



# EuroBlog 2007

European Perspectives on Social Software in  
Communication Management – Results and Implications

March 2007

[www.euroblog2007.org](http://www.euroblog2007.org)



UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG



# Disclaimer and Quotation

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- The results of this survey are from independent research that was not financed by an institution or corporation. The survey was endorsed by Euprera (European Public Relations Education and Research Association), a network of researchers from more than 30 countries.
- The interpretation of the results presented here is that of the researchers and reflects their individual perspectives on the data, which is not necessarily that of Euprera or their own institutions.
- You are welcome to quote from the content of this survey. If you do so, please use this suggested citation:

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*EuroBlog 2007: European Perspectives on Social Software in Communication Management – Results and Implications*, Leipzig/Luzern/Sunderland:  
[www.euroblog2007.org/euroblog2007-results.pdf](http://www.euroblog2007.org/euroblog2007-results.pdf) (Date of Access)

# Content

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1. About the survey (methodology)
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3. Usage behaviour (time & intensity)
4. Usage scenarios (limitations & challenges)
5. Monitoring Weblogs (sites and frequencies)
6. About EuroBlog (disclosure)



# About the survey

# About the survey

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- **Aim of the survey:**
  - to understand the spread, implementation and usage of social software and weblogs in public relations and communication management in Europe
  - to compare the new data with last year's study to map recent changes and developments
  
- **Online Survey:** November/December 2006
- **Target group:** public relations professionals
  
- **Sampling:** self-recruiting snowball-sample
- **Participants:** 409 PR professionals from 24 European countries. Gender: female 45%, male 54%

# Socio-demographic analysis 1/2

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- **Full sample:** 409 fully completed replies (some questions mark higher because not everyone completed all questions)
- **Educational background**  
BA/BSc = 31%; MA/MSc = 31%; MBA = 7%
- **Industry experience**  
1-2yrs = 11%; 3-5yrs = 21%; 6-10yrs = 30%;  
11-20yrs = 23%
- **Position**  
executive = 40%; manager = 30%; associate = 10%
- **Size of organisation**  
>3 co-workers = 18%; <3 co-workers = 23%  
agency = 34%; freelance = 12%

# Socio-demographic analysis 2/2

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- **Type of Organisation**
  - Corporate = 41%
  - Agency = 34%
  - Freelance = 13%
  
- **Most important industry sector**
  - Hi-Tech = 22%
  - Consulting = 21%
  - Media = 18%
  - Education/Academia = 12%

# Interpretation

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- The sample is non-representative, there is a bias towards
  - professionals with higher education
  - those working in hi-tech and consulting
- This specific group is **working in a very competitive environment and is exposed to new media challenges earlier than similar groups**

Therefore we can assume that a significant proportion of sample are **early adopters of new (technological and social) trends**





# Relevance of Social Software

# Is Social Software revolutionary?

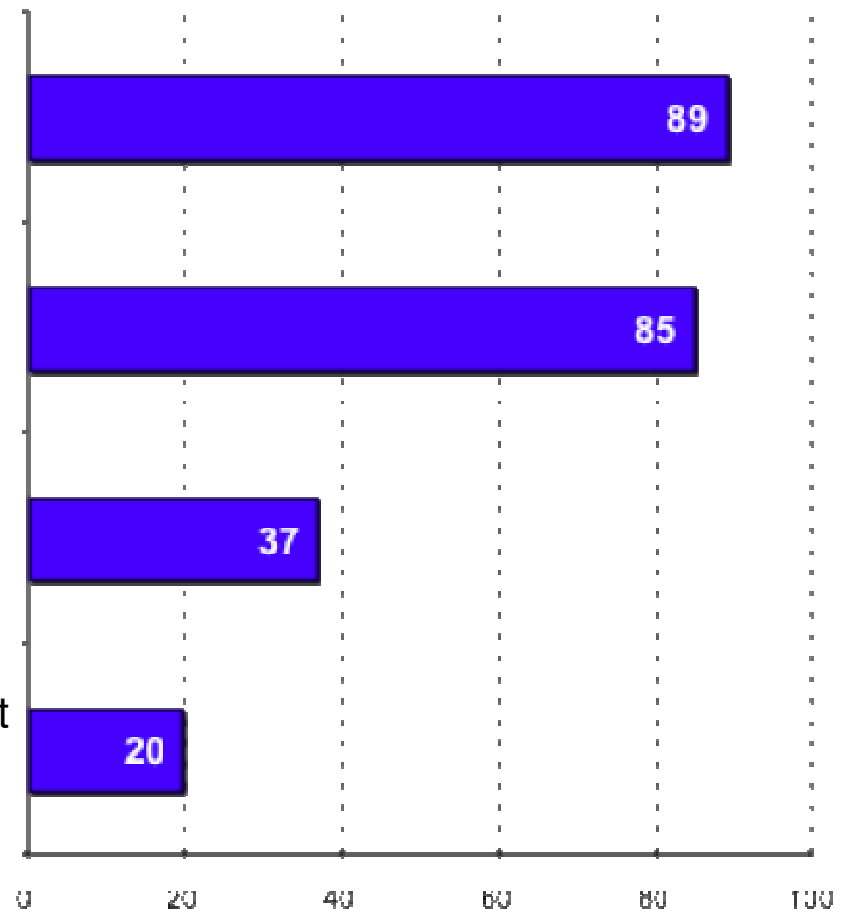
**Question: As a PR professional do you agree with the following statements?**

In a few years, Weblogs and Social Software will be widespread and integrated into communications as websites are today

Weblogs and Social Software are revolutionising the way we communicate

I can see some possible uses (issues monitoring) for weblogs but overall they will have limited impact

Weblogs and Social Software are overhyped and are not relevant to my daily business



Numbers used for calculation from top to bottom; strongly agree and agree were added.  
Item 1 n=598; Item 2 n=601; Item 3 n=595, Item 4=597

# Interpretation

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- Social Software applications can be understood as a 'disruptive' communication innovation: they are changing the way organisations communicate internally and externally
- This disruption affects organisational structure, e.g. influencing the legitimacy of leadership, the authenticity of communication and the relationships to stakeholders



# How Social Software is used

# Usage of Social Software 1/2



**Q: Do you or your organisation use Social Software in the following ways?**

Item	Total sample	
	2007	2006
Read Weblogs	79%	37%
Comment on Weblogs	51%	10%
Run Weblogs	38%	21%
Use RSS feeds	50%	31%

2007 n=625  
2006 n=587

# Interpretation

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- **From casual readership to active involvement**
  - Readership of weblogs has **doubled**
  - Running weblogs has **doubled**
  - **Fivefold** increase in those who comment
  - Use of RSS feeds has almost **doubled**
- Acceptance and usage is rising and many PR professionals now regard Weblogs as part of their daily routine
- PR professionals are more active in their engagement with social media, with half commenting on other Blogs

# Usage of Social Software 2/2



**Q: How often do you read or contribute to weblogs during work time?**

Item	2007	2006
Several times daily	18%	n/a
Daily	20%	18%
Several times a week	19%	9%
Weekly	13%	10%
Monthly	5%	36%
Only when I am pointed to a specific website (e.g. by links or other media)	17%	n/a
Never	7%	26%

2007 n=619  
2006 n=587

# Interpretation

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- **From weekly to daily**
  - Usage is rising
  - Weblogs are a dynamic medium which often requires daily reading
  - The number reading only monthly has dropped steeply
  - Now only 7% never read weblogs, compared to roughly a quarter a year ago, highlighting their perceived relevance
- Weblogs are an **up to the minute medium**, like a daily news bulletin or early warning system for PR professionals



# Usage of Social Software 2/2



**Q: What are the factors limiting the use of weblogs in your organisation?**

Item	2007 agree	2006 agree
<b>Technology</b> is too difficult to implement	5%	2%
We are concerned by <b>security</b> issues (hacking, etc.)	22%	n/a
We are concerned by <b>legal</b> issues (liabilities)	34%	n/a
We <b>cannot control</b> reader comments / feedback	32%	9%
We do <b>not have the personnel</b> capacity	69%	22%
We <b>cannot demonstrate</b> return on investment ( <b>ROI</b> ) from weblogs	42%	31%
It is <b>not possible to measure</b> the impact of our social media activity	34%	31%

2007 n=591, 2006 n=587; strongly agree and agree

# Interpretation

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- **From security concerns to a skills shortage**
  - Lack of employees with right skills is now the biggest factor influencing use of social software. Concern about personnel capacity has more than tripled as organisations look for PR professionals with appropriate skills. Qualified personnel with a specific skill set are not easily found on the market.
  - A new niche specialisation for PR professionals is emerging. Skilled employees are more valuable to organisations than technology!
  
- Showing the **relevance** of Weblogs for business is a key issue for successful organisational implementation.



# **Usage scenarios** (challenges and opportunities)

# Usage Scenario: Challenges



Q: What are the biggest challenges using weblogs brings for your organisation?

Item	2007	2006
Having <b>time</b> to blog regularly	83%	10%
<b>Reacting</b> to comments/feedback by the audience	83%	37%
Creating <b>content</b> and ideas for posts	80%	39%
Staying in line with corporate <b>guidelines</b>	51%	n/a
<b>Implementing</b> corporate guidelines	37%	n/a
Drawing the line between <b>private</b> comments and <b>representation</b> of the organisation	65%	n/a
Integrating blogs into communication <b>strategy</b>	88%	40%
<b>Inability to control</b> the communication content	43%	44%
<b>Disclosing too much</b> relevant information for competitors	37%	n/a

2007 n=547, 2006 n=587  
 very important / important merged

# Interpretation

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- **From experimentation to implementation**
  - We see a shift from the strategic questions (which marked the experimentation phase of 2006) towards more practical issues: finding the time to blog regularly (although strategy still matters)
  - This goes hand-in-hand with the previous findings on resources – weblogs are a time-consuming activity requiring specialised personnel
  
- Committed bloggers face a **triple bind**:
  - carving out time in their busy workdays
  - reacting to audience feedback
  - being creative with new posts

# Usage Scenario: Opportunities



Q: What are the greatest opportunities weblogs offer to your organisation?

Item	2007	2006
<b>Environmental scanning</b> (seeing what is going on)	81%	10%
<b>Fast reaction</b> time to issues	74%	11%
Opportunity for <b>authentic</b> , personal communications	77%	13%
Building <b>relationships</b> with stakeholders	63%	n/a
Reaching <b>new audiences</b>	75%	15%
<b>Direct</b> communication with stakeholders (bypassing journalists)	63%	22%
Being read, commented on and linked to <b>other weblogs</b>	65%	26%
Involving our <b>employees</b>	54%	29%
Utilising an <b>easy to set-up, cheap communication platform</b>	54%	31%
Being seen to adopt <b>leading edge technology</b>	55%	33%
<b>Receiving feedback</b> from the audience	73%	7%

2007 n=506, 2006 n=597

2007 and 2006 = important and very important merged

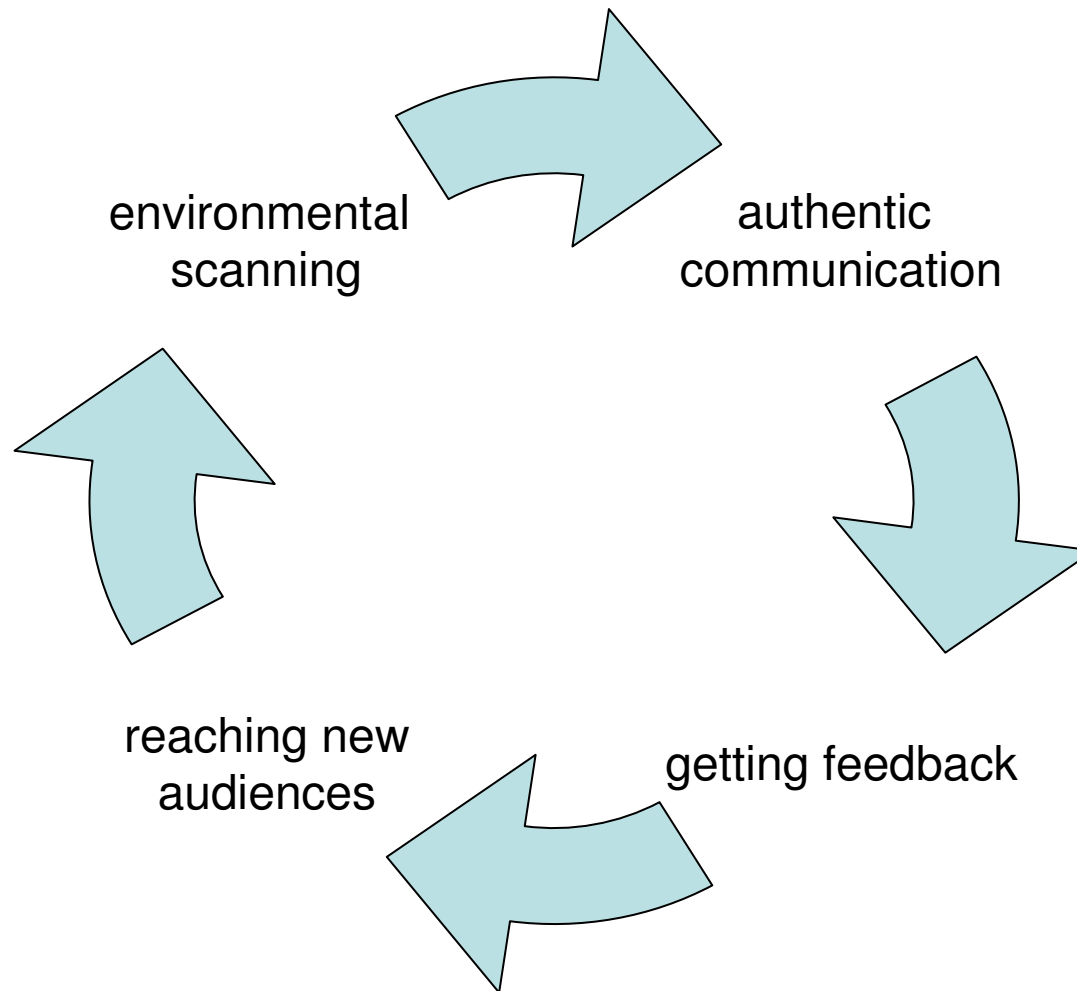
# Interpretation

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- **From techno-hype to business relevance**
  - interactive, communicative issues dominated the 2007 survey while 2006 was focussed on early adopters/ first movers in the market
  - Over the last year, all aspects involving communication, dialogue and interactivity became more relevant, while technology and image issues were considered as less pressing

# Virtuous Circle of Blogging

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# **Monitoring**

(tools and sites)

# Monitoring Social Software 1/2



Q: What tools do you use to monitor weblogs and other sites of interest?

Item	2007	2006
We <b>visit and summarise</b> weblogs/wikis/websites regularly.	37%	34%
We use <b>RSS feeds</b> to scan websites/weblogs for content	49%	31%
We use <b>professional services</b> to monitor online communication	20%	6%
We have <b>developed our own</b> monitoring tools	14%	n/a
We <b>react to media</b> reports about websites	29%	n/a
We <b>do not</b> currently <b>monitor</b> websites	13%	42%
We <b>do not systematically</b> monitor websites	28%	n/a
We <b>do not have the resources</b> (time/budget) to monitor	18%	n/a

# Monitoring Social Software 2/2



Q: What sites do you monitor?

Item	2007	2006
Pressure/activist groups	29%	3,2%
Competitors	47%	15%
Thematic weblogs relevant for our business	60%	40%
Journalism weblogs	42%	32%
Social media sites (YouTube, Flickr etc)	32%	n/a
Social networking sites (MySpace etc)	22%	n/a
News reporting / citizen journalism projects	46%	n/a
Investor and analyst reports	22%	n/a
Product and service testing sites with testimonials	24%	n/a

2007 n =494 / 2006 n=587

# Interpretation

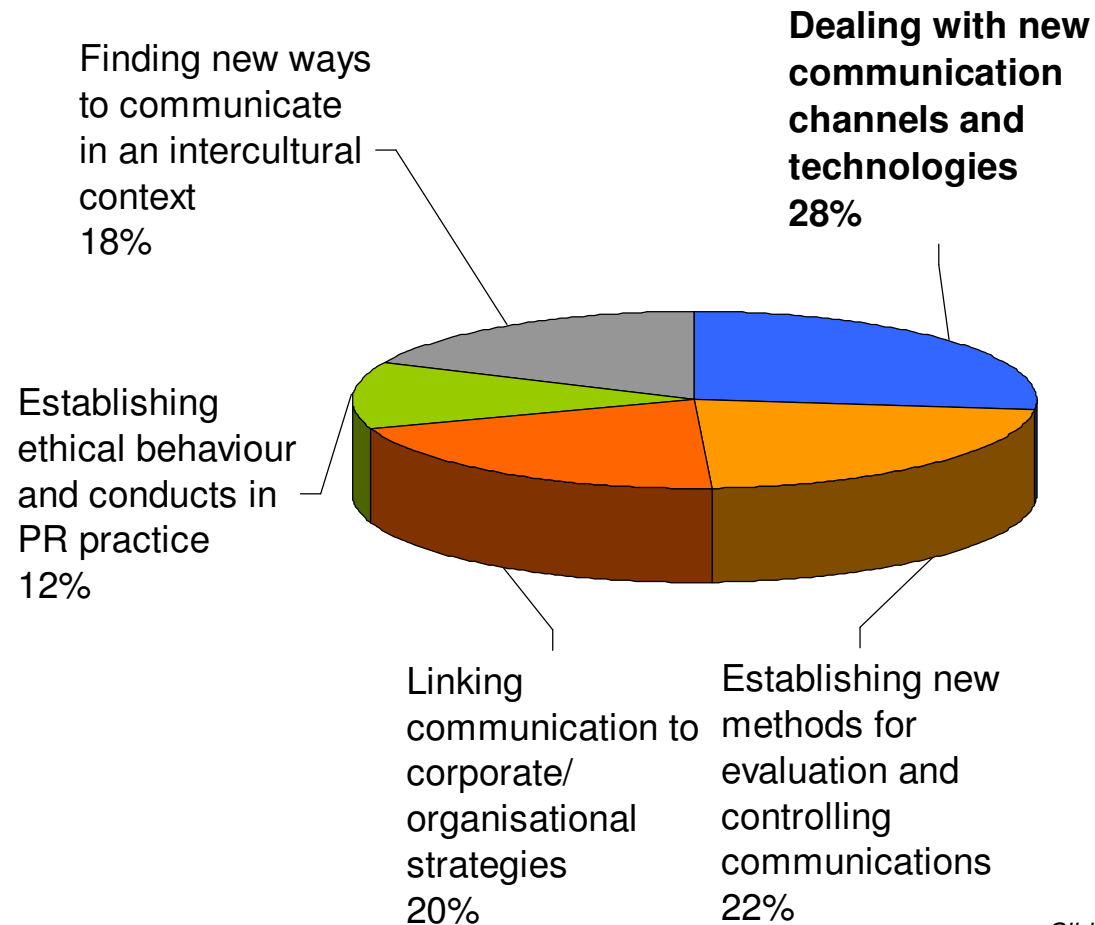
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- **From serendipity to managed monitoring**
  - Half of the sample now regularly monitors social software sites - almost doubling in a year
  - Professional monitoring services saw a sharp rise, tripling
  - Competitors, pressure groups and thematic sites remain most relevant for PR professionals

# Social Media: the Big Picture

# Technologies as a major challenge

Q: What is the most important challenge for public relations and communication management within the next three years?





# Summary

# Summary of Euroblog2007

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- Social Software creates a **visible impact** on public relations and communication management
  - on the *personal level* of the PR professional:
    - skills to understand the new social media?
    - integration into daily business routines?
  - on the *organisational level*:
    - integration into communication strategy?
    - legitimising its use or non-use?





# About EuroBlog

# About Euroblog 2007 & Euprera

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- EuroBlog 2007 is the follow-up survey to EuroBlog 2006. It aims to provide a comprehensive and independent overview how communication professionals are using weblogs and for what purpose.
- The initiative is supported by Euprera, the European Public Relations Education and Research Association, a community of researchers from universities and institutions from more than 30 countries.

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# Research Methodology

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- **Second** Survey into the influence of Social Software on Public Relations and Communication Management (first time comparable data)
- **Independent**, interest-free academic inquiry by Euprera (lead researchers from UK, GER, CH)
- **Online** survey (Nov 1 to Dec 31, 2006)
- European **self-recruiting** snowball-sampling
- **Non-representative** results

# Research Team

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