

News

Australian media use less than 20% of the press releases sent to them, and much of the information received is considered unreliable, irrelevant and only of marginal interest, according to a study commissioned by GCI Group (Australia) and conducted by Melbourne market research consultants Sweeney Research Pty Ltd.

Data on how the media views the PR industry was provided by one hundred non-specialist journalists including editors, deputy editors, news editors and sub editors – working in print, radio and television in Victoria and NSW.

The survey found that the general public was the main source of information for journalists – 61%. Press secretaries and government were next favoured, followed by other journalists and PR agencies.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents agreed that the full story only came from senior management. Journalists did not consider the corporate communications staff were much help. Less than 20% said the corporate communications department was a source and 18 % said staff could not provide access to the right people.

Source: GCI Group Australia, *Eye on the Media Study*.

The smallest satellites ever launched are now circling Earth in low orbit. Designed by the Californian Aerospace Corporation and sponsored by the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the satellites are about the size of a pack of cards weighing less than 250 grams.

The “picosatellites” basic mission is to serve as a platform for testing miniature radio devices. Working in pairs and tethered by thin strands of gold wire, they send data packets back to a stationary third picosat on the ground. They are envisioned as tiny workhorses of the future.

It is likely that successful test results of the picosats will have significant implications for future space-based defense technology. A swarm of miniature satellites could communicate with microsensors on a battlefield and convey surveillance and tactical information, among other missions said Aerospace engineer Ernest Robinson. "The use of this technology for low-cost, reliable, integrated space systems applications is inevitable," he said.

Source: www.aero.org/news/current/picosat-launch.html

The growth in online purchases is stimulating parcel delivery businesses. United Parcel Service (UPS), the world's biggest deliverer of packages, announced that its fourth quarter earnings for 1999 increased by 37% to \$661 million. UPS attributed the reason to the growth in international and Internet operations.

The staking out of cyber territory leaves few stones unturned. Wired News reports that the domain name nigger.com is taken – not by the Ku Klux Klan, or Aryan Nations, or any other hate group.

Nigger.com is the property of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) which says it owns every domain with variations of that word, including hyphenated versions.

"We wanted to make sure these domain names would not be used for derogatory purposes," NAACP director of communications John White said. "We are the oldest civil rights organization and it is within our charter to reduce hate in whatever way we can."

Source: www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,21873,00.html