User-centered journalism

Perfect digital storytelling in just nine steps

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A storytelling manual
for the newsroom

Good digital journalism is journalism that reaches its public.

Good digital journalism is journalism that serves its public.

The *what* depends on the journalistic approach.

The **how** depends on the needs of our readers.

= user-centered journalism

= user-centered journalism

User-centered journalism

Perfect digital storytelling in just nine steps

A storytelling manual
for the newsroom

_method

_workflow for newsrooms
_synopsis for courses
_tool-kit
_road-tested (industry / school)

Use this Table of Contents
as your checklist

1 Here's how you come
up with good topics

☐ Put yourself in the reader's position
☐ Use data and the agenda systematically

2 Here's how you find the best hook
and approach

☐ Don't let "newsiness" be your only guide
☐ Establish proximity
☐ Understand users' needs
☐ Look for the most appropriate perspective

3 Here's how you find the
optimal story format

☐ Determine the appropriate format
☐ Choose your channel or channels

4 Here's how you decide
if it's worth the effort

☐ Determine your goal
☐ Estimate the work involved

5 Here's how you make your
multimedia, cross-channel
stories happen

☐ Start planning early
☐ Make use of multimedia's potential
☐ Write or sketch out your story

6 Here's how you
guarantee quality

☐ Get feedback
☐ Make sure to proofread

7 Here's how you "sell" your
stories successfully

☐ Optimise the headline
☐ Pick the perfect teaser photo
☐ Craft your content for search engines

8 Here's how to get your
content in front of readers

☐ Suggest a time that would work best
for your story to be published
☐ Make sure you A/B test
☐ Plug your article in a newsletter
☐ Link to your story in other articles
☐ Post your content on social media

9 Here's how you give
your work a longer life

☐ Make use of community input
☐ Analyse performance
☐ Give yourself reminders

Multimedia storytelling
How to find a form that
fits the content

"FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION" OR HOW TO USE THIS
CHART

There is a form that suits every element of a story
best – no matter if you're telling your story in print or
online. This flowchart helps you to decide which part
of your story is best presented as text, pictures, video
or as a graphic or chart.

Start with the question "What is the story about?"
and answer every question either with "yes" or "no".
The coloured boxes indicate the most suitable form
of presentation.

Please note: This chart proposes forms you can use,
but that does not necessarily mean you should use all
of them. Make choices based on your story and your
resources. The chart does not tell you what order to
use the forms in. It's your task to decide how best to
tell your story.

Download this chart:
www.maz.ch/storytelling_tool

What is the story about?

Is the
Person doing
something?

Is their
background
important?

Is their
appearance
important?

Person

Video/Audio-
slideshow

Text

Timeline

Photo

Event

Is a result
visible?

Is there
movement?

Is sound
required?

Is it a
sequence?

Are there
before / after
pictures?

Photo Gallery

Timeline

Slide-over

Animated GIF

Video / Audio-
slideshow

Setting
(Location)

Is it
well-known?

Are there
interesting
details on site?

Is the location
easy to grasp?

Is the location
photogenic?

Is something
interesting
happening?

360° Video

360° Pano-
rama Photo

Photo Gallery

Map /
Infographic

Map

Is it visually
representable?

Text

Explanation
(How it works)

Is something
moving /
happening?

Is it visible?

Complex
Infographic

Text

Animation

Video / Audio-
slideshow

Do you have
photos?

Are there
contemporary
witnesses?

Do they go with
the photos?

Background
(Archival material)

Do you have
video material?

Is chronology
important?

Text

Audio-
Slideshow

Video

Timeline

Figures
(Statistics)

Is it one
data set?

Are they
geographically
related?

Does the data
equal 100 %?

Is it one
data set?

Does the data
show a process?

Pie Chart

Sankey
Diagram

Photo
Overslider: scribblesaur.knightlab.com
360° Panorama: pannellon.com
Animated GIF: ezgif.com

Video
Social Video: www.lumen5.com
Editor: www.veedion.com

Timeline
Comprehensive: timeline.knightlab.com
Free map: newsfreeman.org

Maps

Simple Infographics
Comprehensive: infogram.com
Easy to use: datawrapper.de
Sankey Diagrams: sankeym...

Complex Infographics
Comprehensive: ...
Comprehensive: ...
Flowchart: ...

Animation
Easy to ...
Easy to ...

Developed by Brot Huck, Head ...
... Editor of "Der Storyteller" ...

EJTA Teachers' Conference A

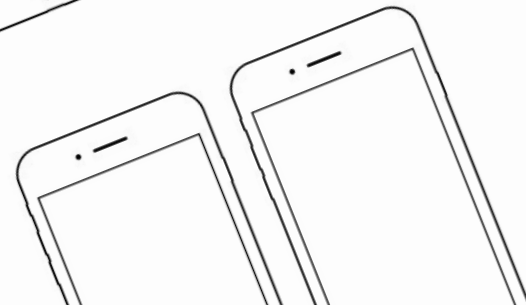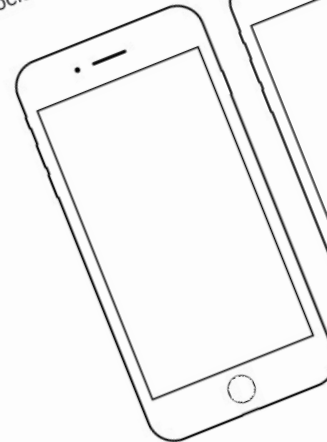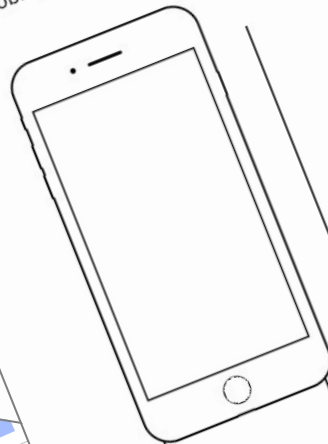Goal

I want my
audience to ...

Topic

Megatopic

Context

Proximity

Print

Social Media

Mobile

1 Here's how you come
up with good topics

☐ Put yourself in the reader's position

☐ Use data and the agenda systematically

Example: public health infrastructure

Example: local hospital gets closed down

2   Here's how you find the best hook and approach

- ☐ Don't let "newsiness" be your only guide
- ☐ Establish proximity
- ☐ Understand users' needs
- ☐ Look for the most appropriate perspective

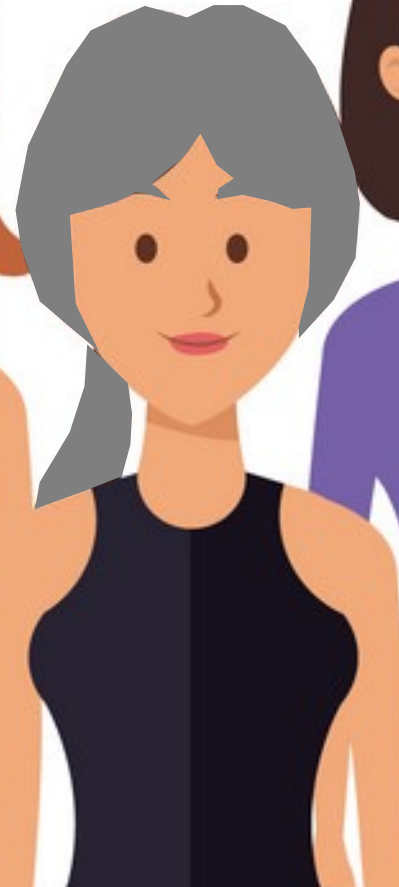# Example: local hospital gets closed down

3 Here's how you find the optimal story format

☐ Determine the appropriate format

I want my audience to ...	That means:	The best format might be:
be informed.	Put facts in the focus.	News/reporting, with structured content (bullet points, for example).
get answers to urgent questions.	Focus on the answers.	Q&A, searchable, non-linear.
get context / understand the background.	Organise. The different aspects of the context should be clear.	Structured content, perhaps an infographic.
understand complex connections.	Break down complexity.	Infographic illustrating connections, perhaps a timeline.
get an introduction to the topic.	A quick overview is crucial.	What's happened so far.
solve a problem.	Step by step, no purple prose.	Step-by-step directions.
read a great story.	Focus on great storytelling.	Reportage, profile, etc.
search through data themselves.	Present information structured.	Tables, database.
have fun.	Find a format with "fun factor".	A quiz.
ask questions.	Invite the most appropriate expert	A live chat.
only see what they're interested in.	Content needs to be filterable.	Personalisation.
express their opinions.	Offer the best format.	Comment sections, surveys, chats.
...		

Goal

I want my
audience to …

Topic

Megatopic

Context

Proximity

Urgency

Perspective

Needs

Format

Approach

Channel

Planning worksheet

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Download pdf incl. worksheets: ejta.eu