



How to...Position PeaR News

The Classic Target Audience

PeaR news positioning means reaching the target group at the right time in the right way. It is about influencing people to take action or to think about the organisation, project or initiative in our way. In the case of the NRENs, - we know usually who our “customers” are and we more or less know their needs. Our customer segments may be created according to a key criterion, like the broadband need, or according to the different criteria, depending on the message. The created segments can then be processed in different ways, according to the particular needs and preferences of the defined PR strategy and the action plan. We may have some kind of segmentation written in the strategy depending on the content of news – for example, news marked as important for the stakeholders may have some obvious priority, or the channels – the administrators interested in some new technical issues may require an e-version only.

Today's Demanding Groups

Dynamically changing technologies and exploitable research results make targeting a new challenge. The biggest problem now is that target groups are becoming more and more unpredictable, their interests and desires more and more complex. The Internet services provider for research and education is forced to look for different ways of network services positioning as well as associated PR activities (news positioning). Often they require current monitoring and flexible approach. Since motivation for these decisions and business relations has become increasingly complex, it is no longer possible to describe target groups through sociodemographics or statistics alone – frequently it requires an individual approach and case studies.

The PeaR News Wire

Each NREN or its operator has a news service but more often the international events and global mega trends require some international approach. The TERENA PeaR news wire, accessible by all TF-PR members may be a good tool here. It is used for posting news items for and about European research and education networking organizations which may be found at: <http://www.terena.org/news/community/> Currently, thanks to an automatic newsletter generator, the postings can be easily accessible to the wider community and media.

Efficiency of the customising the posts, however, means their co-relation to the other PR activities. Nowadays a post at the news wire is not enough – it is just one of the channels to reach the target audience. It is, however, definitely a great tool to increase the number of the final readers, enabling a more complex approach.



Media Segmentation

The common media data base should consist of the records with some additional important features. Actually each PR person has their own way of data description; however, some general guidelines may be found as well. Usually the most interested medium is the local or regional press but it is not always so. The three/four general levels may be defined as: local/regional, national, international – when we take the portal based media into account, there may be just two options – national and international. The second general criterion is the scope of the given media title – there are general press, scientific magazines, (higher) educational titles, IT specialised press (in that press focused on the networking), commercial and business titles, financial, etc. The next criterion may be channels and perception: TV stations (classic, digital, net TV, etc.), radio stations (including IP radios), press and portals (in a classical approach the press was in a different category than portals – currently almost each main newspaper has its own portal – it may be surprising that we have some radio stations in the category as well). Last but not least – in practice a very important mark is “influential”.

Personalisation and Exclusiveness

Each and every medium (especially the influential ones) requires some exclusiveness – either an additional fact or a hot news privilege. Taking an individual approach requires production of many releases on the same subject as well. Each release is written in that approach in 5-10 versions. Of course the essential content remains the same but the context usually refers to the given audience or the scope of interests. As usual the direct personal relationships are essential here (see *How to...organise a press event* as well) – some additional phone calls can strengthen the interests and help in understanding the topics – in spite of great popularity of IT technologies it is still an advanced knowledge for many. Because of that focus on the main fact, a detailed and clear description seems to be very important.

The Essence of the Classical News Release

We are more and more used to short messaging – mostly via mobiles but as they are more often connected to the web portals the portal news require essentiality (some popular US video portals may be downloaded via mobile as well). The key issue here is to make an impact, make it short and make it simple (Please see *How to...write a news release paper* as well). The optimal news item has no more than 500-700 characters, which is a very dense and basic text. Of course in the news wires there are usually some further information links like the web site content, text or graphic file. What is very important here is the title which should be a short and very eye-catching strapline (not too many adjectives if possible) – note that the strapline should be readable via webfeed tools.



RSS and Atom Tools – Monitoring and Aggregation

The syndicating news and web content systems may be very useful in reaching the target audience as well – especially a demanding one. It is not only about the feedback but more often about the news context, especially for customising the news. Programs known as feed readers or aggregators can check a list of feeds on behalf of a user and display any updated articles (or podcasts) that they find. It is common to find web feeds on major websites and many smaller ones. TERENA's website offers RSS feed as well. Some websites let people choose between RSS or Atom formatted web feeds; others offer only RSS or only Atom. Obviously it is not only for news – anything that can be broken down into discrete items can be syndicated via RSS (or Atom). The RSS (Atom)-aware program (usually freeware or often added to the browser) can check the feed for changes and react to the changes in an appropriate way.

Web 2.0 Communities and the Open PR

The Web 2.0 communities are more and more popular as well as weblogs or social bookmarkings. It is usually a more re-active approach than the active one – it may accompany some comments on the news articles, open discussion or blogs touching the interested subject. It is still an open issue about its influence on PR activities and its full usage in the PR work; however, the common TF-PR exercise with the Wikipedia may be a great experience here as well. Most of us visited Wikipedia and amended the networking related glossary.