



Savvy Digital Journalism: Best Practices for Writing for the Web

Session 1: Digital Journalism Overview

Lesson 1: Digital Journalism vs. Traditional Publishing: The New Requirements of Digital Writing

Lesson 2: The Tools and Skills You'll Need to Succeed

Lesson 3: Today's Journalism Ethics & The Importance of Fact Checking

Assignment: Pick a recent news story from a digital publication and determine what makes it a worthwhile read. What drew you in about the piece? The idea? The language? Was it visually stimulating? Can you determine anything about the writer's ethics?

Describe in a few sentences why you liked the piece and then come up with an idea of your own. Use the news story you initially analyzed as a helpful guide to come up with a hook, a headline and why it's newsworthy. Imagine you are pitching this idea to a potential editor at the "perfect" publication for your story. Tell the editor why it's such a great fit for XXX publication – be sure to reflect your research!

Session 2: Photography and Multimedia in the Modern Newsroom

Lesson 1: Digital Photography Basics

Lesson 2: Utilizing Video Content for a Web Story

Lesson 3: Other Multimedia to Use and Making the Best Choice for a Project

Assignment: Use the story you created in Session 1 and determine which multimedia elements could accompany it. Search online for photos and videos (ensuring they are from legit sources and you are giving credit). Give yourself multiple options and determine which multimedia element would be the right fit. Also, give an example of a choice that wouldn't work.

Session 3: Utilize Social Media Platforms to Reach a Larger Audience

Lesson 1: Create Headlines for All Social Media Platforms

Lesson 2: How Clever, Short and Snappy Headlines Build and Engage Your Audience

Lesson 3: The Importance of Twitter (and Other Platforms, Including Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest) to Reel in Your Audience

Assignment: Imagine the story you have been developing thus far has been published to the outlet you pitched to. Now, the editor wants you to use social media to promote the article. Create a snappy tweet that will encourage your followers and other Twitter users to check out your story. Be sure to include multimedia elements like links and photos to make the tweet visually stimulating and easy to navigate. Create a few versions of the tweet, tweaking the headline for each option.

Session 4: Launch Your Digital Journalism Career

Lesson 1: The HTML Rundown & Blog/News Site Comparison

Lesson 2: Increase Web Traffic With Strategic Linking

Lesson 3: How to Pitch a Story to an Editor,
Find a Job, and Use Your Blog to Help with Both

Assignment: Write a detailed pitch from your original article/post idea from Session 1. Be sure to incorporate all the elements of a successful pitch described in Session 4, Lesson 2. Your pitch should include your idea, the hook, any pertinent background information, possible headlines and which multimedia elements you could include.

It's crucial to describe why you're the right person for the job, so include a short bio and past work experience, why it would be a good fit for the publication and if possible, the editor's name (which usually can be found in a publication's masthead). It's important to get into the habit of targeting the specific contact that can make decisions about your story without being sent to the spam folder.