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In 2004, the Pew Research Center issued a report on where people get their news. Fifty-five percent reported watching local news, 41% read a daily newspaper, 41% reported listening to radio news, 29% read weekly news magazines regularly, and 25% went online for news at least once a week. By 2006, Pew researchers found that in the under 36 age group, the local newspaper, local TV and national TV newscasts play lesser roles in news gathering. At the same time, with the increase in numbers of people having high-speed Internet access, online media in the form of TV.coms, newspaper.coms and other online media are growing as preferred news information sources. In fact, a report from the Newspaper Association of America indicated that "a record number of readers visited U.S. online newspaper sites last year, indicating that it was one of the few bright spots for the newspaper industry.

So, what does that mean for authors and illustrators of children's and teen books? Clearly, it emphasizes the importance of having a strong online presence and making a concerted online marketing and publicity effort. Having a website has become a basic requirement, and there are online template tools that make this work much easier. Many authors are also using social networking sites, particularly MySpace because it reaches a younger demographic than Facebook (though that's being used too) and YouTube as ways to connect directly with fans. Hosting blogs and participating on listservs offer ways to connect with teachers, librarians, booksellers and others. Publicity to online news venues is also increasingly important and can be pursued by issuing news stories and developing relationships with individual websites that may have an interest in your books.

Publishing Trends www.publishingtrends.com, a newsletter about the book industry, has just released results of two surveys conducted with publicists and online content providers about how online publicity is being used to promote books.

On the PR side, when asked what percentage of company publicity resources went to online marketing, 39.8% said "a little" and 31.3% said "most." Publicists said that the biggest obstacle to doing more online publicity was, according to 67.1% of the respondents, that it was "too time consuming to explore." At the same time, blog tours were reported to be on the rise, while traditional author tours were declining. Visit www.publishingtrends.com for more information.

Large publishers have the advantage of having staff to dedicate to online media and hosting online events. The difficulty can be getting the publisher to devote time to your work when there is a large list to promote. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing just announced its first Simon Pulse Blogfest, which will be a two-week online event March 14-27 featuring more than 100 of their teen authors. The objective, according to Paul Crichton, director of publicity for Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, is to "involve as many of the Pulse imprint authors who were interested in participating and to give teen readers the chance to connect with favorite authors and be introduced to other Pulse authors they may like." The company expects a range

of participation among the authors, depending on their own comfort level with online media and the time they plan to devote to the event itself.

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