



# Leveraging Digital Presence

Driving professional growth in the right of way industry

BY TIARA MCCRAY, RWA-GN, AND JANELLE EDGE, PMP, RWA-GN

In today's digital age, a strong online presence is no longer a novelty — it's a necessity. This is particularly true in a specialized field such as right of way (ROW), where professionals often work behind the scenes to support infrastructure projects, manage complex negotiations and property rights and contribute to economic and community development. Cultivating an online presence that aligns with career goals can elevate your standing within the industry, expand network connections with industry peers and facilitate continuous professional growth. This article presents several benefits on how embracing a digital footprint can enhance your journey as a ROW professional.

## Building Professional Credibility and Visibility

A professional online presence starts with being visible to the right audience. Establishing a LinkedIn profile, for instance, can serve as an online portfolio that showcases your work experience, certifications and projects you've contributed towards. By actively engaging on LinkedIn or other industry-relevant platforms, such as IRWA's Member Network, ROW professionals can highlight their specialized skills and certifications and make their expertise known to both colleagues and potential employers.

Showcasing your knowledge on these platforms through articles, sharing industry insights in the Member Network Open Forums or commenting on relevant posts can also position you as a thought leader in the field. This can be especially valuable in professional networks, where demonstrating your knowledge of ROW complexities can set you apart as an expert. While specific data on the number of ROW professionals approaching retirement in the immediate future is not readily available, the industry, like many others, is experiencing a demographic shift as a significant portion of its workforce nears retirement age. This trend underscores the importance of attracting and training new professionals to ensure the continuity of expertise in the field. Given the anticipated retirements, the demand for new talent has never been more pressing than it is now.

## Networking and Connecting with Industry Professionals

As experienced professionals exit the workforce, they take with them years of specialized expertise that may not be easily replaced. While in-person events such as IRWA Chapter meetings and seminars are invaluable, digital presence and virtual engagement platforms expand your reach far beyond local or regional events. Being active on IRWA forums, LinkedIn



groups, hosting or participating in webinars or hybrid events or participating in structured virtual mentorship programs, seasoned ROW professionals can share insights and best practices in ways that new or existing professionals can revisit and learn from over time. This opens up opportunities for collaborative projects, mentorship and shared learning across Chapters and even countries.

For young professionals and those looking to transition roles within ROW, networking online can provide insights into career paths, job opportunities and trends within the industry. A visible and accessible digital presence signals to prospective professionals that the industry is forward-thinking, organized and welcoming; in turn, this aids in attracting younger, tech-savvy talent who might not have otherwise considered a career in ROW. A digital footprint provides a framework that preserves invaluable expertise, engages the next generation of professionals and supports the seamless transfers of knowledge.

### Continuous Learning and Staying Informed

Social media and professional platforms offer access to a wealth of information. Following thought leaders, industry news sources and organizations like IRWA can help you stay updated on emerging trends, legislation changes, credentialing education and best practices in ROW. Additionally, LinkedIn Learning and industry blogs provide access to a range of educational resources, from technical knowledge to soft skills like project management and negotiation — skills critical to ROW professionals.

By consistently engaging with this content, you position yourself as a knowledgeable professional who is dedicated to self-improvement, which in turn makes you more valuable to your current or future employers, and to potential professionals as well.

### Personal Branding and Career Advancement

Your digital presence is an extension of your personal brand. This brand should align with your career goals and communicate who you are as a professional in the ROW industry. Crafting a narrative around your skills, interests and achievements can help attract the right opportunities, whether it's a promotion within your company, a transition into project management or taking on a new leadership role within IRWA. Your digital presence becomes a living network that stays with you, no matter where you work or what you're working on.

For instance, if you're aiming to transition into project management within the ROW industry, showcasing achievements and certifications through the IRWA can aid you in delivering a story about your qualifications. Credentials such as the Right of Way Professional (RWP) and the Senior Right of Way Professional (SRWA) not only highlight your expertise but also demonstrate your commitment to professional growth within the field. Pursuing these designations and presenting them on your LinkedIn page

help recruiters and managers understand your career goals, while positioning you for advanced opportunities in project management and leadership with the industry.

### Enhancing the IRWA Community

A vibrant digital presence also contributes to the IRWA community. Sharing your experiences — whether it's through a LinkedIn post about attending an IRWA event, a recap of a recent seminar or an article from the Right of Way Magazine — fosters a sense of community. By sharing insights, you're helping to build a more informed, connected and engaged group of professionals. This strengthens the collective knowledge of IRWA members, benefiting the community at large.

### Conclusion

Building and maintaining a professional digital presence may seem challenging, but the advantages are invaluable. A strong online presence enhances your credibility, broadens your professional network, keeps you informed and opens doors to career advancement — especially within the ROW industry. Taking that first step, creating or refining your LinkedIn profile, sharing relevant insights or joining industry groups online, can be a powerful investment in your development and the next generation of professionals.

As members of IRWA, we have a unique opportunity to leverage these tools to strengthen our expertise, career trajectory and community impact. We invite you to connect with the International Young Professionals Committee to explore further ways to build and enhance your digital presence. Let's continue the conversation on maximizing our professional influence and visibility in the ROW industry. 🌟



*Tiara McCray, RWA-GN, has over eight years of experience in the right of way industry, managing property acquisitions for transportation projects valued from \$500K to \$662M. With expertise in right of way principles under the Uniform Relocation Act (49 CFR Part 24) and a passion for strategic project development, she excels in stakeholder engagement and complex negotiations. A North Carolina A&T State University graduate with a degree in agricultural economics and agribusiness, Tiara joined the IRWA in 2019 and has served Chapter 14 in leadership roles, including International Young Professional Committee chair.*



*Janielle Edge, PMP, RWA-GN, a right of way agent with Regency Right of Way Consulting, has over 6 years of real estate experience in land acquisition and transportation projects across California and the Carolinas. She joined the IRWA in 2022 and now chairs Chapter 31's YP and Social Media Committees. Previously a commercial and residential REALTOR® with Keller Williams Realty in Charleston, SC, Janielle is also a North Carolina A&T State University graduate and serves as a business development analyst with Global United Diaspora. She is passionate about advancing sustainable infrastructure initiatives worldwide.*