

**BULLDOG REPORTER/
TEKGROUP INTERNATIONAL
2008 JOURNALIST SURVEY ON
MEDIA RELATIONS PRACTICES
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Bulldog Reporter/TEKgroup International

2008 Journalist Survey on Media Relations Practices:

Executive Summary

Survey conducted September 11-23, 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A broad survey of working journalists across all media was conducted for the second year in a row using SurveyMonkey.com as the data collector, and generating valid responses from 2,386 journalists, of which approximately 48% were editors or editorial staff and 34% were reporters or writers. The objective was to track year-over-year changes in journalist usage of the Internet and other resources to research, follow and report news and features material.

1. Respondents again reported that the single greatest change in journalism practices due to new Internet technology is that they can now research corporate and other news online 24 hours a day (77.8%) *and* they can now access media contact phone numbers and email addresses online (67.5%).

2. Nearly *half* of all journalists report visiting a corporate website or online newsroom at least once a week, and almost 87% report visiting a corporate website or online newsroom at least once a month. Ironically, despite such heavy traffic from journalists, most corporate websites seem inadequately designed to accommodate them: Almost half of journalists complain that when they visit organizations' websites, it's often difficult to find the organizations' media representatives or to find contact information for those representatives.

3. Journalists also report a significant increase in usage of blogs, social media and RSS feeds to stay on top of the news.

Almost 75% of journalists read one or more blogs to keep up with the subject matter they cover, compared with only about 70% a year ago. Today, some 29% of journalists regularly read five or more blogs to keep up with their beat, compared with about 26% last year.

The increase in journalists visiting social media sites to do their job has risen even more dramatically: Today about three-fourths of journalists use social media to research stories, compared with about 67% last year. Almost 38% of journalists now say they visit a social media site at least once a week as part of their reporting, compared with only 28% last year. More than 53% now say they visit a social media site at least once a month, up from about 44% last year.

Nearly 19% of journalists report that they receive *five or more* RSS feeds of news services, blogs, podcasts or videocasts every week, a gain of about three percentage points over last year, and a total of about 41% receive at least one regular RSS feed, a gain of over four percentage points.

4. While about half (48.7%) of journalists report that they *never* seek audio or video material from corporate websites, nearly 23% say they seek such material at least once a month—an increase of about three percentage points over the past year. Among journalists working in national television, some 10.3% seek audio or video material once a week or more and that number jumps to 46.7% seeking such material at least once every three months. Among journalists working in local radio, some 38.4% seek audio or video from corporate websites at least once a month.

5. While a large majority (76.4%) of journalists report that they use their local newspapers to follow the news (followed by the New York Times at nearly 63%), some 51% of journalists report that they use Google News, about 32% use Yahoo! News services to stay abreast.

DETAILED SUMMARY OF RESULTS

QUESTION #1: What is your title?

The overwhelming majority of respondents to this survey were frontline working journalists—more than 85% reported titles of reporter/writer, correspondent/columnist or editor/editorial staff. Fewer than 1% reported a non-editorial title.

Reporter/Writer	34.2%
Correspondent/Columnist	3.7%
Editor/Editorial Staff	47.7%
Producer	2.8%
Booker	0.1%
On-Air Talent	4.1%
Media Outlet Manager (Non-Editorial)	0.7%
Other	6.7%

QUESTION #2: For which type of medium do you work?

Nearly 46% of respondents work at newspapers; about 20% work at trade publications, more than 13% work at consumer magazines, and almost 15% work at TV or radio outlets, providing a reasonable representation of the journalist profession.

Weekly newspaper	5.9%
Daily newspaper	40.5%
Consumer magazine	13.3%
Trade magazine or newspaper	19.5%
Local television	9.2%
National television	1.3%
Local radio	3.4%
National radio	0.7%
Wire service/News syndicate	1.6%
Online service	4.6%

QUESTION #3: Which beat do you primarily cover?

Respondents cover a wide range of beats, with the greatest number—almost 14%—covering city/metro, followed by sports/recreation (9.2%), government/politics (8.5%), and business, general (7.5%). Nearly 11% of respondents represent the combined beat category of entertainment/arts/culture, while nearly 8% cover the combined category of technology, business and technology, consumer.

Accounting	0.2%
Advertising/Marketing	0.7%
Agriculture/Farming	1.3%
Architecture/Design	1.3%
Arts/Culture	4.7%
Automotive	1.7%
Banking	0.3%

Beauty	0.4%
Biotechnology	0.5%
Books	0.3%
Business, General	7.5%
City/Metro	13.8%
Education	2.9%
Electronics, industrial	0.9%
Energy/utilities	1.0%
Entertainment	6.0%
Environment	1.7%
Family/Parenting	1.7%
Fashion/Apparel	0.7%
Financial Services	1.3%
Food/Beverage/Restaurants	3.4%
Government/Politics	8.5%
Healthcare/Hospitals/Medicine	6.2%
Home/Garden	1.5%
International News	0.8%
Law	2.8%
Personal Finance	1.0%
Professional Services	0.3%
Pharmaceuticals	0.3%
Publishing/Media	1.3%
Real Estate/Housing	1.5%
Retail	1.0%
Science	1.7%
Social Policy	0.7%
Sports/Recreation	9.2%
Technology (business)	4.1%
Technology (consumer)	2.9%
Travel/Hospitality	2.5%
Transportation	1.4%

QUESTION #4: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following frustrations, sometimes expressed by working journalists, about public relations professionals.

Respondents rated their agreement on a one-through-five scale, with “one” indicating lack of agreement and “five” indicating full agreement. For purposes of this report, we have combined scores of one and two to indicate general disagreement and scores of four and five to indicate general agreement.

Journalists most fully agreed with the proposition that PR professionals often try to shade or “spin” a story to their advantage, with 60.7% in general agreement, a drop of about three percentage points from last year. While perhaps PR professionals cannot be blamed for attempting to positively represent their clients’ cases, they might take more seriously the complaint that PR professionals interrupt them and waste their time, a proposition with which more than half of journalists generally agreed, about the same as last year.

Likewise, PR professionals may do well to recognize that nearly all journalists generally believe PR people don't understand their media or the subjects they cover, bespeaking a greater need for media research before pitching or distributing press materials. Indeed, almost 50% of journalists generally believe that PR professionals do not "understand which subjects I cover," and 46% generally agree that PR pros are not sufficiently familiar with their media outlets, both indicators holding strong compared with last year.

Given these complaints, it's small wonder that 50.4% of journalist respondents generally agree that phone calls from PR professionals waste their time. Nor is it surprising that more than 37% of journalists report general agreement with the statement that "I cannot easily find information I need on corporate websites" (with only 6.7% strongly disagreeing).

On the positive side, journalists *disagreed* strongly with the notion that PR professionals "do not respond quickly enough when I call them," with 56.1% indicating general disagreement and only 4.8% agreeing whole heartedly—reflecting a slight PR performance improvement compared with last year. Another relative positive was the fact that journalists generally disagree that PR professionals often do not tell the truth, with 53.4% disagreeing with that statement generally, and only 5.0% agreeing fully—again, a slight image improvement compared with last year.

	DO NOT AGREE			FULLY AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5
Material sent by PR is usually <u>not</u> relevant to my work.	04.9%	16.4%	33.0%	28.7%	17.0%
PR professionals do <u>not</u> respond quickly enough when I call them.	21.2%	35.0%	27.1%	11.9%	4.8%
I cannot easily find information I need on corporate websites.	06.7%	23.8%	32.3%	26.4%	10.9%
PR professionals do <u>not</u> understand which subjects I cover.	06.6%	19.7%	27.9%	28.6%	17.3%
Phone calls from PR professionals interrupt me and waste my time.	09.0%	18.0%	22.2%	24.8%	26.0%
PR professionals often do <u>not</u> tell the truth.	20.8%	32.6%	29.7%	11.9%	05.0%
PR professionals often try to shade or "spin" a story to their advantage.	04.0%	12.8%	22.4%	33.6%	27.1%
PR professionals often do <u>not</u> provide access to corporate executives when I need it.	13.2%	23.5%	29.6%	21.6%	12.1%
PR professionals are <u>not</u> familiar enough with my media outlet.	10.5%	17.6%	26.0%	26.3%	19.7%

QUESTION #5: How do you prefer to receive information about corporate, not-for-profit or government news?

An overwhelming majority of journalists—74.8%—prefer to receive information about corporate, not-for-profit and government news by email. Commercial newswires were a distant second choice, with only 8.1% of respondents indicating that preference. More journalists this year indicated that they prefer to receive targeted emails from a corporate online newsroom (7.3%) compared with last year (4.5%), indicating a preference for information targeted to them, as opposed to “shot-gunned” messages. Only 6.3% of respondents indicated that they didn’t want to receive such information from any source.

Via commercial newswires (such as PR Newswire or BusinessWire)	8.1%
Via press releases sent to me through the U.S. Postal Service	2.1%
Via press releases sent to me by email	74.8%
Via official alerts sent to me from a corporate online newsroom	7.3%
Via press releases sent to me by fax	0.8%
Via press releases sent to me by express delivery (such as FedEx or UPS)	0.5%
I do <u>not</u> wish to receive such information from any source	6.3%

QUESTION #6: How many blogs do you read regularly in order to keep up with the subject matter you cover as a journalist? (Please check one best answer.)

Nearly 75% of journalists say they read one or more blogs to keep up with their beats—an increase of about five percentage points compared with last year—which indicates that blogs continue to gain popularity and credibility as a source of information for the traditional press. Indeed, a surprising 29.1% of all journalists say they follow *five or more blogs*—an increase of three percentage points this year—but among consumer technology journalists this number jumps to 75.4%. Journalists covering entertainment also report high reliance on blogs, with nearly 45% following five or more blogs. Sorting by media type, the survey shows that some 57% of online journalists lead all others by regularly reading five or more blogs.

None	25.3%
1 blog	7.2%
2 blogs	17.2%
3 blogs	16.3%
4 blogs	4.9%
5 or more blogs	29.1%

QUESTION #7: How often do you visit a “social media” website (such as YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, Flickr or Twitter) to research subject matter you cover as a journalist?

Social media sites now play a greater role for journalists in their research and news gathering compared with a year ago. Today only about one fourth of respondents say they don’t use these sites (compared with almost one-third who said this last year), and almost 38% say they visit them once a week or more (compared with about 28% last year). However, among journalists covering the entertainment beat, only about 12% report that they *never* visit social media sites, and more than 67% say they visit such sites once a week or more frequently.

Nearly 57% of journalists on the consumer technology beat report visiting social media sites once a week or more frequently. Sorting by media type, it's local radio journalists who make most use of social media sites, with more than 54% reporting visits once weekly or more.

Never	25.4%
About once a year	6.7%
About once every six months	7.7%
About once every three months	7.2%
About once a month	15.3%
About once a week	13.9%
More often than once a week	23.9%

QUESTION #8: How many blogs, podcasts, videocasts or other news services do you regularly receive via an RSS feed?

While RSS feeds are not as universally employed as other technologies covered in this survey, still almost 42% of journalists report using them to receive blogs, podcasts, videocasts and other news services, up about four percentage points from last year, and nearly 19% report receiving five or more such feeds, up about three percentage points from last year. Of course, among consumer technology journalists, more than 60% say they receive five or more such feeds, compared with only about 30% of business technology journalists. Not unexpectedly, online journalists make more use of RSS than journalists at any other media type, with nearly 47% reporting subscriptions to five or more feeds.

None	58.4%
1	6.2%
2	8.4%
3	6.5%
4	1.9%
5 or more	18.6%

QUESTION #9: How often do you visit a corporate website or online newsroom to research subject matter you cover as a journalist?

The importance of a corporate website and online newsroom for journalists as a primary source of information continued over the past year, with nearly 97% of journalists reflecting their usage of such sites in general. Nearly 47% of respondents report visits more frequently than once a week, and more than 86% report a visit at least once a month. Business technology journalists make greatest use of corporate websites and online newsrooms, with 72% reporting visits more than once a week and fully 100% of such journalists visiting once a month or more. Nearly 63% of online journalists visit corporate websites or online newsrooms more than once a week and nearly 92% using such sites once a month or more.

Again, this growing reliance on the corporate website must be juxtaposed with the fact that more than a half of all journalists report significant difficulties in getting specific information they seek from those sites (see question #10).

Never	3.3%
About once a year	1.6%

About once every six months	3.1%
About once every three months	5.1%
About once a month	16.4%
About once a week	23.7%
More often than once a week	46.7%

QUESTION #10: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following difficulties sometimes identified by working journalists when visiting a corporate website.

Answers to this question indicate that most corporate websites are far from media friendly. What kinds of difficulties do journalists have when they visit corporate websites seeking information? Almost half of journalists generally agree that it's difficult to find the identities of organizations' media contacts and contact information for those representatives. More than half generally agree that it's difficult to find press materials that address their interests. What's more, fully 42.4% of respondents generally agree that it's difficult to find organizations' online newsrooms. Given the fact that journalists so frequently use the corporate website to gain information about organizations and since organizing the corporate website for ease of use by journalists (and other publics) is relatively simple and inexpensive, this would seem to point to a major opportunity for media relations specialists.

	DO NOT AGREE			FULLY AGREE	
	1	2	3	4	5
It's often difficult to navigate around organizations' websites.	03.1%	15.4%	34.6%	31.8%	15.2%
It's often difficult to find organizations' online newsrooms.	07.0%	21.0%	29.6%	29.3%	13.1%
It's often difficult to find organizations' media contacts.	06.6%	18.3%	25.4%	30.2%	19.5%
It's often difficult to find contact information for organizations' media representatives.	05.9%	18.2%	26.4%	30.3%	19.2%
It's often difficult to find press materials that specifically address my interests.	03.4%	13.0%	29.2%	35.6%	18.8%
It's often difficult to find out who the organizations' top executives are.	12.1%	27.1%	28.9%	20.0%	11.9%
It's often difficult to find background information about the organizations.	10.9%	27.2%	32.5%	20.2%	09.1%

QUESTION #11: How often do you seek audio or video material from corporate websites for use in your reporting?

More than half of journalists indicated that they use online audio or video from corporate websites in their reporting—an increase of about three percentage points from last year. While almost 10% of respondents report using such material once a week or more, that number jumps to about 20% for journalists working at national radio outlets, 11.5% for journalists at local radio outlets, and more than 10% for national television journalists.

Never	48.7%
About once a year	10.2%
About once every six months	9.7%
About once every three months	8.7%
About once a month	12.8%
About once a week	5.3%
More often than once a week	4.6%

QUESTION #12: Which general-interest media outlets do you use regularly to follow the news?

Journalists overwhelmingly use local newspapers to stay on top of the news—serving more than 76% of respondents. Surprisingly, perhaps, is that the *New York Times* is the second-most-used medium (and the most popular branded medium) by journalists to stay abreast of the news, with nearly 63% of journalists citing it. But online news media—using Google News and Yahoo! News combined—now serve some 72% of journalists (unduplicated)—up dramatically from 63% last year. CNN ranked as a primary source for 52% of journalists, and National Public Radio claims the attention of nearly 49%. Fox News, while more popular among the general public, satisfies only about 20% of journalists' appetites for news, but it ties with CBS as a primary news source. The biggest gainer of journalist audience was MSNBC, which experienced a growth in popularity of nearly five percentage points compared with last year's results.

Local television	57.4%
Local radio	44.9%
Local newspaper	76.4%
<i>New York Times</i>	62.7%
<i>USA Today</i>	24.8%
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	39.9%
National Public Radio	48.7%
ABC TV national news program(s)	24.3%
CBS TV national news program(s)	19.7%
NBC TV national news program(s)	29.0%
Fox News national news program(s)	19.7%
CNN national news program(s)	52.0%
MSNBC national news program(s)	30.4%
Google News	51.0%
Yahoo News	32.3%

QUESTION #13: What has been the greatest change in the way you practice journalism due to new Internet technology?

According to this survey, the single greatest impact the Internet has had on how journalists practice their craft is the ability to research news online 24/7, with nearly 78% indicating this change. Nearly 68% of journalists indicated that the ability to access media contact phone numbers and email addresses online was significant, despite the fact that this information was also deemed difficult to find on many corporate websites. Other advantages brought about by the Internet also pertained to corporate information, such as the ability to search corporate news archives, receive corporate news alerts targeted to their beats, and access electronic press kits online. Again, it would appear that the usability of institutional websites lags behind journalist demand for information about organizations.

I can now research corporate and other news online 24 hours a day.	77.8%
I can now search corporate news archives online.	40.3%
I can now receive corporate and other news via email alerts targeted specifically to my particular beat.	39.2%
I can now receive blogs and corporate news via RSS.	20.1%
I can now search for and download high-resolution photographs.	41.4%
I can now access social media and corporate audio and video online.	21.7%
I can now access electronic press kits online.	45.3%
I can now access media contact phone numbers and email addresses online.	67.5%