

# CHAPTER 4: Electronic Media

**“Two of the cruelest, most primitive punishments our town deals out to those who fall from favor are the empty mailbox and the silent telephone.”**  
**Hedda Hopper**

## **E-mail – Tool of Choice**

“You've got mail.” Nine out of 10 missives are e-mail, according to a report that chronicles the rapid shift from postal letters to e-mail as the means of communicating. The report from the Congressional Management Foundation<sup>6</sup>, a nonpartisan group working to improve the effectiveness of Congress, says a personal message, either online or on paper, carries more weight than the mass mailings so popular with advocacy groups.

Based on a survey of 202 U. S, House and Senate offices, the Foundation found that Congress received 200 million e-mail and postal mail messages in 2004, four times the 50 million total in 1995. During that period, postal mail dropped sharply, from 50 million in 1995 to about 18 million in 2004. Many congressional members have web sites that encourage citizens to e-mail them with their opinions.

Through strategic partnerships with grassroots experts across the state, comprehensive programs with interactive web sites complement traditional strategic communications like direct mail and phone campaigns. The news media generally prefers receiving information by e-mail, especially if the advisory or release is being sent directly to a specific reporter.

A news organization web site regularly lists e-mail addresses of their staff and often a news or feature story will end with information on how to contact a reporter with a phone number and e-mail address.

### *Example Web Site Announcement:*

“E-mail the Governor” ([www.govmail.ca.gov](http://www.govmail.ca.gov))

Thank you for your interest in the Governor's Web Mail. Please note that [governor@governor.ca.gov](mailto:governor@governor.ca.gov) is still available but using the web form will ensure a much faster response, according California Governors office Web site at <http://www.governor.ca.gov>

To help us keep track of correspondence and to ensure that we are able to respond to California residents, please be sure to include your name and e-mail address and choose an appropriate subject from the drop down menu when you communicate with the Governor's Office.

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<sup>6</sup> “Communicating with Congress: How Capitol Hill is Coping with the Surge in Citizen Advocacy.”

## Website Press Rooms and Media Rooms

Web pages labeled “press room” or “media room” are important because a majority of media professionals prefer to go online in search of information for their publications. An online press room can save time and money (postage and printing costs). Your press room is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even when you are not.

An online media room is a “mini-site” or section that resides at a separate secure domain, but with seamless access to and from the main site. The media room is primarily dedicated to communicating media-specific information to reporters and journalists. But, it is also available to the public as a resource for basic company information. There are a few important things to remember when setting up your on-line press room<sup>7</sup>:

- Make it easy to find and remember
- Make it readable
- Make it fast loading
- Make it original
- Keep it current
- Be sure your site is targeted to the reporters it is meant to serve
- Present an easily understood contact list
- Offer accessible press release archives

### *Webcast*

The word “webcast” is derived from “web” and “broadcast”. In the National Association of Broadcasters’ publications/training manual, a webcast is defined as sending audio and/or video live over the Internet or on digital networks, as well as listening or watching on-demand files.

A webcast uses streaming media technology to take a single content source and distribute it to many simultaneous listeners/viewers. The largest “webcasters” include radio and TV stations that “simulcast” their output, as well as a multitude of Internet-only “stations”. Rights and licensing bodies offer specific “Webcasting licenses” to those wishing to carry out Internet broadcasting using copyright material. Webcast is also used extensively in the commercial sector for investor relations presentations (such as Annual General Meetings), in E-learning (to transmit seminars), and for related communications activities. The ability to webcast using cheap/accessible technology has allowed independent media to flourish. There are many notable independent shows that broadcast regularly online. Often produced by average citizens in their homes these episodes cover many interests and topics from the mundane to the bizarre. Webcasts relating to computers, technology, and news are particularly popular and many new shows are added regularly. Some agencies will simulcast an all-staff meeting to outlying offices. The same technology could also be used to broadcast the opening of a new park site or a presentation by a prominent local figure.

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<sup>7</sup> Parkhurst, p. 88.

## **Example**

### **LIVE WEBCAST TODAY**

#### **Schwarzenegger to Sign Strengthening School Accountability Bill This Morning**

9/18/2006 - The Governor will sign AB 1381 authored by Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez (D-Los Angeles), which will help increase student achievement by improving accountability and management of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Watch the live webcast at 10:30am at <http://gov.ca.gov/>.

## **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**

The Federal Communications Commission and the 1992 Cable Act make Public Service Announcements (PSAs) possible. PSAs are short, non-commercial promotions prepared to provide information that also benefits the general public – the intended audience of a PSA. Most PSAs are produced by and for nonprofit organizations. However, a for-profit business could use a PSA to promote a nonprofit activity or community event that could provide health and safety tips, assist in non-profit fund raising efforts, and inform and/or influence public opinion on an important issue.

Free air time (usually 10- to 60-second spots) on television and radio is available to community associations, advocate groups, nonprofit organizations and for-profit organizations that are promoting their nonprofit community events with PSAs.

### ➤ *Radio and Audio Tape PSAs*

Some radio stations require audio-taped PSAs that are ready to air. Audio PSAs produced by organizations may be as simple as having one person record the scripted message on audio tape. Write and format the copy so it is ready for broadcast.

"Copy" is a term used to refer to text in brochures, press releases and, as in this case, a broadcast script. Submit a printed copy (script) of the PSA, along with your pre-recorded tape, to the station and type "Tape Enclosed" at the top or end of the PSA script.

### ➤ *Live Copy PSA*

Live-copy PSAs are short scripted announcements to be read by the station's on-air talent during regular programming. PSAs are read as part of a community calendar. The message is usually read in time slots of 10, 15, 30 or 60 seconds. Many radio stations encourage the use of live copy PSAs.

### **Example PSA for Radio:**

30 seconds:

RADIO NEWS RELEASES SHOULD BE TYPED WITHOUT IDENTATIONS...USE TWO PERIODS (..) TO DENOTE A PAUSE IN A SENTENCE AND THREE PERIODS (...) TO DENOTE THE END OF A SENTENCE...WHEN USING A DIFFICULT NAME IN A STORY.. FOLLOW THE NAME WITH THE PRONUNCIATION IN PARENTHESES..AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE BODIE (BO DEE) IS A GENUINE GHOST TOWN NORTHEAST OF YOSEMITE (YO SEM IT TEE) ..USE FOUR PERIODS (....) TO END THE RELEASE....

#### ➤ *Television and Video PSAs*

For television, there must be a visual component to the story. Most of the guidelines for radio PSAs are applicable to television PSAs. Check with the station for their tape size requirements, they may need either a three-quarter inch or one-inch video tape.

#### ➤ *Video News Releases (VNRs) and Audio News Releases (ANRs)*

Advance planning can provide publicity for an organization on a local TV or radio talk show. Interviews on news programs, whether taped or live, can also provide the combination of sight, sound, and motion that only TV with its physical demonstration of images can provide. TV and radio gives a high impact for the message while targeting large audiences.

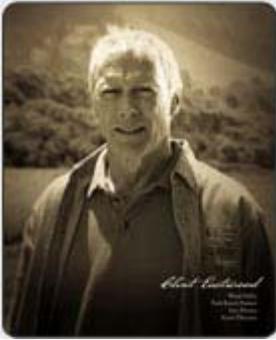
TV and radio can also be limited by the amount of time available and any possible costs associated with production of a commercial, Public Service Announcement (PSA), Video News Releases (VNRs) and Audio News Releases (ANRs).

Video News Releases are video clips that are indistinguishable from traditional news clips and are sometimes screened unedited by television stations without the identification of the original producers or sponsors, who are commonly corporations, government agencies, or non governmental organizations. A VNR communicates an entity's public relations or corporate message, is paid for by the corporation or organization seeking to announce news, and is delivered without charge to the media.

Produced in broadcast news style, VNRs relay the news of a product launch, medical discovery, corporate merger event, timely feature or breaking news directly to television news decision-makers who may use the video and audio material in full or edited form. Most major television stations in the world now use VNRs.

#### ➤ *Post your PSA in Your Web Press Room*

**Example Web site Announcement:** Clint Eastwood serves as National Spokesman for Take Pride in America, promoting volunteerism, parks, and the health benefits of recreation:



[Watch PSA](#) 

## **Eastwood: 'Make My Day - Lend a Hand' Clint Eastwood Urges Americans to Volunteer on Our Nation's Public Lands**

Starring Take Pride national spokesman Clint Eastwood, the Take Pride in America Public Service Announcements were created to help spread the word on volunteering and motivate people to respond to the many volunteer opportunities presented on our website.