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Mar03

[Mike](#)

[Why this is my first Tiger Beat blog post](#)

This, dear faceless blog readers, is my first original (non-follow-up comment) post. My first post here—to this year-old Weblog—and my first post to any blog, anywhere. You see, I'm what you could call a blog skeptic.

I hasten to add, I'm not a Luddite. I work online at a computer everyday, occasionally post to a [message board](#) and believe podcasting has promise. But, I confess, I don't own a cell phone and will never, *ever* subscribe to cable TV (radio is my first love).

Likewise, blogging did not entice me. Ensnared in hoopla, it isn't often accompanied by much substance or credibility. This from David Weidner of [CBS MarketWatch](#) recently struck a chord: "When someone creates editing software that keeps bloggers from spewing what you wouldn't bother telling your dog, that, folks, is going to be a revolution."

But at least the typically unsubstantive, personal-diary-like revelations found on many blogs *occasionally* have a target audience. Well, sort of. (It's often a small group comprised mostly of close friends and would-be stalkers.)

Conversely, *The Tiger Beat* was, in all candor, wanting for one—which was *the* reason for my prior reticence about posting here. You see, this blog—begun by a university public relations office—violated the *first rule of PR: Know your target audience* (more on this point in a future post). It had no discernable purpose aside from allowing us to proclaim, "We have a blog!"

But that was then.

I'm glad *The Tiger Beat* has found its . . . well, its beat. Loosely defined, it targets an RIT audience interested in going "behind the scenes" with University News Services to learn about:

⌘ RIT stories that have made the news (see Paul's "[RIT in the news](#)" posts).

⌘ The "story behind the story": Interesting tidbits about RIT stories that have made the news. Here's a recent [example](#).

⌘ Media relations tips for faculty and others who deal with members of the news media.

Here's where I come in. I've been asked to post advice on working with the media. These tips will be called (quite originally) "[PR tips](#)."

First, though, a bit more about this blog—and blogs and blogging in general.

Though targeting an RIT audience, anyone in the world is welcome to check in and read our musings, of course (this is the blogosphere after all). Just keep this in mind: The words found here are what they are. In another time and place, they may have been depicted as:

Ramblings.

Streams of consciousness.

Brain dump.

My point: *Nothing*

you read here has been vetted, peer reviewed . . . or checked for writing under the influence of illicit substances. Basically, it's worth the price you've paid to read it.

That said, I *don't* view blogs as inimical. On the contrary, I couldn't be *more ardently* anti-big media and pro-free marketplace of ideas (that's the essence of my master's thesis, after all). And this forum—a Weblog—represents a form of grassroots, citizen journalism that I'm all for.

As for *this blog*, in particular, I will fervently challenge *us*—the members of [University News Services](#)—to keep it relevant and interesting, and to continuously strive to make it *better*. Settling for 'good enough' is not something I practice in *any* aspect of my life—and it sometimes demands a little 'rocking the boat.'

In time, perhaps *The Tiger Beat*

would've found a target audience without my prodding. Or, as likely, possibly some of my more blog-euphoric colleagues grew weary of my haranguing against its shortcoming—spurring us to better define its purpose. Either way, about this I have no doubt: This blog and University News Services as a whole are immeasurably richer for the diversity of opinion expressed.

So, even as I post here, I will remain a blog skeptic (consider this PR tip #1: Be wary of blogs). But, in keeping with the true spirit of blogging and bloggers everywhere, I will *always* be candid. In the words of Popeye, "I yam what I yam." (I would've much rather quoted Fred Flintstone, but "Yabba Dabba Doo!" doesn't befit this message.)

Next time: The difference between blogging and writing, and a few words about my credibility as a blogger offering PR tips.

1. [Justin Thorp](#)
Mar03

Mike, I am very glad that you and University News Service have joined the blogosphere. I am a RIT student and find it very interesting to find out more about what you guys do. As far as your blogging skepticism, have you read Robert Scoble and Shel Israel's book Naked Conversations?

2. [Mike Saffran](#)
Mar04

No, I haven't read that one yet, Justin. But it sounds interesting. Thanks for your recommendation. I'll consider adding it to those on my bookshelf that await my reading.

3. [The Tiger Beat](#)
Mar18

Writing vs. blogging: Why they're not the same thing In my previous post, I raised the issue of blog and blogger credibility. So, you decide if you feel I'm qualified to post public relations tips here. My background: I have more than 20 years of professional experience in the...

4. [JiggaDigga](#)
Apr07

Great reading, keep up the great posts. Peace, JiggaDigga

5. [Mary](#)
Jun05

Hi, What an honest post. Very well said. I agree that you have to wait for time to develop what you got right now. And honestly, with your bold way of saying this things out, this blog would truly have an audience that are really always up to something new and interesting because you only don't talk with sense but with full honesty as well. =>

6. [Mike Saffran](#)
Jun06

Thanks for checking in and commenting, Mary. I appreciate your remarks. As a great amateur philosopher (me) once said: "Because the truth always surfaces eventually, you may as well save yourself some grief and start there." :-> Please stop by regularly.

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About us

The Tiger Beat takes you behind the scenes with the members of [RIT University News](#)—the news and public relations division of [Rochester Institute of Technology](#). Get the "story behind the story" and an insider's look at who we are and what we do to publicize RIT news.

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