

Anastasia Lopez

What you really need to know about successful titles and New Media

The Digital Storytelling Handbook -
A checklist with best practice examples



03	Preface
04	Workbook: Creating digital texts
11	Connect: Networking on social media
15	Storytelling: Best-Practice for the radio library
25	Extra: Creating a homepage
28	Sources



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR
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Hi, I'm Anastasia,

and as an expert of cross-media journalism & digitalisation and as a coach for new media I would like to help you step by step to work on your audiovisual presentation both in terms of language and your website content. My aim is to help you create your articles with confidence and address your target group in order to make your show even more visible online. This way you can attract new listeners on all digital channels simultaneously. Therefore, as a coach, I have made it my task to explain you how to achieve this goal.

About myself: I have been working as a multimedia journalist for the ORF for the last few years, I was a reporter and online journalist for the largest radio station in the country, Hitradio Ö3. I learned my journalistic skills working for "Women on Air" and the series "Global Dialogues" on Radio ORANGE 94.0. Then I shot television reports for "Zeit im Bild" and "Magazin 1" (ORF1) and was live "on air" as a trimedial news editor in the regional studio in Linz. During this work I not only learned how to narrate exciting stories and reach different age groups, but also how to present pieces information tailored to the needs of people and develop new approaches with regard to digital and cross-media reporting. With this booklet I would like to share some basic principles with you!

Before you immediately start working through this manual and the checklists, I would like to add a few words:

Your texts on the homepage, in your social media news feed or in your digital stories are the very start of the communication between you and your listeners. Here you have the unique opportunity to establish a direct contact between you and your target group. Read more under "Step-by-step workbook for defining the target group".

First and foremost, it is important that you write your website texts and descriptions on your channel like conversation "under four eyes", so that they are immediately perceived in your message. In this way you set the first bridge between you and your target group, by defining common values and generate interest in your work. How do you manage this?

The following two rules are very important for your start in writing texts:

1. Imagine writing for just one person, for your dream listener of the show.
2. Write the way you normally speak

Technical jargon, difficult anglicisms and complicated expressions can be explained more easily and directly in your broadcast. However, when you establish the first contact on the website and social media, it is important that people who have never heard of your topic understand the message correctly. A short description, the teaser of your show, helps people to recognize your show afterwards and, ideally, recommend it to someone else. Therefore, you can also use this space for a short summary of the content (of the show).

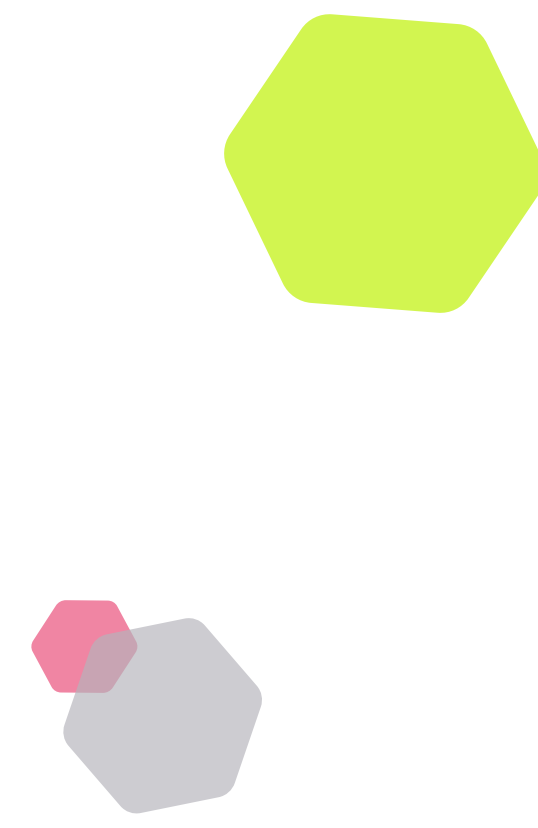
Online copywriting is not about proving that you have the highest knowledge in your subject area. Having sufficient knowledge of your area is obviously important. But first of all: Show understanding. For the reason that not everyone has gathered as much knowledge as you have. Show that your topic can be easily dealt with in the radio programme so that the first hurdle does not become the last. By respecting the needs of your listeners, they will feel attracted. In this way, your website articles will not become monotonous, easily overseen business cards for your show. On the contrary they will result in exciting pieces of information that lead to new listeners for you all around the clock.

This guide is designed to support you! However, don't get overwhelmed by the whole content. My recommendation is to read the checklists thoroughly. Afterwards, you can choose step by step the single bullets you want to work on. For each major topic I have written a short summary and a checklist for you, in order to provide you with all the information at a glance. This will also make your work easier if you want to develop new approaches for your audience with other producers or in the editorial department. You will also find a step-by-step guide to help you define your target group precisely and thus simplify how to plan your show.

All the best!
Anastasia Lopez

PS: Simply reading is unfortunately not enough: Implementing is the necessary step towards getting more people interested in your radio programme and reaching new listeners from local communities. This is how you contribute to media diversity!

Workbook: Creating digital texts



Step-by-step workbook for defining the target group

Step 1: Identify your target group

At the start of every transmission there is the relevant issue of whom you want to inspire and attract with your new contribution. The easiest way to do this is to identify the "ideal target group". This involves developing a very specific profile of a (fictional) person who will then represent your main target group.

How you identify your ideal target group:

You focus for example on...

- age
- name
- gender
- profession
- problems and needs (that fit your show)
- and much more, in order to draw the widest authentic picture of this person. How does he or she live? Where does he or she listen to your show? And when? Why does he or she do this? How often does he or she have time for it? What does he or she not like at all? And what does he or she need to keep on listening?

The more specific, the better!

The reason why it is so helpful to identify your ideal target group

As soon as you have defined your ideal target group, listener and reader, you know exactly who, you want to attract with your show, interview, contribution or music, debate or news service information transmission and who you want to convince as a medium.

No matter what situation emerges - you can every time refer back to the created profile of your ideal target group:

- Would this person prefer to use the formal or informal form of you? (in the show and consequently the way in which this person will be addressed in the digital text)
- What kind of information is this person looking for? And how would he or she prefer to receive said information?
- Whom exactly should the article/description of the item appeal to? Whom exactly are the articles aimed at (a community, specific interest groups, activists, etc.)?

Define your target group

Questionnaire



Advice for completing the form: When answering, think of only one person as "your ideal listener".

- 1 Name, age, gender, pronoun & domicile
- 2 What does this person do for a living?
- 3 What are the person's favourite magazines, blogs, websites, shops, places?
- 4 What hobbies and interests does this person pursue with passion?
- 5 What are the biggest challenges in his or her life? What problems does this person have in his or her job/life/(family) history?
- 6 What is important in the person's life? What does he or she believe in?
- 7 Which values does he or she want to convey and pass on to others? According to which values and beliefs does he or she live his life authentically?
- 8 What are his or her personal goals? And how can he or she achieve them through your news service/transmission/your digital contribution?
- 9 Whom does this person follow online/on digital channels? And why?
- 10 Which social media channels does this person generally uses? How often? And why?

Step 2: Define your brand values!

The description and title on the website represent you and your radio show. And therefore your brand. If you mean, you don't have a brand at all, it can be useful to remember the saying "You cannot not communicate" by the Austrian communication scientist Paul Watzlawick. The same applies to your brand. All the people who come in contact with your radio show automatically form an opinion. They not only read and listen to information, they have a very specific gut feeling.

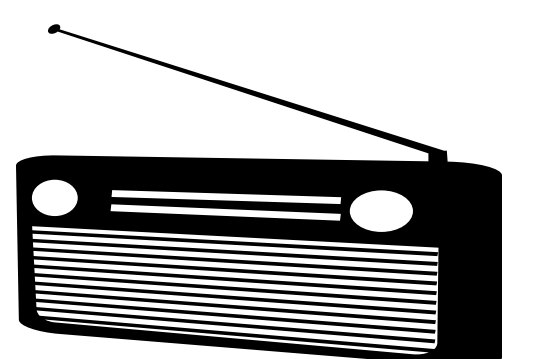
Do your readers feel comfortable? Do they feel they will switch back on next time? Will they recommend your show to friends and acquaintances? And will they even interact with you, send you their ideas, follow you on social networks and integrate your show into their lives?

In order to awaken the gut feelings that are important for you, it is necessary to define your brand values. What "gut feelings" do you want to be associated with in your show (inspiration, motivation, reliability..)? Once you have defined your brand values, it will be much easier for you to define the right words, titles, descriptions, fonts and colours (on your social media channel). Before you start, have a look at the next questionnaire. These questions will help you figure out what you want to stand for as a "brand" (reporter/journalist, radio producer, influencer). At the end of this process, you will be able to define your brand values.

Define your brand!

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1 Someone asks you what your show is about. Explain it in a maximum of two sentences.
- 2 What distinguishes you from other (similar) broadcasting formats?
- 3 Why is your show important? Which thought makes you feel that you are doing a valuable work?
- 4 Why do your listeners share this opinion?
- 5 How do your listeners feel when they hear your programme?
- 6 What do they say after they have heard your show?
- 7 Imagine that your show is a person: What would he or she look like/say? How would he or she behave? What would he or she mainly talk about? What would be his or her most intimate passions?
- 8 Which five feelings and values in total do you want to evoke with your show (for example joy, trust, resilience, sustainability, equality...)?



Practice searching for what you want to say

If you find it hard, you can practice this in the following way: Have a real conversation with a person and try to explain the most exciting section of your show in three to five sentences. Record the conversation and transcribe it afterwards. This way you can practise identifying the most important contents. It is also helpful to ask whether the person felt addressed or what is perhaps missing to create more involvement. In this way you can put more knowledge into your preparation.

Step 3: Plan your fonts and colours for social media (and your own homepage)

Depending on how you define your brand values, the colours and fonts you use on your digital channels should match them perfectly. Example: In your social media postings, your photos should be distinguishable from others at first glance. This is most likely to be the case if your colour and font concept is consistent (for instance if you use the same three colours over and over again, people will start to associate your postings with you). Because both colours and fonts evoke certain "gut feelings" when you look at them. These so-called colour-related effects automatically trigger certain associations in our minds. You can make use of these subconscious processes for your programme! To this purpose I have created a list with different colour-related associations.

Colour is an important recognition tool in marketing. In the artistic theory of colours blue, red as well as yellow are the so-called "primary colours". Orange, green and violet are the "secondary colours", which result from the mixture of the primary colours. The colour circle is completed by the so-called "neutral colours" such as black, grey, white and brown.

When choosing your colours, you should select those that suit well to the brand values and goals of your show. This is the easiest way to do it: compare the colour characteristics with your brand values and choose one or at most two colours that intuitively match your values best. You can use these for your own website, if you have one or plan to create one, as well as for social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.). The colour choice is also very important for your personal logo (see "Create your own logo" for more information)!

The colour-related effects:

Important: At present, these colour effects are assigned to the colours. It is essential to know that the colour effects have changed in the course of time. An example for this: In the 19th century the effects of pink and blue were exactly the opposite. In an article published in the New York Times in 1893, it was said that "Boys should always be dressed in pink and girls in blue". At that time, red was seen as the "stronger colour", blue was said to have "more delicate" effects (read more about this in the book "The Secret Lives of Colour", see list of sources). Accordingly, you can assume that these colour effects will also change in the years ahead with the coming generations.

Blue: calm, quality, confidence, objectivity, safety, productivity

Green: health, harmony, balance, freshness, nature, happiness, peace, tranquillity, hope, prosperity, growth

Turquoise: energy, clarity, healthfulness, speed, thoughtfulness, freshness, innovation, inspiration, creativity

Yellow: joy, happiness, extroversion, warmth, friendliness, friendship, self-confidence, optimism, emotionality, energy

Red: motivation, love, sensuality, desire, power, strength, movement, energy, perseverance

Orange: optimism, open-mindedness, sociability, positivity, passion, cosiness, energy, family, friendship, creativity

Pink: romance, warmth, hope, calming, optimism, love

Purple: extravagance, wealth, creativity, wisdom, peacefulness, religiousness, being dreamy, mysticism, spirituality

Brown: organisation, calm, down-to-earth, reliability, grounded, nature, honesty, stability

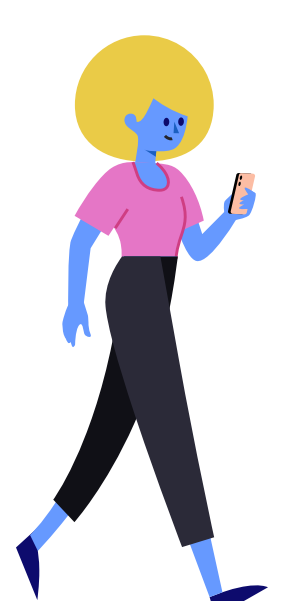
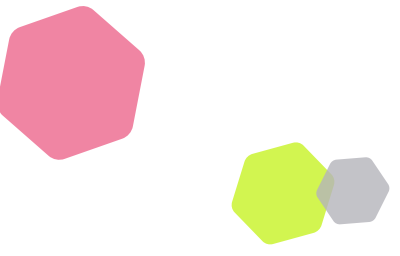
Grey: efficiency, glamour, self-confidence

White: minimalism, efficiency, self-confidence, cleanliness, simplicity, clarity

Black: dynamism, drama, determination, being mysterious, glamour, strength, (self-) security, seriousness, uncompromising

Silver: Glamour, responsibility, balance, calm, self-control

Gold: luxury, success, strength, wealth, generosity, opulence, love, wisdom



Step-by-step: Your colour palette setup for social media and website

To give your website and social media channels the best possible recognition value, the easiest way to build your colour palette is to use the following method:

- **Main colour:** The main colour should be present on your channels very often. It also needs to be immediately recognisable on your logo and/or profile picture.
- **Main colour graduation:** This colour should have the same shade as your desired main colour. At the same time, it should be more subtle and slightly lighter. This colour is best used as an eye-catcher or as a structure on your social media channels.
- **Accent colour:** This colour should be very different from your chosen main colour (you can choose the complementary colour, for example). You may use this for elements that you want to highlight or for sections of the social media posting that you want to underline.
- **Text colour:** For the text you can choose a dark to light shade of grey that matches the rest of your colour scheme.

The perfect selection of fonts for digital channels

Just like colours, fonts also have their own unique effect and a strong recognition value. In general, it can be said that a so-called "sans serif" font is generally considered more modern, while "serif" fonts usually look more elegant.

To ensure better readability for your readers on your social media channel, you should combine and select two fonts for your postings: One for your headlines and one for the body texts.

If you have or plan to have your own website, there is a high probability that your "theme" (for example on Wordpress) will give you the opportunity to choose between different "Google fonts". Most websites use these so-called fonts, provided by Google.

The most important consideration when choosing the right fonts is whether you simply like the combination or if it actually fits your brand.

Tip: On the <https://fontpair.co> website you can click through a wide variety of font combinations and thus choose "your" personal choice with greater ease!

Next step: Write convincing texts!

To help your readers feel into your topic and return to your show again and again, here are the three most valuable tips that always help me create website texts and articles:

Tip 1: Go for a drink

Imagine sitting with your ideal listener, your ideal reader, having a drink of your choice. Close your eyes before writing your texts and go through the conversation briefly in your mind. What is the most important thing you would tell the person about your new show? What would be your first sentence? How would you express yourself exactly? How would you explain the topic? And which questions would this person ask you?

With this simple, short exercise you can train your perception for your target audience, understand their needs better over time and potentially even get input on topics or answers that you may be able to give and explain in your new episode.

Tip 2: Use a direct approach

On your website you are talking to a reader, to a visitor. Therefore always use active instead of passive formulations. In doing so, you make it easier for the person to actually visualise images in his/her head and follow your articles with excitement.

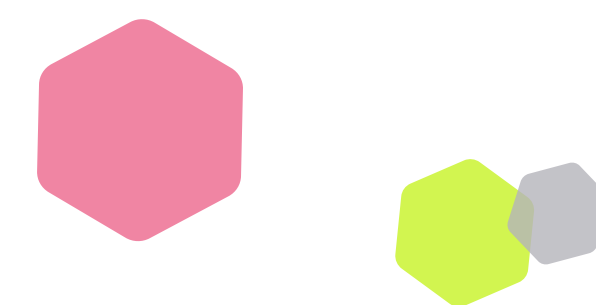
Examples:

Active: We have improved the show for you.

Passive: The show has been improved for you.

Active: The organisation bought a new car.

Passive: A new car was bought by the organisation.



— Make sure as well that you put yourself in your listener's place. Use a direct speech instead of the impersonal word "one".

Tip 3: Create texts that are easy to understand

This advice is particularly important for user-friendliness, the so-called usability. Therefore, it is important that you keep your social media and website texts as compact as possible for your topic, while remaining meaningful. If you discover a lot of commas in your text afterwards, make several short sentences out of them. After all, in a good digital text, each sentence addresses only one topic, thought or argument. If you want to share considerable content with your readers, use short paragraphs, clearly marked subheadings and lists. Write mainly short sentences with approximately 10 - 15 words each.

Another tip from the radio industry: If you only need a maximum of one breath to read the sentence aloud, it is also enjoyable to read. When you write, be use-oriented, not self-centred: Count the words "you" and "your" and "I" and "my" in your digital article. The former should appear more often if you choose the direct form of address. Your texts should not be written entirely from your perspective. Many readers are rather egocentric when reading online texts and want to know a lot: What's in it for me on this site? Explain to them exactly what they can learn and take away with them in your show. This will make it easier for them to choose specifically your show content.

And another tip: Your sentences are of varying lengths. It is often said: write only short sentences. That then quickly appears choppy. That then quickly appears stuck. My recommendation: Write different sentence lengths instead. This will give your text more melody and lighten it up.

How to win the attention of search engines

CHECKLIST

- 1 Write "Unique Content" : Avoid copy and paste of other articles, as search engines like Google consider such content as irrelevant and will rank it further down.
- 2 Pay attention to the amount of characters even in long texts (guideline 500 - 1,500 characters for a digital text) and avoid unnecessary repetitions!
- 3 Use bullet points for better readability of enumerations.
- 4 Separate paragraphs with subtitles (maximum 5 - 8 words)
- 5 Use internal and external links in your posts
- 6 Create info boxes (particularly suitable on social media)
- 7 For your website and social media: Invest time and effort in finding appropriate pictures and photo series (example: if you had a live guest)
- 8 Label the pictures like a story of their own
- 9 Use 5 - 10 important keywords (of your story/theme): This so-called "tagging" is a useful way of indexing important content.

— Keywords are relevant words or terms in context with your programme.

Connect: Networking on social media



Both on social media and on the website, users want to know more about the people behind an article, an opinion or a series of broadcasts.

— Tip: Make your story come alive for others.

This questionnaire is designed to help you share your story with others. You may use these answers as a basis for your "About me" page on your homepage. Similarly, you can use this questionnaire for your short description at the end of the digital texts and for the short description of yourself on social platforms like Instagram.

"About me" questionnaire for website and social media

On your website you can answer the following questions in whole sentences, however, on social networks like Instagram often only keywords and emojis are used (example for Instagram: Anastasia Lopez, multimedia journalist, new media coach, yoga lover and always on the go).

- 1 How did you get to where you are now? And what were the hurdles, obstacles and successes? Tell your own story!
- 2 What characterizes you as a person? Which things do you like to concentrate on most?
- 3 What makes your show so special for you personally? What exactly do you find exciting about your topic?
- 4 What explicitly qualifies you to offer your show the way only you do?
- 5 What does your audience get out of listening to your show?

Promote your show on the social networks

In order to advertise your broadcasts in the best possible way, you can start by choosing one or two social networks that suit you and your target group. Each of these platforms has different needs and ways of interacting. Therefore, here is a brief overview of two of the most popular platforms.

The right posting times on Instagram

On the photo platform Instagram the best time to post is between 11.00 and 13.00 and in the evening between 19.00 and 21.00. Why? Most users on Instagram access the platform via their smartphone and tend to browse through their feed before or after work. However, the best days to post on Instagram are Monday, Wednesday (when engagement is at its peak) and Thursday. Sundays are the worst day in the ranking. The best time to post is on Saturdays at 17:00. You can use these times for teasing before your show or for promotion after your show.

The right posting times on Facebook

In contrast to Instagram, Sunday is an absolute top day for this social network: the best time to post on Facebook is on Sundays at 15:00, when engagement reaches its absolute peak. In general, the best days for postings are Thursday to Sunday between 1pm and 4pm, therefore during working hours. This is due to the fact that many users go online on their desktops. As you can see: You can easily combine two different social networks! In the meantime, you can also automatically display every post you make on Instagram, for example, in the Story function on Facebook as well. In the Radio Library, sharing is implemented for the social networks Facebook and Twitter with a button. When uploading, make sure that the text of the teaser (the individual show description in the backend) does not exceed 250 characters, otherwise it will be too long for the users and the presentation on the website (if you get over the number of characters, a message will appear that the text is too long).

Titles and ideas that work particularly well on social media

If you want to feed your followers with exciting stories on social media, you need to gather new creative ideas. To help you get started, here are a few ideas that always work well as an evergreen.

Titles that work well in social media postings:

The 3 best..., 5 tips for..., 7 ways to..., 4 reasons why..., 2 advantages..., In 4 steps to..., With this method..., How to explain that..., Your guide to...

Ideas for Postings: Introduction (Who are you and what do you do?), A thing nobody knows about your show, A life-changing experience, Your values, Your top 3 books/podcasts and what you have learned from them, Your favourite quote, Colleagues who inspire you, Something you changed and made happen, A question you are often asked, How you deal with haters or hurdles, Your greatest fear (and how you overcame it), What you would advise your younger self to do,...


Always remember: there is so much content on the internet that most people just "scroll".

Accordingly, you have to be able to use your content, your idea, your style and your message to get people stop scrolling and look at your site. This is how you can really build an online community that listens to your show regularly and recommends it to others. You can also think of it like a fruit market: everyone has about the same things to offer. It's important that the vegetables look and taste good to convince customers of your products. Ultimately, however, it is important that you stand out, simply because you are somehow different from the others in the market: You have to be distinguishable at first glance.











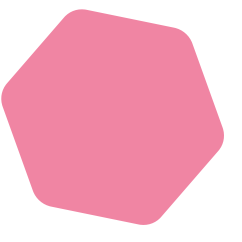
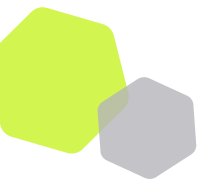
The ideal image selection for your social media



Pictures clearly express who should be attracted to your show and your social channel. To make the best choice, you can ask yourself two questions: "Does this photo reflect my values?" and "Is the image quality of this photo as good as my performance value?" Only if you can answer both questions with yes you should really take the picture!

Possibilities of picture selection

Altogether, you have four options when choosing your pictures:

-  1 You choose photos from free agencies.
 -  Free stock agencies in this category are Pixabay, Unsplash, Pixels and Pikwizard.
 -  2 You purchase images from agencies.
 -  Examples of stock agencies with costs are: iStock, Fotolia, Shutterstock and 123rf.
 -  3 You engage someone to shoot photos for you.
 -  4 You photograph yourself or use your own image database.
- 
- 

However, if you have some experience with a camera or a budget for a professional photographer, the last two options are highly recommended. By so doing, you generally obtain really authentic photos that best fit your show and your values.

Edit your photos effortlessly with digital editing

To post-process your images for social media, there are several professional tools available online that cost little or nothing. Free of charge and easy to use even for beginners is for example the website: <https://pixlr.com/de/x/> Generally, the most important editing steps are: correct cropping, adjustment of colours, changing the saturation or brightness of the image and adding some text. The apps "Snapseed" and "Adobe Spark Post" are especially recommended professionally editing your pictures (free of charge) directly on your smartphone.

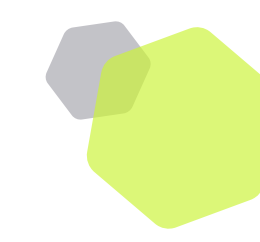
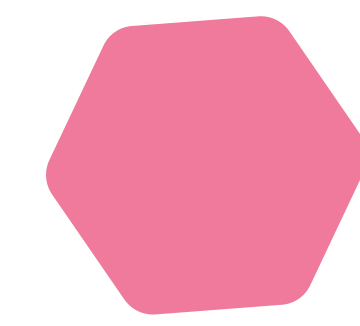
Every picture is a story in itself

To all homepages and social networks, the following principle applies: Every picture should tell a story, but no picture speaks for itself. For this reason, I suggest that each photo should have its own explanatory text. The same applies to social media. An important note on accessibility: screen readers of blind people cannot "see" pictures. Therefore, it is particularly important to describe what is visible in a picture. Picture texts must "read" the picture to the audience. Accordingly, texts must not just paraphrase the picture. They have to point out clearly: Who are the people depicted? And what are they doing? It is well known that Henry Nannen, the founding editor-in-chief of the news magazine "Stern", once said: "Some kind of feuilletonistic nonsense is superfluous here". You can play with words, of course, but it is of central importance that you can see at first glance what the picture is supposed to represent.

Detecting and working out points of view

Focal points are important, too, when it comes to the structure of the text: readers usually look first at the image or image elements (such as the logo), then at the corresponding image-text. Consequently, they first look at the title, the opening lead (teaser) and finally at the (continuous) text of the article. If all these elements reflect the same message, the readers will have the feeling that very little new content is following and stop reading. The professional tip is therefore: Use different eye and ear catchers to step up tension! Studies have shown that our reading behaviour on the internet is mainly concentrated on the left side. So if you have taken a photo of your show and want to publish it on social media, place the most important information of the graphic (for example explanatory text or title/description of the picture) on the left side.

Storytelling: Best-Practice for the radio library



Writing for a radio library: What you have to pay attention to

There are specific writing requirements for the radio library, as your radio programme is also of long-term interest to listeners. This section is intended to provide you with basic guidelines to put in place an effective writing process.

Identifying the ideal title for article of your new show

In order to be concise and immediately understandable, titles should consist of three to eight words. However, the title should never exceed the maximum number of characters (see "The perfect number of characters for titles" for more details), in order to remain legible in the mobile version, which most of your listeners will access. Headlines represent a promise that your text and your show must comply with.

Preciseness generates interest

Each single content on the site is structured like an article. The most important information, visible for the eye, is particularly prominent. It is essential that you rapidly catch the interest of your listeners, otherwise they may choose another information offer. 150 milliseconds - this is the average time you need to convince a person that your site is worth visiting. This fact is closely connected with a sense of gratitude: Gratitude to the listeners who, in their available free time, choose your show among plenty of interesting contributions. In order to facilitate their decision particularly easy, it is important that the title is as direct as possible. For instance, the titles "Black Lives Matter" or "Police Violence and Racism" are so open that anything from historical background knowledge to an expert talk or a debate might be covered. The more accurate your title is, the more interest it generates.

Time instead of today

As the transmission, interview or talk will still be of interest months after it was produced, it is preferable to indicate the exact date or why a topic is discussed exactly on that particular occasion. Therefore you may prefer to write "the XX-editorial team will be focusing on..." at the end of July/ in autumn/for the memorial/anniversary/on the 15th December" rather than "today the XX-editorial team is focusing on...". For example, a title could read as follows: "5 dark facts about the history of Mother's Day" or "Motorcycling in autumn: why it is becoming dangerous".

Important: Hashtags have no specific role in an article title and **should be avoided** (unless you report for example about the #metoo movement).

Hashtags currently have a very important role as a search function on social media (like on Twitter and Instagram).

On social media, on the other hand, you can use them very effectively to increase your **recognition value or in order to start a new trend on a topic**. In case the hashtag is part of your broadcasting name: You don't need to write the name of the programme in the title, it will already be visible on the opening page (just like the date of the programme or the name of the station). In this way you can avoid word repetitions while writing your title and **focus on the content of the show!**

Important: Do not write the exact date (e.g. 18.6.2020) in the title if it has no relevance for the content. The date of publication is visible at first glance in the radio library in any case.

Generate added value with Evergreen Content

By creating online content, you assure your listeners that they will always find exciting information in your show. This is why it is essential to create so-called "evergreen content", let's say topics that are relevant to your target group at any time as they do not become obsolete and therefore not only valuable in a certain period of time (examples are online glossaries on certain topics/procedures or guidebooks). Furthermore, you can always create a combination of 80% evergreen and 20% new content in your article. In this way, you assure listeners accessing your show in different times that they are not left with outdated information, but that they will always find



Evergreen
Content

Describe activity and name in your title

Be specific, not generic: If you have a guest in your show, write a short description of his or her role in the title. This will allow your listeners to identify immediately who/whom they are listening to in your transmission. For example: Instead of "Meral Svoboda visits Radio XX", write "Political scientist Meral Svoboda interviewed by Radio XX". And instead of: "Interview with Mona Günkern", write: "Interview with futurologist Mona Günkern: Why we need a climate change reversal". As a result, you not only generate greater interest, you also address the needs of your target group (in this example, ecological activists).

Avoid clickbaiting

A title can better awaken the interest of readers/listeners if there is a teaser on your show, for example by anticipating what question will be answered and how much the listener/reader will become more aware of the topic afterwards. Remember: Only promise what you can truly convey in the show. You should avoid the so-called "clickbaiting". It describes the process of advertising appealing content on the web in order to generate higher clicks, and thus increase traffic on websites. Your listeners will not forgive you in the long run. By promising them in the title that you will be historically identified by the end of the programme, should avoid to solely mention historical facts in a subordinate passage of the programme.

Use the right words when writing:

No matter how intelligent humans' brain may be, it requires sometimes longer to put things orderly. This is particularly true in the digital world. When we read "no problem", our brain stores the word "problem" in most cases. If you report on possible solutions in your show, then include this in the title. For example: "The most innovative solutions for treating cancer".

Can you feel the difference?

- "Not bad!" vs "That's great!"
- "No problem." vs "You're welcome."
- "This won't take long" vs "This is done quickly."

Your readers immediately perceive more lightness, by "just" using a different word. Words always produce an effect, although we do not often recognize this immediately.

Avoid using unnecessary filler words

Filler words are expressions with little content. Therefore, in text coaching sessions it is often recommended to leave them out completely. In the journalistic field, this is a controversial topic: They may have no much intrinsic value, however they make your texts incredibly vibrant and generate interest. Of course: Use them result-oriented, not in an inflationary manner. Here are a few examples which can result particularly impressive in titles and teasers: Also, overly, already, imaginable, actually, something, continuously, exactly, often, sometimes, well, obviously, suddenly, relatively, already, sure, nevertheless, absolutely, maybe, full, again, quite.

Making the right choice of words

Use words that suit you and your target group. So-called "power words" give your texts the necessary energy and strengthen their effect by emotionally reaching your target group. They may either be specific keywords that also benefit your Google ranking - or simple language such as: simple, finally, really, exclusive, extraordinary.

Just as an example:

What you should know about the new feminist social media trend vs. What you should really know about the new feminist social media trend

The very title can emphasize that you have dealt with the topic thoroughly and that you have an overview of it. In this way, your listeners are reassured that you have given yourself the task of separating the important aspects from the unimportant ones.

Another example:

"Tips against sexism in everyday life" vs "Extraordinary tips against sexism in everyday life". This effect will be intensified if you mention how many they are and from whom they come. You want an example? "Four extraordinary tips from young men against sexism in everyday life". It is important to keep each of these promises in the text as well as in the show.

The perfect number of characters for titles

It is not possible to clearly establish the exact suggested number of characters for titles, as letters have different width (example: www vs. iii). In terms of design, presently titles require more space in the desktop version than in the mobile version due to the layout. In order to limit a title to a maximum of two lines, you can reckon approximately 50 characters. Of course, this depends on the characters used. However, quatrains or longer formulations should be avoided. My advice: Before publishing your article, insert your title in a Word document at the beginning and make sure that you don't exceed the maximum character length. With the passing of time you will develop a sharper sense for it and automatically write punchier titles.

— **Note:** The maximum number of 200 characters applies to the general description of a radio show.

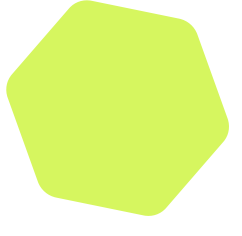
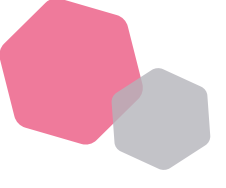





Digital Titles

BEST-PRACTICE-EXAMPLES

As an example, instead of "Black Lives Matter", in accordance with the message of your show, the title could read as below. For the purpose of this exercise, it is mainly the content and not the exact number of characters that counts! Once you have chosen your perfect title, you can then find shorter synonyms or easier ways to express it.

- 
- 
- ▶ "Explained for children: The BLM protests in the USA"
 - ▶ "The story behind the Black Lives Matter protests"
 - ▶ "These celebrities are supporting the Black Lives Matter movement"
 - ▶ "Has the US made progress since George Floyd's death? Activists respond"
 - ▶ "How strong is the BLM movement in Italy? Interview with sociologist Maria Nicola"
 - ▶ "Here the 5 most common Google search questions about Black Lives Matter"
 - ▶ "How has rap changed the Black Lives Matter movement? A discussion"
 - ▶ "«Many lack understanding»: Interviews with affected citizens"
 - ▶ "Activism in sport against racism - seven strategies of the BLM movement".

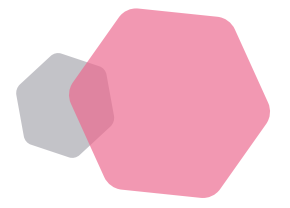
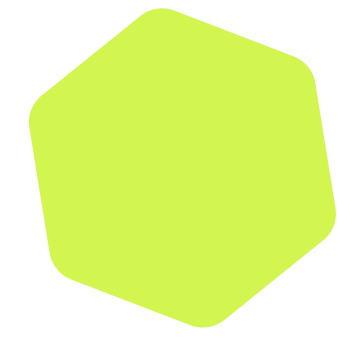


ON AIR

A great number of possible, exciting titles would be available for this topic alone. In order to find the right one for your programme, answer the following questionnaire before writing.

Write the ideal title!

QUESTIONNAIRE



1 Which questions will you answer for sure in your show?

When it comes to music: What is the specific topic of your present show, and how does it differ from (your) other productions?

2 Who do you want to address?

If you want to address children/youth/retired people/affected persons / doctors / certain professional groups, this should already be clear in the title.

3 How can you explain the topic most easily?

This is particularly difficult if you have a long (news) programme in which you have to address many different topics at once. In that case it is important that you think about the most relevant question you want to answer before you even start producing the programme. In this way, you can work holistically and do not end up distressing yourself to find a suitable title.

4 Which is my red thread?

If your question is a central element of the programme, it will motivate your readers not to lose a single minute of it. This form of storytelling helps you distinguish between unimportant and important information.

5 If you had to write your programme like a tweet: How would it look like?

The 160-character exercise trains you to focus the attention on the most important elements for your listeners. And in the meantime you formulate your show title. Accordingly, the title should stimulate the appetite for reading, the teaser/preface should tell you more precisely what the topic is in detail about.

For your digital titles

CHECKLIST



- 1 State what the news is about! What is the most significant fact?
- 2 Write a clearly understandable headline, don't be cryptic.
- 3 Don't use artistic and abstract titles (although they work well in print journalism).

— **For example:** "A life to complete a vision" from the printed edition of the "Frankfurter Allgemeine". Such titles make sense in a newspaper as they seem mysterious and exciting and you've already turned the page anyway. That is why the probability of reading the article is higher. In a list of programmes (like the radio library), however, listeners tend to click on programmes whose titles they understand at first glance.

- 4 Use strong catchwords in your title, so-called keywords.



— **Tip:** Google Trends collects mostly searched for keywords of a given period. Here you can see which topics are currently very exciting for users in a certain period. In addition, you can get an overview of what people have googled more often this year, for example!

This is the direct link for you:

<https://trends.google.de/trends/?geo=AT>

The importance of good teasers

You did it! When your listeners actually click on your exciting title and feel attracted, you will have already achieved a lot: You have gained their attention for your radio journalistic work. **Now it is time to analyze in detail the teaser, to determine which are the main topics of your show.** The optimal length for this usually amounts three to five lines or sentences. So doing, try not to just give a list of the whole content, but rather express in simple, clear sentences what the priorities of your show are and where you put the focus on.

The four types of teaser

It is important that: Title and teaser form a unit, they have to complement each other and fit together, without repeating themselves. First comes the essential message. This is especially known as the principle of the inverted pyramid, which is particularly true in the journalistic field. Most users on the web are mainly lazy readers. Very few of them read an article up to the end. The question arises: What can you do when you write a digital article? Get straight to the point. Here you will find a list with the principal types of teasers:

1 The **news teaser**: With this type, the fundamental information is given in the first sentence. Especially with news formats I advise you to use such a teaser.

Example: A four-week partial lockdown has begun throughout Austria to slow down the spread of the coronavirus. Nationwide, gastronomy, cultural and leisure facilities have to close as far as possible. Stricter rules also apply to face-to-face meetings.

2 The **cliffhanger teaser**: This teaser interrupts at the most exciting point and makes you curious about the rest of the text. Usually you build it up as follows: A sentence with a news item is followed by one or two sentences with a "mystery" or an important information (which are then explained in the article or in the show). That's why the readers are determined to read on.

Example: A four-week partial lockdown has begun throughout Austria to slow down the spread of the coronavirus. Nationwide, gastronomy, culture and leisure facilities have to close as far as possible. It is only now that it became public who published this information in advance of the press conference.

3 The **question mark teaser**: Sentences with a news item are followed by a concluding question (the question you deal with in your show and in the article).

Example: How could a third coronavirus lockdown be prevented?

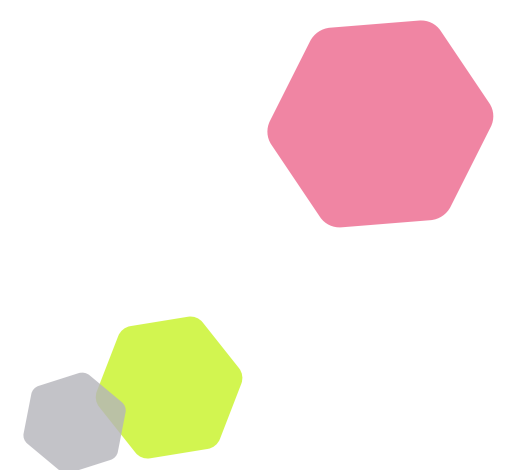
4 The **Call-To-Action-Teaser**: Sentences with the important messages are followed by a call to do something. Who is supposed to act? To do what? Details are then described in the main text and in new service.

Example: Doctors demand that office workers should wash their hands for 30 seconds at least four times a day.

The W questions words as the basis of each story

What makes a story a good one? In order for a journalistic report to meet its goal of informing about a fact or event, the so-called "question words" must be answered:

- **Who?** The sociologist Ezra Mellin
- **Where?** In Klagenfurt
- **When?** At 2 pm
- **What?** A new study
- **How?** Through a large number of interviews
- **Why?** To understand how relationships work
- **What is the source?** The information comes from...
- **What consequences** does the fact have? An appeal to politicians / a new book / etc.



The classic structure of your article

The text structure of an article looks often like an inverted pyramid. This means: The important or most current information first (has to answer to the question: Who did what?), followed by details and answers to further question words. This is followed by background information, and at the end, if there is still capacity, a perspective can be given. Therefore, the less significant information comes at the end of the contribution/news broadcast / interview. Centrally to each story is a human being (source: editorial statute of the news magazine "Der Spiegel".) So before you start researching your story (i.e. before your show was "On Air"), you can first answer two questions: What interests my listeners? What exactly do I want to tell them? To catch the attention of your readers, it is important not to follow the same pattern in every report or show. Tip: As readers and listeners have a right to receive news, it is advisable to avoid starting a report with the words "As is generally known", "Once again" or "For the fifth time".

Delivering a news item is good. To explain a message, decipher it, and make clear what it means for individuals is even better. Important to any media producer is to never affirm one's knowledge in the text. The real ability is to portray complicated things in a simple way. After all, if something is sensational, tragic or incredible, no adjectives need to confirm this quality. It is therefore particularly advisable to use adjectives with caution avoiding superlatives.

Formal criteria for your website texts

CHECKLIST

- The **title** should consist of **three to eight words**, with at least one **keyword** directly connected with your topic.
- Write as simply as possible, **avoiding complicated sentences**: Give exact numbers and promise only things you can really deal with to avoid losing readers (avoid clickbaiting).
- Invitations like "Switch on" do not make sense in the text, as many listeners only **consume the contribution afterwards**.
- Main headlines and teasers: **Your headline can be supplemented with a subtitle (a so-called "subline")** if the title itself is not self-explanatory. Example: "From activism burnout to more mindfulness - How meditation helps to stay mentally healthy as an activist". Therefore: The problem of the target group in this example: Distress caused by activism. Need of the target group: Calmness, mindfulness, renewing strength, pause and reflect. Or: Instead this you can of course put the **most important information into your teaser**. Or your headline stands for itself: "Understanding feminism in four weeks: A discussion roundtable". Target group's wish: To understand basic aspects/pillars of feminism. What the target group gets: An informative discussion programme. How quickly can the wish be fulfilled: In four weeks/broadcast/contributions etc.
- Short paragraphs: **Think also of the mobile view**. Your paragraphs should therefore not be longer than 100-150 words each.
- Relevant information is **marked in bold** (especially helpful for those who like to have a quick look).
- Use **bullet points with a maximum of 5-7 points** to make your text lighter.
- You have inserted **subheadings** after 3-5 paragraphs.
- **Pictures and graphics** help to make your text more dynamic: You can use this tip especially on social networks such as Instagram and Facebook.
- Your **links are speaking anchor texts**. Therefore not: "More information can be found here" (then linked). But rather: "In this show about XX there is a historical background about this topic". Afterwards you can add the link to the corresponding show.
- Your texts pursue a **clear goal** on every single channel. For example: The text on the website should briefly inform what your show is about, what you offer consist in and how they can benefit as listeners.
- Finally, you write who you are and which editorial team has looked into this topic (explained in more detail in the "About me" questionnaire for websites and social media). The goal here is to **attract and spur listeners** to follow the show, forward it to interested people, creating interest in further information and linking relevant subpages (your last shows).



- You write the way you speak. You do not use **unnecessary filler words**. You write short and straight forward: You awaken interest by naming **advantages, wishes and/or problems of your target group**.
 - You avoid imperatives and avoid making your readers feel patronised by you. Instead of "Keep reading", you prefer "Read more" (for example, when you link to a study or your latest programmes).
 - You show consistency in your titles, teasers and texts. How does your target group think? Accordingly, you can decide which words you use, how deeply you can deal with the topic in the teaser or how much your target group already knows about your chosen subject. You make **concrete statements**: Your users can get a picture of the terms and formulations you use. My tip for this: Go through your texts and mark the parts that are formulated in a very general way. Then write down how you could shed more light on the topic in order for your readers to clearly identify the meaning.
- Your texts should remain **easy to read and be comprehensible**. Especially out of the fact that
- reading on the screen causes much more fatigue and tiredness to our eyes than reading from paper.
 - You use active phrasing, which means you use **more verbs than nouns**. Instead of: "By using the nominal style, you make the readability of your text more difficult." Rather: "If you often use a nominal style, your readers will find it difficult to follow you."
 - **Avoid conjunctions**: They do not address your listeners. Instead of: "I would like to explain the topic XX" write: "I will explain the topic XX so that you understand this and that (for example more background knowledge)".
 - You are giving your readers a good feeling. Important: The content we have just read is usually not memorised as much as the **"gut feeling"** we had while reading it. Maybe you know this from your own experience while listening to a new show. So how do you achieve that? By getting continuously an **"inner nod"** from your readers. Because the more they agree with you inwardly, the more successful you will be in convincing them to further listening to your show. Be logical in your narrative, explain difficult words they might not know. Always **clarify the basic terms**, even if they seem "simple" to you.
 - Repeat your point, again and again. **Use key words and sentences regularly** in your text. After all, repetition is key to deeper understanding. Only few people read your whole article from the beginning to the end. By repeating relevant terms, it becomes clear what your show stands for. It's better to use synonyms to prevent your readers from getting bored. You can search for new terms on the web in the "Woxikon" or the "OpenThesaurus". It is important that you don't use the same terms one-to-one, but rather examine and describe the topic **from different angles**. From a SEO point of view, this is especially useful to ensure that your site is best displayed on Google.



Extra: Creating a homepage

Tip: Generally speaking, short domains are more catchy and easier to remember. They also look better on business cards and when forwarded, and in addition to this they ensure fewer typos.

If you are planning to create your own homepage (to link it on the radio library or your social media channel, for example), I suggest you to read the tips I have summarised to help you start your work:

Extra: Tips for creating your own homepage

- 1 For a so-called personal brand, it is usually recommended to use first and last name, the so-called "clear name" for a website (see my own example anastasiaperez.com). Why? Because as an independent radio journalist, producer or freelancer, you are the foreground.
- 2 You do not want to use your clear name? Then think about a domain that is generally so openly phrased that you will be able to use it, in case you need to reposition yourself in terms of your journalistic approach, radio technology or content. If not, it is advisable to redirect to a new domain in the future. Of course you can also simply use the name of your radio show if you wish.
- 3 Do not use numbers and hyphens on the domain.
- 4 Choose .at rather than .com, as readers in German-speaking countries generally tend to type this. This will make it easier for them to find you and your radio programme.
- 5 Menu bar: Select a maximum of seven menu items. Too many of these quickly appear excessive and additionally, it is hard to keep track of them. Name them clearly: Many websites use similar descriptions to simplify navigation. These are the classic menu items usually used by media professionals: Blog / Vlog / Podcast / About me / Services / Contact (ideally at the bottom as it is more visible).
- 6 You may also link to your logo instead of the "start page" button, thus providing more space and clarity in your menu bar.

Create your own logo

Logos are crucial for being recognized and successful. For you, it represents your own radio show, and your chances to gain more listeners and draw the attention to that specific radio program. **To ensure that your new logo fits in well with the already established logo of your radio station, you can orient yourself on the colours, geometric shapes or the font.** Your logo should visibly match the logo of your radio station, and at the same time give evidence of your own presence. However, you can either have your own logo designed by a creative, graphically talented person or you can do it yourself. Below you will find four websites where you can enter your programme name as well as your font and colour preferences. In this way you can create your own logo (free of charge) in a very short time!

Tip:

Freelogodesign: <https://de.freelogodesign.org/>

Freelogo Services: <https://www.freelogoservices.com/de>

Design Evo: <https://www.designevo.com/de/logo-maker/>

Hipster Logo Generator: <https://hipsterlogogenerator.com/>

SEO recommendations for your personal website

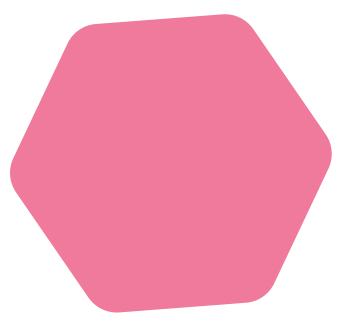
Important: SEO stands for search engine optimisation. It serves to increase the visibility of websites and all their content for users of a search engine.

1 Don't copy, exceed: Search your main keyword and look at the competition on page 1 in the search engine. Then do better! Not by using keywords much more frequently, but by offering your desired target group an even more comprehensible content. Your articles are not identical on the subpages. Make sure that you have rephrased them. Otherwise Google could classify them as "Duplicated Content". Frequently people mention a "keyword density". This is now outdated: Therefore do not repeat the same keyword compulsively, but rather when it emerges freely in your natural flow of expression.

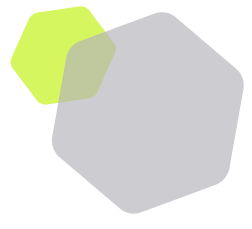
Example: If you are making a radio programme on the mass extinction of birds by agriculture, one of your main keywords would be bird mass extinction. This keyword is independent from the name of your radio series.

2 Writing for your target group means writing for Google - not the other way around. For this reason, it doesn't matter if you have not completely fulfilled all the above mentioned points, as algorithms are now intelligent enough. Still, most important of all is to listen to your target group. Adopt their choice of words! After all, these are exactly what your potential listeners are looking for in the search engine. If you want to be found in the longer term with your show via organic search, it is absolutely advisable to have your own social media channel or well placed links in your digital articles in the radio library or on the website.

3 You have set internal links. For example, you may link to the start page of the radio show, to other subpages of the website or to older articles that are related to the same topic. You can also link to other trustworthy websites (= external links). You can do this if, for example, you want to re-direct the reader to an interview partner of yours who has his or her own website. Alternatively, you could provide a link to a current study/survey as well.



So you managed to read up to the last line: **Congratulations!**



You are on the right way to draft outstanding texts that are meant to draw attention and attract new listeners.

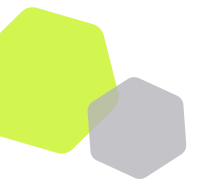
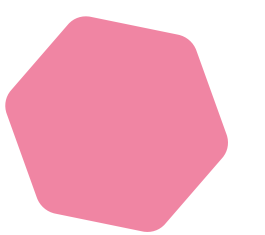
I wish you all the best and success with your writing!

Anastasia Lopez

For further networking:

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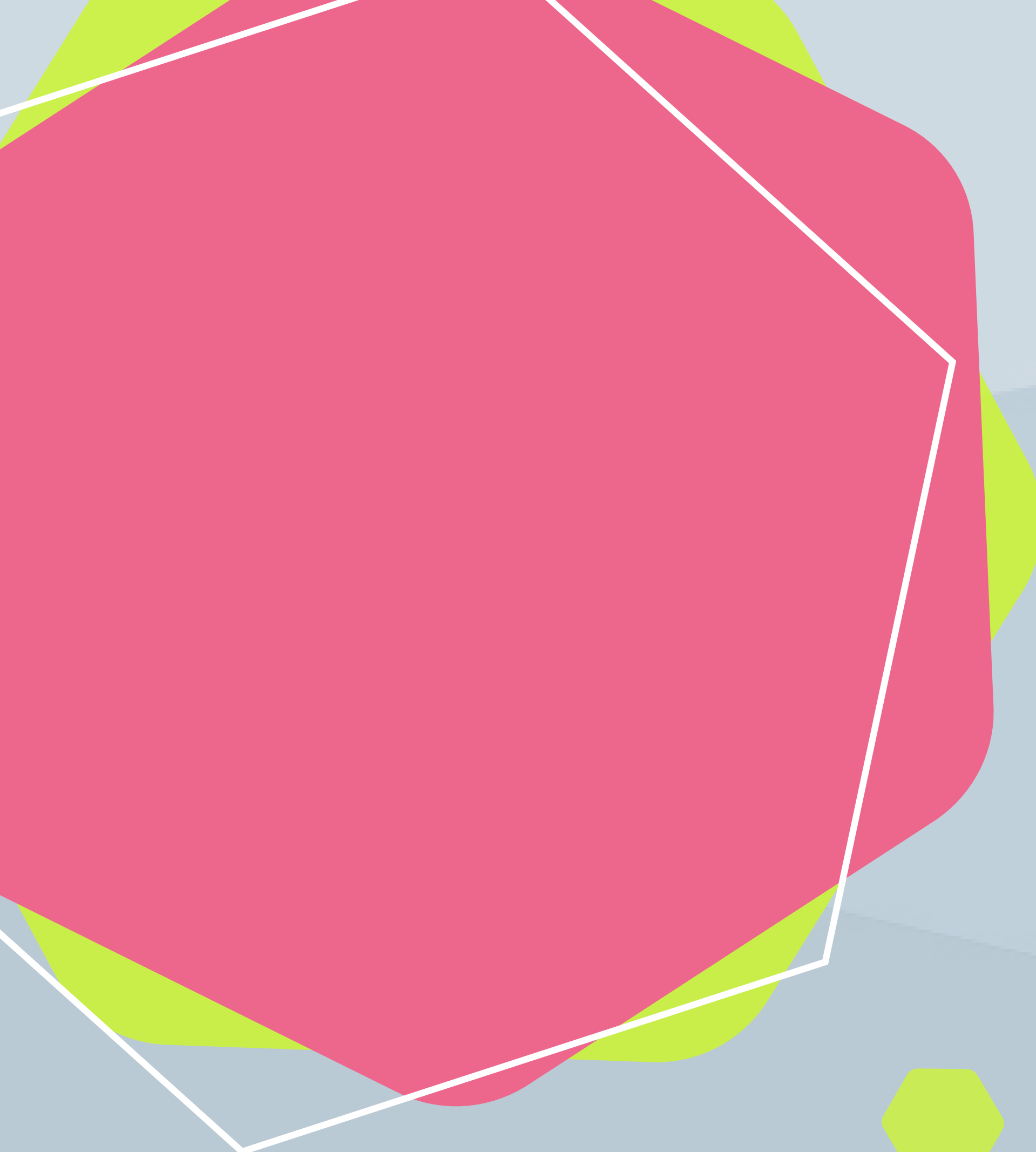
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What you really need to know about successful titles and new media
The Digital Storytelling Handbook -
A checklist with best practice examples

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