

Online resources, Information Technology

Newsletter: Experienced practitioners working in technology recommend a free monthly newsletter. Here is information from the publisher:

“**NetGain UPDATE** is a monthly newsletter published by NetGain, a consortium of independent communications technology consultants. Each article in this newsletter is copyrighted by its author. Feel free to share the NetGain Update with your associates, clients, managers or anyone else you think would benefit from it. And remember, anyone can sign up for a free subscription at our Web site, <http://www.netgain.org>.”

The Institute for Public Relations offers, at no download fee, papers on new technology including the Information Superhighway (1996), by John Pavlik, quoted early in the study session on technology. Here is the URL:

http://www.instituteforpr.com/internet_-_new_technology.phtml

Online pressrooms: A study of journalists' expectations of online pressrooms was done in 2002 by Joanna Schroeder APR for her master's thesis. A report published in PRSA's *Tactics* is available on the Web at

http://www.prsa.org/_Publications/magazines/1102hands1.asp

Another report published by Women in Communication is available at www.womcom.org/membersonly/FallMatrix2002/3simplesteps.html.

Schroeder now does consulting on such matters. Her e-mail address in 2003 is jschroeder@integermidwest.com or jmschroeder29@yahoo.com

Ongoing media survey: Guidance on creating messages for the media is available at the Web site of the Middleberg/Ross Media Survey

(<http://www.middleberg.com/toolsforsuccess/surveyofmedia.cfm>).

Here is the description offered on the site: "The Middleberg/Ross Media Survey: Credibility, Ethics and Influence." The Middleberg/Ross Surveys of Media are the most comprehensive examinations of how technology, news events and a changing economic climate affect journalistic coverage. This is our ninth year of conducting these surveys. As analyses of journalists' practices and perceptions, they have become essential guides for communications executives seeking the most effective and up-to-date methods for reaching and motivating journalists, and for creating messages that resonate in the media."

Weblogs: The Web site <http://www.computerworld.com/> offers a copyrighted article about the development and growth of Weblogs. Go to the site; search for Blogs, and it should come up. There is also a place to subscribe to a free electronic newsletter. Jupiter Research posts its analysts' Weblogs at <http://weblogs.jupiterresearch.com>.

News groups : An extensive list of news groups is available via www.google.com, after clicking on the button for Groups. There is an option to browse the entire list, or call them up by categories. The roster tells you how many groups are in each category or subcategory, and how active they are. Eight broad categories with established structure circulate worldwide on Usenet. The "Big 8" (as they are commonly known) newsgroup hierarchies, and the scope of their subject matter:

- "rec." – recreational activities of all sorts
- "sci." – science and technology
- "hum." – humanities and the arts
- "comp." – computers, computing, and related subjects
- "news." – NOT current events, but the USENET 'news' system itself
- "soc." – of interest to specific "social" groups, cultural, lifestyle, religious, etc.
- "talk." – "talk a little, talk a lot! talk, talk, talk." -- mostly 'emotional' subjects such as abortion, politics, euthanasia
- "misc." – things that don't fit elsewhere ("miscellaneous")

The "alt" category means "alternate" – it was established as an unstructured catchall. Those groups are less likely to circulate worldwide, since they may not have exact counterparts on all servers. The net also includes local or regional news groups – for instance, those starting out "ba." for Bay Area. The content focuses on that area, but you may find them listed on the big Internet Service Providers. Other specialties exist: For example, groups whose names start with "de." are regional groups for Germany (so named from "Deutschland", German for Germany.) Discussion in these groups is in German; posting in English, or another language, is a breach of the 'rules' for those groups, and will get you chewed out – usually in German. That's incidental information – unless you want to see what those folks are saying about your issues, services or products.

The Google groups page is worth browsing. It offers articles such as "The Basics of Usenet" and a glossary. If you browse the groups list, toward the top you will notice "24hoursupport." That's a good one. You can read the messages without subscribing.

When you have subscribed on your own system, the news groups list is available there, probably including "24hoursupport." Under "news" look for "news.announce.important". This group has only a few messages per year, but they are of import to all readers of any newsgroups. Subscribe to that one. Also look for "news.newusers" and "newusers.answers". The newusers groups contain a wealth of introductory orientation information about Usenet. They will probably be instructive at first. They consist almost exclusively of recurring postings of the same reference materials. There's little benefit in remaining subscribed once you've assimilated the material therein.