

Creating Compelling Online News Content

15 April 2020



TOUCANTECH WEBINAR

Hello!

I'm one of the co-founders of ToucanTech, an advancement software for schools – with a sophisticated news publishing element, our focus topic for today's webinar!

Previous marketing and comms roles in pharma, banking and retail and founder of a business education news platform, [BusinessBecause.com](https://www.BusinessBecause.com):

- Punchy daily news content about management education and future business leaders
- 100,000 monthly readership and popular weekly newsletter, team of 4 full-time and 6 part-time writers
- Sold to the Graduate Management Admission Council, owner of the GMAT test



• Live Updates: Coronavirus Impact On Business Schools



LIVE: Coronavirus Impact On GMAT
Testing

LIVE: Coronavirus GRE Test Center
Closures

2020 MBA Application Deadlines:
Coronavirus Extensions

Videos [▶ Watch More](#)



Why Choose Berlin For Your Master's?

6:10



Coronavirus Update | Applicant Bulletin

1:23



Do You Need An MBA To Start Your Own
Business?

Follow us



BusinessBecause

Online #GMAT test available by 'mid-April' as
#coronavirus has big impact on test centers

👉 <https://t.co/DQ0epD5dmM>
@GMACUpdates

2 LIKES • 0 COMMENTS



@BUSINESSBECAUSE 3 WEEKS AGO



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Does this sound familiar?

For community managers “Engagement” is the holy grail, but it can seem hard work to achieve...

We want more **logins**, more **reads**, more **opens**, more **interactions**, but sometimes it's hard to find the time, or come up with the ideas, to pull people in... and they won't come on their own, they need regular encouragement!

3 rules - compelling content - FUR

Are you going to make
someone smile?



Fun

Click-bait
Share-able
Amusing
Competitive
Interesting

Are you solving
someone's problem?



Useful

Connections
Careers support
Top tips
Advice
Market place

Are you making
something personal?

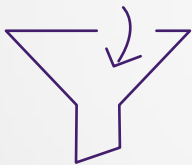


Relevant

From your time
Nostalgic
Industry-specific
Sports
Hobbies

3 steps – execute with energy

Come up with your
FURy idea



Idea

Fun
Useful
Relevant

Execute with energy



Execution

Catchy headline
Slick creative
Tag people
Include photos

Force an action/
transaction



Action

Sign-up/ login
Complete form
Click/ share
Comment

13 practical tips to consider when creating online news



1. Carve out a catchy headline

Sounds obvious, but I've seen so many bland headlines that don't inspire people to click-through to read – what a shame!

Headlines should be short and punchy, intriguing and include names (people or places or companies) if relevant.

Don't be afraid to use click-bait – “You will not believe what happened at the Cricket reunion event” or “These students have all secured 1st choice offers, what's the link?”

Sussex, drugs and rock'n'roll: how Keane got clean

They seemed more likely to play cricket on the village green than go off the rails, but the sensitive Battle band had their meltdown too, they tell The Times journalist, Will Hodgkinson.



7 Jun 2019

Arts & Culture

Featured

 Music Network



2. Write a clear introductory sentence

People want to know what they're investing their time to read – don't be vague or cryptic in your opening sentence

A concise summary, with the key facts from the article, is a good start – and will help for search engine optimisation (SEO) too

Don't repeat the headline – use the space to provide additional key info and lure people in for more

Women's struggle in Afghanistan: An Insight from a Human Rights perspective

Current student Nandhini Jaishankar's (MADev13) looks at what the history of women in Afghanistan tells us about women's rights as Human Rights



10 Feb 2020

Written by Nandhini Jaishankar

Blogs: "Perspectives, Provocations & Initiatives"

By Unknown - <http://afghanistanonmymind.blogspot.com/2012/01/afghan-women-in-1920s-and-womens-rights>



3. Choose a high-impact image

The web is increasingly about images... if you're an Insta user you'll understand this! Any news story should be accompanied by a beautiful or bold image

Avoid grainy or dull pictures or cheesy stock photos - but does not need to be a professional shot (especially in current times when it's difficult to send professional photographers on site...)

N.B. tag (name) your image for SEO and make sure you have the copyright to use it

Engaged! Congratulations to Eloise and Jesse

Eloise Cooper (Class of 2014) tells us her engagement story and how she almost spoiled the surprise.



Jesse Ditchfield (Class of 2016) and Eloise Cooper (Class of 2014)



9 Apr 2020

Written by [Eloise Cooper](#)

Weddings & Engagements

Featured

 Jesse Ditchfield, Eloise Cooper



4. Quote people in your story and be charming about them

People (generally) like being mentioned in the news!

Quote or reference people in your story and ideally 'tag' them to the article (if you have this feature) to involve more people

Anyone quoted (assuming the reference is positive) is likely to share the story with their social channels – bingo, more eyeballs!

Concord celebrates third Concord-Oxford Welcome Dinner

How does Concord support its recent leavers at The University of Oxford?



24 Feb 2020

Networking:Social

Concord Oxford Alumni.

Featured

 Kate Rudzka , Maria Serova , Rosma Salomaa

 Oxford University Buddy Club



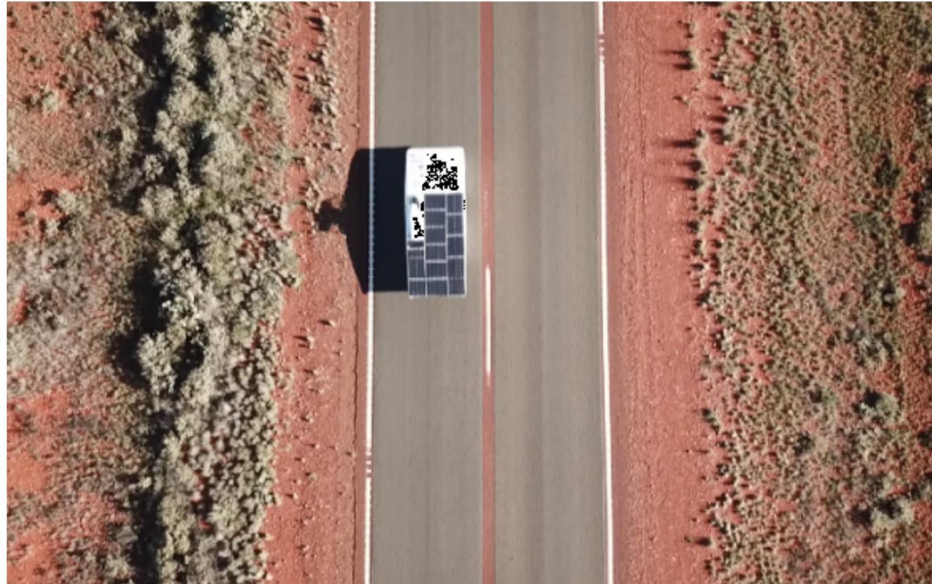
5. Quote organisations in your story

This can be particularly effective if you make the company (or their PR team aware) of the article, asking them to re-post, link and share the piece

Companies and universities often have large Twitter/ LinkedIn/ Facebook audiences, which can really help to boost your readership numbers

The Future is Solar

Toby McBride (SH 08-13) updates us on the latest news from Durham University Electric Motorsport (DUEM)



27 Jun 2018

Science & Technology

We are about to experience the single biggest paradigm shift in the history of motoring. Gone are the days of internal combustion. We are on the cusp of an electric revolution. Durham University Electric Motorsport (DUEM) is playing a vital role in this critical area. We are the UK's most established solar car team. Founded in 2002, we've been pushing the boundaries of innovation in sustainable motoring for over 16 years.



6. Use a digestible format – such as listicles or rankings

Use sub-headings, sections or lists to help break down your story into bitesize nuggets

People typically can't remember more than 3, or maybe 5, points at a time – but sometimes very long lists can garner attention or become a 'library' resource for readers to refer back to – e.g. 50 reasons to do an MBA

Five Ways to Engage your Alumni Community During COVID-19



9 Apr 2020

Building a community

COVID-19 has undoubtedly affected people, jobs and industries everywhere. Traditional methods of communication, events, and engagement can no longer be performed in parts of the world due to social distancing. However, that doesn't mean they have to stop altogether. Many schools and organizations have turned to the online world in order to keep connected to their communities and to keep planned events on the calendar. Below are five ways to keep your alumni communities engaged during COVID-19.

1. Go Traditional with Letters

In a period when many of us are social distancing, why not break up all the online communication with some tangible letters! Here's how it can



7. Don't be too long

500 to 800 words are the max most people can comfortably read on a screen

Or, let's face it, for the younger folks it's more like a quick glance at a photo with a caption or two...

However, the occasional longer article can be helpful for SEO – 1,800 words was the average for Google's top-ranking blog posts in 2019

Frankie Fox and her food business

Success with preserved table products 'The Foraging Fox'



26 Sep 2019

Inspiring Bradfieldians

Frankie who appeared in the Daily Telegraph magazine in Spring 2019



8. SEO

Not enough space here to delve into the world of Google crawlers, but in very quick summary, it's helpful if you

- publish your content on a mobile-friendly site with a good SEO structure (e.g. canonical URLs, no broken links)
- add relevant keywords to your title and headings (H1, H2, H3 etc)
- link to your articles from other pages and other websites, using your keywords as anchor text

Image
Use



Keyword
Integration



Domain
Age



Content
Freshness
& Frequency



Content
Indexing



Content
Quality



Content
Length



Mobile
Friendliness





9. Be original or intriguing

Originality is good for SEO, but also better for your readers – cover a new topic, or a different angle, or provide a personal account

Intrigue is also a useful tactic – how can you spark attention or cover something unexpected?

Schools are blessed with tonnes of interesting content – every alum will have a unique story to tell if you ask the right questions!

The Mystery of the Abandoned Concord Suitcase

Found in Oxfordshire thrown into a field! But not everything was missing...find out what was left inside this abandoned suitcase and how we know it must be one of yours!



12 Jul 2019

Help:Search

To read this story

Login

Join



10. Appeal to peoples' competitiveness or incentivise comments

Online readers often like a quick contest, poll or game – can you incorporate this into your story, or even make it the entire point of your piece

We've seen comment competitions working brilliantly – e.g. encouraging people to post their memories about a funny event or popular staff-member

[News](#) > [10 Questions With...](#) > [Alastair Graham](#)

Alastair Graham

We catch up with former Headmaster, Alastair Graham



Alastair Graham

To read this story

[Login](#)

[Join](#)



 12 Jun 2018

 [10 Questions With...](#)

Saturday 4th August 2018, 13.53 (UTC)



Habit

Dear Mr. Graham

You accepted me in Mill Hill on oct 1980 under exceptional circumstances considering there was the Iran-Iraq war. We met several times during my 3 years at Mill Hill. You truly are a gentleman and I owe my upbringing and relative success to you and Mill Hill School which I will always cherish. I wish you all the best of health and happiness. Thank you



Friday 3rd August 2018, 19.50 (UTC)



Jason I

Gentlemen, leader and a great sense of humour. A perfect headmaster. Thanks Mr Graham.



Friday 3rd August 2018, 17.06 (UTC)



Austin

ACG changed my life. He was the first senior teacher who made it totally clear that to love your school was the right thing to do. I have been mocked for it ever since but he was right on the money. Thank you Mr Graham, from the bottom of my heart.



Friday 3rd August 2018. 16.37 (UTC)



Patrick

A true gentleman with a lovely family. It is good to see you looking so well sir.



Friday 3rd August 2018, 15.06 (UTC)



Richard

I consider myself so fortunate to have had Mr Graham as my Headmaster while at Mill Hill. He was a wonderful Head Man and a true gentleman. My Mother and I still both credit Mr Graham to a very great extent with any success I have enjoyed at and since Mill Hill. Richard Baxter (BB '81-'86)





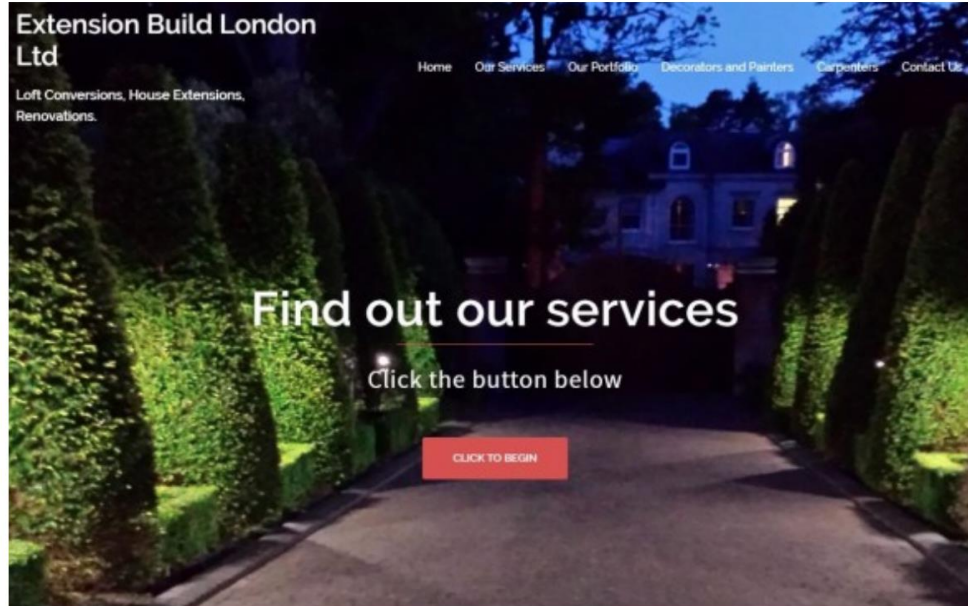
11. Promote your alumni's businesses!

Use your news page to help your alumni to promote their businesses or projects – they'll likely write the story for you, they'll share the link and they'll be grateful for the free PR!

Your website is likely to have a strong Google ranking (particularly if you have a gov/ edu URL) – which makes the new promotion even more helpful for the businesses you promote

CONSTRUCTION: Extension Build London

Looking for a loft conversion in South London? Then look no further than this Alumni business...



8 Jan 2020

Alumni Construction Businesses

Featured

 Richard Bahari

 Concordians in London



12. Share your story

Hopefully your readers will share your article, but you should make an effort too!

Which social media groups/ pages are relevant for your story?

Who can you email the story to (e.g. in a newsletter)?

Which friends or organisations will share the piece on your behalf?

**Brian Davies** • 1st

Development Director & Deputy Director of Sport at Bishop Vesey's Gramma...

1w • 🌐

It has obviously been a difficult few weeks for everybody, but in this short piece one of our Class of 2020, Development Intern [Benedict Newman](#) discusses his thoughts on a tumultuous time for all Year 11 and Year ...see more

**Thoughts from a Class of 2020 Leaver**alumni.bvgs.co.uk

👍 37 · 5 Comments

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Most Relevant ▼



Add a comment...

**Claire Bridges** • 2nd

Strategic Leader, Networker, Policy Shaper, Deliverer of Results, Ch...

1w...

Good article from Benedict and a fab photo of some of our students,

**Brian Davies** • 1st

Development Director & Deputy Director of Sport at Bishop Vesey's Gra...

1w • 🌐

Several new stories have been posted over the weekend featuring both students and alumni.

...see more

**Robert P. Lowndes OV1958**alumni.bvgs.co.uk

👍 3

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share



13. Repeat, regularly

Like face creams and diets, once you have a formula that works for online news, keep doing it!

The web moves quickly and yesterday's stories slip down feeds and email inboxes quicker than ever – so publish little and often

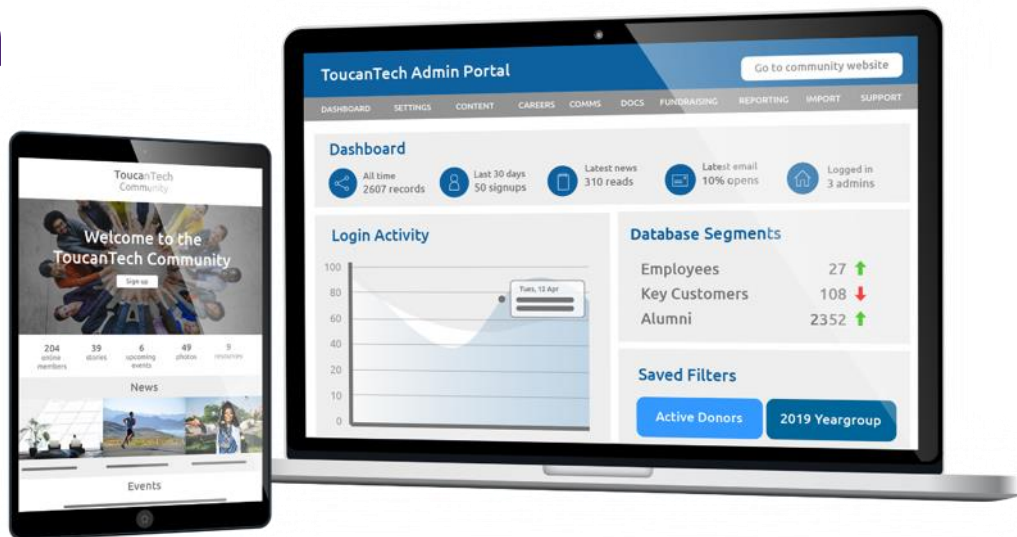
Create a schedule if it helps you to plan ahead and line up content to publish on days that you aren't in the office

Questions?

Suggestions?

About ToucanTech

ToucanTech is an easy, affordable and beautiful fundraising CRM and website software to manage your online news and content, alumni and donor records, email newsletters, online payments, events, mentoring, careers and more!



Any questions?

Please contact Merryn
merryn@toucantech.com