



## Planting New Ideas:

• November 13, 2007 • Issue 11

### What do you think?

MPA staff has been publishing Planting New Ideas for some time now, and we'd like to find out from our members how it's working.

Please e-mail us at [readership@michiganpress.org](mailto:readership@michiganpress.org) and let us know what you think. What were some of the good ideas? What ideas could you have lived without?

We are also looking for other ideas to help newspapers all over the state grow their readership. If you've seen anything interesting in your travels, or have been doing something innovative at your paper, forward the idea to us and we'll get the word out.

Don't forget to visit our Web site [www.michiganpress.org](http://www.michiganpress.org) to find out what's new at Michigan's newspapers.

## Happy Holidays!



The holidays are fast upon us and they provide a great opportunity to draw in new readers.

Special sections about holiday meals and decorating are a natural fit. There are many great ideas for everything from turkey and trimmings to trimming the tree that people are interested in getting new ideas about.

Also asking readers to write about their family traditions or featuring letters to Santa from school kids would be a couple of ways to use reader participation.

Finally for online content, have an interactive map to Christmas tree lots, church and temple services or special gift marts. The Dayton Daily News has

an online card generator ([http://www.daytondailynews.com/search/content/shared/entertainment/interactives/holidays/holiday\\_card\\_generator/index.html](http://www.daytondailynews.com/search/content/shared/entertainment/interactives/holidays/holiday_card_generator/index.html)). Or you could provide a service that allows readers to download Christmas Carols as ringtones.



Being the provider of information for all things holiday in your community is a sure way to keep readers coming back. The following Web sites from newspapers around the

country might give you some ideas:  
• [http://www.helenair.com/specialsections/index.php?sSection=Downtown\\_Helena\\_Holiday\\_Edition](http://www.helenair.com/specialsections/index.php?sSection=Downtown_Helena_Holiday_Edition)  
• <http://www.mysanantonio.com/holidaygiftguide/>

## Michigan Ideas:

Listen up! Monroe Talks. If you do too, share your site's URL with Planting New Ideas

In a recent Readership listserv posting, Elaine Clisham, marketing director at the American Press Institute, suggested that readers look to [monroetalks.com](http://monroetalks.com) at **The Monroe Evening News** for a site that engages its market in a community conversation, <http://www.monroetalks.com/forum/index.php>.

Do you have a similar site? Avoid the holiday (or any day) search hassle—send your URL to [janet@michiganpress.org](mailto:janet@michiganpress.org) and we'll include the list in December's PNI. A great new idea might be one click away.

# Try cross promoting your product with other media.

Every Monday morning Mary Kramer, Publisher of *Crain's Detroit Business* can be heard on WJR (Detroit's most listened to talk radio station) talking to Paul W. Smith. John Smyntek of the *Detroit Free Press* and Daniel H o w e s of the

*Detroit News* are also frequent guests on WJR.

Many TV stations show their local newspapers next-day headlines. Some newspapers have cameras in their newsrooms that feed into TV stations.

The above are just a few examples of media outlets cross-promoting their product. Having well known newspaper personalities talk about the topics they

write about in a broadcast medium is an outstanding way to lead readers to the printed word.

Because of the nature of broadcast there is not enough time to tell a complete story. Promoting your writers and your product in other media outlets will give potential readers a taste of the information they can find by reading a newspaper.



## Newspaper readers use blogs cautiously

Newspaper readers who follow blogs say challenging traditional journalists is a vital new tool blogs possess. Newspaper readers who follow blogs remain cautious as they judge bloggers' credibility, but they say a willingness to challenge traditional journalists makes the network of personal sites a vital newcomer to the media scene.

About 20 percent of readers told a national group of newspaper editors that they read blogs at least sometimes, if not regularly. The responses were gathered in an online survey by the Associated Press Managing Editors' National Credibility Roundtables Project. The survey targeted the most interactive of newspaper users. This compares with a recent study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, which measured blogging's readership at about 11 percent of overall U.S. Internet users.

Readers who find blogs important say the online writers discuss stories mainstream journalists ignore, and are eager to question the decisions news networks make. They recognize the fallibilities that go along with blogging, but say those drawbacks are balanced

out by openness, interactivity, and a communal nature that helps honesty rise to the top.

"If someone posts something that is inaccurate or incorrect, hundreds of people will correct them -- and the good ones acknowledge any mistakes made," said Megan Casto of Olympia, Wash.

Readers get a greater overall view of the news, said Michael Hodges of Nashua, N.H., because each blogger speaks in the context of one big conversation. "In the aggregate, bloggers are much more balanced because they instantly call one another on bias, slant, errors in logic, and inadequate information. It's a network effect that is better than the mainstream 'networks.'"

This diversified approach helps bloggers hold the media accountable. "With more events like the CBS 'document scandal,' bloggers could have the effect of forcing a closer look at journalistic integrity and a much wider line of separation between commentary and news reporting," said Chad Shue of Everett, Wash.

All this has forced the traditional media to re-evaluate its relationship with readers newly empowered to speak out

From [www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org)

and challenge the system. And the public voice is getting louder.

Steve Outing, senior editor at The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, has watched the evolution of blogging as it intersects with professional journalism. "I think they are influencing mainstream media to become more interactive, to treat news more as a conversation and a bit less as a lecture," he said. "Blogs are blurring the line between who is a 'journalist' and who's not. A growing number of mainstream news companies are inviting the public to blog under their brand names. Readers benefit by getting new viewpoints and new styles of coverage."

Journalists aren't ignoring bloggers any more; neither are they just covering them as a trend story. They're citing them, fighting with them, and talking about what they're saying.

Below are a few examples of Newspapers blogs around the country:

- <http://blog.washingtonpost.com/dcsportsbog>.
- <http://info.detnews.com/redesign/blogs/travelblog/index.cfm>.
- [http://featuresblogs.chicagotribune.com/entertainment\\_tv](http://featuresblogs.chicagotribune.com/entertainment_tv).