

How Has PR Changed, within the Communication World?

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Introduction

Social media has had a significant impact on public relations, presenting companies with new possibilities and difficulties. It enables companies and customers to interact in real time throughout a range of platforms, which has boosted need for brands to respond promptly and efficiently to consumer enquiries. Additionally, social networking has resulted in the creation of successful online advocates with whom companies may connect and collaborate. Coordination of interactions among customers and writers is a significant element of media relations, from briefing the client to going to a physical place for talks or interviews (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

The global usage of social media has attained an upward trend within the communication world, with Facebook and Twitter as some of the most preferred platforms. As a result, several organizations have gained substantial mileage by utilizing the platforms to communicate efficiently and promptly with their clients regarding their products and responding to various questions from their customers. The paradigm shifts to a progressively mobile, digital, and social media environment. However, increasingly intense competition exists to draw attention where popular media such as broadcasters and newspapers dominated. While remaining imperative, journalists are growing fairly less vital as producers and disseminators of news. Hence, the underlying discussion highlights the fall of journalism, social media's rise, and its impact on the public relation (PR) practice.

Due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 on in-person encounters, public relations professionals shifted their focus to conducting virtual interviews, often by video. This may be advantageous since it saves time and money and eliminates the need for everyone to be there at the same moment. Employing digital approaches to interact with journalists may also put everyone at ease and offer the interviewer greater power. Among the many changes the pandemic has brought to public relations, improved accessibility is likely the most noticeable. Geographical location is considerably less significant in an internet environment (Santoso et al., 2021).

Virtual activities are accessible to anybody, not just those allowed to attend in person. While it is difficult to mimic the sensation of being together in person, the pandemic's enhanced availability allows for the gathering of more individuals and opinions, which could continue to erode geographic and physical boundaries in the future. The recent year of surviving during a pandemic has altered a great deal in the realm of communications, but these tendencies are projected to persist, even as we return to more normalcy post-COVID-19. Whereas the previous year has posed several obstacles, the chances for learning and growth have shown that the public relations business is robust, flexible, and durable in moments of emergency (Peters et al., 2020).

Public relations, more than any other business, has been impacted by conflict, politics, innovation, and societal transformation. What distinguishes it is that it exists at the nexus of commerce, science, and basic human experiencing. This is most frequently observed in an acknowledgement of PR's influence on consumer involvement and public perception while simultaneously advocating for more precise scientific evaluation of its financial impact. By examining how public relations has evolved over time, we can get insight into what the business might anticipate for the future—and, no, it does not have as much to do with online as you would assume, even if online PR does contribute significantly in what the future holds for company.

Public relations is sometimes seen as a relatively recent profession, with its development beginning just a few generations earlier. Nonetheless, PR stretches all the way back to the early 1900s, when activists exploited the potential of PR to promote their propaganda during the first world war, and it was not until the 1920s that PR infiltrated the business community. Prior to it, there were other different forms devoted to influencing public perception. Ever since, public relations has undergone a paradigm change in terms of its current function. Ivy Lee and Edward L. Bernays established public relations as a career in the United States, and it quickly expanded around the globe (Bernays & Fleischman, 1937).

Lee was the first public relations expert employed by famous entrepreneur John D. Rockefeller. John was fighting with a protest over his fuel and iron factory at the time, dubbed the “Ludlow Massacre.” He had a bad reputation and was seen as self-centered and a dictatorial dictator. However, this was not the case. He was a well-known philanthropist in his day, and Lee changed John’s repulsive image into that of a smart manager who values his employees more than himself. In its infancy, public relations was primarily concerned with news releases. Public relations professionals relied primarily on print media and radio stations to communicate their message to the public. The method of transmitting information by postal systems was slow, and breaking news may take days to reach the public (Gitelman, 2016).

Research Methodology

The research uses the systematic review methodology to address the research question: How has PR changed within the Communication World?. The methodology presents an extensive summary of research-based insight that can aid in understanding a certain phenomenon. Systematic research review encompasses literature search and evaluation, which is ensued by data extraction and analysis. The literature search comprises literature identification in which the keywords play a vital role (Xiao & Watson, 2017, p. 93). From the title, if the presented content appears to discuss the role of social media on PR, as a result, 20 studies were deemed relevant. First section, looks on the evolution of Public Relations as a definition throughout the years which dates back to the early 20th century, the definition reflects the changes and advances in society and technology. Second section, states the development of PR through the years since 1923 and the major milestones to the present day, highlighting the changes that emerged on the field. Third section, compares the traditional understanding “old school” with the modern practice “new school” which deepens the understanding of the developments in the communication field. Lastly, examining the fall of journalism and rise of social media, by discussing the shift and influence technology caused on communication tools

and factors affecting communication (building relationship through conversation, reputation development with transparency, reduced control over the messages). The intention of the study is to highlight the changes that influences the development of the practice.

Importance of the Study

While a large number of studies, evaluation and research regarding Public Relations have been conducted, limited research focused on the development of the field. This study intends to fill the gap by exposing the intersection between modern technology tools and traditional understanding of the practice.

Evolution of Definition

There are various definitions through which PR is communicated. The definition presented in Awofadeju's (2019, p. 66) is that PR consists of planned communication between an organization and its public to attain a certain objective regarding common understanding. The definition is given by Amodu et al. (2019, p. 2) relates the concept of PR to a management function that aids in achieving the organizational objectives, as well as defining philosophy and facilitating change. Another remarkable definition provided by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) asserts that the PR entails counseling management at all organizational levels concerning policy decisions, communication, and course of action, considering their public consequences, as well as social responsibilities (Amodu et al., 2019, p.7). Thus, these definitions imply that PR is a communication-based approach.

The current PR is still transitioning both in theory and practice. Transition indicators manifest through considerable dissimilarities in definitions, opposed history accounts, and the exceptional ways the field experiences key challenges of increasing risks, worldwide uncertainties, and disruptive technologies. In particular, the dominant definitions in the 20th century centered on the ideas of PR as a management function, with the meaning managing relating closely to "control" as it is "to cope with" the interactions and communication between an entity and its audiences. The latest meanings recognize PR as more democratic and less organization-oriented by underscoring its duty in "reciprocally" beneficial relations instead of underpinning control management and traditional command (Mckie & Sriramesh, 2017, p. 1). Along with these democratizing drifts, propelled by the worldwide spread of the field, PR is also in concurrence with the technological advancement effects. In a 2011 to 2012 exercise, PRSA appreciated technological relevance by using web-enabled crowdsourcing to respond to the universal aspect of upgrading definition with the global consultation. Ultimately,

the PRSA website defined the PRs as a premeditated communication procedure that nurtures mutually benefiting interactions between entities and their targeted audiences to distance from the ideologies of control and top-down, one-way conversations related to the management (Mckie & Sriramesh, 2017, p. 2). Thus, these shifting highlights help differentiate the PR field from corporate communication, communication management, and strategic management.

The latest trends in the academic field indicate that PR is effectively underpinned as an inventive and social exercise availed to almost every person to apply the principles and practices of public relations with organizational reputations, individual reputations, and crisis and risk communication circumstances. The idea is that the definition described above is viewed as not an ivory tower idealism because it is socially visible already (Mckie & Sriramesh, 2017, p. 3). It is broadly illustrated in how individuals within economically progressed economies move conveniently in heavily promotional settings and can always absorb procedures and use them. The trend is noticeable in the context of young individuals with social media know-how and skills and young businesspersons introduction of exceedingly successful firms. Hence, rather than journalists playing a huge PR role as done previously, the citizens have advanced by posting materials that go viral to win redress for individual grievances, even against vast organizations (Mckie & Sriramesh, 2017, p. 3). Besides, the latest definitions of PR, concerning social media dominance imply that the field is no longer a one-way communication but a participative social sphere.

Development of PR Through the Years

PR development is marked with various milestones that provide a clear path to the field's present understanding. The initial milestone involved the separation of PR from the idea of propaganda in 1923 by Edward Bernays. In particular, Bernays connected PR with democracy and differentiated it from propaganda (Mckie & Sriramesh, 2017, p. 4). Initially, PR was used to persuade people into accepting some stands taken by the government. For instance, the work of George Creel on behalf of the war effort under the Presidency of Woodrow Wilson depicted propaganda in action with the "Four Minute Men" group, who toured the nation speaking to the citizens about World War I and reinforcing the president's stands and opinions. As a tool of propaganda, the role of PR centered on a one-way communication with the government talking to the population through its appointed individuals such as Creel. On the contrary, Bernays focused on empowering the public and enabling citizens to express their grievances. Bernays believed that PR was most efficient when both behavioral psychology and science were balanced to create campaigns to shape public opinion or behavior (The

History of Modern Public Relations, 2021, p. 37). Through Bernays' efforts, the concept of PR was constructed as a linear advancement that transformed from press agency to a two-way communication form with phases described by dissimilar perceptions from leaders to citizens.

The second milestone was marked with the growth of the public relations agency pioneered by individuals such as Harold Burson and Daniel J. Edelman in the 1950s. For instance, Burson identified the possibility of PR as a global business opportunity and started an agency known as Burson Marsteller (B-M) with its first overseas office in Geneva in 1953. B-M was viewed as a reputation and crisis communications management leader for a long time. Moreover, Edelman founded his PR company, branded as Daniel J. Edelman, Inc., in 1952 and steered its expansion into the globe's largest independent entity (The History of Modern Public Relations, 2021, p. 40). The third milestone was characterized by an increase in ongoing conferences, including the BledCom founded in 1994, the Barcelona International PR Conference established in 2011, and the National Communication Association. The presentations and proceedings of these conferences addressed several themes pertinent to expanding the limits of PR. The pluralization of voices accompanied by new perspectives and writers on the PR from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East opened different horizons that include anti-imperialist campaigns and the societal role of women (Mckie & Sriramesh, 2017, p. 6). These milestones enhanced the two-way communication between the authority and the public.

The growth of digital media defined the fourth milestone. Digital media continues to change how PR is conducted and, in the process, accelerate the anticipations of both the management and clients for outcomes (The History of Modern Public Relations, 2021, p. 46). Several people use online platforms more often to consume news and information, thereby reducing the number of those who rely on traditional newspapers and broadcast news stations. However, social media has deteriorated the original role played by traditional journalists in disseminating information, and the field of PR is not an exception. Based on the statistics presented by Pew Research on social media usage between 2005 and 2015, almost 65% of the American adults utilize social platforms, accounting for a 7% increase since Pew Research Center started its systematic tracking of social media (The History of Modern Public Relations, 2021, p. 47). In brief, the current PR relies more prevalent on social media than on journalism.

Old School PR vs. New School PR

Old School PR

The old school PR and the new school PR have differences that set them apart. The old-

school PR was mainly connected to publicity, with the practitioners focusing on creating awareness and building recognition for the organization or clients seeking the services. It was largely tied to promoting and distributing the message to the broadest possible audiences. For instance, taking the case of George Creel with his concept of “Four Minute Men,” the main point was to publicize World War I along with the positions and views of president Woodrow Wilson (The History of Modern Public Relations, 2021, p. 39). Under the leadership of Creel, the Committee of Public Information (CPI) was created to use its creativity and chicanery to publicize Wilson’s messages and obstruct those of his opponents. In particular, CPI ensured the dissemination of the message to a wider population by commissioning preachers, journalists, and poets to advocate for the war efforts. The entire PR process was about creating awareness of the stand taken by the Executive branch of the government rather than seeking to know people’s opinions.

The urgency characterized the old-school PR to clarify information, which prompted the introduction of agency businesses affiliated with journalists. Thus, with the great emphasis on providing more complete details and enabling the client to clarify the reasons for their stands, agency businesses, as demonstrated by Daniel J. Edelman, created the idea of a media tour through which the agency’s representative could travel and hold events and public appearances in collaboration with the local media (The History of Modern Public Relations, 2021, p. 42). Hence, such opportunities created room for an extensive understanding of the message by the targeted public.

New School PR

The new school PR, dominated by the use of social media, underscores mutual satisfaction between the involved entities and the public. In particular, there is two-way communication, especially where the leadership is involved with the citizens. For example, the former U.S. president, Donald Trump, engaged the citizens directly through Tweets rather than agencies, generating a conversation. For example, Trump tweeted on November 10, 2012, appreciating many who he claimed acknowledged him as the best 140-character writer globally. Two-way communication was sparked up with citizens, including Jim Spellman, Leslie Abravanel, and Jon Sosis responding directly (Ott, 2017, p. 63). The new school PR is less associated with traditional news sources and requires insignificant journalism efforts. Wright and Hinson (2017, p. 1) indicate that the recent studies show dramatic increases in the role played by social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook. While the aforesaid trend is most common among young individuals 30 years and below, Wright and Hinson (2017, p. 1) affirm that even the older population turns to social media for news. The study by Pew Research Center established that in 1995, Only 10% of American adults were using the internet as compared to almost 90% presently. These statistics affirm that the traditional communication model of top-down

applied previously in the PR does not apply currently. Since people get the information directly through online platforms, the role of journalists is skipped (Safari, 2018, p. 150). Despite the absence of journalists, PR is enhanced through mutual satisfaction. Readers of the online newspaper can participate by availing feedback regarding the news and may also interact directly via chat forums and blogs.

The Fall of Journalism and the Rise of Social Media and its Influence of PR Practice

Journalism and news media have changed under the digital platform era. With social media, the role and value of the news have transformed. Overall, social media platforms have changed the collection and distribution of news. The production, dissemination, and consumption of news have shifted. Notably, news producers tended to engage in distribution, now digital platforms and consumers have also embarked on the role of dissemination. As such, the interaction between the news and the audience has become more multifaceted and layered, with far-reaching effects on journalism and news media (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 11). The current journalism environment has experienced a massive crumbling of the pre-digital business model, especially for the news producers. In the Australian case as an illustration, a whopping \$1.5 billion was lost by the publishers of newspapers and magazines between 2011 and 2015. Besides, \$349 million in print advertising revenue was lost within the same period. By 2016, Facebook and Google acquired 75% of the total Australian online advertisement (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 12). In other words, the fall of journalism became unavoidable when the players succumbed to a hybrid model.

The Hybrid Role of Platforms

The fall of journalism concerning the hybrid model is characterized by the onset of the most complex changes involving how the interaction between journalists and audiences is transforming. Critically, the field of journalism and the public have not had an entirely straightforward transaction. Most commonly, the traditional news media functioned within a two-sided market with its advertisers and the audience, where the democratic transaction was a substantively positive externality. In the digital platform era, the initial two-sided market has transitioned into a multi-sided market with the digital platforms entering the frame. Thus, one fundamental aspect of the change in the journalist/public relationship is how consuming audiences have created audiences through digital platforms. In the process, the new hybrid model has acquired a description as “we media,” with participatory journalism superseding traditional journalism. Besides, consumers are no longer passive; rather, they engage in filtering and discussing the news

content and aid in creating it (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 13). With the hybrid model gaining popularity, the relations between news producers and consumers have become more interactive. Therefore, the news agenda is managed collectively by news companies and digital platforms that play a vital role in the distribution process.

Unlike previously, where news production was entirely confined to journalists, the current journalistic content is produced, disseminated, and restructured through the communicative options between journalists and their audience, thereby relinquishing some tasks such as filtering news played by the former to the latter. The repercussion is an augmented network between presses and consumers and an ever-presence of consumer feedback. As a result, new organizations endeavor to manage the increasing volume of consumer-led comments. For instance, discussions have been centered on the comment sections, forums, and audience interaction on their social media channels. The constant increase in users' comments is potentially one of the utmost remarkable examples of news restructuring, and it demonstrates that the consumer participation idea in journalism has transitioned moderately rapidly for the past few years (Kramp & Loosen, 2018, p. 206). The present-omnipresence of consumer articulations, as well as consumer-generated content has prompted the recognition of consumers as part of the editorial community management (Kramp & Loosen, 2018, p. 213).

The considerable change experienced in the journalism sector is switching to online platforms. Kalombe and Phiri (2019, p. 1984) indicate that technological improvements have transformed how individuals interact. Presently, people want to interact quicker, increasing the urgency of digital platforms and displacing the role of traditional journalists. The increasing access to smartphones has accelerated the availability of opportunities for consumer engagement (Kalombe & Phiri, 2019, p. 1986). As a result, most of the audience no longer rely much on traditional journalism for news. From the survey conducted by Kubtan et al. (2020, p. 3) across different states in the U.S., the internet or social media was voted as the most convenient, thereby superseding newspaper TV and radio. According to the findings from the study, the internet makes accessing information online easy and can apply to the various category as depicted in figure 1. Based on whether social media is taking over TV news, the outcome affirmed that there is a substantial difference between the daily averages for the time spent on social media and TV (Kubtan, Antabi, & Alqeshi, 2020, p. 12). It seems that individuals currently spend much time on social media compared to TV, thereby implying that the likelihood of accessing news through the former option has surpassed the latter.

Gratification	Internet	Newspaper	Television	Radio
Convenience	3.48 (.03)	2.04 (.04)**	2.53 (.04)**	2.18 (.04)**
Variety	3.08 (.03)	2.28 (.04)**	2.46 (.03)**	2.32 (.04)**
Vote	2.83 (.04)	2.01 (.04)**	2.32 (.04)**	2.10 (.04)**

Figure 1: Increased preference for social media due to convenience and variety use
(Kubtan, Antabi, & Alqeshi, 2020, p. 3)

According to the research carried out in July 2021 by Pew Research Center, 48% of U.S. adults admitted to using social media to get news more often or sometimes. As indicated in figure 2, Facebook outpaces all other social media sites like the news source for Americans. In the separate question probing the users of 10 social media sites where they frequently obtain their news, approximately 31% of the U.S. citizens confirmed sourcing their news from Facebook. In contrast, approximately 22% admitted to regularly using YouTube. From Pew research findings, Instagram and Twitter serve as regular sources of news for 11% and 13% of Americans, respectively. Nevertheless, other social media sites are less likely to serve as regular sources of news. For instance, 7%, 6%, 4%, and another 4% of Americans claimed that they get their news from Reddit, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Snapchat, respectively. Only 3% and 1% affirmed using WhatsApp and Twitch in that order (Walker & Matsa, 2021). These social media platforms collectively are dislodging the role of journalism in news distribution and partly production.

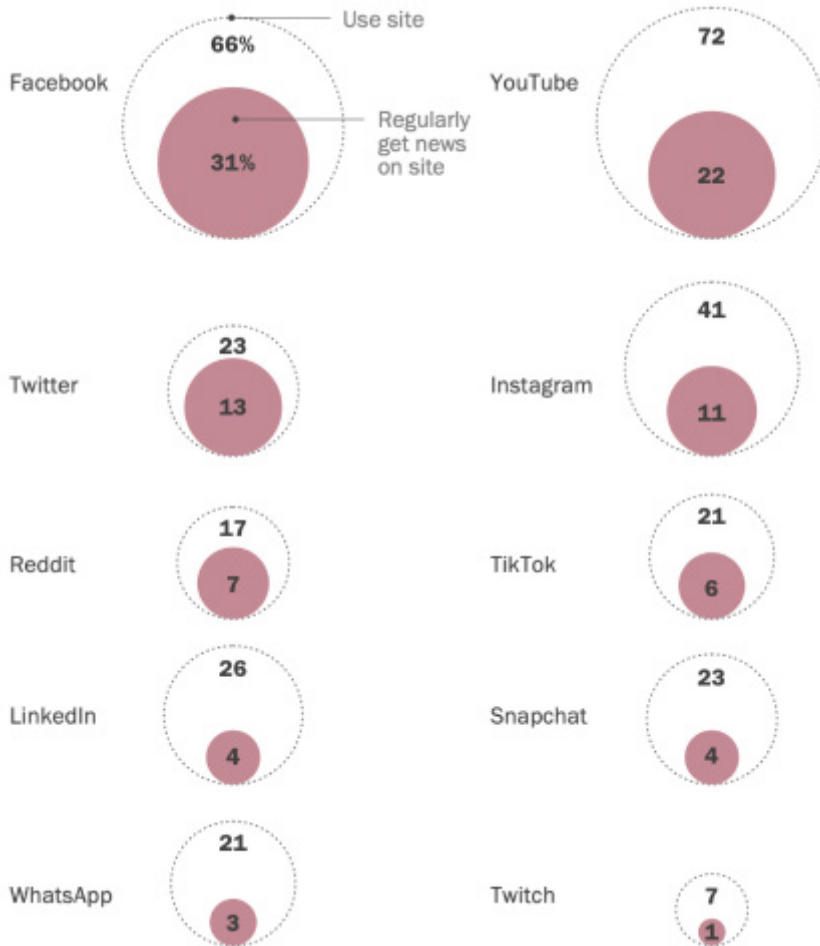


Figure 2: Social media platforms and how they are preferred (Walker & Matsa, 2021)

The Rise of Social Media and its influence on PR Generation of Feedbacks

The rise of social media has influenced the PR field by enabling an interactive environment. Amodu et al. (2019, p. 3) underscore that for years, the urgency to reach a large number of people through communication resulted in the adoption of mass media options as means of disseminating information. The mass media, although efficient in accessing masses, were limited in feedback generation, which is vital in assessing the suitability of PR efforts. Amodu et al. (2019, p. 3) note that contrary to the previous model where a clear dichotomy between the message creators and the end-users exists,

consumers in the social media-dominated setting also engage in producing the content through their feedback. Martens (2020, p. 11) argues that social media has impacted PR by providing practitioners in the field with opportunities of addressing traditional media through channels that engage directly with the consumers and influencers. For example, consumers in the contemporary fourth estate are permitted to provide tailored feedback to the sector's main writers and actively participate in the news production processes. Thus, the conversational format has placed the population back into public relations.

Building Relationships Through Conversations

Provided that social media is grounded on multi-directional dialogues, it enables PR practitioners to fulfill the two-way symmetrical communication model, which is a vital part of excellent PR. In particular, Martens (2020, p. 13) alludes that practitioners are enabled through a two-way symmetrical approach to apply efficient communication and develop relationships with multiple publics through direct involvement and listening to their discourses. Allagui and Breslow (2016, p. 22) perceive social media as the heart of PR activities due to its capacity to improve organization connections with the public, thereby cultivating community relations. Besides, Allagui and Breslow (2016, p. 22) indicate that the relationship between marketing and PR has improved to the extent of allowing a greater capacity for interaction and relationship development. Safori (2018, p. 149) points out that social media adheres to selectivity and interactivity option as depicted through web-based journalism. In particular, consumers can choose the topics of their preference with the assistance of hyperlinks. As a result, an ongoing platform for the audiences is provided where news producers communicate and avail feedback to the related stories. Martens (2020, p. 14) also argues that the initiation of social media has facilitated organizations to link and communicate with their public. As a result, the public has become influential players instead of remaining recipients of a planned message by the organization. In summation, two-way communication facilitated through social media results in an interactive PR.

The two-way communication approach enabled through social media aligns with the sentiments echoed in the excellence theory, which postulates that organizations are interdependent with their stakeholders or the public. The theory articulates that part of the managerial role entails practicing a two-way symmetric PR model, which harmonizes the organizational interests and its public. Certainly, the two-way symmetric conversation aligns with social media communication in which organizations are enabled to get a response and know more concerning their publics (Neill & Lee, 2016, p. 6). Therefore, contemporary PR practitioners should always build relationships and

encourage a two-way discourse.

Reputation-Development With Transparency

Social media has a considerable effect on reputation and organizational survival. Martens (2020, p. 14) indicates that the inclusion of social platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or micro-blogging into the PR is expected to improve corporate accountability and legitimacy by actively involving the public online. Moreover, transparent conversation by genuinely answering inquiries posted by consumers through social media contributes to the entity's reputation. In contrast, reliable and 'personable' conversation nurtures sustainable interactions between the involved organization and its public. Hence, the presence of social media plays a significant role in building a positive reputation and robust interactions between organizations and their public.

Reduced Control Over the Message

The other impact of social media on PR involves reduced control that organizations have over their intended messages. Initially, PR practitioners had better control of the organization's communication through press releases. Nevertheless, the advent of social media offered opportunities for conversations to occur outside the entity's sphere of influence. The greatest worry among the PR practitioners was the loss of control. Based on Marten's (2020, p. 14) assertions, agency practitioners used blogs more than in-house experts because the latter group was under restrictions imposed by organizations to ensure control over the message. Awofadeju (2019, p. 72) argues that though PR actors still package their content, they acknowledge publishing it themselves through social networks, blogs, and other social media channels. Notwithstanding sending the information to the traditional media, PR practitioners find opportunities to talk directly with the public, view consumer responses, and act as expected. Thus, PR organizations no longer have absolute control over the message.

Reduced control over the message is characterized by the ability of those involved in certain news to bypass the news media and access the audience directly. The opportunity enables other parties rather than PR players to engage the public and keep them informed about occurrences that impact them. For example, a five-minute video dubbed "The operation the world never forgets" was posted to Facebook on July 12, 2018, by the Thai Navy. The video depicted drivers checking gears and cleaning masks in preparation to save 12 boys and their soccer coach, who at the moment were trapped in the Tham Luang caves. Rather than issuing press releases and providing spokesperson for interviews with the media house. The video was viewed 2.5 million times within a week, attracted 150 000 likes, and was shared 44,000 times (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 14).

The case of the Thai Navy illustrates how social media has created a participatory PR where everyone, rather than only media houses or journalists, can engage in informing the public.

Conclusion

The rise in social media has resulted in the decline of traditional journalism. The population no longer relies on sources such as print media for news since online platforms such as Facebook act as convenient alternatives. For example, the public can use their digital devices, including smartphones, to take videos of occurrences in their proximity and post them on social platforms. Besides, the research has established that social media has considerably impacted the PR practice. For instance, it has changed how media organizations communicate, most of them embracing a two-way conversation model. Through social media, PR practitioners have the chance to access their audience remotely through digital platforms. With the advent of social media in the PR field, consumers who were only recipients of news in the past years have become vital in producing news content. For instance, consumers can provide personalized feedback to PR practitioners about the distributed content. Besides, consumers currently perform the task of filtering the news by engaging in online discussions through platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Thus, social media has reduced the role of journalists in the production and dissemination of news and enhanced a participatory PR practice through consumer feedback. To answer the question; How has PR changed within the Communication world? The answer is PR changed dramatically and will continue to do so, professionals and academics in the field coped with the changes and will continue not only in adapting to technological developments but also in humanizing the communication experience.

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