

# *Seismic Shift: Metrics, Media and Marketing and the changing world of journals*

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## *Metrics and Measuring the Social Impact of Research*

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Author of *Women and Problem Gambling* (Routledge, 2013)

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### **TRANSCRIPT**

#### **Liz Karter**

[START] And actually I'm really flattered to be invited along to speak this morning because I feel like I'm pretty much a fledgling in terms of being a published author; my book came out in March of this year. I'm currently working on a second commission called "*Working with Women's Groups for Problem Gambling*", which is something else that I do.

So, of course, we're here today to look at how an author can use the media to promote their work; but funnily enough it kind of worked the other way around with me, because what happened was Joanne Forshaw, who is the senior editor from Routledge, actually saw me on television. It was a happy coincidence, as she happened to be at home, I'm sure she wouldn't mind me saying, on maternity leave and I was on the "This Morning" programme; they were running a feature on, of course, women and problem gambling. So, again the theme comes up and I'd been invited along as their expert for the morning and Joanne had seen me and thought that it seemed that I kind of knew a little bit about my subject and that maybe it would be good to have a book on the topic. So, she Googled and found that actually, I had written one or two papers and had been interviewed by a couple of magazines.

So, she asked me to put in a proposal, which I did, and decided I could string a sentence together, so there was my book-- so there I was. So, it was kind of a culmination really of a bit of writing and a bit of media.

So, today I'd like to speak to you very much as I speak, and I write, which is from a point of view of experience and in plain English. So, that's what I'd like to do. So, I thought what I'd do, is tie in my work as a therapist with my work now as an author. To try to explain how I got there-- you know-- how come I was there on the sofa with Holly and Phillip when it could so easily have been any of my colleagues. There are hundreds of therapists out there who are just as good at doing what they do, I'm sure some of them are a lot better than me, so how come it was me? So, what I thought is, I'd do what I do as a therapist and that's peel back the layers to find out how we got to the here and now by sort of looking at the past. So, I think how I got there was through deciding to go against the advice of many of my colleagues and to really specialize in an area. I suppose, again, what we're looking at today is getting out there into the world; that's what the media does it promotes us and gets out into the wider world. But I think what I did at first was narrow things down. In working in the field of gambling addiction, it's pretty narrow anyway, but then what I began to notice was a significant difference in the male and female psychology of gambling; I won't start on that now because I'll be here all day feeling very excited about it, but it gave me a niche, it gave me an avenue of my own and the media love that. And as I've said, I'd already sort of published a couple of articles; I'd published for an in-house magazine and a couple of other magazines. So, I began to get a name to myself and because the media are so busy they love what they call their 'go-to experts' and I kind of cringe at that title because I don't see myself as an expert; I really don't like that. I prefer to be seen as a specialist in what I do. But they love it because when they're busy and they're looking for somebody to go to, if they can find somebody who's really obvious and has a profile it makes their life easier. And one thing I've learnt about the media is that when they go, they go like lightning. So if they do go to you, you need to grab them, if you've got that real live journalist or you've got that TV producer and they're own the phone to you, grab that moment because if they can't go to you immediately, ideally yesterday, they'll very quickly go on to someone else.

So, it starts with the real basics, things that are really very very obvious that I'd suggest to you, to any author: make yourself available, have your contact details really very very obvious. You know, email address but ideally a mobile phone number because they'll want you there and then, and drop everything if you get them on the phone because as I said, they may want you as the expert but if they can't have you then they'll move onto someone else because their article or TV programme has to go out now; that can be quite difficult. People such as myself who

are therapists; it's really learning another way of being and another mentality because we're taught in our training all about boundaries and thinking things through. You've very much got to learn to, sort of, think on your feet with that one. So, also somebody gave me some really good business advice which I translated into my work with the media which is always say yes, you can say no later. So-- So, if they ask me to do something, within reason, I tend to say yes. And what they usually want from me is, you know: "Can you produce some poor or unsuspecting women who is willing to reveal her identity to everybody and to talk about her gambling problem". So usually I will, kind of, use that opportunity and say:" well, I can always ask about that for you" but then what I do is use that time, quite cunningly, to then say: "well, of course you know it's going to be quite difficult because gambling is also about very shameful experiences and underneath the women's gambling problem often you're dealing with issues of maybe abuse and domestic violence"; and they say: "That's really interesting". So, you've got an opportunity then to engage them and to tell them what it is that you might know and to hook them in so then even if you can't then produce the women for them that they would like to interview, you might at the very least then get a quote in the paper.

They love their sound bites so I'll often say something like: "Of course, you realize that gambling is a social and psychological problem". So, you might get something like that—so, there's your mention in the paper and there you have something else for your online profile.

Dealing with the media I think we also have to develop quite a thick skin because also sometimes you're going to find you've said things that you haven't actually said at all. I remember about-- must have been about 4 years ago or 5 years ago. Apparently, I said to a freelance journalist writing for the Observer that the gambling industry were a demonic force luring vulnerable women into gambling websites. Now, I don't remember saying that at all and it caused a few problems because at the time I was working for the largest problem gambling treatment service in the UK: GamCare; who are funded by the gambling industry. So, you can imagine-- yes-- it went down like a ton of bricks. So, I was sitting on the train, I opened the paper and thought this I wonderful because there was my name in bold print, you know, double page, and then I realised what I'd supposedly said. So, I went into work, hoping I still had a job, and even though it's only four years ago things are quite different. We didn't use, I think, social media to the extent that we do now, so, my organisation was very quickly-- literally phoning the gambling industry to say, you know, this was a huge misquote and apparently the journalist told me it was a very bad line, which is why they thought I'd said the gambling industry was demonic. But things have changed a lot and again I had a misquote, I

couldn't believe the timing of it. I had been interviewed by-- this time it was an Independent on Sunday journalist who had actually asked me, did I think that the gambling industry were on the whole irresponsible? So, I said categorically no; that the major operators were not irresponsible yet they twisted it around to say that they thought I said that they were. So this was printed the day before the publication of my book, the day before I had-- yes that's exactly what I thought-- the day before I had a launch party which was being sponsored by Aspers Casino because I belong to their social responsibility committee. The wonderful thing was that we now have Twitter and we now have LinkedIn, so instead of having to phone everybody individually, hoping they'd still talk to me, I was actually on my twitter account and I was on LinkedIn making it very clear that this was a misquote and that I hadn't said that and again, as they say any publicity is good publicity'; it still got my name heard and I had the opportunity also to, to put it right. And, I think that's the wonderful thing about the social media that it is our own voice, you know, that's the wonderful opportunity that we have.

Unlike giving an interview to the press, we have an opportunity to get our own voice out there and make our words really clear. And I think for me, that's another reason that I've—I've engaged well with the media is that I tend to try and speak and write in plain English and people like that. You know, people like to understand what it is that we're saying and so again, I think that's one reason people will come to me. So, when we're using twitter too I try and be really current. So, I'll try and find out what's going on in the media and in the press and any stories that might link with my work. My work is with women, so if there is anything on women and prisons for example or anything on women and eating disorders then I will tweet my comments on that. And I think, don't be afraid to say what we think too. If there's something out there in the media that we disagree with, or there's a big story that we disagree with, it's having the courage to say that. And as a result of using twitter I've got a few interviews with the national newspapers and I recently had the opportunity to write a guest blog for an American website called "Recovery Rocks", very American, which had-- I think she put-- the lady there, Veronica Valli has about five thousand visitors a month and so she gave me this amazing front page on her blog and a link to my book so that went very well. And what I like to do with twitter too is to make it really human because though these might be remote relationships but we're still relating with other people and I think it's easy to forget that when we're using social media, so I like to be polite. You know, somebody retweets something that I said and you thank them for that, if you like something that somebody's said then say that. It's all about again, relationships and having manners and people remember that I think we have more impact.

But I think one thing-- going back to what was said in the earlier presentations about modesty; I think we find it really very hard as therapists and I know a lot of people who write, we have a natural modesty, we tend to be people who spend a lot of time either on our own or in the room one-to-one with someone else, so it's about having the courage to find a voice, an authentic voice and to get it out there, and it's not easy; because in England of course, we talk about having tall poppy syndrome; if you put your head above the rest it's very easy to have it chopped off and it's true. When I had my book published, when I started writing a blog I was aware that some colleagues who I got on very well with suddenly distanced themselves a bit from me, as if to say: "well who does she think she is?" So, you do have to have quite a thick skin or as somebody once said to me in the nicest possible way 'cause I think we've got an American colleague in here today, we've just got to be a bit more American about this in terms of just being confident to say what you think. So, I'd finish by saying I think, yep, that's what we have to do. So, when we write the blog or when we write the tweets, feel the fear and just press send anyway. So, thank you for your time. [FINISH]