

The Changing Media Landscape

Media Experience Unprecedented Change

As one of the world's leading international communication firms, it is our job at Fleishman-Hillard (FH) to keep our clients apprised of industry trends. One of the most significant changes is the evolving media environment. News audiences migrate to more niche modes of information. Online news sites, blogs, podcasts, social networks and wireless services give rise to the **fragmentation of mainstream media**. While many major media brands maintain their credibility, they lose their relevance as consumers seek more **participatory experiences, on-demand information** and **peer insights**.

According to [The State of the News Media 2006](#), published by Journalism.org, "What is occurring, we have concluded, is not the end of journalism that some have predicted. But we do see a seismic transformation in what and how people learn about the world around them. **Power is moving away from journalists as gatekeepers** over what the public knows. Citizens are assuming a more active role as assemblers, editors and even creators of their own news. Audiences are moving from old media such as television or newsprint to new media online. Journalists need to redefine their role and identify which of their core values they want to fight to preserve — something they have only begun to consider."

While the mainstream media business is suffering from a loss of its audience and has been forced to make job cuts of late, the [Pew Internet Project](#) revealed that Internet users are more likely to **consume both mainstream and online media**.

Where People Got News "Yesterday"				
	All respondents	Non-Internet users	Dial-up users	Broadband users
Local TV	59%	57%	65%	57%
National TV	47%	43%	50%	49%
Radio	44%	34%	52%	49%
Local Paper	38%	37%	41%	38%
Internet	23%	-	26%	43%
National Paper	12%	8%	12%	17%

Source: Pew Internet Project December 2005 survey

Publishers and broadcasters are finding new ways to **reinvent themselves** and keep their content, and more importantly their delivery of content, relevant to the preferences of their readers, viewers and listeners. This creates opportunities for communication professionals to provide rich content and engaging ideas that will help media organizations develop new opportunities to redefine their offering.

Navigating New Communication Opportunities

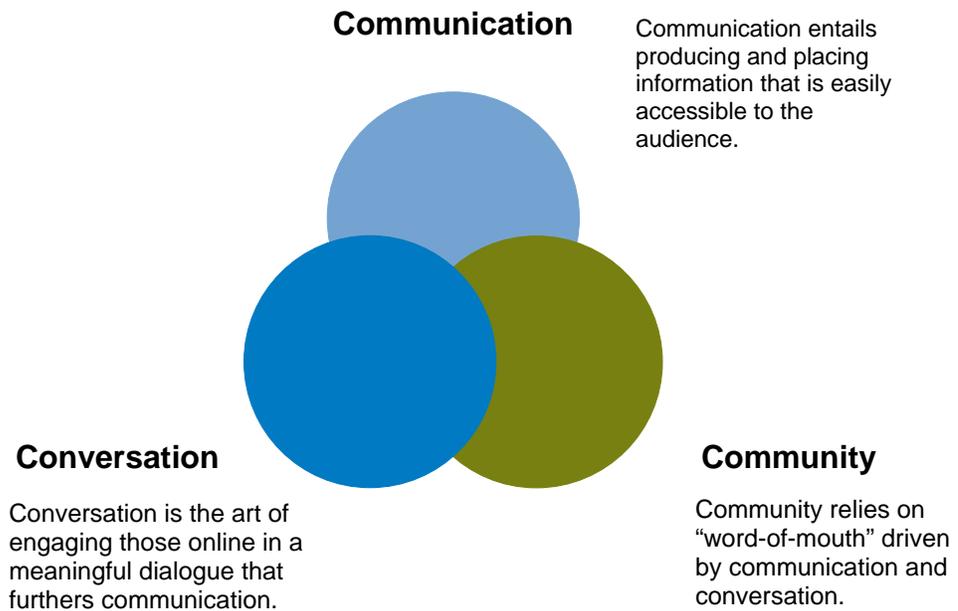
Change in communications represents a major opportunity for our clients. Direct communication to the end-consumer is easier with online content mechanisms. Navigating new communication opportunities requires a **strong sense of direction, ethics and accountability** on behalf of the organization creating and circulating content. “Citizen journalists” and bloggers are unpredictable, opinionated and free to publish whenever and whatever they want.

Blogging strategist [B.L. Ochman](#) suggested at the [Council of Public Relations Firms Critical Issues Forum 2006](#) that starting on Friday night and through the weekend is the easiest time for bloggers with an agenda to create problems for an organization, since so few companies monitor blogs and online conversations off-hours. As a result, Monday can be a day for initiating online damage control. After two or three days of online chatter without an official response, the damage can often be irreparable since what’s published online stays online forever. The warning was issued as a wake-up call to the public relations industry.

Fear not. Even though this is the reality of the new media, through effective online programs we can ensure that our **communications generate visibility and achieve impact**. In order to be successful in this new environment, we must grow our media mix to embrace more than just **communication**. In the online space, **conversation** and **community** ensure our messages are heard and accepted.

The Social Media Mix

Media have traditionally been the primary conduit for mass communications. Social change and technological innovation force traditional communications to become more **consumer-generated** and driven by **peer-to-peer dialogue**. This trend is referred to as **social media**. The new communication toolkit draws on these three core elements of the **social media mix**.



The key to success in social media is to not just become part of the conversation but become the **topic of conversation**. Ultimately the conversation leads to a point of action, whether it’s a favorable blog posting, a visit to a brand or corporate Web site, a product review posted online or sales. [Social media optimization](#) is a growing trend.

Optimization in general is something that most communication professionals need to integrate into their programs. Why? Most brands serve to distinguish themselves by their defining characteristics or lifestyle claims. This works at the point of familiarity and conversion into sales, but in order to raise awareness and generate traffic among the unaware or unconverted, content needs to fit into a more common nomenclature. This is the **language of the Internet and its users**. From press release optimization and search engine optimization to social media optimization and content optimization, the goal is to ensure that information is easily located by those that might find it useful.

Creating New Communications and Leveraging Social Media

Every communication situation is unique. There are some common tactics, however, that ensure an ideal social media mix is integrated into your programs. The following bundles represent a few areas of specialization the FH Digital team brings to the table.

Content Optimization: Creating a Functional Communication Framework

Our content services team ensures that the digital content housed within your Web sites, newsletters, blogs and podcasts is written and produced to be found. Content optimization is a **common nomenclature** exercise. We begin with keyword analysis, the way we would with any search engine optimization (SEO) campaign. Key concepts and search terms based on brand positioning and key messages are compared against actual search behavior. We then critique the content of your online property to identify opportunities for improvement. Web sites in particular are layered entities where different types of content fulfill different functions.

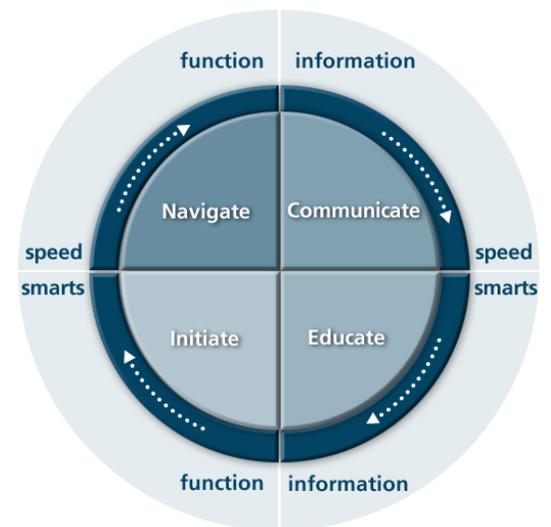
The **Functional Communication Framework**

is a model we use to ensure your content is easily found, understood, informative and actionable. The model is based on two axes. The horizontal axis represents speed or smarts. The vertical axis splits function and information.

When we combine speed and function, we end up with the **Navigate** function which is designed to help people identify the most relevant information as quickly as possible. The **Communicate** function is next. Once someone lands at an online property they quickly learn about what the site or section has to offer.

Both Navigate and Communicate content are typically candidates for optimization. This content needs to be logical and familiar to the average visitor.

When we delve into the “smarts” of an online property, we move into the **Educate** function where people drill into a topic area to gain a greater understanding of what the organization offers and how it distinguishes itself from the competition. As people learn more, they become convinced or persuaded to complete a desired behavior through the **Initiate** function. The entire framework is organic, so once they complete the cycle, they are redirected to related content and additional online options.



Content optimization ensures that the online property is more easily found by existing and prospective customers. It's about creating an experience that is **convenient and relevant**.

New Media Release

The New Media Release, also known as the Social Media Release or Optimized Press Release, is an intelligent and logical digital development in public relations. It **redefines the news release** in a world where consumers, bloggers and media turn to company news for additional information. It also serves to enable a one-stop shop that is **rich with supporting media content** such as audio, video, photos and other graphics. Fleishman-Hillard has been closely involved with the development of common [Social Media Release elements](#):

- Headline
- Sub-headline
- Highlights / Key Facts
- Summary
- Tags / Keywords
- Links
- Quotes
- Embedded Audio, Video and Images
- Traditional Press Release
- Company Information
- Contact Information
- RSS Feed
- Date / Time Stamp
- Revisions
- Location
- Source URL
- Trackback URL

New Media Release samples can be provided to help further understand how the news release is being redefined for the online audience.

Online Media Kit

The Online Media Kit takes the New Media Release one step further and enables a series of optimized releases to be housed within a single domain. The news domain is predisposed to becoming one of the more popular sites hosted by a company since it integrates many of the social media tools and regular updates that **increase visibility within the search engines**. An Online Media Kit can be as utilitarian or flashy as required based on the goals, brand and type of content available on the site. Some clients simply want a venue capable of syndicating multiple content formats while others want something that rivals their most dynamic brand Web site. Similarly, some sites are simple static XML files while others are built on a dynamic publishing platform that enables media to edit together story elements in real-time and save the output for transfer to their production environment.

The most important thing to bear in mind when it comes to creating the Online Media Kit is to truly understand the needs and expectations of the audience.

Online Editorial Outreach (OEO)

Creating the news materials and distributing information online is only the start. Our team specializes in online editorial outreach (OEO) to publishers such as online media, bloggers of influence and popular podcast producers to **pitch and place content**. The OEO process involves several stages.

- Target list development
- Target feed aggregation
- Target feed monitoring
- Rapport building
- Story ideation
- Content placement
- Comment follow-up
- Placement evaluation

Social Media Production

Sometimes the communications concept and content is strong enough to warrant its own social media platform. Our team works with clients to create **multi-channel platforms** that deliver engaging and consistent messages. These programs typically bypass mainstream and online media with the goal of **adding a new voice to the conversation**.

Social media production can include simple tactics like setting up a public “**social bookmarking**” account with a free service like [Del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us). For example, the FH Digital team maintains a public account at <http://del.icio.us/fhdigital> to track industry issues and catalogue useful articles, reports and tools. Other simple tactics include creating **social photo libraries** on [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com) or **social video libraries** on [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com). We can even look at cleaning up and enhancing entries on **collaborative knowledge resources** such as [Wikipedia](http://www.wikipedia.org).

Some organizations take a deeper dive into social media with a **blog, podcast** or **vodcast**. These programs require commitment. Upfront planning ensures that cornerstone elements like a content calendar, management model and evaluation program framework are in place. Our team has won **international awards** from organizations including the Webby Awards and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) for our work in social media.

Digital Communication Program Evaluation

The intent of every program is defined at the start through **clearly stated goals and objectives**. Our evaluation services range from Web site performance analysis and email campaign results to monitoring the blogosphere and reporting on influencer activity.

At the end of the day, clients want to understand how well online programs are influencing the overall marketing and communication priorities. What is the return on investment? How can value be optimized? Many of our online and social media programs offer **highly measurable results** that provide insight into overall brand positioning and customer attitudes.

Harness Change, Create Advantage

Reinvent your communications now.
Join the conversation.
Leverage the community.

The social and technological evolution of digital media creates new opportunities for organizations to reach customers directly, attract investors, service media partners and grow market share. Whatever your goal, there are new ways to achieve success and drive progress.

Contact the FH Digital team to identify your next steps.

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