about offending people but more so I am concerned about people writing mean things to me." It is critical to protect the student's identity as much as possible until they are comfortable sharing their blog more widely. For this blog assignment, online names could be pseudonyms as long as the educator knew the blogger's identity. In addition, students wrote their blogs privately for two weeks and then shared the blogs with their classmates. By keeping the blogs private for the first two weeks of the assignment, it was possible to allow the students to develop confidence in their blogging abilities. One student summarised the general concerns expressed by others: "I was a little afraid that I might write something that could be taken out of context and used against me later on, especially when I tried to reflect on issues impacting the entire industry."

The blogs for the assignment were published as a real blog in the real world to add credibility to the assignment and provide it with a good sense of realism. Publishing the blogs on a public site, such as Blogger.com, also enhanced the thoughtfulness of the posts and the sources to which the students chose to link. However, by using a real format we had to make sure that students understood which actions on their part would affect the popularity of their blog. These include links to sites already high on search engine criteria, posts on sites with high visibility, selecting currently popular tags, and discussing and linking to issues popular in the media.

4. *Picking appropriate material to blog about*

Even students who became active bloggers within the first week of receiving the assignment expressed some concern about what material was appropriate for their blog. Students who conducted Internet searches and looked through trade publications said that there was too much information – even when they narrowed their searches down to singular industries or events. "It was so overwhelming in the beginning. I just couldn't decide what to concentrate on," one said. For these students, educators may need to step in and offer some guidance by examining the source credibility of the item or its timeliness. The best-written blog topics are newsworthy and have timely items that contribute to the media's discussion of society and public relations practitioners' discussion of their role and function.

Additionally, educators should stress to students that once their personal opinions are published on a blog, they are available for everyone else to read and challenge. So students need to be prepared to discuss and possibly even defend their comments. This challenge was highlighted by one student: "Making sure the information is truthful and factual. I would not post anything as fact unless I could support it." Another student summarised the problem with blog credibility that "opinions can sometimes be taken as fact. Someone may have great evidence to support an issue, but that (probably) is only one side of the issue. This leads people to have incomplete opinions of their own".

One student noted that even though there was some initial hesitation, the dialogue and discussion that emerged from the blogs was one of the more rewarding aspects of the assignment – "It was fun."

Finally, though not an issue raised by students, this is one that educators should embrace: learn the new tactic along with your students. For both educators who implemented this assignment, this was their first experience with blog management. When they felt that

that they were learning with the educators, the students were more willing to explore the topic and discuss their attitudes toward blogging. This is particularly true for two reasons with blogs: firstly, it is an emerging field and they are excited to be helping their educators stay up-to-date and for them to be on the cutting edge; secondly, the conversational nature of blogs makes it an interactive teaching experience in which it is appropriate to share your observations and learning too.

Conclusion

It did not take long after giving the blog assignment to the students for their initial hesitance to be replaced with confidence and an understanding of the impact of this new medium. By exposing students to the dialogic nature of blogs, educators can show the impact of relationship development in the public relations setting. One important lesson that students and educators can take away from the blogging assignment is that this new, emerging tactic allows organisations to be in touch with this very loyal Internet public in a two-way relationship that is unparalleled in its potential impact. It also is important for us to introduce this new communication channel in the classroom because as one student explained:

> "A student's' familiarity with blogs and their use in public relations will enhance his or her value to future employers. Even if they choose not to actively address the blogging community, it will be helpful to have staff personnel who know how to track blogs and provide strategic recommendations regarding this practice. In addition, blogging has only been on practitioners' radar for the past few years, and current students are among the first to benefit from learning about blogging in a classroom environment."

Blogging has been embraced and acknowledged as a major influence on organisational behaviour and communication. The introduction of blog management into the public relations curriculum challenges both educators and students to learn more about this emerging tactic that is influencing the communications behaviour of companies, non-profit organisations, and government agencies. The issues presented in this paper offer some insights into what educators can expect to face when incorporating blog management in the classroom.

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