

November 2011

**AC** **POV**

# Read All About It!

*Understanding Media Transformation and Usage*



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AN ACCESS COMMUNICATIONS POINT OF VIEW

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## *Understanding Media Transformation and Usage*

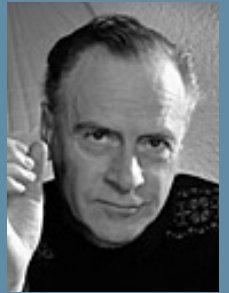
*“Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication.”*

– Marshall McLuhan

Almost fifty years after his groundbreaking book, *Understanding Media* (1964) focused on the media effects that permeate society and culture, renowned academic and communications theorist Marshall McLuhan is as relevant and his insights as important and timely, as ever. In fact, the man known for coining the iconic phrase, “the medium is the message,” is also widely credited as having predicted the World Wide Web, thirty years before its inception, with his concept of “the global village.”

### WHO IS MARSHALL McLUHAN?

This year marks the centennial of the birth of Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) a Canadian educator, philosopher, and scholar — a professor of English literature, a literary critic, a rhetorician, and a communication theorist. McLuhan’s work is viewed as one of the cornerstones in the study of media theory, with practical applications in the advertising and television industries. McLuhan’s most widely known work, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), is a pioneering study in media theory. McLuhan proposed that media themselves, not the content they carry, should be the focus of study — popularly quoted as “the medium is the message”. McLuhan’s insight was that a medium affects the society in which it plays a role not by the content delivered over the medium, but by the characteristics of the medium itself.



Since McLuhan’s characteristically prescient observation on the nature of communication vs. its content, technology innovations have introduced unprecedented changes – in how media cover and report the news, how societies consume news and, increasingly, how individuals participate in the reporting process itself – which in turn are having a profound effect on public relations and how it’s practitioners engage with journalists.

The nature of media has evolved dramatically over that time, from the once mighty monochromatic daily newspaper to the lively and colorful national news outlet of USA Today, and from “The CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite” to an explosion of 24-7 cable news shows. Today, every bit of traditional media has undergone a dramatic transformation as news websites compete with blogs, Twitter and Google News and those channels are in turn being transformed by new, immersive “touch web” news platforms such as Flipboard.

Each of these developments is a step in the evolutionary process of how we consume media, which as McLuhan observed, has far more influence over how we define ourselves than the content we consume.

As part of Access Communications’ ongoing analysis of the changing media and communications landscape, we asked our friends in the media to comment on the nature of these changes: what they mean to reporters on an individual level; how they are influencing what takes place in the newsroom; and how they are helping shape the decisions journalists are making about the future of newsgathering and reporting.

At the beginning of 2011, we kicked off a new series of informal recorded interviews with journalists. These conversations evolved into the Access Social Scene video series. These sessions typically run 7-10 minutes, and take place in a variety of settings – amid the frenetic action in Austin at South by Southwest (SXSW), in our New York and San Francisco offices during journalist visits for “brown

## SOCIAL SCENE

### JOURNALISTS WE INTERVIEWED:



Brian Barrett  
Gizmodo



Tiffany Black  
Inc.com



Brandon Bodow  
Good Morning, America



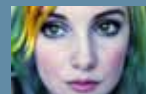
Omar Gallaga  
The Austin American  
Statesman



Abigail Jones  
The Daily



Anya Kamenetz  
Fast Company



Jolie O'Dell  
Mashable



Ryan Osborn  
The Today Show



Zach Seward  
The Wall Street Journal



Brian Stelter  
The New York Times



Jon Swartz  
USA Today



Stephanie Wash  
ABC News

*“The best thing (about social media tools) as a reporter is to be able to reach out and find experts or those types of people you might not be aware of. I use Facebook to reach out to people I already know, but I use Twitter to reach out to people I may not know and would like to meet.”*

– Jon Swartz, USA Today

bag” lunches, as well as at tradeshow, conferences and industry events.

What these journalists shared with us unequivocally reinforces the prevailing wisdom: that the advent of social media and citizen journalism, with new communications tools and technologies, is rewriting the way news and information is delivered, and is having profound effects on journalists, journalism, and the state of the media industry. Equally fascinating are the anecdotal and personal observations that emerge in these interviews about what this transformation means on a practical, operational, and philosophical level as reporters respond to and help create new mediums of communicating with their viewers and readers.

Over the course of some 22 interviews with a wide range of reporters representing traditional print media (USA Today, The Austin American-Statesman, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Inc., Fast Company), broadcast media (Good Morning America, ABC News, CBS News) and new media (Mashable, The Daily, Gizmodo), we began to see compelling, larger themes emerge, which taken together seem to validate something else McLuhan said: we shape our tools and then our tools shape us.

- **Twitter as indispensable tool:** in so many ways – reaching out for sources and information, more intimate engagement with readers and viewers, building community – Twitter is reshaping journalism
- **Breaking news is a first draft:** social media tools and technologies, in the hands of both journalists and citizens, continue to accelerate the reporting process, underscoring the need for responsibility and accountability
- **The tablet as fifth screen:** with its simple elegance and mobility the tablet has quickly become the new “hearth,” a singular device enabling users to plug into a vast community anywhere they are – and enabling journalists to tell richer, more immersive stories than ever before
- **The rise of the meta-literate digital audience:** while observers with a dystopian bent decry a post-literate world, technology savvy-consumers are demanding a more inclusive role in news-gathering and reporting, and bringing a meta-literate perspective to the process

### SURVEY SAYS! JOURNALISTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

69%	Use Twitter as a tool to assist in reporting, a 21% increase from 2010 study
68%	Believe that reliance on social media has increased significantly
95%	Believe that social media can be a reliable tool for sourcing stories

Source: 3rd Annual Survey of the Media in the Wired World, conducted by The Society of New Communications Research (SNCR) and Middleberg Communications. For full survey results: <http://bit.ly/UJZaI>

### TWITTER IS THE INDISPENSABLE TOOL FOR JOURNALISTS

McLuhan wrote that: "It is the framework which changes with each new technology and not just the picture within the frame." Could he have been predicting Twitter? Twitter as a technology framework for communications has become an indispensable tool for journalists, who use it in almost every way imaginable.

#### Finding And Connecting With Sources

"I use it religiously," USA Today's Jon Swartz told us, who uses Twitter to find sources and background information. "It's the best service in the world, bar none, it's one of the best ways to find friends of friends

### WHAT THIS MEANS TO PR PROFESSIONALS

- **The 140 Character Message:** Twitter is now a top choice for journalists to communicate with PR people and connect with sources. To foster meaningful engagement, key assets and messages should be boiled down and concise to capture immediate attention. Also, remember that downsized links (like bit.ly's) are a way to provide additional supporting material in less characters.
- **Be a part of the conversation early, and stay connected:** If your brand or PR reps are not on Twitter, now is the time to start. While C-suite executives might hesitate at adopting a new medium, PR professionals need to strongly counsel their clients on the conversations and interactions taking place that they are missing out on. With so many reporters using this medium as a sourcing platform and news vehicle, brands and companies not present will lose valuable, real-time feedback and monitoring, as well as the opportunity to manage the conversation about their brand that reporters and other key constituencies may be watching.

of friends or experts of experts of experts. It's a good way to let people know what you're working on and I notice a lot more reporters are doing that."

For Tiffany Black, who recently left Inc.com, Twitter just makes reporting easier. "I actually think it's easier to connect to people because I'll think of someone and be like 'Oh, let me hit them on twitter' and people are usually very quick to respond back to you, especially when you're a major media publication. So, I feel like because of social media I can actually do my job faster than before, when you're sitting there waiting for a phone call and someone to get back to you."

### Building "Community"

Tiffany Black also talks about how the staff is using Twitter to foster stronger engagement with its community of readers: "We're definitely looking at unique visitors, but we want followers who are retweeting us. We have a really tight community, and while we only have about 200,000 people following us on Twitter – they are passionate! They are constantly tweeting at us, constantly tweeting our stuff, and it's really good to see that high level of engagement given that we don't comparatively have that large of a Twitter audience. Our Twitter has grown rapidly – this time last year we only had about 45,000 followers, so for us to get to 200,000 in a little less than a year is pretty amazing for us."

Access spent time with Austin American Statesman reporter Omar Gallaga at SXSW in Austin earlier this year. Omar shared how he and his editor were using Twitter from the festival: "We're tweeting all of the blog posts that we're putting out in panel reviews, and we're getting information from my readers through

*"Sometimes there is a huge pressure to 'go' on breaking news. You do have to remember that it's the first draft of history; yes, there is urgency, but it's not just about the quick hits."*

– Anya Kamenetz, *Fast Company*

Twitter. I'm following my readers through Twitter to see what people are saying about the rest of the festival. I can't be everywhere at once, so it helps me sort of have a better grasp of what's going on at the festival."

### Uncovering Stories With Legs – And Giving Stories Legs

Gizmodo's Brian Barrett touched on a challenge that Twitter helps solve, namely that once a story hits a major site then it's typically been picked up by numerous other news sites. "I look at Twitter a lot, just for stories that might be a little bit off the beaten path."

For ABC News' Stephanie Wash, as with numerous other journalists now, Twitter is a highly effective means to build awareness for stories and reporters: "We use Twitter as well, linking a bunch of different medical sites, getting our correspondents like Chris Cuomo onto Twitter and tweeting about legal stories, or Dr. Richard Besser, tweeting about medical stories and getting all of our content there as well. Our ABC News site has well over a million followers on Twitter and we're constantly breaking news, constantly getting all of our digital content out there as well."

### Adding Depth And Content To Breaking News

The Today Show's Ryan Osborn: "As social media is evolving we're using it as a news-gathering tool for our reporting. A great example is when we used The Today Show Twitter handle to find pictures of the people who had survived the US Air plane crash. That was a pivotal moment within our organization as we realized how important these tools were going to be for what we are trying to do in the space."

### BREAKING NEWS IS A FIRST DRAFT

The speed with which news now breaks puts enormous pressure on journalists to "go fast" on stories even as they are evolving. In these situations social media is the fulcrum upon which both quick fact-checking and quick publishing simultaneously rest. It is creating a new environment where what is initially published can very well be a "first draft," open to ongoing editing and updating in real time, both by the journalist and his or her readers. With this temptation to deliver the "get," to break the story, comes tremendous responsibility and accountability; the impediments to this kind of reporting in the old media world – a chain of editors to review and edit copy, the laborious process of laying out type, the quaint once-a-day publishing and broadcast schedules – have given way to the sublime simplicity of a single keystroke. Journalists today recognize that what they publish can evolve very quickly.

### The Importance Of Due Diligence

USA Today's Swartz counsels to always keep due diligence a critical part of a reporter's process: "In the haste to get things out, you often see things that are one source stories or stories that are just aping what that company has told them, without

### WHAT THIS MEANS TO PR PROFESSIONALS

- **Be on call for journalists:** Social media allows for collaboration and the opportunity to help shape and develop the full story. With potential customers and consumers engaged in these mediums as well, it enables PR professionals new ways of engaging with both constituencies in the same conversation, thus cutting down on additional legwork for the journalist.
- **The story is far from over:** Instead of viewing each placement as a "hard stop," think of it more as a jumping off point for further communication and engagement. Comments could turn sour or present a fresh new idea, so if you aren't monitoring closely, you may miss the opportunity to respond clearly and articulate your feedback to the reporter.

much due diligence, and I think that one of the things that you have to do as a reporter is that you have to question what people tell you. You're not a stenographer – that's why they call them stenographers – you're someone who's supposed to digest, in a reasonable amount of time, as many opinions as you can and distill it in to something that is seamless but also speaks to the truth."

When we sat down with Fast Company’s Anya Kamenetz at SXSW earlier this year, she brought this to life in speaking about breaking news concerning Architecture for Humanity’s Cameron Sinclair: “Sometimes there is a huge pressure to go on breaking news; I filed last night at 11PM when Cameron Sinclair announced on his blog that he was starting his earthquake reconstruction effort here at SXSW, and I texted him really late at night to get the response, and he texted me back – so you do have some of that pull, some of that urgency, but at the same time you have to think about ‘what is the quality, what’s the accuracy, what’s the quality of the story’ and is it something that people will want to read, evergreen, down the line? On the site, as well as on the print magazine, even on fast company.com, we have posts that were made popular year, after year, after year. You do have to remember that it’s the first draft of history, yes there is urgency, yes, but it’s not just about the quick hits.”

### Standards In The Digital Age

The impact of social media in journalism has created an ongoing debate about its deleterious effects on journalistic standards, and our journalists shared their own passionate feelings on the subject. Said Gizmodo’s Barrett: “there is constant debate around the erosion of journalistic standards. I think that we all have the same standards. The baseline standard is that we don’t post something that is not true. I think that’s a standard that old media, new media both share. We are a little bit faster, or a lot faster, depending on what you’re talking about. We will print a rumor, but will say explicitly that it’s a rumor...we’ll tag it as a rumor, we’ll say in the headline it’s a rumor, we’ll try to hedge it as best we can, and we’ll say to the extent to which

### BY THE NUMBERS

25M

Today, more than 25-million iPads and an estimated 5-million competing media tablets are in use globally

23%

The Online Publishers Association (OPA) estimates that 23% of the U.S. Internet population, ages 8-64, will own or use a media tablet by early 2012. That represents an estimated 54-million U.S. consumers

120M

Most analysts are now forecasting that as many as 120-million iPads and 40-million other media tablets will be in use globally by the end of 2012. They also expect that by then more than 5,000 news apps will be available to use on media tablets

it might be true, or not. The bottom line is; we will not print something we know is not true, or that we highly suspect is not true. I think that applies to both old and new media.”

### THE TABLET IS THE FIFTH SCREEN

Wilbur Schramm, a contemporary of Marshall McLuhan, is sometimes called the “father of communications studies” for his influence on the development of communication research in the United States and the establishing of departments of communication studies in U.S. universities. One of Schramm’s areas of focus was on how consumers weigh the expected rewards of consumption of news and information against what it takes to get those

rewards. Since the advent in the 1950s of “mass media, messages have evolved from print to public airwaves to cable channels to computer screens to mobile phones, and over that time Schramm’s central premise has remained essentially valid: “we all make decisions of which content we choose based on our expectations of having some need met, even if that decision is to not make a choice.”

When Apple released the iPad tablet in early 2010, the potential implications for the news business were soaked in hyperbole. As New York Times media critic David Carr remarked, “There hasn’t been this much hype about a tablet since Moses came down from the mountain.” But the breadth of the device’s features and functionality – it’s portability, ease-of-use, and tactile interface – have combined to enable an immersive experience equaling or even surpassing the intimate relationship consumers have had for decades with newspapers, magazines and TV programs, and in the process redefining the way media outlets present the news to their audiences. It has emerged as the ideal device to enable the connectedness and interdependence of an increasing more mobile society with dramatically changing needs that must be met more quickly – fulfilling Schramm’s promise and moving us along the next logical progression to “fifth screen,” following the movie screen, television, personal computer and cell phone.

### The Future Of Publishing

The Daily’s Abigail Jones: “This is about the future of publishing; you know, the iPad suddenly arrived and it kind of changed the way that we interact with each other, the way we spend our time at home, watch movies, and e-mail and use apps, and for anyone

## WHAT THIS MEANS TO PR PROFESSIONALS

Be cognizant of what is driving the decisions behind the best and most innovative media outlets’ delivery of news and information on tablets. There are four key anchors:

- **Non-linear news presentation:** Today’s news consumer expects to absorb the news in whatever form and in whatever order he/she wants.
- **Multimedia content:** It is more vivid and immersive because the tablet is portable, yet technologically elaborate.
- **Interactivity:** News is now a conversation, not a one-way lecture. Readers believe they have a stake or at least a say in what is being published.
- **Immediacy and urgency:** When news breaks, readers expect to find the latest updates online.

Things to think about include, what can readers digest quickly, what other assets you can provide should they want more information, is video the best medium for this interview, etc. In the age of the tablet, what were commonly side bar adds in traditional media are now your “go-to” for these features.

who's played angry birds on an iPad they know how amazing it is, and I think that The Daily has changed the way that people experience the news. I'm very excited to see what happens next, and where the daily is today, after about a month, we'll see where we are in six months, in a year, or six years and by that point, where are all the other publications going to be? I think it's an open question.

### Creating For The Fifth Screen & Still Telling A Richer Story

When USA Today launched in 1982 it was available – in a humorous twist of irony – on the street in kiosks purposely fashioned to look like television sets to underscore the publishers' intent to marry the visuals and brevity of the broadcast medium with the context of print.

Thirty years later, the paper's Swartz talked to us about crafting stories for the fifth screen – without sacrificing his fundamental mission as a journalist: "I always try to write a story as well as tell a story. So you write the story with the idea that you want to draw someone in. You want to do all the heavy lifting for them, you want to go through as much reporting and resources as you possibly can, streamlining into a presentable, entertaining, hopefully informative story. And you can do that in print, but what I'm trying to learn is how to do that through video. That's one thing that reporters are going to have to do now, is in addition to writing a story, is to film interviews and insert them. But I want to do this without sacrificing my first job, which is to write for the paper and try to make something that's somewhat intimidating or confusing palatable to a large audience vs. our audience."

*"Social media has made us more responsive to readers and viewers. . . and it's made us realize that they wanted to talk to us, to engage with us, to ask us questions, they wanted to make our work better. And that was always true, throughout maybe two hundred years of journalism history, but we didn't know how to tap into it as well as we can now."*

– Brian Stelter, The New York Times

### The Tablet As Community Builder

Like many online-only sites, Mashable is extremely community focused. As Jolie O'Dell, who was with Mashable when we interviewed her and is now with VentureBeat, explained: "Being a social media publication, those are our roots, it's where we came from. We really do focus on helping people share content and consume content across a wide range of social media and social networks. I think we are, as readers ourselves, really interested to see how different form factors are affecting content, especially tablets. We really want to see better content presented on tablets and different ways of consuming content on tablets."

## THE META-LITERATE DIGITAL AUDIENCE

Today's Digital audiences are actually more literate than previous generations – technology savvy, plugged in to what is happening anywhere in the world with immediate access, and able to interpret and instantaneously find added context to what they are experiencing. We need only tune in to coverage of events unfolding across the Middle East and Northern Africa to observe the integration of video, Tweets, and actual reporting by citizen journalists into coverage to see the role social media is playing in helping us give a more complete picture of these momentous events.

In this new world, listening to the public is as important as telling the story. With story and blog comments, Twitter and Facebook, that responsiveness comes much more naturally, and more quickly. Readers can now react and be heard in real time during news events, and journalists now get notes, through Twitter, Facebook and e-mail, from people thankful that they're listening and responding to concerns and comments.

Journalists still report facts and give us the news, but the rise of social media has changed how reporters craft and tell a story and how we consume it. As we've already discussed, many journalists use social media every day to interact with readers and sources. Social media tools enable journalists to get instant feedback on their reporting, gather tips and other background information, track trends and build more intimate and meaningful relationships with their readers and viewers. The era of "I write, you read, you're welcome" is over.

## WHAT THIS MEANS TO PR PROFESSIONALS

Learn Where Your Consumers Are and What They Want to Hear Where

- With customers and consumers searching multiple mediums for information and sifting through tons of information on an hourly basis, it's important to learn where your audience is and know what they want to see. Are they getting news via Twitter feeds and Facebook? Do they own tablets or smart phones? Do they rely on morning news shows to get the top headlines? Once you know where your audience lives, you can better cater your campaigns and story ideas to fit within that platform.

The New York Times' Stelter, talking about publishing as first draft and engaging his readers in the iterative process: "Well, for one thing we get news up fast, and we identify it, at least I do on my Twitter feed, as a rough draft, as a first draft - because that terminology encourages people to improve my draft. I think when I write on Twitter, "Hey, here's the first draft of a story about NPR, or about CNN, it lets people know they can update it, and improve it, and advise it. And they can ask questions about it, they can correct it if I have a spelling mistake, or if they have some question. And every day in subtle ways they make my stories better."

The Today Show's Ryan Osborn also talks about the increasing empowerment new tools and technologies are nurturing – and what this means as news organizations react, adapt to, and engage with these citizen-journalists: “We are always learning and things are changing quickly. Users are becoming more empowered so the faster news organizations can figure out how to tap into those users, whether to generate content, or mine their emotional reactions to a given segment or broadcast, the better our product will be. And the more we get comfortable using our viewers – or users as we now call them – in the news-gathering process the smarter our reporting will be.”

## FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

It's been accepted wisdom in the news business since Thomas Paine published Common Sense that journalism is storytelling. They have become synonymous. “Journalists are storytellers.” With the rise of social media and the explosion of sites and channels offering news and information – what USA Today's Jon Swartz calls “a Sargasso Sea of content falling all around us” – many, including journalists themselves, have begun to question this. Are we exposed to so much information, are we generating so much “content,” that we are losing the context, the perspective, the essence of the story behind the reporting? Our journalists offered compelling commentary on the subject as well, addressing such issues as the perceived shift in balance from “quality” of reporting to quantity, the imperative of the narrative and, finally, the challenge inherent in managing the overflow of information, even as new social media tools and technologies are seemingly birthed every day.

## A Return To Quality From Quantity

Mashable's O'Dell: “In the past, I think the expectation, not just at Mashable but a lot of sites is that page views are the benchmark for success. You could write great beautiful literary posts, but if you got 500 page views, how good was it really? We're taking a different approach these days. We really do kind of optimize for page views in terms of getting a great image, getting a great headline, making sure it's relatable to a lot of people but also we're looking at the quality of the content, how long and in depth is this piece? Does it have original reporting? Because in the end, those benchmarks of quality and integrity in journalism will lead to more page views, not just for that piece, but for the whole blog, and it will enhance the reputation as well.”

## Readers Want the Gripping Narrative

Fast Company's Kamenetz: “So, there was a talk at the TED conference by an MIT scientist, actually, who filmed his son for three years, from the moment that they brought him home from the hospital, and use these incredible 3D visualizations to track his son's language development and found out exactly what context in which he said each of his words. This was an experiment 3 years in the making and it was being told for the first time from the TED stage in all its glory, and our readers were really excited to hear about it. Not because it was breaking news, but because it was a really gripping story.”

## The Biggest Challenge Of Social Media

USA Today's Swartz: “There is so much news happening so quickly, there is such a demand for content, in the form of a blog, video, print, what have

you, that the news cycle is speeding up: the amount of work we have to do is overwhelming at times, there's so many digital tools that are coming at us in terms of instant messaging, chat, there's so many types of e-mail services, video – there's so many tools but you have to learn which ones to use, and how to use them moderately. If you use them to excess you will kill yourself.

“It's an interesting challenge,” said Tiffany Black. “You want to be everywhere the users are, and there's constantly new social media popping up and it's like deciding which ones do you jump on right away, which ones do you sit back and see where it goes before you get involved, and I think a lot of times it's finding an application for what you do. For example: foursquare: the NYT figured out how to work with foursquare because they had a lot of content that could provide those tips and that's the kind of information foursquare needed. But not every media publication has that “tips” kind of thing built into it. Or it's even figuring out what kind of iPhone or iPad app or mobile app that you're going to create that's really a big challenge for content organizations to figure out.”

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The social Web has dramatically altered the way journalists do their jobs. As our journalist friends shared with us in our Social Scene interviews, no matter the subject, reporters are using social tools to convey breaking news in real-time. Social journalists are also using social tools to clarify online content, check facts and earn

## PR PROFESSIONALS ENGAGING CITIZEN JOURNALISTS

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting recognizes the value of citizen journalists – they just announced they will fund a \$4.1 million grant to American Public Media to expand its network of “citizen sources” that help provide local news coverage across the country.

Cultivate this “citizen journalist” mindset among your fans and advocates. Encourage supporters to contribute to and participate in the reporting of the news around your brand.

Two examples:

1. An energy drink learned of a user who was a highly active “digger” on the social news site digg.com as well as a huge fan of their brand and their Xtreme Sports events. They invited him to their next event, gave him access to behind-the-scenes information and allowed him to meet and interview some of his favorite Xtreme Sports figures. The result was significant coverage on the Digg homepage.
2. A start-up in Los Angeles discovered that two top diggers have a podcast that reaches college kids. Getting covered on this podcast is now a top priority so they can get buzz going in relevant social networks that reach their target audience.

*Source: Sally Falkow; The Proactive Report. A list of the most popular news sites based on traffic figures from Alexa, a website that tracks traffic on most websites and reports on their statistics, ranks Digg at #8 with over 25 million visitors a month*

readers' trust. They're using tools for newsgathering and dissemination, for investigation and crowdsourced fact-checking. Perhaps most importantly, though, they are using the social Web for engagement with what New York University's Jay Rosen famously dubbed "the people formerly known as the audience" – each one of whom is a potential source.

As public relations professionals, one of our primary responsibilities is media relations – understanding the current media landscape, gauging how news is being presented, correctly assessing what journalists need and how best to work with them. If this is their future, it must also be ours. Just as journalists must learn how to produce compelling digital content and engage with open, collaborative tools and methods, so must corporate communicators and public relations professionals. Social media and digital PR training should be high on your list of priorities.

We look forward to our continued dialogues with Access friends in the media. They have provided us with invaluable insights and provocative commentary. Finally, they consistently compel us as an organization to remain alert to how best to communicate with the media, how best to integrate social Web tools into what we do, and how best to engage with audiences increasingly more integral to the newsgathering and reporting process.

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*Read All About It! Understanding Media Transformation and Usage is published by Access Communications, a full-service public relations firm with offices in San Francisco and New York. Learn more about us at [www.accesspr.com](http://www.accesspr.com).*

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## 14 WAYS TO USE TWITTER TO ATTRACT JOURNALISTS

1. Find the reporters by searching through Muck Rack.
2. Peruse the “contact us” pages of your local media outlets to track down reporters’ Twitter names. Be helpful especially when it doesn’t help you directly.
3. Watch for tweets asking for help, especially on deadline. That’s the quickest way to strike up a relationship.
4. Monitor and post hashtags of the town or topic you or your client is involved in. Even if the reporters don’t tweet, they’ll likely monitor it for interesting story ideas.
5. Say something nice about the story a reporter wrote or aired, making sure you add the reporter’s Twitter name to the comment. When possible, link to the story.
6. Retweet their tweets, especially when they link to their stories.
7. Offer to connect them with experts you think will genuinely help them on their beats.
8. Thank them via Twitter for covering an event you attended, especially if you were able to chat with the reporter. This helps solidify the new contact.
9. Look out for story ideas for them, not just big stories but follow-up pieces on stories they’ve already done.
10. Thank them especially when they write about an idea you pitched.
11. Take note of something in the reporter’s Twitter bio when sending an initial tweet. It tells the journalist you took a moment to learn about them.
12. Extend the relationship to other social networks if they’re more active elsewhere, or get their email.
13. Congratulate them on their birthdays or other news they tweet about themselves.
14. Highlight them on your own blog.

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