

New Media and Public Relations (3rd Edition)

Book reviewed by
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The third edition of *New Media and Public Relations* offers a comprehensive edited collection of original research regarding digital, social, and mobile media in public relations and strategic communications contexts. Readers of this edition will engage with entirely *new* content, which spans the most prolific period of new media research thus far between 2012 and 2016. This book is most appropriate for graduate students and faculty in communication disciplines who are seeking an array of new theoretical and practical concepts addressing corporate and nonprofit applications of new media, ethical and diversity implications of new media, and crisis implications of new media. It makes a strong contribution to public relations education by offering creative and cutting-edge applications of social media and public relations theory while offering excellent recommendations for future digital and social media research trajectories.

Organization of the Book

Structurally, the book features 30 chapters that are divided into eight separate categories. First, an introduction by Duhé analyzes the status of new media research since 2012. She found that scholars have

largely focused on applications, perceptions, and concerns regarding new media in public relations. The introduction concludes with a spotlight on unique theoretical contributions, such as Hon's (2015) development of a digital social advocacy model, Valentini's (2015) critical analysis of social media, Li's (2016) testing of a psychological empowerment framework for social media, and Vujnovic and Kruckeberg's (2016) research regarding the concept of pseudo-transparency. The remaining seven parts feature chapters addressing emerging or groundbreaking ideas regarding new media research, corporate applications of new media, nonprofit and education advancements in new media research, ethical implications for new media use, activism and new media, community management and new media, and lastly, crisis management applications of new media.

Inclusion and New Media

Part 2, dedicated to emerging ideas, offers especially thoughtful calls for more inclusive, global, personal, and publics-focused scholarship regarding new media and public relations. Vercic, Vercic and Sriramesh's chapter entitled, "Where have all the publics gone: The absence of publics in new media research," argues that the majority of new media research remains limited to a North American perspective and remains "silent" on issues of privacy, diverse and marginalized publics, and the remaining digital divide. Similarly, Brand and Beall's chapter entitled, "Cognitive listening theory and public relations practices in new media" acknowledges the understudied concept of listening in the context of new media. Applying Harfield's (2014) cognitive listening model, they argue, can best enable public relations professionals to understand and interpret voices and contexts of diverse publics, manage social media listening on a global scale, and foster an effective listening environment within organizations.

Nonprofits, Ethics and New Media

Parts 4 and 5, dedicated to non-profit and ethical applications, also

provide creative and thoughtful theoretical models and professional best practices for engaging with publics in the digital and social media spheres. Sutherland and Mak's chapter in Part 4, for example, acknowledges the challenges of integrating social media and traditional media in non-profit organizations. The authors recommend the blending of dialogic and relationship management principles in order to best foster a consistent flow of communication, integration of social media and traditional media, and relationships among all key publics. Their integrated social media communication model (p. 137) offers a guide for doing so. Similarly, Sisson's chapter acknowledges the lack of research regarding relationship management, ethics, and social media. After a thorough review of extant scholarship, she argues for greater focus on the concept of control mutuality in ethical non-profit engagement in order to give voice to all publics. In Part 5, McCorkindale applies theoretical concepts regarding care ethics (i.e., Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993) and moral reasoning (i.e., Colby & Kohlberg, 1987) to social media. Citing Tronto (1993), she emphasizes the importance of caring about publics (attentiveness), taking care of publics (responsibility), care giving for publics (competence), and care receiving by publics (responsiveness) (p. 163). McCorkindale's chapter concludes with important recommendations for practice emphasizing the tenets of responsibility, nurturance, and compassion online.

Activism and New Media

Part 6 features research regarding understudied practices of activism in digital and social media environments. Frohlich's chapter, for example, offers an extensive review of activism and social movement scholarship, focusing on the evolution of new media, public relations efforts, and activist relations. She argues that organizations must better develop specific social media strategies to engage activists and consider them as key organizational stakeholders. Similarly, Lee, Chon, Oh, and

Kim's chapter applies the situational theory of problem solving (STOPS) and communicative action in problem solving (CAPS) theories to activist publics, who are assumed to be quite active on social media. Particularly valuable is the authors' list of digital communicative activism behaviors addressing dimensions of information acquisition, information selection, and information transmission of digital activists (pp. 202-205). This list and the concluding paragraph offer new scholars excellent ideas for future research regarding digital activism, especially concerning best communication approaches to foster online relationships among organizations and digital activist publics.

Recommendations

Ultimately, Sandra Duhé's third edition of *New Media and Public Relations* is a joy to read. It offers timely, original, and insightful considerations for public relations students, scholars, and practitioners who are interested in digital, mobile, and social media theory development and practice. The book is well organized and provides balanced and substantial content regarding a variety of nonprofit, educational, corporate, and activist new media contexts. To strengthen future editions, the addition of a chapter that concludes the book is suggested. The concluding chapter might discuss overarching themes across all contributed chapters, overarching applications of the research to professional and educational contexts, discussion questions for classroom engagement, or additional directions for future research.

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