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MIDDLEBERG/SNCR SURVEY OF MEDIA REVEALS JOURNALISTS' GENERATIONAL GAP

Other Key Preliminary Results...

- New Generation of Journalists Rapidly Adopting Social Media/Online Communications
- Social Media Tools Going Mainstream in the Newsroom
- Online Media Gaining Credibility
- Key Implications for Communicators – Adopt or Fade Away

NEW YORK, November 17, 2008 – While journalists across all age groups and beat assignments are rapidly adopting social media tools into their everyday work, the greatest usage is shown by young “Millennial Generation” journalists. The disparity in usage between younger versus older journalists is striking and holds important implications for journalists and communicators.

These and other important findings were revealed at the 3rd Annual Society of New Communications Research Symposium, which was held Friday, November 14th, at the Hotel Marlowe in Cambridge, MA, (<http://sncr.org/symposium08/>). The survey findings were presented by Don Middleberg, CEO of the independent public relations agency, Middleberg Communications, and Jen McClure, executive director, SNCR.

This new study is the successor to the highly-regarded journalist survey conducted from 1994 – 2004 by Don Middleberg and Steven Ross, formerly Associate Professor of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

“The most dramatic and significant finding of this new survey,” stated Middleberg, “is the rapid adoption of new media and online communication among all journalists. The disparity in usage and perceived value of

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these new tools and technologies to the future of journalism is particularly striking among the youngest demographic versus the oldest.”

Key findings among youngest versus older journalists:

- 100% of Millennial respondents (*i.e.*, 18-29 year-olds) believe new media and communications tools are enhancing journalism, versus 40% in the 50-64 demographic
- 87% of 18-29 year-olds believe bloggers have become important opinion-shapers, versus 60% of 50-64 year-olds
- 87% of 18-29 year-olds confirm that new media and communications enhances the relationship with their audience, versus 42% of 50-64 year-olds

Key findings among all journalists:

- 48% of all respondents use LinkedIn, and 45% use Facebook to assist in reporting
- 68% of all respondents use blogs to keep up on issues or topics of interest
- 86% of all respondents use company websites, 71% use Wikipedia, and 46% use blogs to research an individual organization

“The exciting news,” said Middleberg, “is that we have new ways to reach and communicate with a whole new generation of journalists. The communications professionals who embrace these changes will be far more effective and successful.”

Stated McClure, “What is striking about this survey is that it is very clear that the ‘Millennials’ – the younger journalists entering the workforce – are adopting new media and social tools more readily and seeing their value, especially in terms of collaborating with their peers and strengthening their relationships with their audiences and the people in the areas they cover. While it’s not entirely surprising that this younger generation of journalists are users of these new communications tools, it’s interesting that they understand how to use them effectively in their work, and are pushing the journalism profession as a whole to create a more collaborative, reciprocal, interactive and fluid form of journalism.”

Implications For Public Relations Practitioners

- Public relations must connect the dots between public relations and social media
- Managing social media belongs with public relations practitioners since PR professionals are story tellers who understand how to build relationships, collaborate, engage in conversations, understand changing influence patterns, and how to communicate with journalists in the channel of their choice

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- Personal contacts and relationships continue to be critical. Journalists still want old fashioned face-to-face meetings and phone calls

Survey Methodology

The survey questionnaire was developed by the SNCR Fellows in conjunction with TWI Surveys and informed by discussions with those Fellows who are journalists and communications professors. It was launched in September 2008 and is still in progress. All data was tested for significant differences. All journalists are invited to participate in the survey at:

<http://www.surveytracker.net/scripts/survey.dll?AHID=03100D>

Respondents to date include 160 editors and reporters from print, broadcast, and online news organizations. Final results will be published in the SNCR's *Journal of New Communications Research* and presented at the New Communications Forum in Spring 2009. The full study will include in-depth case studies with journalists.

About the Society for New Communications Research

The Society for New Communications Research is a global nonprofit think tank dedicated to the advanced study of the latest developments in new media and communications, and their effect on traditional media and business models, communications, culture and society. SNCR creates a bridge between the academic community and practitioners using these new tools and methodologies, and is focused on research, education and best practices. For more information about the Society for New Communications Research, visit <http://www.sncr.org> or call +1 (650) 331-0083.

About Middleberg Communications

Middleberg Communications is a full-service, independently owned public relations agency with specialized expertise in corporate and financial services, marketing and media, technology and sustainability. The agency places a major emphasis on achieving real, tangible goals that are designed to help our clients grow their businesses. Hallmarks of the firm are: smart, creative strategic thinking; in-depth media relations; and unbridled enthusiasm for achieving clients' business goals – all supported by good old fashioned hard work. Visit Middleberg Communications at www.middlebergcommunications.com

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