# Chapter 19
# Best Practices of News and Media Web Design:
## An Analysis of Content Structure, Multimedia, Social Sharing, and Advertising placements

**Sonya Zhang**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

**Samuel Lee**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

**Karen Hovsepian**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

**Hannah Morgia**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

**Kelli Lawrence**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

**Natalie Lawrence**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

**Ashish Hingle**

*California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA*

## ABSTRACT

*As more print media move to online, news and media websites have evolved with increasing complexity in content, design, and monetization strategies. In this article, the authors examined and reported the web design patterns of 150 leading news and media websites in six different categories: TV news, online newspapers, online magazines, and technology news, sports news, and business news, using 28 analytics metrics in four dimensions: content structure, multimedia, social sharing, and advertising placements.*

## INTRODUCTION

Print media like magazines and newspapers have been declining significantly over the years, and forced to adapt to increasing Internet readership and online competition by creating their own online websites and apps in addition to physical products (News Media Alliance, n.d.; State of the Media, 2010). As with many substantial businesses that dominate the Internet today, these news delivering and media websites evolve to become more like lifestyle brand businesses.

Simply adding an online platform isn't panacea for saving traditional news and media businesses - online news and media industry have grown significantly and become one of the most competitive ones (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2013). WordPress, the most popular open source Content Management System (CMS) powers 75 million websites, about 18% of all, and it provides even small and niche businesses the opportunity to create an impact with a modern and professional-looking website optimized for search engines and accessible to online readers worldwide. From year 2000 to 2017 the global Internet users have jumped from 400 million to 3.7 billion. In 2017, every minute of the day, Google receives 3.6 million search queries, YouTube users watch over 4 million videos, Facebook users share 2.46 million pieces of content, Instagram users post 46,740 new photos, Twitter users send over 456,000 tweets (Domo, 2017). The more content that is published, the more difficult it becomes to attract traffic, which is the lifeline to online news and media businesses. While top news and media brands like CNN.com and Huffington Post dominate the organic search results, others suffer from low visibility. Majority of content published on the Internet is of poor quality or redundant, very few of them received social shares or interaction, and even fewer had backlinks or outbound links (Buzzsumo, 2015). It is more critical now than ever to not only create compelling content but also deliver them via an effective web design.

Our study focuses on the best practices of leading news and media websites, in particular, their web design strategies in content structure, multimedia, social sharing, and advertisement placement. Novice news and media websites without much web design or analytics resources could benefit from adopting these best practices, thus improve search engine optimization (SEO), user experience, and monetization effectively.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies on content and media web design were either conceptual (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2011) or case studies of a single website (Singh et al., 2014). This limitation is probably due to the difficulty of gaining access to the internal analytics data. In this study we focus on the web design practice of reputable and popular websites across six categories. Since we do not have access to the internal analytics data such as visitor traffic, page views, or ad revenue, we focus on four predominant dimensions that we are able to collect from the user interfaces: content structure, multimedia, social sharing, and ad placements.

### Content Structure

Search engines like Google covered a list of common areas for webmasters to optimize platform and delivery of their content, and specially emphasized the importance of SEO friendly content structure, such as using keywords reinforced page title and meta tags, headlines, image alt attributes, self-documenting

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