

Smart web heads, summaries

How to increase hits on your stories

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See today's top 50 articles

Teresa Schmedding

Daily Herald July 2011

SEO

SEO stands for search engine optimization, which means using words to get a higher ranking on Google/Bing search engines so more people click on.

Words in headlines, summaries, captions, breakout boxes all determine search engine results.

It's Journalism 101: Use "key" terms in the summary (vs. generic words like 'elementary music education'), be specific and be clear.

Tips: Don't tear yourself up in knots writing a gibberish summary to appeal only to a search engine. Use your journalism skills and write a straight, clear nut-graph lede.

Click-through

Headlines and summaries will also encourage people looking at home page and search engine results page to click on your story to read it.

Again, it's Journalism 101:

What makes this story interesting? What are the key facts? What about it reinforces our brand?

Don't: Many people may be tempted to tease or taunt readers into clicking on a story by being vague or “clever.” Don't. Studies upon studies show readers have a high distrust of stories on websites and will not click on such “teasing” stories – and will have an overall negative impression of a site. They do like headlines and summaries that help them evaluate if they want to read.

Do: Summaries don't have to be boring and dry. Attitude and color is fine if it matches tone of the story and is clear.

Headlines

Stick to seven words or less

Reinforce brand

Be clear

Update with story

Summaries

-

Stick to 40-50 words

Reinforce brand

Be clear

Update with story

Hed is too short, summary is too vague

TOP STORY : NEWS

1 2 3 4 5 « PLAY »

Family hosts benefit for ill sibling



Bu Eileen O. Daday Jul 15, 2011 11:31 AM

Members of a longtime Arlington Heights family are hosting a fundraiser Saturday to help a sibling in desperate need of a lung transplant.

FULL ARTICLE COMMENTS (0)

Good hed, but short summary undersells story

The image is a screenshot of the Daily Herald website homepage. At the top left is the logo for 'dh Daily Herald' with the tagline 'Big Picture - Local Focus'. To the right of the logo, there is a weather widget for Arlington Heights showing a temperature of 83°F and a forecast for the next few days. Further right is a small profile picture of a man and a headline about a 1970s sex scandal. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories like HOME, NEWS, SPORTS, BUSINESS, LIFE & ENTERTAINMENT, DISCUSS, AUTOS, HOMES, JOBS, CLASSIFIEDS, SHOPPING, and SERVICES & INFO. A secondary menu below that includes FRIDAY, JULY 15TH STORIES, VIDEOS, PHOTOS, BLOGS, COMMUNITIES, WEATHER, and FITTEST LOSER. The main content area features three large advertisements: 'AMERICAN WATERPROOFING CO.' with a phone number, 'Leaky Basement? Crooked Concrete?' with a 'Click Here For Savings!' button, and 'COOK OF THE WEEK CHALLENGE'. Below the ads is a search bar and a 'BROWSE OUR ARCHIVES' button. The main news section is titled 'TOP STORY : NEWS' and features a video player for a story titled 'Metra eyes ticket price hikes, train cutbacks' by Mariel Pyke, dated July 15, 2011. The article text states 'Metra could hike fares and cut service to balance its budget.' To the right of the main story is a 'BEST BETS' section with a 'Business' category and a photo of several women in colorful dresses. Below that is another advertisement for 'Pollack Clinic' offering '\$37 1-HOUR MASSAGE in a Clinical Setting!'.

Good – and quotes draw readers

TOP STORY : NEWS

1 2 3 4 5 « PLAY »

Metra eyes ticket price hikes, train cutbacks



By Marni Pyke Jul 15, 2011 2:08 PM

Enjoy your current Metra fares and schedules while you can — fewer trains and ticket price hikes appear likely in the near future. Metra administrators outlined some grim scenarios today. "We're facing tough financial times," Executive Director Alex Clifford said.

[FULL ARTICLE](#) [COMMENTS \(13\)](#)

Good words, but awkward flow and misses key facts

TOP STORY : NEWS



Glenview marijuana growing house found



Daily Herald report Jul 15, 2011 12:51 PM

A Glenview man was operating a marijuana grow house from his rental home, where guns and children also were present, the Cook County sheriff's office announced Friday.

[FULL ARTICLE](#) [COMMENTS \(0\)](#)

Drugs, gun and eviction? Can't miss in burbs!

TOP STORY : NEWS

1 2 3 4 5 ◀ PAUSE ▶

Pot, guns found in Glenview house during eviction



Daily Herald report Jul 15, 2011 2:10 PM

A Glenview man was operating a marijuana grow house from his rental home, where guns and children also were present, the Cook County sheriff's office announced Friday. Officers were executing an eviction order when they discovered the grow house, police said.

FULL ARTICLE COMMENTS (7)

Final thought

- Ask yourself, if you were googling this story, what words would you type into search engine?

Ask yourself, what elements of this story would make you want to read it?