**Enhancing Social Capital between Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners? The Social Media News Release Uncovered**

Sara K. Portoghese (Dr. Barbara Miller) School of Communications

One of the most common media relations tactics used in public relations is the news release. Traditionally, news releases have been written in document form and submitted to the media – initially via hard copy, later via fax, and most recently via email. Of course, new technologies are changing all facets of communication, and public relations is no different. My research examines the social media news release (SMNR), an evolution of the traditional news release that incorporates many of the tools of new media into its format to make the information more readily accessible to journalists and media organizations. Considering a fundamental goal in public relations involves building and maintaining relationships with key publics (including the news media), my study examines whether the SMNR is an effective relationship-building tool between journalists and public relations practitioners. To investigate this topic, I conducted 19 in-depth interviews with print and online journalists and public relations practitioners. Preliminary research suggested that many practitioners and journalists were unaware of the SMNR, therefore this method afforded me the opportunity to show journalists and practitioners the SMNR template and ask follow-up questions. The interview texts are currently being analyzed according to the qualitative coding procedures outlined by Corbin and Strauss. Social capital theory, which has been used to describe public relations’ ability to form and maintain relationships to achieve organizational goals, will then be applied as an analytic induction tool to analyze the findings for their synthesis with existing literature. I will then comment on the implications of this research and how it may be useful for both scholars and practitioners in understanding how new media can enhance relationships between and among key publics, including journalists.