Online Professional Identity
Janae Cherry
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Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of the future career that I plan to pursue. It explains why I have chosen this career for myself and analyzes three job postings to find what positions in this field are looking for in employees. It creates five criteria that may be used to evaluate people in the Public Relations field, also analyzing my current online identities. The purpose is to analyze these online identities in relation to where I want to be professionally, using the five criteria that I have identified. Each criterion is broken down in relation to my various online identities and discusses how my current digital identity fulfills, or does not fulfill, each criterion. It concludes with an inquiry of my strengths and weaknesses within my current online identities and provides ways in which I can build upon my strengths and plans to improve my weaknesses. Analyzed job posting, online identities, and a reflection of my formatting decisions can be found in the appendices.

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The Future Professional Me

When I graduate from college, I want to pursue a career in Public Relations. I have chosen to pursue this career, because I have always been interested in representing a company in various aspects. I have a strong passion for helping companies set out a good name for themselves and making them appeal to their target audience. When I first came into college I was a marketing major. I wanted to work in advertising, but soon realized that I didn't want to do the mathematical aspect of the job. I looked for similar career paths that still allowed me to do what I wanted to do. I stumbled upon the Communications field and as I looked more into it, I noticed that a Public Relations concentration allowed me to still represent a company in the manner I wanted to, but didn't require the math that Marketing did.

In researching job advertisements on LinkedIn, I came across three different employers within the field of Public Relations. The first job I came across was looking for a Public Relations and Marketing Specialist. This position is looking for someone to design all advertising, public relations, and media campaigns for Ernest & Young in Charlotte, NC. They are looking for an employee who will be responsible for designing and developing external public relations across all of the Southeast U.S. and Caribbean and marketing for the Carolinas market. Building a PR program for the Southeast U.S. region and helping to design a marketing strategy are key components of this position. The second posting I came across was seeking a Public Relations manager for Charles Schwab in San Francisco, CA. This position is looking for an employee who will provide public relations support across various aspects of the company including their local branch of locations. Responsibilities for this position include creating news releases and talking points, developing story pitches, working with spokespeople for the different firms, interacting with the media on the company's behalf, and external agency management.

The third job posting was seeking a Public Relations Specialist for Reed & Associates Marketing in Norfolk, VA. This company is looking for an employee to develop and maintain local and national PR on behalf of Window World, a window replacement business. The potential employee must be able to maintain a strong working relationship with the client and maximize their exposure on both a local and national level. Potential employees will have to create and implement communications campaigns, as well as track results and alter the campaigns as needed.

I also analyzed three professional identities in the Public Relations field, looking for qualities that people within this field possess. Robin Magrisi works as a Marketing and Event Freelance Specialist in the Norfolk, VA area. She graduated from California State University with a Bachelors of Arts in Speech Communications. She is currently the owner of Big Top Marketing and Communications. She spends her time now doing PR for the South Norfolk Jordan Bridge. Her specialties include media relations, internal communications, freelance writing, media/FAM tours, special events, individual press visits, annual reports, promotions, and branding. Robin has done work for Norfolk Festevents, LTD., BCF&M, and the Elizabeth River Project.

Meredith Mobley is a Public Relations and Marketing Consultant in the Greater Atlanta Area through an independent contractor. Meredith graduated from Hampton University in Hampton, VA with a Bachelors of Science in Public Relations. Her specialties include: corporate communications, media relations and training, project management and team leadership, strategic messaging and branding, sales collateral, traditional public relations and social media campaigns, concept and content creation, website development, email marketing, and copyrighting. She also speaks Spanish. Companies that she has worked for include The Virginia Zoological Park, Scripps Network, For Rent Media Solutions, Write Ambition, and the Urban

League of Greater Atlanta. She was an officer on the Board of Directors for the Hampton Roads chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. She has experience in writing newsletters, press releases, and blogging.

Rebecca Freeman is the Social Media Marketing Coordinator at For Rend Media Solutions in Norfolk, VA. She graduated from Old Dominion University with a Bachelors of Science in Communications, concentrated in Public Relations. Her specialties include social media strategy, public relations, marketing, writing, and research. Her experience includes working at Optima Healthcare as the Marketing Public Relations Specialist, Office Manager at Wasabi Rabbit, Public Relations Associate at Managing Communications Consulting, and the Public Relations and Marketing Intern at Sentara Healthcare. Rebecca has experience in managing Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr accounts for companies.

The employers in this field are all looking for potential employees who have graduated with a degree in Communications, Journalism, Business, or another related major. They want employees who have experience in Public Relations, the amount of experience wanted ranging from 1 to 5 years. Many employers are looking for employees who work easily with others and experience in planning and implementing media relations. Soft skills are that valued in this field include, proficiency in Microsoft Office, experience in working with social media, and the ability to work in a high paced environments with tight deadlines. They want someone who is creative, innovative, has an outgoing personality, and a good sense of judgment. Someone who is able to think on their toes, can express thoughts clearly when spoken as well as in writing, and are enthusiastic are ideal for these positions The field is one that requires employees to be passionate about their job so that they can help make companies, products, and even people appeal to the public. Five criteria that are used to evaluate people within the Public Relations position would

be education, experience, communication skills, the ability to function under inflexible

deadlines, and creativity. The list of job postings, including links, is located in Appendix A and

the list of analyzed personal identities is located in Appendix B.

My Current Online Identity

My current online identities include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Wordpress, Google +, YouTube, Diigo, Old Dominion University's Student Transition and Family Programs online website, and recently LinkedIn. All of my online identities are public except for my Facebook page and my twitter account. When searching for my online identities, I used Google, Yahoo and Bing to see what I could find. I was a little freaked out to find out that most of my online identities do appear when a search is run on my name. Google was where I found the most of my online identities. I was able to find my Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Wordpress, Diigo, and Google + accounts. I was also able to find many images of myself on Google which was a shock to me; including a picture from my job's website that I had forgotten was on the site. Yahoo and Bing both only showed my Facebook profile when searched. The current online identity that I have set up for myself has a long way to go to reflect where I want to be. The complete list of my current online identities with links included is in Appendix C.

Analysis of Five Criteria in Relation to My Current Identity

As far as the education criterion, I am close to completing it as I am graduating with a Bachelors of Science in Communication in May. The only online identities that I have which reference my education are my Facebook, Wordpress, and Diigo accounts. My Facebook profile shows the university I attend, but doesn't state what I'm majoring in nor does it state when I will be graduating. If potential employers were to look at my Facebook account, they would have no idea that I am about to finish school and enter the professional world. My Diigo and Wordpress site, being associated with my Digital Writing class shows that I'm enrolled in school and am able to utilize the skills that I'm learning throughout the course.

The experience criterion is not reflected in any of my online identities. The only experience I have within the field includes being the Public Relations chair of an organization that I'm currently a part of. That information is nowhere to be found within my online identity. I have recently accepted an internship offer, which will start in the spring 2013 semester, but this also isn't listed in any of my online identities. My current identity doesn't fulfill this criterion because I chose to not make it a part of my online identity. Adding this to my LinkedIn account in particular can help me greatly when trying to pursue a career in the Public Relations field and show that I have worked within the profession.

The third criterion, communication skills, also isn't represented in my online identity. As a Communications major, I have taken public speaking classes, writing intensive classes, and Public Relations classes that have taught me how to write pieces for this career path, but I haven't included my abilities in my online identities. As stated before, my LinkedIn account would be ideal to add these skills to since that online identity is based around finding jobs, but it would also be beneficial to add it to my Facebook profile for networking purposes. A potential

employer can see my profile through a mutual friend and by seeing the skills that I have; they may be interested in offering me a job.

The fourth criterion, the ability to function under inflexible deadlines, is not shown in any of my online identities. Since this field requires employees to stick to strict deadlines, it's very important that potential employees know that I am capable of doing so. My various accounts do make it hard to show that I can work under tight deadlines. I can change that by simply stating that I'm able to do so in my various identities.

The last criterion, creativity, isn't shown in my online identity either. My Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter accounts show the creative interests that I have. However, they don't show those interests being implemented. My Instagram and Twitter accounts are both private so potential employers in the Public Relations field aren't able to view those accounts. I chose not to make these accounts public to potential employers because they reflect the social and somewhat personal aspect of my identity that I only share with friends and family.

Conclusions: Bridging the Gap

My online identities need a lot of work to be where I want them to be. I have strengths that I can continue to build upon, along with weakness that I can change for the betterment of my digital self. Assessing both the strengths and weaknesses will allow me to make my online identities as strong as possible and utilize them to my highest ability.

Strengths that I have seen include that I have been pretty successful in keeping my professional and social identities separate and I also include images that are of a professional nature on all of my online identities. I believe that online identities are a good way to express both professional and social aspects of my personality. As far as the social aspects, I chose to keep those only accessible to my friends and family by making the online identities that show this information private. It is only available to those whom I have approved of. Another strength within my online identities is that I try to keep all pictures of myself professional, because that is the manner in which I want to represent myself. My professional identities already show professional pictures of me, but within my social identities, which I consider to be more relaxed, I try to keep the trend the same. I can build upon this by changing my settings on my Facebook so that all tagged pictures of me have to be approved by me before they are posted. I can also build upon my strengths by continuously updating my privacy settings on other sites to make sure they're up to date and also by keeping up usage policies of my many online identities.

There are many weaknesses in my depiction of my digital self. My various online identities do not demonstrate the skills that I have listed because I have chosen not to show them. This is a hindrance because it doesn't show potential employers the abilities and skills that I have worked so hard for that will help me within the Public Relations profession. This is easily fixable, but I do believe that I would have to refurbish my various online accounts to reflect the

career path that I have chosen for myself. I need to display my skills in a way that will appeal to my intended audience. Another weakness within my identities is that I believe that I have too many of them. Although they are good to utilize, by having so many I'm not able to keep up with all of them. Some sites have outdated information on them that are no longer relevant in representing the person that I am now. I plan to fix this by getting rid of some of my identities and only keeping the ones that are most beneficial to my future professional self and those that allow me to stay connected to friends and family in a social manner.

Just by participating in online identities, such as Twitter and Facebook, I am showing potential employers that I have experience with technologies that are utilized within the Public Relations field. Making these identities more professional and building upon them to reflect my skills and abilities will allow me to stand out amongst other people applying for jobs within this field.

An analysis of my formatting and stylistic choices is located in Appendix D.

Appendix A

Analyzed Job Postings

- [Public Relations & Marketing Specialist](#)

- [Public Relations Manager](#)

- [Public Relations Specialist](#)

<u>Appendix B</u>

Analyzed Professional Identities

- [Robin Magrisi](#)

- [Meredith Mobley](#)

- [Rebecca Freeman](#)

Appendix C

Current Online Identities

- [Diigo](#)

- [Facebook](#)

- [Google +](#)

- [Instagram](#)

- [LinkedIn](#)

- [Old Dominion University's Student Transition and Family Programs](#)

- [Pinterest](#)

- [Twitter](#)

- [Wordpress](#)

- [YouTube](#)

Appendix D

Formatting and Stylistic Reflection

Since this is a formal report, I chose to structure it in a professional manner. I used Times New Roman, 12 point as my body font and used Arial, 14 point as the heading font. I wanted to keep the font simple to that it would be easily readable. I chose to use contrast in the heading size and font and the body content size and font to emphasize a visual hierarchy. I wanted the reader would be able to tell the difference between the headings and the body content in each section. I want those reading this to be able to find the necessary information quickly and efficiently without any confusion. I utilized repetition throughout this report by aligning the heading and body content for each section in the same manner and keeping the fonts the same. I established verbal flow in the traditional Western cultural manner, from left to right and top to bottom.

My stylistic decisions helped support my report rhetorically because my goal was to present the information in a professional and thoroughly analyzed manner. By keeping the headings, font, alignment, and font size simple, I was able to make sure that my reader focuses on the content and not be distracted by overly fancy elements.