

National Journal Communications Council

**Media
University**

AMU 414

Building a Better E-Newsletter— Part 2

December 18, 2015

Our Time Together

Highlighting Opportunities to Optimize Newsletter Engagement Across the Life Cycle



The Sign-Up Experience



A/B Testing Fundamentals



Subject Lines



Senders



Time of Day



Personalization



Design



Social Integration



Archiving

Optimizing Engagement Across the Newsletter Life Cycle

How Targeted Changes Can Yield Meaningful Impacts in E-Newsletter “Weak Spots”

E-Newsletter Testing Matrix

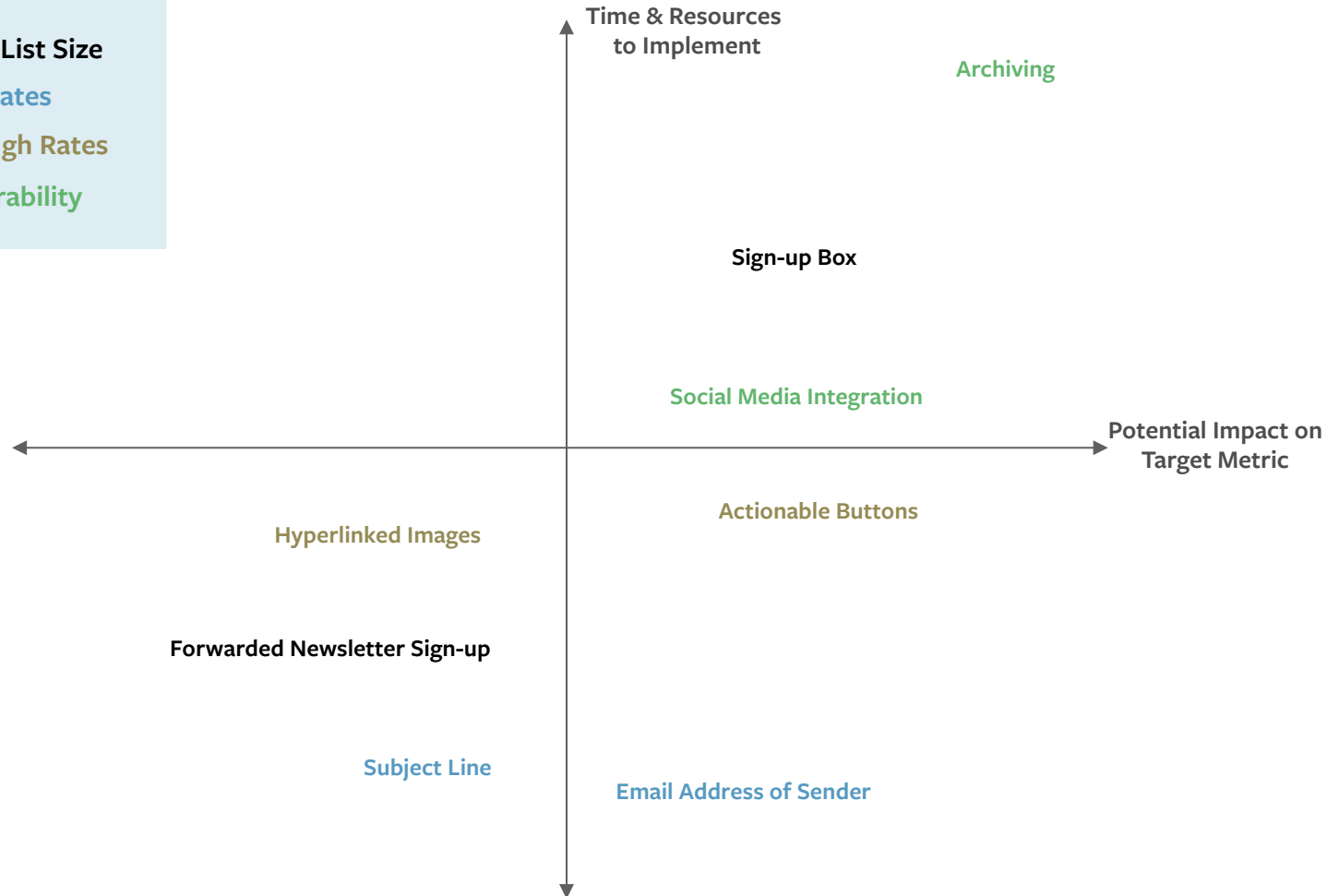
KEY: TARGET METRICS

Subscriber List Size

Open Rates

Clickthrough Rates

Discoverability





A Simple Template Can Still Incorporate All Necessary Attributes

Balancing a Minimalist Yet Informative Design Defines a Strong Sign-Up

Sample #3:
A Concise and Appealing Sign-up

Clear, attention-grabbing call to sign up

Finite interval for email push and a description of expected content

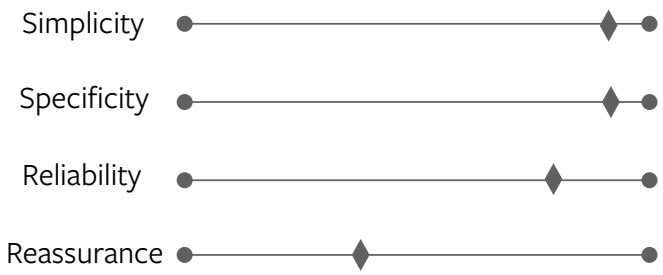
One-step sign-up

Sign Up

Sign up for the best of our environment research every two weeks—stunning photos, conservation wins, and action alerts.

Good Start, But Still Room for Improvement

This newsletter thanks you for signing up and then asks if you would send more optional information. It could potentially improve on this by emailing a direct confirmation of your sign-up with initial content.



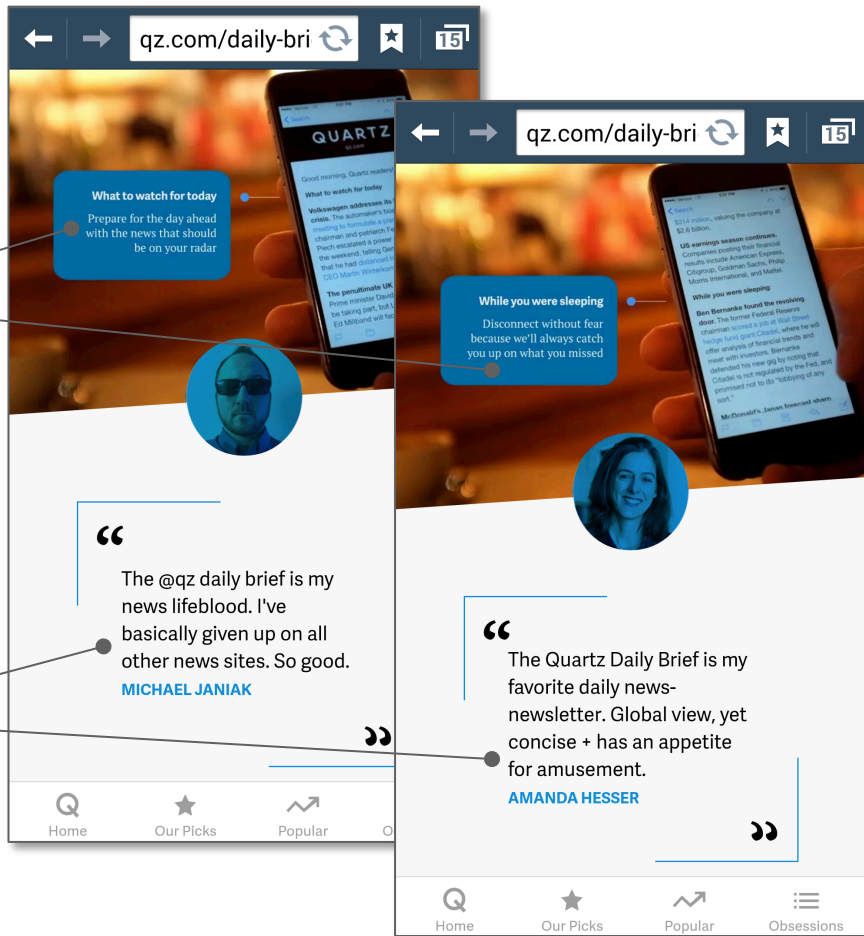


Putting a Human Face on Your Newsletter

Quartz's Mobile-Friendly Testimonials Provide Third Party Validation of Quality, Boost Sign-ups

Section-by-section descriptions of content provide even more specific, individualized value propositions

Rotating reader testimonials are a simple way to boost credibility and create a sense of FOMO



Try This At Home

- ★ Capture and record positive feedback from members or advocates on your newsletter, whether it comes in via email or social.
- ★ Use these short testimonials alongside your sign-up form, archives, or feature them in the newsletter itself.



The “From” Name Should be Recognizable, Trustworthy

The Best Fit for Your Email will Depend on Its Content and Recipients

Clear

Humane Society	PAWgress Newsletter - Upcoming events
Dr. Smith, Humane Society	You Should Adopt A Pet - We a

Trustworthy

Julie Dixon	E-Newsletter Challenge - This week's cha
Santa Claus	What Do You Want For Christmas - Ho h

Attention-Grabbing

Got Milk?	Big Almond is At It AGAIN - Stop the nut!
Donald Trump	Make America Great Again - The media is

Organization Name:

It's likely the recipient already knows and trusts this name. If your content is appreciated, it positively reinforces your organization's reputation.

Combined Name:

Method for building familiarity with a person, campaign, or brand. Can transfer trust from an established name to a lesser-known one.

Personal Name:

Recipient may feel like this is a warmer and more personal touch, but it could backfire if the “from” name sender is not someone well-known or respected. The recipient will also expect the email's content to reflect the sender's personality.

Campaign Name:

Useful if your organization sends lots of emails and wants to distinguish each. Make sure the name is recognizable.

Gimmicky or Celebrity Name:

Stands out in a full inbox, but it can be alienating if done poorly. Use rarely.

Weekends are an Overlooked Opportunity

Fewer Emails Enter Reader Inboxes, but Those That Do Are More Likely to Be Read

Find Your Sunday Read In The BuzzReads Newsletter!

The week's best feature stories are just an email away.

posted on Nov. 1, 2014, at 1:33 p.m.



Raymond Sultan
BuzzFeed Staff



Want to get a little more out of your Sunday mornings?



Is the Weekend Open a Metric for Value?

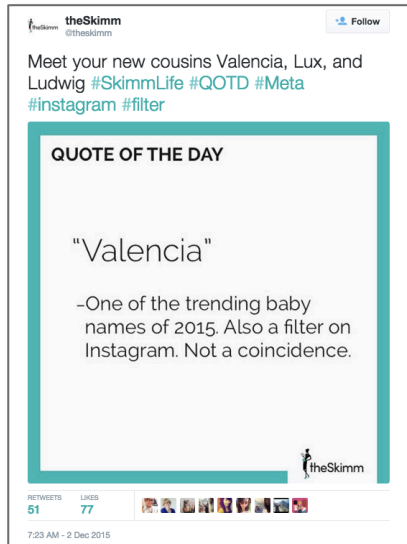
American Press Institute checks to see who opens their emails on the day of send and then again a few days later, particularly if a reader opens it again on a Saturday. Their theory is that a later open could mean the content was worthy of a second, deeper read.

The “Sunday Paper” Effect

- **People still want news on the weekends, but they want different content.** Consider what is in the Sunday newspaper: weekly wrap-ups, long-form articles, better photography, and investigative pieces.
- **Readers still check email over the weekend.** According to Apsis, 32% of people “often” read email on their mobile device on weekends, 31% “sometimes” read email on mobile devices.
- **Email volume is lower on the weekends, but open rates go up,** according to the Informz 2015 Benchmark Report. Maximize your chance for engagement. Your email will stand out and have a better chance of being read.
- **Weekend reads are leisurely,** which is why BuzzFeed, Longform, and other “deep reads” are sent on Friday nights or Sunday mornings.
- **Readers are more likely to be on social media during weekends,** which may increase the chances that your content will be shared. Build opportunities with clear calls-to-action into your newsletter.

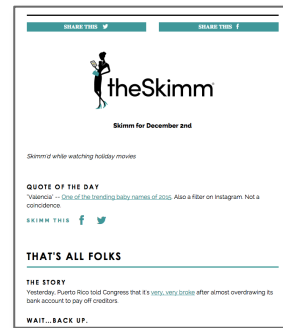
Email and Social Should Complement, Not Overlap

Don't Bore Existing Readers by Re-Releasing Newsletter Content; Engage Them Instead



Get Visual: Include photos or other media that can't be included in a newsletter.

Consider highlighting interesting content with a Twitter card



Interact: Host contests or test newsletter knowledge



Encourage sharing: Start conversations about a recent newsletter topic or include a "featured" reader

Content = Newsletter, Engagement = Social

ATLANTICMEDIA

Content happens in the e-newsletter; engagement happens on social. Each format should complement the other, says Shannan Bowen, National Journal's Director of Audience Engagement Strategy.



How to Archive Newsletter Content?

The Dos and Don'ts of Archival

E-NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

Item Name
December 2015 E-Newsletter PDF (5.19 MB)
October 2015 E-Newsletter PDF (7.65 MB)
August 2015 E-Newsletter PDF (4.39 MB)
June 2015 E-Newsletter PDF (3.25 MB)
April 2015 E-Newsletter PDF (1.39 MB)
February 2015 E-Newsletter PDF (2.72 MB)
December 2014 E-Newsletter PDF (3.69 MB)
October 2014 E-Newsletter PDF (6.49 MB)
August 2014 E-Newsletter PDF (3.67 MB)
June 2014 E-Newsletter PDF (2.55 MB)
April 2014 E-Newsletter PDF (2.9 MB)
February 2014 E-Newsletter PDF (3.5 MB)
December 2013 E-Newsletter PDF (2.15 MB)

By sharing their climate coverage with each other, smaller publishers in Climate Publishers Network were able to jumpstart their coverage

Nieman Lab

PUBLISHED 12/02/15 8:14 AM

Beginning in May of this year, several dozen publishers worldwide have been sharing climate coverage with each other through the Climate Publishers Network. The network's goal was to help publishers ramp up their climate coverage ahead of COP21 without needing to hire more staff or stretch their resources. While some of the larger European daily publications were more hesitant to grab stories from the network, smaller publishers say the network has allowed them to jumpstart their climate coverage. El Deber editor David Duster says though they could not contribute to the network at the same pace as other publishers, "We are a small newspaper with few resources, and we couldn't pay as much attention [to climate stories] as we wanted."

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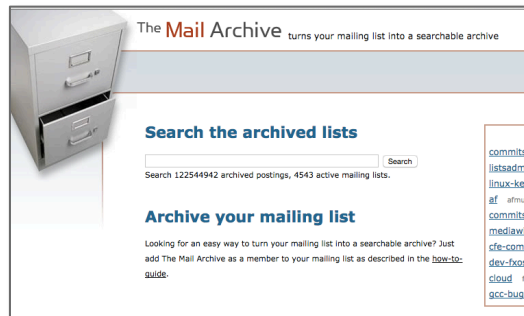
Don't: Keep newsletters in a PDF list. Downloads are an obstacle to access. Plus, search engines can't always find this text, which means readers can't search your newsletter online.

Do: Make archives searchable plain text. American Press Institute maintains old newsletters as blog posts, tagging articles with the subject of content and the section of the newsletter they were in.

How to Archive Newsletter Content?

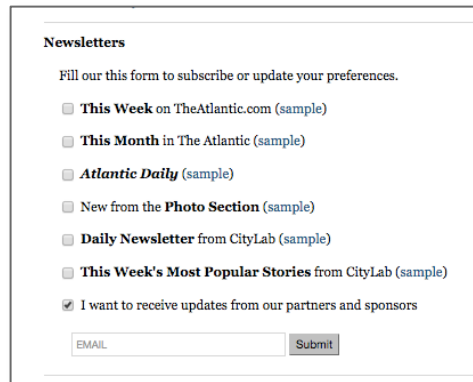
Solutions to Common Archival Issues

What if my email system doesn't provide archiving services?



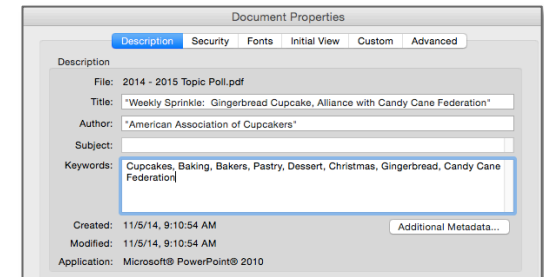
- Re-post newsletter content as blog posts. Current subscribers can still search back issues
- Try a free archival service, like <https://www.mail-archive.com>.

What if we don't have storage for an archive?



- Save only the most recent version of the newsletter, so new subscribers can still preview and existing members can share on social.
- It's free to create a public Google Spreadsheet that includes the date of each newsletter and a description. Readers can then preview old content and request more information on topics as needed.

What if we want to maintain the original formatting?



- If you save to PDF, keep the file size small and give the URL an SEO-friendly title.
- You can also assign the PDF a title and keywords in Adobe Acrobat's "Properties" tab. Google and other search engines will use that metadata in searches.