

SWMS Editorial Teleconference Series:

**Peter Kafka, Silicon Alley Insider
Managing Editor**

October 2007

Accompanied by colleague Dan Frommer, Peter left Forbes.com this summer to help launch this fledgling news site, focused primarily on VCs, start-ups and "digital business."

This is a good time for PR pros to get on Peter's radar -- and if you know of any good journalists looking to make a change, Peter is [hiring](#).

Audio Sample - [Peter Kafka, Silicon Alley Insider](#)



Integrated services and software solutions for reputation and campaign management, media monitoring and research of media contacts.

**"Covering digital business with a New York-centric perspective."
After 10 years at Forbes.com... "I've never worked this hard before, period."**

Traffic: August was great and...

"September was better. It's great when you start with zero." Suffice it to say things are "going well, better than we expected." Peter points to a good showing on Compete and Alexa and they recently came in at 13 on the Techmeme Leaderboard, "ahead of some established folks."

East Coast TechCrunch?

Not exactly. With several two- and three-person blog-based businesses in the game (Rafat Ali-Om Malik-Mike Arrington-Nick Denton) Peter and company saw room "to do a slightly different analysis, more rigorous or more analytical... bring a different set of disciplines to bear, and do it from New York with a New York take on the world. We think that both in terms of perspective and also in terms of stories there's a lot being missed -- because people, with good reason, are focused on small part of Silicon Valley right now."

Perceived tilt toward Silicon Valley?

Peter: "I think the tech blogging world is centered on Silicon Valley, and again for good reason. That's where the most people are doing the most work, but that doesn't mean that if you add up the eastern seaboard (Austin, the Midwest, and Southern California for that matter) there isn't plenty "going on outside of that tiny little geographic radius." With that, stories outside of New York on companies that are "doing something *unique*" are of interest. "If something is west of the Hudson, we're still going to write about it, but it's better if it's a NY company," especially for smaller start-ups.

What's on Peter's radar

"Anything you can put on a screen. Anything you can put on the internet, or that will be delivered by the internet in the future -- that's what we're covering." This includes TV to the extent that it is being challenged by new media, in addition to the battle of [iTunes vs. the labels](#). Their backgrounds put [Dan Frommer's](#) focus on mobile telecom, [Peter's](#) on music, "and we all write about everything. With a "three-person staff, there's not much labor division." The current average is 20 posts a day and "not all posts are equal" with some simply linking out so they can "move on to the stuff that takes time the more original reporting and analysis.

Q & A, evergreen, empirical

Peter would like to do a story a day that's not "pegged to news." Also, Q & As with high-level executives like this one with [Yahoo's new U.S. sales chief](#) are of interest. The value prop for readers is access to interviews with people they generally don't get to read about. You'll also find stories diving into company numbers and other empirical data looking to determine whether there is veracity behind a company's financial claims -- not surprising with Peter's Forbes pedigree and Henry's analyst background.

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Public vs. private

Public companies get the majority of the coverage, but according to Peter, “the most interesting companies are private right now.” While private companies don’t offer much to scrutinize, “that doesn’t mean we’re not going to try to find out what those number are and we’re not going to take the handful of available numbers and try to parse out what that actually means.” In other words: empirical data may be useful in getting attention.

Contributed Pieces

Example 1: [Steven Blinn](#) “perhaps Steve is promoting himself” but the reason it ran is because “it’s a good, well-written piece and will help start-ups who haven’t hired a PR company yet.”

Example 2: [Greg Galant](#) exec with a start-up who reported back on DEMO and a Southern CA podcast conference, “I asked him to take notes and write something for us and he did.”

We’d love people, who are in our community ideally, who would like to write something we can run. Obviously it makes our job easier.” Press releases will be considered, but they are looking for “well-written, insightful stuff; stuff we would have liked to have written, stuff we’d like to read. It’s not a dumping ground; it should be sharp and smart and should have perspective.”

PR tailwind?

We would love help from PR people by telling us about announcements in advance” and of course they’d love to hear it first. “We’re happy to work with embargoes under certain circumstances,” What’s not to love about embargoes and NDA’s? “[Someone is always breaking them.](#)” What is not helpful? “Clients commenting on breaking news.”

The need for speed...

Timing of information requests for breaking news stories “is instantaneous.” Peter remembers the old days when a reporter would call before writing, write, and call again afterward. In the new paradigm, “we find ourselves writing very quickly and calling afterward. The nice thing about that is if we’re wrong or if somebody has a comment, we’re happy to include it whenever and amend that immediately. But now we’re very rarely going to wait a couple of hours for someone to get back to us before writing something. The exception is a longer piece that is analytic -- and we need help from someone to walk us through the economics of online video.”

A few quick Q’s

- Interested in interviewing consultants? “Maybe.” It depends who they are.
- Company visits? “Maybe. One thing we do not have is time, so it’s hard for us to get away... we do it,” but they pick and choose carefully.
- Video submissions? “Certainly amenable... has to hit same considerations.”

Coming up?

Be on the lookout for the [SiliconAlley Insider 100](#) -- a list of the “most important movers, shakers and thinkers in Silicon Alley and NY in general.” It will include a wide range of people from “a guy who runs digital strategy inside a large public company (to) a guy who runs a start-up. Nominations currently being accepted: tips@SiliconAlley.com.

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