Web Posts & Press Releases

- 1: Welcome, intro
  - Who am I?
  - Who are you?
  - This hour is not a writing class
  - Outcome: better understanding of when to use posts and releases, and key points to remember
- 2: Approach
  - Discuss posts and releases simultaneously
    - In a connected world, they can spread widely
  - Mainly organized by story parts
- 3: Posts vs. press releases
  - Posts
    - Purpose: to inform, educate, engage readers
    - When:
      - Whenever you have new information
      - Can be far more frequent than press releases
    - Audience: everyone
    - Tone: conversational, informal
    - Length: can be long and have multiple parts
    - Engagement: tone invites engagement
  - Press releases
    - Purpose: to create buzz about your product, service, event, and to inform
    - When: significant items (front page worth) only
    - Audience: news media, organizations, other websites
    - Tone: formal
    - Length: one page, two pages tops
    - Engagement: just the facts
    - Other: can use service like http://www.ereleases.com for distribution
  - Can combine them
    - Can post press releases to website
    - Can expand a release in a web post
  - Press release format
    - Basics
      - Get straight to the point
      - Total length under 2 pages, ideally 400-500 words
      - Avoid using "I", "we", or "you"
      - Use a standard font, such as Times New Roman or Calibri
      - Headline is bolded, larger
      - Single space body text, one line of space between paragraphs
      - Standard 1 inch margins and white paper
    - Format
      - Title (headline)
      - Subhead
      - A quote
      - The body
      - Summary of organization
        - The same for all your releases
        - Can subtitle as "About the organization"
      - End notation
        - If another page: -- more --
        - If end: ###
      - Final note
        - Can add "for more information" after end notation
        - "If you would like more information about this topic, please call [Name] at [Phone number], or email [email address]."
    - Examples
      - http://fitsmallbusiness.com/press-release-examples/
      - https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/news/national/newsroom/releases/
- 4: Basics
  - How people read web-based material
    - People scan, don't read
      - Only a few moments to get their attention
      - Titles, subtitles become more important
      - Your summary expands the title
      - Visuals are important
    - The W's: who, what, when, where, why...and how
      - How many of us were taught
      - Works for press releases, but too formal/impersonal for web posts
    - Search engine optimization (SEO)
      - What is it?
        - Many aspects to SEO
        - Process
          - Improving search engine ranking
          - Driving traffic to your website
          - Increasing visibility to search engines
      - Advice: focus on writing great, original content for people
- 5: The Title
  - What do you want from readers?
    - Interest?
    - Engagement?
  - How do you want readers to feel?
    - Repelled or attracted?
    - Examples
  - Be careful of clickbait titles
- 6: The Summary
  - If they get past the title...
  - What is the article about?
    - One sentence = meta description
  - Can also tease readers to continue
- 7: The Body
  - The meat of the post/release
  - Break into smaller chunks than for print
    - Use subtitles to help readers scan
  - Visuals can help web posts
    - Must be related to article
    - Try not to use stock images
    - Captions are helpful
    - Be cautious about size
      - Responsive is best
- 8: The Close
  - A paragraph that sums up the conclusions
- 9: The Credits
  - Author and how to contact
  - Organization and how to contact
  - For more information...
- 10: Social media
  - Curator or creator?
    - Curator: post other people's material
    - Creator: post your own original content
  - Hashtags
    - In context, can be helpful
    - Can be harmful if meme is hijacked
  - Frequency
    - Depends on your audience
    - Flood or starve?
      - You don't want to flood audience
      - Also don't want to starve them