

The Relay

a publication for PR students

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PRSSA hosts first Tweet Shop

By Geoffrey ZuHone

"Twitter is basically an organized RSS feed," Tara Rosenbaum said. "You post information and follow other users."

Twitter has become a powerhouse social media tool even under Facebook's shadow. This, however, has prevented potential tweeters from joining because they simply do not understand how to use Twitter.

The Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA hosted a Tweet Shop Nov. 29, with the intent to provide potential tweeters with an understanding of Twitter. About a dozen people showed up to the event, many of whom did not know how to begin using Twitter.

PRSSA Chapter President Rosenbaum headed the event. she explained what Twitter is and how to use it.

Rosenbaum stressed that Twitter users need to remember that Twitter is not Facebook. Posts on Facebook are not necessarily Twitter appropriate.

"Tweets are not meant to be overly personal," Rosenbaum said. "There are only 140 characters for a reason."

Aside from the lingo of Twitter, there are many third party applications that make Twitter more manageable.

Lauren Cole, senior health



Eastern's Chapter of PRSSA hosted a Tweet Shop to help students understand Twitter and how to use it.

Photo courtesy of Google

studies major, attended the Tweet Shop and described it as a good learning experience.

"I really like the application TweetDeck," Cole said. "It made multiple specific feeds easier for me to manage."

Also on Twitter is hash tagging. Hash tagging occurs whenever a user puts a pound sign (#) in front of a word or phrase, allowing it to be searchable. According to Twitter statistics from the Chirp Conference, more than 600 million

searches happen daily on Twitter.

Twitter is growing and pushing the bounds of social media everyday. Statistics from the Chirp Conference show that more than 110 million users are on Twitter, and 80 percent of them tweet from a mobile device. Twitter is a social network adapting with the people who use it. The Tweet Shop gave insights on how to Tweet both professionally and personally.

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire PR officers."

— Daniel J. Boorstin

Half day with a Pro: Hoosier style

By Tara Rosenbaum

Twelve EIU public relations students attended PRSA Hoosier Chapter's Half Day with a Pro in Indianapolis Nov. 10.

Students had the opportunity to spend the morning job shadowing corporate, agency and nonprofit communications professionals.

Brianna Svec, junior communication studies major, visited Young and Laramore, an advertising and PR agency.

Svec said professionals at Young and Laramore stressed the importance of social media, having a blog and getting involved on and off campus.

"All students should try to get involved with RSOs, internships and volunteer work," Svec said. "These activities are great portfolio builders."

Shea Brunson, senior communication studies major, shadowed corporate communication professionals at Lilly Pharmaceutical Co.

Brunson said he learned about the different aspects of a corporate PR position.

"Lilly gave me a new perspective of the PR field," Brunson said. "This experience gave me an idea of what I would like to do with my degree."

After spending the morning with their selected businesses, students went to the Hoosier PRSA luncheon.

The luncheon featured a



PRSSA members from left, Kelly Wittenmeier, Geoffrey ZuHone, Tara Rosenbaum, Ben Percy, Ellie Sternaman, Terri Johnson, Brianna Svec, Shea Brunson, Jennifer Schwendau, Ashley Barrett, Cara Fumagalli, Albulena Veseli and Jessica Leggin attend PRSA Hoosier Chapter's Half Day with a Pro.

Photo courtesy of Terri Johnson

student-run panel of local PR professionals who shared their experiences from various parts in their careers.

The Hoosier PRSA luncheon was a first for both Svec and Brunson. Svec said it was a great experience to hear PR professionals give advice.

"Listening to the professionals speak gave me more confidence going into interviews,

entering the real world and shadowing PR professionals," Svec said.

Brunson said the luncheon was a good opportunity to meet and interact with PR students and professionals.

"Professionals gave me valuable advice on how to get ahead in the field," Brunson said. "It was definitely a facet of the experience that I recom-

mend to everyone."

Attendees noted an overall theme of the importance of securing an internship before or after graduation. Several of the PR professionals stressed that internships are necessary in order to stand out above other candidates. All stressed the need to write and to write well.



Follow PRSA on Twitter @PRSA



What journalists want from PR people

By Kelly Wittenmeier

Beth Heldebrandt, feature editor at the *Journal Gazette Times-Courier*, deletes about 250 e-mailed news releases daily, because they are not newsworthy or are written poorly.

She spoke to members of EIU's Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA about what journalists want from public relations people at the Oct. 25 meeting.

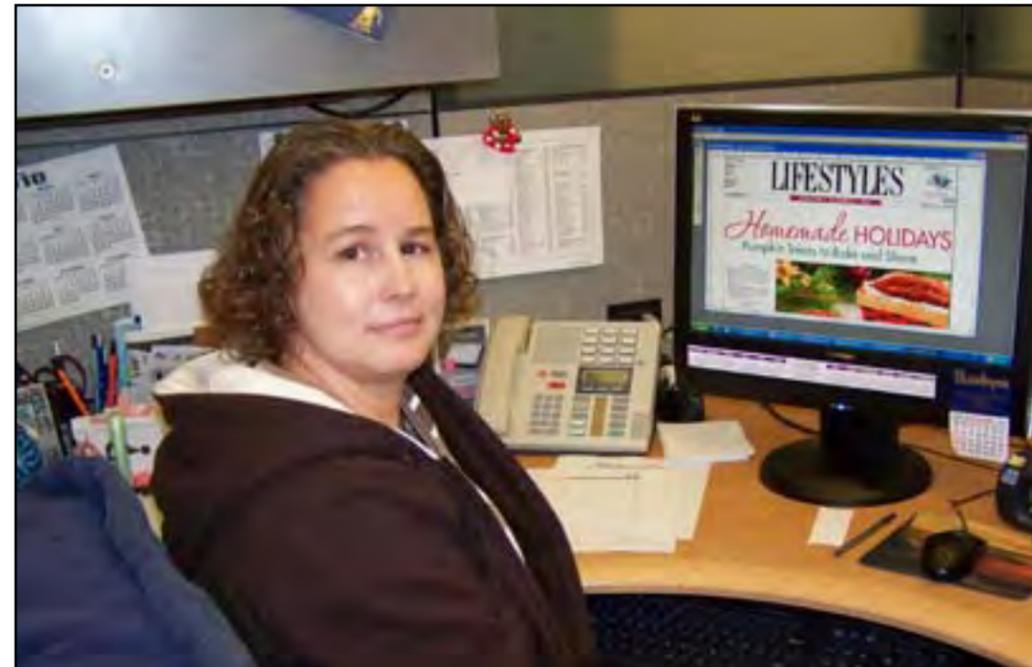
In addition to being a feature editor for JG-TC, Heldebrandt teaches a copy editing course at EIU.

Tara Rosenbaum, PRSSA chapter president, said Heldebrandt gave PRSSA members' tips, advice, and ideas about writing for journalists.

Heldebrandt spoke about several factors PR people need to keep in mind when writing press releases.

"It is important for PR people to consider timeliness, the five W's and the H, AP style, grammar, format and attachments when writing a press release," Heldebrandt said. "Journalism is a fast-paced business and there are only so many reporters to go around; therefore, timeliness is a major factor for PR people to consider if they want coverage for their event."

Heldebrandt said she is bombarded with e-mails from PR people every day.



Beth Heldebrandt, feature editor at JG-TC and a adjunct journalism professor at EIU, spoke to PRSSA members about what journalists want from PR people.

Photo courtesy of Beth Heldebrandt

Of those deleted e-mails, Heldebrandt said, "PR people need to know how to write attention-getting press releases in order to get coverage."

Rosenbaum said Heldebrandt told PRSSA members that a press release or e-mail should be simple and to the point, considering all fonts, pictures and attachments.

"Make sure the contact information is correct so that editors can get a hold of the someone who is able to answer

questions," Heldebrandt said. "I have received numerous mistakes from public relations people with incorrect addresses, phone numbers and dates."

Heldebrandt said most of the time she receives releases for upcoming events.

"Occasionally, we'll get a media alert or a request for coverage that merely lists information about an upcoming event," Heldebrandt said.

Ben Percy, senior communication studies major, asked

Heldebrandt if stories are ever posted online and not in print.

"Stories are often online before they are printed, but usually are written for both," Heldebrandt said. "Sometimes print stories tend to be more detailed than online stories."

Heldebrandt reinforced that there is a fine line between public relations and journalism. To be good public relations professional you must have good writing skills," Heldebrandt said.



PRSSA 2010 National Conference proves to be a life changing experience

By Kelly Wittenmeier

Three EIU senior PRSSA members gained insight on social media and professional development at the PRSSA 2010 National Conference in Washington D.C., Oct. 15-19.

The five-day conference was a life-changing experience for PRSSA Chapter President Tara Rosenbaum and active member Ben Percy.

Each year, PRSSA and PRSA work to bring students professional development opportunities through the PRSSA National Conference.

The conference consisted of professional development sessions, a career exhibition, leadership training and workshops presented by top professionals. Rosenbaum and Percy had the opportunity to network with students and public relations

professionals from across the country.

Rosenbaum said members also got the chance to attend sessions at the PRSA 2010 International Conference also in D.C. The PRSA Conference featured keynote presentations from some of the most influential and respected PR professionals from a variety of areas.

"Listening to the keynote speakers at the PRSA conference was one of my favorite parts of attending," Percy said. "I learned so much about the PR profession from some of the most influential people in some of the biggest organizations in the world."

At the conference, members learned about the importance of social networks and how to use them to the fullest advantage.

The University of Northern Iowa presented, the "Power of the Tweet Deck: Integrating Social Media for Event Success."

Percy said the session focused on the benefits of Tweet Deck, how to use its personal browser for staying in touch with what's happening now and the importance of connecting with people across Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and more.

At the Saturday chapter development session, Kent State University presented, "Bonding with the Pros: Building a Relationship with PRSA," which highlighted the advantages of being connected with the local PRSA professional organization.

"Being connected with the local PRSA chapter can provide

more professional development opportunities," Rosenbaum said.

Rosenbaum and Percy said this was an amazing opportunity to explore the PR profession.

"This experience was hands-down the most beneficial experience I have had in the development of my understanding of the PR profession," Percy said.

"Not only did I learn from professionals, but I also learned from my peers outside of the sessions," Rosenbaum said. "I made several new friends with similar interests as me from schools across the country."

Rosenbaum said she grew closer to her own chapter members, which made the conference worth it. She is already using ideas from the conference.



Senior PRSSA members from left, Tara Rosenbaum, Ben Percy and Kelly Wittenmeier attend the PRSSA 2010 National Conference in Washington D.C. Photo courtesy of Tara Rosenbaum

Guest Relations Ambassador for New York Yankees speaks to PR students

By Nick Persin

Cedric Bess, public relations specialist and guest relations ambassador for the New York Yankees, spoke to students in Professor Terri Johnson's PR techniques class about his experiences in the industry during an hour-long conference call Wednesday, Nov. 17.

Bess, elected PRSSA's first African-American president while in college, talked about the ups and downs of all the different internships he had and

how he got them.

Bess highlighted the importance of social networking for PR.

"Be aware that your posts will affect your influence on social networks and be sure to choose your words carefully," Bess said. "Making connections with professional contacts increases followers automatically, so don't worry about your number of followers on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn."

Bess also discussed the importance of follow-ups with

new contacts. He emphasized not to underestimate the power of a hand-written letter.

"Get a stationary pack and take the time to sit down and hand write a letter to a professional contact. It will go a long way," Bess said.

When Bess isn't working for the New York Yankees, he does freelance work for Mercedes Benz USA as a product specialist.

"What I love most about my job is traveling to parts of the country I normally wouldn't go

to and getting to meet celebrities and athletes," Bess said.

Bess has worked in the PR industry for 13 years. He has held PR positions for Nike, Adidas, Bank of America and Pepsi.

He is a graduate of the University of Miami and Florida International University, where he studied communications and public relations.

He gave tips on internships hunting and job hunting and offered students to follow him on LinkedIn.

Leon prepares for the real world

By Kelsey Karstrand

Mike Leon, senior journalism major, is gaining real world experience as an event planning and fundraising intern for Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center this semester.

Leon was a former associate director and director for The Agency. He has also worked with non-profit organizations and charities on a number of independent efforts like "Flexing for a Cause."

Leon started "Flexing for a Cause" last spring when he competed in Mr. EIU. The charity sold T-shirts and sponsorships to raise money for the Children's Advocacy Center of East Central Illinois.

Leon said his past experiences really prepared him for his internship with Sarah Bush.

During his internship, Leon has worked on Festival of Trees, the biggest event that Sarah Bush Lincoln Foundation organizes each year.



Mike Leon, senior communication studies major, is gaining experience as an event planning and fundraising intern at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center this semester.

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Helio Fred Garcia to speak on crisis

By Ben Pearcy

Helio Fred Garcia, executive director of the Logos Institute for Crisis Management and Executive Leadership, will speak about crisis communication at the PRSA Central Illinois Chapter dinner Dec. 7.

The dinner will be held at the Sangamo Club in Springfield, Ill., at 6 p.m.

The focus of the presentation will be on organizational behavior and leadership. Garcia will address best practices for protecting an organization's reputation during a crisis. He will also discuss how to maintain confidence of internal and external stakeholders during a crisis.

Garcia has authored many acclaimed books specializing in public relations and crisis management. The second edition of his most recent work, *Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Management*



Helio Fred Garcia, executive director of the Logos Institute for Crisis Management and Executive Leadership, will speak about crisis communication at the PRSA Central Illinois Chapter dinner on Dec. 7 in Springfield.

(co-written by John Doorley), was recently published.

Garcia is also an adjunct professor of management and communication at New York University. He teaches crisis management for NYU's school of business and crisis communication, communication strategy and communication ethics in law for NYU's PR/corporate communication program,

which for the last two years has been named the best PR education program in the U.S. by *PR Week*.

For more information about the next meeting of the Central Illinois Chapter of PRSA, visit www.centralillinoisprsa.com. Reservations can also be made through Ruth Slottag at rslottag@aol.com or (217) 793-8200.

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The festival features specialty items like trees, wreaths and gingerbread houses for purchase, live holiday entertainment and activities for kids. Net proceeds from the festival will support "Funding the Future," a campaign to fund the mission and vision of Sarah Bush Lincoln in the community.

Leon worked two days a week putting all the small piec-

es together so the event would run smoothly. Some of his duties included doing paper work, organizing supplies and editing contracts.

"I am lucky to have been able to intern during this event," Leon said. "I got to see all the behind the scenes details of event planning first hand."

Leon graduates in December and he plans on pursuing another internship with the hope of one day working at a PR firm.

Terri Johnson, journalism professor and faculty adviser to PRSSA and The Agency, believes Leon's experiences will take him anywhere he wants to go.

"I encourage everyone to get as many internships as possible, pay or not," Johnson said. "Internships build experience and it is so important to have them. Many of my colleagues won't consider a new employee without one or more internships."

General Information

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