

**National Journal Communications Council**

**Media  
University**

**AMU 401: Narrative Storytelling in the Digital Age**

# Making Stories Social

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# Exploiting Points of Shareability

## Key Practices Behind a Successful Social Story



I

### Designing for Shareability

- #1: Find the “Thing” That Will Travel
- #2: Don’t Rest On Your Sharing Laurels
- #3: Reduce Sharing Friction



II

### Executing for Shareability

- #4: Step Away from the Cross-Post
- #5: Write Headlines That Earn Clicks
  - *Creating the Coveted Curiosity Gap*
  - *With Social Headlines, One Size Does Not Fit All*
- #6: Use Images That Tell the Whole Story
  - *Variety is the Spice of Social*
- #7: Timing is Everything
- #8: Lather, Rinse, Repeat (and Measure)
- #9: Put Your Money Where Your Best Content Is
- #10: Prepare for the Future in Social Sharing

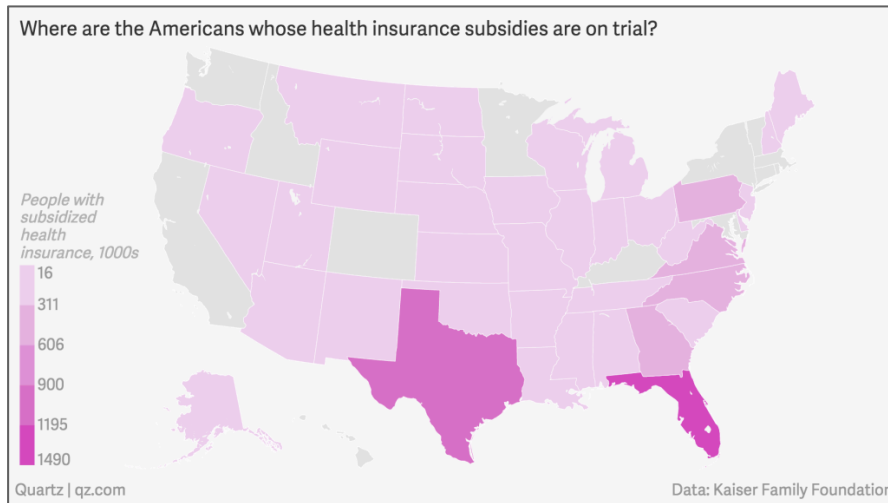


# 1. Find the “Thing” That Will Travel

## Adjusting a Story Treatment to Highlight a Single, Sticky Element Can Reap Social Dividends

### Re-Focusing a Broader Story Through A Single Visual

#### Mapped: The 7.6 million people whose health insurance goes on trial today



- Focuses less on breaking news, and more on why the news matters (e.g., the “second day story”)
- Uses data to make the story more personally relevant to the audience
- Pulls out the single most interesting piece of a story (e.g., a fact, a surprising statistic, a quote or a visual)

## QUARTZ

### A Break From Conventional Storytelling

“Thing’ is simply our catchall term for stories that break free of the traditional article format to convey information in ways that work better on the web.”

Quartz Editorial Team



# 4. Step Away from the Cross-Post

## Pushing Content in the Same Way to Multiple Platforms Reduces Engagement, Limits Features

### Minor Modifications to Language, Format Play to Platform Strengths and Use Cases

**ONE** 11 Global campaigns that prove women rock

With International Women’s Day less than a week away, we thought it appropriate to look back at some of our favorite global campaigns that prove that women totally rock. And most importantly – they show how important it is to invest in girls and women around the world.

*Original*

- ✓ Promotes conversation on the platform by asking a question
- ✓ Includes original article headline in its entirety
- Opts not to tailor article preview for Facebook, resulting in cut-off description



Shared on Facebook



Shared on Twitter

- ✓ Adopts more conversational tone and use of platform-specific slang
- ✓ Includes same image, optimized for platform preview size
- Forgoes hashtags, although they are much more common to Twitter than Facebook



# With Social Headlines, One Size Does Not Fit All


Combine Headline Types and Platform-Specific Strategies to Arrive at Optimal Choices

## One Story, Five Distinct Headline Opportunities

**1 Why Don't Convenience Stores Sell Better Food?**  
 New programs aim to put more produce in corner stores in order to improve the health of low-income communities. Will it work?  
 OLGA KHAZAN | MAR 2 2015, 8:00 AM ET

Original

**2** Can the bodega become a healthier place?



**3** Americans Should Shop More Like Europeans Do  
**4** Why small, local vegetable stores might help with the obesity epidemic  
 THEATLN.TC | BY OLGA KHAZAN

Like · Comment · Share · 863 34 188

Shared on Facebook

**5** A new program seeks to expand healthy offerings in low-income communities  
 theatln.tc/1zzX5wn



View more photos and videos

Shared on Twitter

#1 **Original Headline**  
Asks a “big simple question”

#2 **Facebook Intro Text**  
Reframes original headline as shorter and more conversational

#3 **Facebook Preview Headline**  
Reframes original headline to be decisive, stir emotion

#4 **Facebook Preview Description**  
Offers a similarly decisive sub-header

#5 **Twitter Headline**  
Mimics original, explanatory article sub-header

### Head-First Writing

“Headlines have to work on their own, unlike in print. What’s the proposition you want to say to the reader to earn their click?”

Gabriel Snyder  
Former Chief Editor, The Wire