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By Karen Freberg, [WVU Integrated Marketing Communications program](#) Instructor

Abstract:

WVU Integrated Marketing Communications instructor Karen Freberg addresses the ownership of social media and how to build a solid foundation in emerging technology. In an emerging technology landscape that is constantly changing, how does a PR professional keep up? Freberg talks about five ways to stay abreast on current technology.

The ownership of Social Media & how to build a solid knowledge & skills base in emerging technology

One of the main questions that arises regarding social media is who really owns it. This topic of conversation always seems to come up in various circles – and it always has a different answer to it. Public relations professionals say that they have made strides to make social media their own while marketing professionals say that they have this in their overall campaign and research agendas. Psychologists say that their research studies focus on the perceptions, motivational factors, attitudes, and behaviors online through social media – so they have a clear stance in this new digital realm. Some say that it is either in the hands of employees or those who are engaged and working with it every day such as public relations, advertising, and marketing professionals.



The question that comes to mind is – with social media evolving so quickly – *how can one person build a foundation of knowledge and practice their skills with this emerging technology?* It appears that it is constantly changing and there are so many conversations emerging from various platforms that it is astonishing and overwhelming at times. The [visual above](#) shows clearly how much data and conversations are emerging through social media in just 60 seconds –

it is amazing! There are several things to think about when looking at this particular question, and here are a few suggestions that I would make:

Start small, think big picture: Build up to where you can look at things from the big picture (macroview) but also be aware of the specific fine tune elements and characteristics that makes certain platforms and sites unique and how they can be used strategically in research and application (microview).

Educating yourself a little each day: As they say, Rome was not built in a day – so the same goes with a strong social media foundation. It takes a little bit each day and it will all add up. Read news reports, engage in dialogue with followers, and collect information and research studies involving social media across disciplines.

Write, research, strategize, tweet, and repeat: Being knowledgeable in social media means that you have to get the complete picture of exactly what all of these tools are, and that includes being engaged with the ones that are most popular and the others that are most relevant to the particular profession and discipline you are in. For example, I am very active on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn – but I am also following what is happening on various social media platforms like Quora and Delicious to name a few.

Manage reputation to be part of social media: Establish yourself through social media by advocating, sharing, and being engaged with the community. It may not necessarily be key to have a zillion followers, but if you have a small and quality group within your online community, you can really establish your reputation proactively and manage it through social media.

Measure personal analytics: Understand where people are coming from in terms of your commentary on your personal blog or Twitter updates, or what others are saying about you in your online community. All of these components will help determine where you are in respects to having a strong voice in the field. Using tools such as Topsy, Klout, Samepoint, and Sitemeter are just a few ways to look at the big picture of your personal impact on topics involving social media.