

"If an organization has something very valuable on tape, I would recommend they re-copy it periodically. They do have some type of a finite life. I think people are aware of that," advises Larry Swensen.

BOOK HELPS EDUCATORS & PH.D.-TYPES WORK WITH JOURNALISTS

Media Guide for Academics shows how professionals from 2 divergent cultures can assist each other & get the news out. Authors Joann Rodgers (Johns Hopkins) & Bill Adams (Fla Int'l U) explain:

- A) **Academics are conditioned to precision & peer review**, demanding all the right qualifications & caveats in their work.
- B) **Journalists are chasing "history on the run."** They value accuracy but have to deliver on short deadlines with stories keyed to the interest & attention span of the audience.

Bringing journalists & academics together is the challenge. Authors offer these reasons for accepting the challenge:

1. Academics now have a **small voice in the media**. Research shows environmental reporters seek info from gov't sources more than 6 times as often as from academics.
2. Majority of science & humanities education takes place informally, thru mass media. Academics **need to participate**, improve public's scientific literacy.
3. Studies show about 20% of the adult public is already aware, informed & **actively pursuing information** about social, physical & biological sciences.
4. It's a way to **reach colleagues**. Even academics read the mass media.
5. People are wary of academics. Better communications can begin to reverse those attitudes.
6. Positive name recognition builds **credibility**, affects **funding**.
7. Journalists will pursue an important story whether or not you agree to participate. Helping is **sensible self defense**.

Since working with journalists is a "learned skill, not a talent," Guide offers lots of suggestions on how to develop those skills. (From Foundation for American Communications, 3800 Barham Blvd, LA 90068; \$10, quantity discounts available)

ITEM OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

FAXED GREETING TO WELCOME 1995: *Have A Happy Newt Year!* from punner Wes Pedersen of Public Affairs Council.

IS PR A \$\$ TARGET OF NEW POLITICS? WATCH WASHINGTON STATE

First it was the newly Democratic US Dep't of Agriculture cutting public affairs staff (pr 6/20/94). Now it's "the other Washington" & its new Republican legislature's \$420-million spending cut.

1. U. Washington plans to eliminate its respected School of Communication.
2. It is proposed to eliminate *all* state agency pr jobs.
3. Another cut would bite into pr staffs at state colleges & universities.

Partly it's the result of a draconian spending limitation passed by voters last fall -- Proposition 601. University's president is choosing to "cut out those places that aren't critical to the school's mission as a research institution," Dan Graves of Communication Northwest told pr. School of Communication is 1 of 6 units being reviewed. Another is Speech Communication, whose grads often go into pr.

Even if nothing is actually cut as planned, it shows again the view of public relations prevalent in the minds of politicians -- probably because their own brand of "political pr" is so awful.

"If he were to close us, he'd have 60% of the \$5 million he needs," school director Ed Bassett told pr. "We're putting up the best defense we can."

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS SITUATION

Legislature controls tuition. If it agrees to raise it, the increase could save Communications. It's "one of the absolute bargain universities in the US," notes Graves -- but "it's a political hot potato."

"The legislature is favorably disposed. Unless we get caught in a Republican/Democrat fight...& we could...we will see a tuition increase. We're very involved with individual legislators, but the person we really have to persuade is our dean [of arts & sciences].

He's new; he doesn't fully understand the school. This is always the case. Deans are educable but unhappily we don't have much time to educate him," explains Bassett. Review process will take another 4-5 weeks.

"Many people are protesting this proposal. Especially when you consider many of the local media are graduates of the School of Communications. In fact, someone suggested maybe they [chose this school] on purpose just so they'd get an outcry." -- Dan Graves



"Question remains why they selected us to be on the target list. We don't have an answer," reflects Bassett. School enrolls 462 undergraduate majors, 72 grad students & services thousands of non-majors every year. Undergrad program is ranked 10th nationally, is the only accredited program in Washington -- offering adv'g, pr, news-editorial & broadcast. Its masters & doctoral programs are ranked 13th in the nation.

"On the basis of tuition alone, we cover our budget & make money for the University. We're not a cash cow, but we're not grazing at taxpayer expense."

HELP SOLICITED: PRACTICING WHAT THEY TEACH!

School now must document the reasons

it should survive, is marshaling every friend of communication it can discover, says Bassett. Networking with visitors, school's distinguished panel, alums, students & parents, & parents' friends & associates. Puget Sound PRSA chapter established a University Task Force to support the school. Nonprofit org'n, Friends of Communications, has been set up to solicit tax deductible campaign funding (4505 University Way, NE, PO Box 605, Seattle 98105).

FOR PROFESSION, JOB ELIMINATION IS AN EVEN BIGGER THREAT

Could set a precedent -- at a time all levels of gov't are searching for anything to whack **that they think**

they can get away with -- i.e. that will not provoke an outcry. Will PRSA, IABC, CASE et al mount a defense here?

Seattle Times "budget exercise" -- a game readers could play by guessing which proposals legislature will adopt -- presented these pros & cons on the job cut idea:

- Argument for: "These are just public relations jobs designed to create smoke screens."
- Argument against: "Public will get even less information about state gov't, causing greater frustration."
- Political fallout: "Could lead to public relations snafus."

ARE YOUR VIDEO/AUDIO TAPES DETERIORATING FROM "STS"?

STS is Sticky Tape Syndrome. Some report finding unusable tapes only 8 - 10 years old -- including Nat'l Public Radio, which then devoted a long segment to the situation. NPR accused manufacturers of 1) not alerting buyers to deterioration timeline, 2) doing nothing now to alert them to STS. E.g., another hi-tech copout a la Intel.

ARE TAPES SAFE FOR ARCHIVAL USE?

Manufacturers say yes. "They last a long time depending on

storage. Supposedly, after 20 years the oxide starts coming off the tapes.

But I don't think anyone has found the limit of videotape," Larry Swensen of Polaroid told prr. Ampex's Jim Wheeler concurs: "We have played back videotapes that have been stored for more than 20 years. The ultimate lifespan of videotape is as yet unknown, but we do know what is required to lengthen it" -- humidity & temperature control are key.

To prolong the life of videotapes, Kodak recommends playing them once every 6 months. If stored too long unused, "the magnetic particles on the videotape start talking to each other & rearrange themselves." But if they are played periodically, kept away from heat & humidity, "they can last 50 years or more." Film, on the other hand, if stored under climate-controlled conditions, will last forever, advised Kodak. *So don't throw away those old films.*

PHOTOGRAPHS HAVE VERY LONG LIFE EXPECTANCY

When kept in a temperature-controlled

environment they can last 100 years or more, a Kodak spokesperson told prr. Polaroid's Swensen says "it depends on how they are processed primarily. If you just go to your corner drugstore for processing, they'll probably last 10-15 years. But they don't just suddenly go away. They begin to change a little. The colors will change slightly. Some professional photographers will use archival processes."

IS THIS A MARKETING CONCERN?

The only time archiving is a topic of conversation is with photographic

paper, especially wedding photos, Swensen claims. "There is no discussion of this with videotape customers. 90% of tape usage is for movies or tv shows. Most people know they can make extra copies or recopy after a period of time. It's just not a selling point. I was just at the consumer electronic show. Buyers of video & electronics around the world were there along with 4000 manufacturers. No one there talked about it. It never even came up." But what does this mean for family movies or organizational history tapes?

CARE OF VIDEOTAPES

1. Dust-free, smoke-free, humidity- & temperature-controlled environment is preferable for storage. Ideally, 35-45% relative humidity & 65-75 degrees F.
2. No matter what the environment in which a tape is recorded, the tape should *always* be rewound in the environment in which it is to be stored.
3. Wind tape end-to-end to relieve stresses before putting into storage. Stopping in the middle will create distortions.
4. Store tape vertically, in its cardboard sleeve, with the full tape hub at the top.
5. Do not leave tape in a hot place, such as near a heater or in direct sunlight.