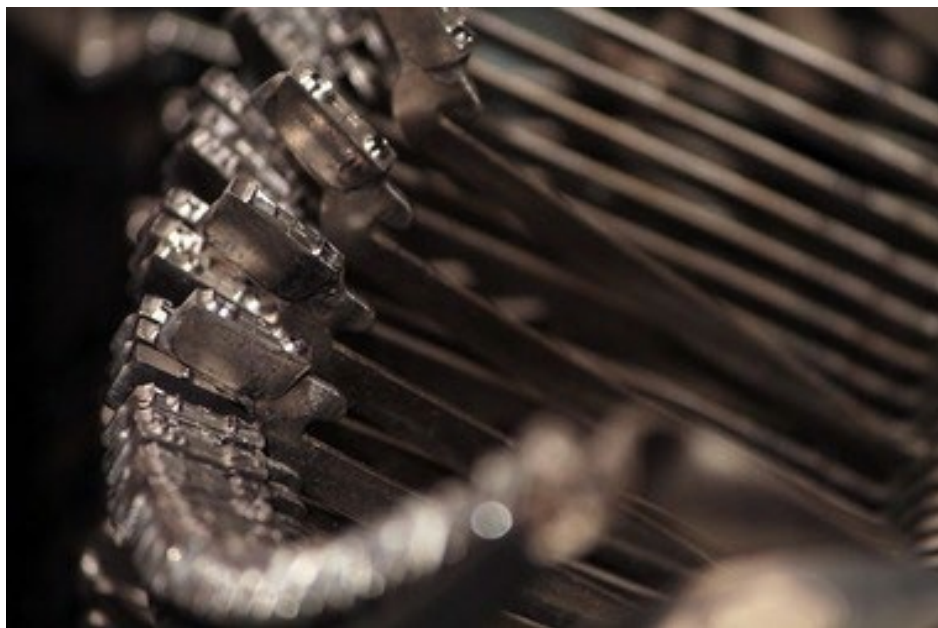


Why the press release is (still) not dead

A question asked almost as much as “is email dead?” is “is the press release dead?”. New data from PR Week and PR agency Wildfire provides insight into how press releases are currently being used and how they are performing.

by [Helen Leggatt](#)



Four years ago, the UK’s executive director for government communications, Alex Aiken, [declared](#) that “the press release is dead”. A year ago, Marian Salzman’s article in Forbes asked “[Is the Press Release Dead or Alive?](#)”

Common to both is the conclusion that no, press releases are not dead, but their delivery and content needs to keep up with the times and form a broader PR strategy using social media and other channels where the intended audience hangs out.

PR Week dug around in the data and [found](#) that, despite Aiken’s declaration about the death of the press release, the number of press releases issued across government has dropped by 20%, with some departments slashing numbers more than others. However, several thousand are still being released each year.

“Modern communication techniques - from creating social media content, to devising hard-hitting behavior change campaigns - are at the very heart of the Government Communications Service,” Aiken told PR Week. “Of course, the humble press release has a role to play, but the way people consume their news and information, and the way they communicate with each other, has changed - our practices have to reflect this.”

PR firm [Wildfire](#) saw gap in the market when it came to researching the efficacy of press releases. They reviewed coverage from over 100 press releases across five key technology sectors to determine how well the format worked in communicating a business’ message. The results show that press releases worked very well to communicate the most important elements such as key messaging (98% of coverage included this), direct quotes from a company spokesperson (82%) and a link back to the business’ website (46%).

“Of course,” [says](#) Wildfire Senior Account Director, Ben Smith, “that’s not to say that this means press releases are all you need for a successful PR campaign - far from it. However, it does seem that the humble press release may have some legs yet.”