

Running head: SOCIAL MEDIA DIALOGUE

Social Media Dialogue:
An Analysis of the Social Media Presence of Selected Fortune 500 Companies

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Abstract

This paper investigates the manner in which the companies engage various publics in the realm of social media. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the type of communication Fortune 500 companies use in their social media presence. Analyzing the web sites, Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts of 21 Fortune 500 companies, the present study assesses the dialogic efforts of these companies using Kent and Taylor's (1998) five dialogic principles. Results suggest that the researched companies have an established social media presence. The accounts are developed but not distinctly dialogic. Further research may assess the quality of the relationships between companies and their publics and investigate potential ways of improving them.

Key Terms: Social Media, Dialogue, Dialogic, Facebook, Twitter, Social Media Networks, Tweets, Wall, Websites, New Media.

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Introduction

There is a growing body of scholastic literature that focuses on the nature and uses of social media (SM) and social media networks (SMN). From the explanation and analysis of emerging tools to the uses and benefits of well-established tools, a growing interest is manifested on this subject in academic literature.

The current paper investigates the degrees of dialogic communication that select Fortune 500 companies employ in their use of SM. The study done by Esrock and Leichty (1998) offered insight into studying Fortune 500 companies. Due to the novelty of this subject, the literature in the field is merely keeping up with the technological developments. Much work has been done to map out the field of SM and various perspectives have been taken such as marketing benefits or computer mediated communication, each perspective adding valuable data about the SM phenomenon.

The main attempt is to assess to what extent the communication is dialogic and as such, the methodology for studying the phenomenon was adapted from previous models. The novelty of this paper is in the fact that it analyzes the SM pages particularly and goes beyond a website analysis. Some researchers (Kent, Taylor & White, 2001; Esrock & Leighty, 1998) treaded the path of analyzing the websites of companies or organizations but no studies have, to date, analyzed the SM presence of Fortune 500 companies. The main SMN chosen in this study were Twitter and Facebook due to their popularity.

The results section of this thesis analyzes the research question and highlights applicable and interesting findings. The discussion analyzes whether the hypotheses were confirmed or not, as well as highlighting interesting results and their application. The limitations and further research outlines the direction the future studies can explore.

This paper analyzed the type and extent of the communication that the selected companies developed with their publics via SM. Some public relations relationships concepts were integrated with communication theory as to investigate the nature of the interaction between the two entities. The literature review summarizes some of the main studies that pertain to the main theme of this paper and established a context for the discussion of the results.

Literature Review

The following literature review analyzes the current discussion of SM in scholastic literature to date. Even though SM has existed for less than a decade, there is sound research that deals with this subject comprehensively. The main focus is the uses and applications of Facebook, particularly for business and companies. Facebook has been chosen because it is the most popular SMN with nearly 729 millions users worldwide (SocialBakers, 2011).

Kent and Taylor proposed five dialogic principles that would guide organizations interested in creating mediated, two-way, dialogic relationships with publics. Leveraging the communication potential of the Internet is important because non-corporate organizations often lack expertise and sophistication in their PR efforts. In light of the new emphasis on “relationships” in public relations, “dialogue” appears to be joining, and potentially replacing, the concept of symmetry as an organizing principle in PR theory building (1998).

Kent and Taylor use Martin Buber’s (1970, 1982) concept of dialogic communication:

The concept of dialogic theory is often associated with the philosopher, Martin Buber. Buber viewed human communication as an intersubjective process in which parties come to a relationship with openness and respect. 24 Dialogue is the basis for that relationship. 25 Buber's conception of dialogue focuses implicitly on ethics. That is, for a dialogic relationship to exist, parties must view communicating with each other as the goal of a relationship. Communication

should not be a means to an end, but rather, as Kant's Categorical Imperative suggested, communication should be an end in itself (p. 234).

The five dialogic concepts were the main thread that guided the methodology of the current paper.

Some articles are more general in scope when referring to SM, while others attempt more particular subjects, usually on the topic of a particular SMN such as Facebook and Twitter and their applications. Some of the literature reviewed focuses on reviewing the broad discussion of these tools since it is partly relevant to this study. Other articles focus on the nature of e-marketing and how the development of new tools led to the development of new marketing strategies. A niche of particular interest is that of website development for the use of public relations and relationship development between companies and their publics.

Part of the literature review focuses on the uses of Facebook for companies—particularly marketing. Various articles add specific elements to the discussion and as varied as the resources may be, they have the common denominator of enlarging the body of knowledge that helps understand the phenomenon of marketing within the SM.

Given the novelty of this subject a part of the literature review is dedicated to the legitimacy of this study. Another section is dedicated to explaining the features of the research tool. An assumed risk is that this tool will need further refining as technology and subsequent literature develops.

It is a recognized fact that one of the core strengths of Facebook is the word-of-mouth approach to information dissemination. When it comes to online marketing, this particular feature makes Facebook a remarkable marketing tool (Bradley, 2011). This

application is a result of the particular design of the site. SMN have the particularity of being networks between multiple users who interact according to the established rules of the network. Bates, R. (2009) discusses the Internet phenomenon called Facebook as it relates to brand advertisement in the virtual world analyzing several features that Facebook has as means of creating awareness and making a presence. Facebook's application to the business sector has made this website more than just a social network, into a veritable target marketing tool. Vorvoreanu's work (2009) analyzes the norms in which the Facebook culture operates. Starting from the culture of college students for whom it was originally designed, companies researched the cultural norms of behavior on Facebook. The implication is that this SMN created a new culture that businesses must adapt to. In other words, in order to properly market on Facebook, a company must understand the norms of this particular SMN. These norms are important because they define the type of communication used. Various models of communication may be applied depending on the target audiences. A specific benefit of Facebook, however, is the fact that when it comes to marketing the audience can be selected using demographic data giving a new precision for defining and reaching a particular targeted audience.

The study done by Fish, M. (2009) explains the goals that need to be achieved by a business in order to be successful on Facebook. Since it is different from previous marketing strategies, new techniques need to be implemented for an effective presence on this website. Companies can use Facebook to generate more traffic and more relationships. This activity has financial dividends for the new technology. An interesting idea that this article brings forth is the understanding that Facebook marketing implies *some form of relationship* even if nominal, and this implies *mutual interaction*.

This new approach is possible in part due to the new technology that had developed allowing for such virtual relationships to be established. Pohlit, S. (2010) explores the application of Facebook in the marketing world. The author expounds on the impact of SM and how that affects the economics of the future. Facebook has led the way in this SM revolution but it is not alone. Neff (2010) observes that some brands have more traffic on their Facebook fan page than on their website. In light of this phenomenon some companies have chosen to shift their campaigns from traditional advertisement and marketing to Facebook campaigns. Facebook as a media technology is increasing in influence as an advertisement facilitator. This article reveals important insight concerning the relationships between the importance of a brand's own website and their Facebook fan page.

Another interesting aspect is the teaching capabilities of SM. Bosch, T. (2009) explores in this direction. Studies show that the Digital Natives (people born after the 1980) generation might be resistant to traditional means of teaching and therefore a digitalized approach may be more successful. There could also be particular SMN that would tackle this niche in the near future. Exploring the relationship between the Digital Natives and online applications, Valenzuela, Park & Kee, (2009) researched on the relationship between SM sites and the social life of young individuals. The results showed that sites like Facebook enhance the social life of young individuals. There is an undeniable link between SM sites and the social world.

Dunay and Krueger (2008) show in their book how users can put Facebook to work in marketing. The authors give a step-by-step setup of Facebook and then continue to explain how to use the SMN's popularity to generate viral marketing. This book

analyzes the relationships between Facebook and marketing with its various applications. Much speculation has been made in this direction particularly because the original intent of Facebook was not particularly to offer companies a marketing platform. Patel (2010) analyzes the relationships that exist between the companies that use Facebook for marketing and public relations (PR) purposes and the revenue that they receive as a result of this interaction. In his article O'Neill documented a recent example (2010) of the continued development of this SMN. The development that the Facebook team is working on is, namely, the ability to integrate "likes" with news search. "Bing social" is a step in that direction (<http://social.discoverbing.com>).

The main thread of the research shows that Facebook has capitalized on one major theme: popularity. The application of this feature are numerous and diverse. Shields' news report (2009) analyzes the way in which Facebook capitalized on their popularity. There is some concern that they have not found a good way to monetize their success. This concern is not as valid now as numerous ways to capitalized on the vast network has been shown.

Importance of SM and Future Perspectives

SM is a rather new term. Traditional media was not conceived in terms of the social masses, rather it was elitist. Kelsey (2010) wrote a book that introduces the reader to some of the most famous SM sites on the web. Some of them are Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Nang, and LinkedIn. Facebook is compared to other innovative SM sites and one is able to get a good understanding of the magnitude of this phenomenon. Shih, (2009) gives a panoramic view of where SM came from and why it is so important. Focusing on Facebook, but not exclusively, the author shows the benefits of the SM and its impact on

businesses and companies. Concerning Facebook, the book explains the cultural phenomenon in which the SMN was possible. A good understanding of how one technology builds on another is also important in order to understand the technical prerequisites of this phenomenon that was not possible until the Internet reached the development stages that it did.

There is an ongoing debate about whether SM is a fad that will fade away or a new way of approaching communication. With scholars on both sides, the outcome is that this phenomenon is gaining more attention and consequently more research. This is positive because more research, both from skeptics and fans, will have the outcome of a more qualitative and quantifiable understanding of this phenomenon. The fact that research has not discounted the phenomenon although many objections have been raised is promising. The many applications of SM are still unfolding. Interpersonal communication was the beginning, business applications have been the next logical step, and other applications –such as education, integrated media, advertising and online shopping – are soon to come. Kitsis, (2008) brings to light an interesting thesis, namely that Internet sites like Facebook can be instances of online learning. The article parallels the activities that individual engage in on Facebook, like blogging and conversation, and associates them with online teaching techniques. If this thesis comes to be applied, Facebook could possibly have online classes offered through their website. Others could learn from the success of this site how to build a community online that has multiple applications.

Madge, Meek, Wellens and Hooley (2009) attempted an interesting study. Their researched in the UK designed a study that would explore the reasons why students join a

university's Facebook network. Results showed that Facebook is the glue of social life; some use it to make friends at college while other use it to keep in touch with friends at home. In the future, universities could promote this SMN because of the dividends to their students. Future research can focus on how Facebook influences community building within universities. Given the fact that universities are not just a place where students learn about a particular field, but also a place where they make long-life connections, future research should be done on the applications of this aspect of the student life.

Sheldon (2008) investigates the reasons why students like Facebook in view of gratification theory. Results showed that Facebook enhances the lives of the students. Men use this site more to create new relationships and meet new people while women use this site mainly to maintain existing relationships. Zywicki and Danowski (2008) analyze two competing theories that could explain popularity on Facebook: Social Enhancement or Social Compensation. Results pointed toward the fact that both theories are supported, but Social Compensation was more adequate.

The growing body of literature that supports the benefits of this SMN points toward the fact that there could be other ones that have not been discovered. Popularity can be monetized. Whether for reputation, financial gains, or other results, Facebook has become a main avenue of assessing one's popularity. This new authority earned by this social website has numerous applications in a variety of fields. Marketing is a primary use of application for this feature.

There are yet other ways of using Facebook. Gazze's work (2009) points toward the uses of Facebook in the realm of journalism, namely how the flow of information on

this particular SM site can lead to leads that would turn into news stories. His study focuses on the Ontario area where there are a few examples of good leads. Journalists have to be sure not to violate the terms and conditions of the site. Facebook could design a mini-feed that is interesting enough to provide data for news stories. This would be yet another way of capitalizing on the interaction of various members of the SM site.

Hicks (2010) explores the attitude that various government authorities adopt towards the SM. Realizing that the new way to communicate is via social sites such as Facebook, some agencies have investigated the option of switching from their own website to Facebook pages. The implications for Facebook are good because they would be a liaison between people and the government. Other can observe this model and take appropriate action. Being the medium in which this interaction is developed a new type of dynamic emerges. A communication type that is appropriate must be developed and this would yield interesting research in the future.

Features of Facebook

An important aspect that must be added is the intent of the creators of Facebook. As founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg (2010) explains, the purpose of Facebook is to give people the tools to create and share content, thus creating a more interconnected world. This mission has changed in particulars but has remained consistent in overall intent over time. In parallel with the development of this SM giant, there have been many other sites that developed in an attempt to measure the particulars of Facebook. Gonzales (2010, November 11) reports about websites that have the purpose of giving up-to-date statistics on Facebook. One of the most important features is the users that Facebook has reached in a day. There is other relevant news about the site and its founders. Facebook

(2010) had its own virtual official pressroom that has the purpose of informing users of the latest news. One can see statistics and facts that are showing the latest achievements of the Facebook community. The impact for Facebook is that they can release their own news and frame them as they would like them to be heard. Other can view this site and learn about the latest news that Facebook wants to share. SocialBakers.com (2011) informs users about important statistics concerning Facebook such as users per country, weekly users' growth, and other applicable data.

For those who have never heard about the website, there are a number of resources that inform the curious reader about this SM phenomenon. Krivak (2008) wrote an article that is an introduction for those who have not heard of the site or do not know its application. There are columns that explain various features and their application. The usefulness of this column is that it promotes SM as a public relations tool to those who have not tapped into SM as a means of marketing. This article informs about Facebook's basic functionality. Awl's book (2009) has the purpose of explaining how Facebook works in its various aspects. The author goes to explain how to create a profile, how to upload pictures, send message, and finally how to go mobile. There are numerous other resources that direct the new user how to use this particular tool. Kirkpatrick's book (2010) offers a brief history of how Facebook came to be. It starts from the beginning of the project with what the authors were thinking and planning and ends at the present time. The implications for Facebook are that this book could give the public some information that the leaders of the company would not want to the world to know. Others can read this book and have an idea of how this magnate SMN came to be. The purpose of including these resources is to show that there are numerous authors who have focused on

this phenomenon. They focus both on explaining the tool in its particulars as well as analyzing the impacts that it has had on society at large.

Judd (2010) analyzes the impact of Facebook on online communication. Since there is an incorporated feature of messaging with the site, some choose that over e-mail. This points towards changing trends in online communication. Since Facebook recently offered email as one of their newer services, a growing body of literature is expected to analyze and quantify this phenomenon as well. Another online feature that Facebook may soon have is merging with television (TV). Davies (2010) analyzes the impact that “The Five Players” have had as the first TV feature that Facebook has incorporated. This means that over 26 million users can watch shows such as The Gadget Show, CSI Miami, Neighbors, and Home & Away. Cryan, D. (2010) analyzes the new trends that Facebook is charting, particularly in regards to TV integration. The contract is still in negotiation, but it would open new horizons for the way in which Facebook is used

Applications are yet another field in which Facebook could develop marketing campaigns. Graham (2008) analyzes the many variables that go into creating a platform on Facebook. The author goes from start to finish and comments on issues of code and integration. Graham explains how API works and how it can be used to expand the Facebook experience.

The overall perspective is that Facebook is a SMN with continually new applications and uses. As technology develops there will be more and more opportunities to develop this SMN and incorporate new uses and applications for both users and companies.

Challenges

While investigating the effects of computer-mediated communication (CMC), Schiffrin (2010) found that individuals perceive this channel to be less effective in producing well being. This SM phenomenon is analyzed in parallel with the incremental users' use of online services. There are some negative results of online communication in parallel with good results. A good assessment of this phenomenon analyzes both the positive and negative aspects of this phenomenon. Ellis' article (2010) comments on the ability of an individual to create his or her own identity on Facebook. The writer is concerned that this is not a good way to go about relationships. As new SMN evolve, such as Facebook, they may not comply with issues such as advertising regulations (Farrell, 2010), fair leading, CRA compliance, records compliance, or information security. This can be a threat that could jeopardize the use of this SM tool extensively as a serious business application. Slutsky's article (2010) investigates the potential problems with Internet advertising when a website goes down. Even though this will not crash the Internet, it could affect millions of other websites connected and implicitly, their businesses. Due to this liability, some businesses may not want to rely heavily on online advertisement. The article shows, however, that this risk is not significant and that the services of Facebook are reliable.

Young and Malchuk (2010) investigate the uses of Facebook in regards to illicit claims. Users post information and photos that could be used in a court of law. Another article explores the connection between privacy on Facebook as it relates to other online behaviors (Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn & Hughes, 2009). Researchers found that users tend to publicize private information due to high gratification or a third-person effect. The general attitude is that users know the implications of their actions, but the data shows

otherwise. Scaglione (2010) analyzes the changes that need to be implemented in the privacy features of Facebook. CEO Mark Zuckerberg outlined the direction that his company will take to address these concerns. Facebook will have to continually update their security as the network grows.

The Chinese Government accused the U.S. of using sites such as Facebook to cause political unrest in their country (Investor's Business, 2010, July 12). In response, Facebook is working on a new SMN that would meet the security demands of China while giving the same product that they offered to the rest of the world.

Opportunities

Some of these challenges could be seen as opportunities. Learmonth (2009) presents a snippet of the competition between Facebook and Twitter. Facebook made an offer to buy the micro-blogging site for \$500 million, but they refused. The article reveals that Facebook observes the ongoing discussion in the public arena and makes necessary adjustments. Evangelista (2010) analyzes the ongoing competition between Google and Facebook. A major landmark has been Facebook's achievement of getting more traffic than Google in 2010.

SMN are growing in popularity both in the business and academic world. The particular applications of these tools made significant contributions to market strategies and the effect of this new type of communication have generated scholastic interest on many fronts. From the explanation and analysis of emerging tools to the uses, benefits, and risk of well-established tools, a growing interest is manifested in the academic literature on this subject.

The Nature of Online Relationships

A distinction needs to be made between personal relationships created by two individuals and corporate relationships created by a company and its publics in the realm of SM. Vorvoreanu (2004) summarizes that the “purpose of public relations is to build and maintain positive relationships between organization and their publics.” This implies that these relationships can be developed but not in the same manner that personal friendship are maintained. In addition, these types of relationship are multifaceted. Companies interact with different publics in different ways. A viable approach for analyzing this type of interaction is the public relations approach. Hung (2005) quotes Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (2000) on the types of exchange within the corporate world:

Organization—public relationships are represented by the patterns of interaction, transaction, exchange, and linkage between organization and its publics. These relationships have properties that are distinct from the identities, attributes, and perceptions of the individuals and social collectivities in the relationships. Though dynamic in nature, organization–public relationships can be described at a single point in time and tracked over time (p. 18).

If a business desires to be successful, it must understand the dynamic of this process and approach the relationships with a two-way communication, symmetrical mindset. Esrock and Leichty (1998) assert that some voices say “the Internet and the Web will ultimately lead to more direct dialogue between companies and their publics, and that empowered publics will increasingly demand real information while rejecting one-sided persuasive pitches.”

Typical media strategies are designed to address the masses, not particular individuals. If the companies want to create meaningful SM relationships they cannot approach this situation with the same mindset of the traditional media. The word-of-mouth approach is generated by fans and “when it comes to getting your fans to help spread your content, it has to be because your fans genuinely want to spread the word and usually that isn't because you shouted at them, spammed them or gave them a coupon” (Neff, 2011). Additional research shows that users use Facebook to gain some sense of acceptance from the online connections they have made (Zywica & Danowski, 2008). A company would have to address this sense of acceptance and gratifying inter-personal relationships as well to develop their brand in the realm of SM.

Jo and Kim quoted by Waters and Lemansky (2011) reflect on interactivity observing that “mutual relational interactions between the message provider and the recipient” (2003) are necessary for a dialogue. In the same article Waters and Lemansky quote Ha and James’ (1998) definition for dialogue as “the extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to each other’s communication needs.” This perspective of the dialogue puts a particular emphasis on symmetry in the act of communication. Of particular interest is the fact that according to this definition, a company is alternatively a communicator as well as an audience. Some companies may be used to communicating more than listening, but both elements are needed if an interaction between the company and their publics can be considered dialogic.

Kent and Taylor (1998) explain five ideas crucial for relationship-building on the web: (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 periodic maintenance; and (5) relationships involve cycles of rewarding and unsatisfactory interaction. These should not be confused with their five dialogic rules for websites assessment. One of the conclusions of the articles is that websites are increasingly a form of expressing relationships and developing influence and as a result, public relations managers need to become skilled in developing healthy relationships on the web.

Waters and Lemansky (2011) noted Liu's (2003) components of interactivity, namely: active control, two-way communication, and symmetry. A SM dialogue cannot be just a two-way interaction according to this source; it needs to be *symmetric* as well. This does not mean that the same amount of information must be sent both ways, but there must be an effort to equalize the amount of effort that goes into communication by both parties. Ki and Hon (2006) analyzed 286 Fortune 500 websites to observe the "relationship strategies of access, networking, openness, positivity, and sharing of tasks were being put to use." They found that Fortune 500 companies used relationship building strategies only moderately. Waters and Lemensky point to the results of his study to provide further proof that "the practice of strategic communication does not align with the theories put forth by scholars designed to explain behaviors and patterns" (as cited in Waters and Lemansky, 2011, p.153). In other words, studies show that companies are not doing all they could do to maintain relationships with their publics. A few reasons for this issue could be lack of information or a different perception on the use of the web. Regardless of the reasons, companies could improve in the area of web relationships development.

The authors understand the tension between being organization-centric and audience-centric but point toward the need for balance in virtual communication endeavors (Waters& Lemanski, 2011). Lefebvre (2009), quoted by Waters and Lemanski:

[He encourages] organizations to understand the power of social networks and the role that they play when it comes to developing and maintaining a positive reputation among the public. Whether it stems from SM sites or on organizations' own websites, individuals are playing a huge part in how organizations are perceived. [...] The most significant finding that emerged from this study focuses on the organizations' strong desire to retain control of their own websites by the dominance of both one-way communication models (p. 154).

The results of this study point toward the tension within corporate communication between openness and control. There is the desire to have a conversation with the public and to listen to the voice of individuals. At the same time, though, the image that a company has is a very important asset and it must be carefully maintained. This concern causes companies to be reserved and retain control of the conversation. An inherent difficulty is the fact that the nature of company- publics relationship is somewhat different than person to person relationship. A company cannot behave as an individual but it can develop relationships with its publics in a likewise manner.

Hung explains that “when an organization decides the types of relationships it wants to develop with its publics, these types of relationships will influence the organization's behavior.” In the researcher study one of the observations that is remarked is that with “companies, the relationships often begin[s] with exchange relationships and

gradually evolve[s] into communal relationships (Hung, 2005).” Companies have to be profitable and therefore they may see relationships as a business transaction. In the long run, though, some do realize that things such as reputation and public opinion are not entirely a business transaction but more like a community interaction. Other means than purely economical must be employed to maintain those relationships. Again, the inherent tension between the cost and benefit of relationship emerges in the type or relationship that companies develop.

Hung points to the work of J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1999), mentioning the responsibility that companies have to develop both mutual exchange as well as communal relationship. They suggest that the marketing team develop the mutual exchange relationships while the public relations department develops the communal relationship without expecting necessarily anything in return. The benefits of this effort would be a good standing within the community and a reputation. Hung (2005) continues to explain that:

Symbiotic relationships happen when organizations, realizing the interdependence in the environment, work together with certain publics with the common interest of surviving in the environment. This kind of relationship does not involve any expectation of benefit exchanges, rather the mutual goal of continuing to exist. All types of relationships conceptualized earlier (covenantal relationships and win–win relationships, communal relationships, exchange relationships, contractual relationships, and exploitive relationships) were found to be used by multinational companies (p.408).



FIGURE 1 The continuum of types of relationships. (Hung, p.411)

These studies point toward the fact there are various types of relationships that organization choose to form with their publics with various intentions behind their actions. Regardless of the desired outcome, establishing relationships with communities is quite different than establishing relationships with other companies and a different approach than just exchange relationships must be employed.

Sometimes it is hard for companies to distinguish one type of relationship from another, but being in a win–win situation was a scenario reported by most participants in Hung’s study as the aim of establishing relationships with companies’ publics. Hung also suggested that there would be a stronger mutual communal relationship between a company and its publics when the company recognizes one of its responsibilities as giving back to society.

Kluemper and Rosen bring further insight:

On the surface, social networking phenomena such as Facebook would appear to affect mainly the company's marketing strategy; but when one digs deeper, one would find that social networking websites could also affect a company's ability and standing in generating product ideas, attracting consumer demands, facilitating service, increasing customer satisfaction, and even facilitating human resource management issues by finding new workforce through those websites (2009).

Creating mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and publics is a time consuming and dynamic process. Kent and Taylor's (1998) data suggest that while most activist organizations meet the technical and design aspects required for dialogic relationship building on the Web, they are not yet fully engaging their publics in two-way communication.

Given the field's shift to a more relational approach to PR, the concept of dialogue may now best capture the process and product of relationship building. Dialogue is more than a framework for understanding interpersonal relationship and can also be used to understand mediated relationships such as those created by communication through the Internet (Kent & Taylor).

There is recognition by practitioners that the Internet has the capacity of leveling the playing field between large and small organizations. For smaller and activist/nonprofit organizations, however, Websites emerge as a primary resource for communicating with and responding to publics (Kent, Taylor & White, 2001).

The effective use of Internet becomes critical for relationship management when considering the potential of the Web for fostering dialogic communication (Park & Reber, 2008). Dialogue is emerging as an important framework as public relations moves toward a relational approach because dialogue has also been considered the most ethical form of PR (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Facebook is the one-stop-shop for virtual social interaction. Through its many applications it could be even more than social interest, and combine other professional and research interests. According to CEO Mark Zuckerberg, the mission of this website is to give the people power to share in order to make the world more open and connected

(2010). A key aspect of this mission statement is that people become more open and connected. The main purpose is interpersonal but this does not exclude interactions with corporations or other types of business. A recent addition to its features is a “fan page” which creates a profile for a particular brand, business, or organization. The way individuals and brands are represented are different, yet interconnected. Mills’ personal testimony is that through Facebook she enjoyed a unique level of informal communication for pleasure and for work, for small and large groups (2010). Facebook displays liked products in the mini feed page and on ones wall, making a “like” an instantaneous marketing event (O’Neill, 2010). This can be either good or bad public relationship depending on the nature of the post. A company that is responsible with their SM presence must engage their publics and be part of the dialogue. If they do not their fan page content can soon turn into spam or become unresponsive.

Jantsh explains that one of the best things about Facebook advertising is the ability to select the users that view one’s ad using a number of variables, including keywords. A local business can target by geography, age, gender, education, relationship status, workplace, and keywords. Specific keywords can be used to reach a particular niche within the audience. One of the more robust tools that Facebook offers is the analytics package which allows the marketer to see demographic information about users who respond to the ad (2010). According to Neff (2010) Facebook has becomes “the biggest relationship-marketing provider for many brands.” This involves a shift from traditional marketing tools using established media (Patel, 2010). The uses of a new tool would suggest a new approach in methodology and application. It is a recognized fact that one of the core strengths of Facebook is the word-of-mouth approach to information

dissemination. When it comes to online marketing, this particular feature makes Facebook a remarkable marketing tool (Bradley, 2011).

Twitter was used in this thesis as a secondary SMN assessment tool. The research however focused more on Facebook due to its popularity and usage. There are 729 million users (SocialBakers, 2011) while Twitter has only 200 million accounts (Chiang 2011). Not all users are connected with persons though because a company or a physical person use the same avenue of creating and maintain an account. Facebook has a different avenue for creating a company's account, the users respectively corresponding, at least in theory to physical persons. This feature persuaded the researcher to choose Facebook as a main research avenue. Twitter results were assessed as well and compared with the Facebook results.

Methodology

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based the on the literature review, this thesis analyzes the following Research Questions:

RQ1: Do selected Fortune 500 companies have an established SM presence?

RQ2: Do these selected Fortune 500 companies have a dialogic SM presence?

The literature review suggests that companies try to have a SM presence. The extent to which they develop this presence though has not yet been researched. Given these findings, the following hypotheses are formed:

H1: Fortune 500 companies that have an established SM presence are dialogic.

and

H2: The majority of selected Fortune 500 companies do not have a SM presence.

Approach

This thesis researches the SM presence and dialogue of Fortune 500 companies through a content analysis of their websites, Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts. The dialogic principles set forth by Kent and Taylor (1998) were the foundation of the questionnaires that can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Kent and Taylor (1998) offered five principles for organizations to follow that enhance open communication and organizational responses to public needs. These principles include offering (1) dialogic loops, (2) usefulness of information, (3) generation of return visits, (4) intuitiveness of interface, and (5) conservation of visitors.

Twenty-five questions were devised by the researcher to assess the Facebook and Twitter SM dialogue of the company websites and respective SM pages. The questions

that researcher designed were based on the five dialogic principles of Kent and Taylor (1998). Each principle is investigated through two questions designed to encapsulate the essence of the principle in the realm of SM realm.

Modeling McAllister-Spooner's (2008) approach, a five-option Likert scale measurement was used by coders to assess the questions on the assessment sheet: 5 (very important), 4 (important), 3(neutral assessment), 2 (unimportant), and 1 (very unimportant). The means and standard deviations of the collective features were calculated. The same scale was used for the Appendix 2.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|
| “very important” | “important” | “neutral” | “unimportant” | “very unimportant” |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

When it comes to Facebook pages, there are some features that can be changed but there are also some limitations. The frame and the design are fixed. The right side of the page contains advertisement that Facebook manages and is not under the control of the page manager. The main areas that can be modified are the profile picture, profile information, buttons (manufactured with a simplified version of HTML called FBML: Facebook Markup Language), the landing pages (if they are created with FBML), and the wall. There are some variations on the theme, and Facebook could decide to change the design in the future as it has a few times before. For a detailed explanation of technical terms, refer to Appendix 3 that contains a glossary of SM technical terms used in this paper.

A random sample of 50 companies was selected from the list of Fortune 500 companies (CNN Money). The researcher selected 10 companies from each tier (1-100, 101-200, 201-300, 301-400, 401-500). For each company that had a SM presence (i.e. a

Facebook fan page as well as a Twitter account), an assessment of their SM presence was coded. The 50 random numbers were chosen electronically (www.randomizer.com) and the companies were then selected from the 2011 Fortune 500 list (CNN Money). The numbers that were arbitrarily selected are as follows. For the first tier, the numbers were: 15, 17, 48, 20, 42, 80, 40, 65, 68, 93. For the second tier, the numbers were: 101, 149, 130, 196, 179, 183, 174, 166, 178, 119. For the third tier, the numbers were: 289, 288, 246, 275, 286, 261, 270, 271, 269, 236. For the fourth tier, the numbers were: 393, 358, 377, 398, 323, 337, 312, 354, 329, 368. For the fifth tier, the numbers were: 487, 402, 434, 431, 480, 493, 428, 406, 403, 478.

The companies that were selected are as follows. For the first tier: McKesson; American International Group; Freddie Mac; WellPoint; United Parcel Service; Johnson & Johnson; Walt Disney; Sysco; Enterprise Products Partners; Tyson Foods. For the second tier: Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance; Ally Financial; Kimberly-Clark; Waste Management; Health Net; FirstEnergy; CBS; General Mills; Eaton; TJX. For the third tier: Holly; Stanley Black & Decker; Ameriprise Financial; Automatic Data Processing; Aon; Norfolk Southern; Icahn Enterprises; Air Products & Chemicals; eBay; First Data. For the fourth tier: Franklin Resources; American Family Insurance Group; EOG Resources; Fidelity National Financial; Stryker; Goodrich; Campbell Soup; Weyerhaeuser; Autoliv; Steel Dynamics. For the fifth tier: Genzyme; Hershey; SunGard Data Systems; Western Union; Graybar Electric; Centene; Consol Energy; NII Holdings; BorgWarner; Rockwell Collins.

To establish intercoder reliability, two coders were trained. They were shown how to code each question and were subsequently assessed until they had a correct

understanding of the questions and how to assess them accurately. Both of them had expertise in SM from formal and practical training. The coders coded all the data independently and the results were compared: from a total of 504 coded items (24 questions for each of the 21 companies) only 22 were different. The intercoder reliability was thus 95.63%. Each website was assessed according to the Social Media Dialogue Assessments found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. From the total of 50 selected companies, only 21 were found to have a basic SM presence and only those 21 companies were coded.

Rationale of the Assessment Guidelines Criteria

The first principle is that of the (1) dialogic loops. The aim of this assessment is to observe if communication is generated and reciprocated by both parties in a symmetrical manner. A dialogue has respectively a transmitter and a receiver that periodically switch roles. The two Facebook criteria the first dialogic rule are: “Responsiveness to posts” and “Response to top post.” The aim of the first question is to inquire if the company turns around and provides feedback for the messages that come from the fans. The second question aims at analyzing if there is flexibility in receiving messages (visual) from the consumers. Some companies (e.g. Disney) decide to allow users to post only under the company’s posts on the wall. In this manner the only type of posts that one sees initially is that of the company itself. At a second glance, one would see that the users are allowed to comment. Measuring both the company’s responses to fans and the response of fans to the company provides insight about the symmetry to the conversation. The “Response to tweets” criterion assesses the interaction that the company has with its followers. A symmetrical relationship would involve some type of response from the company.

The second dialogic rule is that of (2) usefulness of information. The two Facebook criteria that assess this rule are: “Links to other pages/outside sources” and “Presence of multimedia communication.” Some pages do not have any link to other pages or outside sites. Some do but they are not relevant for the company. A productive fan page should give the users more information about the company and its interests. In addition, intentionality to provide useful information can be assessed by the types of media used. Varied multimedia offers the fan more information through various formats. The fewer types of multimedia used, the fewer the mediums of communication. The “Networking with other pages/resources” criterion assesses the type of information that the company offers to its Twitter followers.

The third dialogic rule is that of (3) generation of return visits. The Facebook criteria that assess this rule are: “Development of SM presence” and “Regulation of the page use.” The aim of the first criterion is to inquire about the number of SMN that a company has on its website. The more networks that it is involved in, the more visits the company’s website can have from interaction on those networks. The second criterion assesses the intentionality that the company has to regulate the page. A clean page without spam or other irrelevant information will draw users to come back. A page that has spam or other inappropriate information will push fans away instead of generating recurring visits. Having rules for the fan page establishes boundaries for what is permissible and what is not, giving consistency and clarity to the page. Irrelevant and soliciting information is then ruled out giving the user the safety of exploring the page without miscellaneous distractions. The “Frequency of tweets” criterion assesses the

company's effort to generate return visits. A new tweet is displayed in the user's home page and consequently offers the opportunity of returning to the company's page.

The fourth dialogic rule is that of the (4) intuitiveness/ease of interface. This principle is more challenging to assess because the fan pages have a limited design features. However, a company's website possesses a few elements that direct the assessment, namely: "Easily accessible links/buttons for SMN" and "Development of the Facebook landing page." The presence of these two features greatly eases the access of the users to the respective Facebook fan page. A well-developed landing page will keep the fans longer on the site, develop a greater following, and improve the overall image of the company. In addition, the "Intuitive 'bio' description" criterion points to the company's effort to offer an intuitive presentation to its users through its Twitter account.

The fifth dialogic rule is the (5) conservation of visitors. The questions designed for this assessment are: "Following of the page and "Navigation Buttons." If a user becomes a fan of the page, there is potential to bring that user back to the page. The fans can always opt out if they would like to but while they are subscribers, their mini-feeds will display that company's posts and updates. This feature has the potential to bring visitors back again and again to view the newly published material. A company's well-developed SM presence will encourage visitors to be part of the conversation and return to the respective fan page. In addition, when a fan page has more navigation buttons, this gives fans more options to explore content. Some subordinate pages may have links to outside websites but other can link to subpages offering more reasons to return to the Facebook page. The following criteria are used to assess the company's conservation of visitors on Twitter: "Following of the page," "Following of other accounts," "Ratio of

followers to users followed” and “The Klout score.” The goal of these questions is to assess the intentionality of the company in growing and keeping visitors. Klout.com has developed means of assessing the SM presence of a user or company. If the entity has both a Twitter and a Facebook account, both of those accounts are computed in the Klout score assessment.

The researcher analyzed the Facebook fan page (Appendix 1), Twitter account (Appendix 2) and website SM presence of the selected companies and rated them according to the respective scales. Both coders assessed every company according to the established guidelines.

Facebook

F11. “Responsiveness to posts”

To assess the responsiveness of the company to the wall post the researchers used the following criteria: if there are more than three responses to a thread (wall post) then the response is “very important;” if there are more than two, then the assessment says “important;” if there are only two, the coder noted “neutral;” if there is one the rating was “unimportant” and if there are none it was “very unimportant.”

F12. “Response to top post [No.]”

The coder will note the number of responses (likes and comments) to the top post. The coder will look on the initial page that is displayed but will not look to “older posts.”

F13. “Response to top post [%]”

The number found at F13 is multiplied by 100 and divided by F51.

F14. “Response to top post”

The coder will use the following criteria: if there are more than 25% responses to the top post, then the coder will note “very important;” if there are more than 15% response, the coder will note “important;” if there are 10%, the response is “neutral;” if there are less than 10% but more than 5%, the coder will note “unimportant,” and if there are less than 5%, the coder will note “very unimportant.”

F21. “Links to other pages/outside sources”

Usefulness of information is shown through links from various sources. In order to assess the usefulness of the links, the coder will use the following criteria: if there are more than 4 links to other pages or external links, the coder will code “very important;” if there are only 3 or 4 links, the coder will note “important;” if there is only one link to internal pages, the coder will note “neutral;” if there are only 2 or 1, “unimportant” and if there are none, the coder will note “very unimportant.”

F22. “Presence of multimedia communication”

The presence of multimedia communication will be assessed according to the following criteria: if there are at least three types of media (i.e. video, audio, graphics, art, flash) used the coder will note “very important;” if there are only two types of media the coder will note “important;” if there is only one type of media the coder will write “unimportant;” if there are no types of multimedia the coder will note “very unimportant” and if the only multimedia sources is the logo of the company in the profile picture, the coder will note “neutral.”

F31. “Regulation of the page use”

In order to assess the regulation of the fan use of the fan page the coder will use the following criteria: if there is no spam on the fan page and there are rules of use then

the coder will note “very important;” if there are no rules and there is no spam the coder will note “important;” if there is some spam (i.e. no more than 2-3 unrelated post) the coder will note neutral; if there is spam (i.e.) more than 3 unrelated post the coder will note “unimportant” and if there is more than spam the coder will note “very unimportant.”

F32. “Development of SM presence”

In order to assess a company’s development of its SM presence the coder visits the website of a company (either from CNN Money or by typing the company name in Google). If there are SMN buttons the coder will use the following criteria: for more than 2 buttons (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, and youtube) the coder will note “very important;” if there are only 2 buttons representing 2 SMN sites, the coder will note “important;” if there is only 1 button, the coder will note “unimportant” and if there are no buttons, the coder will note “very unimportant.”

F41. “Easily accessible links/buttons for SMN”

The coder will use the following criteria: if the buttons are on the main page and there is some graphic associated with them, the coder will note “very important;” if there are buttons easily accessible on the main page but no special graphics, the coder will note “important;” if there are buttons but they are not on the main page, the coder will note “unimportant;” if there is only one button and it is not on the main page, the coder will note “neutral” and if there are no buttons the coder will note “very unimportant.”

F42. “Development of the Facebook landing page”

The following criteria will be used to assess the landing page: if the fan page is developed and contains multimedia, the coder will note “very important;” if the page is

developed but there is no multimedia, the coder will note “important;” if the page is blank, the coder will note “neutral;” if the page is developed but it is malfunctioning, the coder will note “unimportant” and if the page is not present, the coder will note “very unimportant.” A coder can consider any relevant FBML developed page as landing page even if on first display the fan page shows the wall and not that particular page.

F51. “Following of the page [No.]”

The coder will note the number of fans that the Facebook page has at the date of the assessment.

F52. “Following of the page”

The coder will note as follows: if there are more than 1000 fans, the code will note “very important;” if more than 500, “important;” if less than 100 but more than 75, “neutral;” if more than 50, “unimportant” and if less than 50, “very unimportant.”

F53. “Navigation Buttons [No.]”

The coder will count the number of navigation bars beneath the profile picture at the time of the assessment. Buttons are an effort to keep the user on the site and provide more information about the product or the company.

F54. “Navigation Buttons”

The coder will note as follows: if there are 7 or more buttons on the navigation bar, the coder will note “very important;” if 6, “important;” if 5, “neutral;” if 4, “unimportant” and if only 3, “very unimportant” since Facebook designs 3 buttons by default.

Twitter*T1. "Response to tweets"*

The coder will use the following criteria for assessing responsive to tweets: if there are retweets, responses, and questions, the coder will note "very important;" if there are just questions and response but no retweets, the coder will note "important;" if the coder detects that the page is automated, the responsiveness will be assessed as "neutral;" if there are only retweets, only replies, or only questions, the coder will note "unimportant," and if there are neither, the coder will note as "very unimportant."

T2. "Networking with other pages/resource"

The coder will note as follows: if there are links, hashtags, and mentions, the coder will note "very important;" if two of the three but not all three, "important;" if the page is automated, "neutral;" if just links, "unimportant," and if there are none, "very unimportant."

T3. "Frequency of tweets"

The coder will note as follows: if the tweets are more than one per day, every day, the coder will note "very important;" if they are daily, but not every day "important;" if they are automated, "neutral;" if they are weekly, "unimportant" and if they are less than weekly, "very unimportant."

T4. "Intuitive 'bio' description"

The coder will note as follows: if the "about us" section is developed and there is an outside link, the coder will note "very important;" if it is just developed but no link, "important;" if the link is to the respective Twitter account, the coder will note "neutral;" if there is just an outside link, "unimportant," and if there is nothing, "very unimportant."

T51. "Following of the account [No.]"

The coder will note the number of account followers on the day of assessment.

T52. "Following of the account"

The coder will note as follows: if there are more than 500 followers, "very important;" if more than 100, "important;" if less than 100, "neutral;" if more than 50, "unimportant," and if less than 50, "very unimportant."

T53. "Following of other accounts [No.]"

The coder will note the number of users the Twitter account follows on the day of assessment.

T54. "Following of other accounts"

The coder will note as follows: if there are more than 500 followed users, "very important;" if more than 100, "important;" if less than 100 but more than 75, "neutral;" if more than 50 but less than 75, "unimportant" and if less than 50, "very unimportant."

T55. "Ratio of followers to users followed [T51/T53]"

The coder will divide the number of followers with the number of users following the account.

T.56 "Klout score"

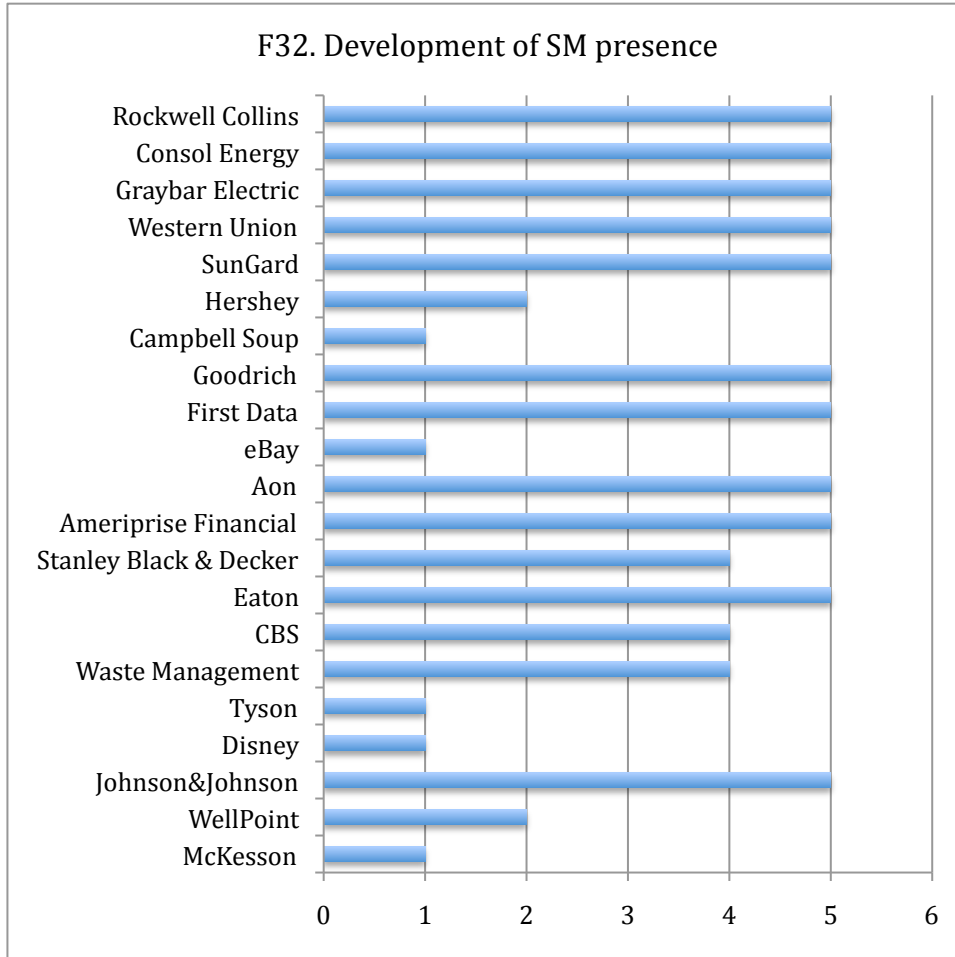
The coder will look up the "Klout" score using a company's Twitter account (www.klout.com) and record the number that is displayed on the top left corner.

Results

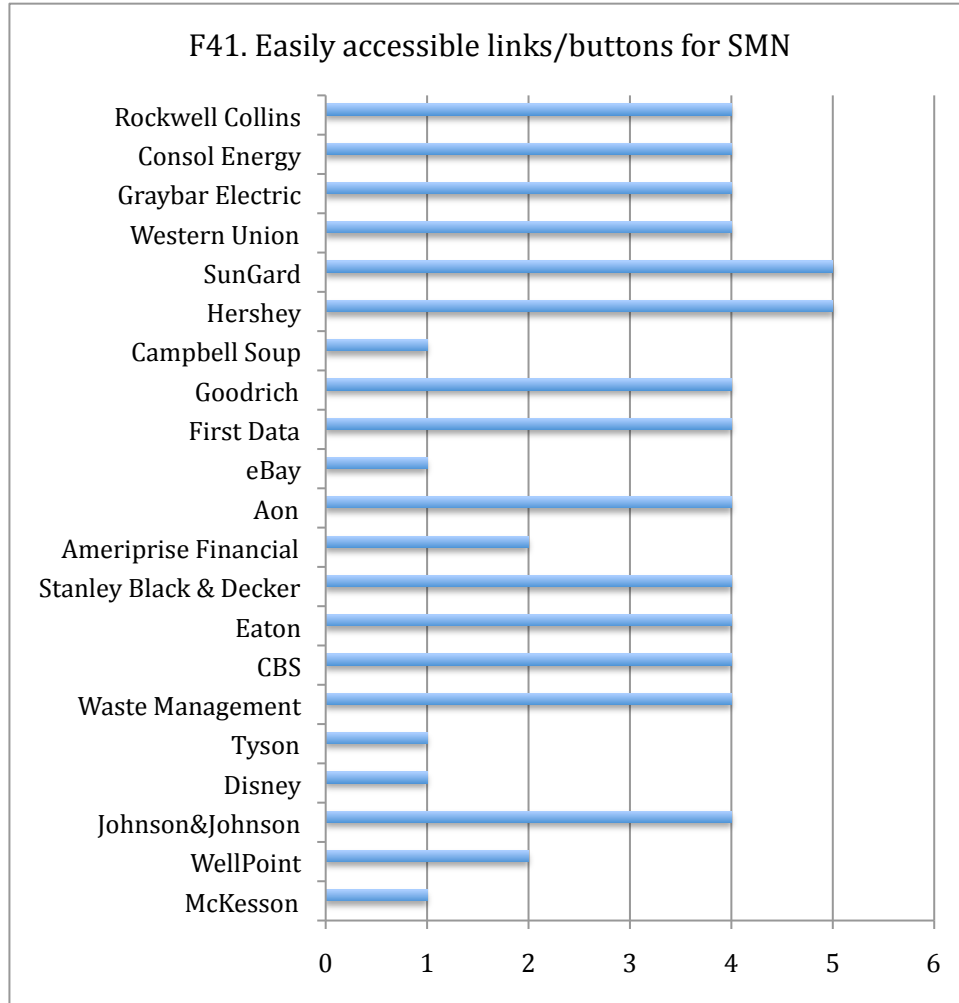
The purpose of this study was to investigate the development of SM presence established by select Fortune 500 companies with their publics. More specifically, the researcher analyzed the website, Facebook fan page, and Twitter account of each company. The study analyzed 21 companies from an original sample of 50 companies. Only 21 of the 50 companies qualified for the study, however, due to the fact that only those companies had an adequate SM presence, namely, at least a Facebook fan page and a Twitter account. The other 29 companies had neither, or at best a Twitter account, and were thus disqualified from the study.

Websites

The purpose of this section is to analyze the extent to which the websites of these companies were linked with the social media accounts of the companies. The results for SM presence (F32) are presented in the table below. The population standard deviation (pstdev) was 1.746 and the standard deviation (stdev) was 1.704 for the mean (M) of 3.619. The companies that had at least two SMN equaled 14.29% (N=3) of the total while the number of companies that had 3 or more was 52.38% (N=11). The number of companies that had only one SMN was 9.52% (N=2) while the number of companies with no SMN was 23.81% (N=5).



The development of SM on the site (F41) is depicted in the graph below. The stdev is 1.436, the pstdev is 1.401 for M= 3.190. Almost a quarter of the companies (N=5) had no buttons on their website at all, namely 23.81%; another 9:52% had buttons on the site but not the main page (N=2). On the positive side, 14.29% had developed buttons for their SMN (N=3) while 52.38% had a developed buttons and multimedia for their SMN (N=12).

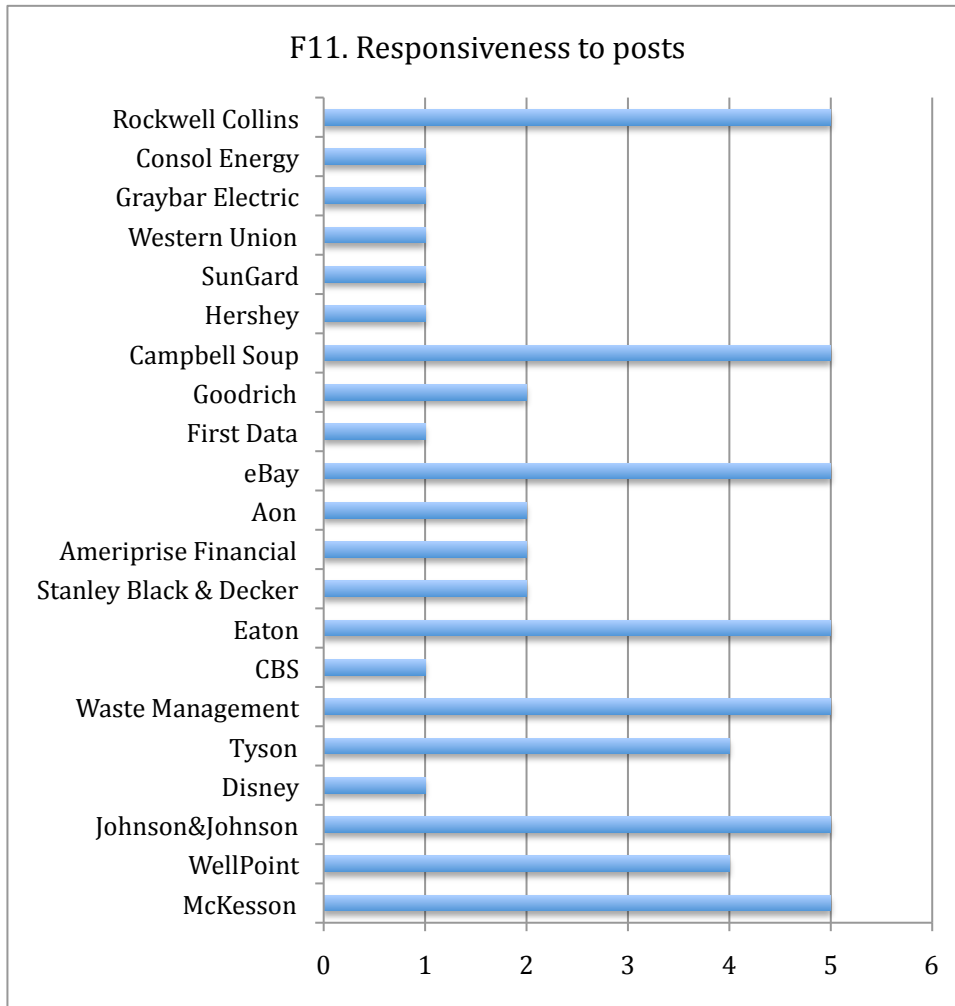


Facebook

This section of the study analyzed the development of SM dialogue that companies developed with their publics via Facebook. The questions were designed to assess the degree and symmetry, intentionality and complexity to which companies interacted with their publics via their Facebook accounts.

The responses of companies to fan posts were noted in F11. The stdev was 1.8, the pstdev was 1.8 for M of 2.8. The study revealed that 38.09% of companies did not respond at all to their users (N=8); companies that had only one response equaled 19.04% (N=4). The number of companies that responded to their fans less than 3 times was

9.52% (N=2) while the number of companies that responded more than 3 times was 33.33% (N=7).



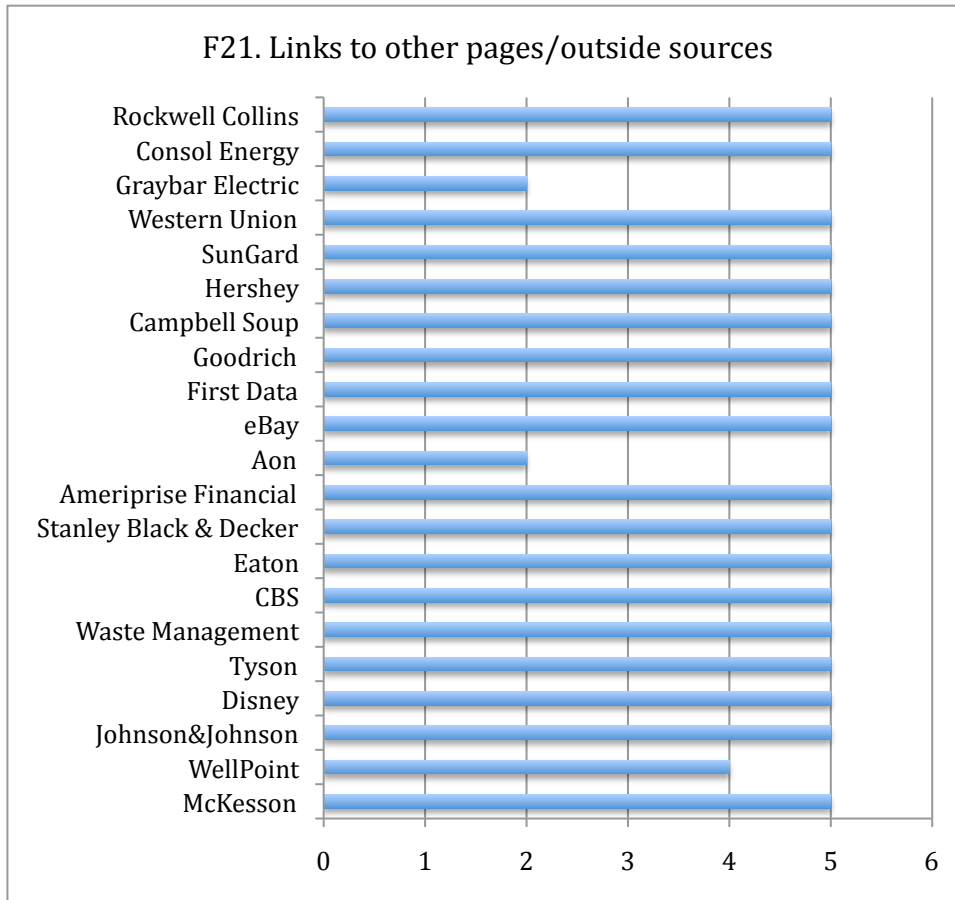
Analysis revealed that 38.09% of companies responded more than 3 times to their fans (N=8); 19.04% responded more than 2 times (N=4); 9.52% had only 1 response (N=2), while 33.33% did not respond to any post (N=7).

The number of responses was noted in F12. The stdev was 17047.917 and the pstdev was 16637.063, for M=4259.523.

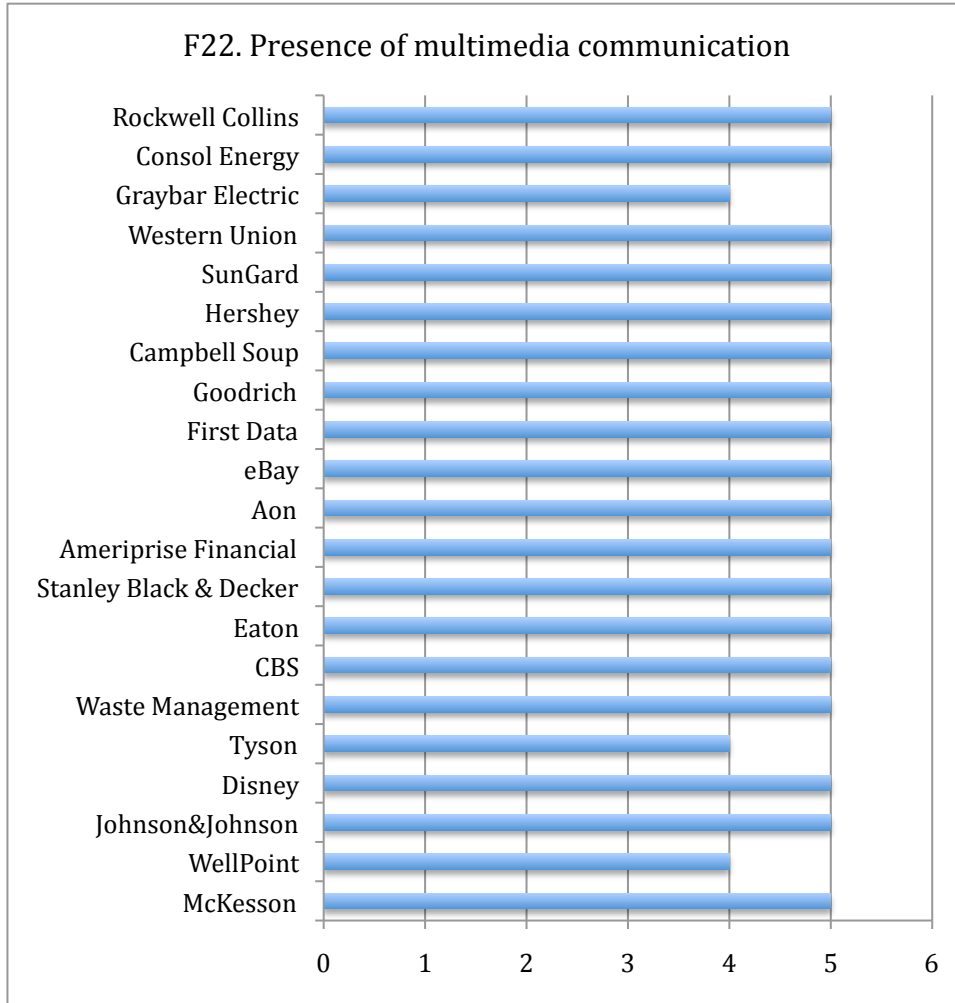
F12. Response to top post

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| McKesson | 22 |
| WellPoint | 3 |
| Johnson&Johnson | 95 |
| Disney | 78005 |
| Tyson | 4 |
| Waste Management | 20 |
| CBS | 228 |
| Eaton | 35 |
| Stanley Black & Decker | 28 |
| Ameriprise Financial | 71 |
| Aon | 5 |
| eBay | 240 |
| First Data | 8 |
| Goodrich | 7 |
| Campbell Soup | 81 |
| Hershey | 10427 |
| SunGard | 45 |
| Western Union | 69 |
| Graybar Electric | 4 |
| Consol Energy | 19 |
| McKesson | 34 |

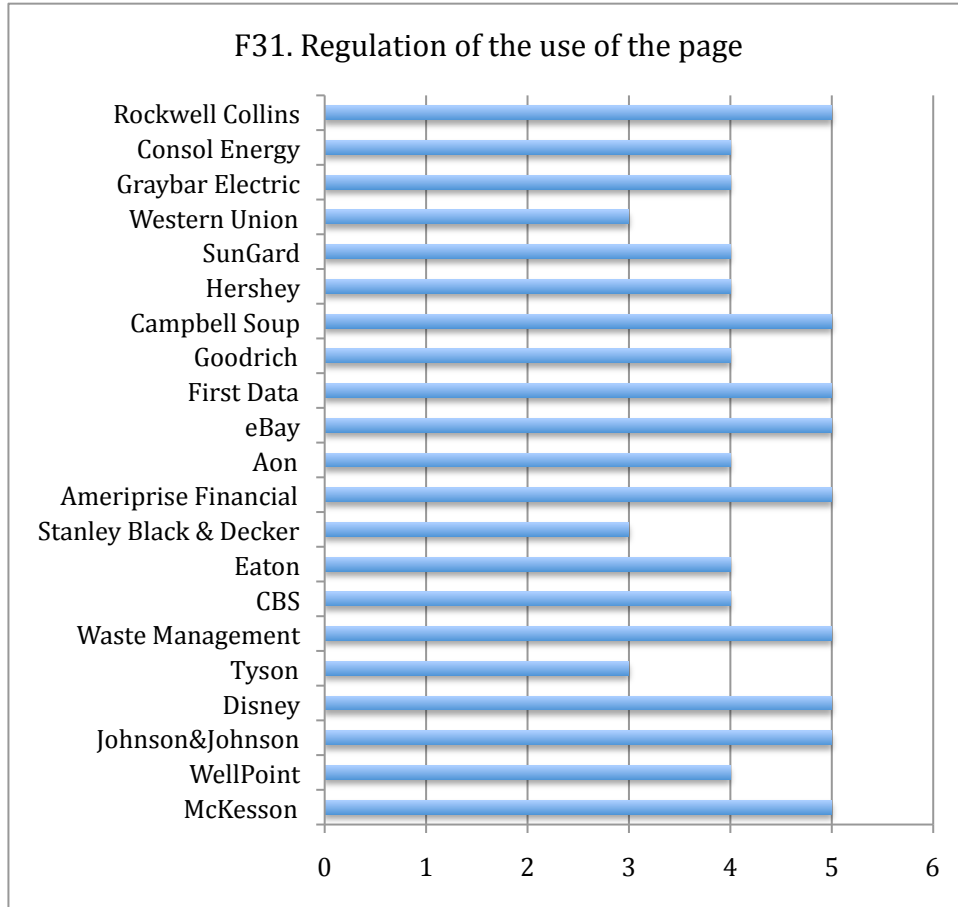
The graph for the number of links is shown in F21. The stdev was 0.913 and the pstdev was 0.891 for M= 4.667. All companies (100%, N=21) had at least one link to another source; 9.52% had only one (N=2); 4.76% had one or two; 4.76% had 3 to 4 links, and 85.71% had more than four links to other pages (N=18).



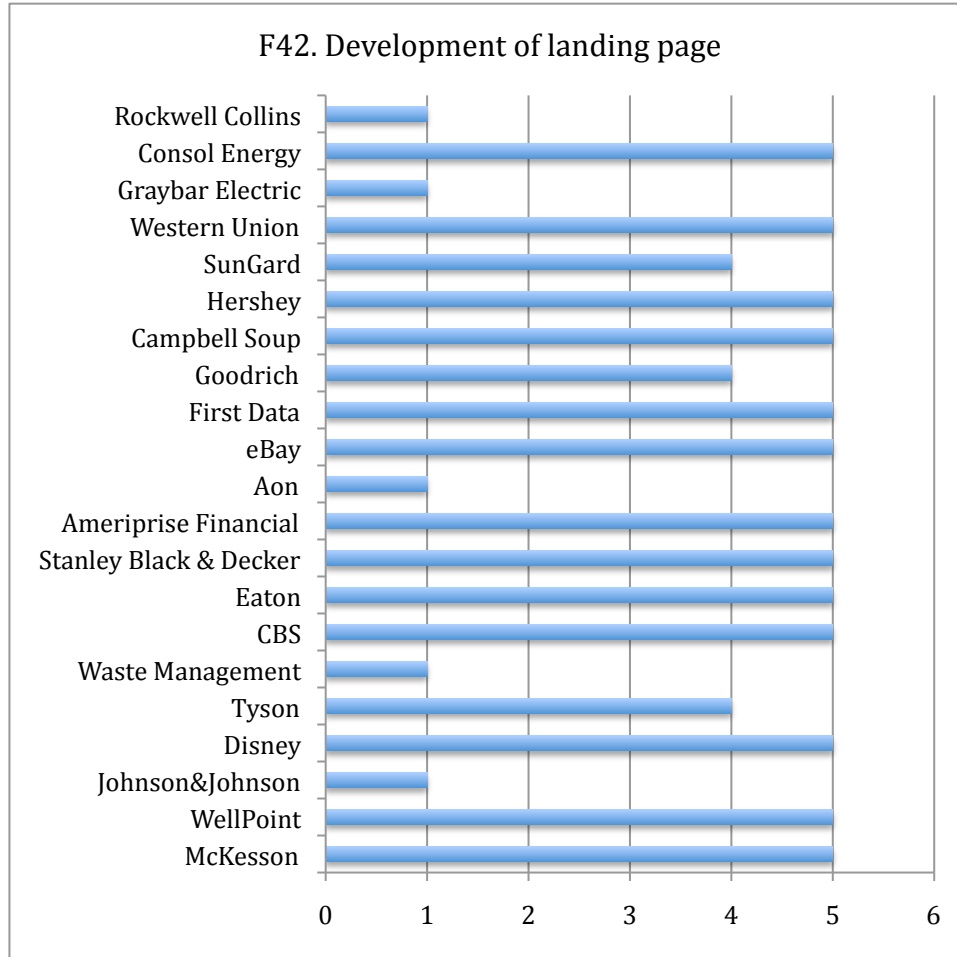
The presence of multimedia sources is shown in F22 where 5 represent 3 or more types of multimedia. The stdev is 0.359 and the pstdev is 0.350 for M= 4.857. All companies had at least two forms of multimedia: 14.29% had only two forms (N=3) while 85.71% had more than two forms of multimedia (N=18).



The regulation of the fan pages is shown in F31. The stdev was 0.717 and the pstdev was 0.700 for M= 4.286. The results were either neutral or positive. Only 14.29% were neutral, meaning some spam existed (N=3) while the rest of the companies had either a regulate page with no spam 42.86% (N=9) or just a page with no spam 42.86% (N=9).



The development of the landing page is shown in F42. The stdev was 1.700 and the pstdev was 1.659 for M= 3.905. Some companies 23.81% did not have a landing page at all (N=5) while 14.29% had a developed page (N=3) and the rest 61.9% had a developed page including multimedia (N=13).



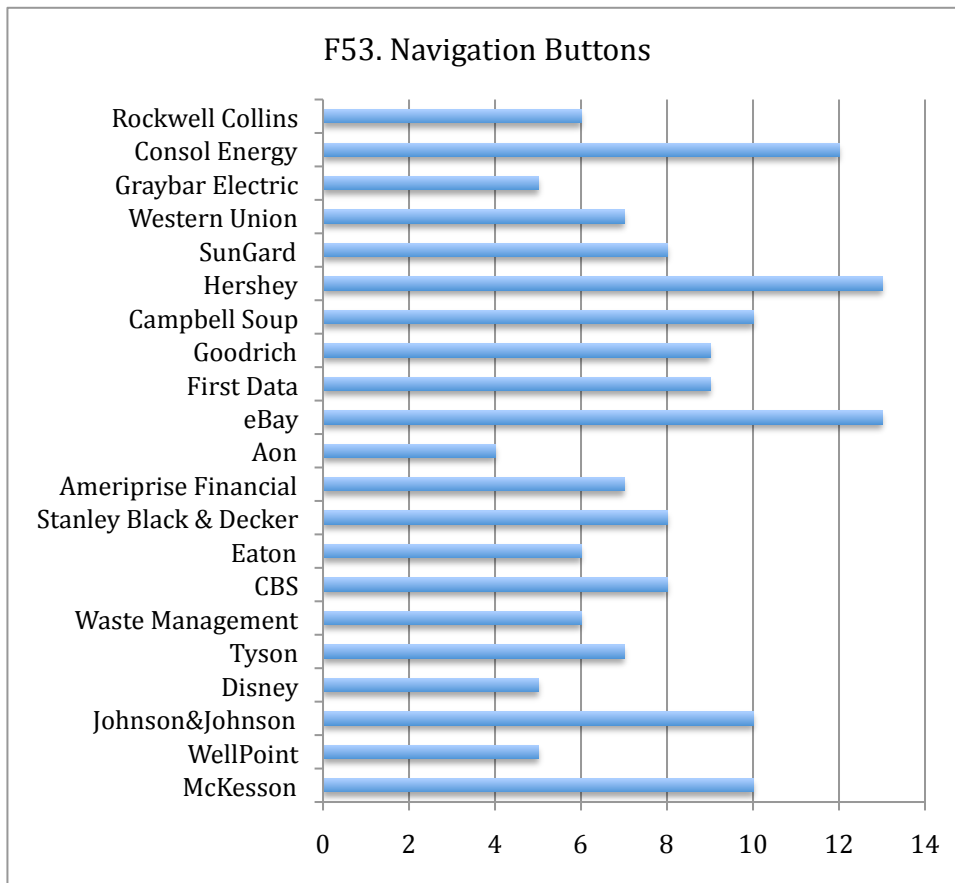
The number of fans is shown in F51. The average number of fans per page was 1,439,373.42. However the stdev was 5,893,938.570 and the pstdev was 5,751,895.080.

F51. Following of the page

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| McKesson | 466 |
| WellPoint | 1,236 |
| Johnson&Johnson | 17,132 |
| Disney | 27,068,297 |
| Tyson | 512 |
| Waste Management | 11,783 |
| CBS | 128,190 |
| Eaton | 2,477 |
| Stanley Black & Decker | 1,618 |
| Ameriprise Financial | 4,903 |
| Aon | 1,661 |
| eBay | 628,943 |
| First Data | 2,538 |
| Goodrich | 1,135 |

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Campbell Soup | 43,356 |
| Hershey | 2,273,803 |
| SunGard | 5,554 |
| Western Union | 25,227 |
| Graybar Electric | 271 |
| Consol Energy | 6,248 |
| Rockwell Collins | 1,492 |

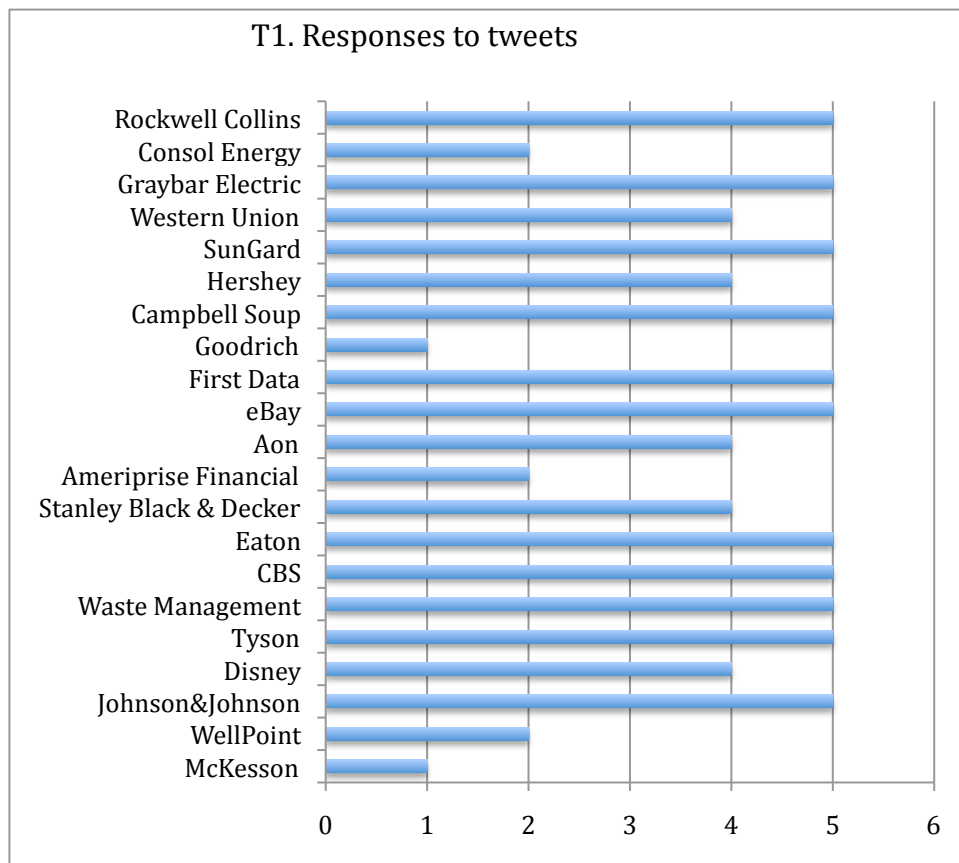
The number of buttons on each Facebook site is shown in F53. The stdev was 2.627 and the pstdev was 2.563 for M= 8. Of the total number of companies, 4.76% had only 4 buttons (N=1); 9.52% had 5 buttons (N=2). On the positive side, 12.29 % had 6 buttons (N=3) while 71.43% had 7 or more buttons (N=15).



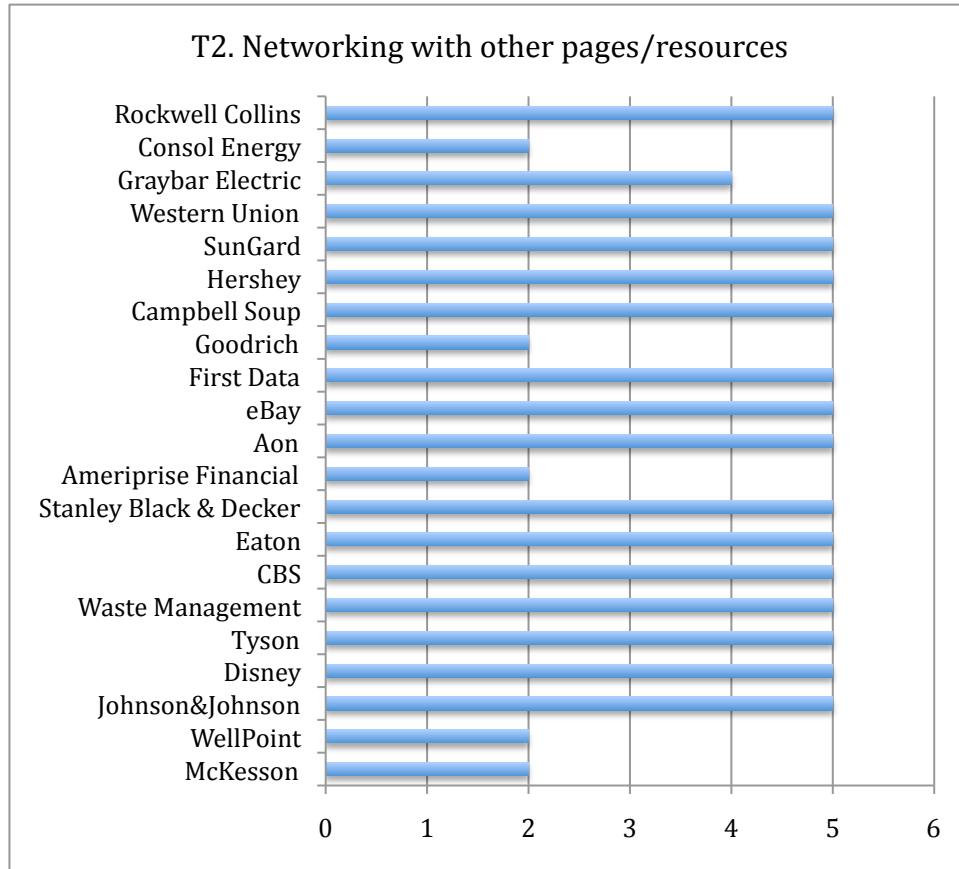
Twitter

The Appendix 2 analysis was designed to gauge the dialogue that develops between companies and their publics on Twitter. Each question was aimed to assess the dialogic principles of Kent and Taylor (1998).

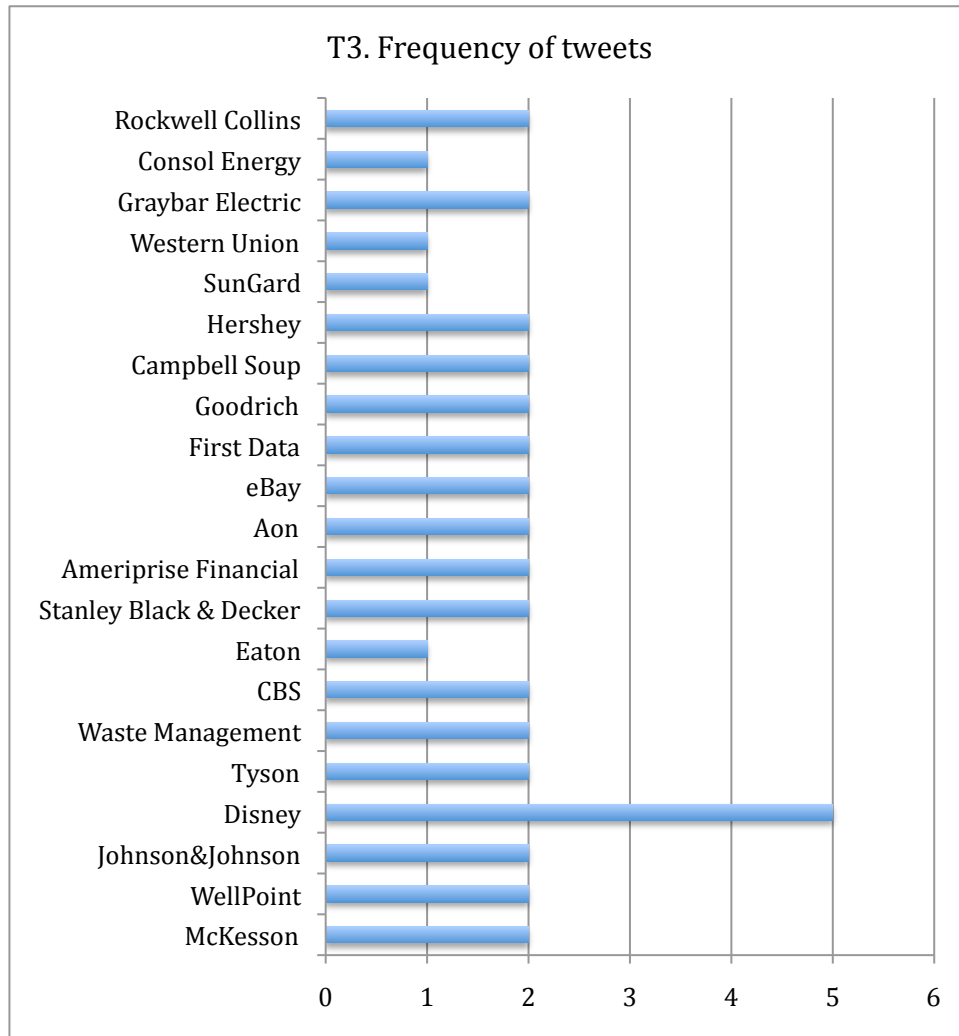
The responsiveness of a company to its publics was assessed in T1. The stdev was 1.431 and the pstdev was 1.396 for M= 3.952. The results were spread across the board: 9.52% were not responsive at all (N=2); 14.29% had either only retweets or only links but not both (N=3); there were no neutral or automated pages; 23.81% of the pages had questions and responses (N=5) while 52.38% had retweets, responses, and questions (N=11).



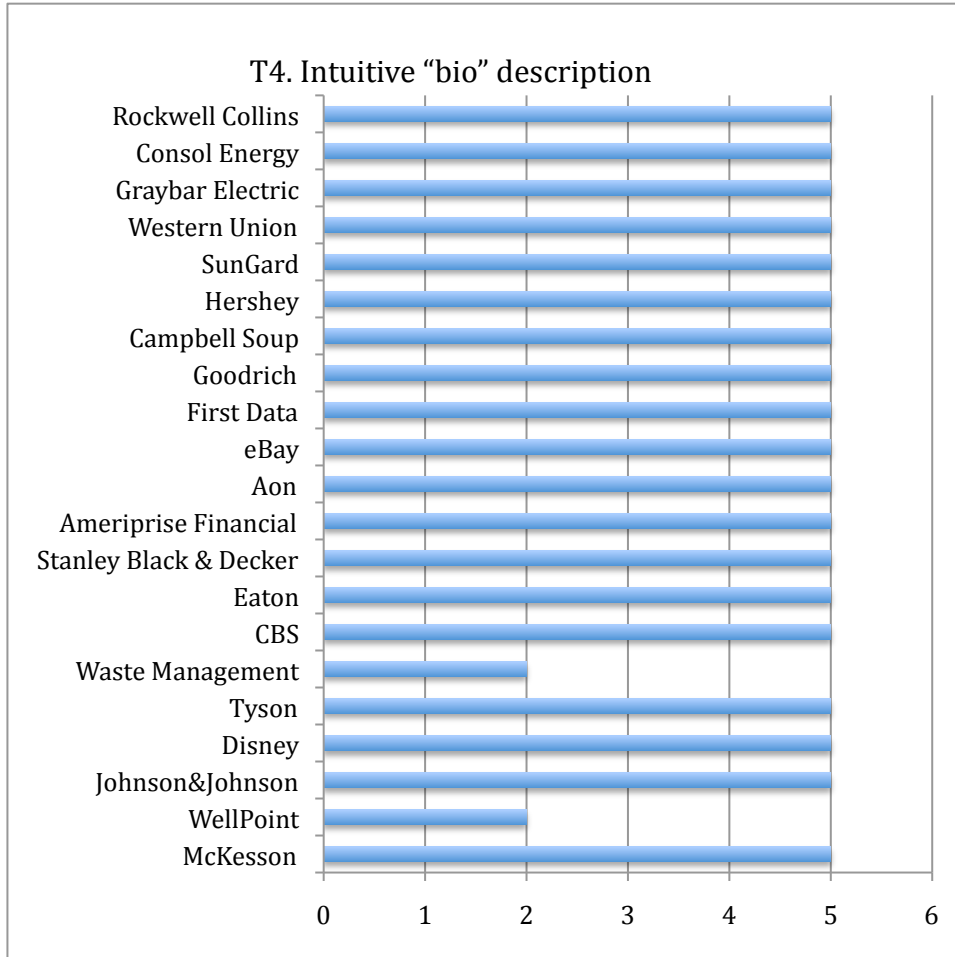
The networking with other pages and outside sources is shown in T2. The stdev was 1.300 and the pstdev was 1.269 for M= 4. 238. The results were mostly positive: 71.43% of companies had links, hashtags, and mentions on their pages (N=15); 4.76% had only hashtags and mentions but no retweets (N=1), while 23.81% had just links (N=5).



The frequency of the tweets was measured in T3. The stdev was 0.805 and the pstdev was 0.785 for M=1.952. The results were mostly negative: 19.05% tweeted less than once a week (N=4); 76.19% tweeted weekly—some had several tweets a day but were not consistent on a daily basis (N=16); only 4.76% (N=1) tweeted more than once a day.



The “about us” section was measured in T4. The stdev was 0.902 and the pstdev was 0.881 for M= 4.714. Most companies (90.48%) had a developed “about us” section that included a link (N=19), while 9.52% of companies had just a link (N=2) but no other text to describe their company.



The number of followers is shown in T51. The average number of followers was 150,299.905 of followers per account. From the total number, 90.48% of the companies had more than 500 followers (N=19) while 4.76% had more than 100 (N=1) and 4.76% had less than 100 (N=1).

T51. Following of the account

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| McKesson | 726 |
| WellPoint | 70 |
| Johnson&Johnson | 7419 |
| Disney | 1296656 |
| Tyson | 8408 |
| Waste Management | 3023 |

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| CBS | 1772505 |
| Eaton | 2,648 |
| Stanley Black & Decker | 2016 |
| Ameriprise Financial | 168 |
| Aon | 2648 |
| eBay | 39681 |
| First Data | 2473 |
| Goodrich | 1709 |
| Campbell Soup | 3822 |
| Hershey | 3360 |
| SunGard | 2390 |
| Western Union | 1948 |
| Graybar Electric | 535 |
| Consol Energy | 652 |
| Rockwell Collins | 3441 |

The numbers of users followed is show in T53. The average number of users followed per account was 673.762.

T53. Following of other accounts

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| McKesson | 105 |
| WellPoint | 1 |
| Johnson&Johnson | 1863 |
| Disney | 100 |
| Tyson | 7610 |
| Waste Management | 292 |
| CBS | 125 |
| Eaton | 852 |
| Stanley Black & Decker | 165 |
| Ameriprise Financial | 139 |
| Aon | 852 |
| eBay | 359 |
| First Data | 191 |
| Goodrich | 159 |
| Campbell Soup | 639 |
| Hershey | 144 |
| SunGard | 27 |
| Western Union | 201 |
| Graybar Electric | 73 |
| Consol Energy | 34 |
| Rockwell Collins | 218 |

The study found that there were an average 673.762 that followed an account for every user followed. The individual rapport for each company is listed in T55.

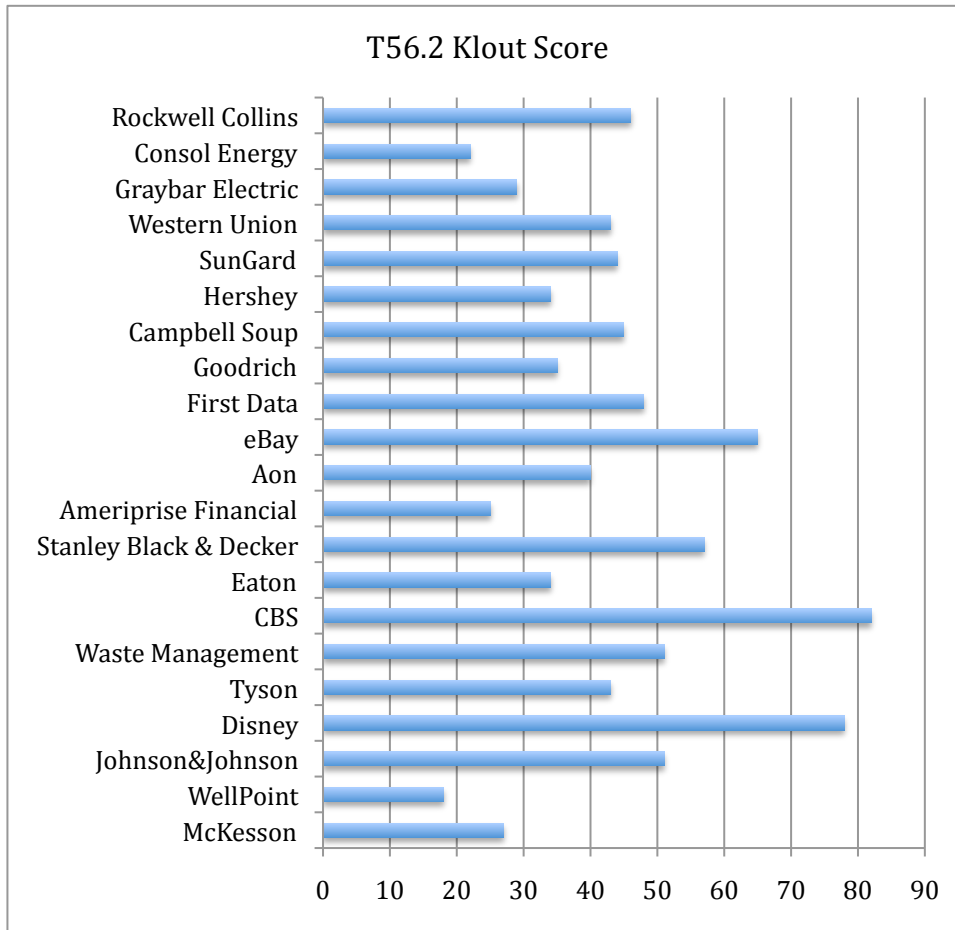
| T55. Ratio of followers to users followed | |
|---|------------|
| McKesson | 6.914 |
| WellPoint | 70.000 |
| Johnson&Johnson | 3.982 |
| Disney | 12,966.560 |
| Tyson | 1.105 |
| Waste Management | 10.353 |
| CBS | 14,180.040 |
| Eaton | 3.108 |
| Stanley Black & Decker | 12.218 |
| Ameriprise Financial | 1.209 |
| Aon | 3.108 |
| eBay | 110.532 |
| First Data | 12.948 |
| Goodrich | 10.748 |
| Campbell Soup | 5.981 |
| Hershey | 23.333 |
| SunGard | 88.519 |
| Western Union | 9.692 |
| Graybar Electric | 7.329 |
| Consol Energy | 19.176 |
| Rockwell Collins | 15.784 |

The Klout score for the companies is show in T56.1. The average score was 43.667.

| T56.1 Klout Score | |
|------------------------|----|
| McKesson | 27 |
| WellPoint | 18 |
| Johnson&Johnson | 51 |
| Disney | 78 |
| Tyson | 43 |
| Waste Management | 51 |
| CBS | 82 |
| Eaton | 34 |
| Stanley Black & Decker | 57 |
| Ameriprise Financial | 25 |
| Aon | 40 |
| eBay | 65 |
| First Data | 48 |
| Goodrich | 35 |
| Campbell Soup | 45 |

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Hershey | 34 |
| SunGard | 44 |
| Western Union | 43 |
| Graybar Electric | 29 |
| Consol Energy | 22 |
| Rockwell Collins | 46 |

The Klout Score Comparison is shown in T56.2.



The following section interprets the data through the lens of dialogic theory as to assess the extent to which companies developed and maintained intentional and symmetric relationships with their publics.

Discussion

This thesis assessed the SM presence and the nature of the dialogic relationship between select Fortune 500 Companies and its publics. The three research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to give direction to the research process.

Results revealed that **RQ1** was positive for less than half of the initially selected companies. Analyzing the 50 arbitrarily selected Fortune 500 companies, revealed that only 21 had both and Facebook and Twitter accounts. As a result, the number of companies with established SM compared with those who do not have an established SM presence is 42% with, and respectively 58% without. These findings point toward the validity of **H2**, namely that the majority of arbitrarily selected Fortune 500 companies do not have a SM presence.

The selected 21 companies that had an SM presence were analyzed according to the “Social Media Dialogue Assessment” coding sheet (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). The three areas that were investigated were SM on a company’s website, Twitter account, and Facebook page.

From the total amount of studied companies, 66.67% had two or more SMN incorporated on their sites, 53.38% of the total having three or more. This type of SM presence shows intentionality on behalf of the companies. Some companies included other SMN such as YouTube, MySpace, and Flickr. The major theme revealed by the results is that the buttons linking the users with their respective SM accounts were on the main page.

Results showed intentionality in having buttons on the first page, with 52.38% of companies going the extra step of developing multimedia for their buttons. Most often

this meant a graphically enhanced button that brought attention to its presence on the site. In some cases the intentionality was even more evident through the presence of a video or flash animation.

The most common SMN found on these websites was Facebook. The two most commonly displayed were Twitter and Facebook. The average number of Facebook fans was 1,439,373.42 per account while the average number of follower for a Twitter account was 150,299.90. The ratio of these two averages is 9.57. In other words, Twitter accounts have in average close to 10% of what Facebook fan pages have. To date, Facebook has reached 726 million worldwide (Facebakers.com) while Twitter reached nearly 200 million registered accounts (Forbes.com). The ratio between these amounts is 3.63. This statistic shows that companies have been more successful at gathering Twitter followers than Facebook fans. In addition, the researcher found that of the 50 companies researched, some had a SM presence consisting of Twitter but absent on Facebook (i.e. Adp, Centene). These findings suggest that companies may have a proclivity towards Twitter rather than Facebook.

The leader in regards to numbers on Facebook was Disney. At the time of the measurement they had 27,068,297 fans and also the most responses to a post: 78,005 responses and likes. The vast majority (85.71%) of companies had more than 500 followers. This shows intentionality in gathering an audience. That being said, the following sections of the chapter analyze how the companies interacted with those audiences.

Facebook

Studying the rule of dialogic loops (1) for Facebook, results did not indicate a very intentional approach toward dialogue from the companies. All companies had less than 5% of fans respond to their top post. In addition to Disney (N=78,005), other companies with high numbers were Hershey (N=10,427), CBS (N=228) and eBay (240). All other companies had less than 100 comments for their top post. Some companies had single digit results: WellPoint (N=3), Tyson (N=4), Graybar Electric (N=4), Aon (N=5), Goodrich (N=7), and First Data (N=8). This does not show an intentional effort on behalf of the companies to create a dialogue.

Other companies had negative results: 38.1% did not respond at all to their fans while 19.04% responded only once. On the positive side, 9.52% had more than two responses while 33.32% had more than three responses. These results point to the fact that companies did not make the task of responding to their clients a priority. In both tasks of initiating dialogue and responding to posts, the majority of companies fell under the “unimportant” or “very unimportant” categories. An intentional effort will have to be made in the future if these companies want to establish a dialogic loop between them and their publics.

The second rule, namely usefulness of information (2), had more positive results as shown in F21 and F22. There was intentionality, both in linking to other pages and the quality of the information provided on the company fan page.

The vast majority of companies (85.71%) had more than four links on their page. Even though most of these links were to their company site or some company related site,

there was intentionality in providing quality information. Some of these links were located on the left side of the fan page while others existed in posts on the wall. In some cases, the fan page linked to other social media accounts such as Twitter or YouTube.

The companies also showed deliberate effort in providing multimedia on their page. Most of them (85.71%) had three or more types of multimedia. The most common ones were graphics and videos. Whether there was a separate tab for videos or they were imbedded in comments, there was a visible effort to provide the fans with useful information. Some companies used flash animation while others had well developed graphics. In the photos section of the page, some companies used different logos and other images that had to do with branding. Disney, for example, included clips and images from their most popular movies. They also had links to other pages that had more particular content about a movie or a theme. CBS had links to their shows, news, and clips of popular TV series.

The results for the third rule, generation of return visits (3), were also positive. Companies tried to create a “clean” page that would allow for easy navigation and encourage visitors to come back. Having spam or an underdeveloped page would be incentives not to come back because that shows a lack of intentionality in maintaining the relationship between the fan and the company’s fan page.

Many of the studied companies (42.86%) had an explicitly regulated page with no spam, while 42.86% had a page with no particular rules but no spam either. The regulations posted by most companies included “house rules” for the use of the page such as no soliciting or spamming, staying relevant to the theme of the page, and offering quality content. Some companies choose to only allow their posts on the Facebook fan

page wall, allowing users to comment under their posts (instead of posting directly to the wall). This makes spamming a little harder but it also makes it more difficult for users to comment. Intentionality is needed however needed, in keeping the page clean of unwanted content regardless of where the comments are posted.

In addition, companies developed a strong SM presence on their websites with the majority (52.38%) featuring more than two SMN on their company websites. This feature has the ability to bring the users back to the pages to check for updated content or new discussion.

The fourth rule, intuitiveness of interface (4), was seen by the extent to which the landing pages and SM buttons were developed on the company's site. The majority of companies developed a Facebook landing page: 61.9% had a developed page featuring multimedia while 14.29% had a developed page without multimedia. These results show that companies put forth the effort to make their pages welcoming. Including multimedia is a step forward in trying to impress fans. Some companies did not make it clear which page is their landing page but they had FMBL coded pages so the coders counted the FMBL pages as landing pages. Coders observed that some companies included landing pages tailored toward different countries. This intentionality was assessed as a positive feature. There were a few companies (23.81%) that did not develop a landing page, but they were in the minority.

The fifth rule, conservation of visitors (5), was assessed through the number of fans and the number of buttons/ tabs developed on the page. Intentionality was shown by the way in which companies established a following of the particular company fan page and by offering links to other pages and resources within the page.

By gaining an increasing number of followers, companies gain the opportunity to get more hits on their fan page. Whenever a post is made on a fan page wall it appears in the mini-feed of all followers, drawing them toward the page. The content of the page then keeps the visitors interacting with the page. Hershey and eBay were most proactive in developing side buttons for their companies (N=13), followed by Consol Energy (N=12) and McKesson, and Johnson & Johnson and Campbell Soup (N=10). The vast majority (71.43%) of companies had more than 7 buttons, showing proactive effort to keep the users engaged with their content. Only one company had the minimal number of buttons (N=3) and two companies had one additional beyond the basic (N=4).

Twitter

The five dialogic principles were analyzed in the companies' interactions with their publics via their Twitter accounts. Given the simplicity of the Twitter format, some results were more easily assessed than Facebook pages.

Dialogic loops (1) were observed through the responsiveness that companies showed on their Twitter accounts. A company was considered to value responses as "very important" if they retweeted, responded, and asked questions of their followers. The majority (52.38%) of the companies did this, showing intentionality in engaging their publics. Another 23.81% had questions and response but did not retweeted any tweets, only 14.29% retweeted and had links but not both, and 9.52% were not responsive at all. These statistics show that companies seek ways to engage with their publics and create dialogic loops. Some, however, are more preoccupied with disseminating information than creating dialogue. Results show that this tendency exists in the use of the Facebook fan pages as well.

The usefulness of information (2), was observed through the type of sources that the tweets of a particular account provided. In this regard, companies showed themselves to be proactive: 71.43% had hashtags, mentions, and links to other pages. The presence of hashtags showed purposeful integration with broader themes present on Twitter. The mentions showed the purposed discussion and association with other accounts, while the links to other sources gave richness to the information provided on the account. Another 23.81% only had links in their tweets, showing some intentionality to enrich the types of information provided. Only 4.76% had hashtags and mentions but no retweets, offering more than links but not as much as the majority of the companies who utilized all three forms of sharing.

The generation of return visits (3) was analyzed by the frequency of tweets. The more a company tweets, the more it has a chance to get followers interested in the content of its page. Consistency is key in SM—and Twitter in particular—and companies did not show consistency in their use of their Twitter accounts. Even though there are programs that can schedule tweets ahead of time (i.e. HootSuite), no company tweeted daily or more than daily except Disney. The vast majority (76.19%) tweeted weekly. In this category, some companies tweeted more than once a day some days, but were silent on other days. Other companies (19.05%) tweeted less than once a week. This kind of inconsistency is detrimental to a healthy relationship via Twitter and shows the lack of intentionality that companies have in using their accounts to build a dialogue with their publics.

The intuitiveness of interface (4), was observed through the development of the “about us” section. Results were mostly positive with 90.48% developing an “about us”

section that included a link. All other companies (9.52%) had only a link but no text that described the company. These results show that companies are concerned with their image and how they are perceived, showing purposefulness in how they describe themselves on Twitter. The link displayed most often directed the user to the company's website. This finding, in combination with the links on the websites to company Twitter accounts, makes this a dialogical loop worthy to be noted.

The conservation of visitors (5) was analyzed through measuring how many users followed each account and how many users were followed by the accounts. The ratio between the average number of followers and the average number of users followed was 114.51. This number shows that companies are more interested in gathering a following than creating a dialogic community. An increasing number of followers is, however, a good place to start to build conservation of visitors. Following the users is also a good way to ensure this but companies did not frequently institute this policy. CBS had the greatest number of followers (1,772,505) followed by Disney (1,296,656). They each followed 125 and respectively 100 users.

Lastly, the present study analyzed the Klout score of each company. Klout is a comprehensive SM tool that analyze the influence, reach and audience of a users' Facebook and Twitter following. A superior Klout score, for example, would be between 80-100 and it means that the company is active, engaged and well respected ; on the other hand, a low Klout score (15, for example) means that the company is just listening or participating but not with a proactive mindset. Interestingly, the top two companies were in the media industry: Disney (78) and CBS (82). The next company in line was as online

company: eBay (65). These results show that companies that excel at using SM are media related companies.

Conclusion

The results as a whole suggest that the answer to **RQ2** is that companies do have an established SM presence but it is not predominantly dialogic. Their use of SM tends to be more along the lines of traditional media in focusing on broadcasting and disseminating information. This feature is significant in the use of SM because while content is very important, a distinct feature of SM is dialogue. The results reveal that companies are, at best, maturing in this area, but there is much ground that needs to be covered. Some companies are better than others and some are show-case examples for how to interact with one's publics using SM. Nonetheless, even the top company that has been studied, namely Disney, is not a champion when it comes to responding to its fans. Disney had, by far, the most responses to top posts when compared to all the other companies, but they were lacking in responding to their fans. This points toward the fact that all companies are still learning how to best utilize SM. Intentionality has been observed, however, and fans respond even when companies do not follow all the prescribes SM etiquette rules prescribed by theory. In fact, SM does not have a precise manual and this is probably one of the inherent problems in learning how to use SM for best results. The SM tools are continually evolving and so are the rules that guide them. These findings point toward a negative value for **H1**, namely, companies are not dialogic in their use of SM.

The majority of companies who have a SM presence were deliberate in developing their Facebook fan pages. The effort for dialogue was not very visible but the

effort to offer quality content was. They provided links to other pages, built interactive landing pages, and offered a plethora of multimedia links and resources.

The general direction that companies take is characterized by openness and an investigation of SM. They do not fully engage their publics, but they try to have an establish presence. Concerns for branding and PR policies may hinder the connection process and the creation of a dialogue. Having a SM presence, however, is a step forward in that direction.

Limitations and Further Research

Limitations

An inherent limitation of this study was the low number of Fortune 500 companies that had a SM presence. As this medium of communication becomes mainstream, more companies may be likely to utilize it, rendering a bigger population to analyze.

An important limitation is the period of data gathering. This study chose to analyze all data at one time. Due to the variation of the SMN, a lengthier period would render data that would, perhaps, reveal more reliable trends. Certain figures might change drastically in a few days but are not as likely to change as much over a longer interval. This thesis saw variations in results for two assessments done by two coders at a few days interval. An average of the assessments of the same companies over a longer period of time would render more reliable results.

The novelty of the subject is a limitation in and of itself. There are studies that have different approaches on SM but there is yet much ground to be covered. Some analyze it from a business perspective, others from a communication perspective and others from a psychological perspective. Many of these studies to date however, are more explorative in nature. Some new theories that study the phenomenon of SM are emerging but they are in infant stages since the movement itself is a relatively young phenomenon in the field of communication.

The tools used to assess SMN are also emerging and changing at a very fast pace. This is advantageous for future studies in the sense that the measuring tools will be more accurate and precise. New technological advances will yield the opportunity to develop

better tools and consequently better studies. Some of these tools are free and other have some cost associated with them. This also can be a future limitation depending on the cost of the more specialized tools.

The current study focused on American companies. The main motivation behind this choice was the fact that the SM phenomenon started in the United States and was first adopted in this country. Other countries followed suit and consequently companies from other countries can be studied as they use SM to develop relationships with their publics. The current study, however, focused only on US companies.

In addition, this study analyzed Fortune 500 companies. Another avenue that can be explored and compared is that of non-profit organizations. Their use of SM may be different than that of for-profit companies and it could lead to a better understanding of how this phenomenon is adopted by different branches of the economy.

Further Research

Further studies should analyze a bigger sample of Fortune 500 companies as to be accurate in approximations about the entire population. In addition, future research should analyze Fortune 1000 companies to determine how a greater population of companies adopts and uses SM sites.

A more detailed questionnaire based on Kent and Taylor's (1998) five dialogic principles would reveal more precise data to analyze. Such a questionnaire could be modeled after other current research that uses their principles.

A mixed method study could yield an even better perspective of how companies integrate SM in their dialogue with their publics. Qualitative data gathered by SM experts would be more sensitive to content analysis that has to do with messages that occur

between companies and their publics. Vorvoreanu's (2004) user centered approach is another avenue that could generate quality insight into the phenomenon. By studying the experience that users have when engaging with companies via SM, the researcher could assess other types of empirical data that have to do with companies initiating dialogic communication and users responding.

Future research should also focus on the target audience of each company. Are different publics approached in the same manner? Or is there a contextualized approach for varying types of publics? A segmented study based on the varying types of publics that a company has would reveal insight about how a company perceives its public and how it interacts with it. An interesting addition would be to talk directly to the PR representatives or executives of the researched companies to analyze the intention and direction of their use of the SM. A qualitative interviewing approach would suite this endeavor well.

Due to the novelty of the subject, more specific research is anticipated in the future. Particularly analyzing the relationship between social media and business, there is much that can be said and analyzed. Future research will hopefully bring to light the implications of the development of a virtual brand identity and its connection with the fan and base.

The gap between technological advancements and scholastic literature is a handicap that is not easy to gap. In the next ten years it is possible that some of the data in the current study will be considered antiquated. However, it is necessary that every step of this development is documented in scholastic works that are both theoretical

corollaries of previous research as well as technical assessments of the developing technology.

The nature of the relationships and the identity types that are created online can bring insight on how these can be customized for a positive marketing output. The overall theme that emerges from the current literature review is that SM is a novel object of study with promising results and for the future.

Additional research in business journals should be considered and, when possible, included in the observation of this communication phenomenon. Psychological studies may also aid in understanding the interaction between users and companies on SMN. Theories that analyze relationships can be drawn, not only from the field of PR but also from psychology. An integrated approach could provide more holistic results; for such an approach, more literature would have to be consulted in future research papers.

The main themes that will have to be approached in further research are the types and quality of the relationships developed. This approach combined with an in-depth study of the development and uses of SM will provide valuable insight about the dialogue that Fortune 500 companies seek to develop with their publics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

| Social Media Dialogue Assessment (Web and Facebook fan pages) | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|------------------|
| 1 | Responsiveness to posts | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| | Response to top post | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 2 | Links to other pages/outside sources | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| | Presence of multimedia communication | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 3 | Development of SM presence | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| | Regulation of the page use | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 4 | Easily accessible links/buttons for SMN | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| | Development of the Facebook landing page | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 5 | Following of the page | | | | | |
| | Navigation Buttons | | | | | |

Assessment guideline for Appendix 1

| Social Media Dialogue Assessment (Web and Facebook fan pages) | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | F11. Responsiveness to posts very important (>3) important (>2) | | neutral (2) | unimportant (1) | very unimportant (0) |
| | F12. Response to top post [No.] F13. Response to top post [%] F14. Response to top post | | | | |
| | very important (>25%) | important (>15%) | neutral (10%) | Unimportant (>5%) | very unimportant (0) |
| 2 | F21. Links to other pages/outside sources very important (>4) important (3-4) | | neutral (just to own page) | unimportant (2-1) | very unimportant (0) |
| | F22. Presence of multimedia communication | | | | |
| | very important (3) | important (2) | neutral (just profile) | unimportant (1) | very unimportant (0) |
| 3 | F31. Regulation of the page use very important (rules and no spam) important (rules and some spam; no rules, no spam) | | neutral (some spam) | unimportant (spam) | very unimportant (spam & other) |
| | F32. Development of SM presence | | | | |
| | very important (>2) | important (2) | neutral | unimportant (1) | very unimportant (0) |
| 4 | F41. Easily accessible links/buttons for SMN very important (main page+ graphic) important (on main page) | | neutral | unimportant (not on main page) | very unimportant (no buttons) |
| | F42. Development of the Facebook landing page | | | | |
| | very important (multimedia) | important (developed) | neutral (present but blank) | unimportant (present but malfunctioning) | very unimportant (not present) |
| 5 | F51. Following of the page [No.] F52. Following of the page | | | | |
| | very important (>1000) | important (>500) | neutral (<100) | unimportant (>50) | very unimportant (<50) |
| | F53. Navigation Buttons [No.] F54. Navigation Buttons | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | very important (7+) | important (6) | neutral (5) | unimportant (4) | very unimportant (3) |
|--|------------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|

Appendix 2

| Social Media Dialogue Assessment (Twitter account) | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Responses to tweets | | | | |
| | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 2 | Networking with other pages/resources | | | | |
| | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 3 | Frequency of tweets | | | | |
| | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 4 | Intuitive “bio” description | | | | |
| | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| 5 | Following of the account [No.] | | | | |
| | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| | Following of other accounts [No.] | | | | |
| | very important | important | neutral | unimportant | very unimportant |
| | Ratio of followers to users followed [No.] | | | | |
| | Klout score | | | | |

Assessment Guidelines for Appendix 2

| Social Media Dialogue Assessment (Twitter account) | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | T1. Responses to tweets very important (retweets, responses, questions) important (questions and responses) neutral (automated) unimportant (retweets or just links) very unimportant (none) | | | | |
| 2 | T2. Networking with other pages/resources very important (including links, hashtags and @ mentions) important (including links and hashtags or mentions) neutral (automated) unimportant (just links) very unimportant (none) | | | | |
| 3 | T3. Frequency of tweets very important (more than one per day, every day) important (daily) neutral (automated) unimportant (weekly) very unimportant (less than weekly) | | | | |
| 4 | T4. Intuitive “bio” description very important (developed + outside link) important (developed) neutral (link to Twitter) unimportant (just a link) very unimportant (no description) | | | | |
| 5 | T51. Following of the account [No.] T52. Following of the account very important (>500) important (>100) neutral (<100) unimportant (>50) very unimportant (<50) | | | | |
| | T53 Following of other accounts [No.] T54. Following of other accounts very important (>500) important (>100) neutral (100-75) unimportant (>50) very unimportant (<50) | | | | |
| | T55. Ratio of followers to users followed [T51/T53] (divide followers no. to users followed no.) T56. Klout score [No.] | | | | |

Appendix 3

Facebook Glossary

For a full list visit Earles' (2009) Glossary of Facebook Terms

Ads - An advertisement. Users can create Facebook Ads to market their products and ideas. Ads are not free.

Creator - The person who started and administers a cause.

Fan - A person who has joined a page because they like what that page represents. FBML

Facebook Markup Language is a variation and subset of HTML with some elements removed. It allows Facebook application developers to customize the "look and feel" of their applications. It lets developers build social applications on the Facebook platform.

FBML -Facebook Markup Language is a variation and subset of HTML with some elements removed. It allows Facebook application developers to customize the "look and feel" of their applications. It lets developers build social applications on the Facebook platform. Facebook Developers Wiki is an excellent resource for information about FBML. There are several applications offered that have FBML editing capability.

Friend - A person who has joined a profile, usually by invitation.

Like - A feature that appears as a link next to something you see on Facebook that allows users to let others know they appreciate that something, whether it be a video, a comment or something else. Visit the Help Center to learn more.

Mini Feed - Similar to a news feed, but different. A Mini Feed centers around one person. Each person's Mini Feed shows what has changed recently in their profile and what content (notes, photos, etc.) they've added. Mini Feeds are sent automatically and posted to friends' profiles for all to see.

Page - A page is not a profile. It may look like one, but it's not. The features and capabilities are different. It is a Facebook site intended for and created by artists, musical groups, celebrities, businesses, brands and similar entities (not individuals). You can add pages to your profile to show your friends what you care about. Only the official representative of an artist or business can create and make changes to a page.

Photos - A Facebook application that lets users upload albums of photos, tag friends, and comment on photos.

Status - A micro-blogging feature called which allows users to inform their friends of their current whereabouts, actions, or thoughts.

Video A Facebook application that lets users share videos on Facebook. Users can add their videos with the service by uploading video, adding video through Facebook Mobile, and using a web cam recording feature. Additionally, users can "tag" their friends in videos they add much like the way users can tag their friends in photos.

Tag - Marking a photo or video with text that identifies the image or the person in the image.

Wall - A featured section inside a Facebook profile. It's a space on every user's profile page that allows friends and users themselves to post messages for all to see.

Twitter Glossary

The Twitter (2009) Glossary contains lingo and vocabulary used frequently to talk about features and aspects of our service. Twitter users have developed short-form syntax to make the most of 140 characters.

@ - The @ sign is used to call out usernames in Tweets, like this: Hello @Twitter! When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile. See also Replies and Mentions.

Bio - A short personal description used to define who you are on Twitter.

Follower - A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you.

Following - Your following number reflects the quantity of other Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.

Hashtag - The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. Was created organically by Twitter users.

Mention - Mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". Also refers to Tweets in which your username was included

Profile - A Twitter page displaying information about a user, as well as all the Tweets they have posted from their account.

Retweet (noun) - A Tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter.

Retweet (verb) - To retweet, retweeting, retweeted. The act of forwarding another user's Tweet to all of your followers.

Tweet (verb) - Tweet, Tweeting, Tweeted. The act of posting a message, often called a "Tweet", on Twitter.

Tweet (noun) - A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Twitter - An information network made up of 140-character messages from all over the world.