

4. **Online shopping** should account for 1/3 of US economy by 2007 (if e-commerce firms survive)
5. **Teleliving** will become a lifestyle of choice. People will access streams of info thru large wall monitors
6. **Virtual assistants** will handle routine chores. This means sophisticated software will create computerized helpers to file, screen calls, write letters (hurrah!)
7. **Genetically designed species** of plants & animals will enter the mainstream by 2008
8. **Computers for healthcare?** By 2009, they will keep medical records, fill prescriptions & monitor patients. [At beta sites they already do]
9. **Alternative energy technologies.** Wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, & hydro will meet 30% of energy needs
10. **Decisionmaking robots** will do complex factory work and assist the handicapped. Hymie from the *Get Smart* show? Almost

GW Forecast project has been in the works since '90. Methodology involves researching sci journals & other media, interviewing leading sci thinkers, and a Delphi of 65 research scientists, academic scholars & consultants. (Project is online at [www.GWForecast.gwu.edu](http://www.GWForecast.gwu.edu))

## CONTROVERSIAL PREMIER OF ALBERTA, FORMER PRACTITIONER, IS ENROLLING FOR PR DEGREE. NOW THAT'S ROLE MODELING

Opponents find him mercurial & his policies repressive. They call him "the brain surgeon of spin" – but he's ahead of them again because who cannot admire a 57-yr old willing to head back to class for the degree he never obtained? He's talked about it for years, now says he'll enroll at Mount Royal College (Calgary) in the fall. But he may not be admitted, as there are 800+ applications for 180 spaces. School say he'll get no special treatment, having him there could be disruptive to classes.

*Calgary Herald's* account gives a portrait of the colorful political figure: "Klein will have to become a working student, making room on his tight schedule to attend class and no doubt arriving at the campus in vintage student style, driving his beloved classic Volkswagen Beetle." Surely he's role modeling lifelong learning. His political success is ascribed to his pr skills, so he's called "Alberta's Great Communicator." He was dpr for Red Cross & United Way before becoming a tv journalist & for 10 yrs Calgary's mayor. Klein has been premier since '92, says "It's never too late to learn." Seems he could better teach the subject. (Copies of news coverage available from [pr](http://pr))

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**DIED.** Stuart Richardson, one of the original developers of CPRS in the 40s, in Montreal at age 100.

the Pat Monk Memorial Award for contribution to the profession, CPRS & community to Deborah Folka (DLF Comns).

**HONORS.** Vancouver/CPRS gives its Signature Award for Communication Excellence to counselor Julie Marzolf for "skill & commitment in dealing with community initiatives" &

Amy Fisher (cnslt, Acme Comns) receives NSPRA's Learning & Liberty Award recognizing outstanding collaborative efforts between schools, business & community & the home.

## SMART MOVE: BARAK - ARAFAT - CLINTON SUMMIT GETS NEWS BLACKOUT – SO NEGOTIATION, NOT POSING, CAN OCCUR

"Welcome to the news blackout" says the White House spokesperson to the media conference at a temporary news center set up 5 miles from the Camp David meeting place. While telling reporters items to be discussed & similar big picture info, no details of who said what to whom are allowed.

**Participants talk candidly to one another, make proposals, express things that couldn't be said publicly, try out new ideas & approaches** – instead of addressing other audiences thru reporters & cameras. History bears witness this is how compromises get made & issues resolved. Even right-to-know laws recognize that some subjects require private discussion, with the public & media barred from the meeting & told afterwards only what decisions were made, e.g. personnel matters.

- **Practitioners can learn from this case** when dealing with contentious topics, like union negotiations, environmental discussions or mergers/takeovers. In the latter, securities laws bar most public comment – but leaks from "sources" abound
- **As the move to place cameras in courtrooms first demonstrated**, getting a fair & factual exchange of data so equitable decisions can be made disappears when the acting & posturing begin. Lawyers, judges, witnesses are inevitably motivated not by their obligations in the present situation but by considerations of "fame", attracting new business etc. Media was the prime pusher for this – and it is now clear that neither justice nor the public is served, only media & voyeurs. Yes, it makes good theater – as the many court tv shows attest – but aren't justice & fair trials far more important than using human tragedies as entertainment?

## THERE IS A LEGITIMATE TIME TO CONTROL THE NEWS

So long as it is ethically balanced by fully reporting decisions, outcomes, implications & impacts when the situation is resolved. Very often no public or stakeholder interest is served by having the transcript of who said what or why. Practitioners who've experienced issue debates or crises know how destructive it is to seeking resolution when headlines & anchor persons are screaming about "secret deals" or "truth revealed" or "one side claims" – often inaccurate.

If the several Journalism Reviews, Brill's Content or the many books by leading journalists are correct, contemporary media mgmt doesn't care. They're in the for-profit business of breaking (often making) the news, say these sources, not the social responsibility business of communicating enlightening information that helps society be self-governing.

For practitioners, therefore, this suggests the White House policy at Camp David is role modeling.

## CAN YOU BLACKOUT UNILATERALLY?

What if you feel the details of dealing are best kept private, but the other side keeps running to the media. Is there then any benefit – perhaps the moral high ground? Do you just appear secretive? Or is "plausible deniability" – to use a dubious Nixonian phrase – worth it, since you can

stick to your position this is a private matter between the parties, particularly the tradeoffs required by negotiations, & you are not going to divulge them no matter what leakers or the opposing party claims?

- **Reviewing the history of labor negotiations** where this situation so often occurs is instructive. Unions often want to try the case in the press, even tho the only parties who can contribute to resolution are the employer & union. Why? Because they feel it will either embarrass the employer or bring customer, community or gov't pressure on it to settle
- **The facts:** On rare occasions this has worked, usually because of spineless mgmt which didn't understand the dynamics or the little power of media coverage in these circumstances. What it has done over recent decades is contribute to a great loss of credibility & reputation for the labor movement. Unions won a very few battles but lost the war!

## NEW MAG STARTS OUTLINE SOCIAL AS WELL AS MEDIA TRENDS; CELEBRITY MAGS #1, SEX MOVES FROM X-RATED TO MAINSTREAM

According to magazine guru Samir Husni, sexy rags of the brown paper wrapper variety have fallen from #1 in '95 to the #5 spot for new launches in '99. But the drop does not indicate Americans have lost their lusty appetites – sex now permeates mainstream magazines.

For the second year in a row, celebrity mags top the list of launches with 108 new titles, finds *Samir Husni's Guide to New Consumer Magazines*. "The lifetime of these mags typically coincides with the popularity of the stars they cover – with the exception of Elvis." He adds that since the days of George Washington, Americans have been on a quest to establish their own royalty. "Celebrities are as close as we can get."

**What people will pay to read is also an editorial guide for org'l pubs.** Other trends:

1. **Mags with shelf-life.** *National Geographic* isn't the only title people save. Husni selects the most notable launches in the past 15 years, including *George* ('95), *Martha Stewart* ('90), *The Source* ('91), *Elle* ('85) & *Cooking Light* ('86). Criteria were budget, industry impact & evolution of mag.
2. **Specialization.** "One continuing trend, paralleled by the Internet's capability of easy customization of publications, is a higher degree of specialization." Thus, *Wrestling World for Kids*, *Rubbertime* for latex fetishists, *Bride Again* for those making a return trip down the aisle & *Bark*, a poetic labor for dog lovers. Larry Flynt introduced *Code*, a sophisticated mag for African-American men.
3. **Decrease in launches.** '98 saw 1,065 new titles, '99 only 866 – biggest decrease in the 15 yrs of the Guide. He says large drops are followed by major comebacks. Mags may be around forever.
4. **Proliferation of everything "e"** – *eBay*, *E-shipper*, *E-gear*, *Econtent* – are also worthy of mention, as are the obviously short-lived Y2K survival guides. **And, there were 45 launches of mags about computers.** Husni says this debunks the notion that tech will oust print. People want to read about computers – in magazines! (For info or to order, [www.mediafinder.com](http://www.mediafinder.com) or call 800/955-0231)

¶ **Of Related Interest: Seniors comprise major media niche.** Creative Ink (Burnsville, Minn), which puts out *Senior Media Directory 2000*, finds 1,258 newspapers, magazines, radio & tv programs, plus other media, devote content entirely to the 50+ crowd. Also, more senior-oriented media have Web sites & can be contacted by e-mail. Over 450 had sites & almost half (566) list e-mail addresses. ([www.creativeinkinc.com](http://www.creativeinkinc.com))

## MORE ORG'NS USE NEW NAMES TO REFLECT CHANGE, PROGRESS

A record number of org'ns are creating new names for products, services, programs, companies or divisions – a critical pr strategy which should be undertaken with care. Rivkin & Assocs (Glen Rock, NJ) surveyed 600 firms with 200+ employees. It found that 85% of them have created a new name within the past 2 years. "It was the highest percentage we've seen since we began the survey in 1991," Steve Rivkin told *pr*. He feels the cause is the strength of the economy.

The proliferation of Internet startups & other emerging firms, which the survey did not include, is putting pressure on marketers to differentiate themselves as "they pay the name game." He calls lazy names "the kiss of death" and likens a good, memorable name to winning the trifecta. Other findings:

- **Most commonly used methods to find a name** are: a) internal task force (74%); extension of existing names (43%); ad agencies (27%). Also, contests among employees, customers & naming consultants
- **Cited as most effective methods:** a) internal task force, b) ad agencies/naming consultants
- **Fewer org'ns use research** (about 40%). "This is significantly lower than in past years." Partly because there's pressure to make decisions more rapidly and get goods & services to the marketplace as fast as possible
- **Naming more difficult.** Nearly 2/3rds of the companies say naming is more difficult than in the past. Rivkin notes that last year more than 265,000 new trademark name applications were added to the 1.16 million active & pending trademarks already registered in the US. There are over 10 million names of US corporations & businesses. "No wonder so many companies struggle to find appropriate names for themselves & their products."

**Names are as important for org'ns & products as semantics are in issue debates.** On that front, columnist Ellen Goodman points out how the "pro-choice" sector may have won the recent Supreme Court case on the topic but the "pro-life" sector has the pr advantage as the struggle continues – because they set the semantics, "partial birth abortion." She writes: "This controversy has always been as much about language as about law. In a public relations coup, anti-abortion strategists grabbed the most highly charged emotional vocabulary."

**Practitioners should be assisting, if not driving, this process.** Of all the messages an org'n sends, none comes close in importance to the name(s) it uses. It is the vital org'l semantics.

## FUTURISTS IDENTIFY TOP TECH ADVANCES OF NEXT DECADE

To strategize for the next decade or so, practitioners know they must watch tech trends & discern how they can impact their clients/firms. Researchers from George Washington U (DC) and the World Future Society (Bethesda, Md) predict the following technologies will change the nature of issues concerning environment, the economy & lifestyles:

1. **Portable info appliances.** In the next 3 years, 30% of the population of industrialized nations will surf the Net, send e-mail, watch video, etc.
2. **Fuel-cell powered cars.** These will have a major impact on air pollution issues
3. **Ultra-efficient precision farming.** Satellite data & computerized tractors will boost crop yields