PULITZER PRIZES

TIPS ON COMBINING A PRINT AND ONLINE ENTRY

Under revised Pulitzer rules, you can submit an entirely print entry or an entirely online entry. But many entrants might wish to submit a combination of print items and online elements. Keeping in mind that the goal is not digital quantity but saliency, here are a dozen tips on how to prepare a combination entry:

1. **Review the rules.** Carefully read the category definitions and entry guidelines. Focus on a category's chief purpose and ask how online elements could help your entry be more effective. (See reverse side on "categories.")
2. **Think thematically**. Consider the organizing theme of your entire entry. Then ask how online elements could advance that theme. Strive for smooth integration of pertinent online elements, making the final package unified and crisply focused.
3. **Beef up your cover letter**. Describe the online material being submitted and explain why it merits the jury's attention.
4. **Ponder your "online elements."** An element is defined as a "single, unified, discretely designated presentation." Sometimes, that might be a single slideshow or single video or interactive graphic. Sometimes, there might be multiple parts, such as a blog with manifold postings. There is no limit on the amount of content within an element but consider the burden on a jury. In any case, the submitted element should be cohesive and the conceptual logic linking the internal pieces together should be clear.
5. **Allocate your elements**. Every entry has a limited number of exhibits. Each online element will count as one exhibit. Thus if you have 10 slots in an entry and you allocate six for text articles, you have four left for Web elements.
6. **Less can be more.** Think how you can blend representative online elements into an entry. For example, if you have a dozen videos available, you might submit your two best, with each using an exhibit-slot.
7. **Avoid digital dumps**. Do not submit an entire, multi-faceted Web site as a single element. That will be disallowed. Busy jurors want entries that are edited and selectively assembled.
8. **Go easy on the "supplemental."** Sometimes, an entrant will use all of its slots for text stories and then drop online elements into "supplemental." That might be a valid strategy in some cases, but remember that jurors are not required to review supplemental material.
9. **Submit a legible physical representative**. To ease the jury's task, each online element should be physically portrayed in the entry's scrapbook – for instance, submit a screen shot or a Web page – and the representation should include date, time stamp and name of the eligible news organization. If online stories and other elements can be easily printed out, they should be displayed in their entirety for jurors in scrapbooks.
10. **Provide a reliable URL**. This is an absolute requirement. Any online material must be available on a live URL. But keep the URL brief (no more than 25 characters). Long URLs are clumsy and frustrate jurors.
11. **Make use of CDs and DVDs**. They are especially encouraged if a video presentation is submitted.
12. **Be sure everything works**. This is true of the URL. It is also true of CDs and DVDs. Make certain they are formatted for Windows PC and that they work on standard software, such as QuickTime, Windows Media Player and Flash. Secure your discs in a sleeve firmly attached to your entry.

SOME THOUGHTS ON CATEGORIES

Online elements, in varying degree, can appear in all Pulitzer categories. Several categories are of particular note when submitting online content:

- **Public Service.** This category permits up to 20 exhibits, partly because it is where a newspaper's entire resources can be displayed. Many entrants have made good use of online content to strengthen a Public Service entry.
- **Explanatory.** In this category, online elements, such as an interactive graphic, slideshow or video, can enhance a reader's understanding of a complex situation. In 2005, for example, the Los Angeles Times won the Prize for its reports on the world's distressed oceans. To illustrate the peril, the Times entered three videos, each as a separate exhibit.
- **Local Reporting of Breaking News.** Under revised rules, "special emphasis" will be given to "the speed and accuracy of the initial coverage." Thus news organizations might consider how to feature more heavily their early online coverage in their submission. [This also is a category where a smaller newspaper can be a serious contender by concentrating its resources on a major breaking event in its hometown. In 2004, for example, the Eagle-Tribune, Lawrence, Mass., won the Prize for its coverage of boys drowning in a river.]
- **Investigative.** An online database or interactive graphic that displays documentary evidence could complement entries.
- **Local Reporting.** Online elements could make an entry more effective. For example, they could help a newspaper demonstrate what is emphasized in Pulitzer guidelines – work that demonstrates "original thinking, resourcefulness and an expert grasp of a community's makeup, problems and concerns."

If you have a question about an online entry, call our office at 212-854-3841 or E-mail us at pulitzer@pulitzer.org.