



# Changing newsroom culture in a Digital World

## How to merge your print, web teams ... and survive

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# Daily Herald – old way

The old life of a story at the Daily Herald .....  
(aka: newsroom workflow and website operations)

## Reporter

- Creates budget item and article in MWC.
- Assigns staff-generated photos, graphics using photo booking and graphic requests in MWC.
- Writes suggested print headline
- Adds taxonomies



## Graphic artist/photographer

- Attach assets to articles for print
- Upload assets for web to Basecamp, send email alert to web staff

## Front-line editor

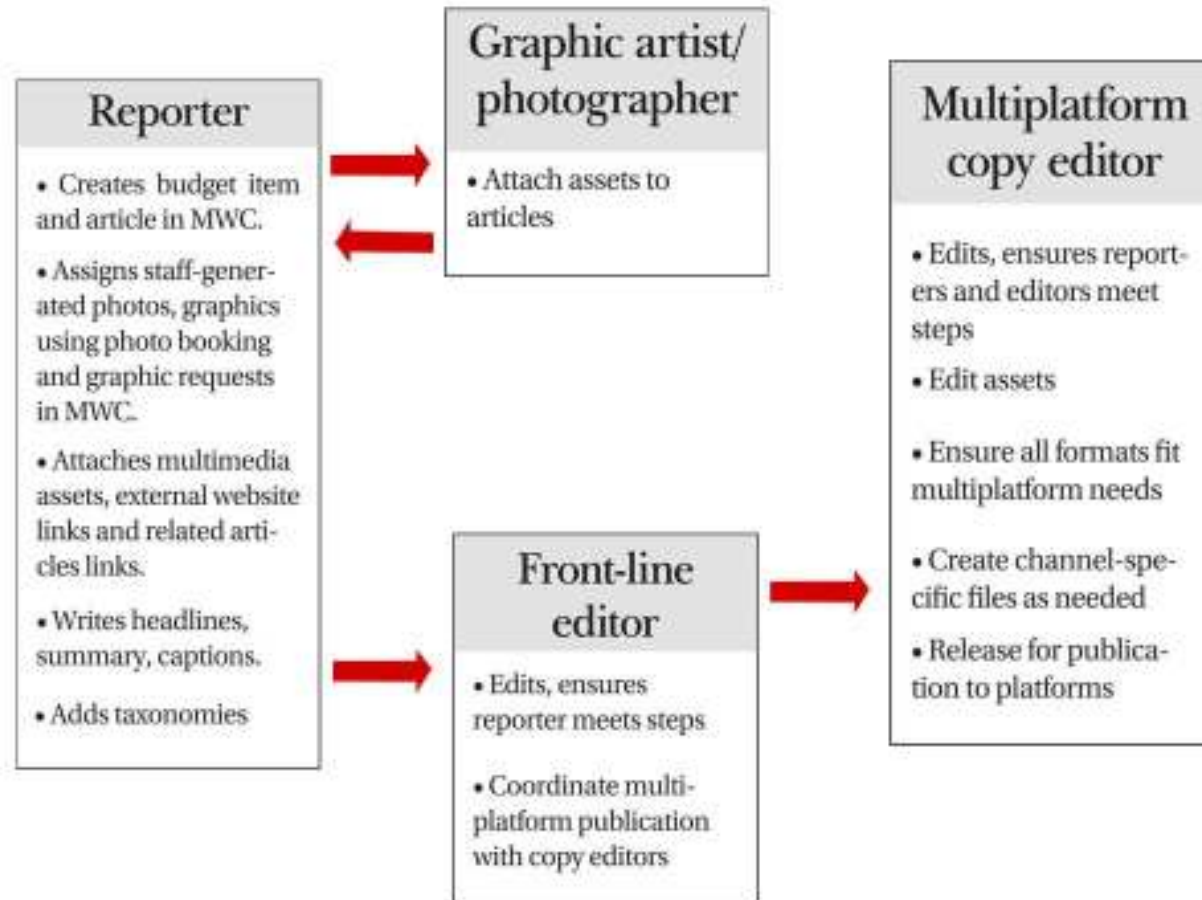
- Edit
- Send email alert to web team when story is ready
- Send second file to copy desk for print

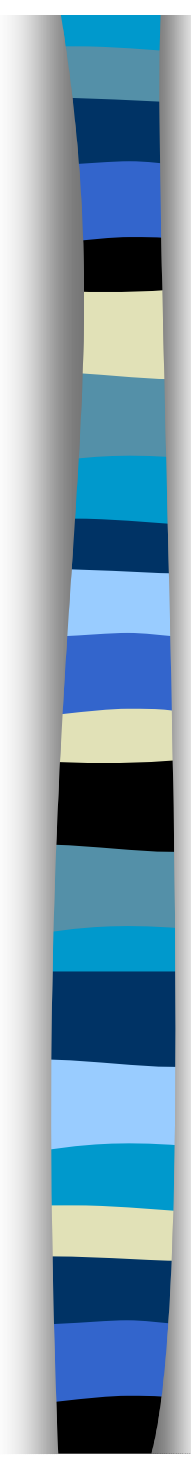


## Web editors

- Handle all stories in online UI
- Sweep, post all wire stories
- Staff website seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Post stories as soon as reporter is done
- Find stories in online UI under print publication date, change publication date to current, resave
- Fill out all headline fields
- Fill out summary field
- Change formats and styles to fit online
- Find external assets, attach to stories
- Find internal assets in Basecamp, download, convert formats, attach to stories
- Find local videos in Basecamp, change format, upload to Brightcove, attach to story
- When story updates, start all over again
- Watch for email alerts from newsroom

# Daily Herald – new way





## Web editor #1

- Flips the home page, posts targeted stories, proofs overall site by 5:00.
- Posts dawn patrol online and FB by 6 a.m.
- Directs dawn patrol reporter for breaking/missed news
- Attends morning news meeting
- Coordinates day's coverage with editors
- Oversees website operations
- Advance planning for weekend website

## Web editor #2

- By 9 a.m.:
- Sweeps all wires
  - Updates business home page
  - Updates refers/teasers on home page
  - Updates for local, breaking news.
  - Sweeps wires until 1 p.m.
  - Updates home page until 2 p.m.

## Neighbor copy desk

- Coordinate content posting with editors
- Post all content in community news sections
- Coordinate UGC with CNCs, editors
- Flip "Top News" home page rotisserie for peak traffic times
- Flip website on Saturday morning

## Features copy desk

- Coordinate content posting with editors
- Post all Features/Lifestyles/Entertainment content during peak traffic times
- Flip "LifeEnt" home page rotisserie for peak traffic times
- Provide four home page refers a day

## Night copy desk

- Coordinate content posting with editors
- Flip home page for day-parting
- Assist Sports desk as needed to post Sports stories

## Sports staff

- Post all sports content
- Coordinate deadline postings with night desk

## Editorial Page editor

- Coordinate content posting with editors
- Post all Opinion content during peak traffic times

## Weekend front-line editors

- Post local news as needed between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.



# Daily Herald: Why

- Reduce posting time
- Eliminate redundancies
- Increase quality, esp. for pay wall
- Improve SEO
- Improve morale, communication
- Increase newsroom engagement
- Increase posts in peak traffic times



## Results

- Posting time reduced from 12 min. to few seconds
- Isolated web team folded into newsroom
- Positions shifted to content creation
- Significant drop in quality complaints, direct contact with readers
- SEO hits increased
- Traffic hit highest level since implementation



## Results

- Multimedia assets tripled
- Tangible morale improvement
- Payroll savings
- Increased posts in peak traffic times
- Paywall a “success”
- Won E&P innovation award, won AP best website in Illinois



# Tips for implementing change

- How you can do it without killing yourself, your staff or your bosses – and without getting killed by all





# Business plan

- Change can't be for change's sake
- Need a business plan
- Layer goals: Critical, would like, not important
- Timeline and backup timeline
- When are you done?



# Manage people

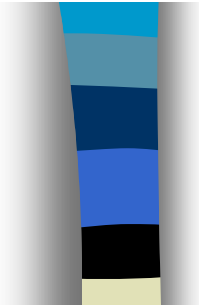
- Adult learners need context
- Culture of show me how
- Why important to them?
- How will this make my job better?
- Solicit their input. And listen to it.
- Sometimes, it's OK to say "just cuz"





# What's your PR campaign?

- Plan it out
- What are you celebrating?
- What are you excited about?
- What are others excited about?



From: Schmedding, Teresa  
To: Editorial; Niche  
Cc:  
Subject: 6.7 awesomeness countdown

Sent: Tue 2/28/2012 9:46 AM

What is Dann "Deduced Category" Gire most excited about? Learning about deduced categories, of course, so suburban entertainment stories can get credit for the traffic they give us.

Sometimes we run business, sports or entertainment stories in the main news section but their online category should not be news. To change it, select Edit Properties on the story, hit the web tab, changed the "deduced" category to whatever it should be. Keep the attached handout for reference.

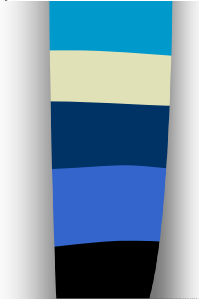
What am I most excited about? That we're sticking a toe in the water for publishing content targeted for different digital platforms with the parent-child option you have to use on breaking news stories or stories in which you want to have different content for the web.

If you're a bit confused on parent-child and how to do it, Travis will be walking about the Arlington Hts. newsroom this week doing some one-on-ones and he'll also have a short Q&A, walk-through at 10 am in 424. I'm also attaching a hand-out on this. It's important you understand this since we will be using parents-kids on election night.

Tune in to tomorrow to see what in 6.7 made a very happy John Radtke get a little misty-eyed :)

Teresa

PS: How many characters should a summary be to fit in the home page rotisserie? If you said 392, you are absolutely correct!





# Manage your team

- Don't go it alone
- Find strongest and weakest links, train to both
- Keep your team enthused
- Stack the deck in your favor
- Admit up front that no plan is perfect
- Be prepared for backsliding
- Continuous feedback loop



# Manage yourself

- Make sure you take breaks
- Prepare yourself for the questions
- Hide when you need to
- Give yourself time 4-6 weeks after implementation for questions
- Give yourself 1 day a month forever
- Plan for revisions
- Plan for failure
- Plan to change the plan



# Manage your Saxo team

- Change you, not the system
- Describe goal, ask how to get there
- Ask how others do it
- Be realistic about unique needs
- Put needs in context
- Say thank you
- Say thank you again



# Final thought

“Society is always taken by surprise at any new example of common sense.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)

