



Blogging: PR's True Claim to the Internet

By Robb Hecht, The PR Machine

Don Middleberg coined the term “online PR” in 2001 and attempted to claim the Internet back then for the PR industry. He pointed out that PR is about a brilliant idea communicated through various forms of media and online was the next form. Thanks to Don, since 2001 we’ve become comfortable with media companies using different reporters and editors for online content. And hence any time we pitched an online media reporter, we were doing “online PR.” We learned that in the world of the Internet that media companies weren’t simply repackaging news for online publishing and we became accustomed to the new pitching approaches to identify and build relationships with both properties for clients.

With differing on and offline personalities and lead times when pitching client stories, PR professional realized there were entirely different content generators to reach, online. Due to the instantaneous nature of the Internet with its global audience, Web news sites weren’t confined to time-to-print and reported news anytime, day or night. Sites like MSNBC.com, CNN.com, News.com and others turned heads by reporting news rapidly. Today it's often the case that the major news players get their scoop from Web news sites. Business Week, for example, releases articles to its website subscribers three days prior to its print publication. And due to the unlimited depth of Internet content capabilities, not bound by print, our PR content generating efforts in the medium can be substantial.

But anyone utilizing the Internet really had to question Don’s PR industry claim to the Internet at that point. It seemed instead that the advertising industry was the one who claimed the Internet through banner ads and email newsletter sponsorships, not PR. But, if Don Middleberg, along with Al and Laura Ries have anything to say about it in 2003, the Internet is a PR tool and the two together can be a phenomenal brand building mechanism.