Best Practices: Use Keywords to Build Traffic

PBS programs and stations use blogs for many things: To develop on-air personalities, build audience for a broadcast series, to invite audience members to provide input or feedback, to promote community activities, to highlight upcoming broadcasts or go behind-the-scenes, to name just a few possibilities. Not all blogs want or need to build a lot of traffic.

But if you want to build traffic for a blog, take note of the following best practices. They'll help your entries rank higher on Google and other search engine results. This will attract newcomers to the blog. They may become regulars.

If any tips below seem inappropriate for your style of blog, feel free to ignore them. Just be aware that you may be losing some traffic and have a harder time building an audience.

There is a related best practices document for building traffic by using links and relationships with other bloggers.

The art of keywords

Each of the suggestions below is based on the principal of **keywords**. Keywords and key phrases are words in your entries that Google's spiders interpret as signals of an entry's content.

If your entry is about **Darfur genocide**, use the phrase or either of the words **Darfur genocide** in the title, first paragraph, and the language of hyperlinks to outside content. Use either or both of the words a few times throughout the entry.

But don't distort your entries or make them seem wooden. There is an art to writing keyword-rich content that is elegant, readable and perceptive. It takes practice.

1. **Make titles very clear and specific, and rich in keywords**
   There is no penalty for clarity in titles. Resist the urge to be clever with titles (unless you can be clever and clear). So:

   Good: April: Best month for planting asparagus
   Okay: April is the coolest month for planting
   Lousy: Ah, the soil is getting warm. . .

   Good: Why did the Lansing school board disband?
   Okay: Behind the school board situation
   Lousy: Ka-boom goes local leadership

2. **Use keywords in the first paragraph,** and again as high in the story as possible without stretching. So:

Good: The Randolph Chamber's performance *using original hand-crafted musical instruments from the 18ᵗʰ century* provided a vivid demonstration of what live music might have sounded like in the salons of European royals.

Okay: I'd never witnessed a live musical performance with *period instruments* before Friday night, but I'll never forget it.

Lousy: Audience members were transported to the 18ᵗʰ century Friday night at the Gifford Theater.

3. **Use keywords in the language of hyperlinks**—the words that you click to go to another site. So:

Good: The <u>Scranton City Council's "Findings on Diversity" report</u> is available online.

Okay: The council's <u>diversity report</u> is available online.

Lousy: <u>Click here</u> for a copy of the committee's Findings on Diversity report.