

6 for '16

Logan Aimone, MJE //

University High School, University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

**You never know
where journalism
will take you.**

'80s: Paste-up

'90s: The Mac

'00s: PDFs

Today: Social

6 for '16

Logan Aimone, MJE //

University High School, University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

Serve the reader.

**Start with the
reader in mind.**

**The work you
produce is for
readers, not just
to produce work.**

**ASK
YOURSELF**



WHAT DOES THE READER WANT TO KNOW?

Readers want a diverse mix of consequential, relevant topics presented each edition.

WHAT DOES THE READER WANT TO KNOW?

- News stories should not disproportionately appeal to or focus on the interests of a small minority (or worse, just the editors).
- Provide a mix of general and special interest features.
- Sports should have pieces appealing to players, die-hard fans and casual observers. Think about leisure, recreation and non-athletic pursuits like video games.

WHAT DOES THE READER WANT TO KNOW?

- Don't hesitate to spend a few pages on a topic that is worth exploring in depth.
- Occasionally, give readers 1,500-2,000 words on an important topic, including sidebars as appropriate.
- Consider an issue “theme” such as health/fitness, music or food — and have multiple stories on the topic.

**ASK
YOURSELF**

2

WHAT DOES THE READER NEED TO KNOW?

Help the reader see what matters.

WHAT DOES THE READER NEED TO KNOW?

- The focus should be squarely on issues that matter to teens at **your school**.
- Provide strong coverage of **routine matters** of school, showcasing a sense of place and providing context.
- The staff should not shy away from **sensitive, challenging and uncomfortable** topics.

WHAT DOES THE READER NEED TO KNOW?

- Maintain the watchdog function. It's important.
- Credibility will be strong — readers (and sources) know and trust the news staff.

WHAT DOES THE READER NEED TO KNOW?

- Be transparent about who you serve — the reader.
- Avoid conflicts of interest, and disclose those that are unavoidable.
- List your policies in print and online. Invite comment and be accountable.
- Own your mistakes.
- Engage readers in a conversation.

**ASK
YOURSELF**

3

HOW CAN DESIGN FACILITATE READER UNDERSTANDING?

Don't assume readers will read story text. **Assume they won't.** How will you communicate the essential information?

HOW CAN DESIGN FACILITATE READER UNDERSTANDING?

- **Appeal to scanners.**
- **Use story layering.** Utilize alternate story forms like charts, maps, bio boxes, listicles, timelines.
- Think about the best way to present information the reader needs and wants.
When you need 1,000 words to tell a narrative story, the reader understands it'll be worth the read.

HOW CAN DESIGN FACILITATE READER UNDERSTANDING?

- Design using white space, photography, art and typography effectively to entice the reader and lead eyes throughout the page. Use drop caps, mugs, captions and illustrations frequently as entry points.
- Add context captions to mugshots, so secondary information is presented while providing visual interest and an entry point.

4

PROVIDE A PORTAL FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION.

Your website is a portal for the reader to discover additional information.

PROVIDE A PORTAL FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION.

- Link to source material, organizational websites, Wikipedia pages for deeper understanding.
- Embed more photos, video and audio.
- Utilize interactive elements to harness the power of the Web, presenting dynamic content for readers — even a custom experience. Free: ThingLink, Prezi, Storify.

PROVIDE A PORTAL FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION.

- Surface related content that is relevant to the story: past coverage, similar stories, others in the section, others by that author.
- Help the readers place this story in context, while facilitating enrichment.
- Help readers discover content they hadn't sought. We used to call this "editing;" now we call it "curation."

5

BRING CONTENT TO NEW PLATFORMS.

The new journalism paradigm requires promoting content to a wide audience beyond campus.

BRING CONTENT TO NEW PLATFORMS.

- Find an audience on **established social media** like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
- Explore **emerging platforms** such as Reddit and Snapchat.
- Capture the **zeitgeist** — discover the journalistic use for platforms your peers are already using.

BRING CONTENT TO NEW PLATFORMS.

- **Ask audience** for story ideas, tips, sources, submissions and feedback. It's a two-way conversation.
- Develop and encourage a **robust conversation** with the audience.

6

CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE.

Always strive for excellence.

CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE.

- **Focus on great content.**
- Use a responsive website for mobile and tablets.
- Approach content and presentation from a reader perspective. What is the experience a reader has with your newspaper, magazine, yearbook, website?

**ALWAYS
REMEMBER**

**Journalism
is a service.**

**Journalism isn't
about the
journalist.**

**It's about
the audience.**

**Place the
audience's
needs first.**

**Every decision
flows from those
initial questions.**

Go do great journalism!



QUESTIONS?

Logan Aimone, MJE //

logan.aimone@gmail.com // @loganaimone