

National Journal Communications Council

**Media
University**

AMU 412

Content Strategy—Part 1

September 25, 2015

Our Time Together

1. The Case for Content



2. Six Steps for Resetting Your Organization's Content Strategy



3. Creation vs. Curation



4. Processes, Tools & Workflows



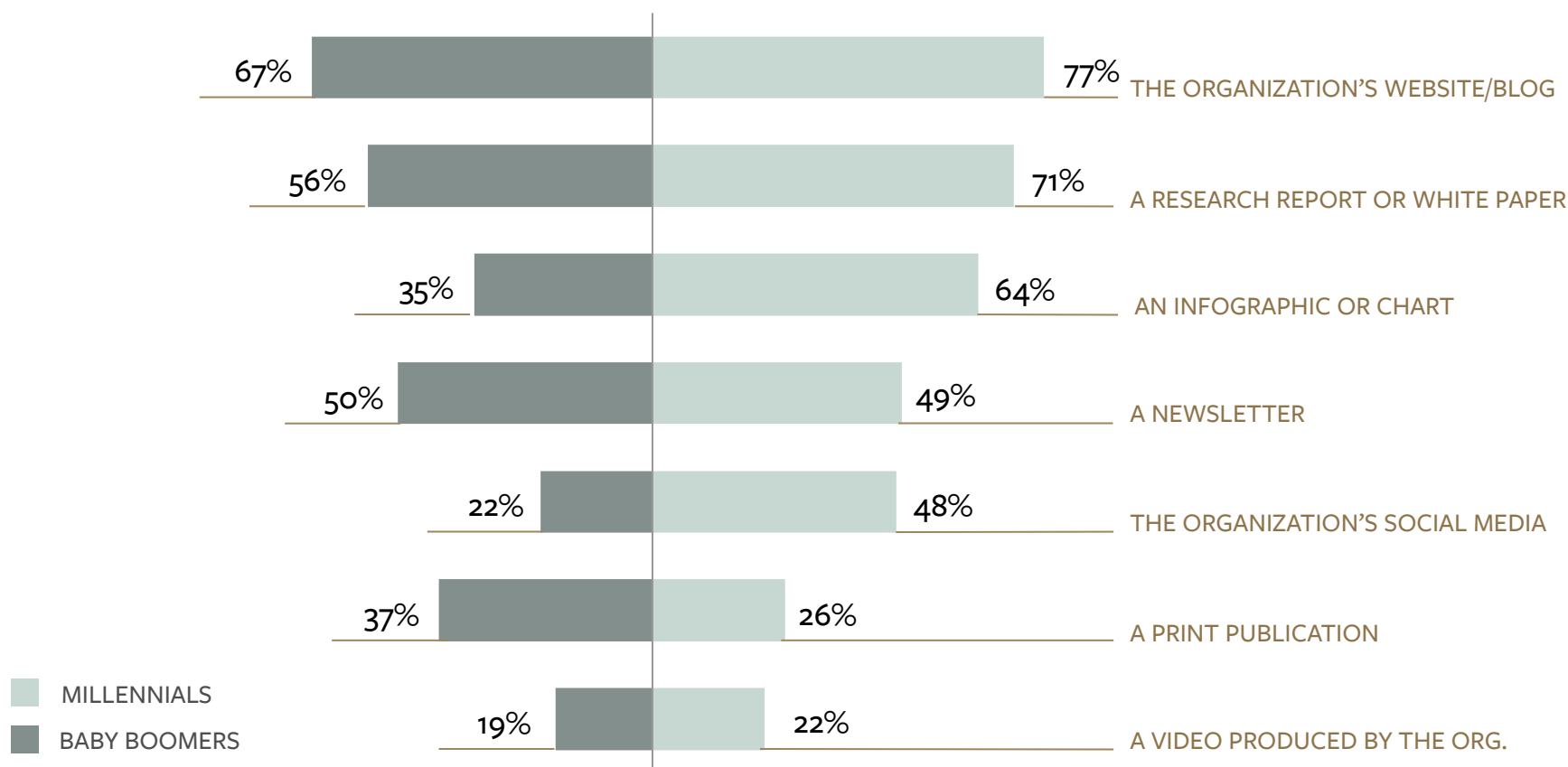
5. Repurposing Content

In a Town Where Content is Currency

Youngest Washington Insiders Are Proving to Be the Hungriest for Most Types of Content

Forms of Content Sought Over the Past 12 Months from Advocacy Groups

Percentage of 2015 WIA Respondents, Millennials vs. Baby Boomers

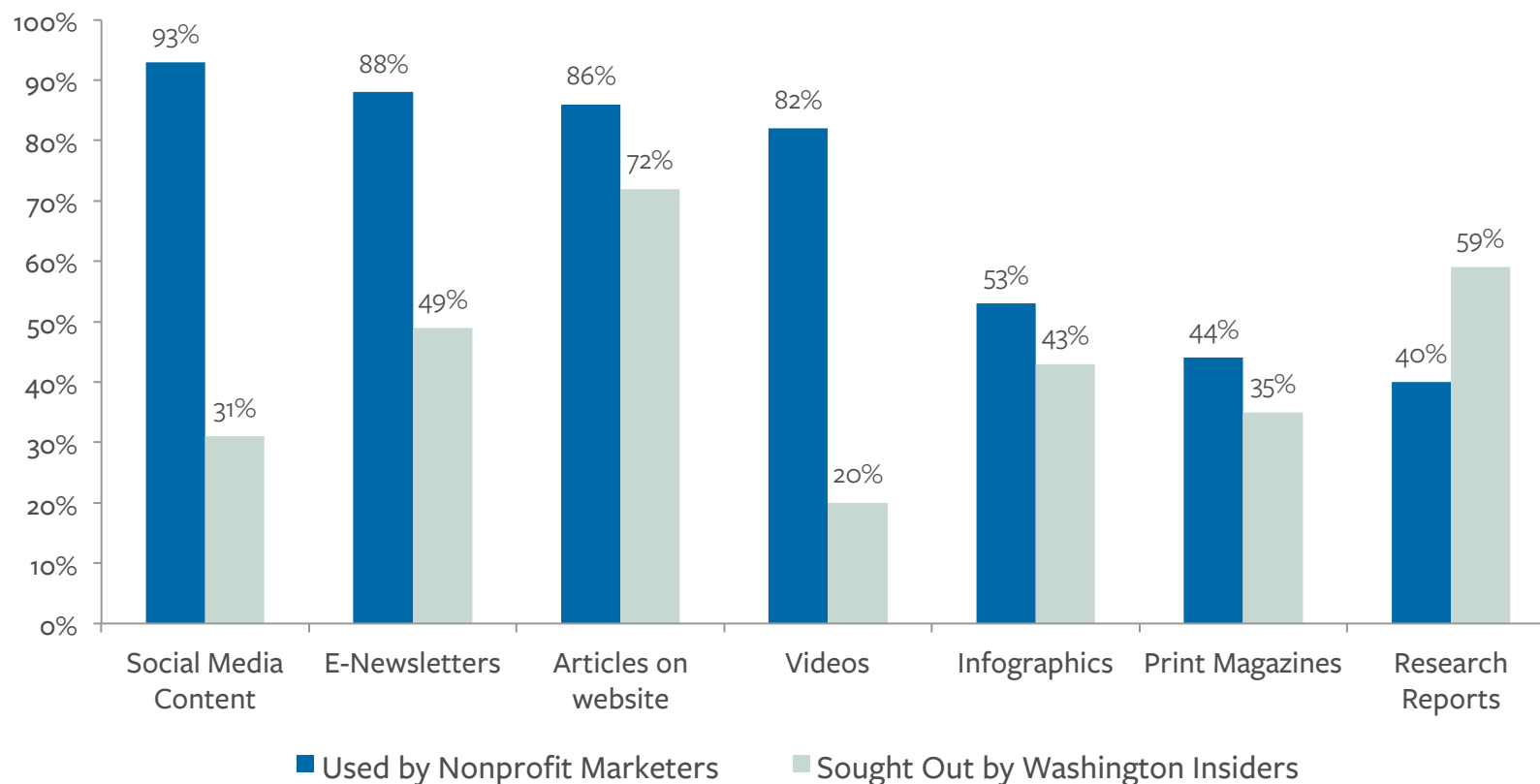


The Consumption-Production Gap

What We Produce Isn't Always What They're Looking For

Content Marketing Tactics Most Utilized by Nonprofits vs. Those Most Sought Out by Washington Insiders

Nonprofit Marketers (N=1,118); 2015 Washington Insiders (N=1,173)

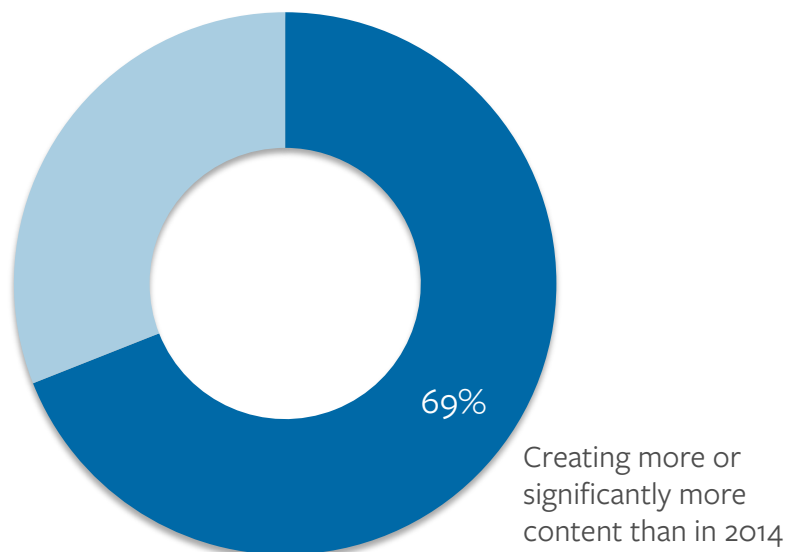


A Growing Piece of the Marketing Pie

Content Creation Activities Increasing, Along With Anticipated Investments

Now Creating More Content Than Last Year

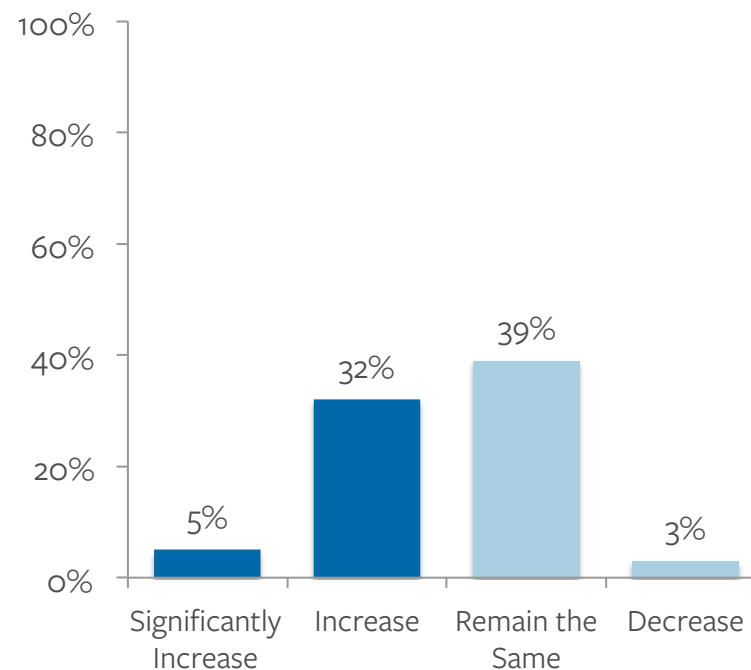
Nonprofit Marketers, N=1,118



Social media content, e-newsletters, infographics, and video in particular have grown as tactics in the past year.

Anticipated Change in Content Marketing Spending Over Next 12 Months

Nonprofit Marketers, N=1,118

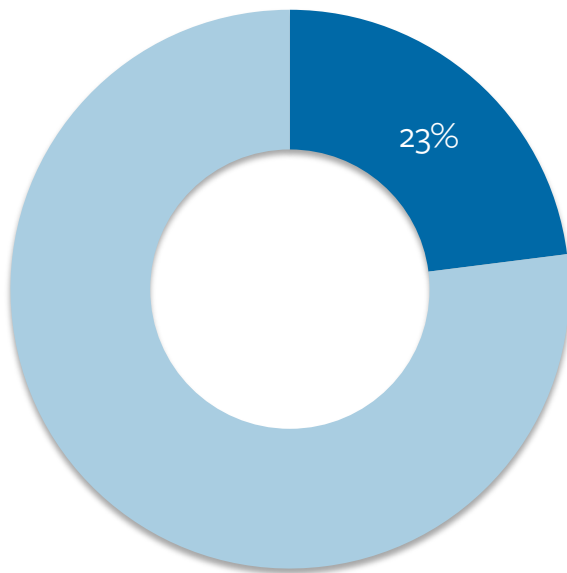


Nonprofit marketers surveyed reported an average of **23% of their current marketing budgets** allocated to content marketing.

No Surprises Here

Without Strategy to Guide Increasing Investments, Efforts Remain Categorized as Largely Ineffective

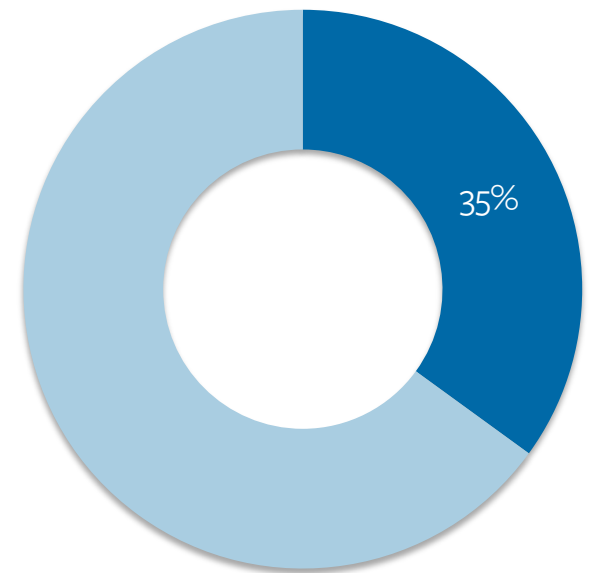
**Have a Documented Content
Marketing Strategy**
Nonprofit Marketers, N=1,118



Within the 35% of organizations that felt they are effective, the percent with a documented strategy jumps to 42%.



**Effectiveness of Organization's Use of
Content Marketing**
Nonprofit Marketers, N=1,118



The Current State of Content Production

Most Content Creators Still Driven By Internally-Mandated Visibility, Volume, or Channel Goals

Organizational Approaches to Creating Content

The Subject Matter Owner



“We want to be the one-stop shop for knowledge on this issue. If someone Googles it, we want to be at the top of the results.”

- Goal is to drown out other content creators by producing high volume of duplicative content on a given topic
- Content largely produced on an as-needed, ad hoc basis
- Good opportunity for repurposing larger content pieces (e.g., white papers)—but most “post it and forget it”

The Strategic Content Provider



“We know the wants and needs of our users, and our content consistently meets those—and, not coincidentally, it meets ours, too.”

- Approach privileges quality over quantity, and strategic fit over superficial web success metrics
- Content production is an iterative process, with adequate time built in to measure, improve, and hone in on what’s working
- Content is an asset—not an afterthought or byproduct of other functions within the organization

The Serial Social Media Poster



“We need a steady stream of new content, because what else are we going to post on social media?”

- Topics tend to be less focused or substantive, since driven by volume/velocity needs rather than comprehensiveness or depth
- “Publish or perish” mindset can be unsustainable in the long term as teams struggle with daily creation requirements
- Difficult to measure effectiveness or impact, since most content is being posted for the sake of being posted

Content as Noise

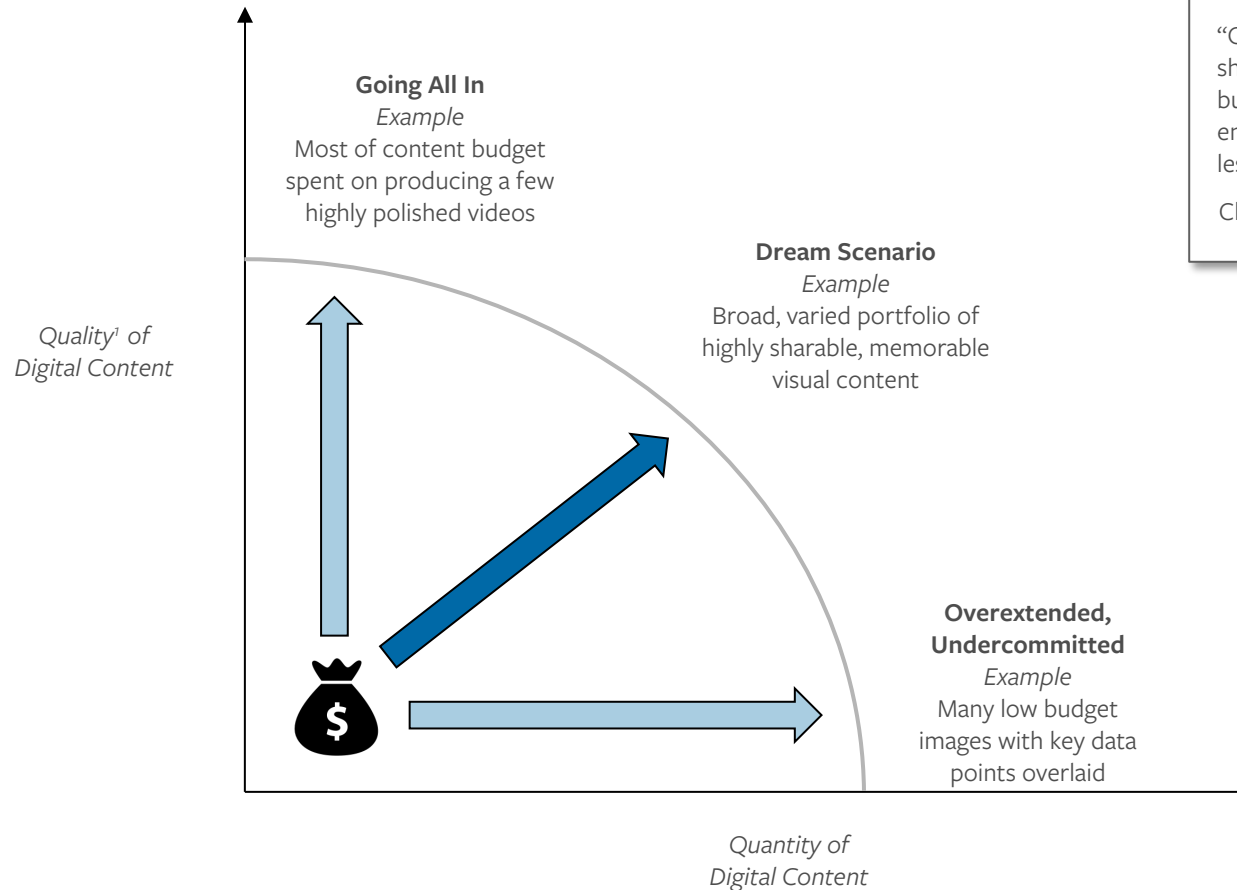
“Twenty-first century content marketers have a dizzying array of digital tools at our disposal to create content at an unprecedented scale, but we face two significant challenges: A massive influx of content from brands, companies, and individuals in practically every niche...and being forced to cut through the noise created by these new adopters, much of which is low quality but still very ‘noisy.’”

Andrea Fryrear, MarketerGizmo

Caught in a Choice Between Quality or Quantity

In Search of a Middle Way

Digital Content Production Tradeoffs



The Case for Quality

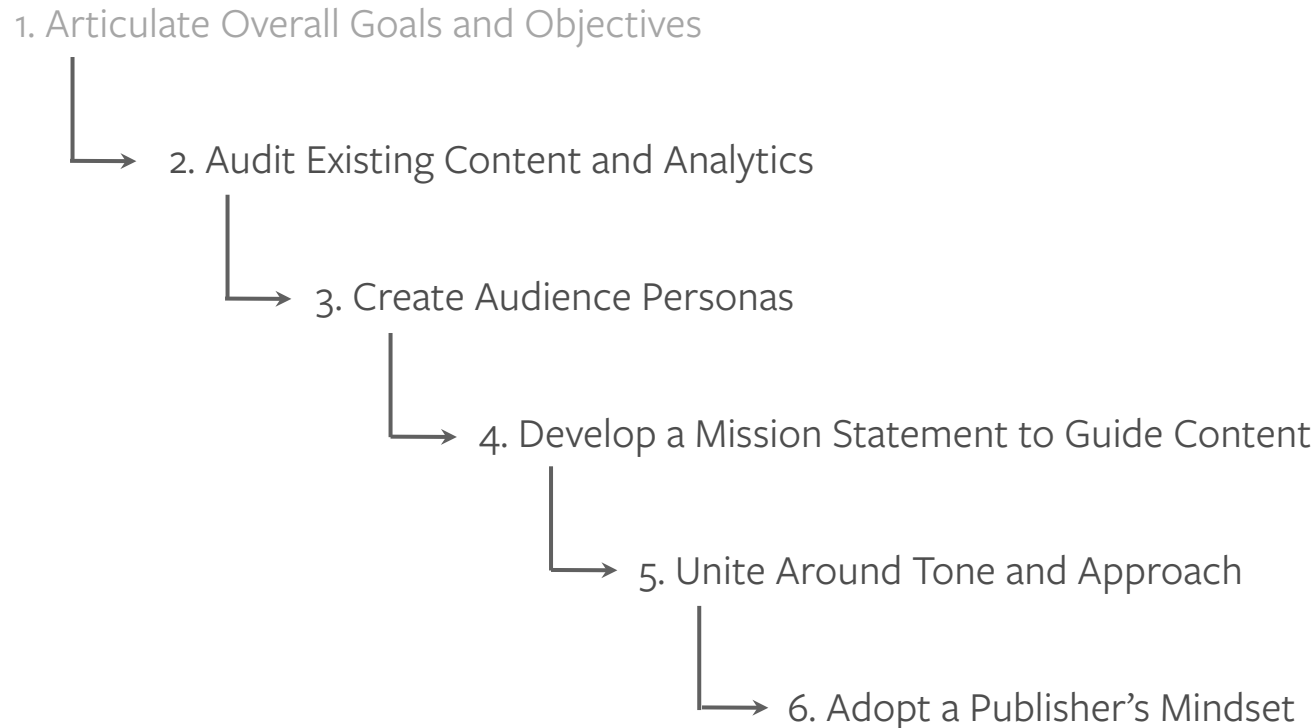
“Our attention spans are now shorter than a goldfish. We need to build content with that in mind. I am encouraging our team to produce less, more precise content.”

Chris Campbell, CMO, CNO Financial

1. E.g., shareability, digestibility, enjoyability – not referencing the quality of ideas represented by the digital content.

The Journey Forward

Six Steps to Effectively Reset Your Organization's Content Strategy



Where We Currently Stand

Conduct a Content Audit to Identify Gaps and Opportunities, Kick-Start Internal Conversations

Content is Recorded, Rated in Audit Template



- ✓ How much content do we have?
- ✓ Where does it live, and who owns it?
- ✓ Which content scores high/low on specific factors?
- ✓ How much is out of date or inaccurate?
- ✓ Do we have a disproportionate amount aimed at any one audience?

Broader Trends Emerge from Crunching the Numbers

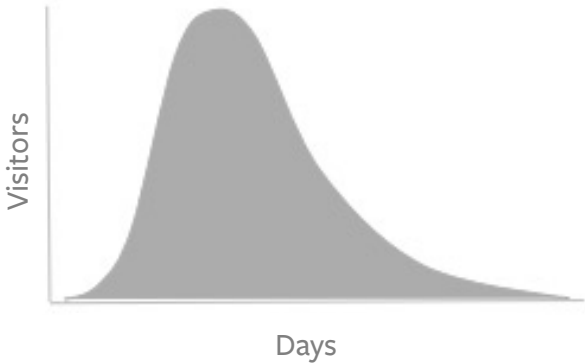
Illustrative

Page ID	Title	Usability	Knowledge Level	Find-ability	Action-ability	Accuracy	On Brand	Audience
3.1.1	At a Glance	5	1	4	2	5	5	Consumers, Pol.
3.1.2	Consumer Info.	4	2	4	3	5	5	Consumers, Pol.
3.1.3	Nat. Gas Glossary	5	3	3	2	5	3	Consumers, Pol.
3.1.4	Add. Resources	3	3	3	5	2	3	Consumers, Pol.
3.2	Reports & Studies	3	5	4	2	3	4	Policy, Members
3.2.1	Benchmarking	2	5	2	4	4	2	Policy, Members
3.2.2	Energy Efficiency	5	4	3	5	5	4	Policy, Members

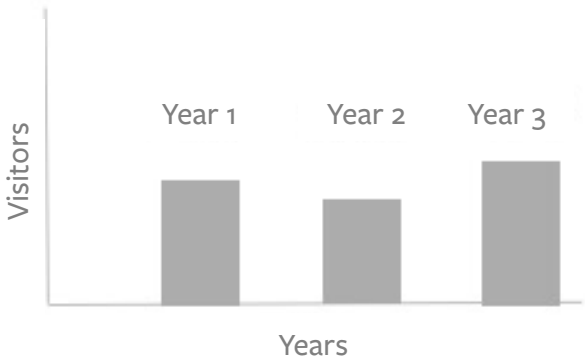
Assess Content Lifecycle Patterns

Knowing How Content Historically Performs Can Aid in Replication, Forecasting Future Success

“The Short Spike”



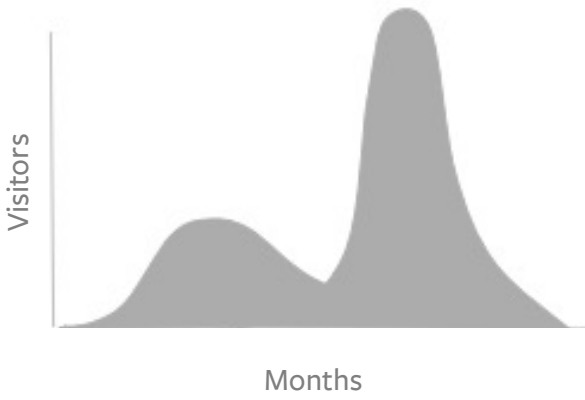
“The Sleeping Giant”



“The Long Tail”

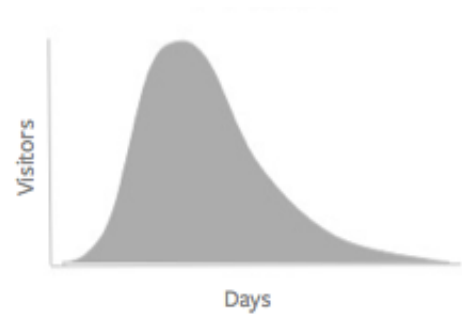


“Resurrection”



The “Short Spike” Characterizes Best On the News Posts

Quick, Popular Content that Drives Traffic, But Its Success is Short-Lived



Characteristics of the “Short Spike”

- Large spike at publication date; half-life is typically less than a week
- Frequently driven by a single large referrer
- Tends to be “On the News” or “Of the Moment”

CULTURE

In Defense of Hufflepuff

The much-maligned house of the *Harry Potter* series doesn't get nearly enough attention or praise for its egalitarian ethos.

8.2k 480



DAVID SIMS | SEP 18, 2015

“Nobody wants to be Hufflepuff.” It’s a fairly common sentiment, but when Mindy Kaling [tweeted it on Wednesday](#), she brought to mind Draco Malfoy’s first appearance in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, when he chats with the book’s hero about the four houses of Hogwarts. “I know I’ll be in Slytherin, all our family have been—imagine being in Hufflepuff, I think I’d leave, wouldn’t you?” As even the normally benevolent Hagrid puts it, “Everyone says Hufflepuff are a lot o



Mindy Kaling 
@mindykaling



Nobody wants to be Hufflepuff

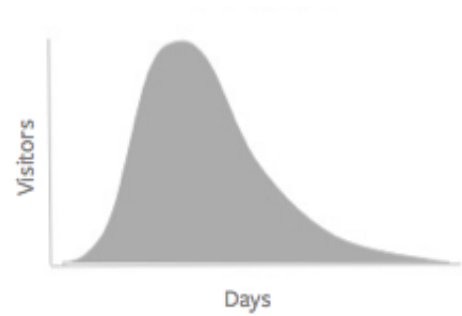
RETWEETS 2,229 FAVORITES 4,125



11:24 AM - 16 Sep 2015

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Putting It Into Practice: U.S. Chamber

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT SEP 17, 2015 - 12:30PM

Chamber’s Donohue Sits Down with Chinese President Xi in Advance of U.S. Visit

U.S. CHAMBER STAFF

Chinese President Xi Jinping, left, talks with U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Thomas J. Donohue. Photo credit: © U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The “Long Tail” Characterizes the Best Content

Content that Covers Big, Lasting Issues



Characteristics of the “Long Tail”

- Large spike at publication date; half-life is measured in weeks for less successful, and months for more successful pieces
- Tend to be “Off the News”

HEALTH

All the Single Ladies

Recent years have seen an explosion of male joblessness and a steep decline in men’s life prospects that have disrupted the “romantic market” in ways that narrow a marriage-minded woman’s options: increasingly, her choice is between deadbeats (whose numbers are rising) and playboys (whose power is growing). But this strange state of affairs also presents an opportunity: as the economy evolves, it’s time to embrace new ideas about romance and family—and to acknowledge the end of “traditional” marriage as society’s highest ideal.

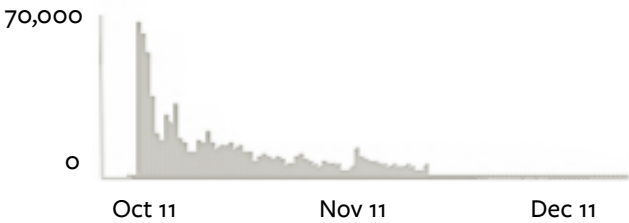
66k

2.0k

KATE BOLICK | NOVEMBER 2011 ISSUE

IN 2001, WHEN I was 28, I broke up with my boyfriend. Allan and I had been together for three years, and there was no good reason to end things. He was (and remains) an exceptional person, intelligent, good-looking, loyal, kind. My

Monthly Views for “All the Single Ladies”



The “Long Tail” Characterizes the Best Content

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Putting It Into Practice: U.S. Chamber

CYBERSECURITY

OCT 27, 2014 - 4:30PM

"You're Going to Get Hacked": Getting Serious About Cyber Security

DAVID KINKADE

110

million Americans have had their personal data exposed in hacking incidents in the last year.

The “Sleeping Giant” Breaks Out Periodically, Goes Dormant

The Rare Content That Continues to Resonate With New Audiences



Characteristics of the “Sleeping Giant”

- Traffic is independent of publication date
- Long dormancy periods punctuated by periodic (and unpredictable) spikes
- Very rare



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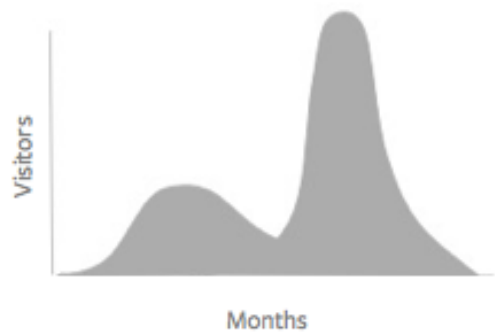
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Putting It Into Practice: U.S. Chamber



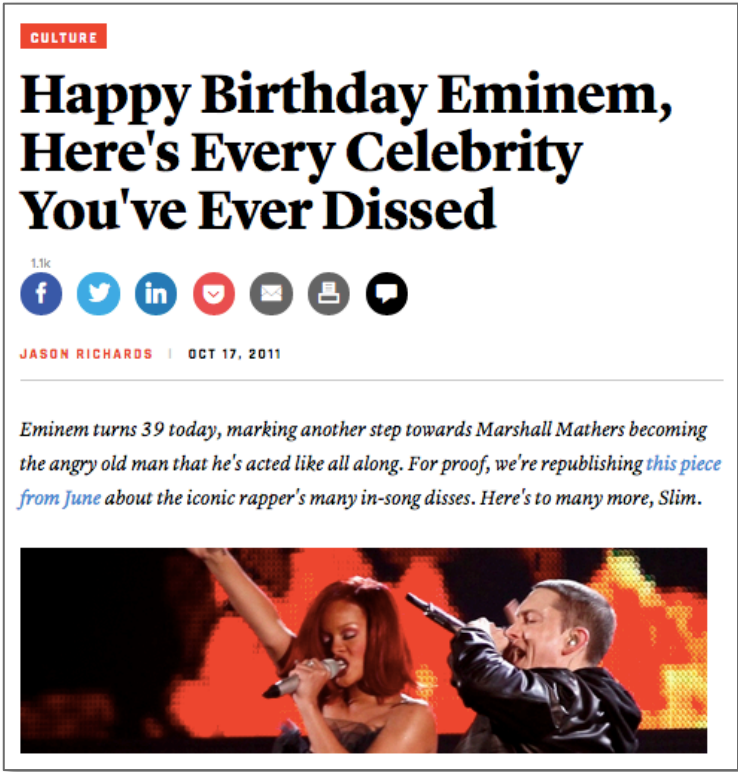
“Resurrection” Content Repurposed to Seize on Big Events

New Momentum Makes Older Material Popular Again



Characteristics of the “Resurrection”

- Small success on publication date; greater success when content is repurposed and re-released
- Typically re-issued during some milestone or event.

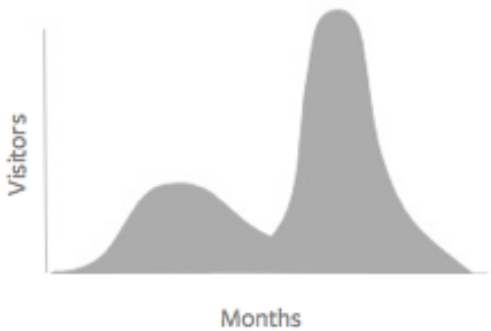


A Portrait of Success

- “A History of Eminem’s Beliefs” published in June 2011 was unsuccessful. When the piece was repackaged and resurrected for his birthday, it generated over 100,000 uniques.
- It went on to become one of the top 50 posts of 2011.

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Putting It Into Practice: U.S. Chamber



Getting to Know You

User Personas Aid in Understanding, Tailoring, and Communicating Content Use Cases

Key Questions to Establish Motivations and Limitations...

- ✓ Who is s/he? How does this person live an average day?
- ✓ What are his or her information needs or “up awake at night” concerns as they relate to the content we can provide?
- ✓ Why should this person care about us?

...And Methods to Gather Data and Formulate Insights

- ✓ One-on-one conversations
- ✓ Web analytics (e.g., what’s most engaging? How are they finding it? Which keywords are most popular?)
- ✓ Social media listening (e.g., what conversations? How are they talking about certain topics?)
- ✓ Surveys

...And Washington in the Information Age Data Can Help, Too



The Socializers:
Millennial Staffers

- Highest average # of social media accounts
- Instagram and Snapchat adoption high
- Trust high in Inside-the-Beltway sources
- Use print because it’s readily available



The Optimists:
Private Sector Gen X-ers

- Heaviest users of mobile for work-related purposes
- Expect to use social, mobile and video more than other groups
- Higher trust in trade publications



The Hybrids:
Private Sector Boomers

- Traditional in reliance on local news, but more optimistic on roles of mobile and social in future work than Skeptic peers
- Attach credibility to print more than others

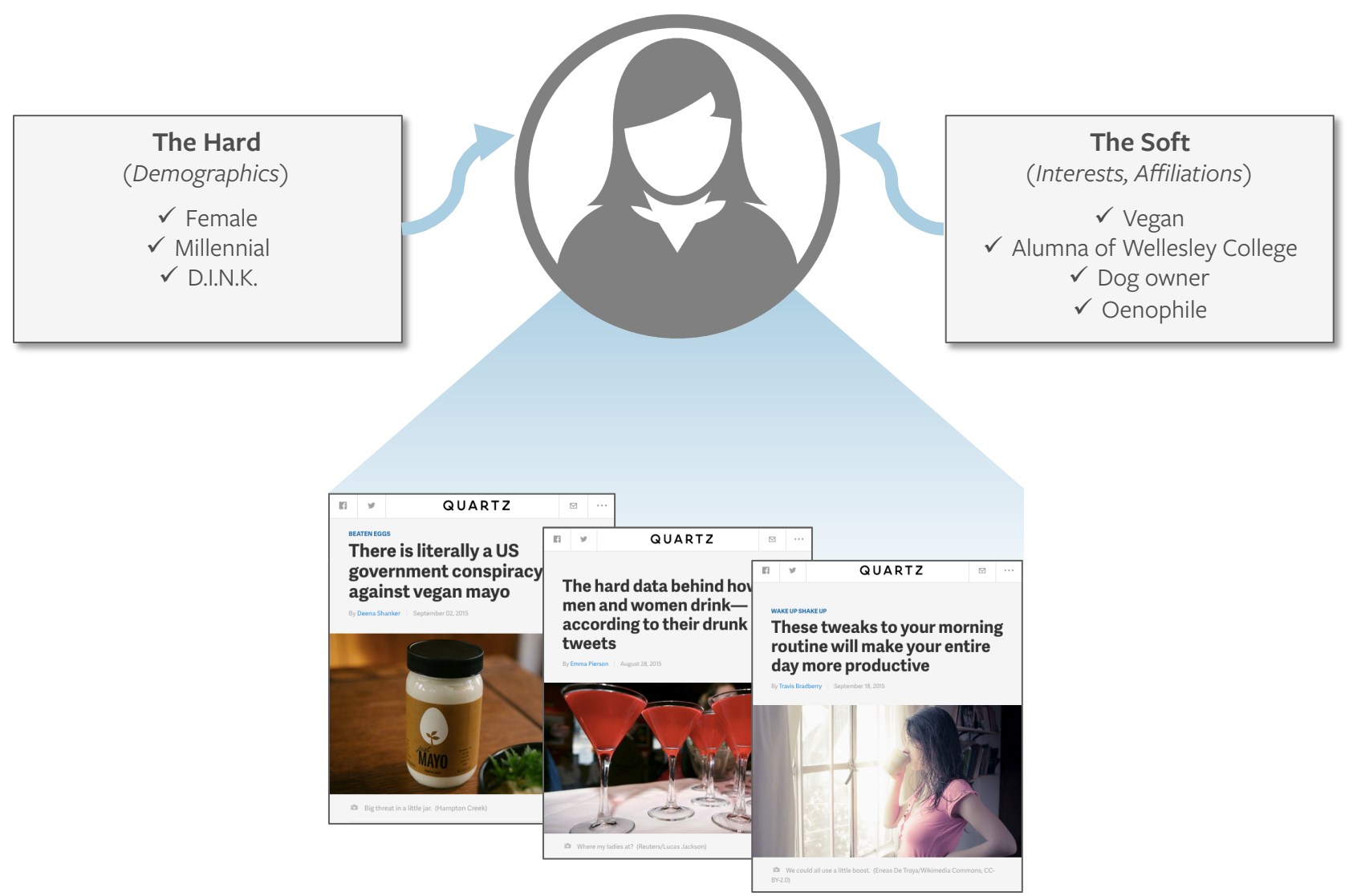


The Skeptics:
Federal Exec Boomers

- Lower trust in all media sources, especially Inside-the-Beltway publications
- Place lower credibility in print, but still aren’t sure of roles of social or mobile in future

For Content to Be Shareable, Play to Combination of Identities

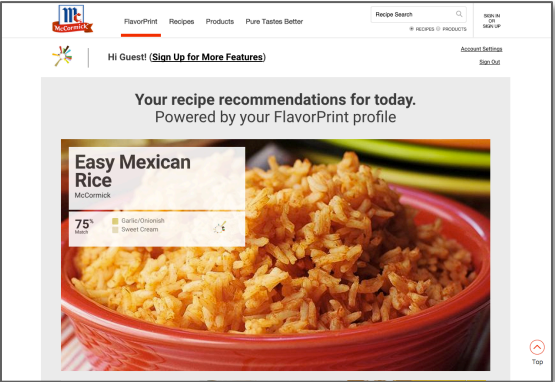
Quartz Combines Hard and Soft Identities to Serve Content That Appeals to Specific Personas' Motivations



A North Star for Content Creation

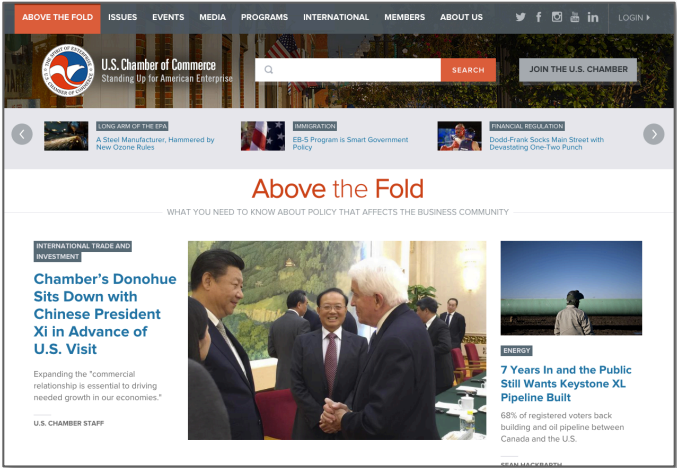
Content Mission Statements Set Expectations Externally, While Aligning Efforts Internally

McCormick's FlavorPrint Content Community

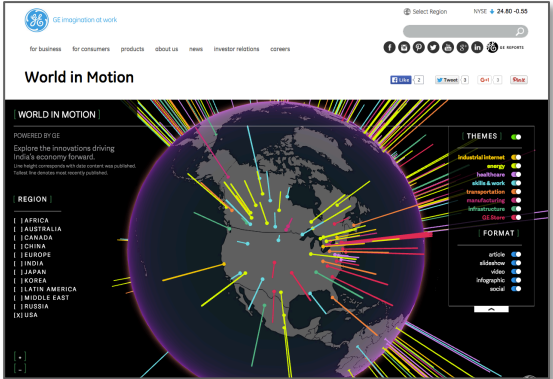


“The personalization service that creates amazing food experiences for you—everyday, everywhere.”

U.S. Chamber's Above the Fold Blog



GE's World in Motion Content Platform



“A global destination for GE storytelling and content discovery. Its technology-first, social approach creates a fluid home for GE content of various origin and format. Spin, click, and explore the world of GE in motion.”

Anatomy of a Mission Statement

“What you need to know about policy that affects the **business community**.”

#1

Core target audience

#2

What the outcome will be

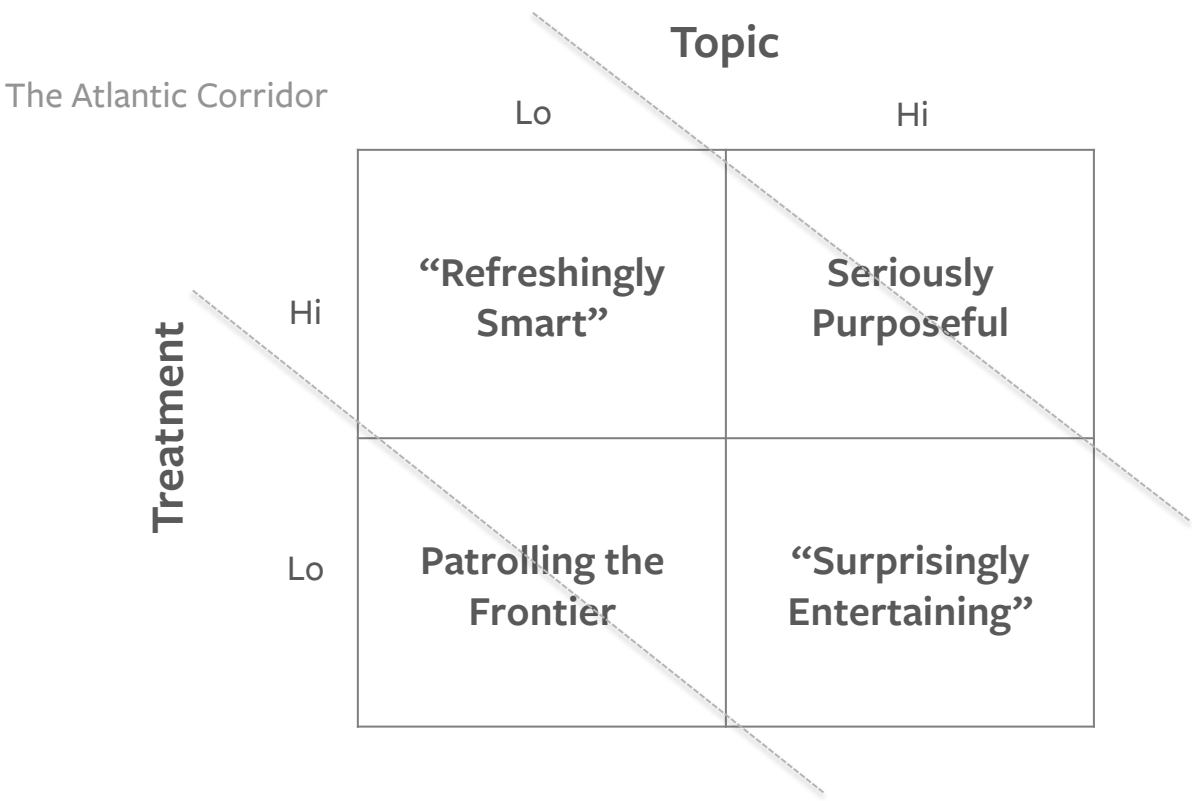
Above the fold is **your window on policy, with analysis, commentary and real stories about the intersection of government and business.**”

#3

How it will be delivered

Create a Content Mix That Matches Audience Preferences

The “Atlantic Corridor” Mixes Hi and Lo Brow Strategies to Reach a Wide Audience



Hi Treatment/Hi Topic



Lo Treatment/Hi Topic



Hi Treatment/Lo Topic

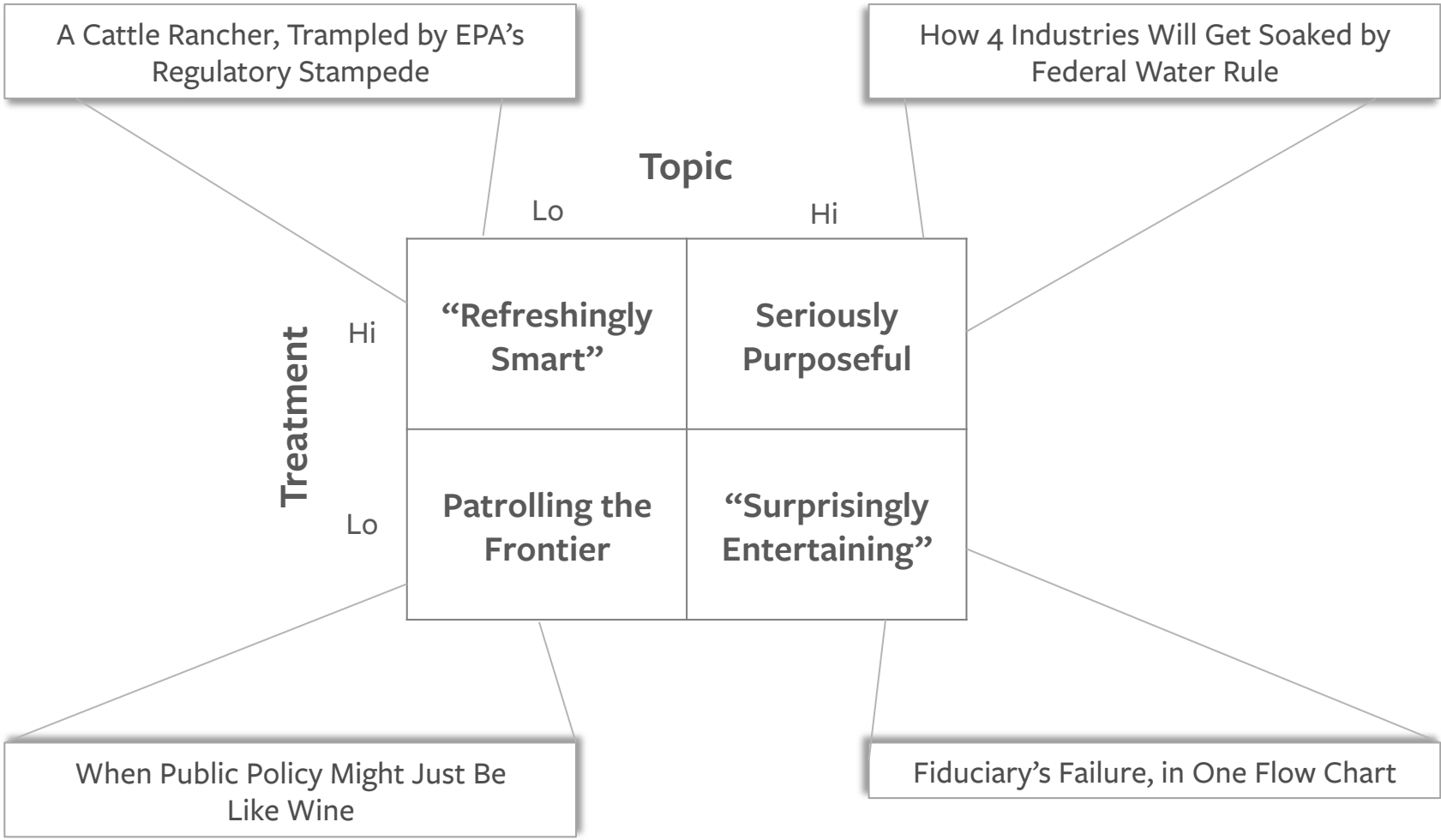


Lo Treatment/Lo Topic



Putting It Into Practice

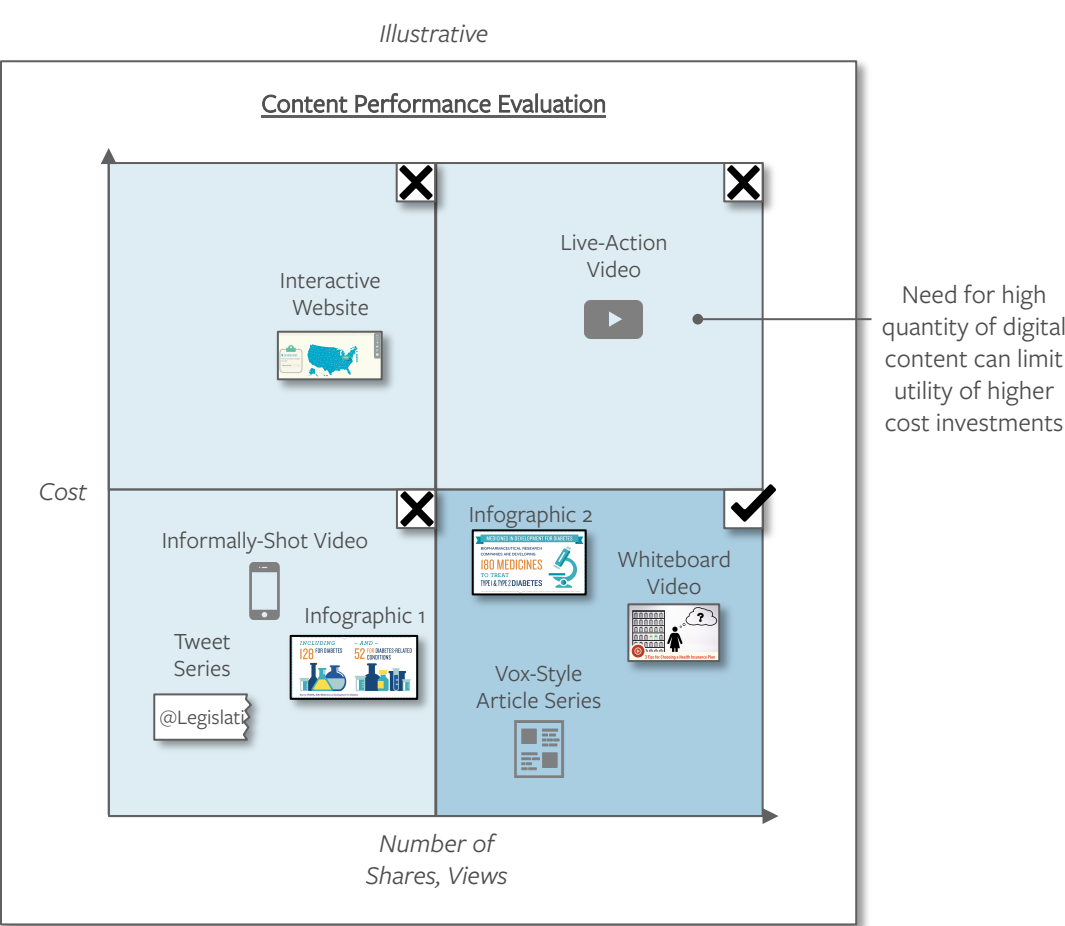
How the U.S. Chamber’s “Above the Fold” Blog Consistently Carves Out Unique Treatments of Policy Content



Our Work is Never Done

Principles of Audience Development Practiced In Media Emphasize Experimentation, Refinement

Balancing Effectiveness of Digital Content with Cost



Iterating to Consistent Quality, Value

Observational Rule Development

Lessons

- 1. Infographics with positive tone perform better than neutral or negative tone.
- 2. Whiteboard video explained this complicated subject well; resonated better than the website version.

Organization devises rules and lessons from each content distribution experience; rules are periodically reevaluated, retested as platforms, conversations evolve

Failures Embraced on Road to Success

Poor-performing content replaced with new content ideas; evaluation repeated, new lessons emerge

Continuous Labor Cost Refinement

- Templates of most successful content standardized, reducing future labor needs
- Relationships developed with highest value contract labor relative to projected original content needs

Stocking Your Content Pantry

Two Primary Methods to Consider When Sourcing Content

Creation

Developing Original Content to Showcase Organization's Resources, Perspectives

Evergreen



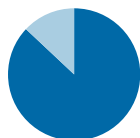
Topical



Operationalized



- ✓ Best platform for demonstrating unique value, expertise, perspectives
- ✓ Establishes authority that can lead to earned media, inbound links, increased amplification
- ⊗ Often costly and time consuming to develop and maintain
- ⊗ Can be difficult to carve out unique take on a topic within a cluttered landscape
- ⊗ Singularity of perspectives can limit utility to some audiences



87% of marketers created their own content as part of their strategies in 2013

Curation

*Presenting Existing Content in a “Meaningful, Organized Way Around Specific Themes”**

Filtering

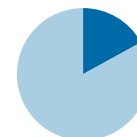


Listicles



- ✓ Can be quicker and cheaper to maintain, if process and monitoring capabilities are in place
- ✓ Showcases a diversity of perspectives not found in organizationally created content
- ⊗ Positions organization as resource (vs. an expert) on given topics or issues
- ⊗ Need to ensure there truly is value being added by curating, rather than simply aggregating others' content

* Curation definition courtesy of Beth Kanter



Just **17% of marketers** utilized curation in their content strategies in 2013

Laws of Motion

“Stories either create their own energy, or leverage existing energy around a topic.”

Zach Seward, Executive Editor, Quartz



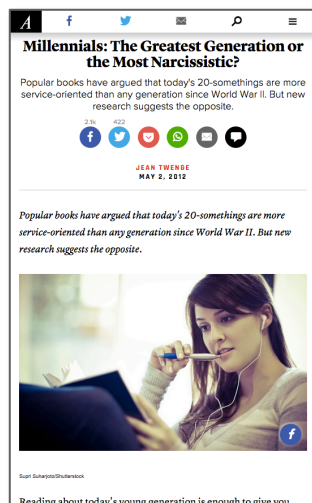
Understanding the Utility of Content By Type

How The Atlantic and Quartz Cover Much of the Same Ground, But Differ in Approach

Evergreen Content

vs.

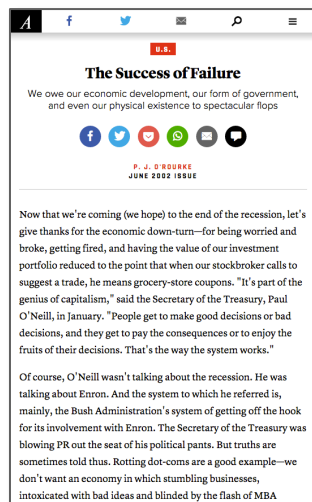
Topical Content



Perennially engaging
(e.g., “what always
keeps my audiences
up at night?”)

Quality, utility of
content

More general



In advance

Date can be omitted
from publication
and content would
still resonate/make
sense

Long-term trends

Topic
Choice

Primary
Emphasis

Audience
Appeal

Planned For?

Time
Bound?

Data Uses

Likely to ride the
news cycle

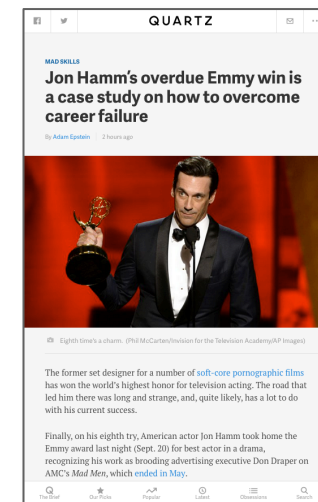
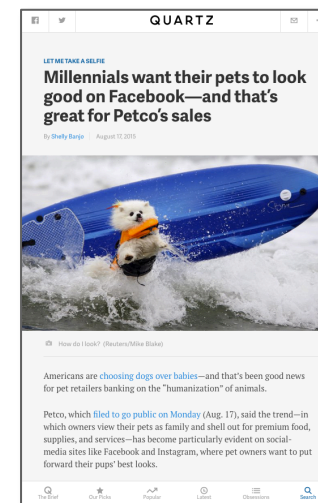
Creative or distinctive
framing

More targeted (e.g.,
likely to garner a short
period of high
engagement among
specific niche)

Also in advance!
(Contrary to typical,
reactive approaches)

Date of publication
often necessary to
understand full
context

Single stats or data
points; short-term
trends





A Tale of Two Articles

How Minor Changes Can Make Content Work for Both Evergreen and Topical Purposes



EDUCATION Project Update

Safety and Liability Issues Related to Field Trips and Field Courses

How do you make sure students will be safe during field work? Understand risk, and expect the unexpected.

By Steven J. Whitmeyer and David W. Mogk 1 October 2013

Fieldwork plays an important role in initiating students into the geoscience community of practice, providing learning opportunities not possible through classroom lectures, lab work, or computer exercises alone [Mogk and Goodwin, 2012]. It's no wonder, then, that fieldwork is a mainstay of any well-balanced university geoscience program, with activities ranging from local field trips to in-residence field camps at remote sites.

Increasingly, modern field instruction offers a diversity of experiences beyond traditional geologic mapping and may include a disciplinary focus (e.g., hydrology, geophysics, paleontology), use of modern instrumentation (e.g., geochemical, geophysical, or digital devices), long-term monitoring, and international settings [Whitmeyer et al., 2009]. Advanced field courses may provide original research experiences but require extended time in remote areas. While allowing for broader learning experiences, the expanding scope of field instruction (see Figure 1 in the Additional Supporting Information in the online version of this article) may expose students to greater safety risks and increase the potential liability of instructors and institutions.

When planning field activities, an ounce of risk prevention is truly worth a pound of cure—awareness of potential risks and liabilities and careful planning and preparation can

When planning field activities, an ounce of risk



Currently: Evergreen Treatment

A how-to guide for managing educational field work, includes a webinar

Narrows the focus, makes it dependent on time



How to Make it Topical?

Release a series of safety concerns for each season or create field trip tips for time-dependent natural phenomena



SCIENCE POLICY & FUNDING News

Hearing Sparks Concerns About Planetary Science Funding

Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle questioned the administration's proposed cuts and whether support for future missions would be adequate.



John Grunsfeld, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate (far left), testified at a 28 July Congressional hearing on NASA solar system exploration. Other witnesses who spoke were from left to right: Alan Stern, principal investigator of the New Horizons Mission, Southwest Research Institute; Christopher Russell, Dawn mission principal investigator and professor of geophysics and planetary physics at



Currently: Topical Treatment

Post focuses on a recent congressional hearing



How to Make it Evergreen?

Release a timeline that shows the relationship between changes in funding and the accomplishments/set backs that occurred as a result

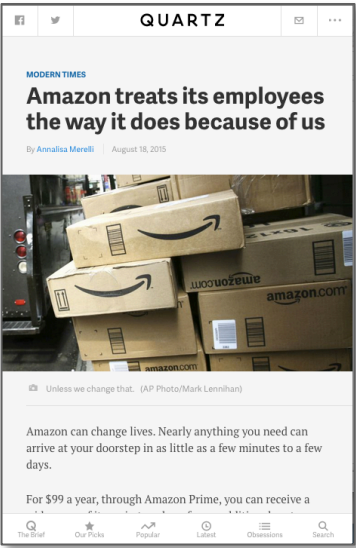
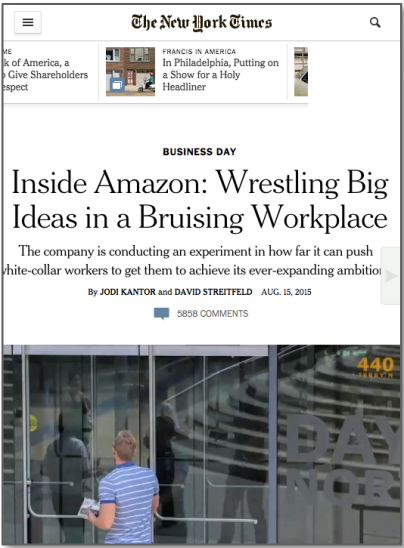
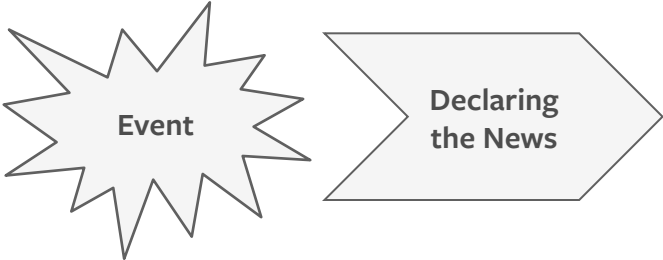
Broadens the audience and expands timing to include other parts of the year



Don't Be Faster, Be Smarter

Successful Topical Content Shifts Focus, Asks a Big Simple Question, or Takes a Stab at Forecasting the Future

The “First Day” Story

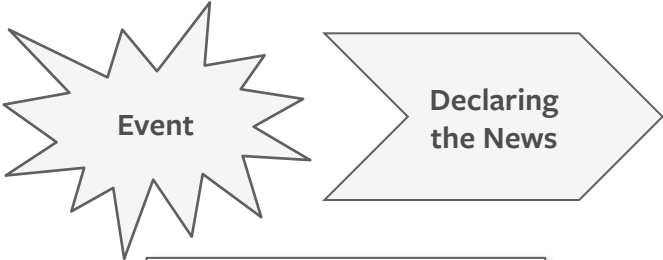




Don't Be Faster, Be Smarter

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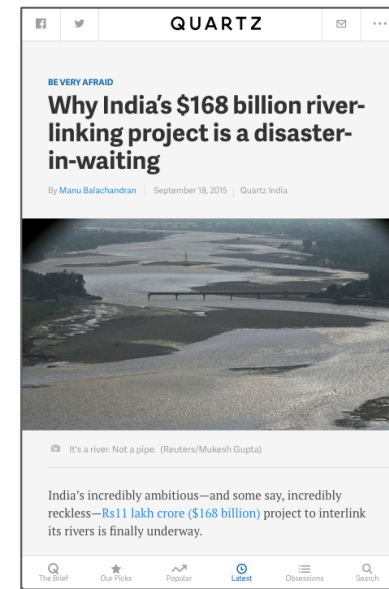
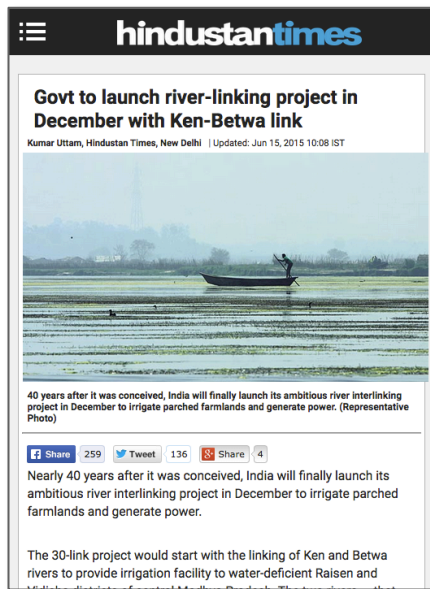




Don't Be Faster, Be Smarter

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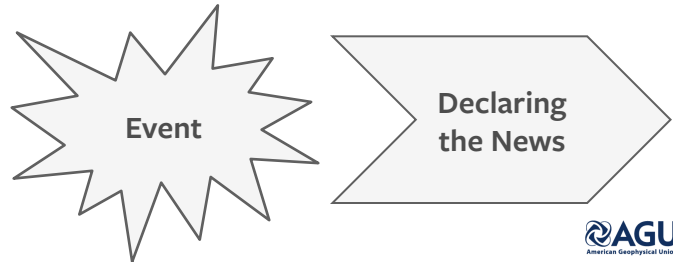




Putting it Into Practice

How Organizational News Can Be Repurposed Into Topical, Shareable “Second Day” Content

The “First Day” Story



A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST GROUNDWATER BASINS ARE IN DISTRESS

RESERVES LIKELY FAR SMALLER THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT, NEW STUDIES FIND

16 June 2015

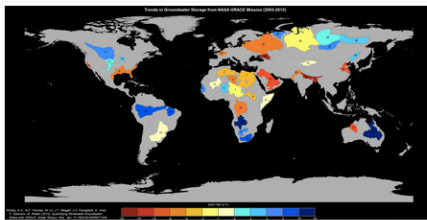
Like 103 Tweet 77 G+ 5 Share 27

Joint Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Human consumption is rapidly draining about a third of its largest groundwater basins, despite having little to no accurate data about how much water remains in them, according to two new studies led by the University of California, Irvine, using data from NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) satellites.

The result is that significant segments of Earth's population are consuming groundwater quickly without knowing when it might run out, the researchers conclude. The new findings have been accepted for publication in *Water Resources Research*, a journal of the American Geophysical Union, and appear online today.

"Available physical and chemical measurements are simply insufficient," said University of California Irvine professor and principal investigator Jay Famiglietti, who is also the senior water scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "Given how quickly we are consuming the world's groundwater reserves, we need a coordinated global effort to determine how much is left."



Human Consumption is Main Cause of Groundwater Distress

Does Your State Have a Plan for Water Emergencies?

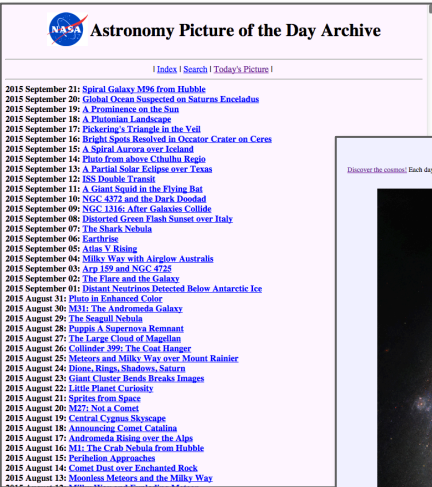
Simple Actions You Can Take to Preserve Groundwater Resources in Your Region



Building Content Velocity Through Operational Content

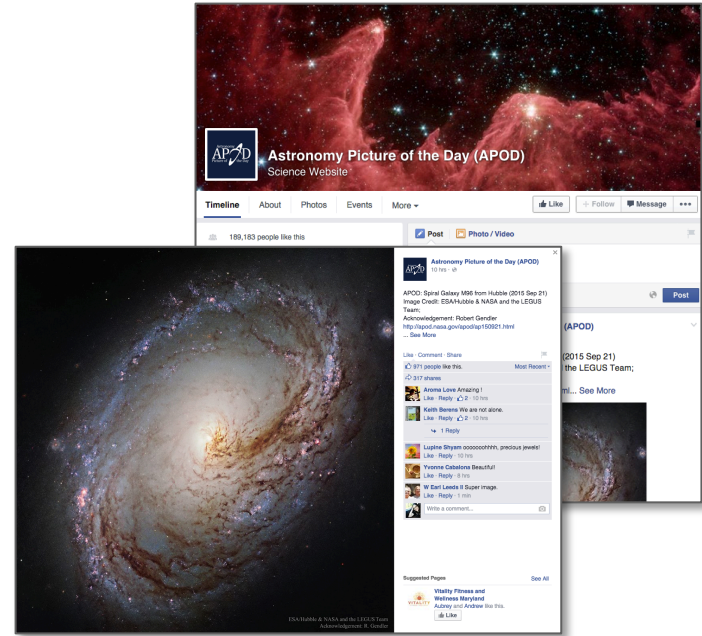
Recurring Daily, Weekly or Monthly Series Fulfill Expectations for Audiences While Reducing Friction in Creation

20 Years of Daily Content...



NASA has posted a new “APOD” every day since June 1995.

...Inspires Loyal, Committed Audiences



The “APOD” Facebook page is sanctioned by NASA, but is administered by fans.

Holding a Place in the Portfolio

“These types of posts are a great addition to the site. They allow us to build the experience and skill base of newer staff members, and they are really effective at boosting our page views..”

Bob Cohn, The Atlantic

National Journal Communications Council

**Media
University**

AMU 412

Content Strategy—Part 1

September 25, 2015