

# The Sources *HotLink*

Tips and Practical Ideas to Get Positive News Coverage

Number Three, Spring 1997

## Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of *HotLink*

Spring has officially arrived (just ignore those flurries!) and the *Sources* office is buzzing with activity. The Summer 1997 print edition of *Sources* is in the works, plans for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations continue, an excellent new edition of *Parliamentary Names & Numbers* is out, and renewal and update forms have been mailed.

If you are currently listed with *Sources*, you should have received a copy of your listing and an approval form. Please heed the April 30 deadline. Do take the time to review and re-evaluate all the components of your listing, and keep in mind the tips included in this and previous editions of *HotLink*. As always, call me at (416) 964-7799 if you have questions.

The *Sources* World Wide Web site – <http://www.sources.com> – has been recognized by *Sympatico NetLife* magazine, (see page 3).

I would enjoy talking with you about your *Sources* listing, or anything included in *HotLink*. I can be reached at (416) 964-7799 or by E-mail – [yvonne@sources.com](mailto:yvonne@sources.com)

Cheers,  
Yvonne Hilder, Editor

## News Release Tip #7

“Staircase wisdom” is what hits you on your way to bed: the perfect come-back, or the point you should have included in that manuscript. Sometimes we get a second chance. Here’s “staircase wisdom” I’d like to add to my “News Release Tips” in the Winter 1997 *Sources HotLink*:

At the end of every news release, include: “See our listing on page XXX of the current edition of *Sources*, or at [www.sources.com](http://www.sources.com)” This reminds journalist recipients of an excellent additional source of information about you – one at their fingertips. It shows how serious and organized you are about media relations. The journalist recipients of your press release will tend to remember – between press releases – they can find you in *Sources*. – B.Z.

## Dressing for TV

BY BARRIE ZWICKER

### The sound bite version:

Choose what you feel really comfortable in. Avoid distractions. Ask.

### The Russian novel version:

Do you have an outfit that draws compliments? An article of clothing – sweater, jacket, blouse, vest, tie, scarf – that causes people to say “I like your vest” or ask “Where did you get that?” That’s probably what you should wear on TV.

You’ll be more confident and relaxed. More “you.” Your clothing has been compliment-tested for colour coordination with your complexion, for fit, for all sorts of other factors that image consultants charge big bucks to advise upon.

Good, additionally, are solid colours, soft patterns. Makeup for women that complements your clothing. Makeup for men that prevents shiny nose syndrome, lessens circles under eyes and noticeable blemishes.

This can still leave choices. Of your “you” clothing, casual or formal? Work or play? To help narrow down, try to watch the program in advance. And rule out distractions, which include:

1. White, except in very small patches. White “flares.”
2. Small checks, fine lines, hound’s tooth, light stripes, geometric designs, chevron tweeds. They “jump,” “buzz” and “vibrate” in the camera’s eye. Distracting.
3. Bright colours make you look too bright.
4. Colours similar to your skin tone will wash you out.
5. Anything that glints, shines, reflects. This includes jewelry with shiny surfaces, non-glare-resistant eyeglasses, metal eyeglass frames, glossy lipstick. Distracting.

6. Anything that makes the slightest noise, such as beads (which can click), other jewelry (which can clink). I once drew a sound person’s caution by rubbing my chin. It made a whisker noise.

7. Anything that moves, such as pendants, large ear-rings. Distracting.

8. Message buttons. Even poppies on Remembrance Day raise an issue, visually.

9. Clothing that makes you stand out in the wrong way. Even if you’re a bank manager you may regret dressing in a double breasted suit and button down tie on a panel with farmers in plaid shirts and overalls.

The single most important rule: Ask! Programs often have special requirements or suggestions. Things will tend to go smoother if you can accommodate these. For instance, on Vision TV’s daily human affairs program “Skylight,” black outfits are “out.” The reason is that Skylight’s studio background is deliberately black. The head of a person dressed all in black would seem suspended in space.

If you’re going to be on TV with some regularity, consider adopting a “trade mark.” Pierre Berton’s bow tie may be Canada’s best-known example.

TV is impressionistic. People will tell you they “saw you on TV.” They won’t usually remember what you said. They’ll be left with an impression. So attention to clothing, grooming and deportment is essential.

Of course, you might flout all the rules, yet dress perfectly. If your message button is central to why you’re going on TV, it may be an excellent idea. Put on that clown suit and go to the funeral directors’ conference. People will be sure to tell you they “saw you on TV.” They might even remember what you said.

*Continued on next page*



## Media Relations – The 10 Commandments

Reprinted with permission from the Simon Fraser University World Wide Web site at: <http://www.sfu.ca/mediapr/>. The SFU listing is on page 301 of the Winter 1997 edition of *Sources*.

Respond as promptly as possible to media requests and try to respect their deadlines.

Make it clear at the outset whether you're speaking for yourself or on behalf of the university.

Try to be frank and open during an interview.

Practice making your points in 20 to 30 seconds.

Use uncomplicated language and avoid jargon.

Rephrase questions in your responses to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.

Don't try to cover up bad news. Often, the impact of bad news can be reduced by being first to bring it to public attention.

Avoid emotionalism, unsubstantiated statements and off-the-record comments.

Take some time to collect your thoughts before answering difficult questions. If necessary, tell the reporter you'll get back to him or her with your response after the interview.

Say nothing within earshot of a reporter, or within range of a microphone, that you don't want your mother – and the rest of the public – to hear you say.

### SOURCES **Hot** LINK

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*Sources HotLink* is free to organizations listed with *Sources*. Subscriptions are \$20/year for those not listed with *Sources*. Subscription orders must be prepaid. Visa or MasterCard accepted.

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## Dressing for TV, the Wallet Version

**D**istractions: Avoid! White. Glint. Clicks, clinks. Dangly jewelry. **F**  
**R**emember your audience. Remember your cause or organization. **O**  
**E**xtrêmes in looks will seldom help your cause or organization. **R**  
**S**elect what makes you feel good, what you're really comfortable in. **T**  
**S**elect what has drawn compliments: Outfit. Or vest, blouse, scarf, tie. **V**

No tiny checks, hound's tooth, fine lines, lip gloss, big earrings. Try to avoid: Metal framed glasses, dark-tinted lenses. Above all, ask beforehand!

Barrie Zwicker, VISION TV

*Barrie Zwicker is Publisher of Sources, and a Segment Producer for Vision TV's "Skylight." He's ticked off that the dressy vests he has long favoured have become as common as sound bites.*

## Look Who's Joined You in Sources

The following organizations have joined *Sources* in the past few weeks. Look for them in the pages of the July 1997 print edition and on SOURCES SELECT® **Online** at <http://www.sources.com>.

ACC Tel

Allergy/Asthma Information Association

Association of Local Official Health

Agencies

Avon

Canada Investment and Savings

Canada Lands Co. Ltd.

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

Canadian Council for International Peace and Security

Canadian Feed the Children

Canadian International Demining Centre

Canadian Hearing Society

Canadian Highways International

Association

Canadian Institute of Actuaries

Canadian Nuclear Association

Canadian Physiotherapy Association

Cancer Prevention Canada Corporation

Capital Management Group

Defence Association National Network

Developing Countries Farm Radio

EvB Communications

Foundation for Educational Exchange

Fred Victor Centre

Government Source

Hemp Nation

Infolink Communications Ltd.

International Fund for Animal Welfare

Laurier Life

Limoges Acupuncture Clinic

Michener Institute

Missing Children Society

National Institute of Nutrition

Ontario Community College Student Association

Ontario Community Support Association

Ontario Hospital Association

Ontario Naturopathic Association

Partners Personal

Planned Parenthood Toronto

Professional Computer Consultants

RCMP

Reform Party

Single Life Magazine

Seventh Day Adventists

Torken Manes Cohen

deVeber Institute

William M. Mercer Inc.

Working Ventures Canadian Fund Inc.

World Sikh Organization

## Move Up!

Stand in the Spotlight  
 The Bank of Montreal, Lucent Technologies, Ford and Ernst & Young attract extra attention with display advertisements in *Sources*. Display ads complement your listing. You are highlighted in the feature sections of

*Sources*. For maximum impact try a sponsorship, one of the covers or an ad in *Parliamentary Names & Numbers*. All sponsorships and ads point to your listing. Call Display Advertising and Sponsorships Manager, Kirsten Cowan at (416) 964-7799.



# Telling Journalists Who You Are

BY YVONNE HILDER

The heart of your *Sources* listing is the Descriptive Paragraph.

The Descriptive Paragraph tells journalists, before they call, what you do. Think of it as a capsule introduction. Some organizations print their mission statement while others choose to address journalists and researchers directly. Make sure your paragraph is appropriate for *Sources* users.

You may also want to take some time to make your paragraph more appealing to journalists. While most journalists and researchers start in the Subject Index and choose organizations to call according to the subject headings they are listed under, some browse through the listings pages looking for ideas. Your descriptive paragraph could provide the spark of inspiration for their next story.

When you include your logo, and present a catchy descriptive paragraph, journalists are more likely to call you. Consider rewriting your descriptive paragraph to make it more appealing.

One organization that does its descriptive paragraph particularly well is the University of Toronto ( see page 313 of the Winter 97 edition). U of T's descriptive paragraph includes the number of experts available, asks *Sources* users to call the contacts listed and to take a look at the university's WWW site.

Which brings me to another point – if you have a WWW site be sure to include the URL in your *Sources* listing. Additionally, you can hotlink your site to SOURCES SELECT® Online for only \$25 per year.

## Award Winning World Wide Web Site

The *Sources* World Wide Web site – <http://www.sources.com> – was recently selected by *Sympatico NetLife* magazine (Jan./Feb. 1997) as a Top Site in the Reference category. SOURCES SELECT® Online was awarded four stars as “a site of outstanding merit.”

*Sympatico NetLife* described SOURCES SELECT® Online as a “definite bookmark for professional writers and researchers, and anyone wanting to get informed about political, social or environmental issues in Canada.”

This is not the first time SOURCES SELECT® Online has received recogni-

Another feature you may want to add to your listing is a French-language paragraph. *Sources* is a national service. Almost 1,000 copies of the print edition are distributed in Quebec. French-speaking journalists and researchers anywhere in Canada can access your listing on the *Sources* Internet site. If you want to address *Sources* users in Canada's other official language the cost is only \$99 per year for a 60 word paragraph.

You may want to include essential definitions in your paragraph. Don't assume *Sources* users are familiar with the complexities of what your organization does. Ideally they will call and ask you about specifics, but a well-written definition or phrase may catch a journalist's eye and prompt him or her to call you. The result could be a story about your organization.

One other thing to consider in evaluating your descriptive paragraph – after 50 words there is a \$5 charge per word. The extra cost may well be worth it. But always write as economically as you can.

Please ask for help if you need it – I've helped many organizations spruce up their listings – and take the time to review your entire listing at least once a year. One simple technique: give your listing to one or two persons outside your organization to read. Once they're finished ask them a few basic questions. If they're puzzled or confused consider rewriting.

For more simple, cost-effective suggestions for improving your *Sources* listing or copies of the first two issues of *HotLink* please contact me at (416) 964-7799.

tion. Jim Carroll, co-author of the *Canadian Internet Handbook*, awarded his much coveted praise: “I just thought I'd make a comment on the *Sources* Web site – congrats! I see a lot of Web sites come and go, and everyone is trying to grab my attention, but I came across your site after reading about it in *Sources*. You've done a nice job – it's clean, crisp, well laid out – but not only that, you've got a damned simple, easy to understand method of allowing one to search the *Sources* directory. Keep up the good work!”

# Good News

BY YVONNE HILDER

Thanks to the following for responding to my request for recent examples of media coverage. (All page numbers refer to the current, Winter 1997 edition of *Sources*):

The Children's Foundation for Creative Technology (page 223): “We have received our copy of *Sources* and have already been contacted for a couple of interviews. Thanks!!” The Foundation joined *Sources* with the Winter 1997 edition.

Communications Meca (page 226) forwarded an article from *Marketing Magazine* which quoted Leah Moss, an account executive at the Montreal Office. Nancy Boomer, writer of the article, receives *Sources* as a member of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada.

Dr. Keith Solomon of the Canadian Network of Toxicology Centres (page 212), sent two articles, one from *At Guelph* and another from the *Guelph Mercury*. Both quoted Dr. Solomon extensively and featured a new computer game called *Peril* which his students are developing. The *Guelph Mercury* receives 10 copies of *Sources*.

Speakers' Spotlight (page 304) was publicized in a January story in *The Financial Post* entitled “Power Talks” and in the Business section of the January 21 *Toronto Star*. Both stories quoted Martin Perelmutter. *The Financial Post* receives 24 copies of *Sources* and *The Toronto Star* receives 197.

Peter Urs Bender (page 181) was featured in the same *Financial Post* story.

Facilitating positive media coverage is the prime purpose of *Sources* and its companion WWW site SOURCES SELECT® Online. Send us examples of coverage you receive so we can mention them (more coverage!) Fax: (416) 964-8763, or mail to: 4 Phipps St., Ste. 109, Toronto, ON M4Y 1J5, E-mail: [sources@sources.com](mailto:sources@sources.com).

## Who's Missing?

Do you know an organization which would benefit from listing with *Sources*? Please contact the *Sources* office by phone at (416) 964-7799 or by fax at (416) 964-8763 or [sources@sources.com](mailto:sources@sources.com) by E-mail.



# Get the Internet working for you

BY ULLI DIEMER

The stampede to get on the World Wide Web is still under way. But computer publications increasingly report a smaller but significant rush to get off the Web, as companies discover expected revenues and promotional benefits aren't materializing.

The disappointed ones tend to be those who plunged in with inadequate planning and excessive expectations.

It is possible to develop an effective presence on the Web at a reasonable cost. But you have to follow some common-sense rules.

Ask yourself:

- ♦ What are your goals? Is your primary objective to promote awareness of your company or organization? Are you seeking to broaden support for your cause? Are you planning to use your site to sell products or services?
- ♦ Have you clearly thought through your aims and objectives? Have you established a budget? A timeline?
- ♦ Whom do you want to reach? Members? Potential members? Customers? Potential customers? Supporters of your cause? People who share an interest in a particular subject?
- ♦ How do you want people to use your site? To access information about the issues you're involved in? To find out more about your products? To place orders? To interact online with others who share their interests?

Will your site offer features to make users want to come back time after time?

Once you've answered these questions to your satisfaction, you need to develop a marketing strategy.

All too often, one hears of organizations pouring time and money into developing a World Wide Web site, then sitting back waiting for the world to find them.

It won't happen.

Thousands of new Internet sites start up every day, joining the millions already in existence. How will the people you want to reach find out about your Web site?

Even if they happen to learn of its existence, what will motivate them to check out your site rather than countless other equally interesting sites they could choose from?

When it comes to World Wide Web sites, nothing could be further from the truth than the *Field of Dreams* fantasy "Build it and they will come". If you

## Don't starve your tried and proven communications methods to build a gold-plated WWW site.

build it without a coherent and targeted marketing strategy, *no one* will come.

In developing your strategy, keep the following points in mind:

- ♦ Your WWW site is one more tool in your communications/public relations tool-chest. It can *supplement* your existing ways of getting your message out, but it can't *replace* them.
- ♦ The World Wide Web is not a broadcast medium. Your content doesn't go out on the airwaves. It sits on your site, unseen, until you find ways to attract and lead users to it.
- ♦ Your WWW site produces costs (time, money) as well as benefits. These have to be weighed against the costs and benefits of other ways of communicating your message to your customers, constituency, or the public. Don't starve your tried and proven communications methods to build a gold-plated WWW site.
- ♦ Don't put all your eggs in the Internet basket. Seventy-five percent of Canadians don't use the Internet. Fewer than half of the 25% who do use it are frequent users.
- ♦ A WWW site works best when it is integrated into a co-ordinated com-

munications strategy. Your other communications efforts should publicize and support your WWW site, and your site should publicize and support your other efforts.

- ♦ Make sure your World Wide Web URL (address) is mentioned prominently on your letterhead, in your sales literature, in your *Sources* listing, in all your communications.
- ♦ Make sure your WWW site home page gives your mailing address, phone number, E-mail address, and fax number. Mention it in your print and broadcast advertisements.
- ♦ Take advantage of the fact that experienced WWW users rely on online directories, subject guides, indexes, and specialized search tools to find what they're looking for. Massive "search engines" typically return thousands of "hits", most of them irrelevant, for each search. It's more valuable to be listed with the specialized sites which place their emphasis on *selecting* the best sources of information and on providing *annotation* and sophisticated *indexing*.
- ♦ Make sure the key online sites reaching your intended audience are aware of you and have indexed you appropriately. If your site is about birds, ask the Birding in Canada site to establish a link to you. If you want to reach journalists, make sure you are listed with *Sources*, since *SOURCES SELECT Online* is the primary site for Canadian journalists.
- ♦ Saying "We have a Web site" is comparable to saying "We have a phone". Your phone won't ring unless you have an effective strategy for attracting calls. Your World Wide Web site won't work for you either without an effective strategy to make it part of your overall communications and public relations strategy.

*Sources* General Manager Ulli Diemer co-ordinates the content and design of the *SOURCES SELECT Online World Wide Web site* (<http://www.sources.com>).