

BEST WEBSITE

Almost all the sites have improved since I judged this category a few years ago. Seven of the eight are using responsive design, which has become the most-efficient and most-effective method of serving desktop, laptop, tablet and mobile readers from the same site. The bigger papers have an advantage in this category because of more resources, so I expected more from them. Some sites lost points because of old content on inside pages. One site had a great home page but not-so-great inside pages. All but two sites could handle an industry-standard 300-pixel ad in their right rail; let's stick to IAB-approved ad sizes. Let's update content with breaking news between issues, and let's sell more ads and consider adding paywalls. Very few of the sites are being monetized to their potential. All in all, I was impressed by seven of the eight sites. Congratulations to all.

1

THE SUBURBAN (CITY EDITION)

www.thesuburban.com

An almost-perfect newspaper website for 2017. Clean, responsive design; 300-pixel right rail; plenty of ads; lots of content including breaking news on a Sunday. Lots of extra features. Negatives: the menu bar breaks into two lines in both Chrome and Safari on a MacBook Pro. I hate the blue headlines; a bigger and/or bolder font from the same family would provide the separation you seek. Otherwise, a very nice site.

2

BULLETIN D'AYLMER

www.bulletinaylmer.com

I judged this site first and kept coming back to it. Not perfect, but I liked it a lot. Clean-looking, responsive design, plenty of content (and it's current), nice byline graphics, photos display well with articles, a simple but effective calendar. A big plus is that the site is bilingual. Negatives: Ads look nice (watch the small type), but they're not IAB-approved sizes. The right rail should be the industry-standard 300 pixels. It would be nice if classifieds could be searched; that's hard with PDFs. Does the 2017 Aylmer Directory have a digital component? It should.

3

THE EQUITY

www.theequity.ca

As a judge, I welcomed the comments that accompanied the entry, noting the increase in paid subscriptions since the redesign. This is not the prettiest site, but it's obvious the staff is trying to succeed at digital by introducing a paywall, an e-Edition/digital edition and news alerts. The site is responsive, the content is plentiful (but apparently not updated between print editions), there's a Twitter widget and a French-language page. Negatives: The menu bar is a mess. Too many choices. Trim down to main topics with drop-down menus for minor topics like Agriculture, which hasn't been updated since November. The right rail also is a mess, with a 160-pixel design above the fold and a 300-pixel design below the fold. When you do your next redesign, stick with a 300-pixel right rail along the right. Again, I easily could have awarded third place to a couple other sites, but you deserve recognition for your efforts to improve.

Honourable Mention:
**THE CANADIAN
JEWISH NEWS**
www.cjnews.com

Judge: Gary Sosniecki, Retired Freelance Columnist, The Lebanon Daily Record, Lebanon, MO • Number of entries in the Best Website category: 8

BEST HEADLINE WRITING

Headlines should serve the biggest W of all - why should readers read this story. Drama does that best, creativity second. Humour in headline writing is a dangerous thing and usually tickles editors more than readers - it should be avoided, as should puns, like the plague. Editors are funny and clever, but their audience is in the newsroom, not for regular folks. Readers will find their own humor in our headlines, too frequently when we are trying not to be funny. This is from an editor whose headlines appeared on Jay Leno's talk show not once but twice and not intentionally in either case. One other point: Headline Hierarchy. Some headlines should be bigger than others because some stories are more important than others. Headlines all the same size serve the layout process but hurt readership.

1

**P. BLACK, J. CRAIG,
C. KERWIN,
C. MUSGROVE,
S. NADEAU**

Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph

Headlines consistently reflect in a creative way the subject matter of the story.

Huff: a show that takes your breath away

What the Dickens? A tale of two Quebec Cities

A feast of literary proportions

Quebec City Staircase Challenge had its ups and downs

2

**S. BONSPIEL,
J. DEER,
D. MARQUIS,
D. J. ROWE**

The Eastern Door

Headline writers saw opportunities in stories to use a play on words to attract readers.

Mohawk Girls up Schitt's Creek

Majority of surveyed want stinky butts out of bars

Winter community meeting called because of... winter

Truck takes a cold dip, dirt bikes take a quick rip

3

M. C. BARRY, G. GUZMAS
The Laval News

Boulevard of broken dreams worked to bring the reader in, and visually. Just like Pizza failed badly - example of making reader work too hard to get the joke which in itself impedes comprehension of the news story. Let them eat credit worked well - short, sweet, nice jumping off point for editorial.

**Boulevard of
broken dreams**

*Notre Dame store owner holds city
accountable for floods*

Let them eat credit

Licence REVOKED!

JUST LIKE PIZZA
2 for 1 DEAL
Snow crew does double-duty
removing the garbage

Judge: Bruce Valpy, Managing Editor, Northern News Services Ltd., Yellowknife, NWT • Number of entries in the Best Headline Writing category: 4