

THE INTERNET: INFORMATION TOOL FOR THE PRESS  
THE USE OF VIRTUAL PRESS ROOMS IN TURKEY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
ABOUT TOP COMPANIES AND COMPANIES WITH "REPUTATION"

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**Abstract**

More and more people have been using the Internet in Turkey year by year, but this increasing use has not reached the level observed in developed countries yet. The Internet is employed as a new communication tool by Turkish companies, but this practice is likely to cause dispute. Companies make themselves easily accessible to media members, and through their websites, they provide journalists with necessary information they may need. This study aims to analyse how reputable and top companies in Turkey, as they are called, use the Internet as a tool to supply information in their communication with the media. Virtual press rooms of 26 reputable and top companies have been comparatively evaluated in this study to determine how these companies define their virtual press rooms, how accessible these rooms are, what kind of material is presented, how often the material is updated, and what kind of contact information is given. It has been found that companies in Turkey are showing considerable efforts to establish virtual press rooms; however, these efforts are, more often than not, currently far from being satisfactory in terms of content and corporate communication information.

**Key words:** Internet, public relations, reputation.

**Öz: Basına Yönelik Bir Araç Olarak İnternet? Sanal Basın Odalarının Türkiye’de Kullanımı: Büyük Kuruluşlar İle İtibarlı Kuruluşlar Arasında Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma**

Türkiye’de internetin kullanımı yıldan yıla artmaktadır, fakat bu kullanım henüz gelişmiş ülkeler seviyesine ulaşamamıştır. İnternet Türk kuruluşları tarafından yeni bir iletişim aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır, ancak bu kullanımın etkinliği tartışmaya açıktır. Halkla ilişkiler açısından ele alındığında, hedef kitle ile aracısız bir iletişim olanağı sunmasının yanı sıra, internetin en uygun kullanım şekillerinden birisi, basına yönelik gerçekleştirilen bilgilendirme ve iletişim hizmetleridir. Kuruluşlar bu hizmetleri sayesinde doğrudan doğruya basın mensuplarının erişimine hazır olmakta ve sundukları çeşitli bilgiler ile gazetecilerin ihtiyacı oldukları bilgileri web sitelerinde hazır hale getirmektedirler. Bu araştırma, "itibarlı" olarak tanımlanan kuruluşlar ile Türkiye’nin büyük kuruluşları tarafından, internetin basını bilgilendirici bir araç olarak kullanımını incelemeye çalışmaktadır. 26 kuruluşun sanal basın odaları ve bunları ne şekilde tanımladıkları, bu basın odalarına kaç tıklama ile erişilebildiği, sunulan materyallerin neler olduğu ve ne sıklıkla güncellendiği, ayrıca sunulan iletişim bilgileri itibarlı kuruluşlar ve büyük kuruluşlar arasında karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmiştir. Türkiye’deki kuru-

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*İşların sanal basın odaları oluşturma yönünde önemli çabaları olduğu saptanmıştır, ancak bunların içerikleri ve kurumsal iletişim bilgileri henüz ideal durumdan oldukça uzak bulunmaktadır. Bu verinin yanı sıra, tüm dünyada hızla yaygınlaşmakta olan kurumsal blogların ve RSS teknolojilerinin de web sitelerinde yer almadığı saptanmıştır.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *İnternet, halkla ilişkiler, itibar.*

## INTRODUCTION

From now on, using of internet by companies with the aim of public relation becomes widespread as the other ordinary instruments. Many companies use their web sites so as to realize a more interactive communication with their target group and stakeholders and also press. Along with the becoming widespread of internet this much, individuals and institutions, having an interaction with these companies, apply to web in order to have a better recognition with these companies and are able to shape the reputations of companies within the light of information they obtained from there

The internet is a valuable journalistic research and public information resource, providing access to Web site that offer constantly updated sources and background material (Whitaker, 2004: 69). Internet has also become an important instrument for journalists to make their jobs. Many possibilities assisting journalists to make their jobs are available in web, these possibilities are ranging from information banks of Public Agencies to we sites of non governmental organizations or simply from search engines to web sites of libraries. The important thing for the public relations specialist is to attract the journalists' attention to his/her institution's web site and provide them the regular information which they may require. In terms of the relationships of companies with press, there are many possibilities available

on web that can be provided for journalists. It is possible to extend these possibilities as from news releases to presentation of visual-audio materials or from making available a press file on web to organize online press conferences. Of course we should not appreciate this relationship from one point, because journalists will have eased their works by availing from the web sites of companies.

Companies thanks to internet and without using agents have the opportunity of sharing their messages directly with target groups, receiving their opinions and constituting interaction with them. Web is not an alternative media anymore but one of the main instruments for public relations, however web, in the literal sense, is an 'alternative' for the conventional media means which are actually in use for public relations specialist, because it does not require any intermediate media means in order to deliver the news relating to its company to its target group anymore. The same situation is acceptable for journalists too. Press members, instead of contacting with public relation responsible of companies and requesting information from them, have the simplicity of directly reaching the information by logging on to online press rooms. From this point of view, there is no need for agencies for both of the occupational groups.

This article contains the investigation results of web sites of 20 reputable companies which were released in 2006 by *Capital Magazine* and the top 20 companies which were determined by Istanbul Chamber of Commerce in the same years of Turkey in terms of relations with press.

### Internet Usage in Turkey

Internet Technology was introduced in Turkey firstly in the year of 1987 via Turkish Network of Universities and Research Institutes which was establish under the leadership of Ege University. Turkey has started to use internet firstly on the date of 12 April 1993 by installing a hired line from ODTU-Ankara to Washington through the connection provided with abroad (Akşam, 2005).

Although the personal computer usage was increased in recent years in Turkey of which 29% percent of its population (67.803.927) is at the age group of 0-14 (TÜİK, 2000) and thereby having a quite young population as to the data of the year 2000. Turkey takes place very below of the averages of USA and EU with the rates of 5,5 computer per 100 persons, approximately 10 millions and %13,8 internet users in the year of 2004 (DPT, 2006, 167). According to 2005 data of Turkish Institute of Statistic, as the rate of household's internet access was %7,02 in 2004, it has increased to %8,66 in 2005. As to the results of same survey, computer and internet usage rates of household individuals at the age group of 16-74 within the period of April-June of 2005 was respectively %17,65 and %13,93 (DIE, 2005). The common internet connection types in Turkey are modem with the rate of %52,27 (connection over normal telephone line) and DSL with the rate of %19,27 (ADSL SDSL etc) (DIE, 2005).

Taking Research on 2007 Household Information Technology Usage carried out by TUIK into consideration, there occurred an increase of approximately 10% in comparison to 2004 and 2005. While it is now recognized that 18,94% of houses have got Internet access in 2007, the computer and Internet usage rates among household individuals at the ages between 16-74 became 29,46% and 26,67%, respectively. While 61,11% of household members at the these specified periods state that they use Internet almost every day, 25,50% of them tell that they use Internet at least once a week (TUIK, 2007).

As scrutinizing the computer and internet usage in 2005 in terms of sexuality and age groups, men in the 16-24 age group take the first rank with the rate of %43,79 before women having the rate of %25,02. The rate of men (%37,41) in the same age group is still higher than the rate of women (%18,82) in terms of internet usage. The same situation is valid for the other age groups(TÜİK, 2006a). In Turkey, especially men use internet by far. This situation was also confirmed by the data of 2007 April-June (see Table 1). In addition, when the same frame was considered, the rates of those who have never used computers and Internet yet seem exceedingly high, in particular, it is revealed that rural areas are very unfamiliar with these technology and communication patterns (TUIK, 2007).

The usage of the internet is growing up from year to year, but according to the "internet-worldstats.com" website, the first ranking is the USA (with 210.575.287 people), the second is China (162.000.000 people), and the third is Japan (86.300.000 people). Turkey is on the rank 17th.

	Computer usage rates			Internet usage rates			
		Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Last three months (April-June 2007)	Turkey	29.46	20.92	7.88	26.67	18.47	34.76
	City	37.00	26.78	47.08	33.85	24.18	43.38
	Country	16.36	10.74	21.91	14.21	8.55	19.79
Between three months-one year	Turkey	1.55	1.29	1.80	1.77	1.43	2.11
	City	1.62	1.44	1.80	1.82	1.53	2.10
	Country	1.43	1.04	1.82	1.70	1.25	2.15
More than one year	Turkey	2.17	2.10	2.24	1.50	1.43	1.57
	City	2.43	2.45	2.41	1.82	1.72	1.92
	Country	1.73	1.50	1.96	0.95	0.94	0.97
Never used	Turkey	66.82	75.69	58.07	70.05	78.67	61.55
	City	58.95	69.33	48.72	62.51	72.56	52.61
	Country	80.48	86.72	74.32	83.14	89.26	77.09

Table 1. Rates of computer and Internet usage in the separation of city-country according to sexes (%)  
Source: TUIK, 2007

As to the "Usage Information Technologies in Companies" survey of Turkish Institute of Statistic which was firstly performed in the year of 2005, there is a parallelism between the bigness of companies and internet access. Accordingly, in January of 2005, %87,76 of companies was using computer and %80,43 of them had internet access. As the internet access was %99,22 in concern with the companies with at least 250 or more employees, this rate decreases to %77,97 in the companies with 10-49 employees (TUIK, 2006b). There is a direct proportion between the bigness of corporations and the fact that they have their own websites. 43,29% of the corporations which employ 10-49 people, 70,89% of the corporations which have 50-249 employees and 90,47% of the corporations which have 250 or more employees have their own websites (TUIK, 2006c).

As to the data which was put forward by Alfonso and Miguel (2006) regarding to the survey of international companies' usage of corporate press rooms, the internet usage rates of the eight countries subject to the

survey was considerably high. The position of Turkey in the The Economist Intelligence Unit (2007) ranking which was prepared by IBM and The Economist as well as the basis of these two authors' survey is slightly below of the middle with a upward tendency in comparison with previous years.

#### Internet usage towards press in terms of public relations

If we consider public relations as "the management of communication between an organization and its publics" as the way Grunig and Hunt (1984: 6) described, Internet and websites can serve for this purpose very easily. Now, most of the biggest corporations of today have their own websites, but those who can use these websites for public relations purposes efficiently still seems insufficient for Turkey.

It is possible to mention that Internet usage of public relations has four ways. While Holtz expresses three of them as e-mail, establishing websites and virtual communities

(2002: 50), it is now possible to add corporate blogs to them.

When corporations intends to communicate with their target audiences directly, they can apply to 'e-mail', when they desire to inform various groups about themselves directly, they can apply to their 'websites' and they defend their own sphere of interest, being included in 'virtual communities'. Thanks to the blogs, which are now getting very common all though the world, but are not much preferred by Turkish corporations, now the corporations are getting in touch with their target audiences more closely. All these aspects form a great support for 'transparency' and 'direct communication' which are included in public relations.

In this research, we will try to put forward how public relations can (or cannot) communicate more efficiently with the press through the web. Journalism and public relations are two occupational fields, which need each other very much. With regards to public relations, now corporations can communicate directly with the press, thanks to web. Now it is vital for corporations to carry out works towards press among various groups, since this way the corporations can inform press directly without directing it to other sources. One of the most important aspects that the corporations should pay attention here is to get the requested information across the journalist who visited its website. Otherwise, the journalist will try to access to different information sources.

According to the Nielsen-Norman research, first five information that the journalist looked for when they visited a website are the following (Holtz, 2002: 160):

•Contact information

- Basic fact checking (such as correct spelling of an executive's name or the location of a plant)
- The company's own spin on events
- Financial information
- Downloadable images for uses as illustrations in the story

As seen here, in fact, this information are not composed of very complex data and form the contents which every corporation can add to their websites easily.

If the corporations, which desire to realize public relations activities towards press efficiently, arrange their websites according to the need of press, they may become the primary information sources of the journalists.

#### **Relation between reputation and public relations**

One of the main targets of the companies having planned and put into practice their Public Relations strategy is to have a successful reputation which is recognized by target groups. In PRSA's (2007) survey over 1493 persons in the year of 2006, respondents were asked to what extend they agree that the PR contributes to moving the organization forward in terms of three aspects: reputation of the organization, market share and financial success/sales. Of these three agreement was strongest concerning reputation of the organization which received an average agreement score of 4.51 on a five-point scale.

The findings of previous research suggest that organizational reputation is a by-product of organization-public relationships management. Also, professionals are attuning their practices to incorporate the concepts of relationships and reputation to assess public relations effectiveness (Yang and

Grunig, 2005). The reputation of organizations is defined by Grunig and Hung as "the distribution of cognitive representations that members of a collectivity hold about an organization, representations that may, but do not always include evaluative components" (2005).

It is observed that the concept of reputation management have been using instead of public relations by practitioners. The concept of 'reputation management' was appeared as rescuer as the Public Relations is not considered adequate or 'another' thing is tried to be put in practice. Hutton et.al. (2001) reflect this opinion:

Reputation management, if it is to emerge as a significant business function, clearly rests on a foundation of what is traditionally termed 'public relations', which in recent decades has become known commonly, in a corporate context, as 'corporate communication', 'corporate affairs', 'corporate relations' and similar terms.

Hutton also points out the following as the reason of emerging of the concepts such as 'reputation management', 'image management' (1999):

The Tendency of managers who lack training in public relations to think in superficial terms like 'image' and 'perception'; the large number of major public relations firms that are owned by advertising agencies, and the desire to bury the negative connotations of 'public relations', once and for all.

It is possible we can mention that public relations and reputation management are almost nested and inseparable two facts. By the way of public relations organizations,

companies aim to add value to themselves, in case of this value is positively perceived by the target group, then at that time we have the reputation.

According to Fombrun (1996), in order to form, maintain the continuity of and protect the reputation of an company, a close coordination of personnel relations, public relations, customer and investor relations and media relations are essential.

Particularly critical to building, sustaining and defending a company's reputation, I suggest here is a closer coordination of traditional fiefdoms: employee relations, public relations, customer relations, investor relations and media relations. (Fombrun, 1996: 12)

Efficient studies to be made devoted to these five areas shape the corporate reputation. We are going to focus on media relations within our study.

When the information given above is considered, it is seen that 'reputation management' was used more especially by executors instead of 'public relations' term. We aim to show with our underlying desire to compare 'reputed corporations' with 'big corporations' in this example we included in this research that there is not very significant difference.

#### **Literature review**

The majority of big companies in Turkey are seemed to include internet within their structure according to the abovementioned data. There is almost no company which does not has internet connection. However, being connected to internet does not mean as using it as a corporate communication media

at the same time. According to a survey performed in the year of 2002, %82 of the top 50 companies of Turkey has an internet site but only %21 of these sites has services aimed to the press (Okay and Okay, 2002). As of today, when the same comparison is made, it was ascertained that 49 companies have had a web site registered on their behalf (namely, %98 of them has their own web sites), however two of them had only purchased the domain name and had not actively used this sites. And finally web sites of %66 of these companies have services aimed to the press. As we make a comparison with the year of 2002, it is possible to determine the largely increase in terms of forming the press rooms but it would not be correct to qualify this increase as sufficient. This numerical increase must also be evaluated in terms of quality.

A great number of articles and surveys are available regarding to how the press rooms can be activated, how they work, what subjects are included within these sites or how an company's web site's press room must be improved etc. within the contents of companies' web sites. Hallahan (2001) examines the nature and value of usability research, and the elements of an effective web site based on usability principles. Callison (2003) had realized a detailed content analysis in the year of 2003 concerning the fact that how the companies in Fortune 500 provide service devoted to press. Andrews (2006), in his article for Cardiff Council regarding to the fact that how an online press room should be improved, basically bearing up to theoretical information, has introduced data regarding to how an online press room should be. Alfonso and Miguel(2006) has generally and also comparatively determined the differences and similarities by making surveys on

virtual press rooms of 120 corporate web sites in eight countries. And Kirat (2007) wrote an article indicating the fact that how Public Relations Departments in United Arab Emirates use online media relations.

## **SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY**

### **The Objective of The Study**

In such a period in which online press room application increases gradually in companies, the main targets we contemplated for our survey are to establish the media relationship on internet between 'reputable companies' and 'big companies', to determine whether or not having meaningful differences in terms of usage and whether or not the reputable companies efficiently avail from web aimed to press.

### **Research Questions**

We asked the following questions in order to realize the targets of this survey.

RQ1:What percentage of the reputable and big companies has clearly defined press rooms?

RQ2:How were the press rooms of reputable and big companies entitled?

RQ3:What kind of materials are inside of the press rooms of reputable and big companies?

RQ4:What are the properties of news releases inside of the press rooms of reputable and big companies?

RQ5:What is the content of communication information provided by press rooms of reputable and big companies entitled?

We also handled these questions from the point of if there is any disparity or similarity between them. For this purpose, the web sites of "reputable companies" and "big companies" were analyzed and evaluated.

Top 20 Companies			Reputable 20 Companies	
Company name	Web Site		Company name	Web site
Tüpraş-Türkiye Petrol Rafineri A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.tupras.com.tr">www.tupras.com.tr</a>	1	Koc Holding	<a href="http://www.koc.com.tr">www.koc.com.tr</a>
Ford Otomotiv Sanayi A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.ford.com.tr">www.ford.com.tr</a>	2	Turkcell	<a href="http://www.turkcell.com.tr">www.turkcell.com.tr</a>
Toyota Otomotiv Sanayi Türkiye A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.toyota.com.tr">www.toyota.com.tr</a>	3	Arçelik	<a href="http://www.arcelik.com.tr">www.arcelik.com.tr</a>
EÜAŞ Elektrik Üretim A.Ş. Genel Müdürlüğü	<a href="http://www.euas.gov.tr">www.euas.gov.tr</a>	4	Sabancı Holding	<a href="http://www.sabanci.com.tr">www.sabanci.com.tr</a>
Arçelik A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.arcelik.com.tr">www.arcelik.com.tr</a>	5	Vestel	<a href="http://www.vestel.com.tr">www.vestel.com.tr</a>
Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikaları T.A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.erdemir.com.tr">www.erdemir.com.tr</a>	6	Garanti Bankası	<a href="http://www.garanti.com.tr">www.garanti.com.tr</a>
Oyak-Renault Otomobil Fabrikaları	<a href="http://www.renault.com.tr">www.renault.com.tr</a> <a href="http://www.oyak.com.tr">www.oyak.com.tr</a>	7	Coca Cola	<a href="http://www.cci.com.tr">www.cci.com.tr</a>
Vestel Elektronik San. ve Tic.A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.vestel.com.tr">www.vestel.com.tr</a>	8	Unilever	<a href="http://www.unilever.com.tr">www.unilever.com.tr</a>
Tofaş Türk Otomobil Fabrikası A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.tofas.com.tr">www.tofas.com.tr</a>	9	Eczacıbaşı Toplu-luğu	<a href="http://www.eczacibasi.com.tr">www.eczacibasi.com.tr</a>
Aygaz A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.aygaz.com.tr">www.aygaz.com.tr</a>	10	Procter&Gamble	<a href="http://www.pg.com.tr">www.pg.com.tr</a>
Türkiye Şeker Fabrikaları A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.turkseker.gov.tr">www.turkseker.gov.tr</a>	11	Ülker	<a href="http://www.ulker.com.tr">www.ulker.com.tr</a>
Beko Elektronik A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.beko.com.tr">www.beko.com.tr</a>	12	Zorlu Holding	<a href="http://www.zorlu.com.tr">www.zorlu.com.tr</a>
Mercedes-Benz Türk A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.mercedes.com.tr">www.mercedes.com.tr</a>	13	Doğuş Holding	<a href="http://www.dogusgrubu.com.tr">www.dogusgrubu.com.tr</a>
Petkim Petrokimya Holding A.Ş. Genel Müdürlüğü	<a href="http://www.petkim.com.tr">www.petkim.com.tr</a>	14	Ford Otosan	<a href="http://www.ford.com.tr">www.ford.com.tr</a>
İçdaş Çelik Enerji Tersane ve Ulaşım San. A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.icdas.com.tr">www.icdas.com.tr</a>	15	Akbank	<a href="http://www.akbank.com.tr">www.akbank.com.tr</a>
Unilever San. ve Tic. T.A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.unilever.com.tr">www.unilever.com.tr</a>	16	Anadolu Holding	<a href="http://www.anadolugroup.com">www.anadolugroup.com</a>
Milangaz LPG Dağıtım Tic. ve San. A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.milangaz.com.tr">www.milangaz.com.tr</a>	17	Microsoft	<a href="http://www.microsoft.com/turkiye">www.microsoft.com/turkiye</a>
Habaş Sınai ve Tıbbi Gazlar İstihsal Endüstrisi A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.habas.com.tr">www.habas.com.tr</a>	18	Petrol Ofisi	<a href="http://www.poas.com.tr">www.poas.com.tr</a>
Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü	<a href="http://www.tki.gov.tr">www.tki.gov.tr</a>	19	Türkiye İş Bankası	<a href="http://www.isbank.com.tr">www.isbank.com.tr</a>
İskenderun Demir ve Çelik A.Ş.	<a href="http://www.isdemir.com.tr">www.isdemir.com.tr</a>	20	Efes Pilsen	<a href="http://www.efespilsen.com.tr">www.efespilsen.com.tr</a>
			Bosch	<a href="http://www.bosch.com.tr">www.bosch.com.tr</a>

Table 2. Companies included within the survey and their web sites

Since 1999, Capital Magazine has been revealing the most admired 20 companies in Turkey for each year. It published the results of survey which was made by the participation of 1350 senior managers from 546 companies from Reputation Management Special Issue, in December 2006. These results by which the most admired 20 companies of Turkey are determined, are taken as the "reputable companies", comprising the first group of our survey (Capital, 2006).

The second group of our survey leans on the survey which is conducted by İstanbul Chamber of Industry since the year of 1968 and started as "100 Big Industrial Companies". The name of the survey is today "Turkey's Top 500 Industrial Companies". We predicated on to the first 20 companies of top 500 companies according to the criterion of "Sales from Production" which was revealed by in 2006 (ISO, 2006). We performed our survey in the period of April-May, 2007



We included the web sites of companies in the Table 3. Accordingly, since the seventh company in the list of top 20 companies is a partnership of two different companies, both of the partners were scrutinized. Since the twentieth rank of most reputable companies list is being shared by two companies, the web sites of both companies were taken into account. Consequently, our survey was performed over 42 companies in total from both of the groups. As you can see from the Table 2, some companies (Arcelik, Ford Otosan, Vestel, Unilever) took place within both of two classification. Since there is no service aimed to the press in web site of Ford, it was not included in the survey. But Arçelik, Unilever and Vestel were separately scrutinized for both of two groups. All data is transferred to SPSS program and chi-square is used in order to ascertain the relation between them. .

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Number of Websites With Press Rooms

The number of corporate websites prepared for meeting the needs of press is gradually increasing. Thus, we researched primarily whether special pages for press were prepared or not in the first step of our research.

As we take into consideration all of the companies we included into the survey, it was determined that as %61.9 of 42 companies in total had press rooms on internet media, %21.4 of them did not, and %16.7 of them had an option of News from Company which we did not include within the other steps of survey. It was determined that no service aimed to the press had been given but only improvements regarding to company take place in the section of News from Company.

Generally, since %92 of the big companies which were observed within the frame of survey realized by Alfonso and Miguel (2006) was having such a service aimed to the press, it is possible to mention that the rate of %61.9 regarding to our survey is actually not a high rate. As we individually evaluate the reputable companies and big companies, we see that they have online press rooms respectively at the rates of %76.2 and %47.8. There is not a significant difference between two groups in terms of having press rooms. ( $\chi^2=3.635$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) In the next sections of our survey, only the companies defined as 'press room' are based. ( $n=26$ ).

### Press room labels commonly used

If we consider that the journalists work under the stress of time, it is possible to mention that the services towards press should be expressed clearly on the websites of the corporations. To this end, corporations may use different names such as 'press room', 'press relations', 'media'. According to the definition used as base, %34.6 of 26 companies has preferred the expression of 'press room'. This high rate was come forward in the Callison's survey (2003). Another high rate for Turkey was occurred as the expression of 'media relations', %26.9 of the companies has used this expression to define press rooms. As %7.7 of these companies has preferred the other expressions such as 'press relations', 'news and media', 'news', 'press', one company (%3.8) has preferred the definitions of 'news and organizations' and 'media" (see Table 3). There is no significant difference in terms of reputable and big companies. ( $\chi^2=7.960$ ,  $df=7$ ,  $p>0.05$ )

	Reputable Companies (n=16)	Top Companies (n=10)	All companies (n=26)
Press Room	43.8%	20.0%	34.6%
Media Relations	18.8%	40.0%	26.9%
Press Relations	12.5%	.0%	7.7%
Press	12.5%	.0%	7.7%
News and Media	6.3%	10.0%	7.7%
News	6.3%	10.0%	7.7%
Media	.0%	10.0%	3.8%
News and Events	.0%	10.0%	3.8%

Table 3. Names of online press rooms of reputable and top companies

### *Numbers of clicks required to reach the press rooms and access*

Generally, press rooms are accessible with one click from the web sites of a big majority of companies (%88.5).(versus %75.7 in Alfonso and Miguel 2006; versus %62.6 Callison's 2003 study). This matter has a big importance with respect to press members are enabled to easily find the areas regarding to themselves. When press members could not easily find the service aimed to them, they instantly leave that site and apply to other information sources. There is no meaningful difference in terms of reputable and big companies. ( $\chi^2=.038$  df=1,  $p>0.05$ ) No pre-registration condition for press members have been determined in any of the sites we scrutinized. In fact, there are many different opinions regarding to such pre-registrations, as some persons underline that such pre-registrations are significant in order to collect information regarding to journalists and be able to sending them special information, others argue that it may prevent the independence of internet ambient and since the web is a democratic ambient, such registration processes should not be exist. In the previous surveys it was determined that limited number of companies had been providing such press room service through a registration process (Alfonso and Miguel, 2006).

### *Materials included in press rooms*

The element which mostly takes place in all the sites we scrutinized is 'news releases' with the rate of %84.6. This rate stays low as we compare it with the previous surveys.(compared to %100 reported by Alfonso and Miguel in 2006; %96.9 reported by Callison in 2003). As 'Company logos for use in publication' logo and corporate identity guidelines which barely held place at the eleventh rank in Callison's survey, they have hold place at the second rank with the rate of %38,4 in Turkey. The wish of journalists to publish the logos of companies as they make a news regarding to them can be determined as the reason of this. Corporate magazine and news regarding to company figured in the press is at the second and third ranks after that respectively with the rates of %30.76 and %26.9.(See Table 5). There is no meaningful difference in terms of reputable and big companies.( $\chi^2=10.430$ , df=19,  $p>0.05$ ).

Generally according to the literature, it was observed that as manager profiles and their photographs frequently took place in press rooms of companies (Callison, 2003), it is determined that these kind of information are not a big matter in Turkey. Since the managers of reputable and big companies in Turkey have not become a brand yet, information regarding to these persons are not

Label	All Companies (n=26)		Top Companies (n=10)		Reputable Companies(n=16)	
	Number of press rooms possessing item	Percentage of press rooms possessing item	Number of press rooms possessing item	Percentage of press rooms possessing item	Number of press rooms possessing item	Percentage of press rooms possessing item
Press/news releases/	22	84.6	8	80	14	87.5
Company logos/corporate identity guide	10	38.4	3	30	7	43.75
House Journal	8	30.76	5	50	3	18.75
News and interviews about the company in the press	7	26.9	4	40	3	18.75
Product or company photo gallery	6	23.07	2	20	4	25
Corporate information films	4	15.38	1	10	3	18.75
CEO/Manager information	3	11.53	2	20	1	6.25
News from the Company	3	11.53	1	10	2	12.5
FAQ	2	7.69	1	10	1	6.25
Manager speeches/presentations	2	7.69	1	10	1	6.25
Corporate presentation	2	7.69	1	10	1	6.25
Commercial films	2	7.69	1	10	1	6.25
Announcements	2	7.68	1	10	1	6.25
The company in the world Press	1	3.84	0	0	1	6.25
Media release	1	3.84	0	0	1	6.25
News alert service for the Media via e-mail	1	3.84	0	0	1	6.25
Promotion campaigns	1	3.84	0	0	1	6.25
E-news releases	1	3.84	0	0	1	6.25
Newsletter subscribe	1	3.84	0	0	1	6.25
Media kits	1	3.84	1	10	0	0

Table 4. Items included in Turkish Companies Virtual Press Rooms

frequently be sought when scanning the information about company.

Table 4, provides a complete list of all items, their frequency of inclusion, and the percentage of pages that included each item.

#### *Information's about press releases*

The seventh of Middleberg/Ross (2001) surveys introduced that journalists use internet mostly for sending and receiving e-mails;

searching about the materials of articles and reference and view the news releases. Actually this situation gives big opportunities to companies in respect to attracting journalists to their internet sites but absolutely the precondition of this is to provide appropriate, up to date and correct information.

Our surveys displayed that %84.6 of the companies having online press rooms had performed the first step which is 'putting the

press room to web site' process. But up-to-datedness and archive capacity of these news releases are critically important matters too. Most of the releases we scrutinized was put into the web site within the period of last week (n=22; %31.8) and six of the total seven companies which put these news releases to their web site within the period of last week were reputable companies; the news releases belonging to the period between last one and three months followed up them (%22.7). As is under the previous titles, there is no statistically meaningful difference between reputable and big companies ( $\chi^2=4.467$ ;  $df=5$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

As we analyze how the news releases were placed into the web sites, it was designated that only %9 of them was sorted according to particular titles and the rest of the news releases were provided all together. This rate is %92.9 for the reputable companies and %87.5 for the big companies. Sorting of the news releases as to particular titles will definitely allow journalists to easily and rapidly access the required information. But this criterion was not accomplished. There is no significant difference in terms of reputable and big companies (see Table 5). ( $\chi^2=.177$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $p>0.05$ )

	Reputable Companies (n=14)	Top Companies (n=8)	All Companies (n=22)
last one week	42.9%	12.5%	31.8%
last 15 days	14.3%	12.5%	13.6%
16 day-1 month	7.1%	25.0%	13.6%
1month+-3months	21.4%	25.0%	22.7%
6months+-9months	7.1%	25.0%	13.6%
No Date	7.1%	.0%	4.5%

Table 5. Date Range of news releases in the site.

As we search for whether or not they have news release archive, we see that %73 of them (if we separate them as reputable and big companies, %71.4 of reputable companies; %75 of big companies) has an archive. There isn't meaningful difference in terms of reputable and big companies. ( $\chi^2=0.33$ ;  $df=1$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). All of the abovementioned evaluations have been realized over 22 companies which have news release.

### Communication Information

It is not an easy job for public relations specialists to make a web site a news source for journalists. Because according to a survey, it was determined that corporate web sites are at the forth rank in terms of news search activities of journalists after telephone, personal interviews and news releases (Hachigan and Hallahan, 2003). As to Hallahan (2004), them main reason of this is lacking of the basic information including communication and telephone information which are the journalists look for in the press rooms. As the telephone number was the first element in terms of communication information, e-mail, fax and address information took place after that. Generally from the point of having communication information with the web sites, there is no significant difference between reputable companies and big companies (see Table 6). ( $\chi^2=0.266$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

### Phone Information

%84.6 (n=26) of the companies subject to the survey have provided communication information regarding to telephone. Although this rate seems like very high, in fact it should be evaluated as insufficient, because the remaining four companies have not provided any communication and telephone number information by no means. If the

	Reputable Companies (n=16)	Top Companies (n=10)	All Companies (n=26)
<i>Communication Information</i>			
Not Available	12.5%	20.0%	15.4%
Available	87.5%	80.0%	84.6%
<i>Phone Number Information</i>			
Not Available	12.5%	20.0%	15.4%
Company in general	50.0%	40.0%	46.2%
PR/ Corporate Communication Practitioner in general (no name)	18.8%	40.0%	26.9%
PR/Corporate Communication Practitioner identified by name	18.8%	.0%	11.5%
<i>E-mail and communication form</i>			
Not Available	31.3%	30.0%	30.0%
Company in general	43.8%	30.0%	38.5%
PR/ Corporate Communication Practitioner in general (no name)	6.3%	20.0%	11.5%
PR/Corporate Communication Practitioner identified by name	18.8%	20.0%	19.2%
<i>Fax number</i>			
Not Available	18.8%	20.0%	19.2%
Company in general	56.3%	40.0%	50.0%
PR/ Corporate Communication Practitioner in general (no name)	18.8%	40.0%	26.9%
PR/Corporate Communication Practitioner identified by name	6.3%	0%	3.8%
<i>Physical Address</i>			
Not Available	18.8%	30.0%	23.1%
Company in general	56.3%	40.0%	50.0%
PR/ Corporate Communication Practitioner in general (no name)	18.8%	30.0%	23.1%
PR/Corporate Communication Practitioner identified by name	6.3%	0%	3.8%

Table 6. Data Regarding Companies Communication Information

journalist has a purpose to make contact with the company, it looks very possible to easily give up that purpose after he/she entered such a web site. As we survey the fact that to whom the data regarding to telephone number are belonging, we appoint that %46.2 of all companies has provided the general telephone numbers of company (general numbers were provided at %50 of reputable companies and %40 of big companies); %26.9 of companies has provided the numbers of company's public relation or corporate communication contact person

whose name had not been determined beforehand (%18.8 of reputable companies and %40 of big companies) A public relations contact person whose name have been provided within the communication information was provided only at the %18.8 of reputable companies. None of the big companies has designated a public relations contact person by name and provided his/her telephone number. There is no meaningful difference between reputable and big companies in terms of abovementioned information( $\chi^2=3.265$ ;  $df=3$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

### *E-mail and communication form information*

As we investigated whether or not it is possible to communicate with the responsible persons of press rooms via mail or a drop-down form, we have determined that %69.2 of all companies (n=26) have been providing this opportunity. As we survey the companies have not provided such an opportunity, we determined that %31.3 of reputable companies and %30 of big companies have not provided such a communication opportunity. In concern with the companies providing this opportunity, %18.8 of reputable companies and %20 of big companies have provided a communication opportunity via mail or communication form with a public relation specialist whose name had been determined beforehand. As we evaluated these companies providing communication opportunity by a public relation or corporate communication contact person whose name had been determined beforehand, we have ascertained that %6.3 of reputable companies and %20 of big companies had provided such an opportunity. The other e-mail and communication form data are the communication information of company which were provided in general sense. There is no significant difference between reputable and big companies in this step. ( $\chi^2=1.319$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

### *Fax and Cell Phone Information*

%80.7 of companies has put their fax numbers into the communication information. But most of these fax information (%50) were generally in the way of fax numbers belonging to company. In terms of general companies, the rate of the companies which provided fax numbers belonging to public relation or corporate communication contact person whose name had been determined

was only %3.8. The rest of the fax numbers were belonging to public relation or corporate communication contact person whose name had not been determined (%26.9). There is no meaningful difference between reputable and big companies. ( $\chi^2=1.987$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). None of the companies had provided their public relation or corporate communication contact person's mobile number.

### *Adress Information*

%23.1 of companies had not put down an address information by which a contact would have been possible with them to online press rooms. The rest of the address information were consist of the information regarding to company with the rate of %50, information regarding to public relation contact person whose name had not been determined with the rate of %23.1 and information regarding to public relation contact person whose name had been determined with the rate of %3.8. As well as all other data, there is no meaningful difference between reputable and big companies under this title. ( $\chi^2=1.625$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Public relations is a profession that newly developing and progressing in Turkey but in addition to this, begin to take successful results at international areas as well. In consideration of public relation applications mainly has started and developed as of 70's in Turkey, it would not be wrong to mention that the situation of this profession in this country is still at the step of development. The same situation is valid in terms of internet usage of companies. By the reason of the fact that the both fields newly become widespread, the usage of web sites by companies in terms of public relations is not highly developed as well. Of course this situation

also contains a supply-demand issue. Because as far as we observed, journalist currently obtain the information regarding to companies not from the web sites of companies but directly from the public relations contact persons by communicating with them in Turkey; or the otherwise, namely information delivery by public relations contact persons to journalists is more common.

Fast improvement that Turkey experienced about communication and technology has not been applied in parallel with 'interactive'-communication-through-web understanding of corporations yet. We detected this fact also at this research. In fact, one dimension of our research consists of demonstrating that there is not any difference between 'reputed corporation' and 'big corporation'. Most of the big corporations we dealt with had their own public relations departments and this was also the case for reputed corporations. But we have found out that there is not any significant difference between being 'reputed' and 'big' in terms of informing the press and establishing relations through the web, which this is actually our expectation.

Most of the 26 companies having online press rooms (20) have directly their public relations or corporate communication contact person. As we separated them as reputable and big companies, we observed that %81 of reputable companies and %70 of big

companies had a public relations or corporate communication contact person. In fact, this is a very low rate for both groups. But becoming a reputable company of big companies without having a 'public relations/corporate communication contact person' is another point worthy of giving thought. In terms of online press rooms' usage of reputable and big companies in Turkey, no difference has been found between them. We have obtained data indicating that these companies are considerably far away from forming an 'ideal' and 'efficient' press room and after once they attract the press to their sites, they are very incapable of making their sites as a information source for journalists at this point. We also ascertained that Turkish companies have not rendered their online press rooms to efficient, 'first-hand' information source yet, and they have a long way to go in order to provide the desired degree of content and interactivity in their web sites. Another interesting result of our survey is none of the companies which were subject to our survey has the opportunities which are that the developed county's companies provide from their sites in order to enable bidirectional, symmetric communication (e.g; blogs)

There are many things and a very long way that the big and 'reputable' companies in Turkey have to learn and walk in order to make their communication with the press in the literal sense over web.

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