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Engaging Fans on Facebook:

How New Zealand organisations are communicating on Facebook
to build and maintain relationships with their publics

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ABSTRACT

This research examined how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics. The research questions were produced by identifying a gap in public relations literature, which revealed a lack of an integrated framework to assess organisations' communication with publics on social networking sites (SNS) from a relationship management perspective. The research questions explored how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by certain New Zealand organisations and their Facebook fans and how the findings of this study relate to specific relationship cultivation and outcome measures as identified in public relations literature.

A content analysis was carried out on twelve New Zealand commercial organisations' official Facebook pages. The main unit of analysis was a single Facebook post, and 21 days of material was collected. Results showed that organisations used a range of interactive and engaging communication activities/strategies such as conversation exchanges, asking and answering questions, compliments and positive reinforcements, which related to relationship cultivation strategies and relational outcomes. Communication activities such as traditional media-type relations like posting press releases or links to news stories were rarely utilised; however, communication activities such as text-based announcements appeared to substitute this.

The results were discussed in light of the research questions and concluded with recommendations to conduct further research in the area of commercial organisations communicating on SNS and the effectiveness of that communication within the relationship management framework.

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the advent of the printing press, communication technology has transformed the way organisations and individuals function within society. New communication media have resulted in society being more transparent, open and interactive (Duhé, 2007) and no communication technology has done this more than the Internet. The Internet has enabled people to access, create and share information in real time like no other communication technology has. The development of social media technology has particularly empowered people to communicate and engage both interpersonally and with the masses in ways that transcend geographic and temporal boundaries. To reach 50 million people, it took radio 38 years, television 13 years and the Internet four years, but it only took social networking site, Facebook, less than nine months (Qualman, 2011).

Social media have also changed people's expectations regarding how we communicate and who we communicate with. Where communication channels were traditionally created as separate, distinct units of text, video, imagery or sound; new media technology has converged these channels into communication "bits" that are viewable in one space, at one time. People expect instantaneous gratification for their information seeking and user-experience needs.

Inevitably, expectations regarding how organisations communicate and engage with society have also changed. Publics no longer accept being talked 'at' by organisations through mass communications and flashy publicity stunts: instead, they expect personable, relevant and informative communication from organisations. Additionally, publics expect organisations to be transparent, open and responsive. These expectations have made strategic public relations (PR) in organisations more important than ever. Fortunately, social media technology has given

organisations an accessible, cost-efficient channel to communicate openly and responsively with publics. Thus, organisations are able to build more strategic, interactive, socially responsible and mutually beneficial relationships with their publics (J. E. Grunig, 2009).

One social media technology permeating the online environment is social networking sites (SNS). As of the beginning of 2012, 82% of the world's online population (over 15 years old) engage with SNS, and 20% of all time spent online is spent in SNS spaces (Khalid, 2012). Organisations have begun to realise the opportunities that this interactive channel presents in terms of building relationships with their publics; however, while research of the diverse social impacts of SNS are gaining momentum, little academic research has been conducted regarding how commercial organisations are engaging with their publics in social media spaces, particularly SNS. Research is especially lacking in the area of organisation-public engagement from a New Zealand perspective.

SNS are dynamic, fast-changing environments that have been advancing quicker than academic research can measure or substantiate. While SNS have been around for more than 15 years, many SNS tend to collapse within the first three years (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). This volatility has resulted in SNS research becoming dated easily; however, one SNS platform that has surpassed this volatility is Facebook, which is slowly becoming recognised as an important SNS for organisations to understand and utilise. It is particularly important for PR personnel in organisations to utilise and understand SNS and the opportunities that the interactive platforms present for building online relationships (Jo & Kim, 2003).

Examining the patterns of communication in SNS channels such as Facebook is an important first step towards building the necessary foundations to establish a framework that organisations can use to communicate strategically in SNS.

1.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this study is to examine how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics. Like the advent of Internet communication, social media has dramatically changed the way organisations can engage with their publics. If PR practitioners are to fully utilise the tools and resources that social media can offer, research must first examine how organisations are communicating in SNS before evaluating the effectiveness of this communication. Thus, this study does not attempt to measure the effectiveness of how organisation-public relationships (OPRs) are built using communication strategies on Facebook. Instead, this research seeks to present empirical evidence of how commercial NZ organisations are communicating on Facebook, and how this communication relates to relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures. To achieve the goals of this study, twelve commercial New Zealand organisation's pages were analysed.

Although this study draws from numerous sources and theoretical perspectives including symmetrical, dialogic and rhetorical theories, this study primarily limits its parameters to the relationship management perspective of PR. Public relations literature draws from a large and diverse range of fields including psychology, sociology, management, media studies, mass communication, marketing and journalism (L'Etang, 2008), which presents a large and varying range of PR perspectives. Thus, the size and scope of this study remains tightly focused around relationship management theory to ensure a manageable and meaningful focus.

1.2 Research questions

The overarching goal of this research aims to examine how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics. The research questions of this study evolved throughout the process of surveying the literature, identifying existing gaps in the literature, and developing the research design of this project.

The first objective that guides research question one aims to explore how organisations and their publics are communicating on Facebook. The first research question aims to identify generic communication patterns and activities evident on New Zealand organisations' Facebook pages:

RQ1: How are the Facebook pages of selected New Zealand organisations being used as a communication tool?

Because the goal of this research is to examine how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by organisations to build and maintain relationships with their publics, rather than measuring the effectiveness of their efforts, it is important to consider the findings of this research in relation to PR theory. Additionally, this study measures the communication efforts of organisations to cultivate and maintain OPRs by examining their actual communication outputs, rather than perceptions of their communication outputs. Thus, it is important to assess whether the communication strategies observed in this study actually reflect established relationship cultivation strategies and relational outcomes as defined in PR literature. The second research objective that guides research question two aims to identify how the findings of this study directly relates to

relationship cultivation strategies and relational outcomes:

RQ2: How do the communication strategies of selected New Zealand organisations relate to specific relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures as identified in PR literature?

1.3 Thesis overview

This thesis is structured to guide the reader through the logical process of this study. The second chapter reviews the literature and provides an overview of the numerous schools of thought within PR discourse that contributed to the development of the relationship management paradigm. The literature review also outlines the history of online communication and how online communication and social media technology – particularly SNS – have affected organisations and PR practices. The review then discusses online communication in relation to relationship management theory and how relationship management theory can be used to guide research in SNS spaces. Finally, the review identifies a scholarly gap regarding how different types of organisations or industries communicate in online spaces from a PR perspective.

The methodology chapter outlines the content analysis method employed in this study and justifies its appropriateness in answering the research questions. It summarises the methodological procedures of this study including the sample, unit of analysis, content categories, pilot testing, reliability and validity, and methods used to analyse the results. The methodology chapter finishes by outlining the ethical considerations of the study.

The results chapter presents the findings from the data collected and the discussion chapter subsequently discusses these findings in relation to the two research questions and relevant

literature. The thesis concludes by highlighting the most significant findings, outlining the limitations of the study, and making recommendations for further research in the area of building OPRs in social media spaces.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Organisation-public relationships (OPRs) form the core of public relations (PR) activity (Ledingham, 2003), and it is vital that PR practitioners understand and use communication channels effectively to engage with publics. As new online communication channels enable mass audiences to communicate and engage more easily with organisations, it is imperative that PR practitioners adapt continuously to these dynamic communication channels and stakeholder expectations. New communication channels are not replacing traditional ones, but are being used in addition to them. Thus, it is important for PR practitioners to identify whether they are using and managing new online communication channels efficiently and in a way that most effectively benefits the organisation and its publics.

This literature review provides an overview of major theories of PR to contextualise the development of the relationship management paradigm. It then outlines the developments of online communication in the PR industry and how online communication channels – especially social media channels - has affected PR practice in terms of building OPRs. It further discusses social networking sites (SNS) – and outlines the scholarship within the parameters of social media, SNS and relationship cultivation strategies. Finally, it outlines a gap in PR discourse regarding how organisational communication may differ (and may need to differ) according to its industry or organisation type, such as the differences between goods-based and service-based organisations.

2.2 Relational perspectives in public relations theory

As a comparatively new area in academic research, PR has drawn from a range of other disciplines to create a theoretical paradigm that develops the credibility and effectiveness of PR as a practice and a scholarly field (L'Etang, 2008). Scholars have drawn a range of theory – including psychology, management studies, organisational communication, interpersonal communication, media studies, philosophy, mass media and journalism studies – in an attempt to create a general theory of PR that captures the core function of PR practice. A general theory can be defined as “a concept that unifies a discipline, providing an overarching framework for exploring issues within that discipline” (Ledingham, 2003, p. 192). Many PR scholars have put forward general theories of PR from numerous schools of thought; however, one core element consistently emerges from these theories, and that is the role of OPRs. The following section discusses three major schools of thought’s perspectives of the role of relationships in PR, to demonstrate how the relational perspective developed.

2.2.1 Symmetry/excellence theory and relationships

Public relations theory has historically relied on the dominant paradigm of symmetry and excellence, primarily because this paradigm has drawn from the most comprehensive and longitudinal research to date in the PR field (L'Etang, 2008). The notion of symmetry was first applied in Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) exploratory study of PR history, where four types of PR were identified as models for PR practices: press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical. The press agency and public information models are characterised by one-way, asymmetrical communication; that is, the message travels in one direction (primarily from the

organisation to the public) and is 'asymmetrically' balanced to benefit the organisation (J.E. Grunig & Grunig, 1992). While the press agentry model uses any method to seek information and benefit the organisation, such as publicity stunts, superlative (or untruthful) language, and advertising, the public information model places more emphasis on truth, albeit truth that is favourable to the organisation (J.E. Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

The two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models are defined by the feedback loop of the communication. Both use research and evaluation methods to gain feedback and encourage interaction between an organisation and its publics; however, the intentions of the two models differ. The asymmetrical model uses two-way communication with the intention to benefit the organisation, while the symmetrical model endeavours to help organisations adapt mutually with their publics (J.E. Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

The concept of symmetry proposes that individuals, organisations and publics should communicate in a way that mutually adapts to each other's thoughts and behaviours, rather than control them (James E. Grunig, 2006); however, this concept has been widely debated and has since been adapted to include a 'mixed motives' approach. The mixed motives approach was borrowed from Game Theory, which proposes that two players of a game have 'mixed motives' concerning what they individually want to achieve during a game (Murphy, 1991). The two players' motives can be placed along a continuum of conflict that spans from pure conflict to pure cooperation (Murphy, 1991). The mixed motives approach was applied to symmetrical communication theory by Murphy (1991), who asserted that, like gamers, organisations' and their publics' motives can be applied along a continuum of conflict, with asymmetrical communication at the pure conflict end of the continuum and symmetrical communication at the pure cooperation end of the continuum. The

extent of symmetrical communication is negotiated based on the motives of what each party wants to achieve. The mixed motives model demonstrates that even symmetrical communication between PR practitioners and publics is not purely altruistic: each have their own motives for certain outcomes that need to be negotiated into a compromised win-win situation (Murphy, 1991). The mixed motives approach has since been widely accepted as the modified version of symmetrical communication.

The symmetrical school of thought was supported by a longitudinal study commissioned by the IABC Research Foundation in 1985 called the Excellence Study. This study sanctioned that symmetrical communication was the most ideal model to practice PR because, among other things, it fostered better long-term relationships with publics (J.E Grunig & Grunig, 2008). Good relationships were found to add value to organisations because they reduced legal, regulation and legislation costs, and the costs of negative publicity (J.E Grunig & Grunig, 2008). Relationship cultivation strategies and strong relationships with publics continue to be emphasised and valued as excellent PR in this school of thought.

2.2.2 Rhetoric and relationships

The major alternative school of thought to symmetry/excellence theory is rhetorical theory. Unlike the symmetrical model, which perceives relationship building as a process of open and balanced two-way communication (Heath, 2008a), rhetorical theory stresses that relationships are built based on how organisations and publics communicate “through argument and counter-argument, to... reach interpretations or meanings of their relationship with one another” (Toth, 2009, p. 50). Perspectives from these two different schools of thought are similar concerning

building relationships through two-way communication, but differ concerning the role communication plays. While symmetrical theory asserts that effective communication comes under tension when it loses the equilibrium of mutual adaptation (L'Etang, 2008), rhetorical theory argues that communication is effective when meaning is interactively negotiated through dialogue and persuasion (Heath, 2008a).

Rhetoric's alternative stance on the role of communication provides a separate paradigm for conceptualising relationship building in PR. Rhetorical perspectives place less emphasis on the act of building relationships itself, but discuss how rhetorical values such as honesty, transparency, and ethical communication lessen power disparities (Heath, Toth, & Waymer, 2009) and inevitably build strong relationships between organisations and publics. This emphasis on relationship building through rhetorical communication is demonstrated in studies that outline how rhetorical communication can be applied in crisis communication and reputation management (Coombs, 2009), community relations (Heath, 2000), activism and issues management (Heath & Waymer, 2009), and even in publicity and promotion (Christensen & Langer, 2009).

Rhetorical perspectives can still be explicitly applied to relationship building in PR. For example, Ice (1991) applied rhetorical theory to relationship building strategies to remedy broken relationships between organisations and publics. However, rhetorical theory generally refers to relationship building at a larger, more societal level of communication and does not provide a strong framework for developing relationships specifically for organisational publics. What rhetorical theory does do is emphasise the importance of mutually beneficial relationships through the use of negotiated meaning and dialogue (L'Etang, 2008).

2.2.3 Dialogic theory and relationships

Organisations developing relationships through two-way communication with their publics are valued not only in symmetry/excellence theory and rhetorical theory, but also in dialogic theory. Dialogic theory is a reasonably new paradigm of thinking, and has its roots in philosophy, rhetoric and relational communication theory (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2011). It places dialogue at the core of developing and maintaining relationships. Like rhetoric, dialogic communication is negotiated through exchanging ideas and opinions (Mifsud & Johnson, 2000), but the two concepts differ in their perception of the role dialogue plays in PR. Rhetorical theory endorses informative, factual and persuasive communication to convince and motivate actions (Heath, 2009), and perceives dialogic communication to be inherent within rhetoric (Meisenbach & Feldner, 2009). Conversely, dialogic communication uses negotiated communication, specifically to strengthen and build mutual relationships (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2011). Dialogic communication focuses on the relationship – not the communication.

Symmetrical theory and dialogic theory can also be compared in terms of their stance on communication's effect on relationships. Both paradigms accept that two-way, interactive communication is necessary to build relationships with an organisation's publics. The difference between these two paradigms is that the symmetrical theory focuses on an organisation's dialogue with its publics as a "procedural means whereby an organization and its publics can communicate interactively" (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 323), whereas dialogic theory sees an organisation's dialogue with their publics as a product of communication and relationships, rather than a process. Dialogic theory places the good of the relationship above the good of the client or organisation and this emphasis on the relationship is what forms the core of dialogic theory in PR.

The key features of dialogic theory include recognising the relationship between organisations and publics (mutuality); being willing to engage with publics (propinquity); being open to new perspectives (empathy); being willing to relinquish some control to gain potential unanticipated outcomes (risk); and a genuine commitment towards honest and transparent communication (commitment) (Kent & Taylor, 2002). These features can guide PR practitioners to incorporate dialogue into their everyday practice. Kent (2002) particularly identifies interpersonal communication and CMC as specific areas to use dialogic features to build OPRs; however, while dialogic communication is being widely used in online communication (which is discussed further in section 2.5), the dialogic paradigm is not without significant challenges in terms of using it as a practical framework. In order to engage with dialogue, organisations must actively make a decision to openly engage, which includes being open to unintended outcomes. This requires time, money and resources. With the potential for vague and ambiguous outcomes, engaging in dialogue can come into conflict with the primary reason of operating a commercial organisation: the motive for financial gain (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2011). Engaging in dialogue also requires organisations' publics to be willing to engage in dialogue, which can create disparities in equality because one party may be more willing to engage than the other party. This can reduce organisations' level of control over communication, thus reducing the appeal of practicing PR from a dialogic perspective. Instead, elements of dialogic theory such as using ethical, honest and two-way communication to build balanced relationships with publics (which is also apparent in symmetry and rhetorical theory) – have been taken and remodelled into a relational theory. The relational theory places relationships, rather than communication, at the core of PR activity.

2.3 Development of the relationship management theory

The symmetry/excellence, rhetorical and dialogic theories are all paradigms which help to conceptualise how PR can be studied and understood; however, one aspect continues to inextricably link these schools of thought, and that is the shared emphasis on building mutually beneficial relationships with an organisation's publics. In symmetry/excellent theory Grunig, Grunig and Ehling (1992) point out that "building relationships – managing interdependence – is the substance of public relations" (p. 69). Rhetorical discourse suggests PR should move towards a more fully functional society through the development of mutually beneficial relationships (L'Etang, 2008). Dialogic theory has changed the nature of OPRs by placing emphasis on the relationship (Kent & Taylor, 2002). These paradigms have naturally paved the way for the development of a general theory of PR focused primarily on relationship management.

According to Ledingham (2001), there were four pivotal developments that spurred the generation of a relational perspective. The first was the recognition that relationships are central to PR. This was rooted in Ferguson's (1984) argument that PR is primarily about the relationships of organisations and publics – not simply organisations, publics or communication; however, more than a decade after Ferguson emphasised the importance of OPRs, the lack of an established definition was argued to be inhibiting the progression of a relational perspective of PR (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997). Thus, Ledingham and Bruning (1998) put forward a definition of OPRs, which is defined as "the state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity" (p. 62); an ideal OPR is one which benefits all parties involved in these aspects. While other PR perspectives recognise the importance of relationships in PR – particularly symmetrical, balanced

and two-way communicative relations – the relationship management perspective places the relationship elements of an OPR at the centre of the PR function, positing that “public relations balances the interests of organizations and publics through the management of organization–public relationships” (Ledingham, 2003, p. 181).

The second development that spurred the relational perspective movement was the re-conceptualisation of PR as a management function. As the focus of PR practitioner roles moved from technician-based to strategic-based – a shift in conceptualisation largely contributed to the excellence study (J. E. Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006)– so did the ability to strategically plan, implement and measure PR outcomes such as stakeholder behaviour. Strategic management meant a focus on integrated, longer-term goals, which correlates strongly with relationship management because positive outcomes of high-quality OPRs are built over time.

The third development was not only identifying the value of relationships – which has always been identified in the frameworks previously discussed (see section 3.2) – but also establishing effective ways of measuring it. Like reputation, relationships are an intangible asset to an organisation, and thus are challenging to measure in terms of return on investment (ROI). The excellence theory delved into the possibility of placing a monetary value on relationship building through PR practice, but rejected the idea after it was found to be impossible to directly measure it as a direct monetary ROI (J. E. Grunig et al., 2006). What studies did find was that good relationship management saved costs indirectly by preventing issues, crises and bad publicity from spiralling out of control (J. E. Grunig et al., 2006). Indirect costs of these benefits are often delayed or unseen due to the long term nature of building strong relationships and the preventative nature of PR activity;

for example, it is virtually impossible to judge how expensive a crisis *might* have been, had no PR intervention occurred.

Ongoing research has identified the tenets of good relationships, and how they can be measured in a way that illustrates effective PR. Elements such as reciprocity, credibility, mutual legitimacy, mutual satisfaction and mutual understanding have been used to gauge the outcomes of quality OPRs (J.E. Grunig et al., 1992); however, it was Hon and Grunig's (1999) research that established a framework to measure the outcomes of OPRs. Hon and Grunig (1999) produced guidelines that not only outlined the importance of measuring effective relationship development strategies, but also constructed six elements that measured the relational outcomes of the strategies. These elements are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Hon and Grunig's (1999) six elements of measuring relationship outcomes

Control Mutuality	Degree of power to influence each party has over the other in a relationship.
Trust	Extent of willingness to open oneself to the other party through dimensions of dependability, integrity and competence.
Satisfaction	Degree of favourability to the other party based on whether the perceived benefits outweigh the costs of the relationship.
Commitment	Extent of willingness to commit one's energy to the relationship.
Exchange relationship	The give and take element of relationships whereby each party gives with the expectation that the other party will too.
Communal relationship	The altruistic element of relationships whereby each party gives due to the care of the other party.

In addition to measuring the outcome qualities of OPRs, measuring strategies that develop and maintain OPRs at a day-to-day level were also been deemed to be important (Ki & Hon, 2009). Communication strategies such as access, positivity, networking, assurances, commitment, investment, openness and involvement have been found to build OPRs and strongly influence

publics' intentions towards positive behavioural outcomes (Ki & Hon, 2009; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Quantitative measures have also been developed for these relationship cultivation strategies (Ki & Hon, 2009).

The fourth and final pivotal development that, according to Ledingham (2001), spurred the predominance of the relational perspective was the emergence of integrated models that consolidated the antecedents, properties and consequences of OPRs. It was argued that measuring relationships is distinct from measuring consequences (outcomes, effects) or antecedents (perceptions, motives, behaviours) of relationships (Broom et al., 1997); instead, these elements are interdependent. The explication of these elements allowed scholars to focus on the measurement of relationships themselves, instead of only their antecedents and consequences. Grunig and Huang (1999) further integrated antecedents, relational cultivation strategies and outcomes into a model that holistically measures the effects of long-term OPRs.

Other integrative models have also emerged, such as in Seltzer and Mitrook's (2009) study, which applied Hon and Grunig's (1999) relationship scale to a coorientational framework. Seltzer and Mitrook's (2009) study demonstrated that measuring both organisations' and publics' perception of the relationship itself better gauged the strength and credibility of an OPR.

Scholars have also explored how "stewardship" – or communicating with publics to continue the relationships beyond a transaction or single interaction with them – can be effectively used in PR to maintain good relationships with publics. The concept of stewardship comes from management theory, and was initially applied in PR to fundraising activities. Stewardship communication such as thanking donors and engaging donors by disseminating positive organisational messages and information was found to maintain OPRs of charitable organisations

and increase the likelihood of further support (Kelly, 2000). From this concept of continuing current relationships through relationship-nurturing communication, Kelly (2000) took the concept of stewardship and applied it more generically to PR, arguing that the PR process did not sufficiently emphasise the importance and cost-effectiveness of continuing current relationships with publics. Kelly (2000) posited that four dimensions of stewardship – reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing – should be used to measure the success of relationship management. Relationship management discourse has also explored stewardship (e.g. - Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Subsequently, Ledingham (2009b) added stewardship as the fifth phase to the emergence of the relational perspective.

Studies continue to empirically find the value of maintaining strong relationships with publics across a range of PR areas, including community relations (Hall, 2006), lobbying (Wise, 2007), media relations (Ledingham & Bruning, 2007), issues management (Bridges & Nelson, 1999), crisis management (Park & Reber, 2011), internal communication (Jo & Shim, 2005), cross-cultural PR (Huang, 2001), and increasingly, online communication. Because strong relationships require a high level of interactivity, which computer-mediated technology can provide, the relationship management paradigm serves as a highly relevant model through which to analyse online communication. The strongest element of the relationship management perspective is that it unifies relational perspectives from other major schools of thought in PR. This holistic approach means online communication can be broadly but comprehensively examined.

2.4 The impact of Internet technology on public relations practices

The interactive and empowering nature of new Internet technology makes social media ideal communication channels for PR practitioners to cultivate and maintain successful OPRs (J. E. Grunig, 2009). Internet technology has revolutionised the way people can reach, connect, and interact with organisations and individuals like no other medium has. Additionally, mobile technology has created expectations of publics to be instantaneously connected to organisations and brands (Hallahan, 2010). From email to websites to social media and SNS, new Internet technologies have widely impacted the communication practices of PR practitioners. The following sections briefly outline the history and features of Internet technology such as email, the World Wide Web, social media and SNS, and discuss social media research in relation to organisational communication and PR. Section 2.5 then discusses Internet technology specifically in relation to relationship management literature.

2.4.1 Email features and public relations practices

Email became widely available to organisations and wider public in the 1980s and this has enabled PR practitioners to disseminate, reply to, or forward communications to multiple publics instantly across geographical distance and time. These instantaneous and many-to-many communication capabilities transcended previous written communication channels such as posted letters or facsimile communication. While letters could communicate the same organisational message to multiple publics, they could not communicate instantaneously. The facsimile machine could send communications instantly, but, like the letter, could not send and receive communications at a many-to-many level. Conversely, email's ability to instantaneously and cost-effectively solicit information, respond to queries and disseminate information to multiple publics

dramatically changed the way PR practitioners could engage with publics. PR practitioners experienced increases in productivity and efficiency by being able to quickly contact staff, management and shareholders in times of crises; communicate interpersonally with publics such as customers, clients, journalists and government officials; increase feedback from publics (thus improving evaluation and research practices); and collaborate on group projects and tasks across geographical spaces (Johnson, 1997). These activities increased the speed and efficiency of communication, or even generated communication that would not normally have occurred due to the effort and time that communication required. Email began the convergence of synchronous, interactive communication online that was further enabled by Internet and Web technology.

2.4.2 The World Wide Web: A brief history

The concept of the Internet started with the development of a “war-proof” computer network developed by scientists in the 1960s for the US Department of Defence. The purpose of the network was to provide a decentralised system that could continue to operate if individual computers were damaged (Wood & Smith, 2005). The ARPANET – or Internet as it became known – was a complicated system that was initially only used by the military, scientists and academics (Moran, 2010). It wasn’t until Tim Berners-Lee launched a much simpler and accessible “point-and-click” system known as the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1991 that the Internet became a revolutionary communication tool for the masses (Wood & Smith, 2005). Today, the Internet and the WWW (or ‘Web’) are often used synonymously in non-technical discourse, and will be used as such in this review to discuss online communication.

There are currently two significant stages of Internet technology that have presently defined online communication. These stages are commonly known as Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. As Table 2 outlines, the fundamental differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 lie in the interactivity of the platform (Beer & Burrows, 2007). The majority of people using Web 1.0 technology could only passively interact with static messages disseminated by those with the money and resources to develop content on websites (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). Conversely, the development of Web 2.0 technology has allowed the masses to communicate and interact online in dynamic and diverse ways (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008).

Table 2: Differences between feature of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Dimension	Web 1.0 (1993-2003)	Web 2.0 (2004-)
Mode	Read	Write and contribute
Primary unit of content	Web page	Post/record; fragmented page
State	Static	Dynamic
Viewed through	Web browser	Anything (mobile, applications, etc)
Content created by	Web coder	Everyone

(Adapted from Beer & Burrows, 2007, Figure 1, para. 2.9)

Web 1.0 is characterised by its interface, which is associated with traditional Internet or “old net” features developed before 2004. These features include:

- Content that is primarily created by site owners,
- “Reader’s Web” – Internet users passively consumed Internet communication,
- Static websites,
- Hyperlinked and multilinear text,
- Traditional multimedia and published material uploaded to one space (news releases, online newspapers, annual reports, brochures, images and some video).

(adapted from Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008; Kent, 2010; O'Reilly, 2007)

Subsequently, communication in Web 1.0 spaces is primarily unidirectional, asynchronous and targeted to mass audiences. Web 1.0 communication has some similar features to traditional communication channels, such as the ability to reach out to mass audiences like print, radio and television can; however, Web 1.0 differs to traditional media in that it can reach mass audiences without the need for mediation such as the media.

In contrast to communication on Web 1.0 spaces, Web 2.0 allows for multidirectional, synchronous and personalised communication. O’Reilly (2007) characterises Web 2.0 as a space that supports open source platforms (platforms that use “free” Internet space), user-generated content (users are content creators), collective intelligence (collaboration), and a long-tail reach of audiences (ability to reach mass and niche audiences). Web 2.0 technology has also enabled proprietary rights to be shifted further from individual website owners and more people who can create their own content through open software (O'Reilly, 2007). This development means individuals can publish written material to the masses, which truly reinvigorates McLuhan’s (1975) prediction that media allows “everyone [to be] a publisher” (p. 76). This emphasis on user-generated content in Web 2.0

spaces has enhanced interactivity and sociability on the Web, hence why Web 2.0 is commonly labelled the social Web. Platforms based on Web 2.0 technology are typically known as social media.

2.4.2.1 Web 1.0 and public relations

The most revolutionary feature of Web 1.0 technology for PR practitioners was its ability to allow them to communicate with mass publics without the gatekeeping function of the media (White & Raman, 1999). While email allows PR practitioners to communicate unmediated messages to a large number of people, it does not allow PR practitioners to communicate with latent or disconnected mass publics. If PR practitioners wanted to communicate with mass publics, they have traditionally had to purchase the ability to disseminate controlled messages to mass publics through advertising, flyers and brochures. The cost of printed or mediated communication in comparison to the Internet was enormous and restricted communication geographically. Conversely, the Internet allowed PR practitioners to engage with their target publics without geographic or time constraints. The Internet also allowed PR practitioners to disseminate traditional communication collateral such as the brochures, flyers and printed material listed above by uploading it onto the Web, effectively saving costs and increasing engagement and connectivity with more publics.

Web 1.0 technology has also affected the way PR practitioners need to strategically plan and implement communication strategies because of the structural expectations of online communication. The hyperlink feature – a linked word, phrase or image which directs web users to different sections, pages and sites on the web – means communication is fragmented and non-linear (Wood & Smith, 2005). Instead of reading material from top to bottom and left to right like traditional written communication, users are now directed to relevant and subsequent information

based on the interactive click of a button. This fragmentation of communication means PR practitioners must think strategically about online communication, ensuring it is brief, concise and makes sense as separate units of text and imagery.

Another characteristic of Web 1.0 that has affected PR practitioner's work practices is the ability to reach out to publics by being visible and transparent to a mass audience through an organisation's website. Although publics have to find the organisations' presence online, organisational websites provide PR practitioners with an accessible and comprehensive space to communicate – albeit asymmetrically – organisational messages, information, news and promotions (Phillips & Young, 2009) to their publics. Organisations' websites can also provide easy-to-access contact information for publics to communicate more personally and interactively with an organisation.

Studies of Web 1.0 use in the PR field have primarily been concerned with how organisations use websites to engage with their publics. Organisational websites were found to allow organisations to disseminate personalised and direct messages to multiple audiences (Esrock & Leichty, 2000) and have a presence online to attract attention to the organisation (White & Raman, 1999). Despite organisations' websites having the potential to reach mass audiences, maintaining the website was initially considered a low priority by PR practitioners and their superiors (Hill & White, 2000).

2.4.2.2 Web 2.0 and public relations

Social media technology has the ability to dramatically change the way PR practitioners can communicate and engage with their publics through online communication (Wright & Hinson,

2010). Although PR practitioners have previously been slow to utilise new online communication technology, they now appear to be more receptive towards, and up-to-date with, social media technologies (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008).

Studies measuring PR practitioners' perceptions of social media reveal PR practitioners increasingly perceive social media technology such as blogs, micro blogs, social networking sites, and video sharing sites to be very important channels to use in their profession (Herring, Scheidt, Kouper, & Wright, 2006; Wright & Hinson, 2009, 2010). Additionally, studies have found PR practitioners feel more empowered from using social media than PR practitioners who do not use social media (Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011); however, PR practitioners also hold reservations about social media use, including the loss of control of their communication channel and organisational messages. Because social media allows individuals to interact with other individuals, anyone can – in a public and permanent way – talk about organisations and brands. Thus, it is easy for an organisation's message to be lost amongst the chatter:

Just as weblogs and other social media allow (or have the potential to allow) organizations an effective environment in which to create dialogues and communicate directly with publics and stakeholders (without the mediation of traditional gatekeepers), so they allow users, clients, opponents and competitors to communicate freely with each other, with the potential to create a discourse that is largely outside the control of the [organisation]. (Phillips & Young, 2009)

While Phillips and Young (2009) raise some important points, it is important to note that conversations about organisations have always occurred – both online and offline – which will affect organisations' brand. The difference is that conversations on the Internet are publicly available and permanent in nature. This permanency emphasises the importance of keeping publics satisfied and engaging appropriately online. Wigley and Fontenot's (2010) study into loss of message control is a

good example of why organisations should engage thoughtfully in social media spaces. Wigley and Fontenot (2010) found that user-generated content is more likely to be used by news media in a crisis than official organisational communication such as the organisation's website or official statements. If news media are going to seek information in user-generated spaces in times of organisational crises as Wigley and Fontenot's (2010) study suggests, it is important that organisations communicate in these spaces to increase the flow of correct information and refute misinformation that may damage the organisations' reputation.

Research has also examined PR practitioner's use of social media technologies, and its effect on their daily practices. Studies have explored these elements on specific platforms, including blogs (see Kent, 2008, for an overview of blogs and blog research); micro blogs (e.g. - Waters & Williams, 2011); discussion forums (e.g. - da Cunha & Orlikowski, 2008); video-sharing sites (e.g. - Wright & Hinson, 2010) and SNS (Boyd & Ellison, 2008); however, studies specifically regarding how organisations engage with publics in interactive, two-way communication to build and maintain relationships in social media spaces is lacking. More research is required in this area to better understand how social media tools can enhance communication between organisations and their publics. The increasing prominence of SNS in people's everyday online activities is a particularly important channel to understand within a PR perspective.

2.4.3 Social Networking Sites and public relations

SNS are a specific channel of social media that is growing at exponential rates. To reach 50 million users, it took radio 38 years, television 13 years and the Internet four years, but it only took SNS, Facebook, less than nine months (Qualman, 2011). As of the beginning of 2012, 82% of the

world's online population (over 15 years old) engages with SNS, and 20% of all time spent online is spent in SNS spaces (Khalid, 2012). In New Zealand, more than 2.1 million people are presently Facebook users (Check Facebook: New Zealand, n.d.). These statistics clearly demonstrate the prevalence of SNS, and highlight the importance for organisations to understand and utilise SNS in ways that enhance organisational communication strategies. The following section defines SNS, outlines its history and discusses research of SNS in relation to the PR discipline.

Social networking sites are regarded as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). In relation to organisations, publics and relationship management, SNS can be more specifically defined as:

... a set of social entities that includes people and organizations that are connected by a set of socially meaningful relationships and who interact with each other in sharing the value... Online social network services build and verify social networks for the individuals and communities who share interests and activities with one another, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of other. (Kwon & Wen, 2010, p. 255)

This second definition conceptualises SNS as a platform for relationship building activities. It also accurately reflects the research that finds SNS are primarily used to enhance offline relationships. Together, the definitions of Boyd and Ellison (2008) and Kwon and Wen (2010) guide this research to discuss SNS history and SNS' role in building relationships online within a PR theoretical context.

2.4.3.1 SNS: A brief history

The first SNS, SixDegrees, launched in 1997 and allowed users to create profiles, and connect and search for their friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). While elements of these features existed in other websites like AIM and Classmates.com, SixDegrees was the first to combine these features, and attracted millions of users in its first three years of being established (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Many other early SNS were established in the years before 2003, including LiveJournal, Ryze and LunarStorm and Friendster; however, like SixDegrees, most SNS could not retain users or generate profits and they shut down (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). SNS in these early days had little relevance for organisations because they were generally used to complement interpersonal, offline relationships. The volatility of SNS is also likely to have contributed to the lack of organisational research available.

From 2003, SNS gained momentum as entrepreneurs begun recognising the benefits of differentiating their sites to specific audience segments. For example, MySpace began as a general SNS, but transformed into a music-oriented SNS, particularly for musicians and fans to connect. While Flickr has focused solely on photo-sharing, YouTube has kept its platform dedicated entirely to networking through the sharing of videos. LinkedIn keeps its interface simple, professional and business-oriented, while niche SNS, CouchSurfing, connects travellers to people offering free accommodation around the world. There are now literally hundreds – if not thousands - of SNS scattered around the Web. One the fastest growing SNS is Facebook, which continues to gain momentum even years after it began as a college SNS in 2003, and became a publicly traded company in February 2012.

2.4.3.2 SNS features and effects on communication

There are a number of SNS features that create opportunities and challenges for organisations when communicating with publics. Firstly, SNS can be distinguished from other social media like discussion forums because they are organised around people rather than interests or topics. This focus on people creates an environment that better imitates unmediated social structures in the offline world (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). By engaging in SNS that simulate offline interactions, organisations can tap into the holistic needs and interests of their publics, rather than communicating only around one particular topic, as is the case in discussion forums.

Secondly, communication on SNS blurs the boundaries between interpersonal and mass communication. While traditional communication has typically been one-to-one or one-to-many in nature, SNS communication creates a many-to-many dynamic, where masses are interactively communicating with other masses (Walther et al., 2010). This creates opportunities for PR practitioners to engage with large amounts of particular publics at one time and generate buzz and discourse around their organisation, product, service or event, but presents challenges for managing content and responding to publics' demands on these spaces.

Thirdly, SNS communication is mostly segmented into "bits" (Boyd, 2010). These "bits" are made up of fragmented communication in the form of conversations, photos, video clips and personal information. PR practitioners can take advantage of these "bits" by organising their messages to help their publics. For example, on Facebook, organisations can place their organisation information, history, mission statement and product/service information in an easily accessed information tab that will always be visible for publics visiting the page. Additionally, PR practitioners can take advantage of using SNS' interfaces, which often organise communication bits according to

the most recent communication, by promoting and posting information that is current, relevant and recent; however, communication that is as fragmented as SNS communication can often mean strategic communication can be difficult to implement in such spaces (Boyd, 2010).

According to Boyd (2010), there are four elements that shape SNS communication: persistence, searchability, replicability, and scalability. Persistence refers to the permanency of communication on SNS. Even if it is a fleeting interpersonal exchange, communication on a SNS will always remain on it. For PR practitioners, this persistence has implications for their publics' communication about their brand or organisation. On the one hand, a customer could rave about the organisation, and this positive communication will always be online. On the other hand, they could criticise the organisation, which will also always be online. Additionally, PR practitioners need to be aware that any communication they write on SNS is persistent as well. Communicating strategically in SNS spaces is particularly imperative for organisations.

The second element that shapes SNS communication, according to Boyd (2010), is searchability. While the visibility of communication on SNS is often fleeting due to the high volume and fragmented nature of communication in SNS, it will always be searchable. With advances in search engine optimisation, communication on SNS is increasingly becoming searchable – even small-scale, interpersonal exchanges.

The third element Boyd (2010) identifies is replicability, which refers to the ability to easily share and disseminate communication in SNS. People's photos and conversations can be shared onto other friends' profiles and posts can be redistributed. This ability to easily replicate communication allows for it to reach huge audience numbers and visibility, thus generating scalable communication – the fourth element to shape SNS communication according to Boyd (2010).

Scalability refers to the extent that SNS communication can reach large volumes of people across vast geographic boundaries and social networks (Boyd, 2010). For PR practitioners, the replicability and scalability of communication in SNS means messages, campaigns, and reputation-building communication can peak at much higher rates than traditional media resources may be able to for the same costs. The ability for organisational messages to go “viral” – or spread and grow rapidly– in SNS can generate large amounts of reputational capital for organisations. Of course, the disadvantage of SNS communication’s ability to go viral means negative communication about an organisation can also spread quickly, creating challenges for PR practitioners to manage reputational damage caused in online spaces.

2.4.3.3 Research of SNS as a communication medium for organisations

Research of SNS communication is primarily grounded in sociological disciplines. Boyd and Ellison (2008) identified impression management and friendship performance, network structure, online/offline connections and privacy issues as the four main areas of SNS research to that date. Since 2008, a number of SNS studies have been published, but they are still primarily focused on student/teen communication or the effects of SNS communication from a sociological rather than an organisational perspective (Richter, Riemer, & vom Brocke, 2011).

However, some areas of SNS research do exist that relate to the public relations and organisational communication. Studies have explored how organisations are using SNS as a communication channel to engage with staff and employees (J. Bennett, Owers, Pitt, & Tucker, 2010), consumers (Lorenzo-Romero, Efthymios, & María-del-Carmen, 2011), activist groups (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009), and volunteers and donors (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Waters,

Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009); current research around SNS does little to identify how organisations are specifically communicating in SNS and subsequently, what strategies are effective, particularly for commercial organisations.

2.5 Online public relations and relationship development

The Internet has provided a revolutionary space for PR practitioners to build and maintain relationships with their publics because it allows dialogic, two-way communication to take place between the two parties. The interactive and empowering nature of online communication has given audiences the power and accessibility to engage easily in symmetrical communication with organisations. This ability to engage easily has helped balance organisations and publics' interests like no other medium has before, thus enhancing the relationship management paradigm's core concept of mutually balanced relationships between organisations and publics.

Kent and Taylor's (1998) research on how dialogue can serve to build relationships on the Internet pioneered the theorising of how organisations can effectively build relationships with their publics online. Their research focused on the advantages of dialogic communication and found that principles such as using the dialogic feedback loop, providing useful information, an easy-to-use interface, and generating return visits through active communication were the best ways to build relationships with publics online (Kent & Taylor, 1998). The dialogic feedback loop allows two-way communication to take place, and effective dialogic communication in online spaces not only requires organisations to provide useful information for their publics, but also to provide a means by which publics can seek (and receive) further information (Kent & Taylor, 1998). The dialogic feedback loop stresses the element of interactivity, which has been found to contribute to

significant positive effects on publics' perceptions of OPR (Jo & Kim, 2003). Despite this, studies have found that interactive elements on organisational Web pages are underutilised (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang & Norton, 2004; Ki & Hon, 2006).

Ease of interface means sites should be well-structured, easy to understand and reflect the brand of the organisation. Kent and Taylor (1998) recommend that content should take precedence over aesthetical "fluff" (p. 330), and this, along with keeping a website dynamic and up-to-date, will retain the generation of return visits. Subsequent research using these principles to measure relational strategies and outcomes include Taylor's, Kent's and White's (2001) study on activist organisations, whose websites were found to contain dialogic principles that built relationships more with their member publics than the media; Ingenhoff's and Koelling's (2009) study on non-profit organisation's websites, which found the use of dialogic principles were not used to the Web's fullest potential to build relationships with donors and the media; and Park's and Reber's (2008) study which found the top Fortune 500 companies were utilising dialogic principles well on their websites to develop strong relationships with their publics.

In addition to the effectiveness of measuring OPRs using dialogic principles, traditional OPR measures drawn from the relational perspective can also be effectively applied to online environments (e.g. - Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). According to Hallahan (2008), five relationship management indicators successfully measure OPRs specifically in online spaces. These indicators are outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Hallahan's (2008) five online relationship development measures

Online OPR Indicator	How organisations achieve online OPR Indicator measures
Commitment	Invest time, resources and funding towards up-to-date technology that is relevant to publics. Organisations must commit to using online spaces to communicate.
Control Mutuality	Engage in conversational interpersonal communication, and include interactive design elements such as surveys, quizzes, online photo albums and other multimedia to increase two-way symmetrical communication and empower the publics.
Communality	Foster a community based on shared values, interests or ideas, either by interpersonally communicating with publics, or fostering a space for publics to communicate based on their shared interest.
Trust	Make online spaces credible by ensuring there are security measures in place on a website, having genuine, truthful and accurate information available including contact details, and branding online spaces according to the organisation's official image.
Satisfaction	Ensure online spaces are easy to use, have relevant and useful information and satisfy publics' needs for that online space.

Studies have continued to use relationship building measures from dialogic and relationship management theory to measure online OPRs (Ki & Hon, 2006; Ki & Hon, 2007; McAllister-Spooner, 2009; O'Neil, 2009; Waters, 2011). However, more recently, research has moved emphasis from observing Web 1.0 spaces such as websites and email, to examining relationships in Web 2.0 platforms such as blogging, micro blogging and SNS.

2.5.1 Relationship management within social media and social networking sites

Despite finding that Kent and Taylor's (1998) study, designed to measure dialogic relationships on websites, was subsequently found to be a particularly useful framework to measure relationships in social media spaces, little has been done in this area. Seltzer and Mitrook (2007) applied dialogic

principles to compare environmental websites and Blogs, and found that Blogs have more potential for relationship building than websites (2007). Briones, Kuch, Liu and Jin (2011) discovered Red Cross individuals were effectively using social media such as Twitter and Facebook to engage interactively with their publics, while Rybalko and Seltzer's (2010) research found Twitter accounts were more effective when they were interactive. Additionally, Utz's (2009) study revealed publics favoured politicians who interacted interpersonally in SNS spaces. Despite research finding these positive levels of interactivity, other studies have found organisations are not using interactive elements in social media effectively (McCorkindale, 2010; Waters & Williams, 2011).

Studies around how SNS can help to cultivate, maintain and develop relationships online are beginning to gain momentum in the PR field. Men and Tsai (2011) compare relationship cultivation strategies employed by organisations on Facebook and popular Chinese SNS Renren, and find that relationship cultivation strategies are used differently in the different networks, suggesting differences in cultural practices within the SNS.

Despite this research developing a range of empirical studies, there is currently no coherent or unified theory to confidently frame effective SNS use in organisational communication. Ironically, there are many practitioner and practice-based books on SNS and how organisations can effectively use them, but there is little academic groundwork in this area that proves or disproves that organisations' use of SNS to engage with publics is effective. One study that explored PR perspectives of SNS found PR practitioners perceive SNS to be an important communication channel, with 83% of PR practitioners regularly accessing Facebook for personal reasons (Wright & Hinson, 2010); however, another study found only 24% of PR practitioners surveyed were actually using social networks for work purposes (Eyrich et al., 2008).

The knowledge gap surrounding organisations and PR practitioner's use of SNS poses significant ramifications regarding the time and resources spent in SNS. Additionally, there is little knowledge about how commercial organisations are engaging with publics in SNS, and it is important that these knowledge gaps are addressed.

2.6 Communication differences by organisations' industry type

Public relations activities are spread across a range of roles and functions within an organisation. Additionally, PR practitioners are required to communicate differently according to what their organisation stands for and who the organisations' publics are. For example, the communication strategies of a makeup company are unlikely to be similar to the communication strategies of an accounting firm. Despite the diversity of organisational communication, there are few studies in the PR field that compare how organisational communication differs in SNS according to different kinds of organisations. While there are studies that have examined how specific types of organisations communicate in SNS, for example, hotel chains (O'Connor, 2011), government agencies (Waters & Williams, 2011) or environmental organisations (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009), there is a lack of studies that specifically compare the differences between organisation or industry type in the PR field; however, one field that has studied how organisation type affects communication is in marketing literature, which commonly differentiates communication strategies based on whether organisations primarily sell goods or services (R. Bennett, 2002).

While goods can be defined as a physical product (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart, & Charbonneau, 2009), a service has been defined as "any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything" (Kotler & Keller, 2009,

p. 192). Because of the fundamental differences between goods and services, marketing literature has shown that goods and services require different marketing – and thus communication – strategies (see Fisk, Brown, & Bitnet, 1993).

While goods marketing has relied on traditional marketing methods, such as advertising and promotion, services marketing has drawn from relationship marketing, which focuses on attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships (Berry, 1995). The concept of relationship marketing aligns more closely with PR theory, than with traditional goods marketing theory. The relationship between communication and relationship marketing is endorsed by Grönross (2004), who states that PR and other integrated marketing communication are influenced by the relationship perspective. Thus, comparing how service-based organisations (SBOs) and goods-based organisations (also more commonly known as product-based organisations – PBOs) use communication strategies to build relationships with publics could provide useful insights that benefit both marketing and PR discourse.

2.7 Conclusion

The relationship management paradigm is a strong theoretical framework to analyse how organisations are using social media such as Facebook because it bring together a range of schools of thought within PR discourse and supports the examination of what is fast becoming the central value to analysing and measuring PR: relationships. Furthermore, analysing online and social media communication within the relationship management framework has been established as a useful way to observe PR activity in these spaces. The following chapter discusses the methodology of the study, which was designed to examine how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the history and theoretical underpinnings of social networking sites (SNS) and the relationship management paradigm, which created the parameters for this study to be conducted. This chapter begins by outlining how content analysis works best to answer the study's research questions. The chapter then defines content analysis and discusses the benefits and limitations of the method. The sample and procedure is explained, including the changes that were made throughout piloting and testing processes, and validity and reliability are addressed. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the ethical considerations of the research and how the data will be analysed.

Many social media studies in the area of PR focus on methods such as surveying PR practitioners about their social media use (e.g. Curtis et al., 2010; Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Eyrich et al., 2008), or qualitative interviews about perceptions of social media (e.g. Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2008; Toledano, 2010; Wright & Hinson, 2010). These provide insights to PR practitioner's stance on social media, but do not assess actual outcomes of PR practitioners' social media activity in the PR industry.

More quantitative studies are now being used to investigate how social media are being used by organisations (e.g. Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Waters, 2011; Waters et al., 2009; Waters & Williams, 2011), but there is still a gap in this area of research from a specifically New Zealand perspective. As a smaller country with a unique PR industry, it is important to document and analyse outcomes of how New Zealand organisations are utilising new technology to understand our industry, rather than merely measuring our perceptions of PR practices. Content analyses have the ability to observe

communication that has already occurred, unlike surveys or interviews which rely on measuring participants' perceptions of research subject matter. Additionally, Grunig (2009) recommends that content analysis is an appropriate method to measure communication to understand OPRs specifically within a cyberspace environment. Thus, a content analysis has been employed in this study because the method can objectively measure communication outputs that have already occurred, against set criteria.

3.2 Research questions

Formulating research questions or hypotheses is important in research to guide the study towards its intended goals. A research question is generally posed when the researcher does not have enough evidence to make a tentative assertion – or hypothesis - about the outcome of the study (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). This study has put forward research questions instead of testing hypotheses because there is not enough previous research in this area to confidently predict the outcome of the research.

These research questions aim to examine how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics. Ultimately, this study's goal is to provide a foundation for further research to explore how relationships can be built and managed on SNS:

RQ1: How are the Facebook pages of selected New Zealand organisations being used as a communication tool?

RQ2: How do the communication strategies of selected New Zealand organisations relate to specific relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures as identified in PR literature?

These research questions have been designed to observe communication on New Zealand organisations' Facebook pages and apply relationship management theory to the findings, rather than to determine the organisations' communication effectiveness in building relationships with their publics. Thus, using a content analysis to answer these questions appears to be a highly suitable methodology.

3.3 Definition of content analysis

Content analyses allow observed information to be measured in a specific, iterative way. Berelson originally defined content analysis in 1952 as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (as cited in Stempel & Westley, 1989, p. 125). This definition produced a significant point of difference to other research techniques at the time, but the concept has since developed much more than this description. Stone, Dunphy, Smith and Ogilvie (1966) go further than observing data as purely quantitative or descriptive, defining content analysis as “any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text” (p. 5). This description allows contextual elements to be perceived when analysing data, giving scope for objectively analysing source intent and overall themes. Krippendorff (2004) further endorses content analysis as a method by validating its ability to be qualitative in nature and latently interpreted. He also emphasises that text is read for multiple purposes by different readers and meaning cannot be extracted from text alone. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful manner) to the contexts of their use” (p. 18).

The definitions outlined present a solid framework for this study's content analysis method to be designed in relation to this study's goals and research questions.

3.4 Content Analysis in the communication field and its relevance in this study

Content analysis has been used as a data collection method across numerous disciplines that, until the Internet brought content analysis online, was a method whose design was often confined within each specific discipline (Neuendorf, 2002). Now, online technology is bringing together an integrated model of content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). As this study collects data from an online platform with a communication/public relations-based perspective – a paradigm of thought that has historically drawn from a vast range of other disciplines – it seems appropriate that this study uses content analysis. Content analysis is a method that has numerous advantages when researching communication online.

The first advantage of the content analysis methodology is the ability to consistently code across fragmented communication and different communication media like images, photos, and text while including them within the unit of the data (in the case of this study, each Facebook post). As discussed in the literature review, communication on the Internet – and particularly social media – is non-linear, fragmented and presented in multiple media forms. These features create challenges to systematically measure communication online; however, content analysis is capable of adapting to these challenges. In this study, the ability to code for communication that can be text, photos, videos, polls or links by appropriating a “Facebook post” as a unit of analysis means the research questions can be comprehensively examined.

The second advantage is its ability to statistically code users and cut the identity from the communication, therefore protecting their identity. As will be specifically outlined in the ethical considerations section (see section 3.7), this research has not sought informed consent from Facebook fans because the material being analysed is considered to be publicly available. Nevertheless, protecting the identities of the Facebook fans is still of importance to the researcher. Content analysis allows this study to gain in-depth information about the communication on the Facebook pages without jeopardising the privacy or integrity of the people who created the communication messages.

The third advantage is that content analysis as a methodology takes into account context. That is, content analysis measures actual communication that has taken place within a real-life, uncontrolled environment, as opposed to in a laboratory or controlled setting like experimental data, or by surveying perceptions of communication like the survey method would. This allows the study to make inferences based on real-time and real-life interactions, which authenticates the study to generalise the findings to what is actually occurring in these social media spaces.

Content analyses have been used by many communication researchers to operationalise complex communication online, for example, Bortree and Seltzer (2009) used content analysis to quantify dialogic communication on Facebook, while Waters (2011) has used content analysis to identify patterns of communication on governmental agencies' Twitter pages. McCorkindale (2010) also used a content analysis to study how corporate Facebook pages are using social media. Content analysis is also an excellent methodology to carry out longitudinal studies (Frey et al., 2000). This is an important aspect in regards to social media because of its dynamic nature. Herring, Scheidt and Kouper (2006) effectively display how social media can be analysed over time using

content analysis with their research on how blogs' communication style has changed. Limited longitudinal studies have been conducted around SNS, so using content analysis in this study allows for another comparison of this nature in the future.

Based on the literature of previous content analysis studies in communication, this methodology appears to be the best option to analyse the outcomes of how organisations and their publics are using and communicating on Facebook. Although communication is complex and can be multiply interpreted, the quantitative nature of content analyses allows communication activity to be measured in a way that is systematic and replicable, where minimal personal interpretation is involved. Quantitative methods help to answer the “what” questions by identifying patterns of communication behaviour (Allen, Titsworth, & Hunt, 2009). In this study, content analysis helps to answer what kind of communication is taking place that relates to relationship-building theory. Content analysis also allows researchers to qualitatively observe quantitative data (Stacks, 2011). That is, although data is coded into numbers, the numbers can represent scales, ordinal data or categories. This means content analyses can provide a range of rich information from one methodology. The ability for this study to be able to statistically compare communication patterns and differences between Facebook pages, organisations, and communication activities while still being able to observe deeper communication implications is an advantage of content analysis for the purposes of this research.

3.5 Limitations of a content analysis and its implications for this study

Content analysis is the best methodology for the purposes of this study, but it still comes with limitations. One limitation is that the creation of coding categories used to code data consequently

predetermines the way data is analysed. Although content categories are necessary to manageably analyse the data, it is extremely difficult to predict all relevant categories, and consequently, important data can be lost (Krippendorff, 2004).

Another limitation of content analysis is the methodology's reliance on making inferences about intention, particularly when using content analysis in a qualitative manner. In this case, the study will be making inferences about the PR activities each organisation employs based on the manifest content; however, this does not necessarily mean that the Facebook content managers intended the communication this way. This limitation is refuted somewhat by the face validity of human coding (Krippendorff, 2004); that is, it can be inferred that no matter what the communicator intended, it is how the communication is interpreted that matters when analysing organisation-public interactions. Because human coding is employed, the coder's life context validates the limitation of inferring intention, that is, the coders are consumers and interpreters of organisations' communication too.

3.6 Steps in a content analysis

Scholars within the social sciences and communication discipline recommend specific procedures when employing content analysis as a research method (see Frey et al., 2000; Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Stacks, 2011). These procedures commonly involve:

1. Selecting the sample.
2. Determining the unit of analysis.
3. Developing and operationalising content categories.
4. Testing and revising content categories (piloting).
5. Determining the reliability and validity of the coding scheme.
6. Determining the analytical constructs of the study.

The following sections will outline how the content analysis method was employed in this study according to these procedural steps.

3.6.1 Sample

This research analyses twelve New Zealand commercial organisations' official Facebook pages to measure how they and their publics communicate on the pages. These organisations are outlined in Table 4 below.

Because the purpose of this study is to examine generically how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by organisations to build and maintain relationships with their publics, this sample was selected using non-probability sampling, which means samples are not randomly selected. Non-probability sampling is less statistically viable to represent a population and increases the chance for bias to exist in the data (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond Peck, & McCroskey, 2008); however, because the sample in this study is not large enough to be representative – and does not attempt to be – the limitations of probability sampling is less of a concern.

Table 4: List of sample organisations

Organisation*	Org Type	Description
Girlfriend Magazine NZ	Product	Magazine for girls targeted 13-19 years, focused on fashion, beauty, lifestyle, pop culture.
Cleo Magazine	Product	Magazine for women targeted 18-29, focused on fashion, beauty, lifestyle, pop culture.
Holden New Zealand	Product	Car brand – range of quality cars and services.
Ford NZ	Product	Car brand – range of quality cars and services.
Weta Workshop	Product	Creative design and manufacturing, particularly animation and special FX for the film industry.
Rainbow's End	Service	Theme park
Matterhorn	Service	Fine dining restaurant and bar, and music venue
Memphis Belle Coffee House	Service	Specialist coffee house and cafe
The Roxy Cinema	Service	Small Wellington boutique cinema
BATS Theatre	Service	Wellington small theatre venue
Cadbury New Zealand	Product	Chocolate brand
Whittaker's Chocolate Lovers	Product	Chocolate brand

*N.B. – these were the official Facebook page names of the selected organisations. Name usage throughout this research is shortened to reflect common usage.

New Zealand organisation's Facebook pages were sourced from a combination of Your Social Monitor (<http://nz.yoursocialmonitor.com>) and the researcher's personal knowledge of New Zealand organisations and Facebook pages. In order to manage the size of this study and collect data from a diverse range of New Zealand organisations, seven criteria were applied to the non-probability sample, as outlined in Table 5. Pages were initially randomly selected based on criteria one and two (drawn from Your Social Monitor) and were subsequently chosen in accordance with the following seven criteria.

Table 5: Seven sampling criteria that guided selection of sample

Criteria to include organisation's Facebook pages in the sample	
1.	Sample represented official New Zealand (or New Zealand-branched) organisations whose Facebook pages were intended for New Zealand audiences.
2.	Facebook pages had at least 500 fans.
3.	Facebook pages that were reasonably active: at least 25 posts needed to be present in a 21-day period.
4.	Sample organisations that could be (tightly or loosely) paired with competing organisations to provide comparisons.
5.	Facebook pages had manageable posts to analyse: Organisations with multiple posts that had more than 200 comments were discarded from the sample, or where Facebook fan posts overwhelmed any organisations' communication activity.
6.	Sample evenly represented service and goods-based organisations for the purpose of comparison.
7.	Facebook pages that primarily featured human communication on the page: Any pages that had excessive links or applications posted to its page and did not feature communication using written words within a post were discarded.

3.6.2 Unit of analysis

Twenty one days of posts from each Facebook wall were captured using Snagit software.

Snagit software is screen capturing software that can capture long web pages and convert them into PDF documents. All Facebook posts were analysed from the PDF captures unless the information was unreadable due to a page break, or a link needed to be clicked on to accurately categorise it. This process ensured that the data was archived to be consistent with the date of the capture, since Facebook pages are fluid. The 'info' tab of each Facebook page was also recorded to archive the data captured at the time of the grab.

Twenty-one days of Facebook posts were captured from each Facebook page because this span of time provided a manageable amount of data to be analysed while making visible weekly trends or patterns; however, some Facebook pages had hundreds of posts within a 21 day period,

which was unmanageable for this project. After testing the average time that each post would take to code (an average of three-four minutes per post), and observing commented post patterns during the formal pilot test (some original posts had up to 300 comments), it was clear that the initial sampling period of 21 days was not feasible, given the scope of this project. Thus, two criteria were set to better manage the project. The first criterion was that data would be coded for 21 days or up to 200 posts: whichever came first. The second criterion was that the coding of commented posts would be capped at 30 posts. Although this limited some data results, such as the frequency of postings of individual posters in a 21 day period, the content of posts with large numbers of commented posts were found to be very similar and did not provide significant data variations. Limiting data collection by these two criteria meant a comprehensive range of content was recorded in a way that was still manageable.

Content analysis in this study was divided into two separate parts. The first part analysed each Facebook page's general information and the second part analysed individual posts on each Facebook page. The unit of analysis for the first part of the study was each organisation's general Facebook page. The unit of analysis consisted of recording the Facebook page's name and other included information, type of organisation (goods or service-based), number of fans, additional applications (default or customised), type of profile picture (logo, photo, image), and other Facebook pages it was linked to. This unit of analysis permitted the generic and static information on the Facebook pages to be recorded that the second unit of analysis (i.e. – individual Facebook posts) could not. For example, this study could not accurately determine if an organisation was using disclosure as a relationship cultivation strategy by analysing only the Facebook posts: information in the 'about' section of the Facebook page is also required.

The second and main part of the content analysis method was analysing the communication content on each Facebook page. The unit of analysis is defined as any content that follows a username preceded by their profile photo. This is generally referred to as a “post.” Items on a Facebook page that did not follow this criterion were not analysed.

3.6.3 Content categories

The content categories were developed from the two different units of analysis: Facebook pages and Facebook posts. Facebook pages were analysed using nine content categories, while Facebook posts were analysed using 15 content categories.

3.6.3.1 Content categories: Facebook pages

The first part of this content analysis was divided into nine content categories that captured data from the general Facebook page (see Table 6 for an overview of the categories. For the full coding chart and detailed instructions, see Appendix A).

The first five categories captured the date, time, official Facebook name, number of fans the organisation’s Facebook page displayed, and how many other pages the organisation ‘liked’ at the time that each Facebook page was captured. Capturing the data of the first five categories served to archive the data of the Facebook pages, rather than providing data for analysis. Because Facebook pages are fluid (i.e. – numbers of fans change, images and information change), it was important to capture information about the Facebook page in order to analyse subsequent data in context.

The sixth category recorded data from the 'info' tab of the Facebook page to capture if there was a statement or reference to the purpose of the organisations' Facebook page, general organisation information, descriptions of the organisations' product or service, any sort of history or background information on the organisations' product or service, and any contact details. Contact details include an address, phone number, fax, email, other social media account or website. This category was developed using an unpublished Facebook page created by the researcher to observe all options available under the information tab for organisations to include information.

Table 6: Facebook page coding chart

#	Category	Description
1.	Date	Date the Facebook page captured.
2.	Time	Time the Facebook page was captured.
3.	Organisation name	Name of organisation as it appears on the Facebook page
4.	Number of fans	How many fans does the organisation have at the time of the capture?
5.	Other pages liked by org	How many other pages are 'liked' by the organisation?
6.	Organisational info	What kind of information about the organisation is visible on the page?
7.	Profile picture	Type of profile photo: branded or unbranded?
8.	Applications	What applications are active and personalised?
9.	Type of organisation	Does the organisation primarily sell goods or services?

The seventh category recorded what kind of profile picture the organisation displayed: a logo, branded image or unbranded image. A logo refers to an image that officially represents the organisation. A branded image is an image that may include official logos and branding, but is not the official logo itself. An unbranded image refers to any image that is not officially branded by the organisation's logo or other defining imagery as described above.

The eighth category recorded what kinds of applications were present. An application is defined as “a complete, self-contained program that performs a specific function directly for the user” (‘application program’, n.d.). An application on Facebook is a software program used within the Facebook interface to enhance the Facebook experience. For the purposes of this study, the applications analysed were the applications visible on the far left-hand tab under the profile photo. They were analysed based on whether the applications were active or inactive, and default or personalised (see Appendix A for detailed instructions).

The ninth and final category recorded whether the organisations were oriented more towards selling goods or services. As noted in marketing theory, most products sit within a goods and services continuum (Solomon et al., 2009). It is rare that something is purely a good or a service. This makes defining an organisation as service or goods-based in studies more difficult. Goods can be defined as a physical product (Solomon et al., 2009), while a service has been defined as “any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything” (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 192). According to these definitions, organisations were coded as goods-based organisations (or product-based organisation – PBOs – as they are commonly known) or service-based organisations (SBOs).

3.6.3.2 Content categories: Facebook posts

The second part of this content analysis is organised into 15 content categories – as displayed in Table 7 – that captured data from each Facebook post (see Appendix B for full coding chart and detailed coding instructions).

Table 7: Facebook posts coding chart

#	Category	Description
1.	Post code	Records the unique ID of posts and their comments
2.	Poster ID	Records the Facebook user's name, to be changed into a unique number ID
3.	Date	Date of the post
4.	Time	Time of the post
5.	Likes	Number of likes visible on the post.
6.	Word count	Number of words in the post.
7.	Links	Where does the link take you on the Web (if applicable)?
8.	Additional multimedia	Type of additional multimedia added (if applicable).
9.	Tone contextualisers	What types of tone contextualisers are included in the post?
10.	Communication activities	What are the purposes of the communication in the post?
11.	PR communication style (for orgs only)	Who benefits from the post (organisation or fans)?
12.	4 Models (for orgs only)	What model of the four models of PR is apparent in the post?
13.	PR activity (for orgs only)	What PR activity is apparent in the post?
14.	Marketing activity (for orgs only)	What marketing activity is apparent in the post?
15.	Other comments	Record any information that enhances the analysis of the post.

General post information

The first category recorded whether the post was an original post or a comment. An original post is made directly onto the organisation's wall, while a comment post is a reply to an original post. The second category recorded the poster's username. Each username was assigned a unique number that represented him or her for each post he or she created on any organisation's page. This helped to keep individuals' identities anonymous in the study. The third and fourth categories recorded the date and time of the post. If the Snagit capture didn't specifically state the date or time – for example, sometimes it would say 'Today, 3 hours ago' – then it was calculated from the date and time of the Snagit capture. The fifth category recorded the number of 'likes' the post had. A "like" on Facebook shows that a user supports, agrees with or is interested in a post. The sixth category recorded the post's word count, which aimed to determine how succinctly organisations and their Facebook Fans (also referred to simply as "fans" in this study) were communicating.

Links

The seventh category determines if there is a link in the post, and where that link takes a user on the Web. A linked post can take Facebook users to many spaces on the Web and it is useful to know how organisations and individuals are using Facebook to direct users to other sites. Table 8 shows there are eight different types of links (see Appendix B for detailed coding instructions).

The post may also have other multimedia attached to the post, which are allowed by Facebook's interface. The eighth category recorded if the post had uploaded pictures or videos, or if it included a (Facebook developed) question or poll.

Table 8: Types of links

Types of links	
1.	Another Facebook event or page that is created by a user.
2.	A Facebook application.
3.	An @mention.
4.	A news site.
5.	A social media site that does not belong to the organisation.
6.	An official social media site of the sample organisation.
7.	The organisation's own website.
8.	Any other website that cannot be characterised by the above categories.
9.	Other link.

Tone contextualisers

The ninth category recorded what kinds of emoticons and other non-word text and symbols were used in the Facebook posts. Studies have found emoticons enhance the meaning of messages (Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2007; Walther & D'Addario, 2001), and can also shape the meaning of written text as an illocutionary force. This study initially aimed to only code for emoticons to examine how virtual facial expressions were used on Facebook, but after initially piloting the category against numerous Facebook posts, it became apparent that Facebook users expressed themselves in a variety of ways that were not simply words or emoticons. Initial piloted posts revealed that Facebook users also used excessive punctuation, action symbols and onomatopoeia. Thus, the term 'tone contextualisers' was created for this study to record how organisations and

their fans use non-word text and symbols to enhance the meaning or context of their posts. These tone contextualisers included recording emoticons, acronyms that describe action (e.g. – lol stands for ‘laughing out loud’), onomatopoeia, picture symbols (e.g. – heart symbols) and excessive use of punctuation. After the formal pilot, these categories were expanded and refined into more specific categories, such as separating emoticon symbols into specific emotions or onomatopoeia words into specific sounds (see Appendix B for the full list of tone contextualisers, and Appendix C for the chart that was used to guide the researcher in coding the tone contextualisers). The categories were also further expanded and refined in the post-coding stage, when the results were written up.

Communication activities

The eleventh category recorded the perceived purpose of the communication. This section, outlined in Table 9, can have multiple coding entries if the communication has multiple purposes and is coded under 18 types of communication (see Appendix B for detailed coding instructions). This category was created from research into communication and speech act literature (e.g. - Bach, n.d.; Devitt & Hanley, 2006; Hutton, Goodman, Alexander, & Genest, 2001; Men & Tsai, 2011; Searle, 1969; Whittaker, Terveen, Hill, & Cherny, 1998), and initially developed in relation to numerous Facebook posts from a range of organisations. It was this category that was reworked the most, with only 12 categories initially present, the number of which were gradually expanded. After the formal pilot of the categories against organisations’

Table 9: Communication activities defined

Category	Definition
1. Positive reinforcement	Reinforcement of another post through positive association.
2. Compliment	Expression of praise, commendation, admiration or respect
3. Neutral Statement	Fact or piece of information that has no bias.
4. Criticism	Complaints, insults or negative assertions. Not necessarily offensive or rude.
5. Disagreement	Disagrees with an opinion, statement or suggestion – not a complaint about a product or service.
6. Resolves issue/complaint	Directly responds to an issue or complaint, or lessens conflict through mediation-type communication.
7. Question	Asks a direct question.
8. Questions response	Directly answers, or attempts to answer a post that asks a question.
9. Conversation exchange	Responds to another post that does not directly seek an answer - primarily a comment post.
10. Directive	Initiates or instructs action or behaviour
11. Announcement	An official notification of a specific occurrence or event.
12. Suggestion/recommendation	Suggests or recommends a solution, answer, improvement or new idea.
13. Share knowledge/information	Shares information that has no personal benefit other than to engage others in a topic or idea that may be of interest to the network.
14. Share experience	Shares or narrates a personal experience.
15. Publicity	Promotes a product or service.
16. Spam	Information irrelevant to the organisation or page.
17. Other	Any posts unable to be categorised into the above categories.
18. Product/service issue	Any post that communicates a product or service issue that requires customer service, as opposed to a complaint or criticism.

Facebook posts, categories such as “promotion” and “negative posts” were revealed to be too generic. They were expanded and remodelled to better reflect the communication apparent on New Zealand organisations’ Facebook pages. For example, “promotion” changed to “publicity”, and other promotional activities that were initially coded under this category moved to the Marketing Activities section under categories such as advertising, sales, and competitions. Additionally, “negative posts” became more specific categories such as “criticism” and “disagreements”. The final category – product/service issue – was not added until after the coding process, when fan communication patterns emerged in the “other category.” These posts didn’t fit into the criticism category because, while fans were having issues with a product or service, they were not criticising the organisation or being negative, but rather communicating to seek a resolution of their problem.

Grunig’s four models of public relations

Categories 12 to 15 of the coding scheme, as outlined in Table 7, (p. 65), are only coded if the post is made by the sample organisation. The twelfth and thirteenth category relate to Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) four models of communication, and are applied at a micro-communication level. The twelfth category uses the principles of Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) four models of PR to examine the flow of communication (one-way or two-way) and who the content of the post benefits (the organisation, the fans, neither or both), which are outlined in Appendix B. The thirteenth category codes the posts directly into Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) four models of PR: press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical.

Press agency posts are coded as such when the communication is biased and persuasive in order for the organisation to directly benefit. The post is likely to appear to be or expect one-way communication only. Examples of press agency may be traditional marketing techniques like

promotion, advertising, or the organisation connecting irrelevant information or events to their product with the purpose of persuading others to purchase or use their product.

Public information posts will appear to be informative in nature and will not use biased language. These posts will also appear to be or expect one-way communication only. Public information posts are likely to appear in the form of sharing links, documents (such as news releases on the organisation's website), and information about the organisation without using language that favours the organisation. For example, a link to the organisation's website page saying "check out our new website" would be a public information post, but if the link was accompanied by "Check out the hottest new website in town," it would be considered a press agency post.

Two-way asymmetrical posts are interactive and engaging; however, the purpose of the post will appear to benefit only the organisation, and not appear to fulfil its publics' needs as well. These types of posts are likely to be engaging question posts that help the organisation know its publics better to sell them a product or improve its services. Although this communication may benefit the customer/Facebook fan indirectly, the primary function is to help the organisation. An example of a two-way asymmetrical post is when Whittakers might ask: "what new flavour would you bring to the Whittakers chocolate family?" The interactivity allows the organisation to do some informal consumer research and help them enhance their products.

Two-way symmetrical posts are interactive, engaging and appear to mutually benefit the organisation and public. The posts appear to strive to maintain long-term relationships and help the public with their needs. Examples of two-way symmetrical posts include posts that answer fans' questions, reply back to compliments or seek to resolve issues or concerns. A two-way symmetrical post may also see the organisation simply interact with fans for no particular purpose other than to

engage in conversation. Any post that is found too difficult to classify into one of these four categories can be coded as 'difficult to specify.'

Public relations activity

The fourteenth category aimed to examine what kind of PR activity is being carried out on organisations' Facebook pages and is divided into nine criteria, as shown in Table 10. In contrast to communication activities, this category aimed to measure how each Facebook post contributed to the holistic functions of PR at a micro-communication level. It was also included to measure the extent that Facebook was used specifically as a PR tool, which could thus increase understanding of why relationship development strategies may or may not be present in the Facebook posts analysed.

Table 10: PR activity coding scheme for organisation posts

PR activity	Description
No PR activity	No specific PR activity appears to be present.
Customer service	Helps Facebook users with issues or queries, or other customer service activities.
Stakeholder engagement	Engages directly with Facebook users.
Media relations	Media material (like a press release) about the organisation, product or industry is present. This may be a media release from the website or a story from a news site or page.
Issues/public affairs	Discusses, remedies or highlights pertinent issues to the organisation.
Reputation building	Raises the reputation of the organisation by posting information that puts the organisation in a positive light.
Event publicity	Advertises, promotes or encourages attendance at organisational events.
Charity support	Promotes or mentions a charity or non-profit name, cause or event with the apparent altruistic intention to help that cause.
Other	Any post that does not fall under the above categories.

This category initially listed a comprehensive range of PR activities drawn from the literature (e.g. - Gordon, 2011; L'Etang, 2008; Vasquez & Heath, 2000), including government relations, employee relations and crises communication. However, during initial piloting efforts, it was obvious that – due to the observed consumer-oriented nature of organisations' Facebook pages – government relations, employee relations and crisis communication PR activities on Facebook pages were irrelevant. Thus, they were eliminated from the study. The formal pilot test did not generate any further changes to this category.

Marketing activity

The fifteenth category aimed to discover what kind of marketing activity was being carried out on organisations' Facebook pages and has eight different criteria, as shown in Table 11 (see Appendix B for detailed coding instructions). Like the PR activities category, the marketing activities category aimed to examine how organisations' Facebook pages were being used for relationship-building exercises or for other communication activities like marketing strategies. This category was developed through the initial piloting of Facebook posts not considered direct PR activities, as well as drawing from traditional marketing activities such as advertising, promotions and sales. This content category was initially created in order to compare engaging communication with promotional communication; however, the formal pilot test of the Facebook posts revealed a range of marketing activity taking place on the platform. General organisational competitions were separated from competitions exclusive to Facebook fans to examine whether organisations were using communication activities exclusive to Facebook publics. Interactive marketing research was added after the formal pilot test revealed that organisations would often ask Facebook fans

questions in ways that appeared to generate informal information about consumer behaviours and attitudes.

Table 11: Marketing activity coding scheme for organisation posts

Marketing activity	Description
No marketing activity	No specific marketing activity appears to be present.
Exclusive Facebook competition	Competitions, sweepstakes or offers that can only be entered through the Facebook page.
General sweepstakes/competition	Competitions, sweepstakes or offers than are not exclusive to Facebook users.
Sales/discount promotion	Advertises special deals on products or services.
Product or service advertising	Advertises a specific product or service as a brand without reference to price promotions or specials.
Organisation advertising	Advertises the brand of the organisation.
Interactive marketing research	Engages Facebook users with questions, links to surveys or other methods to obtain market research.
Partner brand /sponsor support	Actively promotes or mentions another commercial organisation's brand or product.
Other	Any other posts that do not fit under any of the above categories.

3.6.4 Piloting Facebook post content categories

Numerous changes were made to the content categories as a result of piloting organisations' Facebook posts, as discussed throughout sections 3.6.3.2. These changes included:

- Setting criteria to limit the number of posts coded per Facebook page;
- Expanding the tone contextualisers category to include specific kinds of emoticons, onomatopoeia, action acronyms and excessive punctuation;
- Refining generic communication activity categories, such as refining "promotion" to "publicity", and "negative communication" to "criticisms" and "disagreement";

- Eliminating unnecessary PR Activities like government relations, employee relations and crisis communication; and
- Expanding the Marketing Activities category to include specific promotional, sales and advertising categories.

Initial piloting efforts were made by the primary researcher, who observed a range of organisations' Facebook posts to test the required categories. These initial piloting efforts were unstructured and informal. The initial piloting efforts served to cross-check operational definitions and applicability of the content categories against actual Facebook posts.

A formal pilot test was then employed by the primary researcher as well as her two supervisors, who separately tested the content categories against a selection of New Zealand Facebook organisations, including Vodafone, Air NZ, Starbucks (Old Bank Arcade), The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Whittakers, BATS Theatre and NBR NZ Opera. This exposed the primary researcher to posts from a range of organisations to assess if the initial content categories were valid and reliable. The changes made as a result of feedback from the formal pilot are discussed specifically throughout sections 3.6.3.2.

3.6.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are important elements in a study because they help to measure the accuracy and representation of reality of the data captured. Reliability refers to the stability, reproducibility and accuracy of research design: reliable data consistently returns the same results throughout the measuring purpose (Krippendorff, 2004). This research has taken reasonable steps to comply with these principles. Stability – defined as “the degree to which a process is unchanging

over time” (Krippendorff, 2004) – was improved through the piloting phases to ensure that content categories reflected consistently similar results at any particular sitting. Reproducibility – “the degree to which a process can be replicated” (Krippendorff, 2004) – is evident in the comprehensive, written coding instructions that would allow other coders to replicate the study (as outlined in Appendix A and B). Accuracy, or the extent that results consistently return the same results, was measured with an inter-coder reliability test. This involves coding a selection of data and duplicating the coding process to calculate the similarity of results. This research only had one coder, who was also the primary researcher. Neuendorf (2002) recommends that at least two coders should be used to code data, but the resources of this study did not allow this. Therefore, to measure the sole researcher’s ability to consistently code the data of this study, a simple agreement intra-reliability test was taken by the researcher. One hundred and twenty Facebook posts (10% of all Facebook posts analysed), including three organisation posts from each Facebook page, were coded twice by the sole researcher to measure the accuracy of the coding. The general simple agreement was 94.5%. All categories except tone contextualisers, communication purposes, communication style, four models of PR, PR activities and marketing activities coded for simple agreement of 100%. The reliability outcomes of the categories that did not return a simple agreement of 100% are outlined in Table 12.

Table 12: Specific reliability outcomes by category

Category	Simple agreement (%)
Tone contextualisers	96.2
Communication purposes	86.8
Communication style	81.6
Four models of PR	86.8
PR activities	84.2
Marketing activities	86.8

Validity refers to the ability for research results to emulate the real world that it measures.

Measurement validity is the extent to which the research's measuring instrument actually measures what it says it measures (Krippendorff, 2004). This study relies on face validity – or validity that “makes sense” at face value – to guide measurement validity. This type of validity is often regarded as the weakest type of validity; however, as Krippendorff (2004) states, content analyses are “fundamentally concerned with readings of texts, with what symbols mean and with how images are seen, all of which are largely rooted in common sense” (p. 314). Krippendorff argues that because human nature is guided by common sense, face validity can be regarded as the gatekeeper of all validity. Nevertheless, common sense can be highly interpretive; thus, this study aimed to minimise interpretation by explicitly operationalising the study's content categories (as outlined in Appendix A and B). The definitions of these categories consistently guide the subsequent data collection, results and discussion.

3.6.6 Analytical methods

After the data has been captured, a content analysis requires processing and analysing to draw meaningful inferences. This involves discovering patterns and relationships from the data, summarising the findings into easily understood interpretations, and comparing those findings to other relevant research to support and enhance the conclusions (Krippendorff, 2004). The data of this study were processed and analysed using SPSS software. SPSS software allows the researcher to systematically, reliably and repeatedly calculate the data. Calculations were guided by the research questions to answer how NZ organisations are using Facebook to build and maintain relationships with its publics.

The majority of this study's data contains nominal variables, which are defined by category, and lack ordering and metric values (Krippendorff, 2004). This kind of variable meant analysis was primarily focused on finding frequencies and relationships within the data.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The Massey University Human Ethics Committee's (MUHEC) screening questionnaire that analyses ethical research found this research project to be low risk; therefore, a low-risk notification application form was completed and lodged with MUHEC. The form outlined ethical considerations that had been discussed and reviewed with the researcher's supervisors and other academic staff. Two major issues were considered regarding the viability of a low-risk ethics form: the issue of informed consent from those participating on the Facebook pages analysed, including the organisation; and the discussion around social media being a public or private platform.

Issues around social media ethics have been thoroughly debated around data access (Mauthner & Parry, 2010), privacy, informed consent (McKee & Porter, 2009) and whether information in social media spaces can be labelled public information (Thelwall, 2010). A particular debate surrounds the issue of whether content on the Internet is considered content or specifically attributed to human subjects. After a thorough discussion surrounding this debate, Walther (2002) determines that content made by a human subject can be retrieved by a researcher without informed consent if the content (i.e. – the communication material):

- Does not have to be accessed through a password-protected site (i.e. – the content is public);
- Does not directly use any information about a human subject (e.g. – their age, demographics, interests or habits) and;
- Ensures the anonymity of any human subject whose content is used in the study.

Bearing Walther's (2002) conclusions in mind, this study can confidently assert that informed consent is not required; however, some more contextual elements should be discussed. Facebook's platform is a mix of public and private spaces, with the level of visibility altered to user's preferred privacy levels. While many Facebook users have strict privacy settings where most of their information or wall posts are visible only to their friends or networks, organisation and brand pages are often public and are mostly visible to any Internet users and not just Facebook users. Even if a Facebook user has the highest privacy settings, any of their posts on a public Facebook page can be viewed by the public. The implications of this are specifically laid out in Facebook's terms and conditions (see Facebook, 2011a, 2011b); however the jump from different privacy settings on the same platform has ethical implications for researchers. Facebook users may 'publicly' post on an

organisation's wall without thought or regard for its public nature because their own personal settings are of a private nature.

In any case, this study minimises any risk to individual Facebook users because the content analysis methodology allows the Facebook users to be classed statistically. The only information gathered by the researcher is their Facebook usernames and the content they post on the public Facebook page. Their personal pages were never traced in the study. Information or data from the Facebook users are not published in this study: the original data is only accessible to the researcher and supervisors. To minimise further risk of harm to individuals, the data presented is in collective form and is presented in means of frequencies and trends. If particular data is singled out, for example a quote from the content, then no other data such as numerical ID number, date and time of the content is recorded alongside it.

Organisations are identified by name in this study; however, it was discussed between the researcher and supervisors that any information made public by an organisation – whether it be a conversation on a public Facebook page, a speech to a crowd, information on a brochure or website, or a statement to the media – is deemed open to public scrutiny. MUHEC asked for clarification on seeking permission to analyse organisations' Facebook pages from the organisations; however, further discussion with reference to the literature found this to be unnecessary and ethics approval was gained.

One further consideration with the research revolved around access from the data. This issue is especially important after Lewis, Kaufman, Gonzalez, Wimmer and Christakis' (2008) controversial Facebook study that used students to collect the data off other student's Facebook pages, which may have given them information that would not have been 'publicly' available (Parry, 2011). As

stated previously, the data recorded in this study can be accessed without being part of the Facebook network (no password to access the data is required), and can therefore be deemed public information. Facebook terms and conditions inform their users that anything they post on public pages can be used as a public archive. Discussion with supervisors have also led to a decision that social media has now been around long enough for social media users to understand the public nature of platforms like Facebook.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined why content analysis was chosen as a method for this research and the procedures undertaken to guide the data in answering the research questions. A direction was set for the analysis of the data collected and ethical concerns were addressed. The following chapter presents the results of the data collection, which will be discussed in light of the research questions in chapter five.

4. RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to examine how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics. Specifically, this study's research questions aimed to examine how the Facebook pages of selected New Zealand organisations is being used as a communication tool, and how these communication strategies relate to specific relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures as identified in PR literature.

Twenty one days of communication from twelve New Zealand organisations' Facebook pages was captured using screen capturing software, Snagit. The material was captured between 9pm August 7, 2012 and 1am August 8, 2012. General Facebook page information was recorded at the time of each Facebook page capture. Of the 21 days of material captured from the 12 pages, there were a total of 2825 Facebook posts made by organisations and fans. As mentioned in the methodology chapter (see section 3.6.2), post analysis was capped at 200 posts per Facebook page and 30 comments per post. These criteria affected four Facebook pages (Girlfriend; Magazine, Weta Workshop, Cadbury, Whittakers: see Table 13). Thus, 1201 (42.5%) of all 2825 posts in the 21 day period were analysed.

Table 13: Facebook posts analysed in 21 day period by organisation

organisation	Number of posts for 21 day period	number of analysed posts
Girlfriend	271	200
Cleo	36	36
Ford	101	101
Holden	49	49
Matterhorn	37	37
Memphis Belle	33	33
Rainbow's end	24	24
Weta Workshop	988	200
Cadbury	630	200
Whittakers	535	200
Roxy Cinema	80	80
BATS Theatre	41	41
Sum	2825	1201

4.1 Organisations' Facebook page information

All Facebook pages had at least some type of information that explained who the organisation was or what they were about (see Table 15) The least frequently present element of organisations' page information was communication about the purpose of the Facebook page (i.e. - how it can be used), which appeared on only 25% of pages; no SBOs had information about the purpose of the Facebook page. The most frequently present element was contact details, with all Facebook pages containing information that allowed users to contact them directly or that led to the organisations' websites (where all contact details were easily found).

Table 14: Features of organisations' Facebook pages

Organisation types	Page purpose		Org info		Product/ service info		History		Contact info		Inactive apps		Personalised apps	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ALL (n=12)	3	25	9	75	10	83.3	8	66.7	12	100	7	58.3	8	75
Product (n=6)	3	50	4	66.7	5	83.3	4	66.7	6	100	1	16.7	4	66.7
Service (n=6)	0	0	5	83.3	5	88.3	4	66.7	6	100	6	100	5	88.3

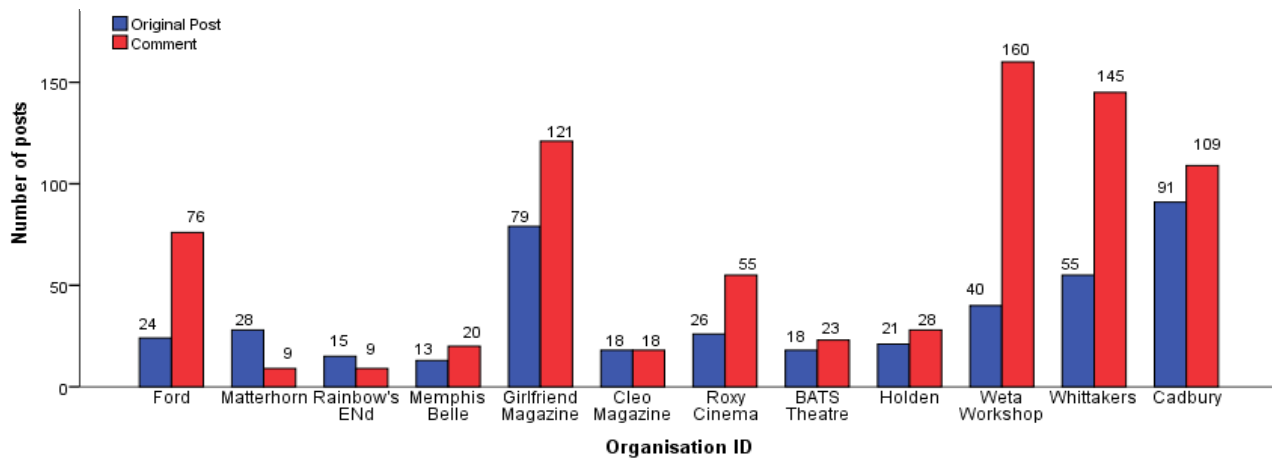
There were eight organisations (75%) that included personalised application tabs to their page. These apps included product and service news, competitions, personalised welcome pages, reviews and feeds from other social media accounts; however, seven organisations had inactive applications present on their pages.

Data of organisations' branding showed four (33%) of the 12 organisations used their official logo as their profile picture; six (50%) used branded images (images with official branding); and two (17%) used unbranded images. All PBOs and four of the SBOs used a logo or branded image. The remaining two SBOs used unbranded imagery.

4.2 Original versus commented posts of all posts

Of all 1201 posts in the sample, 428 (35.6%) were original posts as opposed to commented posts (64.4%). This means there was an average of 1.8 commented posts for every one original post. When separating original and commented posts by organisation (see Figure 1), commented posts are consistently more frequent than original posts, with the exception of Matterhorn and Rainbow's End. This suggests fans are less inclined to comment on these pages.

Figure 1: Frequency of original versus commented posts – all sample posts



When examining posts made by fans (see Figure 2), results show they are contributing substantially to both original and commented posts. Additionally – when Figure 2 is compared with Figure 3 – it is evident that fans are contributing original and commented posts more than organisations across the majority of the organisations, with the exception of Matterhorn. The combination of high fan activity in both original and commented posts suggests there is a substantial level of interactivity present on the sample organisations' Facebook pages – not only with the organisation, but with other fans as well.

Figure 2: Frequency of original vs. commented posts - Facebook Fans

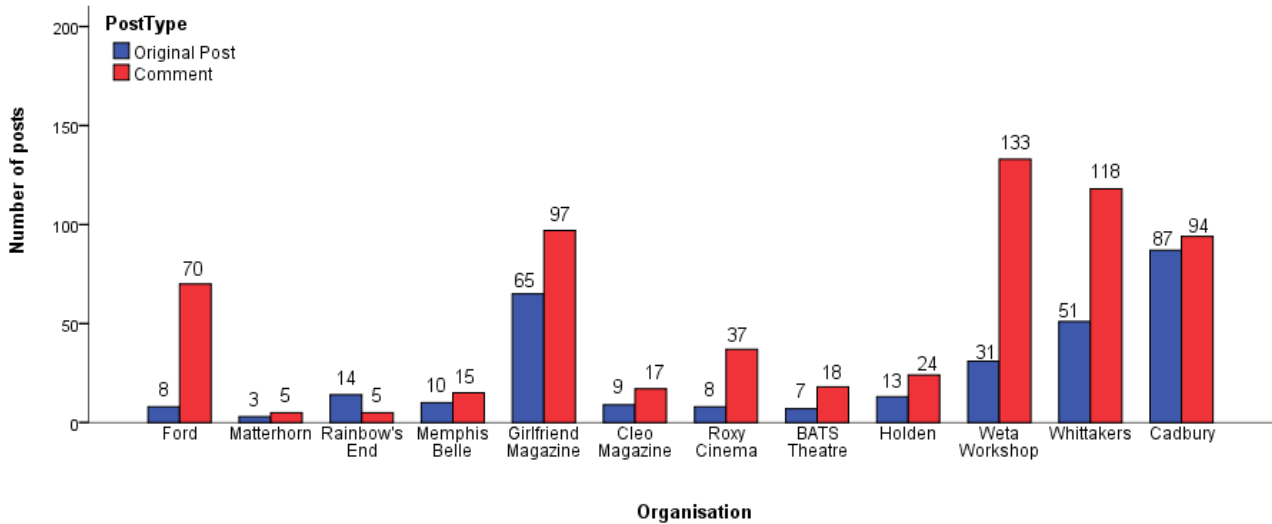
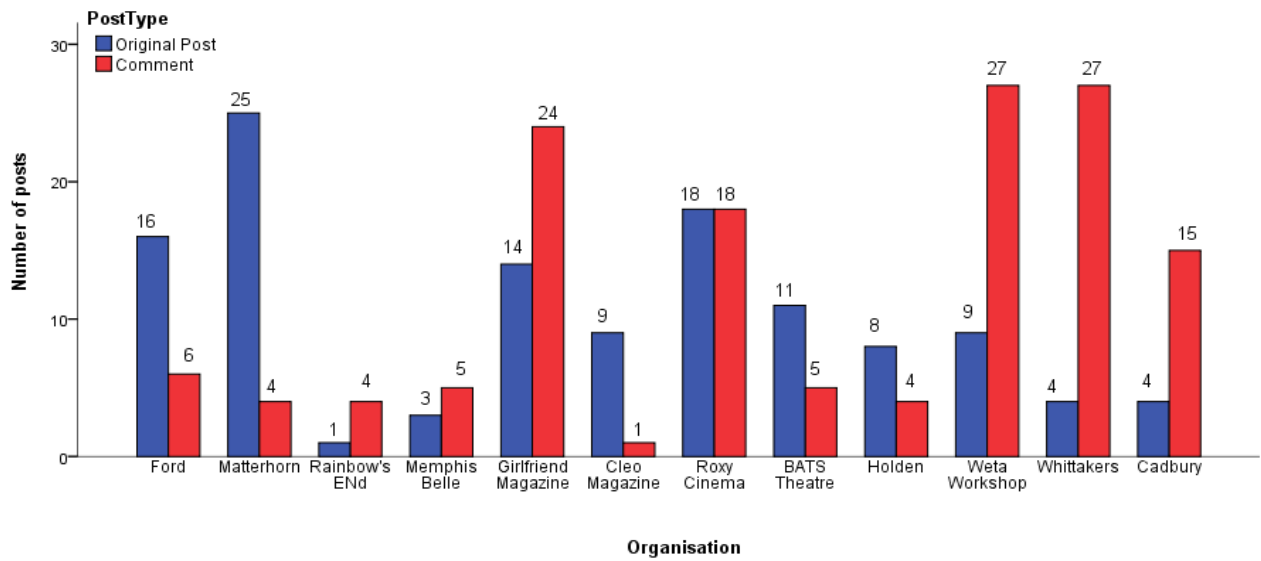


Figure 3: Frequency of original versus commented posts – organisation posts



Original posts and commented posts differ between organisations' posts and fans' posts (compare Figures 2 and 3). Cadbury, Whittakers, Weta Workshop and Girlfriend Magazine's fan and organisation posts follow similar patterns of original versus commented posts (N.B. - these organisations are the same four affected by the capping criteria), while the other Facebook pages' organisation and fan posts vary significantly. For example, when examining Figure 2, it is evident that Ford's fan communication feature significantly more commented posts than original posts (88.6% were commented posts), suggesting there is a lot of fan interaction happening on Ford's Facebook page; however, Ford's communication, as shown in Figure 3, feature more original posts (66.7% were original posts) than commented posts (7.9% were commented posts). These statistics suggests that Ford is not interacting a great deal in Facebook conversations through commented posts, but attempting to engage with fans through proactive communication.

Matterhorn's posts demonstrate a higher proportion of original posts and lower proportion of commented posts than Ford, but fan activity on Matterhorn's page is extremely low. This finding was initially thought to be a result of low fan numbers (Matterhorn's 753 in comparison to Ford's 15,869); however, when comparing BATS Theatre's and Roxy Cinema's fan numbers (1326 and 1812 fans respectively) with fan activity, it was evident that having lower numbers of fans did not affect the level of fan activity on a page. For example, Rainbow's End had the 8890 fans (the sixth highest number of fans in the sample), but the second lowest fan activity.

Product-based organisations commented about 16% more than they created original posts, whereas SBOs created more original than commented posts – but only marginally (N.B. - three of the four organisations affected by the capping criteria were PBOs).

4.3 Communication activities –all sample posts

The results of communication activities from all sampled posts, as shown in Table 16, outlines the general communication trends for this category.

Table 15: Communication Activities - All Posts

Communication Activity	N	Percent
Conversation exchange	357	20.7%
Share experience	210	12.2%
Respond to question	166	9.6%
Compliment	164	9.5%
Positive reinforcement	159	9.2%
Ask question	155	9.0%
Share knowledge/info	108	6.3%
Publicity	96	5.6%
Neutral statement	74	4.3%
Suggestion/recommendation	54	3.1%
Directive	43	2.5%
Announcement	35	2.0%
Resolve issue/complaint response	32	1.9%
Criticism	27	1.6%
product/service issue	19	1.1%
Other	16	.9%
Spam	6	.3%
Disagreement	5	.3%
Total	1726	100.0%

Conversation exchange is the most frequently coded communication activity (20.7%), which suggests that organisations and their fans are in fact engaging and having conversations in these spaces. The most common communication activities that follow conversation exchange are sharing experiences or feelings (12.2%), question responses (9.6%), compliments (9.5%), positive

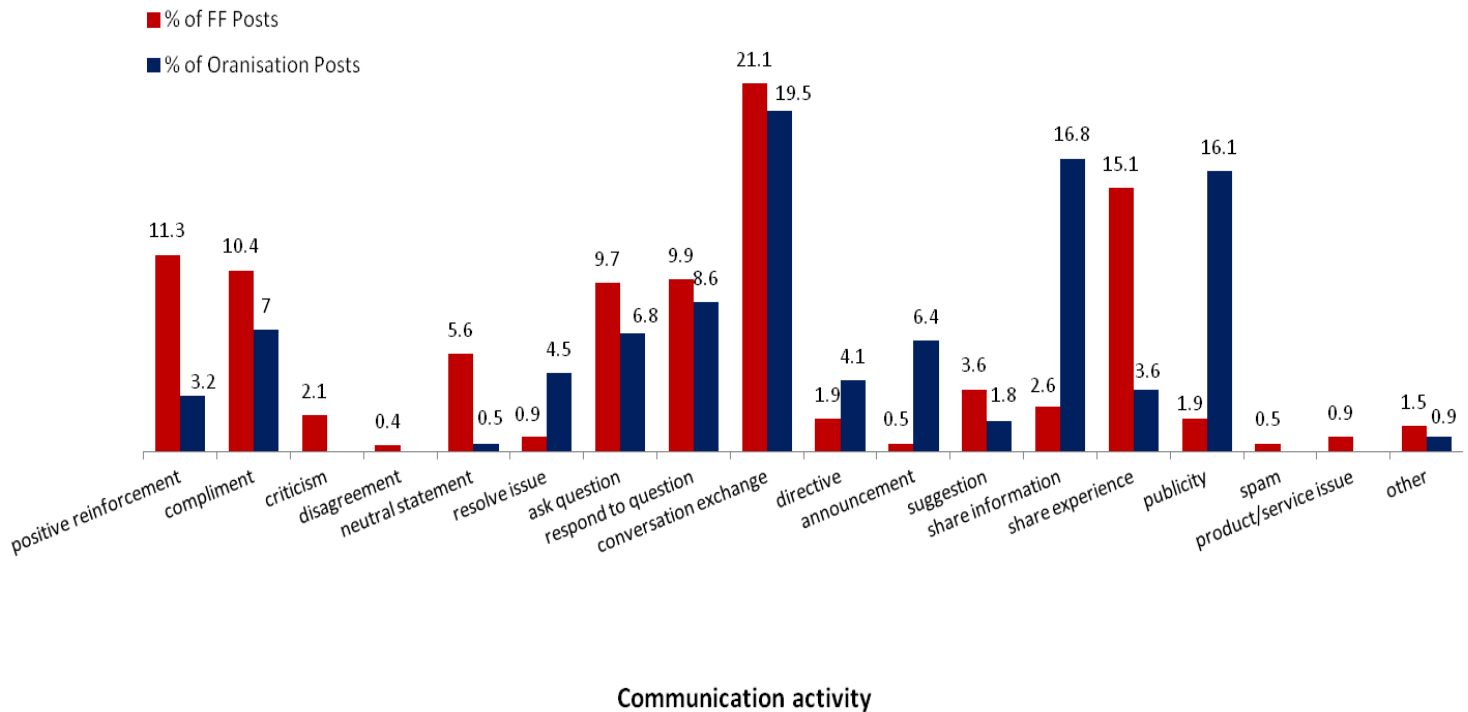
reinforcements (9.2%) and asking questions (9.0%). The least common were disagreements (0.2%), spam (0.3%) and product or service issues (1.1%).

There were several significant patterns present when examining posts that had more than one communication activity. The most common communication activity combinations were compliments with shared experiences (4.5% of all 306 possible communication activity combinations), conversation exchanges with shared experiences (3.9%), shared knowledge/info with publicity (3.1%) and conversation exchanges with asking questions (2.8%). Other notable correlations were conversation exchanges with positive reinforcements, compliments and responding to questions; and shared experiences with asking questions (all between 1.5-2% of all cases).

4.4 Communication activities – fan posts versus organisation posts

The original research question in this study (outlined in section 3.2) aimed to identify how the sample Facebook pages were being used as a communication tool. During the coding process, it became apparent that the bulk of communication was produced by fans. Posts by organisations made up only 27.9% of all Facebook posts analysed; thus, differences and similarities between fans' and organisations' communication activities are regularly separated throughout this chapter.

Figure 4: Communication Activities – fan posts versus organisation posts



Marked differences emerged between the communication activities of organisations' posts and fan posts. As Figure 4 shows, conversation exchange, suggestions and responding to questions have similarly proportioned communication activities between organisations and fan posts; however, the remaining communication activities differ considerably. While fan's most frequent communication activities were conversation exchanges (21.1% of fan posts); sharing experiences (15.1%); and positive reinforcements (11.3%); organisations' most frequent communication activities were conversation exchange (19.5%); sharing knowledge or information (16.8%); and publicity posts (16.1%). While organisations' posts demonstrated a high level of sharing information (16.8%) and low level of sharing experiences (3.6%), fan posts demonstrated the polar opposite (2.6% of posts sharing information; 15.1% sharing experiences). The biggest disparity between

organisations' and fans' communication activity posts was publicity (organisations' 16.1% to fan's 1.9%). These results suggest organisations are sharing less personal information, but instead contribute to the community by sharing information and resources. It is clear organisations are still engaging with fans without sharing experiences due to the high percentage of conversation exchanges.

The least frequently coded communication activities of organisations were criticism, disagreement, product/service issues and spam (all 0%), suggesting a lack of negative communication being generated from the organisation; however fan posts are also low in these areas. Additionally, resolving issues (0.9%) and announcements (0.5%) also featured in the least frequently used communication activities by fans.

Fan posts' high levels of sharing experiences (15.1%), positive reinforcements (11.3%) and compliments (10.4%) strongly suggest they are using organisations' Facebook pages to engage positively with the organisation and other fans. The statistics also suggest fans are not always engaging with organisations for specific customer service-related purposes, but also to be part of a shared community. For example, 59 commented posts were made by organisations for customer service. If we assume that these commented posts responded to most fan's customer-related queries or issues, the data shows that only about 6.2% of all fan communication required customer service. This example further supports the finding that organisations' Facebook pages are not primarily used for specific demands or requirements from the organisation.

Some fan's communication activities such as resolving issues, making announcements and making publicity posts are uncommon (less than 3.5% cumulatively); however, that the activities are present at all indicates that fans are helping organisations to address queries, as, for example, was

apparent on Weta Workshop's page concerning product ordering queries. The presence of these activities could also indicate that fans are enhancing the awareness or credibility of organisations' messages, reputation and activities, like BATS Theatre's fans, who would post recommendations to go and see different shows at BATS.

4.5 Frequencies of organisations' communication activities

Communication activities often differed between the sample organisations, as outlined in Table 17. Conversation exchange was the top communication activity for Whittakers (39.2% of the organisation's posts); Weta Workshop (29.8%); Memphis Belle (28.6%); Cadbury (25.7%); Roxy Cinema (21.0% - the same percentage as their sharing knowledge/information posts); and Girlfriend Magazine (20.3%), while publicity was the top communication activity for Matterhorn (36.5%); BATS Theatre (25.0%) and Ford (20.5%). Furthermore, sharing information/knowledge posts was the top communication activity for Cleo Magazine (38.9%), Rainbow's End (27.3% - the same percentage as their responding to questions posts) and Holden (26.3%). All organisations' top communication activities were used at least 20% of the time, with the average top communication activity being present 28.3% of the time. These statistics suggest that while these communication activities are being used regularly, they are not overwhelming the other communication activities, or being used as a majority, which demonstrates the diversity of communication activities on the organisations' Facebook pages.

Table 16: Frequencies of organisations' communication activities

Communication Activity		n = 441												
		Ford	Matter-horn	Rainbow's End	Memphis Belle	Girlfriend Magazine	Cleo Magazine	Roxy Cinema	BATS Theatre	Holden	Weta Workshop	Whittakers	Cadbury	Total
Positive reinforcement	Count	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	4	2	14
	% within organisation	5.1%	1.9%	.0%	7.1%	3.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	3.5%	7.8%	5.7%	
Compliment	Count	2	3	0	2	9	0	5	1	0	8	1	0	31
	% within organisation	5.1%	5.8%	.0%	14.3%	15.3%	.0%	8.1%	4.2%	.0%	14.0%	2.0%	.0%	
Neutral statement	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% within organisation	5.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	
Resolve issue/ complaint response	Count	1	1	1	0	3	1	3	0	1	1	5	3	20
	% within organisation	2.6%	1.9%	9.1%	.0%	5.1%	5.6%	4.8%	.0%	5.3%	1.8%	9.8%	8.6%	
Ask question	Count	3	0	0	1	4	2	2	1	3	3	9	2	30
	% within organisation	7.7%	.0%	.0%	7.1%	6.8%	11.1%	3.2%	4.2%	15.8%	5.3%	17.6%	5.7%	
Respond to question	Count	2	0	3	1	7	0	5	0	1	9	6	5	39
	% within organisation	5.1%	.0%	27.3%	7.1%	11.9%	.0%	8.1%	.0%	5.3%	15.8%	11.8%	14.3%	
Conversation exchange	Count	2	2	0	4	12	1	13	4	2	17	20	9	86
	% within organisation	5.1%	3.8%	.0%	28.6%	20.3%	5.6%	21.0%	16.7%	10.5%	29.8%	39.2%	25.7%	
Directive	Count	2	3	0	1	3	0	2	4	2	0	0	1	18
	% within organisation	5.1%	5.8%	.0%	7.1%	5.1%	.0%	3.2%	16.7%	10.5%	.0%	.0%	2.9%	
Announcement	Count	6	5	0	1	0	0	8	2	0	4	0	2	28
	% within organisation	15.4%	9.6%	.0%	7.1%	.0%	.0%	12.9%	8.3%	.0%	7.0%	.0%	5.7%	

Communication Activity														
n = 441		Ford	Matter-horn	Rainbow's End	Memphis Belle	Girlfriend Magazine	Cleo Magazine	Roxy Cinema	BATS Theatre	Holden	Weta Workshop	Whittakers	Cadbury	Total
Suggestion/recommendation	Count	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	8
	% within organisation	5.1%	.0%	9.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.6%	.0%	.0%	3.5%	3.9%	.0%	
Share knowledge/info	Count	7	15	3	0	3	7	13	4	5	7	3	7	74
	% within organisation	17.9%	28.8%	27.3%	.0%	5.1%	38.9%	21.0%	16.7%	26.3%	12.3%	5.9%	20.0%	
Share experience	Count	0	2	1	2	6	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	16
	% within organisation	.0%	3.8%	9.1%	14.3%	10.2%	5.6%	.0%	4.2%	5.3%	1.8%	.0%	2.9%	
Publicity	Count	8	19	1	1	10	6	9	6	4	3	1	3	71
	% within organisation	20.5%	36.5%	9.1%	7.1%	16.9%	33.3%	14.5%	25.0%	21.1%	5.3%	2.0%	8.6%	
Other	Count	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
	% within organisation	.0%	1.9%	9.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.6%	4.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	
Total	Count	39	52	11	14	59	18	62	24	19	57	51	35	441

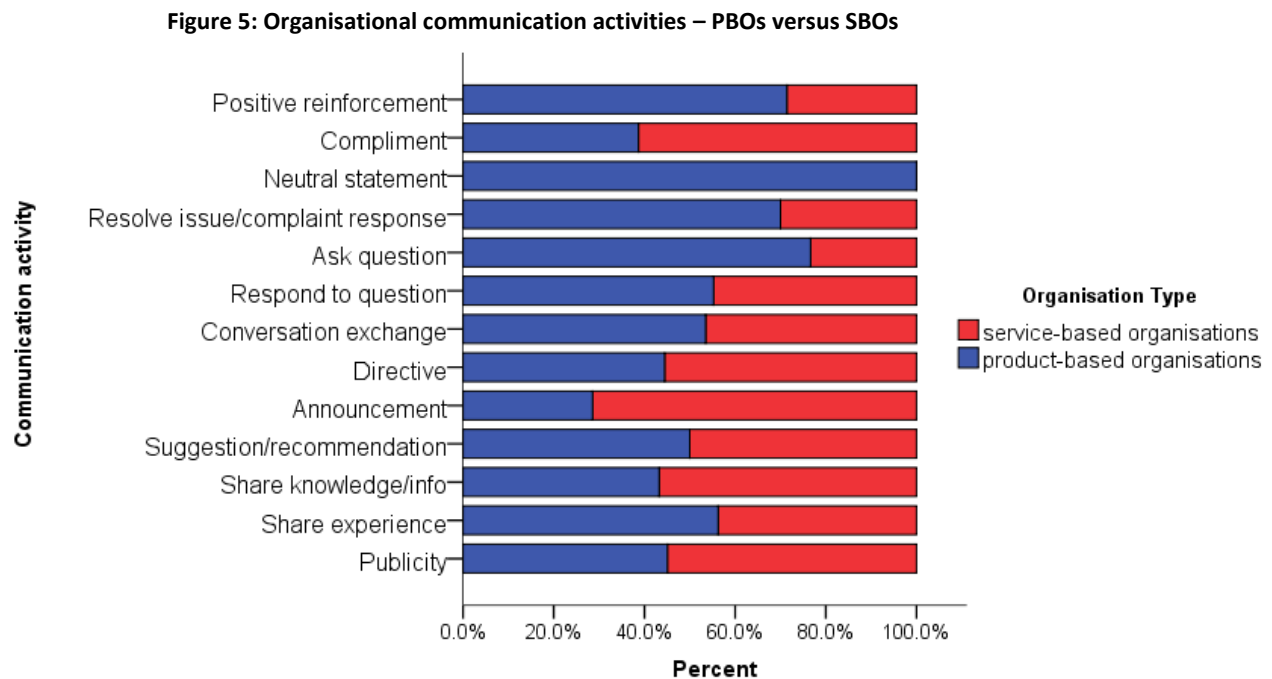
Organisations with the most diverse range of communication activities were Ford, with which 'sharing experiences' was the only activity not used; and Weta Workshop, with which only neutral statements and directives were the communication activities not used. The least diverse range of communication activities used by organisations were Cleo Magazine and Rainbow's End, who only used 10 of the 17 set communication activities. Both organisations did not use positive reinforcements, compliments, neutral statements, directives and announcements. In addition to these communication activities, Cleo Magazine also did not respond to questions, suggestions or recommendations, while Rainbow's end also did not exchange conversations or ask questions.

Some organisations stood out by their use of particular communication activities. Girlfriend Magazine, Weta Workshop and Roxy Cinema collectively held 71% of all organisations' compliment posts, while Roxy, Ford and Matterhorn collectively held 67.9% of all organisations' announcement posts. Whittakers asked 30% of all question posts, while Girlfriend made up 37.5% of all shared experience posts. Ford was the only organisation to post neutral statements.

One of Rainbow's End's most frequently used communication activity was responding to questions (N.B. - Rainbow's End only posted 11 posts in a 21 day period), but it was Roxy cinema who answered the most questions asked by fans (71.4% of fans questions were answered). The mean percentage of fan questions answered by organisations was 31.2%, although it must be noted that not all questions posted by fans would be directed at organisations (e.g. – fans might ask other fans questions in a conversation exchange). Cleo Magazine did not respond to any fan questions, despite that five questions were asked by fans.

4.6 Communication activities of product-based organisations versus service-based organisations

A comparison of PBO's and SBO's communication activities reveal some differences in the way they are communicating on Facebook, as shown in figure 5. SBOs and PBOs undertake the same kind of communication activities with approximately the same frequency.



Neither SBOs nor PBOs exceeded the other in communication activities by more than 20%, with the exception of neutral statements (100% of posts made by PBOs. N.B. – only one organisation used neutral statements); questions (76.7% of posts made by PBOs); positive reinforcements (71.4% by PBOs); announcements (71.4% by SBOs); and resolving issues or complaints (70% of posts by PBOs). Although these disparities are present, no one communication activity is overwhelmingly used by one organisation type.

4.7 Word Count of posts

One element that is often under-represented in SNS studies is the number of words communicated in social media spaces. This study found an overwhelming 96.8% of Facebook posts were 50 words or less, with more than one quarter of posts less than five words long, and nearly half of posts ten words or less. Only 2.9% were between 51 and 100 words, and only four (0.3%) of the 1201 posts were over 100 words. There were no significant patterns of organisations' word count; however, there were significant differences between organisation posts' and fan posts' word count. Organisations are using more words when communicating on Facebook compared to their fans, as displayed in Table 18.

Table 17: Word count – organisation posts versus fan posts

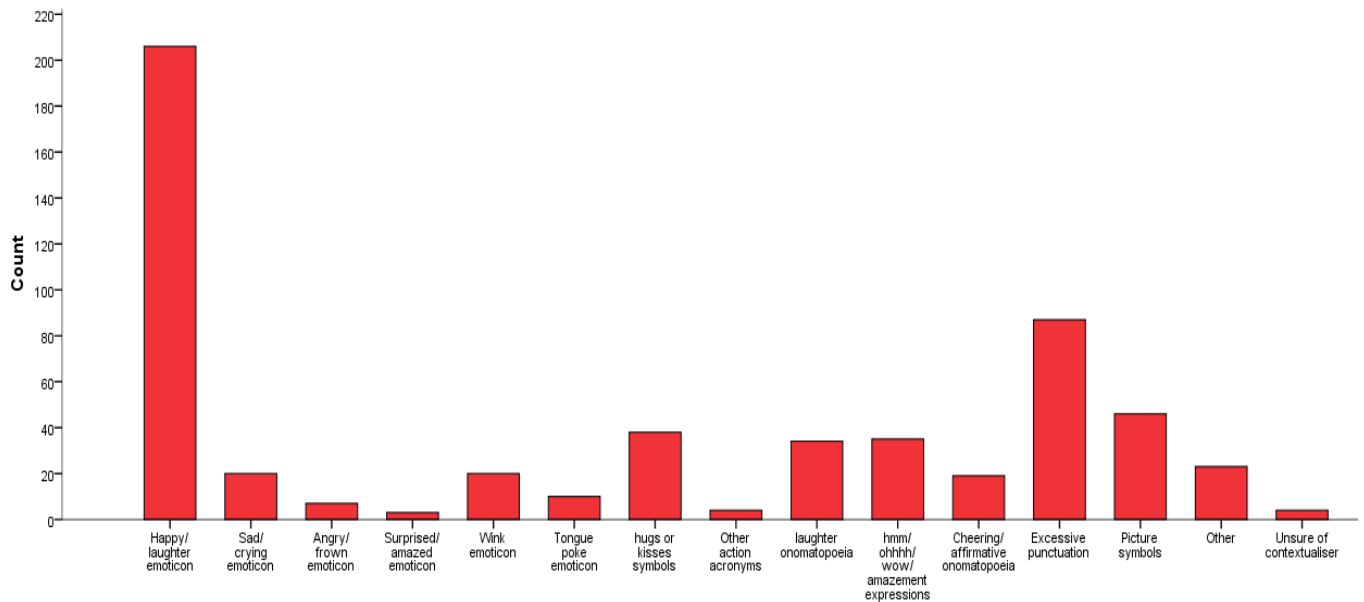
Word count	Organisation posts %	Fan posts %	All posts %
Less than 5 words	18.3	30.7	28.0
6 -10 words	7.3	23.6	20.2
11 – 20 words	29.4	25.9	26.6
21 – 50 words	37.8	17.6	22.0
51 – 100 words	6.5	1.9	2.9
101 – 150 words	0.8	0.3	0.3

4.8 Tone contextualisers

Tone contextualisers were present in 42.6% of the posts analysed. Of the posts containing tone contextualisers (Figure 6), smiley faces or happy/laughter emoticons were the most frequently used contextualisers (37.1%), followed by excessive punctuation (15.7%) and picture symbols (8.3%).

The least frequently present tone contextualisers were angry/frown emoticons (1.3%), action-inserts (0.7%) and surprised or amazed emoticons (0.5%). When grouped together, emoticons represented 47.9% of tone contextualisers and onomatopoeia expressions represented 11.4%.

Figure 6: Tone contextualisers present in posts by tone contextualiser type



Organisations' posts differ from fan posts in that only 28.6% of organisations' posts contain tone contextualisers, compared to fan's 40%. Of the organisations' tone contextualisers, the two girls' magazines were the sole users of hugs and kisses symbols (88.1% Girlfriend, 11.9% Cleo). Whittakers used happy/laughter emoticons the most frequently (43.2% of all happy/laughter emoticons used by orgs), followed by Girlfriend Magazine (25%) and Weta Workshop (15.8%). Additionally, Whittakers used happy/laughter emoticons but no other tone contextualisers. The remaining tone contextualisers used by organisations were statistically insignificant; however all organisations used at least one type of tone contextualisers more than twice in their

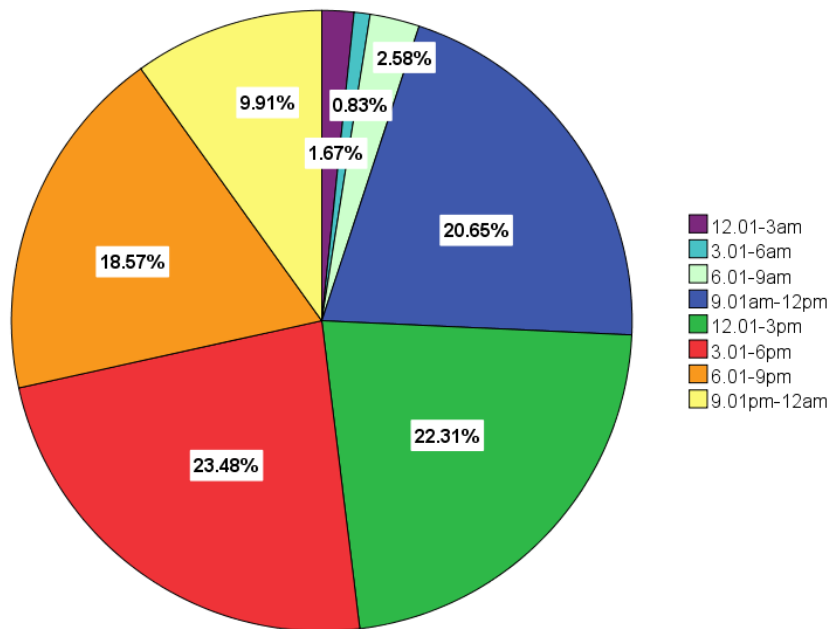
communication on Facebook. Additionally, PBOs used tone contextualisers more than three times as much as SBOs.

When analysing fan posts only, Girlfriend Magazine's fans used tone contextualisers the most frequently (32% - this was spread diversely amongst the tone contextualisers), followed by Cadbury's fans (20.8%). Whittakers' fans used onomatopoeia the most frequently (24.6% of all onomatopoeia), followed by Cadbury's fans (22.8%).

4.9 Time patterns of Facebook posts

Facebook pages are active and accessible to people at all times. As Figure 7 displays, more than one third of posts (33.6%) in this study's sample were made outside of general office hours (9am – 6pm). The most frequent time posts were made on Facebook pages were between 3pm and 6pm (23.5%). This was closely followed by the 12-3pm (22.3%) and 9am-12pm (20.6%) time frames. Posts that were posted between 6pm and 9pm featured 18.6% of all time frames, suggesting that people continue to engage with organisations' Facebook pages after they get home from work. Fans communicate on organisations Facebook pages during all times of the day and night, as outlined in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Time range frequencies of all posts



When analysing organisation posts only, the majority of posts are made within general office hours (66.44%), while 18.7% of posts are made between 6pm and 12am. Of these posts made between 6pm and 12am, 48.5% are commented posts. Organisation posts do not significantly differ to fan posts regarding the time of day that they are posted, with the exception that no organisations posted between 12am and 6am, whereas 2.5% of fans posted in that time. Whittakers, Girlfriend Magazine and Rainbow's End did not post at all outside general office hours, despite that around a quarter of their fan's posts were posted in this time. Ford, Roxy and Weta Workshop were the most frequent organisations to post to their Facebook pages after-hours. The remaining organisations only minimally posted to their Facebook pages after-hours.

When comparing PBOs and SBOs, patterns show that SBOs and their fans tended to post more in the morning, while PBO and their fans appeared to post more in the afternoons. SBOs have a similar spread of posts throughout the day as its fans, while PBO tend to post more during work hours and less during the evening than their fans; however, these statistics are slight rather than significant.

4.10 Links and multimedia

Multimedia was present in 14% of all Facebook posts. Organisation posts included multimedia in 36.6% of their posts, while fans included multimedia in 7.7% of their posts. Of the posts containing multimedia, 88.1% were links, while the remaining 11.9% were multimedia uploaded via the Facebook interface. Most of the multimedia uploaded via the Facebook interface were images (93.1%).

The most common links posted by organisations were links to the organisations' own websites, followed by links to Facebook events and links to other websites (see Table 18). These 'other websites' tended to be general websites that related to the organisation's industry. For example, Holden posted to a website that had revamped a Holden car, while Girlfriend Magazine posted a link to Kimberly Crossman's website (a celebrity guest at one of Girlfriend's events).

Matterhorn posted 11 of the 16 Facebook events and Roxy Cinema posted five of the six links to news sites, which suggests these links should not be discussed generically. Additionally, Cleo Magazine, Weta Workshop and Roxy Cinema collectively posted 59.2% of all links to organisations' own websites.

Table 18: Frequencies of organisations' links

Links	Responses	
	N	Percent
Org's own website	27	32.1%
Facebook event/page	16	19.0%
Other website	14	16.7%
Other social media site	11	13.1%
@mention	8	9.5%
News site	6	7.1%
Facebook App	1	1.2%
Org's own social media site	1	1.2%
Total	84	100.0%

Holden, Matterhorn and Cleo Magazine included links within their posts most frequently (75%, 62.1% and 60% of their posts respectively). When separating original posts from commented posts (only five organisations' links were commented posts), the frequency of multimedia in proactive communication posts (i.e. – original posts) become evident. All of Holden and Weta Workshops' original posts were linked, and the majority of Roxy cinema's posts included links. The organisations with the least number of linked original posts were Whittakers and Cadbury (25% of their original posts), followed by Girlfriend Magazine (less than 50% of its original posts contained links). When analysing original posts only, Rainbow's End and Memphis Belle did not use any links.

SBOs used links more often in their posts than PBOs (55.4% of the time compared to PBO's 44.6% of the time). PBO's most frequently used links were to their own websites (40.0%), other websites (30.0%) and other Facebook pages or events (13.3%). PBO's least frequently used links

were to news sites and Facebook apps, with which both were not used at all. This was followed by @mentions and links to the organisations' own social media sites, which were both used only 3.3% of the time. SBO's most frequently used links were to the organisations' own website (27.8%), other Facebook pages or events (22.2%) and other social media sites (14.8%), while their least frequently used links were to the organisations' own social media sites (no use of link) and Facebook apps (1.9%). The largest disparity between PBO's and SBO's links were the categories of @mentions, news sites, posting to organisations' own websites, posting to other websites and other Facebook pages or events. The most similar use of links between PBOs and SBOs was to other social media sites.

In this study, fans used multimedia 7.7% of the time, with 64 of the 72 posts containing links (the remaining eight posts were uploaded multimedia). The most common type of link included by fans was the @mention (56.3% of linked posts – see Table 19), which suggests fans are trying to include their own friends into the conversation, or engaging directly with others in the posting thread. Other common links were to Facebook events (12.5%) and other websites (12.5%). In no cases did fans post links to organisations' other social media sites or Facebook Apps.

Table 19: Frequencies of fans' links

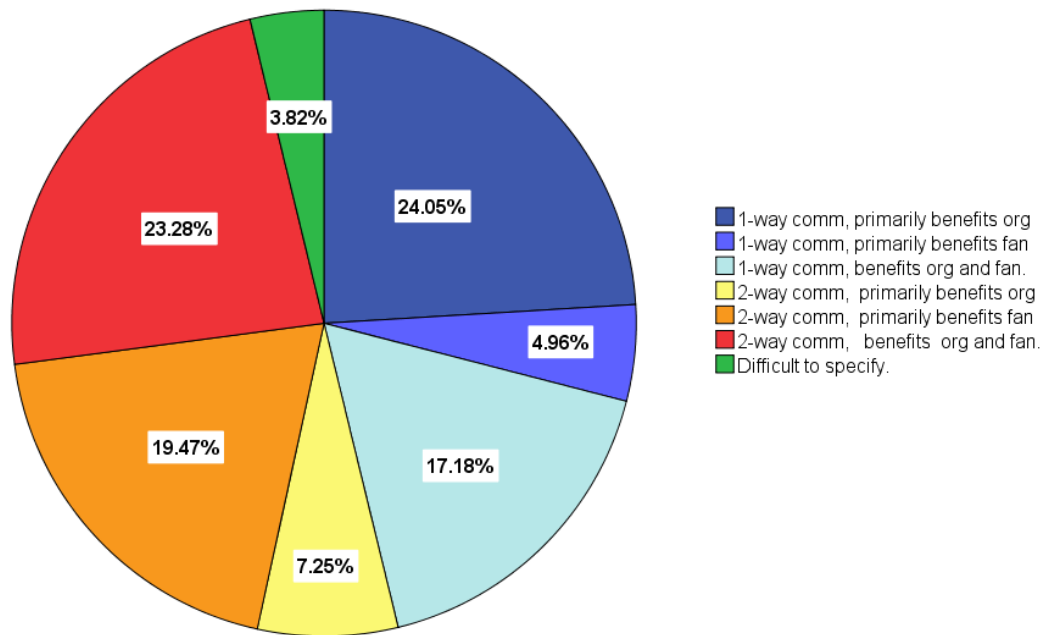
Links	Responses	
	N	Percent
@mention	36	56.3%
Facebook event/page	8	12.5%
Other website	8	12.5%
Other social media site	6	9.4%
News site	4	6.3%
Org's own website	2	3.1%
Total	64	100.0%

4.11 Communication flow and symmetry of organisations' posts

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models PR categorised communication as flowing in a one-way or two-way direction, and as asymmetrically or symmetrically benefiting both parties involved in the communication. As described in section 3.6.3.2 (p. 70), this study used these two features of communication direction and symmetry to break down communication more specifically at a micro-communication level to better understand organisations' communication on Facebook.

As Figure 8 shows, the results of the data collected demonstrates that organisations use less clear-cut communication styles than what Grunig and Hunt's four models outline at a micro level. While the four models outline one-way communication as having the ability to benefit only the organisation (the press agency or public information models),

Figure 8: Communication direction and level of symmetry - organisation posts



this study found that 17.2% of organisations' communication on Facebook mutually benefitted the organisation and its fans through one-way communication. Additionally, 5% of one-way communication primarily benefitted only fans. A high percentage of two-way communication primarily benefits fans with little benefit to the organisation (19.5%).

Differences of communication flow and mutuality between PBOs and SBOs were identified in three communication flow/mutuality categories. PBOs used more one-way and two-way communication that mostly benefits the organisation, while SBOs used more one-way communication that was mutually beneficial; however, the differences were not statistically significant.

4.12 Frequencies of organisations' PR activities

Posts made by organisations were coded for their PR activities (see Table 20). In general, the most frequently coded PR activities were stakeholder engagement (32.6%), followed by customer service (20.8%) and event publicity/communication (13.9%). Thirteen percent of organisation posts had no PR activity evident. Reputation building was evident in posts 7.9% of the time while media relations activity was only evident 5.4% of the time. The least frequently occurring PR activities were charity support (1.2%), recruitment (1.8%) and issues management (2.1%). The presence of these activities, although minimal demonstrate there is potential for these activities to occur; however, PR activities such as charity support, recruitment and issues management are only required based on need. For example, a vacancy needs to be open for recruitment activities to be present, which may not happen within a 21 day period. Thus, of all organisation posts, BATS Theatre was the only organisation recruiting people for work. Additionally, three organisations posted about charity support and five organisations dealt with issues management.

When looking at original posts only, which can be regarded as proactive rather than responsive posts, the statistics change noticeably. Event publicity/communication was the most frequent PR activity at 28.5% of all organisations' posts, followed by stakeholder engagement (16.6%), and media relations (10.6%). No PR activity was evident in 24.5% of organisations' original posts.

Table 20: Frequencies of organisations' PR Activities

PR Activities by Organisation n = 331		Ford	Matter-horn	Rainbows End	Memphis Belle	Girlfriend Magazine	Cleo Magazine	Roxy Cinema	BATS Theatre	Holden	Weta Workshop	Whittakers	Cadbury	Total
No PR activity	Count	3	4	0	1	10	4	7	2	3	4	3	2	43
	% within organisation	10.3%	11.4%	.0%	10.0%	20.4%	36.4%	15.9%	10.0%	20.0%	9.5%	7.5%	7.4%	13.0%
Customer service	Count	5	4	4	1	10	2	13	1	1	7	10	11	69
	% within organisation	17.2%	11.4%	44.4%	10.0%	20.4%	18.2%	29.5%	5.0%	6.7%	16.7%	25.0%	40.7%	20.8%
Stakeholder engagement	Count	7	8	1	6	22	2	11	1	4	19	18	9	108
	% within organisation	24.1%	22.9%	11.1%	60.0%	44.9%	18.2%	25.0%	5.0%	26.7%	45.2%	45.0%	33.3%	32.6%
Media relations	Count	2	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	2	5	1	0	18
	% within organisation	6.9%	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.1%	9.1%	6.8%	10.0%	13.3%	11.9%	2.5%	.0%	5.4%
Issues/public affairs management	Count	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	7
	% within organisation	3.4%	.0%	22.2%	.0%	2.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	6.7%	.0%	5.0%	.0%	2.1%
Reputation building	Count	5	1	2	2	1	0	3	1	3	4	2	2	26
	% within organisation	17.2%	2.9%	22.2%	20.0%	2.0%	.0%	6.8%	5.0%	20.0%	9.5%	5.0%	7.4%	7.9%
Event publicity/communication	Count	5	17	0	0	3	1	5	8	1	2	0	3	45
	% within organisation	17.2%	48.6%	.0%	.0%	6.1%	9.1%	11.4%	40.0%	6.7%	4.8%	.0%	11.1%	13.6%
Charity support	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
	% within organisation	3.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	9.1%	4.5%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.2%
Recruitment	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	6
	% within organisation	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	.0%	2.5%	.0%	1.8%
Other	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	5
	% within organisation	.0%	2.9%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.4%	7.5%	.0%	1.5%
Total	Count	29	35	9	10	49	11	44	20	15	42	40	27	331
	100%													

Generally, organisations used a range of PR Activities throughout the sample period, suggesting that Facebook is being used as a communication medium for a variety of purposes. Nearly half (48.6%) of Matterhorn's PR activity posts were event publicity posts, while about half of all posts made by Girlfriend, Weta Workshop and Whittakers (all affected by the capping criteria) were stakeholder engagement posts. Cadbury's posts – the other Facebook page affected by the capping criteria – showed considerably less stakeholder engagement than the others, with around one third of their posts coded as such. Memphis Belle topped all these organisations, with 60% of Memphis Belle's Facebook posts coded as stakeholder engagement; however, only three PR Activities were evident in Memphis Belle's posts within a 21 day period. Other noteworthy statistics include Rainbow's End's and Cadbury's use of customer service, with both organisations' primary PR activities being coded as customer service for more than 40% of all posts they made on their Facebook pages.

SBOs and PBOs undertake the same kind of PR Activities with approximately the same frequency. Charity support and reputation building posts (13 and 2 posts respectively) were equally evident on PBO's and SBO's posts. Neither SBOs or PBOs exceeded the other in their PR Activities by more than 20%, with the exception of issues management (PBOs posted 71.4% of issues management posts), event publicity (SBOs posted 71.1%) and recruitment (SBOs posted 83.3% N.B. – 5 of the 6 recruitment posts were made by one organisation). Although these disparities are present, no one PR activity is overwhelmingly used by one organisation type.

4.13 Frequencies of organisations' marketing activities

Posts made by organisations were also coded for marketing activities (see Table 21). Posts most frequently did not contain marketing activity (57.2% of all organisations' posts), suggesting that PR activity appears to be more of a core function of the Facebook pages. Of the marketing activities that were present, the most frequent marketing activity was product or service advertising (21.6% of all marketing activities), followed by endorsing other organisations or brands (8.3%) and interactive marketing research (4.7%). The least frequent marketing activities were posting general competitions or sweepstakes (as opposed to exclusive Facebook competitions or sweepstakes) and organisation brand advertising, both at 1.4%.

Posts that did not have any marketing activity present decreased to 23.9% when observing original posts only. This suggests that original posts on organisations' Facebook pages tend to use marketing activities, while commented posts tend to rely more on PR activities. Product or service advertising increased to 39.9% when analysing original posts only, while the remaining categories rose slightly, but remained consistent in proportion to all marketing activity posts. More than 90% of product or service advertising posts were original posts, suggesting that organisations appear to use Facebook proactively as a medium for mass advertising, whilst maintaining interpersonal interactions, which are more evident in organisations' commented posts.

Notable statistics include Whittakers high number of interactive marketing posts – its highest (after no marketing activity) with seven posts (21.9% of its marketing posts). Whittakers had five more posts than the next most interactive organisation which is Holden with two

Table 21: Frequencies of organisations' marketing activities

Marketing Activities by Organisation n = 278		Ford	Matter- horn	Rainbow's End	Memphis Belle	Girlfriend Magazine	Cleo Magazine	Roxy Cinema	BATS Theatre	Holden	Weta Workshop	Whittakers	Cadbury	Total
No marketing activity	Count	11	10	3	5	27	4	23	9	4	28	21	14	159
	% within organisation	44.0%	33.3%	60.0%	55.6%	62.8%	36.4%	62.2%	56.3%	30.8%	73.7%	65.6%	73.7%	57.2%
Exclusive FB competition/ sweepstakes/ offer	Count	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
	% within organisation	.0%	3.3%	.0%	22.2%	2.3%	9.1%	2.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.2%
Competition/ sweepstakes promotion	Count	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
	% within organisation	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	7.7%	.0%	.0%	5.3%	1.4%
Sales/ discount promotion	Count	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	7
	% within organisation	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.7%	.0%	.0%	12.5%	15.4%	2.6%	.0%	.0%	2.5%
Product/ service advertising	Count	8	15	1	0	6	1	10	4	3	6	3	3	60
	% within organisation	32.0%	50.0%	20.0%	.0%	14.0%	9.1%	27.0%	25.0%	23.1%	15.8%	9.4%	15.8%	21.6%
Organisation brand advertising	Count	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
	% within organisation	.0%	.0%	20.0%	11.1%	.0%	.0%	5.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.4%
Interactive marketing research	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	7	1	13
	% within organisation	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.3%	9.1%	.0%	.0%	15.4%	2.6%	21.9%	5.3%	4.7%
Other org/brand support/ endorsement	Count	4	4	0	1	4	4	1	1	1	2	1	0	23
	% within organisation	16.0%	13.3%	.0%	11.1%	9.3%	36.4%	2.7%	6.3%	7.7%	5.3%	3.1%	.0%	8.3%
Other	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% within organisation	8.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	0.7%
Total	Count	25	30	5	9	43	11	37	16	13	38	32	19	278

interactive marketing posts (and 15.4% of its marketing posts). Matterhorn and Roxy Cinema have a high number of posts in the product or service advertising category; however, while Roxy Cinema also had a high level of engaging PR activity (such as stakeholder engagement) in their posts that remedies the press-agentry style of product or service advertising, Matterhorn primarily communicates with promotional activities, suggesting that Matterhorn's Facebook page is not as engaging with its fans as other organisations.

PBOs and SBOs were markedly different in their use of marketing activities. While PBO's and SBO's marketing activities such as sales/discount promotion, organisational endorsements and product/service advertising posts were similar (the difference between the two organisations' activities did not exceed 20%), the remaining marketing activities significantly differed by organisation type. PBOs used interactive marketing research posts significantly more than SBOs (92.3% of all interactive marketing posts were posted by PBOs) and posted all of the competition/sweepstake promotions (non-exclusive to Facebook). Conversely, SBOs used exclusive Facebook competition/ sweepstakes more than PBOs (66.7% of all Exclusive Facebook competition posts were posted by SBOs) and posted all of the organisation brand advertising posts. These significant differences suggest there are more marketing differences between PBOs and SBOs than PR differences.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

As the results in the previous section show, Facebook is being used in diverse ways by the New Zealand organisations examined in this research. This chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the research questions and related literature in the PR and social media arena.

5.2 RQ1: How are the Facebook pages of selected New Zealand organisations being used as a communication tool by organisations and their publics?

5.2.1 The prominence of fan communication on organisations' Facebook pages

Social media analysts and scholars continue to point out that Facebook and other social media platforms are changing the way organisations are doing business (Qualman, 2011). Shih (2011) points out that every customer has a voice, that their voice can be widely heard, and thus, companies are having no choice but to “become transparent, responsive and collaborative, or else risk going out of business” (p. 4). As this study progressed, the power of the consumer became apparent. Although organisations were active on their Facebook pages, significantly more posts were made by their Facebook Fans, including original posts and commented posts. It makes logical sense that fans would communicate more often, since there are more fans than there are organisations; however the expectation of the researcher was that the organisations would primarily be facilitating the conversation. Conversely, it was often the fans who were directing the communication happening on the Facebook pages. This finding raises important

issues surrounding stakeholder behaviour and resource management for PR practitioners that are worth discussing.

At the time that the methodology for this research was developed, no studies were found in the PR field that examined how publics communicate on organisations' Facebook pages. Fortunately, as the data for this research was collected, and the importance of fan communication on organisations' Facebook pages became apparent, Men and Tsai's (2011) article went to press, outlining their study of publics' communication activities on Facebook and Chinese social networking site (SNS), Renren. Men and Tsai's (2011) research provided this study with a comparable measure to discuss the dynamics of fan communication and the importance of understanding publics' behaviour in SNS. Men and Tsai's (2011) study identified five elements of public communication (information seeking, unsolicited information, emotional support and expression, advocacy, conflict/criticism/complaints and comments unrelated to the brand/company) that were taken from uses and gratifications theory. This study's findings can be compared to Men and Tsai's (2011) findings, with the exception of the conversation exchange category, which is not directly present in Men and Tsai's (2011) study. Due to this study's larger range of coding categories, the percentages of the two studies are not similar; however, these activities are comparable to each other by ranking order. For example, Men and Tsai's (2011) Facebook results showed that the most popular communication activity observed in their research was emotional support and expression (31.6% of all fan posts), which is comparative to this research's high percentage of experience-sharing (15.1% of all fan posts), positive reinforcements (11.3%) and compliments (10.4%) – the most popular categories for this study after conversation exchange.

Men and Tsai's (2011) next most frequent public communication activity was information seeking (25.1%), which is comparable to this research's asking questions category (9.7%), which is ranked sixth out of 17 categories. The third most frequent communication activity in Men and Tsai's (2011) study was unsolicited information (17.8% of all fan posts), which has comparable features to this study's communication activities of sharing experiences (15.1%) and sharing information (2.6%), as well as a small similarity to conversation exchange (21.1%), which collectively represents a large proportion of fan communication activity in this study; however, one finding of Men and Tsai's (2011) study did not match the findings of this study. While Men and Tsai's study found significant levels of negative communication activity (15.1%), negative communication found in this study – coded as criticism/complaints (2.1% of all fan posts) was minimal. Of course, there is the possibility that organisations are moderating negative comments on their Facebook pages – something that can only be determined if directly interviewing or surveying the organisations analysed.

While two studies are not enough to evaluate significant patterns of fan communication on organisations' Facebook pages, there is enough evidence to suggest that publics are communicating on organisations' pages to interact and engage positively with the organisation as well as the community created around the page. This finding further confirms PR literature that argues SNS are useful communication channels for organisations to foster positive OPRs (J. E. Grunig, 2009); however, although positive and engaging communication appear to be occurring on the sampled organisations' Facebook pages, only a particular segment of the organisations' publics appear to be present on the sampled Facebook pages. This finding raises issues regarding PR discourse surrounding the ability for social media spaces such as Facebook to empower publics, when in fact; social media spaces may only be used by one segment of publics.

The communication analysed on the sampled Facebook pages suggest organisations' core publics are consumers, potential consumers and supporters of their product or service. This is evident from the communication activities happening on these Facebook pages, such as complimenting, using positive reinforcements, engaging in conversations and sharing experiences. Ang (2011) refers to organisational management of this kind of stakeholder communication in online spaces as 'Community Relationship Management'. Ang (2011) argues that online 'customers' differ to offline customers because people engaging online are not necessarily actual customers of an organisation. Instead, the fans may also be supporters of the organisation or brand, or people who want to engage in an online community surrounding the interests of an organisation's social media space.

Identifying Facebook fans as 'customers and community' stakeholders allow organisations to make strategic decisions about the worth of the stakeholders and how much effort should be put into social media spaces such as Facebook. Ang (2011) recommends taking advantage of the online community by integrating marketing research, nurturing opinion leaders and advocates, taking on advertising and PR opportunities to amplify buzz and visibility, and building brand loyalty. Some of these activities are already apparent within the findings of this study, with promotional, advertising, media relations and publicity posts collectively making up around half of all PR and marketing activity posts. Additionally, interactive marketing research was evident in 4.7% of organisations' posts. One specific example is a marketing research post from Whittakers, who asked fans what their favourite Whittakers chocolate was (see Figure 9). The post received 314 comments, showing that organisations can receive quick and easy consumer data.

Figure 9: Whittakers interactive marketing research post



These communication activities can be seen as practical ways to build and manage relationships with 'customers and community' stakeholders in social media spaces; however, this research highlights the need to address what Facebook is not doing for organisations, and that is reaching out to a range of stakeholder groups. For example, minimal organisational posts were coded as issues management posts (2.1% of all PR activity posts) which, in addition to the low level of criticism posts (2.1% of all fan posts), suggest a significant lack of activist publics. Therefore, symmetrical communication in its truest form – that is, communication that generates mutual adaption between organisation and publics (J. E. Grunig, 2000) – may not actually be taking place. Instead, publics' communication on an organisation's Facebook page is merely reinforcing positive messages about the organisation, which is more comparable to two-way asymmetrical communication.

While Facebook users are consumers and potential consumers, and thus, potential economic drivers of commercial organisations, it is also important for PR practitioners to consider how Facebook and other social media spaces are strategically using interactive and engaging communication with publics to reach organisational goals and objectives. The findings of this study highlight the limitation of Facebook as a platform to empower publics other than consumers that affect or are affected by organisations. It is important for PR practitioners to understand how their Facebook fans are engaging on their page to gauge the value of spending

time and resources communicating with these publics. This study shows that while fans' communication is interactive, there is a level of frivolity in their communication, and PR practitioners must calculate the cost-benefits of engaging with these publics. Further research into this area would be useful for understanding how social media spaces such as Facebook create value for PR activities.

5.2.2 Communication activities and organisational effort

An average of 235 posts and a median of 65 posts from fans were posted on each organisation's page over the three week sample period, which raises time and resource considerations for PR practitioners. (N.B. – there is a large discrepancy between the average and median because four organisations had 200 posts analysed while the remaining organisations only had an average of around 50 posts analysed). Some fan posts don't necessarily directly address the organisation, for example; a fan from Weta Workshop posted up a personally designed image to share with the community of like-minded people (see Figure 10), and a Holden fan posted a classified advertisement of a vintage Holden car for sale in the interests of the community (see Figure 11); however the majority of the posts do tend to address or attempt to engage specifically with the organisation.

Figure 10: Whittakers fan post



Figure 11: Holden fan post



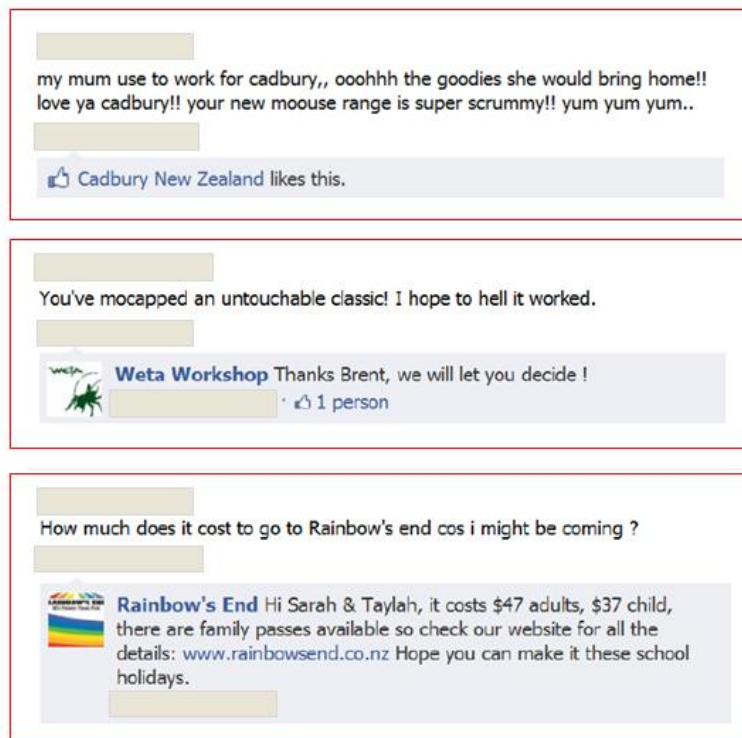
This finding is important in addressing time and resource issues in PR activity. This findings is especially important when viewing it in light of Wright's (2009) study, which revealed nearly half

of the PR practitioners surveyed spent up to 10% of their working day in social media spaces; nearly a third used it up to a quarter of their day and around 10% used it up to half of their day. When looking at these statistics in terms of money spent on wages, there is a considerable amount of soft-costs going into social media maintenance; however, little research in PR has actually gauged the return of investment in spending this time in such spaces. Future research is needed in this area to understand what communication strategies effectively use PR practitioners' time most efficiently.

A positive element that comes out of this research in light of PR practitioners' time spent on social media activities is that fans in this study are communicating in a way that is brief, positive, complimentary or personal, such as sharing an experience related to the organisations and/or its products or services. Organisations in this study varied in their responses to such communication. While Cadbury tended to 'like' compliments and shared experiences, and save actual replies for direct questions or substantial conversation posts, Weta Workshop made the effort of personally replying to all Facebook posts, not matter how phatic the communication was. Conversely, Rainbow's End did not engage with its publics at all unless there was a direct question or customer service posts (see Figure 12 for a comparison of organisation styles). It could be argued that each of these communication patterns on organisations' Facebook pages represent different strategies. Weta Workshop is engaging at the highest level, ensuring publics are acknowledged, nurtured and encouraged to participate; however it requires a lot of time and potential disruption to other PR activities required offline, and could also be unsustainable if the Facebook page gains momentum. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Rainbow's End is ensuring the minimum needs of its publics are met, which saves time and resources, but the organisation is not engaging with its publics beyond the basic needs of customer service.

Rainbow's End is at least providing a space for their publics to interact with each other, but the lack of fan engagement on Rainbow's End's page suggests relationships are not being built between Rainbows End and its publics.

Figure 12: Cadbury versus Weta Workshop versus Rainbow's End - communication style



While Weta Workshop and Rainbow's End's two communication strategies sit at opposite end of a continuum, Cadbury's communication strategy appears to balance the need to save time, engage with its publics, attend to customer service needs, and acknowledge posts such as compliments and shared experiences with minimally engaging gestures such as 'liking' the post.

Examining Roxy Cinema's, Rainbow's End's and Cadbury's Facebook pages demonstrates the diversity of fan communication and emphasises the need to understand how publics are

using and engaging in these spaces (Waters et al., 2009). Although customer service was the second highest PR activity for organisation posts, only around 6.2% of fan posts required customer service from organisations. The majority of fan activity existed around engagement. It is important for organisations to evaluate this and examine the cost-benefit of the relationship-building strategies they choose when engaging in these spaces.

In addition to fan's prominence on organisations' Facebook pages, fans also directly promoted organisations' communication to their own networks, as evident in the extent of @mentions used by fans in this study. Word of mouth communication is seen as one of the most influential marketing strategies in marketing literature, and has been found to be particularly powerful in online social networking environments (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). In light of word-of-mouth literature (see Buttle, 1998), the findings of this study suggest fans are helping to build the organisations' brand awareness by involving their own networks in communication with the organisation via @mentions. Further, the positive and supportive nature of fan communication evident in this study (more than 20% of fan posts were specifically coded as compliments or positive communication, compared to only 2.5% of fans' posts specifically being critical or disagreeing), is likely to be building reputational capital online (Hong & Yang, 2011).

5.2.3 PR versus marketing communication

By analysing how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by organisations, it was important to see if Facebook was being used specifically as a PR tool or whether other elements were being used as well. For the purposes of this study, customer service and recruitment activities were categorised under the umbrella of PR activities, although they are mostly considered separate functions in an organisational setting.

As section 4.12 and 4.13 outline, organisations' Facebook pages utilised PR activities more often than marketing activities (87% of PR activity was present in organisations' posts compared to 42.8% of marketing activity being present). Of the PR and marketing activities combined, stakeholder engagement and customer service (both PR activities) were the most frequent activities, followed by advertising (marketing activity) and event publicity/communication (PR activity). Other prominent activities undertaken on Facebook pages were reputation building (PR), and other organisation/brand endorsement (marketing). When comparing these findings to research such as Men and Tsai's (2011) study, the results are comparable. Men and Tsai's (2011) study found organisation's product and promotion-specific communication was the most frequent communication activity, which is similar to this study's high level of product/service advertising and event publicity/communication.

Stakeholder engagement in this study's PR activity category is similar to conversation exchange in the communication activities category, but differs in that it does not have to be a commented post: it can instead be attempting to engage on a level of interactivity, for example, if an organisation posts a poll or asks a question simply to create engagement opportunities with publics. Contrary to many studies (e.g. - McCorkindale, 2010; Men & Tsai, 2011; O'Connor, 2011), this study shows that organisations are engaging with publics on their Facebook pages at a level beyond customer service or answering direct questions. For example, Men and Tsai's (2011) study found organisations engaged with their Facebook publics by initiating original Facebook posts, but rarely engaged by interacting with user comments. Additionally, the study found organisations primarily used Facebook for product or brand-specific communication. Conversely, this study found a lot of interaction with publics' posts overall (although there were exceptions when looking at individual organisations), and much of the conversation exchanges and

stakeholder engagement were not directly promoting or communicating about the product/service or organisation. For example, Ford’s posts included wishing the All Blacks well for their rugby game, and asking fans what their weekend plans were (see Figure 13). Both posts generated conversation with their fans – one of them purely unrelated to Ford or cars (the All Blacks conversation), while the other ended up generating conversation about how Ford’s fans used their Ford cars on the weekend.

Figure 13: Ford stakeholder engagement posts excerpt



Girlfriend magazine NZ

Stuff we love today: sunshine (because it means we don't turn into icicles when we walk outside); Disney Channel coz they sent us some super cute Mickey Mouse toys; and looking at pics of Joe Jonas' hot new look (sa-weet)!

15 people like this.

 **Girlfriend magazine NZ** Tell us what you're lovin' today too - we wanna know!

Add hot choc and fish 'n' chips in the park for lunch!
1 person likes this

SNOW!!
1 person likes this

Long sunny day at the park.. :L
1 person likes this

warm milk with honey melted into it :P
1 person likes this

The heater, Big Time Rush and food... Hahaha!
1 person likes this

being sick :) gets me out of chores
2 people like this

The 'media relations' category in this study refers to organisations using their Facebook page to post (or link to) media releases or news stories. Although this activity was present, it was not frequently used (5.4% of all PR activities). This finding correlates strongly with other studies

showing that media relations is not being fully utilised on Facebook pages (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009). By not linking media releases and news sites to the organisations' Facebook pages, the literature posits that organisations are missing out on an opportunity to generate dialogue around their organisation to strengthen OPRs (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009); however, creating links to organisations' web sites or news stories about the organisation may not be the only way organisations are increasing reputation or awareness about the organisations' activities. In this study, despite the low frequency of media relations activities, reputation building activities were still reasonably prominent (7.9% of all PR activities). This suggests that organisations may be using other communication activities such as direct conversations to discuss organisational activities usually communicated to publics through media relations activities. For example, Memphis Belle Coffee House posted an announcement about being the best cafe in 2011, rather than linking to a news site or posting an official media release. The post received 67 likes and 11 comments. It is possible that the personalised post was actually more engaging than a link to an official source.

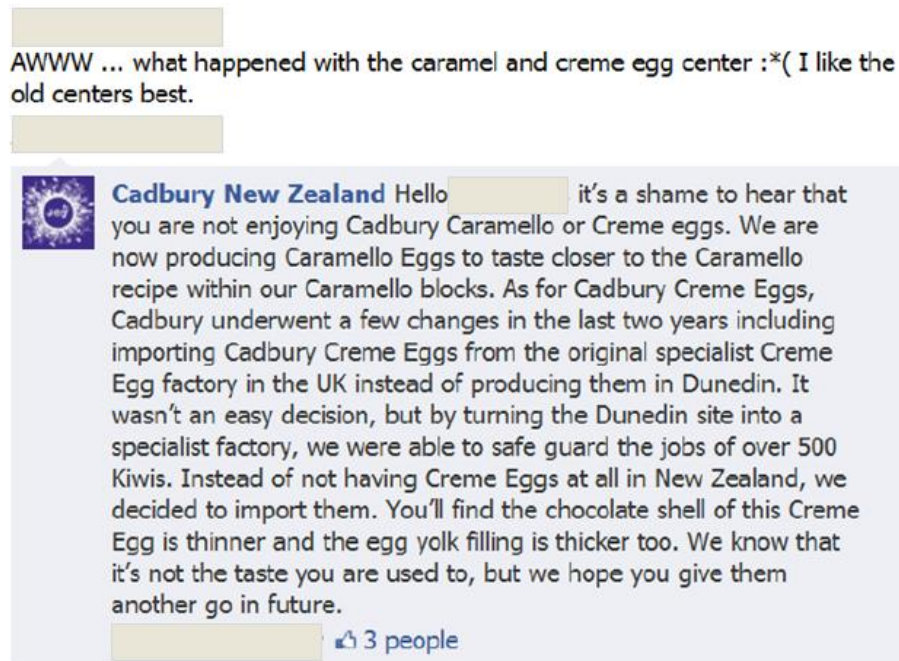
This substitution of media relations activity with alternative communication activity on Facebook highlights the importance of further research into this area. Where traditionally, PR literature has recommended using links and multimedia features to refer to positive organisational material such as media releases and news stories online (Kent & Taylor, 1998), future research may find that personalised, conversational communication better suits social media spaces such as Facebook. Research has already begun to identify the value of conversational voice in social media spaces such as blogs (Kelleher, 2009; Kelleher & Miller, 2006) and should be researched further within SNS platforms.

Figure 15: Memphis Belle announcement post excerpt



Issues management require a current, pressing issue to be present (Heath, 2008b), which is why it is likely that issues management posts in this study were minimal (2.1% of all PR activity posts). Posts that were coded for issues management were at a micro, one-off level, which mostly used communication to mitigate further disgruntlement from fans. For example, Figure 17 below shows how Cadbury responds to a disgruntled consumer. The organisation could have not have responded, or could have simply acknowledged their post; However, Cadbury explained why they were different and expressed their hopes that the consumer would give their new product another chance. This example displays how Cadbury is empathising with the fan, communicating the organisation's reasons for the change of product, and expressing their desire to continue their relationship ("we hope you give [Creme Eggs] another go in the future"). Further, by communicating directly on the Facebook page, Cadbury has gained the support of its other fans. As you can see in Figure 17, the organisation received three likes, while the fan didn't receive any likes.

Figure 16: Cadbury post –issues management post



Of course, the issues analysed in this study were examined at a micro level. A longitudinal or case-specific study would be required to more effectively measure how issues and public affairs are addressed on organisations' official Facebook pages. Nevertheless, the low presence of issues management posts – in addition to the brevity of Facebook posts (74.8% of all posts less than 20 words) – suggest organisations' official Facebook pages are not being used to raise or discuss issues in-depth. As discussed in section 5.2.1 (p. 119), there is an element of frivolity of fan communication, and this frivolity is enhanced by the lack of PR Activities requiring more in-depth communication such as issues management. If important issues are not being discussed in social media spaces such as Facebook, which are argued to be ideal platforms to engage in two-way, balanced communication, where is this communication happening? Despite the accessibility and interactivity that social media platforms promise, the results of this study suggest organisations may be no closer to substantial two-way symmetrical communication than before

they used Facebook in terms of important issues, public affairs and publics other than consumers and fans.

5.2.4 Communication brevity of Facebook posts

The results of this research found organisations and their fans are communicating briefly, with nearly half of all posts featuring less than 10 words. To contextualise the brevity of the communication found in this study, it is useful to compare the results to micro-blogging platform Twitter, which only allows posts of up to 140 characters. If the English language has an average of 5 characters per word (WolframAlpha, 2012), this gives people an average of 28 words per Twitter post. This study shows that people are writing posts on Facebook at lengths less than a Twitter post around 75% of the time.

No studies were found regarding the length of Facebook posts, and Twitter studies do not measure post length because there is already a character limit on the platforms. Conversely, Facebook – at the time of this study – did not have a word limit on its Facebook posts (previously there have been 420 and 1000 character word limits). What some studies have found is that organisations are using public engagement and relationship building activities within the parameters of 140 characters on the Twitter platform (Waters & Williams, 2011; Wigand, 2010; Zhao & Rosson, 2009). This suggests that post brevity does not limit the power of communication on organisations' Facebook pages to strengthen OPRs. Zhao and Rosson's (2009) study even found that micro-blogging within the workplace was seen as beneficial due to the brevity of the communication, which suggests people may be gravitating toward social media spaces because of the brevity and 'punch' of the communication in these spaces. While this study identifies that

organisations and their fans are posting brief communication encounters, it would be beneficial for further research to measure the effects of communication brevity on SNS.

Results also show that organisations are communicating at more length than fans (80.2% of fan's posts are less than 20 words, compared to organisations' 55%), but this might not necessarily be a bad thing, for example – a Cadbury fan asked a question in less than 10 words, but the answer that Cadbury produced was a lot longer (see Figure 17, p. 121). Although Cadbury could have communicated succinctly, the post would not have sufficiently answered the question and quelled further disgruntlement from the fan. This example, however, is the exception. This study reveals that in-depth discourse is not happening on a Facebook's wall, which is further supported by minimal use of issues or public affairs management by organisations discussed previously in section 5.2.3.

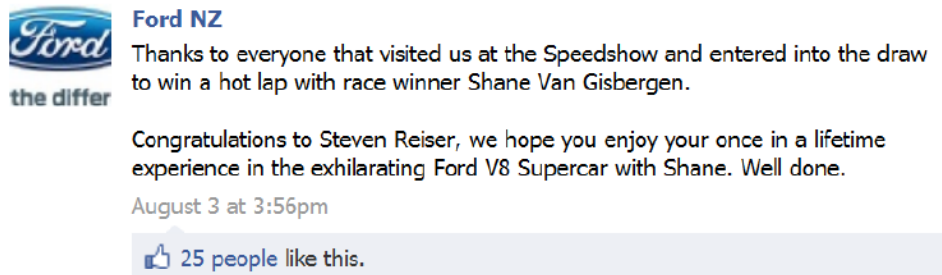
5.2.5 Time and its effect on Facebook activity

Marketing and social software company Buddy Media (2011) released a report with statistics showing that organisations that posted outside of office hours had a 20% more engagement rate than those that did not. The findings of this study do not conform to Buddy Media's statistics in that fans engaged on organisation's pages consistently throughout the day, rather than peaking in the evenings, regardless of whether organisations posted in the evening. The findings also show that Facebook managers are often managing content outside of office hours to keep their Facebook pages active (18.7% of all posts were made outside of office hours), which again, raises issues about organisational resources, and how PR practitioners can most effectively utilise their time.

5.2.6 The Four Models of PR: organisational communication at a micro-level

Grunig (2009) states that new digital media such as social media has dialogical, interactive and relational properties that perfectly suit the strategic management (symmetrical) paradigm of PR. As the findings and subsequent discussion of this research has shown, New Zealand organisations are generally utilising these properties to build and maintain relationships with their publics on Facebook. This dialogical, interactive communication does not appear to be used as 'just another communication tool,' but instead is being used as a medium to drive conversation; however, despite the high levels of interactivity, the results of this study do not necessarily conform to the four models of communication, nor do the results comply with assumptions that two-way asymmetrical communication, by definition, always sways in favour of the organisation (see section 4.11). The results also reveal grey areas in terms of mutual benefit in one-way communication, which brings up questions of the validity of the four models of communication in today's digitalised world. For example, a reasonable percentage of Facebook posts were coded as one-way but mutually beneficial communication, such as Ford's post as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Ford's one-way, mutually beneficial post excerpt



Grunig (2009) has acknowledged the models' weaknesses, and has since moved towards more holistic models public relations that focus on continuums of communication flow (one-way or two-way), type (symmetrical or asymmetrical) and level of mediated or interpersonal communication. These continuums create flexibility in analysing PR activities, particularly online, and align more closely with the findings of this research.

5.2.7 Comparing categorised organisations' communication activities

There have been a small number of studies in online spaces that have examined the differences between organisation or industry segments (Ki & Hon, 2006; O'Connor, 2011; Waters, 2011; Waters et al., 2009). This study was designed so that the sample organisations could be compared by industry segments, as well as based on whether the organisations are primarily product-based organisations (PBOs) or service-based organisations (SBOs); however, neither of these segmentations yielded significant findings that suggested discernible patterns. The only significant communication pattern to emerge from the organisations paired by industry type was that the two magazine organisations (Girlfriend and Cleo), which were found to be the only two organisations that used hugs and kisses symbols in their communication. This exclusive kind of communication on Girlfriend and Cleo Magazine's Facebook pages suggests a particular communication rapport with their fans, but does little to suggest that particular communication strategies are taking place according to industry type. Conversely, the lack of differentiated communication between all organisations instead suggests that organisations appear to be communicating rather generically. That is, although this study has found that organisations are communicating in a variety or diverse and dynamic ways, there is no indication from this study's findings that any particular organisation or industry type is creating unique experiences for their online publics. Of course, communicating in specialised or unique ways may not necessarily be

effective, and the next step for further research in this area would be to measure the effectiveness of different communication strategies – not just in general, but for specific industry types as well.

In order to measure the effectiveness of organisation's different communication strategies requires triangulation research methods that capture Facebook page data, critique organisations' actual communication strategies on Facebook (e.g. – through interviews) and evaluate the success of those strategies by measuring fan's perspectives of the organisation and its associated products and/or services.

The second segment that this study was designed to measure was the communication differences of PBOs and SBOs. As discussed in the literature review (see section 2.6), there is a body of marketing research around how goods-based and service-based organisations should differently market their messages in order to communicate with their audiences. The differentiators between goods and communicating services revolve around tangibility, reliability, storability and ownership of the product (Solomon et al., 2009), and it was these features that interested the researcher of this study in observing if these differences affected communication in social networking spaces.

However, the results of this study found there were minimal patterns within the communication and PR activities. The differences were primarily found in Marketing Activities. Research such as Bodkin's (2004) study has examined and found differences in marketing communication between PBO's and SBO's promotional and company-specific communication strategies. Although this study's categories are not comparable to Bodkin's (2004) research, the findings of this study appear to further support that communication differences between PBOs

and SBOs primarily affect marketing areas such as activities found in Bodkin's (2004) study, rather than PR areas.

Further research on how different types of organisations are communicating effectively on Facebook is worth examining, because some studies have already indicated that there are differences in organisations' communication strategies according to industry or sector type (Bodkin & Perry, 2004; Ki & Hon, 2006; Waters et al., 2009). Because this study did not find significant differences between PBO's and SBO's communication (with the exception of Marketing Activities), it is recommended that further studies explore the differences and effectiveness of communication by organisational sector or industry, where findings appear to result in more significant differences. This type of research will help academics to understand the dynamic and diversity of communication of SNS, and will also be immensely useful and practical for organisations looking to maximise their communication effectiveness and minimise inefficient practices.

5.3 RQ2: How do the communication strategies of selected New Zealand organisations relate to specific relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures as identified in PR literature?

5.3.1 Relationship cultivation strategies

Three elements from dialogic and other relationship-building theory have been identified as effective relationship cultivation strategies in social networking spaces: disclosure, information dissemination and involvement (Waters et al., 2009). Results from studies measuring these strategies found that SNS are ideal platforms for utilising relationship cultivation strategies, but

that organisations are not exploiting these opportunities sufficiently (Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009). The findings of this study appear to support these findings of other studies in this regard.

5.3.1.1 Organisations' disclosure communication strategies

Disclosure as a relationship cultivation strategy refers to the extent that an organisation is open and transparent with its publics, and has been identified as a helpful relationship cultivation strategy for online communication. With regards to disclosure in this study, most of the organisations had information about their organisation and products/services on their Facebook pages, with all organisations listing contact information – whether it was a website or physical contact details. Organisations are also taking advantage of promoting their logo or official branding on their Facebook pages. These identifiers show evidence that organisations are recognising their Facebook pages as official communication platforms of the organisation, and are using the tool as an open and transparent PR tool. By disclosing and promoting their organisations in an official manner, they are minimising damage done to OPRs by nondisclosure, which has been found to negatively affect OPRs in social media spaces (Sweetser, 2010).

Organisations did not generally take advantage of outlining the page purpose – for example stating how the Facebook page is or should be used – which indicates that specific publics are not being targeted; instead, it appears fans are given the freedom to use the page as they feel appropriate or beneficial. This kind of openness may be appropriate for generic organisational Facebook pages, but could present communication implications for organisations that have multiple pages for different purposes, for example, if an organisation had a Facebook page for customer service related inquiries or for alumni employees. It is in these cases that organisations

must be aware of taking control of their media channels to effectively and efficiently manage resources. Whittakers has attempted to subtly direct fans through its more definitive Facebook page title (Whittaker's Chocolate Lovers); however this kind of strategy was the exception.

5.3.1.2 Organisations' information dissemination communication strategies

While previous studies analysing organisation's Facebook pages have coded for presence of relationship cultivation strategies (Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009), this study goes further by studying the extent to which these relationship cultivation activities occur. This study found organisations used multimedia for information dissemination in over a third of all posts, and in the majority of original posts. Many of these links were to the organisations' own websites or Facebook events created by or directly associated with the organisation. As discussed previously and as observed by other studies (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009), findings from this study seem to indicate that links to news sites and media relations were underutilised. Making information available to publics can help to build relationships with publics, as can disseminating information that is useful and interesting to publics (Kent & Taylor, 1998). This principle of interest could be an explanation as to why traditional media relations activity such as posting links to news sites or to the organisations' websites is less frequent. Instead, organisations may have identified that personalised and humanised posts may be more effective. This is supported by the prevalence of information sharing complemented by the presence of announcements. This area needs to be addressed and examined in further research before scholars can continue to claim that not linking to news sites and press releases are missed opportunities.

5.3.1.3 Organisations' interactive communication strategies

Online OPRs have been found to be positively affected by interactivity and the completion of the dialogic loop (Kent & Taylor, 1998). This has continually been identified through online interfaces and communication (Jo & Kim, 2003; Men & Tsai, 2011; Yeon, Choi, & Kioussis, 2007), and subsequently, SNS and other social media are endorsed as effective platforms to build and maintain relationships with publics. The findings of this research demonstrate that interactive elements are beginning to be exploited by organisations to build relationships with their publics. As discussed above, interactive features on organisations Facebook pages such as links, video uploads, and allowing comments to be made on their wall are present. Interactive and involving communication, such as asking questions, engaging in interactive marketing research, and sharing knowledge and information is also present; however, while Waters (2009) asserts that interactive features are not being used enough by organisations to build relationships, research has shown that involvement with publics is perceived to be highest when organisations use text-oriented interactivity (Jo & Kim, 2003). This research is supported by this study's findings which show Matterhorn has a high level of "interactive" posts which link to Facebook events, YouTube videos, links to Podcasts and media releases, but these posts receive minimal interactivity, feedback or responses from fans. The highest level of interactivity on their page came when they posted a text-only description of a new dessert they were offering, and a personalised shout-out to a gig performed the night before (see Figure xx for a comparison).

Figure 18: Matterhorn multimedia posts versus text-only post



This is a prime example of the need to examine interactivity based on communication and involvement levels with the public on an interpersonal level, rather than only in the potential interactivity of a platform and its features. The example also enhances the importance of personalised engagement with publics, which is identified by the majority of the organisations in this study as an important strategy. This is evident in the way the organisations regularly partake in conversation exchanges and interpersonal communication.

5.3.2 Perceived relational outcomes of organisational activity

Successful online relationships are characterised by the degree of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, and communality within OPRs, achieved through two-way communication (Hallahan, 2008). These characteristics of positive relational outcomes appear to be evident in the findings of this study. That original and commented posts were made by both

organisations and fans shows that there is a high level of control mutuality as well as a sense of relationship exchange.

The extent that organisations are sharing knowledge and information and that fans are sharing their experiences shows a level of commitment, while questions being asked by both sides of the OPR displays a mutual exchange relationship; compliments relate to communal relationships and satisfaction, and positive reinforcements also shows a level of satisfaction. Posts with these prevalent communication activities also correlated with a large number with conversation exchange posts. Compliment posts also were also evident in a large number of sharing experience posts. These correlations suggest that two-way communication and engagement are creating positive relationship outcomes, although the reverse could be in effect: that the relationships are already established and subsequently, the identified relational outcomes are evident.

The outcome of trust is a little harder to observe in these findings. As outlined previously in the literature review (see Table 3), exhibiting trust in online spaces requires organisations to maintain integrity (avoiding security or privacy breaches) and be authentic (truthful, consistent, genuine and provide accurate information)(Hallahan, 2008); therefore, trust can only be measured subjectively from those involved with the OPR. Subsequently, this study cannot measure trust in these terms. However, the results of this study can observe building trust online through Hallahan's (2008) relationship indicator measure of using official organisational imagery in online spaces. Organisations in this study have clearly identified the importance of establishing their authenticity through the use of official branding, with ten of the twelve organisations sampled using branded imagery. Thus, it appears organisations are building trust with their fans in this way.

5.3.3 Moving towards measuring how online OPRs affect publics' behavioural outcomes.

The true value of the relationship management paradigm is the shift from measuring communication output and outcomes to measuring relational and behavioural outcomes (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham, 2009b). Before measuring the effects of organisational relationship management activities in social media spaces; however, PR research must first observe how organisations are communicating in social media spaces. Thus, the scope of this study has aimed to contribute to these initial observations by examining how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand. It is now appropriate to discuss this research's findings in light of future directions of relationship management theory and the importance of working towards a framework that measures the value of developing and maintaining online OPRs in social media spaces.

Relationship management theory places OPRs at the core of PR activity. Thus, under the relationship management perspective, measuring the effects of cultivating and maintaining OPRs is fundamental to demonstrating the value of PR activities in an organisational setting. With the fast-changing dynamic of online communication technologies, it is especially important for PR practitioners to understand how they can best utilise their communication efforts with online publics to create value for their organisations; however, there is little, if any, academic PR research that has examined how organisational communication in social media spaces – specifically SNS – creates value for organisations. This study illustrates that, like other studies drawing from relationship cultivation strategies (Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters, Friedman, Mills, & Zeng, 2011), organisations on Facebook are using relationship cultivation strategies such as

disclosure, information dissemination and disclosure to some extent. These organisations' Facebook pages also exhibit communication from fans that appear to demonstrate positive relational outcomes such as satisfaction, commitment and control mutuality at a micro level. However, despite the appearance that organisational communication on Facebook is cultivating OPRs as prescribed by PR literature in this study, there are currently no relationship measures for PR research that examine whether the online communication efforts of PR practitioners are in fact creating value for organisations. Thus, what appears to be a successful relationship building activity at a micro level may not actually be creating value for organisations at a macro level.

In light of relationship management theory in PR (e.g. - Bruning, Castle, & Schrepfer, 2004; Ledingham, 2009a) and previous studies that have produced valid instruments to measure relational outcomes (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ki & Hon, 2006; Ki & Hon, 2007, 2009; Waters et al., 2009), this research has attempted to identify the extent that New Zealand organisations are communicating on Facebook in ways that build and maintain relationships with their publics; however, relationship management theory now needs to be applied to online communication to measure behavioural outcomes based on the relationships built on these online spaces. While research's findings display high levels of positivity and interaction that appear to correlate with positive relational outcomes, Ang (2011) observes that Facebook fans are not necessarily active offline publics for the organisations (e.g. – actual customers). Thus, implications surrounding the cost-benefit of PR efforts in these spaces need to be examined. Are the online publics that organisations are building relationships with being loyal to the company? Are they consuming the organisation's products and services? Are the relationships built online minimising issues, crises or reputational damage? Answering these kinds of questions are going to build the relationship management paradigm and increase its credibility in business and management strategy.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter had discussed the results of this study specifically in relation to the prescribed research questions. The research questions helped to guide the research and subsequent discussion towards examining how Facebook is being used as a communication tool by commercial organisations in New Zealand to build and maintain relationships with their publics. As this discussion section chapter has outlined, the organisations sampled are using Facebook as a communication tool in diverse ways and appear to use relationship cultivation strategies such as disclosure, information dissemination and interactivity to some extent. Additionally, the communication present on the Facebook pages analysed in this study appear to correlate with positive relational outcomes such as satisfaction, commitment, communality and control mutuality; however, the discussion section also brought up issues surrounding time and resource considerations for PR practitioners and discussed the importance of measuring the actual worth of building relationships with online publics. The following chapter concludes the key findings of this research, outlines the limitations of this study and suggests future directions for PR research in relation to organisational communication in social media spaces.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how New Zealand commercial organisations are using Facebook to build and maintain relationships with their publics. The literature review of this thesis led to finding a gap in empirical studies that examined how New Zealand organisations were using Facebook to build relationships with their publics. Reviewing the literature also revealed that communication strategies needed to be identified before they could be evaluated for effectiveness. Thus, research questions were developed to examine how organisations' Facebook pages were being used as a communication tool and how the findings related specifically to relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures. A content analysis was employed to collect data from 1201 Facebook posts from 12 organisations, that would help to answer the research questions. The data was then presented in the results chapter, and further discussed in the discussion chapter, with support from current literature. This chapter now concludes these findings, outlines the limitations of the study and recommends directions for further research.

6.1 Key findings

This study revealed that organisations are communicating in diverse ways. Organisations' interactive and engaging communication was positively associated with relationship cultivation strategies and relational outcomes as defined in PR literature. These findings confirm that social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook are ideal communication channels for New Zealand organisations to build and maintain relationships with their publics.

This study's first research question addressed how Facebook was being used by organisations as a general communication tool:

RQ1: How are the Facebook pages of selected New Zealand organisations being used as a communication tool?

The research revealed that fan activity far outweighed organisations' activity on the Facebook pages. This finding was not initially a major consideration at the beginning of the research; however this study found fan communication affected the way organisations communicated on their Facebook pages. The different communication strategies of the organisations – particularly their response strategies to fan communication– raised important considerations for PR practitioners regarding the cost-benefit of communicating in social media spaces. This observation highlights the need to measure the effectiveness of organisation's social media communication strategies in future research: not just relational outcomes, but also the communication's effect on fans' behavioural outcomes.

Fan communication was similar to Men and Tsai's (2011) findings, but further observations from this study revealed that organisation's pages were not only spaces for fans to engage with the organisation, but also with each other, highlighting a new stakeholder dynamic (customer to customer) for PR practitioners to manage. Of course, there has always been customer to customer communication, but social media provides a space for organisations to observe this communication and take advantage of this visibility.

Organisations used varied communication strategies, but it was clear that Facebook was being used more as a PR channel than a marketing channel. Although advertising and promotion were common, elements of interactive, interpersonal communication were being exchanged

more frequently between organisations and their fans. This is the first PR-focused study researching commercial organisation's Facebook pages that has directly compared PR and marketing activities and shows that further studies would be productive in determining whether organisation's Facebook pages are more effective as a PR-focused, or marketing-focused communication channel. This could be particularly insightful if this direction of research was also applied to different social media platforms such as twitter.

The use of multimedia and media relations-type activities was not frequently used; however, observations of the data suggest that the use of multimedia and media-relations-type material such as interactive elements may not be as important to utilising Facebook and building relationships as some literature suggests. This conclusion supports other studies, which have found organisations do not take full advantage of media release usage and linking opportunities in social media spaces (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009); however, this study revealed that some organisations in this study are using written announcements and reputation-building posts that may be substituting traditional "relationship-building" media such as disseminating an official press release, linking to an external news story or linking to official information on the website. This finding highlights the need for research to further examine alternative media relations-type activities in social media spaces, and identify whether these alternative activities may be more effective in social media spaces than the traditional press release or links to news items.

This research also found that the majority of Facebook posts could— by their word length — be posted on the 140 character-limiting platform, Twitter. This finding demonstrates that — although Facebook does not restrict posts with word limits, organisations are adhering to brief, fragmented communication. Like studies measuring organisations' communication on Twitter

(Waters & Williams, 2011; Wigand, 2010; Zhao & Rosson, 2009), it appears that communication brevity and fragmentation of messages do not limit the power to cultivate relationships with online publics in social media spaces.

This study found that one third of sampled posts were made outside of office hours. Unlike other social media like Twitter and Blogs, organisations – at the time of this research – cannot plan and delay posts on Facebook ahead of time. Of the twelve organisations sampled, only three organisations did not post on their Facebook pages outside of general office hours. This suggests PR practitioners are likely to continue engaging with publics and representing their organisation in their own time, and this raises issues of cost-benefit considerations and resources for organisations.

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of PR were applied to this study at a micro-communication level; however the models did not fit consistently with these four models. Instead, the findings revealed that one-way and two-way communication could asymmetrically benefit the fan at a micro-communication level, and could even mutually benefit the organisation and fans through one-way communication. It is likely that such results would be skewed when looking at them more holistically –for example, while the immediate communication may only have immediate benefits for the fan, it could inevitably build stronger organisation-public relationships (OPRs), which have lasting effects for the organisation in the future. Nevertheless, the high percentage of mutual communication displayed in the results of this study combined with the observed relational outcomes suggests that two-way, balanced communication does have a role to play in relationship management.

Results did not show significant patterns between different types of organisations and their loosely partnered competition. This lack of significance is likely to be from the small sample size,

and further research with larger sample sizes could result in significant findings. Differences between SBOs and PBOs were only significantly found within Marketing Activities. This confirms that using service-based and product-based marketing differentiators in PR do not need to be considered when considering communication and relationship-building strategies, although further research of the differences between SBO's and PBO's Facebook pages from a marketing perspective could be worthwhile.

RQ2: How do the communication strategies of selected New Zealand organisations relate to specific relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures as identified in PR literature?

The second research question in this study sought to relate the findings of the research with previous literature that defines relationship cultivation and relational outcome measures. This study found that organisations used relationship cultivation strategies such as disclosure, information dissemination and interactivity to a large extent, but not necessarily in the form that relationship cultivation strategies traditionally identify. For example, text-based announcement posts would sometimes be used to inform publics instead of links to official information sources such as a news story or press release. Organisations and their fans' communication activities were also found to compare with successful relationship outcomes of satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality, and relationship exchange and communality as defined by PR literature.

This study supports the notion that SNS are ideal platforms to engage and interact with publics to build and maintain relationships. The study concludes that – in relation to relationship cultivation studies, relational outcomes and relationship management theory – the organisations'

pages are producing communication that appears to cultivate relationships with positive relational outcomes; however, there is a lack of understanding in PR literature surrounding whether developing “successful” OPRs online is valuable for organisations, and further research into how online OPRs create value for organisations needs to be undertaken.

6.2 Limitations

Substantial measures were taken to refute the limitations of this study; however, due to the time and resource constraints of this research, there are some limitations that affect the findings of this research. One limiting factor is the small sample of organisations, which means the study cannot be a representative sample of commercial New Zealand organisations. Additionally, the selection and capping criteria meant some bias was present in the sampling process; however, this sampling method was a calculated decision that served its purpose in providing an insightful snapshot of how some New Zealand organisations were communicating on Facebook. The study worked sufficiently to examine the research questions of this study and direct further research in the area of how SNS in the public relations field.

Although this study never sought to measure the effects of communication, measuring the manifest content of communication outputs means this study was unable to measure the intention or attitudes from the communicating participants (i.e. – organisations and fans). Thus, while this research can formulate judgements about Facebook’s potential as a PR tool, it cannot make assumptions about PR practices in the workplace without further research that draws from interviewing or surveying methods.

6.3 Future research directions

It is evident from the results in this study that research now needs to take the next step and measure what communication strategies mostly effectively build online OPRs. Additionally, research needs to further explore whether building and maintaining online OPRs is actually creating value for commercial organisations: Are the fans that organisations are communicating with consuming the organisation's products or services? Do the fans increase awareness and endorse the organisation to others? Are they loyal to the company? Are the relationships maintained on Facebook giving organisations reputation capital that is influencing decisions when issues and crises occur? Researching these areas will help build the relationship management paradigm and increase its credibility in business and management strategy. Additionally, understanding these areas of research will help to critically evaluate the cost-benefits of organisations communicating on SNS, and reveal the true value of engaging in these social media spaces.

Some less obvious areas for further research also emerged. This research observed that while organisations did not take full advantage of the interactive and multimedia aspects of Facebook. While studies have suggested these interactive, multimedia features should be fully utilised to enhance online OPRs (Men & Tsai, 2011; Waters et al., 2009; Waters et al., 2011), this study observed that some organisations are substituting traditional PR activities on Facebook – such as linking or uploading press releases or links to news stories – with more informal and interpersonal approaches, such as personable announcements and text-based reputation building posts. As this finding is more of an observation than a conclusion, it would be worth exploring the traditional role of press releases, news links and other media relations-type activities in relation to online relationship-building research, such as Kent and Taylor's (1998)

online dialogic principles, and Jo and Kim's (2003) study which found insignificant correlations between effective relational outcomes and multimedia use.

Another area for further study is the effects of fan communication and its effect on organisations' communication and relationship-development strategy decision-making. It was clear that the Facebook pages analysed in this study were used differently by both fans and organisations. Further research should now look into what is the most effective strategy, or what kinds of strategies create the most ROI. Are there any lasting effects to minimal engagement and activity on organisations' Facebook pages? And just as importantly, does this differ according to different types of organisations? While this study found little significance in the small sample observed, other studies have found correlations between industry and sector type (Ki & Hon, 2006; O'Connor, 2011; Waters, 2011; Waters et al., 2009), and would be worth exploring this aspect in further research.

6.4 Concluding comments

This thesis has aimed to contribute to literature relating to how SNS are being used as a communication tool by examining how commercial organisations build and maintain relationships with their publics. The study's findings revealed some new insights that – although are not representative – nevertheless provide a base for further research to be conducted. It is time for studies within the PR and relationship management paradigm to move from studying how SNS can be used to build and maintain relationships with publics, to measuring the actual relational outcomes, and how it affects organisations' bottom line. If PR research does not measure the value of PR activities, the PR industry cannot enhance the validity and credibility of its profession; thus, it cannot enhance its ongoing pursuit of establishing itself as a strategic management function of organisational practice.

7. APPENDIX A:

FACEBOOK PAGE CODING CHART AND INSTRUCTIONS

7.1 Coding Chart 1: Individual Facebook pages

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2.	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation name		[Text]
4.	Type of organisation	Product Service Difficult to determine	1 2 3
5.	Organisational info	Purpose of page Description of organisation Description of product/service History of organisation Contact details	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
6.	Number of fans		00000
7.	Additional applications	Active applications Inactive applications Personalised applications Default applications	00 00 00 00
8.	Profile picture	Logo Branded Image Unbranded image	1 2 3
9.	Other pages liked by the org		00

7.2 Coding Chart 1: Detailed instructions

Code 1: 21 days of material from each Facebook page will be downloaded by XX. When the grab of each organisation occurs, the date needs to be recorded, along with the exact time. This will allow analysis of the page to be accurate. For example, Facebook often measures time using “XX minutes ago.” Therefore, knowing the exact time and date is important.

Code 2: Write the organisation’s name as it appears on the Facebook page.

Code 3: ‘Description of organisation’ refers any information about the organisation that describes what kind of company it is. It is likely to come under the categories of *description*, *about*, *founded*, *company overview*, *mission* and *general information*.

‘Description of product/service’ refers to any information about the product or service the organisation sells and may come under the *products* category or any of the aforementioned categories.

‘History of organisation’ refers to any information that talks about how the company used to be. This may include when it was founded, older products or services or previous names. Again, this could be under any of the above categories in the Info section of the Facebook page.

‘Contact details’ will warrant a ‘yes’ if there is any information under ‘info’ or a ‘welcome’ application that allows users to contact them. This includes an address, phone number, fax, email, other social media account or website.

Code 4: An organisation will be considered goods-based if the product is primarily selling something that is tangible, and can be stored, reused or owned by the customer. Fonterra is a clear example of an organisation that primarily sells a product (milk). A less clear example is a fast-food organisation like McDonalds. McDonalds would be considered an organisation that sells a product because you are primarily consuming its product; the burger and fries are the primary outcomes of your purchase – not the person who served you.

An organisation will be considered service-based if the product (i.e. – the service) is not tangible, is purchased and consumed simultaneously or cannot be owned by the customer. VTNZ is a clear

example of an organisation that is service-based. It does not sell you anything other than examining your car to pass its warrant of fitness. An organisation such as Telecom is less clear cut; nevertheless, Telecom would be a service-based organisation because their primary product is to provide you with access to a connection to technology (phone and Internet). Although Telecom sells phones and accessories, these are not necessarily their products (therefore they are a service providing you with a product), and their stores are used to help customers with phone selections, issues with phones and connections, and other service-based offerings.

All organisations should be able to fit under these two categories based on the organisation's *primary* purpose (to sell services or goods). If the coder feels that the organisation cannot be distinguished by one purpose over another (i.e. – the organisation equally sells services and goods), the organisation can be coded under 'difficult to determine.'

Code 5: The number of fans are to be recorded based on how many fans were on the page at the time of the Facebook 'grab.'

Code 6: An application is defined as "a complete, self-contained program that performs a specific function directly for the user" ('application program', n.d.). An application on Facebook is a software program used within the Facebook interface to enhance the Facebook experience. For the purposes of this study, the applications analysed will be the applications visible on the far left-hand tab under the profile photo.

An application is considered 'default' if it is one of the main applications designed by Facebook and appears by default on a Facebook page. This includes *Wall, info, photos, events, videos, discussions, notes, links, and questions/polls*. Any others are considered 'personalised' applications.

An active application refers to an application that has been used. The application may not have been used recently, but if the application is used at all, it is considered active. If any application is visible on the organisation's Facebook page (on the left-hand column of the page), but has not been used once, it is considered inactive.

Code 7: A logo refers an image that officially represents the organisation. This may include a picture or text, or a combination of the two. A photo refers to a photographic image, which may

or may not include text or extra graphics. Other image refers to any image that is not a logo or photographic image as described above. This may include but is not limited to cartoon characters, drawings, and text or logos that aren't officially the organisations'.

8. APPENDIX B:

FACEBOOK POST CODING CHART AND INSTRUCTIONS

8.1 Coding Chart 2: Facebook posts

#	Category	Description	Numerical ID
A.	Post code	Original post Comment	Px PxCx
B.	Poster ID	Individually assigned a number ID	1,2,3,4...
C.	Date of post		Month, Day
D.	Time of post		00:00am/pm
E.	Links	No link – go to 14 Facebook event or page Facebook app @mention News site Social media site Org's own social media site Org's own website Other website (specify)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
F.	Additional multimedia added to post	None Pictures Video Question/poll Other	0 1 2 3 4
G.	Number of likes	Not applicable Visible number of likes	N/A 0,1,2,3,4...
H.	Word count		0+
I.	Tone contextualisers	None Happy/laughter expression Sad/crying expression Angry/frown expression Surprised/amazed expression Wink Tongue poke Other facial expression Kisses or hug symbols Other action-acronyms (specify) LOL/Laughter onomatopoeia Hmm/mmmm/oh/oooohhhh onomatopoeia Whoo/woohoo onomatopoeia Other onomatopoeia (specify) Excessive punctuation Picture symbols (specify) Other (specify) Unsure of use of contextualiser (specify)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 11 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

J.	Communication activities	Positive reinforcement Compliment Criticism Disagreement Neutral statement Resolve issue/complaint response Ask question Respond to question Conversation exchange Directive Announcement Suggestion/recommendation Share knowledge/info Share experience Publicity Spam Other (specify) Product/service issue	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
K.	Communication style (for orgs only)	One-way comm., benefits org, little-no benefit to fan. One-way comm., benefits fan, little-no benefit to org. One-way comm., benefits org and fan. Two-way comm., benefits org, little-no benefit to fan. Two-way comm., benefits fan, little-no benefit to org. Two-way comm., benefits both org and fan. Difficult to specify	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
L.	4 Models	Press Agency Public information Two-way asymmetrical Two-way symmetrical Difficult to determine	1 2 3 4 5
M.	PR activity (for orgs only)	No PR activity Customer service Stakeholder engagement (Social) media relations Issues/public affairs management Reputation building Event publicity/communication Charity support Recruitment Other (specify)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
N.	Marketing activity (for orgs only)	No marketing activity Exclusive Facebook competition/sweepstakes/offer Competition/sweepstakes promotion Sales/discount promotion Product/service advertising Organisation advertising Interactive marketing research Other org or brand support/endorsement Other (specify)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
O.	Post description	5 words or less	text

Coding Chart 2: Detailed instructions

Code A: A post is considered an 'original post' if the post has been made directly onto the organisation's wall. Each original post will be coded to a number preceded by 'P' (post).

The post is considered a 'comment' if the post has been made in reply to an original post. These posts will be coded by adding the code of the original post with the unique number for the comment that is preceded by a 'C' (comment). For example, if the original post was 'P8,' then the first comment under the post would be 'P8C1', and the second comment would be 'P8C2' and so forth.

Code B: Each username will be assigned a unique number that represents them for each post they create on an organisation's page. When coding, type the username of each post. These can then be assigned a unique number using the find and replace function in Microsoft Office.

Code C: The date of the post can be written by recording the month followed by the day. If there is no specific date – Facebook sometimes states the date as 'today' or 'yesterday' or 'Saturday' – then cross the word with the appropriate date based on the date of the Snagit capture.

Code D: The time of the post can be recorded using 12-hour time followed by the am or pm to indicate the time of day. If there is no specific time, i.e. – Facebook sometimes states the time as '23 minutes ago' or '18 hours ago' – then cross the time with the time of the Snagit capture to source the appropriate time. If it is vague, for example '4 hours ago', you would state the time as a full 4 hours ago, so if the Snagit capture was at 6.34pm, the time would be 2.34pm.

Code E: If the post does not include a link, code it as '0' and continue on to code F. A post is considered a link post if it contains a link to another space on the Web.

A link that refers to a Facebook event or page is a link that takes us to a different Facebook page that has been created by a user that is not an @mention.

A link that refers to a Facebook application is a link that takes us to an application site that is embedded within Facebook's interface. The post can often be distinguished by the application asking for access to personal information when the link is clicked, or the Facebook URL will start with "apps.facebook.com/..."

An @mention is when a Facebook user's name or page has been mentioned in the post and is hyperlinked to the Facebook user's profile. This is easily identifiable as names of the Facebook users linked are highlighted in blue.

A link that refers to a news site is a link that comes from any legitimate news site. A news site is a site that officially disseminates news. An example is the Stuff website, which is written and published by employed journalists who are bound by the ethics of journalism; however, the Blog "The Wellingtonista" would not be an official news site because although it contains news, its news is not bound by the ethics or codes of journalism.

A link to a social media site includes, but are not limited to, video sharing sites (YouTube, Vimeo), blog sites (Blogspot, Blogger), microblog sites (Twitter), photo sharing sites (Flickr), URL sharing sites (Delicious, Digg), or social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn). If the social media site is not an official site of the organisation, it should be coded '5', and if it is an official social media site of the organisation analysed, it should be coded '6'.

A link that refers to an organisation's own website is a link that goes to an external page of Facebook that belongs to the organisation being analysed that is owned and run by them or a representative individual. This can be identified through their branding, URL name, contacts and other aspects displayed that shows the site is credible as an official website. Any other website that does not fit into the above categories should be coded as '8' under 'other website' and specified.

Code F: A post is considered to be a picture post if it contains an image that has been uploaded onto Facebook. The post may contain words above the image but there should be no words to the right of the image.

A post is considered a video post if it contains a video that has been uploaded or recorded directly onto Facebook. Like a picture post, there may be words above the post, but none to the right of the video.

A post is considered a question or poll post if it uses the default Facebook tab. This is visible when the word "asks" follows the user name and precedes the question, which is hyperlinked. You may see a range of answers in the form of a bar graph below.

Links have been addressed previously, and if the post contains a link, the coder should not be considering it under this section.

Code G: A "like" on Facebook is when someone pushes the 'like' button under a post to show their support, agreement or interest in a post. The number of likes on an original post is seen by a

thumbs up symbol, and will follow with the number of people who like the post. Sometimes it will say that a name likes the post or it will say a few names and X amount of other people like a post. You will need to add the number and the people mentioned to code the correct number of likes. In a comment post, the number of likes are shown by the number after the thumbs up symbol at the bottom of the post.

Code H: The number of words in each post can be analysed by copying and pasting the post into a word document to read how many words it is, or by manually counting the words. A link embedded in the post (as opposed to as a link shown below the post), is counted as one word. An emoticon or symbol (i.e. a heart symbol) is also counted as one word. Each @mention should be considered one word, even if the Facebook username is two or more words.

Code I: See Appendix C for a comprehensive chart of tone contextualisers.

To clarify some categories: excessive use of punctuation can be categorised as such when punctuation marks are consecutively repeated three times or more with the exception of fullstops, which need five or more repetitions before being coded as excessive. Symbols representing profanity instead of words should not be coded as excessive punctuation. If there are symbols or acronyms that the researcher does not understand or is unsure of its use, it can be coded as 19, and specified.

Onomatopoeia are words that represent sounds. Words like 'Yay' 'Mmmmm' and 'whoooo' are examples of onomatopoeia. Picture symbols are when a selection of symbols are used together (like how emoticons are created) to create pictures. Common picture symbols are fish, roses, boobs, hearts, cartoon characters, faces, hand signs and arrows.

Finally, it is worthy to note that action acronyms are acronyms that describe the reader doing an action. It is not a shortened expression, for example OMG (oh my god/goodness) or FML (f*** my life).

Code J: This section can have multiple coding entries if the communication has multiple purposes.

Positive reinforcement are posts whose sole reason is to reinforce another post through positive association. Positive reinforcements can be identified by positive emoticons (☺), symbols (Cool!!!) or onomatopoeia ('Whooo'). It could also use agreement words like 'yuss' or 'I agree', or encouragement words like 'good work' 'same!' or 'I'm with you on this one, Mr Smith.' Positive reinforcement can agree with negative content or opinions, but still uses supportive language.

These posts do not add any more value to the conversation/ communication than portraying positive reinforcement.

Dictionary.com defines a compliment as “an expression of praise, commendation, admiration... [and] respect.” A Compliment post can be coded by this definition.

Criticism posts are characterised by their negative content or tone and will include complaints, insults or negative assertions. Criticism posts do not have to be offensive or unsightly communication – a polite customer issue or complaint can still fall under this category. Disagreement posts differ from criticism posts usually because the post disagrees with an opinion, statement or suggestion, rather than a complaint of a product or service. Disagreement posts will often have language like; no, nah, I disagree, I don’t reckon, no way, or other disagreeing language.

A neutral statement is a fact or piece of information that has no bias. It will also be a dormant statement that does not call for action, behaviour or opinion changes or discussion. Neutral statements will likely state a fact (“I walked past the Sky Tower today”), but may not be the only criteria for this category.

Resolves issue/complaint response posts are posts that either a) directly respond to an issue or complaint (coded 4), or b) lessens conflict through mediation-type communication. This could be something like reminding people that profanity is not tolerated on a page, or telling people to calm down or direct people to another space in order to lessen tension or conflict.

Ask a question posts are coded based on whether the communication asks a direct question. Because content analysis measures manifest content, rhetorical questions should also be considered as question posts. Coding other communication purposes is likely to display the use of language in this way. Dictionary.com (2011) defines a question as “a sentence in an interrogative form, addresses to someone in order to get information in reply” (definition 1).

A post can be coded as responding to a question if the post directly answers, or attempts to answer a post that asks a question.

Conversation exchange posts can be coded if the post responds to another post when the post being responded to does not directly seek an answer, i.e. – the previous post will not have asked a direct question, and the responding post will seek to relate to the post, not answer a question. This code will primarily be a comment post. The purpose of the communication would be to engage with other individuals’ comments to generate conversation (as a process or as an outcome). The post is not likely to be expected or needed, but will likely enhance the communication experience for the poster and the commenter.

Directive posts are defined as “communication which initiates or governs action, conduct, or procedure” (thefreedictionary.com). E.g. - “click on this link to file a complaint.”

Suggestion posts may suggest a solution, answer, improvement or new idea. It is distinguished from a statement or directive because it *seeks* action (unlike a statement) but does not specifically *order* action (unlike a directive).

Announcement posts make a formal statement about an event or occurrence when the intention is to formally make a notification. In its true form, an announcement could be every post that is posted on a Facebook page, but for the purposes of this research, an official notification of a specific occurrence or event.

A suggestion or recommendation post differs from (but can be in association with) complaints or criticisms because they offer a solution or proactive suggestion on an improvement. Suggestion posts may be completely void of negativity and simply suggest something the poster would like to see happen, e.g – a new product or product variation, a request for a store or service in their area or perhaps the poster is recommending to use a certain product or service.

Sharing knowledge/information posts are coded based on the post's purpose to share information directly or indirectly relevant to the analysed post. This may be sharing a link to a YouTube video, a news story or online media release. Sharing the information has no personal benefit other than to engage others in a topic or idea that may be of interest to the network. Sharing information differentiates from promotion because the intention of the communication is to share knowledge or information, not to sell it.

Sharing an experience may be negative, neutral or positive but the post will clearly demonstrate sharing one's personal experience or narrating an experience they've heard about.

Publicity posts can be coded as such when the intention of the communication is to promote a product or service. The post does not have to endorse the organisation under analysis – it could be spam which is trying to promote its own product, or it could be the analysed organisation endorsing another product. If the intention is to sell (or persuade audiences e.g – to attend an event) rather than communicate, it can be coded as publicity.

Sharing information irrelevant to the organisation is considered spam. This may be a post that communicates messages or ideas apparently irrelevant to the organisation and its industry, products, services, competition, suppliers or other relevant aspects. An example would be a post about a new lip balm product that is posted on a Facebook page representing a telecommunication company. This post may, however, be relevant if the poster said "This keeps my lips nice and moisturised when I'm talking on your XX mobile all day" or is a product sponsored by the telecommunication company.

Purposes of communication that do not come under any of the above categories should be coded as 'other' and specified what kind of communication the coder believes the post reflects.

Code K: The coding for these categories should only occur if it is an organisation post. The categories are reasonably self explanatory within the coding chart. When coding, measure the direction of the communication, and who the communication primarily benefits. If it is difficult to determine who benefits more from the communication, it should be coded as mutual benefits. Remember to measure this at a micro-communication level: what is directly happening within the post? If it doesn't appear to benefit anyone, it can be marked as difficult to specify.

Code L: This category should be coded only if it is an organisation post only. This category is modelled after Grunig and Grunig's (1992) four models of communication, and applied at a micro-communication level.

Posts should be coded as 'press agency' when the communication is biased and persuasive in order for the organisation to directly benefit. The post is likely to appear to be or expect one-way communication only. Examples of press agency may be traditional marketing techniques like promotion, advertising, or connecting irrelevant information or events to their product with the purpose of persuading others to purchase or use their product.

Public information posts will appear to be informative in nature and not use unbiased language. These posts will also appear to be or expect one-way communication only. Public information posts are likely to appear in the form of sharing links, documents (such as news releases on their website), and information about the organisation without it using language that favours the organisation. For example, a link to the organisation's website page saying "check out our new website" would be a public information post, but if the link was accompanied by "Check out the hottest new website in town," it would be considered a press agency post.

Two-way asymmetrical posts will be interactive and engaging, however, the purpose of the post will appear to benefit only the organisation, and not appear to fulfil their public's needs as well. These types of posts are likely to be engaging question posts that help the organisation know their public's better to sell them a product or improve their services. Although this may benefit the customer/Facebook fan indirectly, the primary function is to help the organisation. An example of a two-way asymmetrical post is when Whittakers might ask: "what new flavour would you bring to the Whittakers chocolate family?" the interactivity allows the organisation to do some informal consumer research and help them enhance their products.

Two-way symmetrical posts will be interactive, engaging and appear to mutually benefit the organisation and public. The posts will appear to strive to maintain long-term relationships and

help the public with their needs. Examples of two-way symmetrical posts would be a post that answers questions of a public, or a reply back to compliments or communicates that they will act on publics' concerns or issues.

Any post that is found too difficult to classify into one of these four categories can be coded as 'difficult to specify.'

Code M: This category should be coded only if it is an organisation post only. This category aims to discover what kind of PR activity is being carried out on organisations' Facebook pages.

Customer service posts help people who have questions or issues with the product or service the organisation provides. This could be responding to a customer complaint or product suggestion, directing users onto more information, or sending updates of products or services that aren't promotions, like a recall or a service update.

Posts that deal with stakeholder engagement seek to engage directly with their Facebook fans. This could be like asking a question to acquire opinions or generate discussion, replying to compliments, thanking commercial partners, linking in charities to posts and other pots that involve the Facebook fans. Stakeholder engagement posts are likely to be reasonably positive, and contribute viewing the organisation positively.

Media relations posts refer to any posts that link any media material about their organisation, product or industry to the Facebook page. This may be a media release from their website or a story from a news site or page.

Posts that deal with issues or public affairs appear to discuss, remedy or highlight pertinent issues to the organisation, or subjects the organisation appears to support or have concern for. It also includes posts that deal with issues or public affairs brought up by other users on their page. For example, a post from McDonalds may be that they are responding to criticisms of a new fatty burger and have decided to take it off the menu. Another example might be an apology, for example Cadbury might have posted an apology to their Facebook for changing their packaging and ingredients without advertising or recognising such.

Reputation building posts appear to raise the reputation of the organisation by posting information that puts the organisation in a positive light. This may be announcing an award the organisation or an employee received, highlighting any corporate social responsibility activities or sharing positive survey results or statistics about their organisation, product or service.

Event publicity posts will advertise, promote or encourage attendance to organisational events. It could be posting Facebook event, or telling people that tickets are selling fast! It could be asking to support a cause they are associated with, or promise free giveaways or competitions

associated with an event. An event can be defined as an occasion that has a planned time, place and agenda.

Charity support posts promote or mention a charity or non-profit name, cause or event with the apparent intention to help that cause. Charity support posts should not just be mentioned to benefit the organisation. For example, a post saying: “We just donated \$10,000 to the Red Cross for Christchurch” does not benefit the charity, but the organisation. The post would need to say, for example: “The Red Cross needs money for Christchurch. Support our country by donating here...” to qualify as being a charity post.

Any post that do not fall under any of the above categories should be labelled as ‘other’ and specified by a keyword relevant to the post as identified by the researcher. If there is no PR activity apparent in the post, it should be coded as ‘no PR activity.’

Code N: This category should be coded only if it is the organisation under analysis’ post. This category aims to discover what kind of marketing activity is being carried out on organisations’ Facebook pages.

Exclusive Facebook competition posts offer some sort of competition, sweepstakes or offer that can only be entered through the Facebook page. Exclusive Facebook offers can often be identified by the terms of the offer: exclusive Facebook offers often ask the user to either ‘like’ their page or post to go in the draw, post a reply to the post, directly state ‘exclusive Facebook offer’, or ask user to @mention their page in their posts to friends.

The general sweepstakes/competition post will likely be advertising the competition or offer as a post with a link or instructions on what to do. The offer will not be exclusive to Facebook activity and may include buying products and entering codes, filling in a form or other activities outside of Facebook.

Sales/discount promotion posts advertise special deals on products or services. They refer directly to a product or service and seek to inform readers of specials that are related to the direct selling of product or service.

Product or service advertising posts advertise a specific product or service as a brand without reference to price promotions or specials. An example of this would be a Coke ad. Coke advertisements never advertise a sale; they only advertise the product to remind customers that the brand is available. Organisation advertising is the same as product or service advertising, except the focus is on the brand of the organisation itself. For example, while the ad with the Ghana man and white woman advertises Cadbury’s product Peppermint and Ghana, the drumming Gorilla advertisement advertises the organisation Cadbury.

Interactive marketing research posts engage Facebook users with questions, links to surveys or other methods to obtain informal market research. It could be mass interaction (“what’s your favourite flavour?”) or it could be personal (“Hi, Sally, where did you find out about this page?”).

Sponsor/partner brand support is similar to Charity support in the PR Activities category, except with commercial partners. Posts are not considered partner brand support if the organisation mentions the brand name if the name is part of the event’s name, for example, the Montana WoW awards or Air New Zealand Fashion week. Sponsor/partner brand support needs to actively mention or support their commercial sponsors or partners.

Any other posts that do not fit under any of the above categories should be coded as ‘other’ and specified by a keyword relevant to the post as identified by the researcher. If there is no marketing activity apparent in the post, it should be coded as ‘no marketing activity.’

Code O: this is an opportunity to enhance the data with keywords based on the researcher’s observation, and should be less than 5 words.

9. APPENDIX C:

TONE CONTEXTUALISER CHART

This chart helped the researcher to identify emoticons and other tone contextualisers during the coding process.

Icon	Meaning
>:] :-) :) :o) :] :> =] =) :} :^) >:D :-D :D x-D xD X-D XD ==D	Happy/laughing
: '(;*(:- (: (:-c :c :-< :< :- [:[:{	Sad/crying
>:o >:O :-O :O	Surprised/amazed
>:[>:\ >:/ :-/ :-\ :/ :\ =/ =\ : D:< >:(>:-C >:C >:O D-:< >:- (:-@ >:] ;-) ;) *-) *) ;-[;] ;D	Angry/frown
:S	Wink
:S	Confused
>:P :-P :P X-P x-p xp XP :-p :p =p :-P :P :-b :b	Tongue poke
X xxx :X :-* :* *kiss* <kisses> <K>	Kisses
() <hugs> *hugs* <h> xoxo	Hugs
LOL lol lolz lols Haha ha hee hehe heh Baahaha Mwahahaha teehee	LOL/Laughing onomatopoeia
Hmmm, mmmm, ummmm,	Thinking/delicious onomatopoeia
Whoo wooo woohooo whoop Weee whoa yipeee whipee,	Whooping onomatopoeia
Yikes ugh pffft ewww meh shhhh humph psst	Other onomatopoeia e.g's
!!! ??? ??! \$\$\$:)))	Excessive punctuation
<laughs> <gasp> <gulp> <shifty eyes>	action e.g's
LMFAO (laughing my f**king arse off) ROFL (rolling on floor laughing)	Other Acronym action e.g's
<°))>< (<'))><	Fish
<3 <33333333 ♥	Hearts
@}-;-'----	Rose

10. APPENDIX D:

EXAMPLE OF FACEBOOK SNAGIT CAPTURE

Nb: The clarity of the image is reduced compared to the PDF version.



Wall

Info

Friend Activity

Photos

Discussions

Reviews

Events

About
 Flight Coffee's ultimate coffee house in Wellington!

1 check-in

2,029 like this

Likes See All


Flight of the Conchords


Flight Coffee


SWEET MIX KIDS


Two Fish Cafe


RadioActive.fm

Create a Page

Add to My Page's Favorites

Subscribe via RSS

Report Page

Share

Memphis Belle Coffee House
Like

Restaurant/Cafe · Wellington, New Zealand







Wall
Memphis Belle Coffee House · Most Recent ▾



Memphis Belle Coffee House
 Memphis Belle boys, Bink, Steve and Nick went to Auckland to check out the Cafe scene..... Loved the sky tower, huge, changed their lifes..... every where you go, oh there it is, sky tower, YEAH SKY TOWER GO SKY TOWER. Must of cost them a good 2k to build. Fist person to come in tomorrow 5 / 8 / 11 and shout EAHHHH SKY TOWER! Gets a free brew.
 Thursday at 11:29pm

12 people like this.



All Good Bananas YEAHHHHHHHH SKY TOWER
 Friday at 12:12pm



Sean Ross Memphis Belle Coffee House Auckland? (dare I dream it?)
 Friday at 4:34pm



Will Watterson
 Yo Memphis! What time do you guys open on a monday morning?
 Thursday at 12:10am

Memphis Belle Coffee House 7am Mon - Fri, 9am Sat - Sun. Someone will be there with their arms wide open waiting for you Will..
 Thursday at 11:08am

Memphis Belle Coffee House Say Sky Tower
 Thursday at 11:30pm

Will Watterson Haha, I'ma still be in bed then yo ;)



Brendan John Hurley
 read about you guys in this girls blog!!!



I am Marley - I'm a bit awkward
 marleymerton.tumblr.com
 Does it bother you when you humiliate yourself without knowing it? It doesn't reeeaaally bother me but it did happen to me the other day at my new local coffee house - Memphis Belle (<http://www.facebook.com/memphisbellicoffeehouse>) and I have to admit that I was embarrassed.
 August 1 at 11:54pm · Share

2 people like this.



Flight Coffee
 Memphis Belle Coffee House was awarded the Capital Times People's Choice "Best Cafe In Wellington 2011". Second consecutive year the Belle has taken out People's Choice. Congrats to all the team!!
 August 1 at 3:54pm · View Post

RECENT ACTIVITY


 "If you ever play on the sky..." on SWEET MIX KIDS's Wall.



Memphis Belle Coffee House
 CAPITAL AWARDS! RESULT, BEST CAFE 2011 GOES TO..... MEMPHIS BELLE COFFEE HOUSE!!
 Thanks to all you amazing people for the continued support over the year!! love

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