

TO: EDITORS

We invite you to submit entries for the 2009 Pulitzer Prizes in Journalism. Enclosed are the entry forms, the Plan of Award and the guidelines for preparing an entry.

We have made significant changes in the rules:

- 1) We have expanded the competition to include material from United States text-based newspapers and news organizations that publish -- in print or online -- at least weekly; that are “primarily dedicated to original news reporting and coverage of ongoing stories;” and that adhere to “the highest journalistic principles.”
- 2) We now allow entries composed entirely of online content to be submitted in all 14 journalism categories.
- 3) We have refined the definition for Local Reporting of Breaking News to emphasize immediacy.

Submission rules for specific categories may vary. So we strongly urge you to read carefully the enclosed Plan of Award and the accompanying guidelines as well as the instructions in this letter.

We also urge you to consult our Web site (www.pulitzer.org), which offers information on the application process, examples of acceptable entries, the work of recent winners and the latest news about the Prizes. Additional entry forms are available on request but you can download them from the Web site or you can fill them out online, print them out and submit them with the entry. You may also make photocopies of the form.

Here are key rules:

- All entries should begin with a summary letter of not more than two pages. The letter should explain the genesis of the submitted work; what difficulties, if any, had to be overcome to get the story; and, where appropriate, what was accomplished by its publication. The last of those points carries particular weight

in the Public Service category. Newspapers and news organizations that publish only online are new to the competition. They should use the letter to describe their journalistic mission and to provide ample evidence of their primary dedication to “original news reporting and coverage of ongoing stories.” For more information, see the guidelines.

- A descriptive entry letter is also of special importance in the Local Reporting category where jurors often need context -- a complete picture of the community, of why the reporting was done and of how residents benefited. Last year the category’s definition was revised to read: “For a distinguished example of reporting on significant issues of local concern, demonstrating originality and community expertise.” For more information, see the guidelines.
- Entries now may be made up entirely of content that was published online, and a full range of online journalism -- such as databases, interactive graphics and video images -- may be submitted in all categories except the two photography categories, which will continue to limit entries to still images. If online material is submitted, a description of its contents should be included in the entry’s summary letter. The material must also be available on an active URL that shows original publication on the eligible Web site. More information on how such an exhibit should be presented and the technical details governing the submission can be found in the guidelines and on our Web site.
- In the revised Local Reporting of Breaking News category, the definition now states that “special emphasis” will be given to “the speed and accuracy of the initial coverage.” For more information, see the guidelines.
- In all categories, every item in an entry must be numbered. Any online element must be discretely designated and will be counted as one item in an entry. Do not submit an entire, multi-faceted Web site as a single item. For more information on what constitutes an element, see the guidelines.
- No more than three entries may be made by the editors of a single newspaper, wire service, syndicate or other eligible news organization in any one category. The term “editors” includes all titled editors. Individuals may submit entries on their own behalf but they must be clearly distinguishable from a news organization’s entry and include a separate personal check for an entry fee.
- The same content may be entered in two -- but not more than two -- different categories. If you choose to file the same material in two categories, you must submit duplicate entries, one for each category. You must also pay a separate nonrefundable handling fee for each. However, we strongly advise against cross-filing when an entry falls only marginally into a second category. This caution applies in particular to the Explanatory category where the emphasis is on putting a significant and complex subject in meaningful context and where our guidelines

now state: “The jury will disregard an investigative, enterprise or feature story or series that falls short of the explanatory test.” Similar advice applies to the Local Reporting category, which was designed not to be a second Investigative Reporting category but rather one honoring expert exploration of local issues, whether in a portfolio of stand-alone stories or a series.

- Team entries are limited to three individuals. If more than three people are involved, the entry will be considered a staff entry and must be submitted in the name of the newspaper or eligible news organization that published it. In a staff entry, it is not necessary to submit photos and bios of the reporters involved. Entries in the Public Service category, regardless of the number of people involved, must be made in the name of the newspaper. It is the intent of The Pulitzer Prize Board to recognize, so far as possible, the work of individuals in all of the other categories.
- All entries must be exhibited in scrapbooks or binders measuring no more than 12 x 17 inches. Legibility is imperative. Each story or representation of an online element must be isolated for the jury as a separate exhibit and the type size must be at least as large as originally used. For more information on our rules for packaging entries, see the guidelines.
- On the entry form -- and this is important -- be sure to include a one-sentence description of the submitted work’s subject matter and to check the appropriate box if online material is part of the entry. If the online material is not part of the core entry, but is instead supplemental, please check “no.”
- Be aware that any significant challenge to the honesty, accuracy or fairness of an entry, such as published letters, corrections, retractions, as well as responses by the newspaper, should be included in the submission.

Finally, a few requests: Please bear in mind that entries must be made by the February 1st deadline; submitting entries earlier, however, will guarantee that they arrive on time.

Entrants submitting more than one entry should pay the handling fees with a single check. This considerably eases our office bookkeeping. Further, if you ship entries via FedEx, please choose the option known as “Direct Signature Required.”

If you have questions about the categories or rules, please don’t hesitate to call this office. We look forward to your submissions.

Sig Gissler
Administrator
The Pulitzer Prizes