



A typewriter. ([Wikimedia](#), 2016).

Digital Media Needs Good Writing

[LinkedIn](#) Post 10/31/16

Instead of clamoring for a favorite section in the Sunday paper, people now access and contribute real-time news and entertainment on their handheld devices. Digital media allows anyone who owns a smart phone to be a writer. As a professional writer, I wonder how user-writers will affect the fate of digital media, and I worry that user-content will put me out of work. But if I use Internet websites as a digital media model, history shows that, digital or not, 'good' writing is necessary to produce success.

Digital Media Delivers Life

Digital media lives an interdependent existence with its users, continually changing and updating to reflect preferences and events. This starkly contrasts to static news found in print media of the past. Digital media sites not only update the news, they continuously update their delivery, design, and focus according to user response. Digital media serves an important purpose in society. The collective 'we' creates information as life happens, and digital media acts as the vehicle of delivery. The ongoing relationship between digital media and its users nearly implies that digital media will continue living and users will remain at the center of the process. When we consider digital media as an emerging primary source of collective information, good writing becomes even more essential.

Users Direct Delivery

Today's internet website interactions barely resemble what users experienced even a decade ago. Recall how navigation was impossible and users struggled to determine where to focus their attention on early sites. Many poorly-designed websites ceased to

exist because of cumbersome user experience. The website WayBackMachine.com archives historical screenshots of websites like [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). In the late 1990s busy, crowded text and numerous live links created a distracting experience for users. In contrast, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) today is designed with ample whitespace and easy navigation. While user input influenced improvements made to Amazon.com over the past two decades, I know that professional writers likely created the user-friendly experiences we now enjoy.

Writers Create Delivery

Current digital media trends favor visuals over text. Professional writers may be concerned about these trends, yet the goal of professional writers—to effectively communicate messages—has not changed. Professional writers (myself included) must sift through the mechanics of writing to find techniques that breathe life into information. We say more with fewer words, design engaging visuals, and deliver clear and usable digital experiences. In [“When, How to Tell Stories with Text, Multimedia”](#), journalist, Jeff Glick, reports that giving users control over their information experience helps them absorb the intended message more easily. Simple navigation, balanced text and visuals, and human-focused stories attract and maintain user attention best. Check out the new United Airlines [interactive ad](#) created by professional writers using the interactive content creation platform Ceros. Notice how the ad uses text and visuals to convey its messages.

Digital Media, Users, and Writers Simultaneously Evolve

I am encouraged about both the future of digital media and the outlook for professional writers. Although style and method of delivery have transitioned from media-centered to user-centered, the fundamental purpose of media remains unchanged. Media conveys messages to users who then use the information to create future messages. Digital media and its users dually evolve alongside each other as communication demands change. In response, professional writers sharpen their communication skills to meet demands. They create content, design user interactions, develop digital media strategies, or simply tell a story. No matter what changes digital media and its users face, professional writers will always have work, because digital media needs good writing.