

THE INTERNET AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOL: STUDY OF KOREAN
PRACTITIONERS' PERCEPTION

By

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This study examined public relations practitioners' perceptions of the Internet as a public relations tool and the degree of Internet use by public relations professionals in Korea. Four research questions were proposed: (1) What sort of public relations activities are carried out by public relations practitioners over the Internet by Korean companies? (2) How do public relations practitioners in South Korea evaluate the contribution of the Internet to media relations? (3) Is there a relationship between public relations models and Internet use? (4) Which Internet public relations activities are related to the two-way model of public relations?

To examine these research questions, a survey was conducted in Korea. The survey consisted of 43 questions using a Likert-type scale. Simple regression was used to determine if there is a positive relationship between the degree of Internet use and the public relations models employed by practitioners. Five types of public relations activities on the Internet were discovered via a factor analysis. After identifying

underlying factors, a multiple regression was used to see what factors were most related to the two-way model of public relations.

The practitioners' perceptions about the Internet as a public relations tool indicate there is a significant relationship between the degree of Internet use and the two-way model of public relations. The results of this study also suggested that communication with key and secondary publics using the Internet was related to the two-way model of public relations.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Today, more organizations are investing in Web sites, as the number of people with online access in the population grows. According to Nua Internet Surveys, as of May 2002 the number of total Internet users worldwide was 580.78 million (NielsenNetRatings, 2002). This survey also reported that the number of Internet users in South Korea, China and Japan had expanded rapidly, reaching 22.23 million, 37.56 million and 51.34 million respectively (NielsenNetRatings, 2002).

The Internet represents one of the most important tools ever employed in communication history (Koch, 1991). However, only a decade ago, the World Wide Web, online resources, databases and other new technologies were rarely discussed outside the academic and scientific fields.

A great deal has been written about applying technical innovations in newspaper and broadcast newsrooms, and academics debate how and whether journalism programs should teach students to use new technology (Wright, 1998). Garrison (1995, 1997), for example, has documented the increased use by newspapers of online services as reporting tools; his results suggested an increasing focus on the Internet and an increasing willingness of publishers to spend money for online services. Koch (1991) analyzed the ways in which reporters' jobs would change as they have increasingly used new technologies, and argued that online data technologies provide journalists with more and better information.

In addition to quickly becoming the world's largest information source, the Internet has rapidly developed into an important medium for the distribution of public relations messages. New technologies have transformed the way public relations works by providing new and more efficient ways in which communication messages can be produced, distributed, displayed, and stored (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000). Cutlip et al. (2000) said that the Internet represents the leading edge of a major communication revolution. The digital world has changed communication within organizations and between organizations and their publics.

Given this trend to use the Internet for public relations, it is important to examine how public relations practitioners perceive the Internet as a communication tool. This study examined Korean public relations practitioners' perception about the Internet as a public relations tool. Kim and Hon (1998) indicated that Korean public relations professionals aspire to practice the two-way asymmetrical model and the two-way symmetrical model. In addition, they identified the dominance of media relations within public relations in South Korea. They said that public relations in South Korea is deeply tied to media relations. Thus this study focused on how public relations practitioners in Korea perceive the effects of the Internet on media relations. This study also examined the relationship between the degree of Internet use as a public relations tool and the expected model of public relations in Korea by examining questions originally used by IABC study researchers led by J. Grunig (J. Grunig et al., 1995) in order to assess the various models of public relations. In addition, this study examined what sort of public relations activities using the Internet are positively related to the two-way public relations model.

If most practitioners regard the Internet as an efficient tool in media relations, it might be presumed that the Internet as a public relations tool would become more prominent in Korea. In addition, this study would show whether there is a correlation between the degree of Internet use and the model of public relations which was identified by J. Grunig and widely recognized by scholars and practitioners of public relations.

As noted previously, there are only a few research studies on the use of the Internet in public relations (Wright, 1998). Although several studies have analyzed the usage of the World Wide Web, most studies to date are anecdotal and provide normative guidance, seeing the Internet as a great evolving medium in the future (Hill & White, 2001). There have been few studies to examine the relationship between the Internet and the traditional public relations theoretical framework (Wright, 1998). This paper will add to the small body of knowledge that exists about the relationships of public relations and the Internet in Korea by examining the relationship between Internet usage and public relations models.

CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND

Public Relations and the Internet in South Korea

Although the public relations market in South Korea had an estimated volume of 14 million U.S. dollars in 1993, and the public relations industry has been growing at about 30 to 40 percent annually since the beginning of the 1990s, the practice of public relations in Korea is still in the formative stage (Park & Kim, 1997). According to a previous study (Kim & Hon, 1998) conducted to examine positive public relations in South Korea, Korean practitioners use craft models of press agency and public information more frequently than professional models (two-way asymmetrical model and two-way symmetrical model). Korean business people are more likely to believe that “public relations has been functioning as a publicity/public information model of public relations or as a part of advertising and marketing” (Kim, 1997, p. 159).

As Botan (1992) points out, public relations is characterized in different nations by “different mixtures of national development, primary client, legal/political, and historical contexts” (p.153). The principles and practice of public relations in Korea, quite naturally, differ from public relations in the context of other national cultures.

One of the most prominent contexts affecting public relations in South Korea is the Chaebol-oriented business system. Major Korean corporations are generally referred to as Chaebols. The Chaebol is unique system of government-supported business conglomerates that dominates the Korean economy. As a consequence, Korean conglomerates’ public relations activities have been, until recently, restricted mainly to

publicity. The main strategy of the Chaebols' public relations activities focused on evading negative publicity rather than actively trying to set up mutual understanding with publics. Amid these publicity-oriented circumstances, it was very difficult to expect the development of modernized public relations in Korea (Kim & Hon, 1998).

In addition, Korean practitioners often use the personal influence model to conduct most of their public relations activities. In some circles, "PR" or "Hong Bo" in Korea has been understood merely as publicity. Public relations practitioners create personal influence with vital individuals by doing favors for them so they can solicit favors in return when the organizations need help.

Rhee (1999) replicated IABC's Excellence Study to explore positive public relations practice in South Korea. Similar to Kim and Hon's (1998) findings, she found public relations practitioners are primarily involved with media relations. According to the Korean Advertising Association (2000), more than 97 percent of activities in Korean public relations agencies consist of media relations, including collecting and distributing news material, and monitoring news. Public relations practitioners have not actively worked to promote cooperation between a client and the publics (Kim & Hon, 1998). Public relations agencies in South Korea have recently started expanding their business to include government and serve crisis management communications. Kim and Hon (1998) found that high level Korean practitioners are more satisfied with their jobs than low level practitioners.

With regard to the purpose of communication, Rhee (1999) found that Korean public relations practitioners recognized the importance of mutual understanding as well as the persuasive purposes of the organizations. Even if Korean public relations

practitioners are still using the one-way model of press agency and public information, they aspire to practice two-way, or professional, public relations model (Sriramesh, Kim, & Takasaki, 1999).

Public Relations and the Internet

The use of the Internet around the world has been rapidly expanding. According to the Computer Industry Almanac (2001), the number of Internet users around the world is constantly growing. As of February 2002, the number of total Internet users worldwide was 544.2 million (Nua Ltd., 2002). South Korea is one of the fastest growing countries in Internet use among its population (Korea Network Information Center, 2001).

The growth of new technology has changed the practice of public relations. Public relations practitioners use computers to accomplish the traditional public relations tasks more and more. Around 88 percent of public relations practitioners in one survey responded that their department use online services to support public relations objectives, and 87 percent responded that individuals in their offices use online resources daily (Ryan, 1999). According to Clarke and Caywood (1997), the Internet alone represents a deluge of potential new tools for reaching a variety of publics. Public relations practitioners can select from a palate of mechanisms for making information electronically available, including specialty Web sites such as the PR Newswire, EurekAlert! and Profinet, as well as corporate Web sites and electronic publications.

It is probably fair to say that media relations have been revolutionized by the use of e-mail and the Internet. Hill and White (2000) suggested that Web sites are potential sources of information for journalists and offer easy access to journalists. Practitioners have even greater expectations about media relations benefits of Web sites. Boutie (1995) argued that the importance of gatekeeping by the media declines in an online

environment. Cadance and Niranjana (2000) stated that the Internet allows managed communication to flow directly between organizations and the public without the gatekeeping function of other media.

Communication scholars Pavlik and Dozier (1996) suggest that the pace of technological change is likely to continue to accelerate. Newsom, VanSlyke, and Kruckeberg (2000) stated that it is virtually impossible to effectively practice public relations today without using the Internet. And Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1998) suggested that cyberspace communication is a significant, swiftly expanding tool for public relations practitioners.

Bunz (1998) found that the Internet was having a strong impact on public relations in her survey of professionals in the United States and seven other countries. Among other findings, Bunz reported boundary-spanning activities such as two-way communication were being improved and facilitated through functions such as e-mail and the Internet. Pavlik and Dozier (1996) said public relations professionals, journalists, and advertisers use the new technologies to work more effectively, faster, and more efficiently, and reduce costs in the public relations practices.

Given this trend to use the Internet for public relations, the main purpose of this study is to examine how public relations practitioners perceive the Internet as a communications tool. In addition, according to a previous study (Kim & Hon, 1998), Korean public relations practitioners regard media relations as one of the most important roles. In this vein, two research questions are generated to examine how public relations practitioners in South Korea perceive the Internet effects on media relations as well as the Internet's generic roles in public relations in Korea.

RQ1: What sort of public relations activities are carried out by public relations practitioners over the Internet by Korean companies?

RQ 2: How do public relations practitioners in South Korea evaluate the contribution of the Internet to media relations?

The Internet and Public Relations Models

How is the use of the Internet related to public relations practices? This study also explored how the Internet influences public relations practices. In other words, this study examined the relationships between the use of the Internet as a public relations tool and public relations practices. Accordingly, the third research question is as follows.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between public relations models and Internet use?

The Models of Public Relations

J. Grunig's four models. J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) described four models of public relations using two basic criteria. One is the nature of communication (one-way communication vs. two-way communication). The other criterion is the purpose of communication (persuasive or asymmetrical vs. mutual understanding or symmetrical). J. Grunig's four models include press agency (one-way asymmetrical), public information (one-way symmetrical), two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical.

The press agency model applies when a public relations program strives for favorable publicity. A program based on the public information model uses "journalists in residence" to disseminate relatively objective information through the mass media and controlled media such as newsletters, brochures, and direct mail (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Both press agency and public information are one-way models of public relations; they describe communication programs that are not based on research and

strategic planning. Press agency usually produces conflict with the media (J. Grunig, 1989). The public information model usually produces a more harmonious relationship although it, also, tries to control the media agenda through information subsidies as described by Gandy (1982).

The two-way asymmetrical model is more sophisticated in that its practice includes the use of research and other methods of two-way communication. However, two-way asymmetrical public relations programs use research to identify the messages most likely to produce the support of publics without having to change the behavior of the organization (J. Grunig et al., 1995). In other words, the two-way asymmetrical relations model uses research as a tool to persuade the public. This model is rather manipulative in that it uses research to develop the messages that are likely to persuade strategic publics to behave as the organization wants (J. Grunig, 1989).

The two-way symmetrical model describes a model of public relations that is based on research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with publics. This model is designed to facilitate mutual understanding and collaboration (J. Grunig, 1989). The intended function is to bring symmetrical balance to two opposing interests. The public relations department uses bargaining, negotiating, and conflict-resolution strategies to bring symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both the organization and its public (J. Grunig, 1989).

J. Grunig (1989) suggested that excellent public relations departments model more of their communication programs on the two-way symmetrical model than on the other three models. Even though several scholars (Cameron et al., 1996, Leichy & Springton, 1993, Murphy, 1991, Pearson, 1989) criticized the two-way symmetrical

model as an idealistic and normative framework, J. Grunig (1989) argued that the normative theory is practiced positively, which indicates that it can be practiced.

Public relations is more complex than a simple source-receiver relationship. Public relations scholars and practitioners have valued the two-way communication between the organization and publics as “excellent public relations” (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992). Feedback and activism are also important components in public relations (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The role of publics has been augmented in the communication process. The publics’ power is related to the interactivity of media for better two-way communications and relationship building (Marken, 1998).

Craft and Professional model. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) defined the four models in terms of two continua: one of craft and one of professional public relations. Craft public relations means one-way models that practice publicity and information dissemination. Professional public relations indicates two-way models that manage public relations in a more sophisticated way and use research for creating dialogue with publics.

The two-way asymmetrical model is termed a professional model in that persuasion in this model is not an ineffective method in public relations practice (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992). Persuasion represents the common understanding of interest between the public and organizations. The press agency and public information models are called craft public relations because these models are based on unilateral communication. This reconceptualization means that the four models can be explained more exactly with two concepts of craft and professional public relations even though each of the four models has their own characteristics (Kim & Hon, 1998).

Limitations of J. Grunig's four models. Some scholars criticized the four models' discreteness and unrealistic characteristics. Pearson (1989) pointed out, "serving client and public interests simultaneously is the seeming impossible mission of the public relations practitioner" (p. 67). Murphy (1991) stated the weaknesses of the four models with game-theory terms. Murphy found that the asymmetrical model is similar to zero-sum games, and the symmetrical model resembles games of pure cooperation. Murphy argued that the pure cooperation-symmetrical model is seldom found in the real world. Murphy argued that it is more practical for two sides to negotiate in the continuum range of the bipolar points that represent each side's interests. In short, Murphy posited that positive public relations models could be portrayed realistically in a continuum coinciding with reasoning behind the advocacy/accommodation continuum.

With reasoning similar to Murphy's, Cameron et al. (1996) claimed that the practice of public relations is too complex, too fluid and impinged upon by far too many variables for the academy to force it into the four boxes known as the four models of public relations. Cameron et al. raised questions about the two-way symmetrical model's position regarding an absolutist position to hold any organization's view. They argued, however, that it is more reasonable for organizations to hold moral relativism on the issues. They claimed that the most important problem of the two-way symmetrical model is the lack of research to support it.

Leichty and Springton (1993) argued that reliability problems in the four models were not resolved even after Wetherell (1989) heightened Cronbach's alpha by measuring the models with fractionation scales. Leichty and Springton (1993) claimed that the fractionation scales of the four models reduced reliability because the

respondents tend to answer with a “socially desirability bias” (p. 330). They argued that a biased answer might lead to a normative theory rather than a positive theory of public relations. Leichty and Springton (1993) also pointed out the discreteness of the four models because any organization’s practices combine models rather than following a single model.

Even though J. Grunig’s four models have been criticized with aforementioned weaknesses, several studies (Huang, 2000; Kim & Hon, 1998; Lyra, 1991; Sriramesh, 1991; Kim & Tadasaki, 1999) have been conducted to date using the four models as a means for understanding the status of public relations models. This study builds on this work, and takes J. Grunig’s four models as a theoretical basis on which the research hypotheses are proposed.

Interactivity of the Internet

Public relations scholars have pointed out the introduction of the Internet to public relations practice has made a considerable difference in the way publics and public relations practitioners communicate. The Internet has transformed public relations through such characteristics as interactivity. The question remains, how is the use of the Internet as a public relations tool related to the various public relations models? What is the impact of the Internet on public relations models? To answer these two questions, it is important to review some literature on the characteristics of the Internet which differentiate it from other media as a public relations tool.

The rise of the Internet as a communication tool may satisfy the demand for two-way interactivity, and symmetrical communications. In his study of the impact of the Internet on public relations, Johnson (1997) argued that the Internet could facilitate media

relations, employee communications, and customer relations due to its interactive function.

Interactivity is one of the characteristics that make the Internet and other forms of computer-mediated communication innovative. In the past 10 to 15 years scholars in the mass communication tradition have begun to examine the nature of interactivity in computer-mediated communication. Some of the earliest work on interactivity was done by Rafaeli (1989) who defined interactivity as an expression of the extent that, in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to previous exchanges. Rafaeli also conducted a number of studies in which he examined interactivity as a process related variable based on relatedness of sequential messages (Rafaeli, 1990).

Heeter (1989) suggested interactivity was a multi-dimensional concept based on the functions of the medium. Massey and Levy (1999) operationalized Heeter's conceptual definition and examined Web sites for interactivity based on the presence of functional features such as e-mail links, feedback forms, and chat rooms. Massey and Levy (1999) also used Heeter's conceptual definition of interactivity to identify features of Web sites that may be considered interactivity.

Wu (1999) focused on the need to study interactivity from the perspective of perceptions of those who use interactive media. He developed and tested a scale for measuring users' perceptions of interactivity. This scale is based on dimensions of interactivity that emerged from qualitative research of individuals' perception of interactivity. Scale items include measures for perceptions of how well the site facilitates two-way communication, how much control individuals have when visiting the site, and

how active the visitor must be to fully experience the site. Another measure of perceived interactivity is how the site facilitates the time demands of visitors. Steur (1992) defined interactivity as the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time. Rice and Williams (1984) also focused on the issue of real-time communication and suggested that media are interactive if they have the potential for immediate, two-way exchange.

The dimensions of interactivity include: interactivity between human and human, and between humans and message (Steuer, 1992). Applying this to advertising context, Cho and Leckenby (1999) suggested human-human interaction means the two-way flow of messages from senders to receivers and vice versa – interaction between senders (i.e., advertisers) and receivers (i.e., consumers) of the messages. Cho and Leckenby (1999) stated human-message interaction concerns the consumers' interactions with advertising messages (e.g., clicking hyperlinks, searching for information, etc.). In traditional media, users have many choices but no control over the messages. But with interactive media, users have not only many choices but also control over the messages. They can select, search, edit, and modify the form and content of mediated messages by interacting with the messages (Steuer, 1992).

Even though the definitions of interactivity vary among scholars, the common characteristics reflect mutual relational interactions between the message provider and the recipient. The key element of interactivity is the immediate, two-way interaction.

Ha and James (1998) identified additional interactive features including playfulness, choice, connectedness, information collection and reciprocal communication. Among these, reciprocal communication can be defined as a two-way

communication. Organizations expect feedback or responses from visitors. The reciprocal dimension parallels with the two-way model in public relations (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

McMillan and Downes (1998) suggested that most communication in computer-mediated environments is at some level interactive, and interactivity increases as the communication environment becomes reciprocal. In the area of public relations the Internet, as an interactive medium, can have significant effects on relationship building between an organization and the publics (Marken, 1998). In short, the advent of the Internet, regarded as a two-way, interactive medium, can have a significant impact on relationship-building between an organization and its publics. In other words, the Internet can help organizations develop long-term relationships with their publics through the Internet's two-way interactive characteristics. Based on this rationale (the two-way interactive nature of the Internet and its positive impact on organizations relationship-building), the following hypotheses are generated:

H1-1: The more the Internet is used as a public relations tool, the more similar the model of public relations employed by the practitioner will be to the two-way models of both two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical.

H1-2: The less the Internet is used as a public relations tool, the more similar the model of public relations employed by the practitioner will be one-way models of both press agentry and public information.

In addition to the above two hypotheses, this study also examined what sort of public relations activities on the Internet explain the two-way public relations model. In this context, the fourth research question is proposed as follows:

RQ4: Which Internet public relations activities are positively related to the two-way model of public relations?

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

To explore practitioners' perception of the Internet as a public relations tool in South Korea, questionnaires were mailed to public relations practitioners in Korea between June and July 2002. The mailing list was obtained from the membership directory of KPRO (Korea Public Relations Organization). This directory is composed of journalism students, faculty and public relations practitioners. Among all 5,500 Korea Public Relations Organization (KPRO) members on the Web site, there were 370 usable practitioners whose mailing addresses were listed on the directory as of May 31, 2002. Therefore, a total of 370 questionnaires were mailed to KPRO members.

The mailing was a pre-paid postage return envelope for return of the questionnaire. The procedure for mailing the questionnaires included a six-week cycle. On June 10, 2002, a total of 370 questionnaires were sent to the members on the directory. Two weeks later, on June 24, 2002, a follow-up letter accompanied by a replacement questionnaire and a self-addressed return envelope, was mailed to remind those in the sample who had not yet completed the questionnaire. After a follow-up letter was mailed, on July 8, 2002, another questionnaire postage paid return envelope and a third letter were sent out to those who had not responded to the initial mailings.

Sample Size and Response Rate

A total of 370 questionnaires were mailed out to public relations practitioners on the sampling list. From the total of 370 questionnaires mailed, 43 were returned non-

deliverable because of wrong addresses. It is assumed that the remainder of 327 questionnaires was delivered. A total of 136 completed questionnaires were received. The response rate for the used questionnaires was a 42 percent. A total of 96 completed questionnaires were received on the first wave (between June 12 and June 23, 2002). After sending out a follow-up letter, another 31 practitioners sent completed questionnaires from June 26 through July 7, 2002 and 9 completed questionnaires were got to the researcher on third wave (between July 10 and July 24, 2002).

Measure

The questionnaires were borrowed from the research, entitled ‘Corporate Communications Policy Concerning the Internet’ (Wright, 1998). Among these questions used in Wright’s (1998) research, some questions which focused on corporate communications policy concerning the Internet were excluded (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1. Items from Wright’s research

Items
The Internet (including Intranets and Extranets) will change how communications/public relations resources are deployed at my company within the next three years
Two-way communication
The Internet already has improved two-way communication between my company and its publics
The Internet already has Improved employee communications
Degree of Internet use
Department(s) which is/are responsible for your company’s Internet site
There are so many valid uses for the Internet at my company including marketing, recruiting, financial relations and research – that public relations as a function cannot control all content on the corporate Web site
The period of Internet use
My company has carried out public relations practices throughout the Internet besides of existing media such as newspapers, broadcasting
Public relations as a function should manage and control all content of corporate Web sites, including those on the Internet, Intranet or Extranet that have public relations implications

Table 3-1. Continued

Items
Functions of the Internet in public relations
Personal information seeking
Professional information seeking
E-mail sending
Media contacts
Monitor competition
Research
Recruiting public relations employees
Monitor the news
Contacting investors
Employee communications
Contacting customers
Crisis communication
Contact professional public relations associations
Add or edit Web site's public relations content
Contracting federal, state or local governments/legislators
Strengths of the Internet
Improved investor relations
Enhanced media contacts
Inexpensive research
<u>Source: Wright, 1998</u>

In addition, this study used a 14-item questionnaire borrowed from Sriramesh (1991) to examine the relation of the degree of the Internet use as a public relations tool and an anticipated model of public relations in Korea (Table 3-2).

Sriramesh used a self-administered questionnaire with four indexes that were designed to assess the four models of public relations in India. This study using the questionnaire to assess the public relations model such as the Excellence Study (J. Grunig et al., 1995) should increase the study's validity and reliability. Additionally, in a recent study about Korea (Kim & Hon, 1998), a satisfactory level was achieved in the reliability tests of the model indexes. The Cronbach's alpha was .72 for the press agency index, .65 for the public information index, .71 for the two-way asymmetrical index, and .75 for the two-way symmetrical index (Kim & Hon, 1998). Because a previous

Table 3-2. Item measuring Public Relations Models

Items
<p>Public Information</p> <p>I have little time to engage in research about the efficacy of our public relations activities.</p> <p>Maintaining newspaper clips is the only measure of the success of our public relations activities.</p> <p>The public relations unit of my organization is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between the management and the community.</p>
<p>Press agency</p> <p>The public relations unit of my organization does not go beyond acting as a liaison between the organization and the media.</p> <p>The main purpose of the public relations unit in our organization is to get favorable publicity for my organization and keep unfavorable publicity out.</p> <p>The purpose of public relations is quite simply to get publicity for my organization.</p>
<p>Two-way asymmetrical</p> <p>The public relations unit of my organization does research regularly to determine how effective the public relations unit has been in changing people's attitudes.</p> <p>The broad goal of our public relations unit is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.</p> <p>The public relations unit of my organization looks at attitude surveys to make sure that the unit is describing the organization and its policies in ways its publics would be most likely to accept.</p> <p>Before beginning a public relations campaign, one should conduct research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how these might be changed.</p>
<p>Two-way symmetrical</p> <p>The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organizations and publics the organization affects.</p> <p>Before starting a public relations campaign, we conduct surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.</p> <p>The purpose of public relations is to change the attitudes and behavior of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.</p> <p>It is the view of my organization that public relations should provide mediation for the organization to help management and publics negotiate conflict.</p>

Source: Sriramesh, 1991

study (Kim & Hon, 1998) identified the dominance of media relations in South Korea, this study developed a subset of questions on media relations to examine public relations practitioners' perception of the Internet effects on media relations.

Table 3-3. Item concerning Media Relations

Items
Media relations
The Internet has changed the way my company handles press contacts and media relations activities with reporters.
The Internet enhanced media contact.
Effect of existing media such as newspapers and broadcasting on public relations is stronger than that of the Internet.
The Internet has made it more difficult for the corporate communications/public relations function to control who deals with the media on behalf of my company.

The questionnaires were translated into Korean. To ensure the exact translation of the original questionnaires, translation back into English was conducted with the aid of a United States graduate student. The items used in the survey were measured using 5-point Likert-scales ranging from “strongly disagree” [1] to “strongly agree” [5] to each subset of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were approved by the Institutional Review Board – Approval of Protocol # 2002-373. Please see Appendix A and B for the questions in English and Korean.

Analysis of Data

Data from the returned surveys were coded and loaded for data analyses. The raw data collected from the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Research questions were tested using analysis of a simple regression and a multiple regression.

To test H1-1 and H1-2, a simple regression was used to determine if there is a positive relationship between the amount of Internet use and the public relations model. The independent variable was the degree of Internet use. This was measured by the degree of public relations activities throughout the Internet. The dependent variables were the four models developed by J. Grunig and widely recognized by scholars and

practitioners. J. Grunig's four models include press agency (one-way asymmetrical), public information (one-way symmetrical), two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical.

To answer RQ4, a factor analysis was used for the exploratory purpose in searching for the structures among a set of public relations activities using the Internet variables (14 items). After identifying underlying factors of Internet public relations types, multiple regression test was conducted to see what set of factors (the types of public relations activities with the Internet) are more related to the two-way public relations model. Here, the independent variables were types of Internet public relations activities that were extracted by the previous factor analysis, and the dependent variable is a two-way public relations model (asymmetrical and symmetrical).

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Sample Demographic Description

Among the valid 136 collected samples, 66 subjects were male (48%) and 70 were female (52%). The subjects' average age was 29.5 years old, ranging from 22 to 47 years old. On average, the subjects had worked for 3.8 years in public relations. The average years of Internet use was 3.85 years. Ninety-seven percent of the subjects had at least a bachelor's degree (109 had a bachelors degree; 23 had a masters degree). With regard to the type of public relations department they work for, 38 subjects responded that they work for independent public relations firms (28%), 80 subjects said they work for corporate communication departments in a corporation (59%) and 11 subjects responded that they work for a public relations division in a large advertising agency (8%). Twenty-nine subjects (21%) had some journalism experience. A total of 99 respondents were non-managerial employees (73%) and 37 subjects responded that their working levels were at the managerial level (27%) (Appendix D).

Two-way Communication and Internet

Regarding the Internet's effect on two-way communications, almost three fourths of the subjects (74%) surveyed in this study believed the Internet would change how communications/public relations resources are deployed at their companies. An even larger majority of the subjects (80%) agreed that the Internet has already improved two-way communications between the organization and its publics. Another large percentage (81%) said the Internet already has improved employee communications.

Eighty-two subjects (60%) surveyed suggested that a public relations department should manage and control all content of an organization's Web site, including those on the Internet, Intranet or Extranet that have public relations implications. Only 35 of subjects (26%) said the public relations department is currently managing all content on their organization's Web site. The majority of practitioners (81%) said there are many valid uses for the Internet by other corporate functions such as marketing, recruiting, financial relations, etc. (Appendix D).

Strength of the Internet as Public Relations Tool

With respect to the Internet strengths, 58 subjects (43%) agreed the Internet has improved shareholder relations and 40 percent of the respondents perceived that the Internet has improved media relations. In addition, a large number of the practitioners (75%) said that the strength of the Internet is making various kinds of research affordable (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Frequency of Strength of the Internet as a Public relations Tool

Strength of the Internet as a Public Relations Tool	Frequency (strongly agree or agree)	Percent (strongly agree or agree) (%)	M	SD
Improvement of shareholder relations	58	43	3.27	.87
Improvement of media relations	55	40	3.33	.68
Affordable research	102	75	3.98	.81

Public Relations Activities with the Internet

Subjects were asked for what purpose they used the Internet. Table 4-2 shows the percentage of responses indicating "strongly agree", or "agree" for each purpose listed in the questionnaire (Appendix A, question 9-22).

When respondents were asked to identify their purposes for using the Internet, top functions included information search (99%), followed closely by monitoring news (95%), e-mail sending (93%) and for press release product/distributing (91%). All but one subject said the Internet is a useful medium for information searching (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Frequency of Public Relations Activities with the Internet

Possible Internet Use	Frequency (strongly agree or agree)	Percent (strongly agree or agree) (%)	M	SD
Information searching	135	99	4.75	.45
News monitoring	129	95	4.54	.67
E-mail sending	126	93	4.67	.54
Press release product/distributing	124	91	4.48	.79
Competitor monitoring	120	88	4.31	.72
Media contacts	113	85	4.24	.78
Employee communications	104	77	4.01	.85
Recruiting	103	76	3.85	1.15
Research	102	75	3.99	.86
Professional organizations contacts	84	55	3.49	.97
Customers contacts	72	53	3.60	.83
Crisis management	61	45	3.32	.97
Government contacts	37	27	3.06	.85
Shareholder contacts	30	23	2.86	.90

Note: Each item was measured by 5-point Likert-scales

As table 4-2 indicates, it appears many public relations practitioners have not yet noticed efficiency of the Internet as a public relations tool related to crisis management, government contacts, and/or shareholder contacts. Sixty-one subjects (45%) use the Internet to manage a crisis and only 27 percent say they use the Internet to contact government agencies. Only 23 percent find it useful in shareholder contacts.

The majority of practitioners indicated that the Internet is useful when they monitor competitors (88%) and contact the media (85%). The respondents mentioned the significance of the Internet in accordance with employee communications (77%), recruiting (76%) and conducting research (75%).

Media Relations and the Internet

Since a previous study (Kim & Hon, 1998) identified the prevalence of media relations in public relations practice in South Korea, this study further examined additional dimensions of media relations. Results of this study suggested that most of the practitioners (85%) agreed that the Internet has changed the way organizations handle media contacts and media relations. With regard to the effectiveness of the Internet in media relations, 46 percent said the Internet enhanced media contacts, 39 percent were undecided and 15 percent said the Internet has not enhanced media contacts. In addition, the majority of the respondents (83%) indicated existing media, such as newspapers and broadcasting are more effective than the Internet for public relations, whereas only 17 percent said the effect of the Internet on public relations is stronger than that of conventional media.

The result of this study indicated Korean practitioners do not believe the Internet has made dealing with the media more difficult. Fifty-two percent said the Internet has not made it more difficult for the organization communications/ public relations function to control who deals with the media, 38 percent were undecided and only 10 percent said the Internet has made dealing with the media more difficult (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3. Internet as Media Relations Tool

The Internet as Media Relations Tool	Frequency (strongly agree or agree)	Percent (strongly agree or agree) (%)	M	SD
Changing media relations	116	85	4.13	.75
Effective media in public relations	62	45	3.38	.89
Less powerful media in public relations	113	83	4.20	.82
Less efficient media in public relations	13	9	2.54	.75

Public Relations Models in Korea

This study borrowed a subset of questions from Sriramesh's study (Sriramesh, 1991). The set of measurements is the public relations model, which J. Grunig et al. reconstructed for the Excellence Study. Sriramesh divided the 14 items into 4 groups with 3 or 4 items each, corresponding to the four models of public relations. A subset of indices was modified to measure the press agency model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model, and the two-way symmetrical model (Grunig, 1989).

Appropriate reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha for each public relations model. Cronbach's alpha for press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical model are .78, .70, .82 and .84 respectively. Compared to the previous studies where the average Cronbach's alpha was .62 for the press agency index, .53 for the public information index, .57 for the two-way asymmetrical index, and .59 for the two-way symmetrical index (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992), this study's alpha level was much higher.

The two-way symmetrical model ($M=3.77$, $SD=.73$) showed the highest means among the four models. The two-way asymmetrical model ($M=3.44$, $SD=.60$) showed the next highest means. The public information model ($M=2.59$, $SD=.70$) showed a higher score than the press agency model ($M=2.51$, $SD=.80$). To check the rank order of practitioners' attitude toward the public relations model, three sequential paired t-test comparing mean differences in attitude toward the public relations model were conducted. As shown in Table 4-4, the mean of public information model ($M=2.59$) was a little higher than that of press agency model ($M=2.51$). The result was not statistically significant ($p>.05$). The mean of two-way asymmetrical model ($M=3.44$) was significantly higher than that of public information model. Similarly, the mean of two-

way symmetrical model (M=3.77) was significantly higher than that of two-way asymmetrical model (Table 4-4).

Table 4-4. Mean Differences of attitude toward the Public Relations Model

Public Relations Model		Mean Differences	St. Dev.	t-value
Press Agency (M=2.51) N=136	Public Information (M=2.59) N=136	.074	.566	1.52
Public Information (M=2.59) N=136	Two-way Asymmetrical (M=3.44) N=136	-.852	1.218	-8.16***
Two-way Asymmetrical (M=3.44) N=136	Two-way Symmetrical (M=3.77) N=136	-.333	.399	-9.72***

Note: *** p< .001 (two-tailed)

* Attitude toward the public relations model was measured by 14-item questionnaire

According to Sriramesh et al., even if Korean public relations practitioners are still using the one-way model of press agency and public information, they aspire to practice two-way public relation model (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999). Rhee (1999) concluded that Korean public relations practitioners recognize the importance of mutual understanding with regard to the purpose of communication. The result of this study indicated that public relations practitioners in Korea prefer the two-way model of public relations as well as recognize the importance of the mutual understanding between an organization and the publics based on the two-way public relations model.

Relations Between the Degree of Internet Use and Public Relations Models

Research hypothesis 1-1 and 1-2 concern the predictive utility of the amount of Internet use for explaining the public relations models. For this purpose, J. Grunig's four models of public relations were regressed on the degree of Internet use. The degree of Internet use was measured by one question asking the degree of Internet use in carrying out public relations activities.

As Table 4-5 shows, the degree of Internet use was a significant predictor of two-way public relations model ($p < .001$). In terms of the relative effect of the variable on each public relations model, the standardized beta value for press agency model was $-.78$, for public information model was $-.75$, for two-way asymmetrical model was $.83$ and for two-way symmetrical model was $.81$. Overall, standardized beta value for the one-way model of public relations model was $-.82$, and two-way model of public relations model was $.85$.

Table 4-5. Simple Regression Analysis for predicting Public Relations Models

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	t-value	Model Summary
1. Press Agency	-.58	-.78	-14.45***	R= .781 R ² = .609 F=208.880*** d.f.=(1,134)
2. Public Information	-.49	-.75	-13.05***	R= .748 R ² = .559 F=170.165*** d.f.=(1,134)
3. Two-way Asymmetrical	.47	.83	17.126***	R= .828 R ² = .686 F=293.290*** d.f.=(1,134)
4. Two-way Symmetrical	.56	.81	16.111***	R= .812 R ² = .660 F=259.553*** d.f.=(1,134)
5. One-way Model (1+2)	-.54	-.82	- 16.864***	R= .824 R ² = .680 F=284.404*** d.f.=(1,134)
6. Two-way Model (3+4)	.51	.85	19.042***	R= .854 R ² = .730 F=362.599*** d.f.=(1,134)

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

This data suggests the degree of Internet use has a positive impact on the two-way model. In other words, the more the Internet is used as a public relations tool, the more

the model of public relations is likely to be the two-way public relations model such as two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical, and the less the Internet is used as a public relations tool, the more the public relations model is likely to be the one-way public relations model. In sum, the data supported Hypothesis1-1 and Hypothesis1-2; i.e., there is a correlation between the degree of Internet use and the model of public relations favored by Korean practitioners.

Relations Between Type of Public Relations Activities and Public Relations Models

The fourth research question addresses the predictive utility of public relations activities on the Internet in explaining the two-way model of public relations. For this purpose, first, the researcher conducted a factor analysis to identify the underlying factors of the Internet public relations types, second a multiple regression was run to test the impact of identified factors on the two-way model of public relations.

Five patterns of public relations activities on the Internet were determined by a principal factor analysis with iterations and varimax rotation (Table 4-6).

With eigenvalues of 1.00 or higher and factor loadings of .40 or higher as the criterion, five factors were yielded by explaining 67.67 percent of the variance. Each eigenvalue for factor 1 through 5 are 4.14, 1.75, 1.43, 1.15 and 1.01 respectively. The percentage of the variance explained for factor 1 is 29.55 percent, for factor 2 is 12.51 percent, for factor 3 is 10.2 percent, factor 4 is 8.23 percent and factor 5 is 7.18 percent.

Table 4-6. Factor Analysis of Public Relations Activities

Variables	Factor Loadings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1. Secondary Publics Contact					
Shareholder contacts	.83				
Crisis management	.74				
Professional organizations contacts	.52				
Recruiting	.50				
Government contacts	.45				
Factor 2. Environmental Monitoring					
News monitoring		.73			
Competitor monitoring		.68			
Research		.66			
Factor 3. Key Publics Contact					
Press release product/distributing			.84		
Customers contacts			.65		
Media contacts			.59		
Factor 4. Communication					
E-mail sending				.79	
Employee communications				.62	
Factor 5 Information Searching					
Information searching					.83
Eigenvalue	4.14	1.75	1.43	1.15	1.01
Percentage of the total variance explained	29.55	12.51	10.20	8.32	7.18
Total Percentage			67.67%		
			N=136		

The first factor represented secondary publics contact. Five items were loaded on this factor (Shareholder contacts, Crisis management, Professional organizations contacts, Recruiting and Government contacts). In terms of the kind of the publics, shareholders, professional organizations, and government were classified as secondary publics because they have been regarded as having less effect on organizations compared with customers or media in Korea. Considering the intimate relationship between crisis management and shareholder contacts, ‘Crisis management’ also belonged here. Additionally, ‘Recruiting’ belonged here because employees, internal publics resulted by

recruiting affect organizations less directly than customers or media do (Kim & Hon, 1998).

The second factor referred to environmental monitoring. Three items were loaded here (News monitoring, Competitor monitoring and Research). Among these items, a research activity was included to 'Environmental Monitoring' factor in that the research is conducted to reduce uncertainty in decision making by monitoring around the organization (Cutlip Center & Broom, 2000).

The third factor, 'Key Publics Contact,' consisted of three items (Press release product/distributing, Customers contacts and Media contacts). The third factor indicated that media and customers have a more significant effect on organizations. Especially, practitioners have regarded the media as one of the most important publics in their routine practice (Kim & Hon, 1998). 'E-mail sending' and 'Employee communications' belonged to the fourth factor, 'Communication.'

The fifth factor included an 'Information searching' item. In this case, atypically, only one item, 'Information searching' made up a factor, instead of being absorbed into other factors. In light of the eigenvalue and variance explained, the item, 'Information searching' had a significantly higher value that made it impossible to disregard this item and caused it to be loaded on other factors. In other hand, in terms of characteristics, it represents a unique function carried out by the Internet which was clearly distinguished from any other functions consisting of other factors such as factor 2, 'Environmental Monitoring' inclusive of news monitoring or competitor monitoring in that information searching represents more general information-searching activities. Additionally,

‘Information Searching’ was recognized as the most frequently-used function by practitioners in this study.

Finally, a multiple regression was conducted to see what set of factors are most closely related to the two-way public relations model. In this case, the independent variables were the five factors (Secondary Publics Contact, Environmental Monitoring, Key Public Contact, Communication, and Information Searching) and the dependent variable was a two-way public relation model. The only results that were significant were the ‘Secondary Publics Contact’ ($p < .05$) and the ‘Key Publics Contact’ ($p < .05$)

Table 4-7. Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting two-way Public Relations Model

<u>Explanatory Valuables</u>	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t-value
Constant	3.6		68.5***
Secondary Publics Contact	.13	.20	2.48*
Environmental Monitoring	.81	.13	1.55
Key Public Contact	.13	.20	2.44*
Communication	.15	.02	.289
Information Searching	.86	.14	1.636
R= .34 R²=12% Standard Error of Estimate= .61 F=3.448** d.f.=(5,130) N=136			

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Overall, 12 percent of the total variation was explained by the simultaneous predictive power of all the public relations activity variables through this multiple regression model. In terms of the relative effects of the aforementioned two public relations activities variables, standardized beta values for the two-way public relations model are .20 for ‘Secondary Publics Contact’, and .20 for ‘Key Publics Contact’. Summarizing, the results showed that ‘Secondary Public Contact’ and ‘Key Public Contact’ activity on the Internet has a relatively positive impact on the two-way model of public relations. In other words, the more used the Internet is as a public relations tool in

‘Secondary Public Contact’ and ‘Key Public Contact’, the more similar the model of public relations for Korean practitioners would be to the two-way model.

In addition, stepwise multiple regression was conducted to drop variables from the model if they lose their significance as other variables are added. Stepwise multiple regression model employs a “stepwise” variable selection procedure, which step by step selects variables to be entered in the equation based on “partial correlation.” In this case, the independent variables were the degree of Internet use and the five factors (Secondary Publics Contact, Environmental Monitoring, Key Public Contact, Communication, and Information Searching) and the dependent variable was a two-way public relations model. Table 4-8 shows the output of stepwise multiple regression for a two-way public relations model.

Table 4-8. Stepwise Multiple Regression for Two-way communication Model

Step	Variable	b	Beta	t-ratio	R	R²	F	d.f
1	Degree of the Internet use	1.623	.854	19.042 ***	.854	.730	362.599	(1,134)

Note: *** p< .001

The result of stepwise multiple regression showed all independent variables except the degree of Internet use were dropped because they have no significance as variables to provide the largest boost in R².

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Discussions and Implications

The rise of the Internet as a communication tool satisfies the demand for two-way, interactive, and symmetrical communications. The Internet has already become an integrated part of communication and a routine element of the communication landscape.

In the field of public relations, the growth of the new technology has altered the way in which corporations carry out public relations. According to the results of this study, public relations practitioners in Korea are using the Internet when they carry out their public relations activities such as information searching, news monitoring, press release product/distributing and competitor monitoring. The result is similar to that of the study conducted in the United States in 1998 (Wright, 1998). The study conducted by Wright showed that public relations practitioners in the United States use the Internet mainly for monitoring the news and for information seeking. There is a difference, however, with regard to the use of the Internet as a research or press release tool between Korea and the United States. Practitioners in the United States use the Internet more frequently when they carry out research than Korean public relations practitioners do, and practitioners in Korea distribute press releases via the Internet more than their counterparts in the United States (Appendix E).

This study's central objective was to examine Korean public relations practitioners' perception about the Internet as a public relations tool. As previously mentioned, the results of this study showed public relations practitioners use the Internet

to search for information, monitor news, communicate via e-mail and distribute press releases. It is significant that the majority of public relations practitioners responding to the survey have done press releases by the Internet. The use of the Internet makes it possible for professionals to communicate with various key constituencies without the gatekeeping function of other mass media: the message is not altered by the media. Public relations professionals can communicate with publics directly, circumventing the traditional channels. Johnson (1997) stated that the Internet could facilitate media relations due to its interactive function.

Kim and Hon (1998) identified the dominance of media relations in Korea. They said that public relations in Korea is deeply tied to media relations. Media relations have a higher priority than any other public relations functions in Korea. Establishing personal relationships with journalists is an important role for Korean public relations practitioners (Rhee, 1999). If public relations practitioners do not know the journalist personally, they often have difficulty in getting positive publicity. In particular, personal relationships are critical in the event of unfavorable media coverage. Public relations professionals try to control unfavorable publicity through established personal relationships as much as they possibly can. In this vein, this study explored Korean public relations practitioner's perspectives on the Internet's effects on media relations.

With respect to the impact of the Internet on the media relations, almost all the respondents indicated existing media such as newspapers and broadcasting are more effective than the Internet on media relations. The results also suggested Korean public relations professionals do not believe the Internet has made dealing with the media more efficient. These results reinforce the previous findings that journalists and public

relations practitioners prefer direct communication rather than indirect communication such as computer-mediated communication (Eichholz, 2000). Public relations practitioners still do not value online media such as e-mail or Web sites as superior tools compared with face-to-face contact with journalists. It seems that public relations practitioners prefer the personal touch and have more personal reliance in media relations with journalists, although this may be changing.

This study also examined the relationship between the degree of Internet use as a public relations tool and the expected model of public relations practiced in Korea. Because the Internet is regarded as a two-way, interactive communication form, this study examined the effect of the Internet's interactivity on the model of public relations. The results of this study suggest that the two-way public relations model such as the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical model is favored by practitioners. This reinforces an earlier study's finding. According to Sriramesh et al., Korean public relations practitioners aspire to practice two-way public relations model (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999).

The results also showed the degree of Internet use had a positive impact on the two-way model. In other words, the more the Internet was used as a public relations tool, the more the model of the public relations was likely to be a two-way public relations model. In addition, the result of this study indicated the public contact activity was more positively related to the two-way model of public relations than any other public relations activities on the Internet.

As mentioned above, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Internet is its unique interactive feature. The common characteristics of interactivity reflect mutual

relational interactions between the message provider and the recipient. These characteristics of the Internet have transformed public relations practices.

The impact of the interactivity on relationship-building will likely continue to increase (Wu, 1999). The results suggest that the unique features of the Internet play an important role in building relationships between the organization and the publics. The two-way model of public relations emphasizes keeping relations based on mutual understanding and collaboration. Even though Korean practitioners are still dependent on the one-way public relations model (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999), the results of this study show that more and more practitioners have recognized the efficiency of the two-way public relations model. It is anticipated that an increasing number of public relations practitioners will carry out their roles based on a two-way, or professional, public relations model.

One of the practical implications of this study is that public relations practitioners need to take into account publics-oriented Web content which facilitates building a positive relationship with a variety of publics. In detail, practitioners should make their corporate homepage a powerful tool of two-way communication for monitoring what others are saying about the corporations, rather than simply posting one-way promotional features.

On the other hand, the Internet is a global medium through which communication with people all over the world is possible, because the Internet crosses different cultural and language barriers. Therefore, public relations practitioners can reach various kinds of publics regardless of their nationality and residence. Given this, practitioners can take

advantage of the Internet as a public relations tool to contact foreign publics and should consider format and contents appropriate to this possibility.

Limitations and Suggestions

There are several aspects of this study that may need further examination.

Because the sampling list was not comprehensive, there is little basis for generalization of the outcomes to all public relations practitioners in Korea. Without an exhaustive list of public relations practitioners published by a national public relations association such as the Public Relations Society of America, it is difficult to conduct a survey with generalizable results. It is necessary to interpret the results with care when making generalizations.

This study used 14 items borrowed from the Sriramesh study to assess the public relations models in Korea. In Sriramesh's survey (Sriramesh, 1991), positive models (practical models) and normative ones (desirable models) of public relations practices were mixed (Kim & Hon, 1998). Therefore, it is suggested that further research would use two sets of questions about the four models, tapping into both positive and normative perceptions. By doing so, actual practice and the desired standard would be measured.

Moreover, specific public relations practices in Korea, such as the personal influence model and the considerable influence of the Chaebol-oriented business system, were not considered in this study. As an exploratory study regarding the relations between the degree of Internet use and the public relations models, this study was limited to the application of existing theories such as Grunig's four models for describing the status of public relations in Korea. In subsequent studies, Korean public relations models that can explain and represent unique practices and guide the development of public

relations need to be utilized. For example, it would be valuable to study the Internet effect on the personal influence model in Korea.

The Internet as a representative interactive medium suggests a number of future research topics. According to the results of a previous study in Korea (Park & Kim, 1997), when public relations practitioners were asked to list critical factors for the most effective public relations, they specified understanding by management of public relations. Dominant coalitions play a crucial role in determining strategic public relations decisions in an organization. In other words, the perception of a dominant coalition significantly affects the understanding of public relations. In this context, additional research might be focused on dominant coalitions in an organization to identify the management's perspective about the Internet as a public relations tool.

Finally, because most public relations practitioners regard media relations as one of the most important roles in Korea according to earlier study (Kim & Hon, 1998), it would be worthwhile to study the perceptions of journalists toward public relations on the Internet.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Dear Participant:

My name is Hye Rin Shim, a master's student at the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida. This survey is supervised by Dr. Chang-Hoan Cho at the Department of Advertising at the College of Journalism and Communications. This survey will take no longer than 10 minutes.

The purpose of this survey is to investigate your perception toward the Internet as a public relations tool.

Your responses to this survey will help me to better understand the Internet as a public relations tool. On the following pages you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about the Internet as a public relations tool. Please read each question carefully and respond to the questions as thoughtfully and honestly as you can. All of your answer and your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You need not answer any question if you do not want to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. There are no anticipated risks, benefits, or compensation to you for participating in this survey.

If you have any question, please contact me (Hye Rin Shim at (352) 367-3980 and hrshim@ufl.edu), and the supervisor of this research (Dr. Chang-Hoan Cho at (352) 392-0420 and ccho@jou.ufl.edu). Also, if you have questions or concerns about the research participants' right, you can contact the UF Institutional Review Board at (352) 392-0433. The address is PO Box 112250, the University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250.

I am conducting a survey on your attitudes and opinions about the Internet as a public relations tool. Please answer each question as thoughtfully as you can.

1. “The Internet (including Intranets and Extranets) will change how communications/public relations resources are deployed at my company within the next three years.”

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

(Two-way communication: 2-3)

2. “The Internet already has improved two-way communication between my company and its publics.”

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

3. “The Internet already has improved employee communications.”

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

(Degree of the Internet use: 4-8)

4. “Which department(s) is/are responsible for your company’s Internet site?”

5. “There are so many valid uses for the Internet at my company including marketing, recruiting, financial relations and research – that public relations as a function cannot control all content on the corporate Web site.”

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

6. “How long have you had experience with the Internet?”

1 2 3 4 5
more than 2 years 1 to 2 years 6months to 1 year less than 6months don’t use

7. “My company has carried out public relations practices throughout the Internet besides of existing media such as newspapers and broadcasting.”

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

8. “Public relations as a function should manage and control all content of corporate Web sites, including those on the Internet, Intranet or Extranet that have public relations implications.”

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

(Functions of the Internet in public relations: 9-22)

Please indicate your opinions about functions of the Internet in public relations for each of the following purposes.

9. Information seeking

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

10. E-mail sending

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

11. Media contacts

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

12. Monitor competition

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

13. Research

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

14. Recruiting Public Relations employees

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

15. Monitor the news

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

16. Contacting investors

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

17. Employee communications

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

18. Contacting customers

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

19. Crisis communication

1	2	3	4	5
<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>strongly agree</u>

20. Contact professional Public Relations associations

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

21. Add or edit Web site's Public Relations content

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

22. Contact federal, state or local governments/legislators

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

(Media relations: 23-26)**23. "The Internet has changed the way my company handles media contacts and media relations activities with reporters."**

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

24. "The Internet enhanced media contacts."

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

25. "Effect of existing media such as newspapers and broadcasting on public relations is stronger than that of the Internet."

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

26. "The Internet has made it more difficult for the corporate communications/public relations function to control who deals with the media on behalf of my company."

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

(Strengths of the Internet: 27-29)

Please indicate your opinions about characteristics of the Internet for each of the following purposes.

27. Improved investor relations

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

28. Enhanced media contacts

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

29. Inexpensive research

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

(Measurement of public relations model: 30-43)

30. I have little time to engage in research about the efficacy of our public relations activities.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

31. Maintaining newspaper clips is the only measure of the success of our public relations activities.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

32. The public relations unit of my organization is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between the management and the community.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

33. The public relations unit of my organization does not go beyond acting as a liaison between the organization and the media.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

34. The main purpose of the public relations unit in our organization is to get favorable publicity for my organization and keep unfavorable publicity out.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

35. The purpose of public relations is quite simply, to get publicity for my organization.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

36. The public relations unit of my organization does research regularly to determine how effective the public relations unit has been in changing people's attitudes.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

37. The broad goal of our public relations unit is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

38. The public relations unit of my organization looks at attitude surveys to make sure that the unit is describing the organization and its policies in ways its publics would be most likely to accept.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

39. Before beginning a public relations campaign, one should conduct research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how these might be changed.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

40. The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organizations and publics the organization affects.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

41. Before starting a public relations campaign, we conduct surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

42. The purpose of public relations is to change the attitudes and behavior of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

43. It is the view of my organization that public relations should provide mediation for the organization – to help management and publics negotiate conflict.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

1. My gender is _____
2. My age is _____
3. My education background is _____
4. My company's name is _____
5. My company's type of industry or service is _____
6. I am working for _____ (department) as a
 _____ (position) in my company
7. The size of my company: _____ employees
8. I have worked for mass media: Yes _____ No _____
9. I have worked for the public relations department for _____ years

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B
LABEL OF VARIABLES

1. “The Internet (including Intranets and Extranets) will change how communications/public relations resources are deployed at my company within the next three years.” - *prospective for the Internet*

(Two-way communication: 2-3)

2. “The Internet already has improved two-way communication between my company and its publics.” - *increase of 2-way communication*

3. “The Internet already has improved employee communications.” - *increase of employee 2-way communications*

(Degree of the Internet use: 4-8)

4. “Which department(s) is/are responsible for your company’s Internet site? - *management department*

5. “There are so many valid uses for the Internet at my company including marketing, recruiting, financial relations and research – that public relations as a function cannot control all content on the corporate Web site.” - *degree of Internet-used field*

6. “How long have you had experience with the Internet? - *period of Internet use*

7. “My company has carried out public relations practices throughout the Internet besides of existing media such as newspapers and broadcasting.” - *degree of Internet use*

8. “Public relations as a function should manage and control all content of corporate Web sites, including those on the Internet, Intranet or Extranet that have public relations implications.” - *management of a Web site (Public Relations activity)*

(Functions of the Internet in public relations: 9-22)

9. Information seeking - *information searching*

10. E-mail sending - *e-mail sending*

11. Media contacts - *media contacts*

12. Monitor competition - *competitor monitoring*

13. Research - *research*
 14. Recruiting Public Relations employees - *recruiting*
 15. Monitor the news - *news monitoring*
 16. Contacting investors - *shareholder contacts*
 17. Employee communications - *employee communications*
 18. Contacting customers - *customers contacts*
 19. Crisis communication - *crisis management*
 20. Contact professional Public Relations associations - *Professional organizations contacts*
 21. Add or edit Web site's Public Relations content - *press release product/distributing*
 22. Contact federal, state or local governments/legislators - *government contacts*
- (Media relations: 23-26)
23. "The Internet has changed the way my company handles media contacts and media relations activities with reporters." - *changing media relations*
 24. "The Internet enhanced media contacts." - *effective media in media relations*
 25. "Effect of existing media such as newspapers and broadcasting on public relations is stronger than that of the Internet." - *less powerful media in media relations*
 26. "The Internet has made it more difficult for the corporate communications/public relations function to control who deals with the media on behalf of my company." - *less efficient media in media relations*
- (Strengths of the Internet: 27-29)
27. Improved investor relations - *improving shareholder relations*
 28. Enhanced media contacts - *improving media relations*
 29. Inexpensive research - *affordable research*
- (Measurement of public relations model: 30-43)
30. I have little time to engage in research about the efficacy of our public relations activities. - *public information model 1*

31. Maintaining newspaper clips is the only measure of the success of our public relations activities. – *public information model 2*
32. The public relations unit of my organization is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between the management and the community. – *public information model 3*
33. The public relations unit of my organization does not go beyond acting as a liaison between the organization and the media. – *press agentry model 1*
34. The main purpose of the public relations unit in our organization is to get favorable publicity for my organization and keep unfavorable publicity out. – *press agentry model 2*
35. The purpose of public relations is quite simply, to get publicity for my organization. – *press agentry model 3*
36. The public relations unit of my organization does research regularly to determine how effective the public relations unit has been in changing people's attitudes. – *2-way asymmetrical model 1*
37. The broad goal of our public relations unit is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave. – *2-way asymmetrical model 2*
38. The public relations unit of my organization looks at attitude surveys to make sure that the unit is describing the organization and its policies in ways its publics would be most likely to accept. – *2-way asymmetrical model 3*
39. Before beginning a public relations campaign, one should conduct research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how these might be changed. – *2-way asymmetrical model 4*
40. The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organizations and publics the organization affects. – *2-way symmetrical model 1*
41. Before starting a public relations campaign, we conduct surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other. – *2-way symmetrical model 2*
42. The purpose of public relations is to change the attitudes and behavior of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics. – *2-way symmetrical model 3*

- 43. It is the view of my organization that public relations should provide mediation for the organization – to help management and publics negotiate conflict. – 2-way symmetrical model 4**

APPENDIX C
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF
QUESTION ITEMS)

Variables	M	SD
Prospective of the Internet	3.87	.88
Increase of 2-way communication	3.97	.73
Increase of employees 2-way communications	4.10	.81
Management department	2.92	1.51
Degree of Internet-used field	4.10	.81
Period of Internet use	1.17	.52
Degree of Internet use	3.85	1.07
Management of a Web site (public relations activity)	3.65	1.07
Information searching	4.75	.45
E-mail sending	4.67	.54
Media contacts	4.24	.78
Competitor monitoring	4.31	.72
Research	3.99	.86
Recruiting	3.85	1.15
News monitoring	4.54	.67
Shareholder contacts	2.86	.90
Employee communications	4.01	.85
Customers contacts	3.60	.83
Crisis management	3.32	.97
Professional organizations contacts	3.49	.97
Press release product/distributing	4.48	.79
Government contacts	3.06	.85
Changing media relations	4.13	.75
Effective media in media relations	3.38	.89
Less powerful media in media relations	4.20	.82
Less efficient media in media relations	2.54	.75
Improving shareholder relations	3.27	.87
Improving media relations	3.33	.68
Affordable research	3.98	.81
Public information model 1	2.93	.78
Public information model 2	2.38	.90
Public information model 3	2.44	.97
Press agency model 1	2.38	.93
Press agency model 2	2.63	.93
Press agency model 3	2.53	1.00
2-way asymmetrical model 1	2.92	.53
2-way asymmetrical model 2	3.81	.80

Variables	M	SD
2-way asymmetrical model 3	3.16	.77
2-way asymmetrical model 4	3.86	.86
2-way symmetrical model 1	4.08	.89
2-way symmetrical model 2	3.24	.80
2-way symmetrical model 3	3.96	.89
2-way symmetrical model 4	3.81	.96
Sex of a subject	1.51	.50
Age of a subject	29.5	5.17
Degree of education of a subject	4.13	.49
Sorts of the company	1.80	1.04
Position of a subject	1.98	.76
Company scale	784.28	5220.21
Former press person or not	1.79	.41
Career of a subject	3.75	2.72

APPENDIX D
COMPARISON OF INTERNET USAGE AS A PR TOOL (KOREA VS. U.S.)

The Internet use as Public Relations tool	Korea (2002) (N=136) Percent (strongly agree or agree) (%)	U.S. (1998) (N=49) Percent (constantly or frequently) (%)
Information searching	99	66
News monitoring	95	70
E-mail sending	93	58
Press release product/distributing	91	50
Competitor monitoring	88	44
Media contacts	85	27
Employee communications	77	41
Recruiting	76	2
Research	75	63
Professional organizations contacts	55	9
Customers contacts	53	30
Crisis management	45	15
Government contacts	27	2
Shareholder contacts	23	17

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hye Rin Shim received her B.A. in mass communications from the Ewha Womans University, Seoul, in 1996. She worked for Gallup Korea as a researcher and Nexus Community in the public relations department after graduation from college. After graduation, Shim hopes to work in the field of public relations.