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A Content Analysis of Activist Group Use of Dialogic Tools on the World Wide Web

Roberto Mazzini
University of South Florida

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by

Roberto Mazzini

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Major Professor: Kelly Page Werder, Ph.D.
Derina Holtzhausen, Ph.D.
Kenneth C. Killebrew. Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a quantitative content analysis of activist groups' use of dialogic tools on Web sites. The study was done in order to understand how activist groups use the Web to communicate with their publics in comparison to for-profit corporations. The Web is considered a powerful tool for activists and allows them to communicate better with their publics. Use of the Web should allow activist groups to level the field with corporations by enabling them to get their message out and interact better with their public. Dialogic communication is a necessity for activist groups. By measuring the use of dialogic communication by activists in comparison with corporations, this study uncovers how well activist groups are using the World Wide Web for purposes of dialogic communication with their publics.

Chapter One

Introduction

Activism is a large part of American society today. One could easily name any

number of groups, from the Sierra Club, a nature and wildlife group, to the American

Civil Liberties Union, a civil rights group. There are thousands of groups, each with its

own mission and publics. An activist group is defined as, "a group of two or more

individuals who organize in order to influence another public or publics through action

that may include education, compromise, persuasion, pressure tactics, or force" (L.

Grunig, 1992, p. 504).

According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), "Public relations

is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of

communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and

its publics…" (Wilcox, Ault, Agee, & Cameron, 2000, p. 3). Though the goal of activists,

as stated by L.Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002), is to organize in order to influence

publics, the traditional perspective of activism is now extinct. The traditional perspective

of public relations viewed the activist group as a problem for the organization, a public

whose members had to be contended with and placated. Activists were seen as an

external pressure that came about to "ameliorate social problems" and then disappeared

(L. Grunig, 1992). This view holds that activists are external enemies, something for

public relations practitioners to contend with and eliminate. But, activist groups, in fact,

use public relations strategies and tactics to further their cause. Activist groups do not

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simply evaporate once an issue is resolved. They act as watchdogs for certain issues that they defend.

This is consistent with Holtzhausen's (2000) view of the postmodern practitioner. According to Holtzhausen, practitioners must understand that they are the balance between the environment and the corporation. In the more traditional perspective, the role of the public relations practitioner was always adjoined to that of a corporation or a government entity. But, there are practitioners who behave like activists whether through the role they play in bridging the gap between their organization and the environment or by actually working for an activist group. This is where the old perspective of the public relations practitioner's role must be reevaluated and a new idea of the function of public relations must be understood. Activists are portrayed as the enemy, but they are often the voice of democracy. As such, activist groups should not be seen as an outside force but rather they should be viewed as another public that the organization must relate to. With groups entrenched firmly in place in society and a hierarchy established within activist groups, the groups themselves act as organizations.

Activist groups also use public relations strategies and tactics to achieve their goals. While they are organized to further a cause rather than to achieve a profit, they still must adhere to the same necessities that their corporate counterparts do in enacting public relations strategies and communicating with their publics and the media. Their message must be heard and be credible. Therefore, instead of activists continuing to be viewed as opposition for corporations, this study will consider activists as organizations that use public relations to achieve their goals.

As organizations, activist groups must be able to sustain themselves. Smith and

Ferguson (2001) cite three things that activist groups must do in order to survive: maintain their members, compete with similar activist groups for attention, and adjust to changes in their environment. Simple survival requires time and energy. This, coupled with the fact that activist groups, typically, have far less money than for-profit corporations, adds an additional burden on them.

However, current technology is available to help to ease the burden for activist groups in competing against corporations. Specifically, the World Wide Web has become a great ally in the struggle of activist groups. Organizations of all sizes are using the Web for business and to maintain communication. The Web is an important tool that can help groups spread their message and fulfill their goal of communicating with their publics.

The Internet has changed the way that organizations conduct business. Few other fields have adopted the Web like public relations has, and the field is now beginning to understand the implications of the technology (Hallahan, 2001a). The Web allows activist groups to foster positive two-way communication with their publics, thus allowing them to tackle two of their biggest obstacles: organizing and maintaining membership. Relationships can be created and adapted through the Web (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Online publics are not isolated from each other. Publics can interact, influence each other, and offer different perspectives from their regular life (Witmer, 2000).

According to Selvin (2000), organizations must treat the Internet as a major form of communication. The power of the technology cannot be disregarded, or viewed as a peripheral or alternative mode of communication. He argues that organizations must recognize the opportunities that this technology offers.

According to L. Grunig (1992), two-way communication is a must for activist

groups. J. Grunig presents two-way communication in two different styles. The first is two-way asymmetrical. This method sees the practitioner as using research to develop a message in order to persuade a public or publics to do what the organization wants them to. This method can be summed up as the practitioner listening to stakeholders and adjusting his or her message with the intent of persuading. The second style is two-way symmetrical. This method is also based on research, but communication is used to manage conflict and promote understanding. This means that the practitioner and the public communicate in order to find a common ground. This method, though, is considered a normative model and not applicable in all real-world scenarios.

Research suggests that excellent organizations do practice two-way symmetrical communication but they also use two-way asymmetrical communication (J. Grunig, 2001). This model is dubbed the mixed-motive model, a hybrid of the two former models. In the mixed-motive model communication is still used to promote understanding but there are times when an organization must use some persuasion tactics. The mixed-motive model of public relations is used as the dialogic framework for this study.

By simply acting as storehouses of information and disseminating information without listening, groups practice one-way communication. A one-way communication model, also called press agentry, does not help to foster long-term relationships. Instead, that model can only be used with publics that actively seek out information and want to be persuaded, those who may be unsure or have questions may not participate in a one-way communication effort (L. Grunig, 1992).

While this study is focusing on activist groups and dialogic communication, it is important to note that the findings of this study, as well as the review of literature, can be used to analyze non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Both of these types of organizations follow the same basic rules as an activist group in their reliance on the environment and the support of members and the media to get their message out. Neither money nor manpower is readily available for these groups. Furthermore, some activist groups become non-profit groups and some NGOs are in fact activist groups.

The purpose of this study is to examine the way activist groups use the Web to create, foster, and maintain dialogue with their target publics. Although the Web is a tool that allows two-way communication, this study questions if activists use Web sites to foster two-way dialogue with their stakeholders or to simply disseminate information to their stakeholders.

Specifically, this study seeks to determine how well activists use the Web for dialogic communication. It asks, to what degree do activists use dialogic communication tools on the Web and do the activist groups use these dialogic tools better than corporate entities. To achieve this purpose, this study will utilize the framework posited by Taylor, Kent, and White (2001), which analyzes Kent and Taylor's (1998) five principles of building public relationships. The framework will be used as the foundation to create a new set of principles to measure the use of dialogic tools by activist groups. While the Taylor et al. study focused on an overall look at how activist groups successfully use the Internet, a portion of their framework focused solely on dialogic communication. This study will replicate that portion of the study and expand upon it.

The remainder of this chapter will examine several topics introduced in a review of the literature. Specifically, the review of literature includes the following sections: activist groups and their applicable theories, the Internet and communication, the implication of the Internet for public relations, activists groups and Internet use, and dialogic communication. Chapter 2 explains the methods and procedures used in this study. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the data gathered from applying the framework for dialogic communication developed in this study to activist and corporate Web sites. Finally, Chapter 4 reviews the results and discusses conclusions, areas for improvement, and proposes possibilities for future studies in this area of inquiry.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Activism

An activist group is defined as "a group of two or more individuals who organize in order to influence another public or publics through action that may include education, compromise, persuasion, pressure tactics, or force" (L. Grunig, 1992, p. 504). This section further defines what makes up an activist group. In addition, it examines the types of publics that activist groups must deal with, the goals of activist groups, and the tactics they use. Furthermore, this section will discuss how activist groups must interact with their environment, and it will introduce several theories that will help to explain how activist groups function.

It is first important to understand that activist groups are composed of people. These people come from everyday walks of life and have chosen to take part in a group to fulfill a specific personal need. Leitch and Neilson (2001) refer to these people as a "public." According to L. Grunig (1992), a public is defined as a group of people who recognize a problem and organize to do something about the problem. A public is a group of individuals who represent a collective interest. Members of this group may share a zone of meaning in relation to a certain issue or event. Being a part of one public, though, does not exclude members from being part of other publics or activist groups. Some groups may overlap, intersect, or conflict. Activist groups are always in a state of flux as many things can change, such as membership, leadership, and focus.

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According to L. Grunig (1992), the general intent of an activist group is to improve the functioning of an organization through outside pressure. Many groups – also called pressure groups, special interest groups, grassroots opposition, social movements, or issue groups – may be formed around a new issue or existing groups may change their focus. Mintzberg (1983) examines the different activities of these groups. Activists may be episodic, regular, general or focused. They may also be categorized as detached or personal. Process may vary also, as groups may be formal or informal. Activist groups may initiate action, or organizational initiatives may be obstructed. Whatever the case, the main purpose is to exert control (L. Grunig, 1992).

Historically, activist groups have been considered essentially powerless. Groups have always existed to try to influence organizations since organizations have existed. But, in the past, these powerless groups were easy to ignore. However, with the advent of technology and the Internet, groups have become stronger and more difficult to ignore (Coombs, 1998).

One mistake that has historically been made when classifying activist groups is the assumption that they are different from other organizations. Kent, Taylor, and White (2003) posit that activist groups, though they are different from for-profit groups in some ways, use similar activities to achieve their public relations goals. In fact, activist groups use public relations as much as corporations do in order to keep the organization relevant and to achieve the group's mission.

There are different structures of activist groups, and different ways to understand them. Different factors can be used in classifying groups, such as size, mission, success, or use of public relations strategies (Kent et al., 2003). But, according to Olson (1982),

size shouldn't be a factor since small groups, too, can make changes and sometimes even have a greater effect than larger groups. A reason for this is that smaller groups are often more involved and display more action-taking behavior than larger groups.

Goals, publics, and tactics. Activist groups may start out small but depending on the issue, membership can snowball and alliances can be formed, both of which can turn an activist group into quite a force. Once a group starts to climb in numbers and it endures battles against policies or other problems, certain needs of the group must be taken into account. Smith and Ferguson (2001) state two goals that activist groups must have. First, they seek to rectify the conditions identified as problematic. This means that the groups must be successful in what they do. A lack of success over time has the ability to erode any power a group may have. The second goal of an activist organization is to maintain the organization established to pursue the activists' purpose. Change is a long-term process, and a group should not simply evaporate after one goal has been achieved.

The strength of an activist group actually becomes evident as it pursues the latter goal. Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) state that many activist organizations are operating on minimal budgets and are also in competition with other activist groups. There are many activist groups in the United States and many of them share similar causes. Groups must compete with one another for membership and press. The goal of maintaining membership can become the most challenging task for a group. Smith and Ferguson (2001) stated that being an activist requires time and energy. Without a membership base, an activist group can lose power or even dissolve.

Which people identify with which problem is an enduring question for activist groups, as well as organizations. While there have been many ideas about how publics

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form, J. Grunig's situational theory of publics offers a well-researched framework for understanding variables related to the formation of publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). J. Grunig identifies four general types of publics: all-issues, apathetic, single-issue, and hot-issue. This categorization system is not based on the issue, rather it is based on the actions of the members of the group. All-issue publics will rise up when something is wrong regardless of the cause. Apathetic publics are generally disinterested in any issue. Single-issue publics concentrate on one issue only and then vanish after the problem related to the issue has been solved. Hot issue publics follow whatever the cause of the day is (Smith & Ferguson, 2001). Because of these types of publics, the general public is of no consequence to an organization. Organizations cannot speak to everyone, so they focus on a particular group with which to engage. Typically, activist groups become high priority publics for organizations (L. Grunig, 1992).

Broom and Dozier (1992) list nine characteristics that can be used to identify publics. These include geographics, demographics, psychographics, covert power, position, reputation, membership, role in decision making, and communication behavior. Geographics segment people by location. Demographics segment people by characteristics such as age, sex, and income. Psychographics segment people according to their lifestyles. Individuals with covert power can influence decisions in a group or community. Individuals who hold positions of influence are also relevant. These can be people such as doctors, teachers, and elected officials. The reputations of individuals can also be used to tell what sort of influence they have, as is the case for individuals with membership in powerful groups. Studying the roles of individuals in decision-making positions also identifies relevant publics (L. Grunig, 1992).

According to L. Grunig (1992), activist groups, in pursuing their goals of solving problematic conditions, will attempt to either confront organizations directly or seek regulation from government or administrative agencies. Smith and Ferguson (2001) found four factors that may determine the strategy choice. These include: a) the organization's resources; b) the perceived efficacy of various courses of action; c) the legitimacy of the problem, the proposed solution, and the organization advocating it; and d) the interaction with the target of the activists effort.

If a group decides to go straight at an organization, the most common way to do so is to use the media and force the issue to be introduced to the public agenda to create public awareness. This in turn places the issue in the court of public opinion. The more negative the coverage is, the more likely the organization is to change its stance on the issue. L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) state that the media helps activist groups to convey legitimacy. Generally, media coverage tends to be more favorable for the activist groups. The reason for this is that activist groups can get away with certain things corporations cannot, such as making exaggerated claims or demonstrating to cast a negative light on the corporation. Corporations are expected to state their case and act professionally. Activists, on the other hand, have more flexibility. Negative coverage, or any coverage of an issue for a long period of time, casts the organization in a negative light with the public.

Besides the press, activist groups also work with government organizations in order to protest against corporations. If activist groups are successful in government involvement, this adds another group of opposition that an organization must contend with. This governmental intervention reduces organizational autonomy.

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Jackson (1982) offers five categories of strategies: 1) informational activities, 2) symbolic activities (boycotts), 3) organizing activities and networking, 4) legalistic activities, and 5) civil disobedience. These five strategies are often used by activist groups, from PETA handing out leaflets or throwing paint on fur-wearers to pro-life protesters blocking entry to a clinic. These acts can be seen most everyday, though some are more outrageous than others.

The previous section has covered the fundamental definition of an activist group, as well as the needs and goals of these groups. The next section explores three theoretical frameworks that aid in the understanding of how activist groups function as organizations.

Relevant theoretical frameworks. There are several theoretical frameworks that aid understanding of activist groups. These frameworks help explain the activities of activist groups in terms of organizational and relational criteria.

Hatch (1997) explains that organizations, which include activists, must fit into their environment. This is a necessity for all organization; however, activists are more closely linked with their environment, or at least should be, because they are both made up of and comprise the environment. The activists' toughest challenge is creating and maintaining a large membership. Unlike larger organizations, an activist group cannot simply shut itself off from the public or even survive without the public's support. Since the power of an activist group comes from its environment, it must be linked more closely to that environment, making the environment a primary focus. Furthermore, in facing the demanding challenges of membership and organization, that communication also is a primary objective of the activist organization.

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Systems theory provides a framework for understanding the relationship between an activist group and its environment. Hatch (1997) states that according to systems theory, organizations are most effective when they acknowledge, interact with, affect, and become affected by their environment. Systems theory helps to show how an activist group must manage itself in order to become successful. As mentioned before, activist organizations cannot exist in a vacuum, they are very much a part of the world. Therefore, they exist in an open system. They exchange information, material, and communications with their environment (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001; Hatch, 1997).

L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Ehling (1992) posit that, according to systems theory, an organization does not have strict measurable goals but instead is evaluated on characteristics such as growth, equilibrium, and decline. In an open system, an organization is not simply focused on the success of its goal, but also, its publics, government agencies, and other facets of the environment. Also, this theory holds that the organization is comprised of subparts that must fluidly work together or the entire system will be affected. The main linkage for these subparts is communication. Communication is a necessity; it allows the public relations function to interact with the management function, and so on. Management must count on the public relations function of the organization to maintain good relationships with publics.

Finally, Austin and Pinkleton (2001) state that there are three things necessary for an organization to succeed from a systems theory perspective: surveillance, interpretation, and advising management. Surveillance means that an organization is gathering information about the environment and any possible changes or trends that may result in a change, challenge, or opportunity. Interpretation is used by an organization to

make sense out of gathered information. In interpreting information, an organization can flow with the environment and understand what might help or hurt the organization. Lastly, advising management means making credible suggestions that will result in measurable objectives that fall in line with organization goals.

There are some limitations in applying systems theory to an activist group. Because this study examines the activist group as an organization – comprised of all the necessary parts and, when large enough, having the structure of an organization - there are some facets of the activist group's functions that are not explained by systems theory. Systems theory, as well as other organizational theories, focuses on how a traditional organization functions in a normal world. Activist groups, because they are so closely linked to the environment and comprised of it, are not sheltered, nor do they have the potential to become sheltered, from the environment. Corporations, though affected by the environment, can close off communications or at least minimize them and still survive. Because members of the environment make up the activist group, this cannot be done. The environment is the lifeblood of the activist organization; therefore, activist groups do not fully fit into the systems theory. But, in the sense of communication and the importance of the environment, systems theory is the best way to understand how the group must interact with its surroundings (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001).

Taylor, et al. (2001), in reviewing activist groups' goals, stated that activist groups are not only competing for publics with corporations, but also other activist groups with the same causes. Focusing primarily on the goal of creating and maintaining membership, a simple search on the Internet reveals a large number of animal rights, civil rights, environmental groups, and so on. These groups must all compete with each other

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for members; though, it is acknowledged that there is some overlap. In competing for publics, which are viewed as a primary resource, *population ecology theory* can show what will make an activist group successful (Hatch 1997).

According to Hatch (1997), population ecology stems from an assumption similar to that of systems theory, in which the organization is reliant upon the environment in order to function. Again, like systems theory, population ecology focuses on the traditional for-profit corporation, but it can still be applied with success to explain activist groups' dependency. The theory of population ecology posits that the environment makes the choice as to which organization succeeds and which organization fails. Organizations are competing for publics from the same resource pool. This is likened to Darwin's survival of the fittest principal. Furthermore, the environment is not looked at as a whole but is broken up into specific groups, or niches. A niche focuses on the groups that are competing for the resources in that niche; in this case, people.

According to Hatch (1997), population ecology, there is an evolutionary process – variation, selection, and retention – that explains the way a public works. Variation occurs in the population of an organization when a new organization is formed. This organization then goes through the selection process in which the environment selects an organization based on its ability to best serve the population. Organizations that meet the criteria are then retained by the environment. Retention equates to the survival of the organization (Hatch, 1997). Retention for an organization means that the organization manages to keep its membership while maintaining its validity in pursuit of its goals. Therefore, retention for an activist group demonstrates that its positioning and its goals are still relevant and desired by the public.

Like population ecology theory, Hatch (1997) states that *institutional theory* also helps to choose an organization for an environment. Institutional theory, though a separate theory, can work along with population ecology with regard to the environment. As previously stated, population ecology allows an environment to select which organization thrives and which organization is eliminated. Without the support of the environment, an organization cannot survive. Institutional theory furthers the idea of choosing the most suitable organization for an environment. Institutional theory adds to population ecology the idea that an organization not only has to serve a purpose for the environment, but it must also adhere to and maintain the values of the external society (Hatch, 1997).

Essentially, by using both population ecology theory and institutional theory, a public still selects an organization using variation, selection, and retention. One more step is added with the use of institutional theory. The environment goes to the extra step of making sure that the values of the organization, not only the services, are in adherence with that of the environment. This is an especially important factor for the environment when dealing with activist groups. Though activist groups generally fight for a cause supported by people, their methods and values should be congruent with the environment that they survive in.

Austin and Pinkleton (2001) recite the old adage that you cannot please all of the people all of the time (p. 273). This leads to the question of what types of publics should an organization seek to please and when should these publics be considered a high priority. All-issues, apathetic, single-issue, and hot-issue publics have been identified by J. Grunig's *situational theory of publics* as the four types of publics that activists face.

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Situational theory provides an understanding of how publics are defined and it captures the linkages in changes between organizations and publics.

Dozier and Ehling (1992) posit that organizational publics come and go depending on their interaction with the organization. A public is created when organizational actions create consequences for its members. This creates a link between the organizations and the publics.

Dozier and Ehling (1992) also provide a few additional types of publics. These publics are formed when people face a similar problem. This brings them together and allows them to organize and confront the problem. To start with, if there is no commonality to a problem, leaving people unable to connect, they become a nonpublic. A nonpublic is of no concern to an organization. If a public does form but is unable to reach a consensus about what the common problem is, that public will become latent. When people recognize a common problem, they become an aware public. When those people organize to solve the problem, they become an active public.

According to Dozier and Ehling (1992), active publics are the only publics that have the ability to create an effect. Active publics, though, are generally ready for a fight. Therefore, communicating with an active public is extremely difficult, as they are more willing to cut off lines of communication due to the fact that they will discount organizational communication. Aware publics are easier to communicate with because they are not yet in the fight stage. The other two types of publics – nonpublic and latent public – do not recognize a problem; therefore, there is no effective way to communicate with them. They are unlikely to process or seek information because they do not recognize the problem. According to J. Grunig and Hunt (1984), information processing

is a passive communication behavior and information seeking is an active communication behavior. Information sought has a greater impact than information processed or ignored.

Austin and Pinkleton (2001) state that active publics can be divided into three types: the long haul, those interested in all aspects of the issue; special interest, those interested only in a certain aspect of the issue; and hot button, those who get emotionally involved only if an emotional debate ensues.

There are three variables that determine active publics. These three variables – problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement – define characteristics of the individuals who take part in the active public. Problem recognition allows individuals to understand the consequences of what an organization does and makes them more likely to process and seek information. Constraint recognition decreases the probability of information processing and information seeking. In constraint recognition, individuals feel they have little freedom and are therefore unlikely to seek information or communicate. Individuals who have constraint recognition are in the same state as active publics, so communication with this type of public is unlikely to be effective. Level of involvement is the degree to which people connect themselves with a situation or how much the organization's activity matters to them. Level of involvement increases information-seeking behavior and reduces passive information processing. Highly involved individuals will typically have high problem recognition and low constraint recognition (Dozier & Ehling, 1992, Austin & Pinkleton, 2001).

Again, these categories were created with the traditional organization in mind, but they are helpful for activist groups to understand who their publics are. Instead of preparing to engage in battle with these publics, activist groups instead can use these

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categories in order to conclude which publics they should target for membership or support. Dozier and Ehling (1992) state that these categories serve as "early-warning indicators" of emerging publics. They allow an organization to decide which public it should respond to.

Systems theory, population ecology, institutional theory, and the situational theory of publics help to better explain activist groups. They show how activist groups must organize and react to their publics. These theories capture the different aspects of the needs of an activist group and what criteria must be met for these groups to be successful. They must first understand how to operate in and merge with their environment. Then, they must realize that they are in competition for environmental resources with other groups and must attempt to understand and offer value to individuals who have the potential to join the group. Finally, the publics of activist groups must be understood. The situational theory of publics is perhaps the most important theory for activist groups because without knowing what level of involvement, problem recognition, and constraint recognition members of a public are at, potential members will be lost. This explains the behavior of activist group. These publics are what create activists' power, without recognizing where each public's involvement lies; any attempt to move ahead with organizational goals can only result in failure.

Obviously, activist groups have certain needs they seek to fulfill and the groups must appeal to certain types of people. Many of the strategies stated can be implemented via the technology offered by the World Wide Web. The Web can help activist groups reach out in a way they have never been able to before. The following section will look at the Internet and the implications the new technology has on public relations.

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The Internet and Public Relations Implications

In the previous section of the chapter, we learn from Taylor et al. (2001) that many activist groups operate on minimal budgets and must fight to gain and keep membership. Without a membership base, there is no power. This study posits that the Internet is the key to a successful activist group because it facilitates development of a membership base. Most corporations use Web sites and the Internet to communicate with stakeholders. To compete with the corporations in both fighting for their cause and in gaining public backing, activist groups must also utilize Web resources.

More and more the digital divide is decreasing as technology becomes more available and less expensive. Wright (2001) states that 33 percent of Americans who went online in 2000 have a high school education or less. This is up from 22 percent in 1999, an 11 percent leap in Internet use among this education level in one year. In addition, the average income level of those who go online is also shifting. Twenty-four percent of households that went online had incomes of less than $35,000. This is also up 11 percent from a year earlier. The Internet is becoming more understood and available. Cyber cafes are becoming more prevalent, libraries supply high-speed connection for patrons, and schools are fully equipped to supply students with Internet access when it may not be available at home.

McCaughey and Ayers (2003) claim that the reason the Internet is so powerful is because of its immediacy. It produces news and information much faster than a newspaper can supply it. Also, it has the power to be more interactive than television. They state that, "Not since the U.S. Postal Service have we seen a communication

development in society that can give power to individuals like this" (p. 5).

Not only is the Internet immediate, but it is constantly available. Twenty-four hours a day, anyone with access can 'surf the Web' and gather information as needed. Newspapers' Web sites are updated several times a day as news happens. E-mail is practically instantaneous and, for most people, free. Wright (2001) states that, because of the obvious advantage of the Internet, audiences continue to grow each year. Research shows that each year since 1998, going online is becoming a more important part of many people's lives.

Because of this, the Internet cannot be ignored by activist groups. Selvin (2000) warns that as organizations move into this high-tech era, regarding the Internet as simply another mode of information diffusion can be a mistake. These organizations will only have a partial understanding of the opportunities that the technology offers. By disregarding the technology, alternative ways to solve problems and handle risks may be ignored.

Selvin (2000) explains that the Internet opens up opportunities for "participatory opinion formation." This makes the technology more important and the need for exploration into how individuals and collectives might participate more urgent. Unlike the mass media, the Internet cannot be written off as non-participatory. In the Internet, there exists the possibility for a dialogic loop. According to Kent and Taylor (1998), the dialogic loop – which allows publics to query organizations, and more importantly, organizations to respond to questions and concerns – allows feedback from audiences and gives the organization an opportunity to respond to questions concerns and problems. Selvin (2000) states that the Internet clearly contributes to two-way communication with

many options such as e-mail, Internet phone calls, and chat options at individuals'

disposal. Also, besides one-on-one encounters, the Internet allows dialogic use for many

different sized groups.

According to Selvin (2000), organizations would be wise to use the Internet to

facilitate dialogic communication. This will empower organizations and practitioners to

make changes from reactive to proactive communication. Both the organization and the

public will be able to address issues before they arise or as an issue is building instead of

simply reacting to an issue once the damage is done. He warns though, that the Internet's

benefits are not automatic. Opportunities must be seized.

As more is understood about how and when the Internet can be used to listen and

respond to publics and concerns, organizations will be able to fully apply the benefits of

the technology. Dialogic communication is a powerful tool that can involve individuals in

an organization's activities. Immediate flow of information and the increasing availability

of the Internet also contribute to its power. If overlooked, an organization may miss out

on a powerful instrument to reach target publics and increase competitive advantage or, at

the very least, level the field since the competition might already be using the technology.

Public relations implications. For public relations, the Web is more than simply

another venue for disseminating information. "Technological innovations over the last 25

years have changed many aspects of the public relations practice" (Johnson, 1997, p.

213). White and Raman (2000) state that the Web is actually quite different than any

communication channel that has been available in the past. It is the first medium of

communication that links the organization directly with the public. Unlike other mediated

channels, there are no gatekeepers. The Web is the first controlled medium where the

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sender of the message actually has control over the message content. Before the advent of the Internet, advertising was the only means to send a controlled message to a mass audience.

The Internet is a desirable medium for public relations. Without gate keeping, this medium allows a totally different style of communication and opens a new channel for public relations. Esrock and Leichty (1998) claim the Web actually has the potential to increase the pace of public relations. There are three characteristics of the Web, all of them speed: speed of dissemination, speed of access, and speed of feedback. This speed empowers public relations practitioners to provide information and receive feedback in a timely fashion.

Each day, different groups tap into the power of the Internet and utilize the World Wide Web. Virtually every industry, product, activity, and public pursuit can be found somewhere on the Internet (Kent & Taylor, 1998). This power, speed, and availability forces a change in thinking. Organizations cannot choose to ignore this medium. If so, leverage will be given up. Imagine if some groups chose not to use television news or if an organization felt that newspapers were too old-fashioned; something would be missing. The goal of public relations is to get an organization's message to its key publics. By choosing to ignore one medium, others with the same goals and publics will have an advantage.

However, the technology is still new. Some people don't trust it and some don't understand it. But it is something that a consummate public relations practitioner will utilize. This technology must be used to stay in touch with publics and the media. By ignoring the technology an organization can distance itself from them.

The Internet can add a personal touch and reach out to communities that might otherwise remain isolated if not for the technology (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Consequently, the use of the Internet may be one of the only ways to reach some isolated publics. Businesses no longer just use the Web to influence through advertising and marketing; they use it to obtain feedback and improve relations (White & Raman 2000).

Johnson (1997) reiterates the notion of using the Web to become closer with publics by explaining that an organization in crises (or a group fighting an organization) no longer needs to rely on the media to speak to its publics. The organization has the ability to communicate with publics directly and immediately by using Web pages or e-mail. In addition, the diversity of information available online allows for the early identification of emerging issues.

The Internet not only provides an organization with a way to disseminate information, it also creates dynamic and lasting relationships with publics. Most public relations campaigns involve dissemination of information, but they also require the formation of relationships (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Wright, 2001). These relationships are the basis for a successful activist group, which must focus on its competition and its goal of maintaining membership. Since organizations must go beyond disseminating information and allow for the flow of two-way communication, the Internet is a valuable tool. Public relations practitioners use the Internet for two-way communication with key publics and move beyond what the traditional media offer.

In further separating the Internet from traditional media channels, Jo and Kim (2003) cite interactivity as one of the Internet's most distinguishing features. Interactivity is a critical component in technological communication.

In fact, Esrock and Leichty (2000) state that the interactive nature of the Internet separates this medium from other forms of media. The Web can disseminate information, but it also collects data and monitors public opinion. A proactive organization can engage in dialogue with its publics on a number of issues, such as policy. This allows closer contact with publics than has previously been feasible.

Traditional thinking might lead a practitioner to disregard the notion that the Internet is actually an alternative and not a supplemental form of information dissemination. One of the reasons public relations is favored over advertising in times of crisis is the credibility that newspaper coverage lends to an organization. Third-party endorsement is a cornerstone of public relations. Since a Web site can be owned or operated by an organization, the first aversion to using the Internet may be due to a lack of credibility (Esrock & Leichty, 2000). But, in contrast to that line of thinking, Wright (2001) mentions that studies show Web sites are either as credible as traditional media or, in some cases, even more credible.

Actually, the Internet creates a sort of link with other media. Wright (2001) argues that some groups use the Internet to effectively advance their positions. By doing this, they have gained ground with the media. Success is derived because effective use of the Internet has built relationships with various publics. This is another advantageous idea for activist groups. Some groups struggle, be it due to competition or the fact their story is not a hot topic, to get their message disseminated through the media. The Internet provides a channel to connect with the publics, as well as the news media.

Estimates suggest the Internet is now used for a variety of communication and information sharing tasks by more than 275 million people in at least 175 countries

(Wright, 2001).

It is important, though, at this point to note *how* the Internet is different. Esrock and Leichty (2000) relate suggestions from practitioners that state the Internet is just one more channel to communicate to stakeholders with, while others say the Internet has the potential to revolutionize organization-to-public communications. To further this, Kent and Taylor (1998) assert that the Web offers a multi-channel environment where communication and negotiation can occur.

Despite the advantages and implications the Internet holds for public relations, the question remains of how well the technology will be utilized. It is true that many older or technologically impeded practitioners may reject technology as something unnecessary or superfluous. Though acceptance grows, there still remains a divide between those accepting of the technology and those who either don't understand it or don't care to. Kent and Taylor (1998) posit that scholars and practitioners have expressed great interest in the Web. Also, the Web serves public relations functions as outlets for disseminating information to media and the public. But, despite the Internet's potential, it still seems to be underutilized by many organizations and under-examined by scholars as a relationship-building tool.

This might all seem a bit odd for a society so focused on what tomorrow holds and what the next great technological advance will bring. It seems that the focus on the Internet is superficial in the sense that its basic tools, postings, and e-mails, are its most popular features, whereas its dialogic ability is ignored. This is not to discount the importance of e-mail. Wright (2001) states that 98 percent of professionals polled said that e-mail has an impact on how they do their jobs; however, Taylor et al. (2001) point

out that many organizations are missing the potential that is held in the Internet's two-way communication ability. Furthermore, the Internet's ability to provide public relations research, planning, and evaluation are ignored. While many organizations appear willing to use the Internet to collect information, they do not employ the technology effectively or fully.

Springston (2001) provides a short summary of the Internet's implications for public relations. He states that there is growing evidence that this new technology is enhancing how public relations is practiced, while also changing the traditional roles of practitioners. The most important aspects of this change include the ability to efficiently search vast amounts of information, the detection of emerging issues more quickly than ever before, the changing nature of communications with key publics, and an effective Internet presence that aids practitioners in times of crises.

Overall, the literature indicates is that the Internet provides a powerful tool that is revolutionizing the way that public relations practitioners are able to disseminate their message and communicate with their publics. Although it is a powerful tool with a breadth of uses, it still has not realized its fullest potential. There is room in both scholastic and professional realms for further study of how the Internet can be utilized to foster and maintain relationships. After reviewing the literature related to the Internet and what it means to public relations, it is now necessary to examine the Internet tools that are used by activist groups. The next section will analyze the relationship between activists and the Internet.

Activists and the Internet

There are many different reasons why the Internet is an important tool for activists. As the literature has established, the Internet helps level the field between corporations and activist groups. Communication, cost, and credibility all help give activist groups power. Also, the Internet provides a virtual organization. For example, if activists are small in numbers and have a low budget to fight against a big organization, they may not be able to arrange meetings outside of a certain geographic area. A Web page sets up a virtual operation that allows activists to become acquainted with other activists and gain members. Coombs (1998) states that the Internet can increase the power resources available to activists.

How the Internet is used for the activists' purpose depends on who is using the Internet and creating the messages. The primary use of the Internet for activists revolves around mobilization and carrying out actions. Only the Internet allows activists to distribute messages to thousands of people all over the world and to publish information that is accessible anywhere and at any time.

There are three different categories of Web activism: awareness/advocacy, organization/mobilization, and action/reaction. These categories show different initiatives and determine whether a group is proactive or reactive. Awareness/advocacy uses the Internet as an alternate news source that focuses largely on the issues not reported by other media. This type of Web activism uses distribution of information through methods such as e-mails and e-newsletters. Organization/mobilization can be used to call for action in the real world, such as a demonstration; it can back up an action that is already happening off-line, such as contacting an elected official through e-mail; and it can call

for action that can only be carried out online, such as spamming campaigns. The key to this step is to match the online tools to the task. Action/reaction simply refers to activist style Internet protests, or 'hacktivism'. This method is used to crash organizations' Web sites or create parody sites and confuse the issue (Vegh, 2003).

Though all three of the methods described can produce a desired affect, only action/reaction produces an immediate effect. The belief of this study is that long-term goals of activist groups, such as membership retention, and communication should be concentrated on. Though effective, hacktivism should be viewed only as a tool and not necessarily a type of activism. Though there are groups who take part in hacktivism, the attacks are not constant, nor are they the only methods used to keep the activist organization together. Acts of hacktivism merely supplement other methods of fighting or are used to draw attention to the activist organization.

Regardless, though, of the method used, the main purpose of activists using the Internet is to garner attention for their issue and raise awareness within their publics. Activists must use mobilization to allow organizations, collectives, and individuals to establish for inclusive forms of organizational communities.

When used for mobilization, the Internet helps organizations to generate power. The Internet, as previously mentioned, helps push issues that were once unheard to the top of the agenda. Publics become more aware of issues that might have been ignored by traditional media. Mobilization must involve facilitating intelligent relationships and promoting dialogue. By ignoring active participation and neglecting to monitor the issues, interests could be damaged and activities, undermined. Web sites must be reflexive and encourage interaction in many different ways: top-down, bottom-up,

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sideways, or any other direction possible (Selvin, 2000). All of the literature repeats the premise that communication must flow. Involvement is the key idea when both informing people and keeping their interest. Taylor et al. (2001) state that, "activist organizations have unique communication and economic restraints and may be able to use the Internet dialogically" (p. 268).

Rutherford (2000), while focusing on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that attempted to ban landmines, argues that spreading a consistent message is important. The Internet helped gain the sort of mobilization mentioned by Selvin (2001). It allowed NGOs not only to spread messages, but also to organize a coherent campaign from hundreds of other NGOs. Using the Internet to devise a clear consistent message, even those with differing opinions on the underlying reasoning for protest had one consistent message to concentrate on. This consistent message helped the NGOs mobilize and, at the same time achieve one of the main goals of activism – to maintain membership.

The Internet also allows activist organizations to better serve their publics, extend their reach, and coordinate with other like-minded groups. The Internet is one of the best channels for activist organizations to communicate their message and garner support. One way this is done, is by fostering dialogic communication (Taylor et al., 2001). The main point of the Internet is to be seen and heard by the audience you choose. Others will also see your messages, but the stakeholders you target in particular will benefit more from the messages and attempts at dialogic communication. Heath (1998) states that the Web offers many of these opportunities for activist groups to get their messages out to key publics and their point of view evaluated by the media. A Web site creates both a platform to disseminate information from, as well as a venue where two or more entities

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can debate issues.

While the use of the Internet in establishing a dialogic loop has been established and will be further discussed in the next section, there are other advantages for activist organizations that use the Internet as a tool. There are several more basic benefits beyond the attempts to communicate with stakeholders and the media that make the Internet a prime weapon for an activist. These benefits include low cost, control, transparency, and trust, as well as the link between the act and the stakeholder.

Low cost, though it is only an economic reality to regular for-profit organization, is one of the goals of activism. Generally in activist groups, money is tight and any tool that helps to cut costs while increasing outreach is indispensable. Jo and Kim (2003) mention several of the ways that the low costs of the Internet come into effect. Its worldwide reach, ability to reduce the use of paper, help in cutting costs by accelerating research, e-mail, and access to vast amounts of information all contribute to making the Internet a viable cost cutting tool.

Coombs (1998) explains that activists, for as little as $20 per month, can create an Internet presence. Actually, it can cost even less with free services in existence such as Netzero. In addition, little computer skill is needed since many sites, such as Yahoo, provide free Web pages and Web site tool builders that allow for simply clicking and dropping. Also, Web page builders such as Dreamweaver and Microsoft Front Page can be purchased for a low price and can create professional looking Web sites with little training. Heath (1998) states that any organization, no matter how financially limited, can sustain its message on the Internet. This allows the organization to reach people around the world and the electronic playing field helps to democratize public debate.

Rutherford (2000) gives a few examples of how NGOs were able to take advantage of the low cost of the Internet. The Internet allowed the groups to reach out across geographical space, which helped to broaden and build a membership base. Further, the ease of use and minimal cost allowed participation from many areas that might not have been able to join up with the groups. The availability of the Internet ensured that other NGOs were kept up-to-date, and including them lessened the risk that they would drop out. Perhaps the most important and cost efficient aspect of the Internet was e-mail. This communication tool permitted fast communication and data collection from other areas. Though e-mail may seem a small asset for organizations that must communicate, e-mail is a huge boon. Currently, stamps cost 37 cents each. Letters, on average, take two to three days to arrive. In using e-mail, mass mailings can go out instantaneously and can save an organization limitless funds on postage.

Though low cost is one of the prime reasons the Internet should be used by activists, control also adds to the technology's appeal. Unlike the general reliance on the news media that organizations are subject to, the ability to control what information is disseminated on the Web greatly helps activist groups. Everything that appears on the Web site, aside from posts that come from users, is placed there by the activist organization. Control also expands beyond simply being able to post a certain side of the argument or a view that is not exhibited in the mainstream media, a Web site can also contain vast amounts of multi-media information. Text, audio, video, downloads, etc. can be made available for interested parties, turning that Web site into a one-stop place for all information on a certain topic (Coombs, 1998).

Also an important part of having control is being able to alter content on a Web

site 24 hours a day. When news breaks, new views, opinion, opposition, or information can be posted. Part of the control the Internet lends to activists is the ability to monitor the development of issues that are of vital interest to them. Instead of being a reactionary entity, by following up after news has been reported, activist groups can change right along with news developments by constantly updating their information and shaping their views. In a proactive, as opposed to a reactive, position that might exist for groups following newspapers and other slow-to-surface news sources, the Internet will help groups by already having answers for questioning stakeholders (Heath, 1998; Coombs, 1998).

In response to this idea of control, the notion of credibility again can be raised. According to Wright (2001), studies show Web sites are either as credible as traditional media or, in some cases, even more credible. Further, Rutherford (2000) explains that the Internet, through a full dissemination of information, can build transparency and trust. This is done by providing increased access and opportunities to communicate directly with leaders. This communication helps to encourage cooperation and understanding.

The Internet seems to provide utilities that will help activist groups gain leverage in attaining their goals. Although the Internet is not a singular means to success, it is a complimentary device that will assist activist groups in communicating with their audiences and attaining their goals of building membership and keeping costs down.

Along with membership, we have seen a few examples of how dialogic communication is a vital part of what the Internet provides. Without dialogic communication, the Internet is simply a tool for the one-way dissemination of information. When the dialogic loop is not utilized, much of the Internet's benefits

disappear and activist's goals are more difficult to achieve. The following section will cover the dialogic nature of communication via the Internet and how activists can use this powerful aspect of the technology.

Two-way Communication in Public Relations

Though this study examines how activist groups are using dialogic tools to communicate with their publics using the Web, it is important to note some differences in the methods of two-way communication. This study will describe three different methods of two-way communication that may be used by activist groups in communicating with publics – dialogic communication, dyadic communication, and symmetrical communication.

Dialogic communication is the basis of this study. Organizations that use dialogic communication are seeking to encourage participation from stakeholders. Participation is important and requires collaboration on the part of participants. Collaboration is rewarded and encouraged rather than stifled. Most importantly, it must be noted that dialogic communication seeks to move communication during times of conflict (Spicer, 1997). Because of the conflict, dialogic communication is not necessarily symmetrical. The parties involved aren't concerned with the give and take of symmetry. They are more focused on unearthing problems.

The main difference of dialogic communication, as explained by Deetz (2001) is the fact that dialogic communication looks at dissensus. Dialogic communication is about facing differences. Dissensus is not disagreement but a presentation of differences and the disruption of any course. Whereas consensus seeks to discover organizational culture,

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dissensus works to show the fragmentation and the work required to maintain coherence.

Deetz (2001) continues in explaining that dissensus considers struggle and conflict to be natural states. This means that dialogic communication is a deconstructive process that unmasks elite conceptions, in turn allowing organizational activities to be given new, multiple, and conflicting descriptions. Holtzhausen (2000) states the reason that dialogic communication focuses on dissensus instead of consensus is because consensus sacrifices the recognition of differences. It avoids conflict and does not allow for more critical thinking, whereas, dissensus extends thinking. Therefore, a public relations practitioner must not strive for consensus. By doing so, the practitioner will not be able to identify the tensors between the organization and its publics.

Pearson (1989) posits that ideal speech occurs when participants have the freedom to exchange ideas. Pearson mentions that Habermas' ideal speech situation states that individual speakers can speak about whatever they wish to with no constraints or manipulation. Holtzhausen (2000) shifts this idea to the public relations practitioner in stating:

> Public relations has a role to play in challenging in challenging dominant world views and practices of the organization when these are perceived to be unjust. The role of public relations should be to continue to demystify the organization and its practices and transform it into a more democratic institution, for both its internal and external publics. (p. 105)

Deetz (2001) states that the basic goal of dialogic communication is to reclaim conflict. It addresses marginalization and conflict suppression. In recognizing conflict and not settling on a common ground, true dialogic communication allows groups to

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identify conflicts and problems below the surface that might be ignored or suppressed using normal methods of communication. It must be noted that dialogic communication does not necessarily solve the problems uncovered, it is more a means to uncover and address the problems. While problems may work out, organizations and publics may agree to disagree.

The second method of two-way communications that may be used by activist groups is *dyadic* communication. Hallahan (2001b) describes dyadic communication as communication that takes place on an interpersonal level between someone from the organization and someone from the organization's public. This type of communication tends to be one-on-one communication and is generally an unstructured, unplanned event. The communication, though generally face-to-face, can be conducted through telephones and correspondence.

This type of communication is highly interactive but sometimes volatile due to its unplanned nature. This kind of interaction is generally used for negotiations. It can also be used to deal with a disgruntled member of the public or members of publics who seek to resolve problems due to high levels of uncertainty. Organizations usually participate in this type of communication because they are forced to participate through confrontation (Hallahan, 2001b).

This type of communication differs from dialogic communication through its spontaneity. Also, this type of communication is generally one-on-one and only addresses certain individuals' needs, not that of a group. Dyadic communication is never planned and does not necessarily have a goal set by both parties. Unlike dialogic communication, dyadic communication does not work to address all issues. Instead, this type of

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communication is a simple use of two-way communication designed to get an answer or voice a grievance without a particular or clear goal in mind for both parties involved.

The third type of communication is *two-way symmetrical* communication. According to J. Grunig (2001), two-way symmetrical communication provides the normative ideal model of public relations. With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners look to have a back and forth communication with their publics. Where two-way symmetrical differs from dyadic communication is the use of research. Two-way symmetrical communication involves conducting scientific research and dialogue in order to bring about symbiotic changes for both the organization and the publics.

Though all three of these communication methods involve a two-way dialogue between an organization and its publics, there are differences to each of them that are important to point out. The three can be viewed as a different type of two-way communication: process, flow, and research. Dialogic communication is a process that involves the organization and the practitioner sitting down and attacking uncertainty and understanding what effect the culture has on the relationship. Dialogic communication embraces conflict and is therefore not symmetrical because it is not necessarily searching for a solution. Dyadic communication is a flow that seeks consensus. It is an unplanned communication that is simply a back and forth dialogue between the organization and the public. Two-way symmetrical communication involves research. This method uses research to understand both the organization's standpoint and the public's standpoint in order to reach a consensus.

Kent and Taylor (1998) suggest that dialogic communication is considered to be especially ethical. Though this is the case, they point out that it is not necessarily better than other forms of communication.

For the purposes of clarity, differences between dialogic, dyadic, and two-way symmetrical communication are all important to note. All of these forms of communication are used depending upon the circumstances facing an organization. For the purpose of this study, the Web tools are called dialogic tools because they have the ability to provide a dialogic loop. It must be stated that the method in which the Web tools are employed is up to each group, but they do allow for an ethical form of communication between the organizations and their publics.

Now that the three forms of two-way communication have been discussed, the rest of this section explains how both activist and corporate groups can use Web tools in a two-way capacity.

Wright (2001) explains that most public relations campaigns not only involve the sending of information to key publics, but they require the formation of a relationship. This relationship is the most important aspect of activism, whether the relationship be with the organization the activists are hoping to change, the key officials and/or publics needed to side with the activists, or the news media the activists can use to spread their message. A good relationship with all of the components above, while not necessary, can go a long way towards helping an activist group achieve its goal.

Two-way communication is required for activist groups. Their purpose is to promote understanding of the activist group's issues (L. Grunig, 1992). Groups use the Web for the purpose of creating, fostering, and maintaining dialogue with their target

publics using two-way communication. The Web is a tool that allows the flow of two-way communication. According to J. Grunig (2001), two-way communication can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. Two-way symmetrical communication attempts to achieve a dialogue between the organization and its public. The public should be just as likely to persuade the organization as the organization is to persuade the public. The basis of two-way symmetrical communication is that communication and understanding flow both ways.

As previously mentioned, this study accepts the mixed-motive model as the most appropriate form of communication. The mixed-motive model of communication represents a fusion of both symmetrical and asymmetrical communication (J. Grunig, 2001). Symmetrical communication, while possible, does not let the organization follow its course all of the time. Asymmetrical communication only uses the public in a limited basis and is grounded in persuasion. Two-way symmetrical communication deals with research and conflict resolution, rather than persuasion and media effects. The mixed-motive model of communication offers a framework that incorporates aspects of both symmetry and asymmetry that are useful to activist groups (Dozier & Ehling, 1992).

The two-way model relies upon the use of research by the practitioner. The role of the research is to develop relationships between the organization and its publics, not just to persuade. Two-way symmetrical communication relies on conflict resolution. Environmental scanning and research are necessary for effective communication. In this manner, activist groups must use this sort of communication to survive. Already, without the Internet, activist groups use research to create a dialogue with publics and the organization or entity they are up against. The activist group acts as a watchdog of sorts.

It must monitor the situation and public opinion, as well as the government and the news media, not only to shape its message but also to understand what a true solution to the problem might be. Without research and conflict resolution, activist groups may force an organization to change a method or activity only to have it backfire completely or result in greater damage to the environment.

Heath (2001) advocates the use of symmetrical communication for activist groups in order to better enhance their interests. Activist publics are initiators of public relations programs because they are aware what organizations are doing.

Jo and Kim (2003) state that with the rise of Internet use, relationship building has been pushed to the forefront of public relations. Since the purpose of public relations is to build favorable relationships, two-way symmetrical communications is the key to Internet dialogue. Since the Internet is interactive, letting the user control the flow of information, it allows two-way communication between the practitioner and the receiver, or both. Moreover, the Internet may actually facilitate relationship building and increased participation (Jo & Kim, 2003; Johnson, 1997; Kent et al., 2003). This illustrates the utility of the Internet for the practice of public relations by offering dialogic communication. The Internet provides a never-before-seen capability for activist groups to do what is naturally in their best interest.

In addition, Kent et al. (2003) explain that dialogic communication is also the most ethically grounded form of communication. Dialogic theory suggests that an organization must be willing to interact with its publics in honest ethical ways. This, of course, is the way that most activist organizations with an ethical goal should also behave. Dialogic communication also assists in achieving one of the activists two most

important goals – the maintenance of membership. At the most basic level, the Internet puts activists on a competitive level with the organizations they are targeting.

Taylor et al. (2001) show that through maintaining membership, activist groups are also able to bring members of diasporic groups together. This unique ability to join people using dialogic communication is significant. This type of relational approach situates relationship building as the central type of communication in public relations. Taking it one step further, Taylor et al. go on to state that dialogue appears to be joining and even replacing symmetry as an organizing principle of public relations theory building.

Kent and Taylor (1998) posit that dialogic communication refers to any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions. It contains a communicative give and take guided by two principles. First, people engaged in dialogue do not necessarily have to agree. Second, dialogic communications is about intersubjectivity, not objective or subjective truth. Because of its focus on a process of negotiation, dialogic communication is considered an extremely ethical way of conducting public relations.

Kent and Taylor (1998) continue by stating that in evaluating both concepts of two-way and dialogic communication, there are some parallels, but there also seems to be one main difference when looking at how activist groups' campaigns are managed. With two-way communication, there is the choice of being symmetrical or asymmetrical. As with dialogic communication, two-way communication stresses listening skills and environmental scanning. Two-way communication serves as a good basis for understanding how the communication flow should progress. It is understood that all parties must be considered in the process. However, the two forms differ in where the

power lies.

Kent and Taylor (1998) state that two-way communication puts the power in the hands of the practitioner. In this model, it is up to the public relations practitioner to be the buffer between the environment and the organization. It differs from dialogic communication because the decision of whether to listen to the other parties involves lies solely with the practitioner. If the practitioner wishes, communication can be managed in a monologic or one-way style. With dialogic communications, the parties involved must listen to one another. While there may or may not be a buffer, both parties must acknowledge or at the very least listen to each other to further a solution.

Dialogic communication is more important to the activist group because there should be no buffer. Everyone should be included in negotiated communication. Keeping the system open and using an open and honest communication approach is the strongest weapon for an activist group. It is for this reason that Internet communication should be available for anyone who would like to take part in the negotiation. Kent and Taylor (1998) state that without creating an effective dialogic relationship with its publics, an activist group turns the Internet into nothing more than a monologic communication medium, a platform for the party line and information dissemination.

Esrock and Leichty (1998) share another reason why dialogic communication is so important in saying that the use of dialogic communication on the Internet will not only allow more dialogue between organizations and publics, but it will empower publics who will increasingly demand real information while rejecting one-sided persuasive pitches.

Taylor et al. (2001) claim that for activists, the Internet should be the primary source of communicating with publics. The formation of dialogic relationships is effective and creates mutually rewarding interpersonal communication. In fact, Taylor et al. argue that the building of dialogic communication with publics through the Internet contains the same qualities as building interpersonal relationships.

Wright (2001) posits that interpersonal relationships can in fact be formed and fostered on the Internet. According to Suler (1998), cyberspace offers a new venue in which to interact in a social setting and may in some ways actually be better than interpersonal or face-to-face exchanges.

There are five principles listed by Kent and Taylor (1998) that enhance open communication and organizational responses to public needs. These five principles consist of offering dialogic loops, ease of interface, conservation of visitors, generation of return visits, and providing information relevant to a variety of publics. Taylor et al. (2001) claim that these five principles are the keys to using the Internet to its fullest in creating dialogic relationships.

Jo and Kim (2003) support the use of dialogic communication to communicate with publics by stating that audience power is related to the interactivity of media. Dialogic communication use on the Internet can have a significant effect on relationships between organizations and publics. Long-term relationships can be formed in this way.

Most research points to the fact that the Internet is the reason why dialogic relationships work. It facilitates these relationships and helps to foster long-term relationships that bring groups together. The Internet's power for enhancing dialogic communication can be seen in how it enables people to both information seeks and

receive.

The interactivity that users need in order to take part in dialogic communication can be likened to interpersonal communication. In fact, the five principles from Kent and Taylor (1998) relates to several principle components of interpersonal communication exchanges: 1) relationships are based on interest or attraction; 2) relationships are based on interaction; 3) relationships are based on trust yet involve some risk; 4) relationships require some periodic maintenance; and 5) relationships involve cycles of rewarding and unsatisfactory interaction.

These five principles demonstrate why the interactivity offered by the Internet is so important to organizations seeking to communicate with stakeholders. Interactivity is required for dialogue to occur. Without dialogue, it becomes extremely difficult to strengthen the ties between the activist group and its members. Rogers (1995) defines interactivity as "the degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles and have control over their mutual discourse" (p. 314). Jo and Kim (2003) state that interactivity in the Web is related to relationship building through attitudinal and behavioral change. Further, interactivity on the Web can help to enhance the mutual relationship and collaboration between the sender and the receiver. This furthers the idea of two-way communication and stresses its importance.

Overall, the idea of dialogic communication on the Internet must not be an afterthought or even a secondary reason for its use. Dialogic communication should be the primary reason the Internet is used. The Internet is a powerful tool with the ability to reach publics like no other form of communication can. As computers become more a part of every home, the Internet has fewer boundaries to confine it. As more people

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become disillusioned with the media and as more people seek deeper relationships with organizations, the Internet is a tool that activists can use to help reach and retain a larger part of the public for membership and action.

In examining how activist groups use the Internet and dialogic communication tools to further their cause, the research question that guides this study is as follows:

RQ1. *What types of dialogic tools are present on activist Web sites?*

This question examines the use of dialogic tools on activist Web sites. Specifically, it seeks to determine the dialogic level of the Web site tools used by activist groups.

First, this study will attempt to determine the frequency of use of the dialogic tools on activist Web sites. To accomplish this objective, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H1. Dialogic tools are used in activist Web sites.

Second, this study attempts to compare activist group use of dialogic tools on the Web and corporate use of dialogic tools on the Web. Because corporations are often targets of activist groups and because activist groups must also compete for publics, it is necessary for this study to compare and contrast the amount of dialogic tools between the two. To examine the frequency of the use of dialogic tools on corporate Web sites, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H2. Dialogic tools are used in Corporate Web sites.

This study also examines how well, or to what degree, activist Web sites use dialogic tools in comparison to corporate Web sites. This study posits that activist groups will better understand the importance of using dialogic communication to further their

goals and will therefore use a greater number of dialogic tools than corporate Web sites. To compare the activist groups' use of dialogic tools on the Web and corporate use of dialogic tools on the Web, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H3. Activist Web sites will contain more dialogic tools than corporate Web sites.

After analyzing the number of dialogic tools used by both activist Web sites and corporate Web sites, this study will examine the type of dialogic tools used on the Web. To accomplish this objective, a list of 15 dialogic tools, called *levels of dialogic interactivity* for this study, currently available on the Web was created. The list was then broken into two groups, Level 1 dialogic tools and Level 2 dialogic tools. Level 1 dialogic tools, or *ancillary dialogic tools*, are those that provide a response or allow interaction by a user without the necessity of a human on the other side of the computer. These tools assist the Level 2 dialogic tools. Level 1 tools allow users to feel as if they are participating, though, no actual dialogic communication is taking place. For example, a Level 1 dialogic tool can be a survey or a guest book. Level 2 dialogic tools, or *dialogic exchanges*, are a more involved set of tools with which users can actually contact a person or receive a response from the activist group or corporation. Examples of Level 2 dialogic tools are the ability to engage in a chat room or a feedback option.

As previously mentioned, activists should be aware of the power they have with the Internet and they should understand that deeper more involved dialogic tools will be more successful than those that don't fully involve stakeholders. On the other hand, corporations may not have the time, knowledge, or human resources to use Level 2 dialogic tools, therefore, they must rely on the simpler Level 1 dialogic tools that can be handled by automation. Finding out the level of dialogic tools used by both activist

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groups and corporations will be tested by the fourth hypothesis:

H4. Activist Web sites will use more Level 2 dialogic tools than corporate Web

sites do.

This concludes the literature review of this study. The following chapters will

present the methods, data analysis, results, conclusions and recommendations. The

methods, design, and procedure used to gather and analyze the data necessary to test the

hypotheses and research questions stated above are explained in more depth in Chapter 3

of this study.

Chapter Three

Method

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures used to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions stated at the end of chapter 1. Again, this study examines how activist groups use the Web to communicate dialogically with their publics. The Web is a powerful tool for activist groups and can be used to help level the field with the corporations and organizations they are attempting to change. It has been established that the Web allows activists to achieve their goals of generating and keeping membership, and it is a low cost alternative. The research suggests that activist groups should be using the Web's dialogic communication tools heavily. The purpose of this study is to determine how well activists use the Web for dialogic communication. More specifically, this research attempts to determine the degree to which activists use dialogic communication tools on the Web and if activist groups use these dialogic tools more than corporations?

Methodology Selected

This study attempts to analyze the tools present on a number of Web sites; therefore, the selected research method for this study is content analysis. According to Poindexter and McCombs (2000) content analysis limits itself to produced content alone and draws conclusions based on what is there. "Content analysis can be used to describe

the attributes of messages, and those attributes can be compared over time to identify trends or across sources to detect differences and similarities" (p. 188). Further, Berelson offers the most widely accepted definition of content analysis defining it as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989, p.197).

As a measure of what is and what is not there, this study will examine manifest content. The manifest content for this study are the dialogic tools that either *are* or *are not* present on a Web site. In order to measure the manifest content for this study, a codebook (see Appendix E) was created that categorizes each of 16 dialogic tools contained within the levels of interactivity this study examines. The tools are broken into two levels for analysis. Level 1, ancillary dialogic tools, deals with less involved methods of dialogic communication, while Level 2 dialogic tools, dialogic exchanges, involve a deeper dialogic commitment and a human response. Reviewing Web sites was a two step process. First, starting at the home page of each site, each of the 16 dialogic tools was searched for. Once found, a number was placed next to that tool representing the amount of mouse clicks it took to reach that tool.

The amount of clicks is used to determine the efficiency of the Web site visited. The closer that the tool is located to the home page, the faster the visitor will find the tool; therefore, the site will be more efficient with a lower average of clicks.

Design

Kent and Taylor (1998) focus the first principle of their paper on the dialogic loop, which is being used for this study. They state that the "new" technology of the

Internet offers the ability to allow feedback from audiences. This feedback loop is an appropriate starting point for dialogic communication between an organization and publics. With the loop, the organizations can respond to questions and concerns. Simply posting enough information for the public is not enough. There needs to be a person to follow up with any further concerns a stakeholder may have. Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) state that the dialogic ability of a Web site is in fact its most important feature.

Taylor et al. (2001) used the five principles from Kent and Taylor and broke them down into a six section, 32-question survey. Similarly, this study uses a framework consisting of 16 points focusing on attributes that promote and facilitate dialogic communication. The 16 points are broken into two groups. The ancillary dialogic tools consist of basic dialogic tools or tools that can initiate or satiate a dialogic need, making the member/customer feel like part of a group. The dialogic exchanges consist of deeper dialogic tools that either require a personal response or provide requested information.

Framework

Level 1 of the framework consists of seven items: directory, fact sheet/FAQ, quiz/polls/surveys, media, guest book, e‑newsletters, about us/company info, and a news room/happenings area.

The directory consists of a directory of important positions within the organization. Contact information consists of e‑mail, a telephone number, or both. A public relations official or information specialist should be a point of contact. The fact sheet/FAQ must also have a place where further question can be asked or more information can be sought. There is no limit or minimum to how thorough the FAQ must

be. The quiz/polls/survey section simply includes one of the listed. Whether you must be registered or not to participate makes no difference. The media section may consist of downloads such as annual reports, newsletters, video, etc. The guest book must be easily found on the home page for the organization and allow visitors to sign. There is a link or area on the home page or site map to sign up for an e-newsletter. The about us/company information page tells the visitor who and what the company is about; its cause and/or its market. Lastly, the news room/events page keeps the visitor up to date on the happenings of the organization. This page includes press clippings, biographies of executives, events being held by the company, upcoming dates that are important, and so on.

The Level 2 tools for the framework includes seven items: e-mail discussion lists, chat rooms, bulletin/message boards, feedback/comments, member/customer center, request information, and contact us.

The e-mail discussion list offers the visitor an opportunity to sign up for an e-mail discussion list. Chat rooms should be available, not necessarily for visitors, to discuss the ongoings of the organization. A bulletin board or message board allows the user to both post comments and reply to others' comments. The feedback/comments section allows the visitor to contact the organization through either a built in system or through e-mail from a direct link on the Web site. The member/customer center is present on the home page and allows for visitors to sign in or sign up. Request more information has a built in link or e-mail link that allows the asking of questions. The contact us option allows the visitor to see whom they are contacting with a question or comment. Again, this option should be available electronically.

The groups of dialogic tools were separated into the two levels of interactivity.

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Level 1, the ancillary dialogic tools, contain an automated response. It allows the

company to respond to requests without using any manpower for every request. Things

like FAQs and surveys are shallower in the type of communication they give out but they

are put there specifically for the visitor. It allows them to dig further into the site and

either allows them to feel like part of a group (surveys) or answers questions they might

have had about an aspect of the company (about us). As for dialogic exchange items,

these require a response from, or interaction with, people.

Obviously, responses to e-mails and questions is an issue identified by Taylor et

al. (2001), who state that some organizations create the illusion of dialogic

communication but they do not actually respond. Without a response, the communication

cannot be considered dialogic. This study, though, is not concerned with the response as

much as it is concerned with the presence of these tools on the Web site itself. Therefore,

the results of this study will only acknowledge the presence of a dialogic tool and not the

response rate and time of the tool.

Samples

In order to obtain a sample to compare the Web sites of activist groups and

corporations, this study made use of two different databases. For each of the two groups,

100 Web sites were randomly chosen from each database and coded in order to examine

the hypotheses stated. One hundred activist Web sites were randomly selected from

http://www.webactive.com, and 100 corporate Web sites were randomly selected from

http://www.forbes.com/2003/03/26/500sland.html. Each of the Web site databases was

chosen because it contains a comprehensive listing of different organizations. The activist

database represents 32 different categories of activism and 1,429 pages from which a sample could be drawn. The Forbes 500s list contains a listing of 802 top growing companies in America, each with its own Web site. This list was chosen because it is a good source of the type of corporation the literature speaks of. From each database, a sample of 100 Web sites was analyzed for coding. This gives the study a total of 200 Web pages. The Web sites from each database were numbered and a starting point was randomly assigned using Microsoft Excel's random number function. To obtain a skip interval, the total number of Web sites for each database were counted and then divided by the desired sample size of 100. This process was used for both the 100 activist Web sites and the 100 corporate Web sites. This resulted in a skip interval to begin the sampling.

Once all 200 Web sites were coded, another coder tested 20 percent of the total number of Web sites, or 40 Web pages. The coder was given a codebook and explicitly defined rules for marking each of the 16 items and the amount of clicks that it takes to get to each. The intercoder reliability was then measured and reported.

For the activist Web site, the site http://www.webactive.com was chosen. This site was chosen because it is a large database of activist Web sites with various different categories ranging from AIDS/HIV and civil rights to the environment and human rights. On this Web site, there is a directory listing that categorizes activist Web sites alphabetically. The directory consists of 38 total categories. For the purposes of this study, 6 of the categories were removed due to the fact that these categories did not include activist group Web sites and were therefore not pertinent to the study. The categories that were removed included: Government Resources, Humor, Publications,

Useful Information, and Theory.

The remaining 32 categories were printed and numbered for sampling. In each of the 32 categories, there were a number of activist sites listed by the name of the organization with a hyperlink to jump to that specific page. In total, there were 1,429 Web sites numbered for random sampling. With the goal of 100 Web sites to be sampled, the skip interval for the sites was rounded up to 15 from 14.29. In order to obtain a random starting point for the sampling, the random number function in Microsoft Excel was used. The random number 696.2903 was created. In order to be able to use the number for this study, the number was rounded up to 697, which was the sample starting point with a skip interval of 15.

In sampling the corporation Web site, the site http://www.forbes.com/2003/03/26/500sland.html was chosen. This Web site is a section of Forbes.com, which carries the Forbes 500s list. This list was chosen because it is a place where large, non-governmental organizations are grouped in a list. All of the corporations listed in the Forbes 500s are for-profit organizations. Forbes.com describes the list as containing America's biggest companies. It is a report card on how the corporations performed in the year 2002. The 500s list is a number of lists actually containing 802 corporations, judged on sales, profits, assets, market value, and employees. Each of the categories contains the 500 top corporations in that particular category. Because there is some overlap, there are a total of 802 companies that are listed. For purposes of sampling, the list of all 802 corporations was organized in alphabetical order, printed and numbered. As with the activist group Web sites, each of the corporations is listed by name with a hyperlink jumping to the corporation's Web site.

With a total of 802 corporation and the goal of 100 Web sites to be sampled, the skip interval for the list was 8.02. For purposes of this study, the skip interval was, again, rounded up to 9. Microsoft Excel was used to generate a random starting number. The random number 256.3162 was created. For the purposes of this study, the number was rounded up and the starting number for the sampling of corporate Web sites is 257.

Intercoder reliability. In order to obtain a score for intercoder reliability, two coders were used for this study. The first coder coded all 200 Web sites (100 activist, 100 corporate). The second coder coded 40 randomly selected Web sites (20 activist, 20 corporate) from the original 200 to reach a total of 20% of the total amount. In order to test the consistency of coding, Holsti's formula was used to measure the reliability. This method was used because it is a simple formula that is used to determine the reliability of nominal data in terms of percentage agreement (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003).

The process was simple and the training for the second coder was brief. The list of the two levels of variables was given to the second coder in the form of a codebook. Basic instructions were explained. Because of the explicit nature of the coding not much detail was covered. The coder was simply told to search for each variable on the listed Web sites and to mark down the presence of the variable and how many clicks it took the coder to reach the variable (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2004).

Once the numbers were compared, this study created two averages of intercoder reliability to report the findings. The 20 activist Web sites from the second coder were compared to the same 20 Web sites from the primary coder for each Web site, the number of variables that both coders agreed on was calculated. Since there are 16 variables, the number could range from 0 to 16. For the activist Web sites, the lowest

number of agreement found was 11 (alpha = .69), the highest found was 15 (alpha = .94). The average reliability coefficient for the 20 activist Web sites was .83.

The 20 corporate Web sites from the second coder were compared to the same 20 Web sites from the primary coder. For each Web site, the number of variables that both coders agreed on was calculated. Since there are 16 variables, the number could range from 0 to 16. For the corporate Web sites, the lowest number of agreement found was 9 (alpha = .56), the highest found was 15 (alpha = .94). The average reliability coefficient for the 20 corporate Web sites was .76.

Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2004) state that coefficients of .80 or greater are acceptable in most situations and a coefficient of .70 may be appropriate in some exploratory studies. Even though a higher score might be expected because of the simplicity of the coding, there were several times when one variable might be mistakenly marked or another might not be noticed. Moreover, in reviewing the second coder's coding, it seems as though, as the process went on, the coder became more efficient and the agreement rose substantially. Because of the lack of training and the limited time for the coders to review how the data was obtained, the decision was made to use the main coder's data and proceed with the data analysis. This is because the main coder had a longer time for training and a deeper understanding of the tools being looked for.

Data Analysis

SPSS was used for all data analysis. A level of $p < .05$ was used to determine the significance of all tests. Two types of data analyses were conducted. First, frequencies were used to assess all hypotheses of interest. Then an analysis of variance was

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conducted to examine the research question. The next chapter of this study will present the results of the analyses and answer the hypotheses and research question stated.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

This chapter reviews the results of the data analysis for the use of dialogic tools on activist and corporate Web sites.

The purpose of this study is to examine the way activist groups use the Web to create, foster, and maintain dialogue with their target publics. Although the Web is a tool that allows two-way communication, this study questions if activists use Web sites to foster two-way dialogue with their stakeholders or to simply disseminate information to their stakeholders. Specifically, this study seeks to determine how well activists use the Web for dialogic communication. It asks, to what degree do activists use dialogic communication tools on the Web and do the activist groups use these dialogic tools better than corporate entities.

In analyzing the Web, this study measures the use of dialogic tools. In order to measure the use of these tools, two categories of dialogic tools were created: ancillary dialogic tools and dialogic exchanges. The ancillary dialogic tools are those which allow input from users but do not offer a response; therefore they do not complete the dialogic loop. The ancillary tools are those that assist the dialogic exchanges and also allow for participation on the Web site. Dialogic exchanges are tools that allow publics a direct link to the organization on a Web site. These tools, when used, can elicit a response; therefore, they create a dialogue between users and the organization.

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While this study is focused on how activist groups use the Web for communication with their publics in order to achieve their goals, corporate Web sites were used in order to compare and contrast activist use. Many activist groups come into existence when they recognize a problem related to a corporation or other for-profit groups. Therefore, since corporations are usually the targets of activist groups, this study looks at corporate Web sites as a method of comparison. Both use their Web sites to disseminate information and help get their message and mission to the public.

Because the use of dialogic tools is so important for activist sites and the power of the Web is something which should be harnessed, this study seeks to realize how well activist groups are using the Web for the purpose of dialogic communication with their publics. As mentioned in previous chapters, using Web pages as a way to communicate with publics eliminates gatekeepers and allows full dissemination of information to interested publics. But, it is through the use of dialogic tools that activist are able to fully involve their publics and allow activist groups to achieve their goals of maintaining membership in order to rectify the condition for which the activist group was formed.

In order to make this analysis, one research question and four hypotheses were formed in order to find if activist groups use the Web and the dialogic tools it offers.

First, this study attempts to determine the frequency of use of the dialogic tools on activist Web sites. To accomplish this objective, the following hypothesis was tested:

H1. Dialogic tools are used in activist Web sites.

Second, this study attempts to compare activist group use of dialogic tools on the Web and corporate use of dialogic tools on the Web. Because corporations are often targets of activist groups and because activist groups must also compete for publics, it is

necessary for this study to compare and contrast the amount of dialogic tools between the two.

To examine the frequency of the use of dialogic tools on corporate Web sites, the following hypothesis was tested:

H2. Dialogic tools are used in Corporate Web sites.

This study also examines how well, or to what degree, activist Web sites use dialogic tools in comparison to corporate Web sites. This study posited that activist groups would better understand the importance of using dialogic communication to further their goals and would therefore use a greater number of dialogic tools than corporate Web sites.

To compare the activist groups' use of dialogic tools on the Web and corporate use of dialogic tools on the Web, the following hypothesis was tested:

H3. Activist Web sites will contain more dialogic tools than corporate Web sites.

After analyzing the number of dialogic tools used by both activist Web sites and corporate Web sites, this study examined the type of dialogic tools used on the Web. To accomplish this objective, a list of 15 dialogic tools, called *levels of dialogic interactivity* for this study, currently available on the Web was created. The list was then broken into two groups, Level 1 dialogic tools and Level 2 dialogic tools.

Finding out the level of dialogic tools used by both activist groups and corporations was tested by the fourth hypothesis:

H4. Activist Web sites will use more Level 2 dialogic tools than corporate Web sites do.

In seeking to answer the stated research question and hypotheses, the following

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section will cover the analysis of the numbers gathered through a random sample of Web sites for both activist groups and corporations.

Lastly, this study seeks to answer a research question posed in order to more fully understand what tools are being used and what the differences are between activist and corporate Web site and dialogic tool use.

Research Question 1. What types of dialogic tools are present on activist and corporate Web sites and how efficiently are they used*?*

Activist Dialogic Frequency

The focus of this study is on activist groups and how they use the tools available on the Internet to communicate with their publics. As previously mentioned, dialogic communication should be the desired form of communication for activist groups. Therefore, this study uses a list of dialogic tools divided into two levels in order to measure the presence of dialogic communication on activist Web sites. In order to gather the Web sites needed to create a sample, an activist directory from http://www.webactive.com was used. This directory was used because it represents 32 different categories of activism and 1,429 pages from which a sample was be drawn. The activist categories varied in topic from civil rights to religion. To test the hypotheses of interest, 100 Web sites were randomly sampled from this directory and measured using the dialogic communication framework.

Ancillary dialogic tools. Table 1 contains the frequencies for the ancillary dialogic tools for activist Web sites. It lists both the presence of ancillary dialogic Web tools and the amount of clicks it takes to find the tools. There are nine ancillary dialogic tools

examined in this study. They include directory, mission, fact sheets/FAQs, e-newsletters, quiz/polls/surveys, media, guestbooks, about us/company information, and newsroom/current events/happenings. These ancillary tools provide an automated response. They allow the company to respond to requests without using human resources for every request. The following section describes the findings for each variable on the 100 activist Web sites examined in this study.

Table 1. Activist use of ancillary dialogic tools

Ancillary Dialogic Tools	Home page	1-click	2-clicks	3-clicks	4-clicks	Total
Directory	1	15	17	_	_	33
Mission	4	17	9	_	_	30
Fact sheet/FAQ	1	16	3	1	_	21
E-Newsletter	2	27	7	1	_	37
Quiz/Poll/Survey	1	7	_	_	_	8
Media (Downloadable information)	_	20	10	1	_	31
Guestbook	_	4	1	_	_	5
About us/ Company Information	8	71	4	1	_	84
News Room/Current Events/Happenings	1	55	5	_	_	61

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 33% (n=33) contained a directory. A directory, according to this study, is a listing of staff, directors, or managers and their contact

information. Of the 33% of sites that contained a directory, 1% (n=1) were located on the home page, 15% (n=15) were located one click away from the home page, and 17% (n=17) were located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 30% (n=30) contained a mission. A mission is a mission statement of the organization, which states the organization's mission and goals. Of the 30% of sites that contained a mission, 4% (n=4) were located on the home page, 17% (n=17) were located one click away from the home page, and 9% (n=9) were located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 21% (n=21) contained a fact sheet or FAQ. A fact sheet or FAQ is designed to offer up commonly asked questions about the company for interested publics. Of the 21% of sites that contained fact sheet or FAQ, 1% (n=1) were located on the home page, 16% (n=16) were located one click away from the home page, 3% (n=3) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 1% (n=1) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 37% (n=37) contained an e-newsletter. An e-newsletter is a mailing sent out through electronic mail, which allows publics to sign up to receive more information from an organization. Of the 37% of sites that contained e-newsletter sign ups, 2% (n=2) were located on the home page, 27% (n=27) were located one click away from the home page, 7% (n=7) were located two clicks away from the home page and 1% (n=1) was located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 8% (n=8) contained a quiz, poll, or survey. A quiz, poll, or survey is designed and placed on the site in order to allow a user to voice an opinion to the company or other users in the public. Of the 8% of sites that contained a

quiz, poll, or survey, 1% (n=1) were located on the home page and 7% (n=7) were located one click away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 31% (n=31) contained a media area. The media area contains downloadable information and also streaming audio or video. Of the 31% of sites that contained a media area, 20% were located one click away from the home page, 10% (n=10) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 1% (n=1) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 5% (n=5) contained a guestbook. A guestbook allows visitors of a Web sites to make comments viewable by everyone. Of the 5% of sites that contained a guestbook, 4% (n=4) were located one click away from the home page and 1% (n=1) were located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 84% (n=84) contained an "about us" page. The about us/company information page describes the organization and can include the mission, vision, and background of the organization. Of the 84% of sites that contained an about us/company information page, 8% (n=8) were located on the home page, 71% (n=71) were located one click away from the home page, 4% (n=4) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 1% (n=1) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 61% (n=61) contained a news room/current events/happenings page. This page keeps publics updated on what events the organization is involved in or what is going on within the organization at the moment. Of the 61% of sites that contained a news room/current events/happenings page, 1% (n=1) were located on the home page, 55% (n=55) were located one click away from the home page, and 5%

(n=5) were located two clicks away from the home page.

In analyzing the total number of ancillary dialogic (AD) tools used, 12% (n=12) of the sites used one AD tool, 15% (n=15) of the sites used two AD tools, 23% (n=23) of the sites used three AD tools, 26% (n=26) of the sites use four AD tools, 13% (n=13) of the sites used five AD tools, and 5% (n=5) of the sites used six AD tools.

Dialogic exchange tools. Table 2 contains the frequencies for the dialogic exchange tools for activist Web sites. It lists both the presence of dialogic exchange Web tools and the amount of clicks it took to find the tools. There are seven dialogic exchange tools examined in this study. They include e-mail discussion lists, chat room, bulletin/message board, feedback/comments, member/customer center, request more information, and contact us. These dialogic tools allow for a two-way response, initiating a feedback loop. These tools allow the users to feel involved with the organization by permitting dialogue between users and the organization itself. The following analyzes the findings for each dialogic exchange variable on the 100 activist Web sites.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 4% (n=4) contained an e-mail discussion list. The e-mail discussion list is designed to let users state their opinions about topical and organizational events to others through e-mail. Of the 4% of sites that contained an e-mail discussion list, 2% (n=2) were present one click away from the home page, 1% (n=1) were present two clicks away from the home page, and 1% (N=1) were present three clicks away from the home page.

Table 2. Activist use of dialogic exchange tools

Dialogic Exchange Tools	Home page	1-click	2-clicks	3-clicks	4-clicks	Total
E-mail discussion list	_	2	1	1	_	4
Chat room	_	1	_	_	_	1
Bulletin/Message board	_	7	2	2	_	11
Feedback/Comments	1	15	5	_	_	21
Member/Customer center	_	7	_	_	_	7
Request more information	_	14	5	_	_	19
Contact us	3	83	8	_	_	94

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 1% (n=1) contained a chat room. The chat

room allows an exchange of opinions and ideas between users in an on-line, live forum.

Of the single Web site that contained a chat room, the chat room was one click away

from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 11% (n=11) contained a bulletin/message

board. The bulletin/message board allows users and the organization to post opinions and

thoughts and allow for responses and feedback. Of the sites that contained a

bulletin/message board, 7% (n=7) were located one click away from the home page, 2%

(n=2) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 2% (n=2) were located

three clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 21% (n=21) contained a feedback/comments

section. The feedback comments section allows users to contact the organization directly with any feedback. Of the 21% of sites that contained a feedback/comments section, 1% (n=1) were located on the home page, 15% (n=15) were located one click away from the home page, and 5% (n=5) were located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 7% (n=7) contained a member/customer center. A member/customer center allows a user to log in to access more information and sometimes interact with other members. The 7% of sites containing a member/customer center were located one click away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 19% (n=19) contained a link to request more information. The request more information link explicitly tells the customer to click on the link to request more information from the organization. Of the 19% of sites that contained a request more information link, 14% (n=14) were contained one click away from the home page and 5% (n=5) were contained two clicks away from the home page.

Of the activist Web sites analyzed, 94% (n=94) contained a "contact us" link. The contact us link allows users to direct any information they wish directly to the organization. Of the 94% of the sites that contained a contact us link, 3% (n=3) were located on the home page, 83% (n=3) were located one click away from the home page, and 8% (n=8) were located two clicks away from the home page.

In analyzing the total number of dialogic exchange (DE) tools used, 45% (n=45) of the sites used one DE tool, 37% (n=37) of the sites used two DE tools, 8% (n=8) of the sites used three DE tools, and 4% (n=4) of the sites use four DE tools.

Corporate Dialogic Frequency

The inclusion of corporation Web sites provides a contrast with which to analyze the activist groups' use of the Web. Since corporations are generally a target of activist groups, they were chosen as the comparison groups. Corporation must also use dialogic tools in order to speak with the general public, customers, other businesses, and investors. In sampling the corporation Web site, the site http://www.forbes.com/2003/03/26/500sland.html was chosen. This Web site is a section of Forbes.com, which carries the Forbes 500s list. This list was chosen because it is a place where large, non-governmental organizations are grouped in a list. The Forbes 500s list contains of 802 top growing companies in America. Of the 802 groups present on the Forbes 500 list, 100 of the Web sites were randomly sampled for use in this study.

Ancillary dialogic tools. Table 3 contains the frequencies for the ancillary dialogic tools for corporate Web sites. It lists both the presence of ancillary dialogic Web tools and the amount of clicks it takes to find the tools. There are nine ancillary dialogic tools looked for by this study. They include directory, mission, fact sheets/FAQs, e-newsletters, quiz/polls/surveys, media, guestbooks, about us/company information, and newsroom/current events/ happenings. These ancillary tools allow for an automated response. It allows the company to respond to requests without using any manpower for every request. The following analyzes the findings for each variable on the 100 (n=100) corporate Web sites.

Table 3. Corporate use of ancillary dialogic tools

Ancillary Dialogic Tools	Home page	1-click	2-clicks	3-clicks	4-clicks	Total
Directory	_	9	12	3	_	24
Mission	1	5	8	3	_	17
Fact sheet/FAQ	_	20	21	2	1	44
E-Newsletter	_	11	12	_	_	23
Quiz/Poll/Survey	_	_	2	_	_	2
Media (Downloadable information)	_	14	13	3	_	30
Guestbook	_	1	_	_	_	1
About us/ Company Information	4	78	7	2	_	91
News Room/Current Events/Happenings	_	59	20	4	_	83

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 24% (n=24) contained a directory. A

directory, according to this study, is a listing of staff, directors, or managers and their

contact information. Of the 24% of sites that contained a directory, 9% (n=9) were

located one click away from the home page, 12% (n=12) were located two clicks away

from the home page, and 3% (n=3) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 17% (n=17) contained a mission. A mission,

is a mission statement of the organization, which states the organization's mission and

goals. Of the 17% of sites that contained a mission, 1% (n=1) were located on the home

page, 5% (n=5) were located one click away from the home page, and 8% (n=8) were

located two clicks away from the home page, and 3% (n=3) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 44% (n=44) contained a fact sheet or FAQ. A fact sheet or FAQ is designed to offer up commonly asked questions about the company for interested publics. Of the 44% of sites that contained fact sheet or FAQ, 20% (n=20) were located one click away from the home page, 21% (n=21) were located two clicks away from the home page, 2% (n=2) were located three clicks away from the home page, and 1% (n=1) were located four clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 23% (n=23) contained an e-newsletter. An e-newsletter is a mailing sent out through electronic mail, which allows publics to sign up to receive more information from an organization. Of the 23% of sites that contained e-newsletter sign ups, 11% (n=11) were located one click away from the home page and 12% (n=12) were located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 2% (n=2) contained a quiz, poll, or survey. A quiz, poll, or survey is designed and placed on the site in order allow a user to voice an opinion to the company or other users in the public. Of the 2% of sites that contained a quiz, poll, or survey, 2% (n=2) was located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 30% (n=30) contained a media area. The media area contains downloadable information and streaming audio or video. Of the 30% of sites that contained a media area, 14% (n=14) were located one click away from the home page, 13% (n=13) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 3% (n=3) was located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 1% (n=1) contained a guestbook. A guestbook allows visitors of a Web sites to make comments viewable by everyone. Of the 1% of sites that contained a guestbook, 1% (n=1) were located one click away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 91% (n=914) contained an "about us" page. The about us/company information page describes the organization and can include the mission, vision, and background of the organization. Of the 91% of sites that contained an about us/company information page, 4% (n=4) were located on the home page, 78% (n=78) were located one click away from the home page, 7% (n=7) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 2% (n=2) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 83% (n=83) contained a news room/current events/happenings page. This page keeps publics updated on what events the organization is involved in or what is going on within the organization at the moment. Of the 83% of sites that contained a news room/current events/happenings page, 59% (n=59) were located one click away from the home page, 20% (n=20) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 4% (n=4) were located three clicks away from the home page.

In analyzing the total number of ancillary dialogic (AD) tools used, 8% (n=8) of the sites used one AD tool, 19% (n=19) of the sites used two AD tools, 33% (n=33) of the sites used three AD tools, 25% (n=25) of the sites use four AD tools, 12% (n=12) of the sites used five AD tools, and 2% (n=2) of the sites used six AD tools.

Dialogic exchange tools. Table 4 contains the frequencies for the dialogic exchange tools for corporate Web sites. It lists both the presence of dialogic exchange

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Web tools and the amount of clicks it takes to find the tools. There are seven dialogic

exchange tools examined in this study. They include e-mail discussion lists, chat room,

bulletin/message board, feedback/comments, member/customer center, request more

information, and contact us. These dialogic tools allow for a two-way response, initiating

a feedback loop. These tools allow the users to feel involved with the organization by

permitting dialogue between users and the organization itself. The following analyzes the

findings for each variable on the 100 corporate Web sites.

Table 4. Corporate use of dialogic exchange tools

Dialogic Exchange Tools	Home page	1-click	2-clicks	3-clicks	4-clicks	Total
E-mail discussion list	_	_	_	_	_	_
Chat room	_	_	_	_	_	_
Bulletin/Message board	_	_	2	_	_	2
Feedback/Comments	_	17	22	2	_	41
Member/Customer center	_	14	1	_	_	15
Request more information	_	20	27	3	2	52
Contact us	1	84	8	2	_	95

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, there were no e-mail discussion groups

available in the 100 sampled Web sites. Similarly, of the corporate Web sites analyzed,

there were no chat rooms available in the 100 sampled Web sites.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 1% (n=1) contained a bulletin/message

board. The bulletin/message board allows users and the organization to post opinions and thoughts and allow for responses and feedback. Of the 1% of sites that contained a bulletin/message board, 1% (n=1) were located two clicks away from the home.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 41% (n=41) contained a feedback/comments section. The feedback comments section allows users to contact the organization directly with any feedback. Of the 41% of sites that contained a feedback/comments section, 17% (n=17) was located one click away from the home page, 22% (n=22) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 2% (n=2) were located three clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 15% (n=15) contained a member/customer center. A member/customer center allows a user to log in to access more information and sometimes interact with other members. Of the 15% of sites containing a member/customer center, 14% (n=14) were located one click away from the home page and 1% (n=1) were located two clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 52% (n=52) contained a request more information link. The request more information link explicitly tells the customer to click on the link to request more information from the organization. Of the 52% of sites that contained a request more information link, 20% (n=20) were contained one click away from the home page, 27% (n=27) were contained two clicks away from the home page, 3% (n=3) were contained three clicks away from the home page, and 2% (n=2) were contained four clicks away from the home page.

Of the corporate Web sites analyzed, 95% (n=95) contained a contact us link. The contact us link allows users to direct any information they wish directly to the

organization. Of the 95% of the sites that contained a contact us link, 1% (n=1) were

located on the home page, 84% (n=83) were located one click away from the home page,

8% (n=8) were located two clicks away from the home page, and 2% (n=2) were located

three clicks away from the home page.

In analyzing the total number of dialogic exchange (DE) tools used, 22% (n=22)

of the sites used one DE tool, 42% (n=42) of the sites used two DE tools, 28% (n=28) of

the sites used three DE tools, 2% (n=2) of the sites use four DE tools, and 1% (n=1) of

the sites used five DE tools.

Hypotheses

H1 posits that dialogic tools are used in activist Web sites. In referencing the

numbers previously stated, 94% (n=94) of activist Web sites used ancillary dialogic tools,

and 94% (n=94) of activist Web sites used dialogic exchange tools. Therefore, the

descriptive statistics support H1 in showing that activist Web sites do indeed contain

dialogic tools.

H2 posits that corporate Web sites use dialogic tools. In examining the total

number of dialogic tools used on corporate sites, 99% (n=99) of corporate sites used

ancillary dialogic tools and 95% (n=95) of corporate sites used dialogic exchange tools.

Therefore, H2 is supported due to the fact that corporate Web sites do use dialogic tools.

H3 posits that activist Web sites will contain more dialogic tools than corporate

Web sites. The first method to answer this hypothesis used was to count individually how

many total dialogic tools each activist and corporate site used. Out of the 100 activist

Web sites analyzed, 310 ancillary dialogic tools were used and 159 dialogic exchanges

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were used, for a total of 469 dialogic tools used. Out of the 100 corporate Web sites

analyzed, corporate Web sites used 317 ancillary dialogic tools and 203 dialogic

exchanges for a total of 520 dialogic tools used. Second, the total percentage of Web sites

that contained dialogic tools for each group was examined. Using the totals from H1 and

H2, the study found that 94% (n=94) of activist sites used AD tools and 94% (n=94) of

activist sites used DE tools. Whereas, 99% (n=99) of corporate Web sites used AD tools

and 95% (n=95) used DE tools. This gives an average use of 94% for activist Web sites

and 97% for corporate Web sites. In both instances, corporate Web sites used more total

dialog tools than activist Web sites. Therefore, H3 is rejected.

H4 states that activist Web sites will use more Level 2 dialogic tools than

corporate Web sites do. In examining the numbers, 94% (n=94) of activist groups used a

total of 159 Level 2 or dialogic exchange tools, whereas 95% (n=95) of corporate Web

sites use a total of 203 dialogic exchange tools. In examining the numbers, corporate Web

sites used more Level 2 dialogic tools than activist sites did; therefore, H4 is rejected.

Analysis of Web Site Efficiency

In order to test the difference between activist group Web sites and corporate Web

sites for each of the two levels of dialogic tools, a one-way analysis of variance test was

conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between activist and

corporate sites for the use of dialogic tools. The ANOVA test measures the difference in

the efficiency of each of the two groups, activist and corporate, in using the ancillary

dialogic tools and dialogic exchange tools on Web sites.

For each Web site analyzed, the path to each variable was recorded using clicks.

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Starting at the home page of each Web site, the coders counted how many clicks it took to reach the target variable, on the site. The desired effect of this analysis would be to show the efficiency of each Web site in allowing users to access the information they are searching for at a faster speed. If a variable was present on the home page, a score of "0" was given. Every page visited beyond the home page needed to reach the desired variable added "1" click to the total reported.

Each of the variables from each level of dialogic interactivity was entered as a dependent variable and the sources of the Web sites (activist or corporate) were entered as the independent variable with two levels. In measuring the significance for each level (see Table 5), this study will only report results for variables that indicated a significant difference between activists and corporate Web site efficiency of dialogic tools. A significance of .05 was used for all tests.

In measuring the mission statement variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.17 clicks and corporate sites had a mean of 1.76 clicks. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 46) = 7.519$, $p = .009$.

In measuring the fact sheet/FAQ variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.19 clicks and corporate sites had a mean of 1.64 clicks. The results for the fact sheet/FAQ indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 64) = 6.494$, $p = .013$.

Table 5. Activist and corporate analysis of variance

Variables	Activists		Corporate		df	F	Sig.
	N	M	N	M			
Mission	30	1.17	17	1.76	1,45	7.519	.009
Fact Sheet/FAQ	21	1.19	44	1.64	1,63	6.494	.013
E-newsletter	37	1.19	23	1.52	1,58	5.224	.026
Quiz/Poll/Survey	8	0.88	2	2.00	1,8	18.514	.003
News Room/Current Events/What's happening	61	1.07	83	1.34	1,142	11.420	.001
Feedback/Comments	21	1.19	41	1.63	1,60	8.747	.004
Request more information	19	1.26	52	1.75	1,69	7.240	.009
Total (DE tools)	94	1.69	95	2.14	1,187	13.989	.000

In measuring the e-newsletter variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.19 clicks and corporate sites had a mean of 1.52 clicks. The results for the e-newsletter indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 59) = 5.224$, $p = .026$.

In measuring the quiz/polls/surveys variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.17 clicks, corporate sites had a mean of 1.76 clicks. The results for the mission indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 9) = 18.514$, $p = .003$.

In measuring the news room/current events/happenings variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.07 clicks, corporate sites had a mean of 1.34 clicks. The results for the mission indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 143) = 11.420$, $p = .001$.

In measuring the feedback/comments variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.19 clicks, corporate sites had a mean of 1.63 clicks. The results for the mission indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 61) = 8.747$, $p = .004$.

In measuring the request more information variable, activist sites had a mean of 1.26 clicks, corporate sites had a mean of 1.75 clicks. The results for the mission indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 70) = 7.240$, $p = .009$.

In measuring the total number of dialogic exchange tools, activist sites had a mean of 1.69 clicks, corporate sites had a mean of 2.14 clicks. The results for the mission indicate that there is a significant difference between the number of clicks between activist and corporate Web sites, $F(1, 188) = 13.989$, $p = .000$.

In the eight categories in which there was significance, activist group Web sites measured a better mean of efficiency by registering fewer clicks. This is an important number, as Web sites should seek to communicate to users with the most efficiency possible. Overall, activist sites had a lower mean score than corporate sites in all but two categories.

The results gathered from the ANOVA aid in understanding the research question that this study posed with regard to the types of dialogic tools present on activist Web

sites. Research question 1 asked what types of dialogic tools are present on activist and corporate Web sites and how efficiently are they used? In reviewing the numbers, the 100 activist Web sites analyzed contained at least one of each of the variables from the levels of dialogic interactivity. In reviewing the 100 corporate Web sites visited, corporate sites contained all but two of the dialogic exchange tools named in the levels of dialogic interactivity; chat rooms and e-mail discussion lists.

In examining the efficiency of the use of dialogic tools on the Web, activist groups have a lower average mean for clicks away from the home page. Eight of the variables showed a significant difference in favor of activist group Web pages. This is a significant number for this study, as the body of the literature explains that the dialogic exchanges, or true dialogic tools, are the most effective and important means of communication.

The next chapter will discuss the results found in this chapter. Chapter 5 will report the findings, theoretical relevance, significance, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Findings and Summary

This study is an exploratory study aimed at getting a basic understanding of how dialogic Web tools are currently being used by activist groups. The goal of this study is to establish a foundation of dialogic tool use on the Internet for future studies. It's data can be used to further expand understanding in the analysis of dialogic communication on the Internet and the World Wide Web.

This study found that activist and corporate Web sites both contain the dialogic tools that are necessary to communicate with their publics. H1 and H2 were both supported. To examine the use of the tools for each Web site, H3 stated that activist Web sites would contain more dialogic tools than corporate Web sites. The results indicate that corporate Web sites contained a higher percentage of dialogic tools than did activist Web sites. Therefore, H3 was rejected. Narrowing the scope further, H4 stated that activist Web sites would use more Level 2 dialogic tools than corporate Web sites do. This hypothesis was rejected, as corporate sites use a higher number of dialogic tools on their Web sites.

Finally, in answering RQ1, the study reveals that activist group Web sites contain more kinds of Level 2 dialogic exchanges and the rate of efficiency, as assessed by number of clicks, to reach the tool of activist Web sites is higher. Eight of the 16 variables examined resulted in a significant difference in the number of mean clicks in

order to reach the tool in favor of activist group. Of the 16, only two variables reported higher means for corporate Web sites.

H1 and H2 stated that the dialogic tools would be present; these hypotheses were supported. The rejected hypotheses, H3 and H4, in following with the information examined in the literature review, were created with the idea that activist groups would make better use of the dialogic tools available to them out of necessity. Smith and Ferguson (2001) indicated the goals that activist groups must achieve, the first of which is to rectify the conditions identified by the publics as problematic. The second goal of an activist organization is to maintain the organization established to pursue the activists' purpose. The literature reviewing activism and the Internet stresses that the Internet is a way for activists to level the playing field because the Internet provides an inexpensive, readily available alternative to traditional media used to rectify conditions.

H3 and H4 were rejected and the findings indicated that corporations use more dialogic tools and more Level 2 dialogic exchanges. This could be due to several reasons. First of all, corporations have more resources and manpower. Though the Internet is a more inexpensive and readily available tool than others that activist groups can use, it still does require some funding. Web sites domains must be purchased and hosting has to be paid for. While sites can be hosted for free in some instances, they must still be updated. Someone must constantly update the Web site, maintain links, and make corrections. Finally, manpower goes beyond simply hiring or being a Web programmer. Another requirement in using true dialogic communication is that someone must be on the other side to receive the communication from the sender, in this case, a member of the activist group's public. If the tools are available but there is no one to respond to requests

or moderate a chat room, the result would be dialogic tools with dead ends. While there are some costs involved, some groups may feel to small to have the need for tools. Some groups may still not realize the use of the Internet and some still may not feel they need to use it.

Theoretical Applications

This study reviews four theoretical frameworks that help to understand how activist must operate; both in relation to their publics and their environment. The four theories are systems theory, population ecology theory, institutional theory, and the situational theory of publics.

Systems theory. Hatch (1997) states that organizations must acknowledge, interact with, affect, and become affected by their environments. With regard to this study, this would require activist group Web sites to carry over the function of interacting with publics to the technological side. This theory relates to the hypotheses and the necessity for well-used dialogic tools in order to create the dialogic loop, which will allow the required interaction. Activist groups must work fluidly with their environment for the very reason that they are comprised of that same environment.

This study viewed the use of dialogic tools, primarily Level 2 dialogic exchange tools, as a way for activist groups to take part in their environment. It is necessary not only to have dialogic tools available, but to also respond to comments, questions, and other forms of feedback. Though 94% of activist group Web sites did use Level 2 dialogic tools, that number still fell short of the total amount used by corporate Web sites. Aside from those numbers, this study did find a few more puzzling details. Most every

Web site contained a way in which to contact a representative. But other dialogic tools, which could be an advantage for activist groups, were not used. Deeper tools not available, or available sparsely, were e-mail discussion lists, chat rooms, and bulletin boards. All three of these tools allow users to interact with the organization and each other. Yet, even on activist sites, these tools were limited, with e-mail discussion lists totaling four Web sites, chat rooms totaling only one Web site, and Bulletin/message boards totaling only 11 Web sites. Though a contact link is a helpful tool, these other tools are also important and potentially useful to activist sites. In this manner, it seems activist groups have failed to take advantage of all the tools at their disposal in order to communicate with their environment.

Population ecology/institutional theory. Though population ecology and institutional theory are separate from each other, they are used to complement each other for the purposes of this study. First, population ecology says that the organization is reliant upon the environment in order to function. Population ecology works like an evolutionary process involving variation, selection, and retention. Institutional theory goes one step in that evolutionary process and adds that the environment chooses the most suitable organization. The organization must not only serve a purpose for the environment, but it must also adhere and maintain the values of the environment (Hatch, 1997).

Though this study cannot necessarily judge adherence to values through the presence of dialogic tools, these tools are important in appealing to the environment for survival. For an environment to choose an organization to remain operational, logic dictates that the environment must understand and believe in the organization. This is

especially true for an activist group, since the environment must actively take part in the activist group to permit its survival. In terms of the overall use of tools, activist groups did a better job in using the simpler ancillary tools. While the deficiencies of the Level 2 tools are mentioned in the previous section, many activist groups have basic tools such as an "about us" page, a news room, and an e-newsletter. The numbers, though, are still low and there is room for improvement. The use of Level 1 tools is good, though more could be done. All of these tools and this information are necessary to help the environment understand that a particular activist group is necessary for the environment. The more information disseminated and the more avenues that information is able travel through, the better the acceptance and survival rates for activist groups will be.

Situational theory of publics. J. Grunig (2001) identifies three types of publics: all-issues, single-issue, and hot issue. Dozier and Ehling (1992) provide four more types publics: a nonpublic, a latent public, an aware public, and an active public. In analyzing publics, there are three variables – problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement – that define the characteristics of individuals who take part in active publics.

With regard to the use of dialogic tools, as is the same for activist groups, a nonpublic is of no concern. A latent public is of some concern, but without consensus, they cannot operate. An aware public, though, is a concern. It is extremely important to communicate with an aware public before they sever communication and become an active public. It is during this critical stage when different dialogic tools can facilitate gaining public support for an ongoing fight. While publics are information seeking, that information must be provided. If publics are researching a situation and cannot find any

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information or opinions on Web sites, they may then attempt to contact and begin a dialogue with an organization. Without the tools available, communication is strained and difficult. A lack of dialogic tools limits the efficacy of communication and could potentially deter any support from the aware public.

All of the theories can tie in to the use of Internet technology and how better use of dialogic communication on the Web allows an activist group to be understood by its environment, survive and be chosen by the environment, and understand its publics and communicate effectively with them before it is too late. In real life situations, activist groups understand they must make noise to draw attention; they have to be seen to have an effect; they have to be open and vocal with publics they are trying to persuade. With the tools available for them in both analyzing and attracting publics, it seems as if there is much more activist groups can do in order to create a means of more effective communication with these publics.

Dialogic Communication

One item that must be addressed is the idea of dialogic communication used in this study. The definition that dialogic communication was based on in this study is actually a two-way symmetrical style of communication. There are several definitions of dialogic communications available in scholarly literature. Dialogic communication as a two-way symmetrical communication style has been argued by public relations scholars such as James Grunig and also Kent, Taylor, and White. Alternately, the postmodern view of dialogic communication seeks to move communication during times of conflict (Spicer, 1997). Because of the conflict, dialogic communication is not necessarily

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symmetrical. The parties involved aren't concerned with the give and take of symmetry. They are more focused on unearthing problems.

The main ingredient of dialogic communication, according to postmodernism, is dissensus. The give and take described in the texts of public relations is simply a two-way flow of communication. The dissemination of information is the key; solving problems is not necessarily the aim.

Deetz (2001) states that the basic goal of dialogic communication is to reclaim conflict. Activist groups should look for the argument. Activist groups aren't necessarily looking to achieve the goals mentioned in the literature. Not all groups wish to become large, non-profit-like groups. Rather than find a way for the group to fit in to the environment by continuously changing its missions and goals, some groups simply come into existence to solve a problem and then disappear.

Dialogic communication is a very important tool for activist groups and public relations in general. The tools present on the Web site help to gain members and even enlighten persons who are information seeking. At the same time, by not subscribing to a postmodern view of dialogic communications, activist groups will not be attacking problems and solving them; they will simply get their side out and look to include as many people on their side of the fight as possible.

Activist Groups Versus Corporations

One area that this study overlooked was the overall goals of activist groups. Do activist groups, in general, aspire to have a similar look to that of a corporation. Meaning, can activist and corporate groups really be compared? Corporate group Web sites were

used in this study because they are typically the focal point of activist groups. Therefore, this study hypothesized that activist groups would strive to be better than corporate groups by using the Internet on the same way, only better. But, the question remains, do activist groups really want to be institutionalized?

While some large groups, such as Green Peace and PETA, seek to grow larger and sometimes change their focus in order to remain relevant, not all groups have that mission. Some groups come into existence simply to right a perceived wrong and then dismantle. This could be, for instance, a group who is fighting against land mines or for certain political prisoners. These groups, then, would not be concerned with growing and putting up a corporate façade on their Web sites. Simpler means of dissemination and communication will work for them. Some groups may start as two or three members, stay at that number, and still succeed. Not all groups may seek to grow and not all groups want additional members or responsibilities.

In some cases, it may even be a disservice for activist groups to become institutionalized. The public may perceive them in a different light if they change their mission once their initial goal has been accomplished. Overall, activist groups rise up to serve a purpose. They may still exist afterwards, but it is not a requirement. An activist group using dialogic communication in the postmodern sense is not looking to gain popularity or money. They come out to focus on a point of disagreement by creating dissensus and fight against the group(s) they perceive as the problem.

It is important then to note in any future studies that, though activist groups may not give off the illusion of a two-way style of dialogic communication, there may still be dialogic communication through dissensus. In this way, activist groups are still using

dialogic communication to succeed, though, not in the same way as a corporation might.

Significance

    Theory. This study replicates and extends a framework created by Kent, Taylor, and White (2003), who looked at the relationship between Web site design and organizational responsiveness to stakeholders. That study in turn was based upon Kent and Taylor's (1998) paper looking at dialogic relationships on the Web. Kent and Taylor created five principles of relationship building. The first one was the dialogic loop. Taylor et al. (2003) tested these five principles in order to find out how Web site interface, usefulness to media, usefulness to volunteers, conservation of visitors, return visit encouragement, and dialogic loop all factored into creating a better relationship between an organization and its publics.

    The final dialogic feature, dialogic loop, was the basis for this study. This study sought to delve further into the use of dialogic tools on the Internet. The study by Kent et al. looked at four factors of the dialogic loop, opportunity for user response, opportunity to vote on issues, survey to voice opinion on issues, and offers regular information. While those four items helped to identify a sight as containing a dialogic capacity, this study aimed to expand the criteria and look deeper into what sorts of tools are used on activist Web sites.

    The significance of this study, towards theory, is that the findings of this study will set the foundation and framework for future studies that look to more deeply examine the use of dialogic tools on the Internet and the World Wide Web. While there are a number of studies on the Internet and activism, they are not generally looked at

together and an analysis of dialogic communication with the latter is even more rare. This study aims to be a building block in order to expand the theories and the understanding of activist groups' use of the Web.

Practice. This study will be helpful to those in the practice of public relations on either side of activism. This study will allow those who are the counsel for an activist group to better understand how to communicate with their publics. The study further shows that traditional means of communication (i.e. news media) are not the limit to the possibilities. Activist groups can further their stance and their publics involvement in their cause by involving their publics. By understanding that there is a cost-effective resource available, more and more activist groups will be able to not only better communicate, but to better interact with their publics.

This study explains how at the moment, the findings show that corporations are using more dialogic tools and they are also using more involved tools than most activist groups. Upon the realization that more must be done in order to not only keep up but surpass their opposition, activist groups can take advantage of a readily available technology.

P*edagogy.* This study may be helpful to teachers of Web design, non-profit and activist theories, and public relations and communications.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. There were a limited number of resources as far as prior studies are concerned. While some studies focused on the goals of activism or the use of the Internet, the combination of the two being studied together

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was very rare. In several instances, there was literature speaking to the fact that the Internet would be a powerful tool for activism but there was no data to back up the claims. The only study that focused specifically on dialogic communication for activist groups using the Internet can from the source of this studies frame work from Taylor et al (2003).

Because of the limited amount of foundation work on this subject matter, this study was limited as to what it could look for. It was important for this study to build upon what has already been created without skipping any steps. Without the knowledge of what kind of tools are present on the Web and how they are being used, it would not be useful to jump over that step in the process.

Within the study, one of the limitations was the choice of database used. While the database for the corporate groups, the Forbes 500 list, gave a good representative sample, the same was not true about the activist database, webactive.com. An initial browse of the webactive.com database showed a large database with numerous subjects and a variety of links. Within the study, though, a number of dead links and bad links were found in the database. Furthermore, the database contained a number of out of date sites, student/educational institute sites, news sites, and portals. With some of the aforementioned sites being selected in the random sample for this study, there were a few sites that could have created a bias in the results found. Some sites were simply one-page online newsletters. Some were informational sites but not necessarily the site of an activist group.

Furthermore, the results of the intercoder reliability were acceptable but very low. Being that this study looked primarily for the presence of dialogic tools, the numbers

should have been higher. There was a limited amount of time in conducting this study to fully train a coder. Additionally, perhaps the directions were not explained well enough or the coder misinterpreted what was expected of them. While directions were given to mark an item that appeared on the sheet, perhaps the coder was able to read into items that might border from one variable to another. For instance, a "contact us" form or link is simply a "contact us" link as far as the code sheet was concerned. Whereas a link or mention of requesting more information would be then marked under "request more information." It is possible that either the coder understood the ability to request more information without the explicit mention of doing so still qualified as requesting more information. Lastly, one coder may have been searching specifically for a link that stated one of the variables where the variable, such as directory or comments/feedback, may have been listed in the text on the current or prior page.

Future Research

As mentioned, this work is only meant to be a base for future research into the realm of activism and dialogic communication on the World Wide Web. This study has created a framework that can be expanded upon. There are several possibilities for future studies that will be able to elicit more in the way of analyzing the field of online activism.

First, a more in depth analysis can be done. This study focused primarily on frequency. This was necessary to find what this study was looking for. But, with the framework and initial findings already in place, a future study could search more in depth into dialogic tool use and conduct a critical content analysis.

Second, with this study using a random sample in order to obtain representative

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numbers, a direction for furthering these findings would be to do an analysis of groups in conflict. By looking at only activist and corporate groups that are in direct conflict, a study could better realize how and if activist groups are able to use dialogic tools better than their corporate counterparts. A study of this nature would also avoid the problem this study had with the databases. Since the groups would be in conflict, this would guarantee, at the least, that both sites are active and up to date.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Randomly Selected Activist Web Sites

1	Sigurd F. Olson	www.uwm.edu/Dept/JMC/Olson/
2	ECOsmart Planet Friendly	www.ecosmarte.com/
3	Range Watch	www.rangewatch.org/
4	Families USA	www.familiesusa.org/site/PageServer
5	Just Food	www.justfood.org/
6	HandsNet	www.handsnet.org/
7	Webcorp Politics Pages	www.webcorp.com/politics.htm
8	American Smokers Alliance	www.smokers.org/do/Home
9	The Foundation for a Smokefree America	www.tobaccofree.com/
10	The Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Home Page	www.cb3rob.net/~merijn89/mumia/maillist.html
11	Support Coalition and Dendron News	www.mindfreedom.org/
12	Tibet Online	www.tibet.org/
13	Amnesty International - Dornbirn, Austria	http://members.magnet.at/ai.dornbirn/
14	Students for a free Tibet	www.studentsforafreetibet.org/
15	Irish Northern Aid Committee - DC Area	http://inacmidatlantic.org/
16	International Crisis Group	www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm
17	Global Citizens Circle	www.globalcitizenscircle.org/
18	McSpotlight	www.mcspotlight.org/
19	Good Nature Publishing Co.	www.goodnaturepublishing.com/
20	The Body	www.thebody.com/index.shtml
21	Computerized AIDS Ministries	http://gbgm-umc.org/cam/
22	PAWS	www.paws.org/
23	Tiger Information Center	www.5tigers.org/
24	Cuba Poster Project	www.zpub.com
25	OutProud!, The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Youth	www.outproud.org/
26	Gaynet Cape Town	www.gaynetcapetown.co.za/
27	The Gay Gene	http://members.aol.com/gaygene/index.htm
28	International Union of Gospel Missions	www.iugm.org/
29	Youth Radio	www.youthradio.org/

30	National Network of Violence Prevention Practitioners	www.hhd.org/
31	Toys for Tots	www.toysfortots.org/home/
32	First Ammendment Cyber-Tribune	http://fact.trib.com/
33	PeaceFire	www.peacefire.org/
34	Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for Greater New Orleans	www.cadagno.org/
35	Community Impact	www.communityimpact.org/
36	Assistive Media	www.assistivemedia.org/
37	Reclaim Democracy!	http://reclaimdemocracy.org/
38	Share the Wealth	www.stw.org/
39	APT Enterprise Development	http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/apt.enterprise/
40	Live from Haro Strait	http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/index.html
41	Sabre Foundation	www.sabre.org/
42	Democratic Socialists of America	www.dsausa.org/dsa.html
43	Liberty Library: Ballot Access News Index	www.ballot-access.org/
44	Illinois Citizens for Proportional Representation	www.prairienet.org/icpr/
45	Politics1	www.politics1.com/parties.htm
46	The Envirolink Network	www.envirolink.org/
47	The Population Council	www.popcouncil.org/
48	Izaak Walton League of America	www.iwla.org
49	Zero Population Growth	www.zpg.org/
50	World Wildlife Fund Canada	www.wwf.ca/Default.asp
51	Enviro Video	http://envirovideo.com/
52	Littlearth Productions	www.littlearth.com/
53	The Bioneers Conference	www.bioneers.org/
54	Institute for Energy and Environmental Research	www.ieer.org/
55	Native Forest Network	www.nativeforest.org/
56	Citizens Awareness Network	www.nukebusters.org/
57	The Hunger Site	www.thehungersite.com/
58	New Dimensions Radio	www.newdimensions.org/
59	The Support Center for Nonprofit Management	www.supportcenter.org/
60	League Against Intoxicants	www.fmr.no/index.php?cat=10285

61	Center for Science in the Public Interest	www.cspinet.org/
62	National Committee for Quality Assurance	www.ncqa.org/index.asp
63	Irish Political Prisoner Information	http://larkspirit.com/ipow/
64	World Artists for Tibet	www.art4tibet1998.org/
65	Middle East Research & Information Project	www.merip.org/
66	24 Hours of Democracy	www.scripting.com/twentyFour//
67	Web Lab	www.weblab.org/
68	Citizens for Truth about the Kennedy Assassination	www.webcom.com/ctka/
69	The Sentencing Project	www.sentencingproject.org/
70	Pay Us Our Wages!	www.icem.org/campaigns/no_pay_cc/index.html
71	RetailWorker.com	www.retailworker.com/
72	Online Journal	www.onlinejournal.com/
73	International Rescue Committee	www.theirc.org/index.cfm
74	Juneteenth World Wide Celebration	www.juneteenth.com/
75	The Christian Coalition	www.cc.org/
76	PAR-L	www.unb.ca/par-l/
77	AIDS Treatment Data Network	www.aidsnyc.org/network/
78	Carnivore Preservation Trust	www.cptigers.org/
79	Politprop	http://archives.mcad.edu/politprop/politprop.html
80	The TransGenderGuide	www.tgguide.com/
81	Comingoutstories	www.comingoutstories.com/
82	Free the Children	www.freethechildren.org/
83	Endangered Animals Center	www.worldkids.com/eac/
84	Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press	www.rcfp.org/
85	Campaign for the Restoration and Regulation of Hemp	www.crrh.org/
86	Cannabis Action Network	www.jug-or-not.com/can/
87	Change-Links	www.change-links.org/
88	Community and Environmental Defense Services	www.charm.net/~ceds/
89	Old Man River	www.oldmanriver.com/

90	Feed My People	www.feed-my-people.org/
91	Center for Applied Special Technology	www.cast.org/
92	OneWorld	www.oneworld.net/article/frontpage/10/3
93	Teachers & Writers Collaborative	www.twc.org/
94	The Media Education Foundation	www.mediaed.org/
95	We the People	www.wtp.org/
96	The Center for Voting and Democracy	www.fairvote.org/
97	League of Women Voters	www.lwv.org/
98	Global Recycling Network	grn.com/grn/
99	Earthwatch	www.earthwatch.org/
100	Green Cross International	www.gci.ch/

Appendix B
Randomly Selected Corporate Web Sites

1	Emcor Group	http://www.emcorgroup.com
2	Equitable Resources	http://www.eqt.com
3	ExxonMobil	http://www.exxonmobil.com
4	Fidelity National Financial	http://www.fnf.com
5	First Republic Bank	http://www.firstrepublic.com
6	FNB Corp (Florida)	http://www.fnb-fl.com
7	Freddia Mac	http://www.freddiemac.com
8	General Dynamics	http://www.gendyn.com
9	Gillette	http://www.gillette.com
10	Group 1 Automotive	http://www.group1automotive.com
11	Health Care Property Investors	http://www.hcpi.com
12	Hibernia	http://www.hibernia.com
13	Host Marriott	http://www.hostmarriott.com
14	IKON Office Solutions	http://www.ikon.com
15	Intergraph	http://www.intergraph.com
16	Investors Financial Services	http://www.ibtco.com
17	John Hancock Financial Services	http://www.jhancock.com
18	KeyCorp	http://www.key.com
19	Knight Ridder	http://www.kri.com
20	Legg Mason	http://www.leggmason.com
21	Limited Brands	http://www.limited.com
22	Lowe's Cos	http://www.lowes.com
23	Marathon Oil	http://www.marathon.com
24	May Department Stores	http://www.maycompany.com
25	MDU Resources Group	http://www.mdu.com
26	MetLife	http://www.metlife.com
27	Mohawk Industries	http://www.mohawkind.com
28	Mylan Laboratories	http://www.mylan.com
29	Network Appliances	http://www.netapp.com
30	Nordstrom	http://www.nordstrom.com
31	Nstar	http://www.nstaronline.com
32	OGE Energy	http://www.oge.com
33	Owens Corning	http://www.owenscorning.com
34	Patterson Dental	http://www.pattersondental.com

35	Pepsi Bottling Group	http://www.pbgjobs.com
36	Pioneer Natural Resources	http://www.pioneernrc.com
37	PPG Industries	http://www.ppg.com
38	Progress Energy	http://www.progress-energy.com
39	Public Storage	http://www.publicstorage.com
40	RadioShack	http://www.radioshack.com
41	Rent-A-Center	http://www.rentacenter.com
42	Rohm and Haas	http://www.rohmhaas.com
43	St Joe	http://www.joe.com
44	Schering-Plough	http://www.schering-plough.com
45	7-Eleven	http://www.7-eleven.com
46	SLM	http://www.salliemae.com
47	SouthTrust	http://www.southtrust.com
48	Stanley Works	http://www.stanleyworks.com
49	Sunoco	http://www.sunocoinc.com
50	TCF Financial	http://www.tcfexpress.com
51	Texas Instruments	http://www.ti.com
52	Toys 'R' Us	http://www.toysrus.com
53	UCBH Holdings	http://www.ucbh.com
54	UnitedHealth Group	http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com
55	Univision Communications	http://www.univision.net
56	Varian Medical Systems	http://www.varian.com
57	Wachovia	http://www.wachovia.com
58	Watson Pharmaceuticals	http://www.watsonpharm.com
59	Wesco International	http://www.wescodist.com
60	Williams Cos	http://www.williams.com
61	XTO Energy	http://www.xtoenergy.com
62	Administraff	http://www.administaff.com
63	AGCO	http://www.agcocorp.com
64	Allegheny Energy	http://www.alleghenyenergy.com
65	Altria Group	http://www.altria.com
66	American Financial Group	http://www.amfnl.com
67	AmerUs Group	http://www.amerus.com
68	AOL Time Warner	http://www.aoltimewarner.com
69	Aramark	http://www.aramark.com
70	Astoria Financial	http://www.astoriafederal.com
71	Avery Dennison	http://www.averydennison.com

72	Bank of Hawii	http://www.boh.com
73	Bears Stearns Cos	http://www.bearstearns.com
74	Berkshire Hathaway	http://www.berkshirehathaway.com
75	H&R Block	http://www.hrblock.com
76	Bowater	http://www.bowater.com
77	Cadance Design Systems	http://www.cadence.com
78	CDW Computer Centers	http://www.cdw.com
79	Chiron	http://www.chiron.com
80	Cisco Systems	http://www.cisco.com
81	CNF	http://www.cnf.com
82	Commerce Bancorp	http://www.commerceonline.com
83	ConocoPhillips	http://www.conocophillips.com
84	Adolph Coors	http://www.coorsjobs.com
85	Cullen/Frost Bankers	http://www.frostbank.com
86	Dell Computer	http://www.dell.com
87	Dole Food	http://www.dole.com
88	Downey Financial	http://www.downeysavings.com
89	Eastman Kodak	http://www.kodak.com
90	Emcor Group	http://www.emc.com
91	Equifax	http://www.equifax.com
92	Express Scripts	http://www.express-scripts.com
93	FedEx	http://www.fedex.com
94	First Midwest Bancorp	http://www.firstmidwest.com
95	Fluor	http://www.fluor.com
96	Franklin Resources	http://www.franklintempleton.com
97	Genentech	http://www.gene.com
98	Gilead Sciences	http://www.gilead.com
99	GreenPoint Financial	http://www.GreenPoint.com
100	HCA	http://www.hcahealthcare.com

Appendix C
Intercoder Activist Web Sites

45	Politics1	http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm
50	World Wildlife Fund Canada	http://www.wwf.ca/Default.asp
55	Native Forest Network	http://www.nativeforest.org/
60	League Against Intoxicants	http://www.fmr.no/index.php?cat=10285
65	Middle East Research & Information Project	http://www.merip.org/
70	Pay Us Our Wages!	http://www.icem.org/campaigns/no_pay_cc/index.html
75	The Christian Coalition	http://www.cc.org/
80	The TransGenderGuide	http://www.tgguide.com/
85	Campaign for the Restoration and Regulation of Hemp	http://www.crrh.org/
90	Feed My People	http://www.feed-my-people.org/
95	We the People	http://www.wtp.org/
100	Green Cross International	http://www.gci.ch/
5	Just Food	http://www.justfood.org/
12	Tibet Online	http://www.tibet.org/
17	Global Citizens Circle	http://www.globalcitizenscircle.org/
22	PAWS	http://www.paws.org/
27	The Gay Gene	http://members.aol.com/gaygene/index.htm
33	PeaceFire	http://www.peacefire.org/
37	Reclaim Democracy!	http://reclaimdemocracy.org/
42	Democratic Socialists of America	http://www.dsausa.org/dsa.html

Appendix D
Intercoder Corporate Web Sites

23	Marathon Oil	http://www.marathon.com
28	Mylan Laboratories	http://www.mylan.com
33	Owens Corning	http://www.owenscorning.com
38	Progress Energy	http://www.progress-energy.com
43	St Joe	http://www.joe.com
48	Stanley Works	http://www.stanleyworks.com
53	UCBH Holdings	http://www.ucbh.com
58	Watson Pharmaceuticals	http://www.watsonpharm.com
63	AGCO	http://www.agcocorp.com
68	AOL Time Warner	http://www.aoltimewarner.com
73	Bears Stearns Cos	http://www.bearstearns.com
78	CDW Computer Centers	http://www.cdw.com
83	ConocoPhillips	http://www.conocophillips.com
88	Downey Financial	http://www.downeysavings.com
93	FedEx	http://www.fedex.com
98	Gilead Sciences	http://www.gilead.com
3	ExxonMobil	http://www.exxonmobil.com
8	General Dynamics	http://www.gendyn.com
13	Host Marriott	http://www.hostmarriott.com
18	KeyCorp	http://www.key.com

Appendix E
Dialogic Web Tools Code Book

Web ID Number																
Level 1/ Ancillary Dialogic Tools																
Directory																
Mission																
Fact sheet/FAQ																
E-Newsletter																
Quiz/Poll/Survey																
Media (downlaodable information)																
Guest book																
About us/Company information																
News Room/Current Events/Happenings																
TOTAL (number of AD tools)																
Level 2/ Dialogic Exchange Tools																
E-mail discussion lists																
Chat room																
Bulletin/Message board																
Feedback/Comments																
Member/Customer center																
Request more information																
Contact us																
TOTAL (number of DE tools)																