

Network Science's Role in Audience Analysis and Planning for "Buzz"

PRSA 2012 International Conference, Tuesday, Oct. 16, 12:30-1:45 p.m., San Francisco, Calif.

Description

From family and friends to social media, networks have always been at play in the spreading of messages. Indeed, any public relations practitioner's dream is to have people advocate for their company and its products or services without prompting. This is the optimum view of "buzz," or what is called "word of mouth" communication. Traditional audience analysis that uncovers demographic, attitudinal, and other dimensions is useful. But in our wired world, the personal *and* technological networks everyone builds provides the pathways for messages to flow. Beyond traditional audience analysis methods is network analysis, which is based on a relatively new field of network science. Six degrees of separation is a fact, and network science has proven it in many ways. The question is, "How can network science help us in public relations to more effectively and efficiently channel messages that command attention, inspire sharing, and result in 'stickiness' in people's minds?" This session will address basic matters of network science and its methods. It will also discuss the implications of network science on public relations planning, execution, and measurement.

Category	Format	Audience Level	APR Credit
Messaging	Lecture	Mid-Level	No

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the basics of network science and its implications on audience analysis.
 2. Uncover the real potential for channeling messages through target audiences' networks
 3. Review example approaches of network analysis befitting public relations
 4. Explore the fit of network analysis in strategic planning and evaluation
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Content Outline

What is network science?

- Six Degrees of Separation

- Small Worlds

- Key Concepts

How Do Network Science and Public Relations Intersect?

- Contemporary and Future Relevance

- Network Measurement

- Influence and Influencers

- Psychological Dimensions

- Messaging Considerations

Why use NS for PR?

- Analytical Concerns

- Case Example: KONY 2012

What are Next Steps?

- Strategic Planning and Measurement Implications

- Continued Research and Application

Lead Presenter

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Peter M. Smudde, Ph.D., APR is associate professor and coordinator of public relations at Illinois State University. He has 25 years of experience (16 in industry) and moved to academia in 2002 to fulfill a personal objective to do so. His industry experience includes planning, writing, editing, and evaluating a full range of public relations, marketing, executive, and technical discourse for companies in many industries. He has held an executive-level position and consulted in public relations.

Presenter

Ms. Rachael Hoffman, MS
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Rachael Hoffman is special events coordinator for the American Lung Association. She holds a master's degree in communication from Illinois State University (May 2012), specializing in interpersonal communication and its role in organizational settings, especially public relations.

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