



writing with
wylie
Ann Wylie

Anatomy of a 21st-century news release: 5 tips that work

Today's online releases serve several functions: They drive traffic to your site through search engine optimization, inform your readers and spread your message via journalists and bloggers.

To make your 21st-century release most effective:

1. Keep the headline short.

Aim for 65 to 70 characters if you want your release to show up on Google News, according to a 2010 study by Schwartz Communications. Still, despite Google's preferences, the average headline in Schwartz's study was 123 characters long, and the longest more than 1,000 characters.

Bring your releases into the 21st century

Want to write releases that get posted on portals, help Google find your site, reach readers online and more? Join Ann Wylie at PRSA's "Anatomy of a 2.0 Release" webinar on **March 10**. Sign up or get more details at www.prsa.org. **T**

2. Get to the point quickly.

Keep your lead to around 25 words. If it's longer, then it starts looking too thick to invite readers. If it's shorter, then news portals might not recognize it as a paragraph. Google News, for instance, rejects releases that are only bullet points and one-sentence paragraphs.

3. Tighten the release.

The best length for a news release: 250 words. If your release is:

- Longer than 700 words, then Google News may reject it for being too long.
- Longer than 500 words, then portals may cut it off in the middle.
- Shorter than 125 words, then Google News may reject it for being too short.

Plus, reading online is onerous. Releases of about 250 words are easier on people's eyes.



4. Cut the fluff.

Nobody searches for "world-class," "cutting-edge" or "next-generation." Hype not only clutters your copy, but it also dilutes your keywords. And that makes it harder for Google and other search engines to find your site.

Instead of piling on the jargon, write about what your product, service or idea will do for your clients and customers.

5. Write for people.

Today's releases serve two audiences: search engines and people. In the rush to optimize for the former, we sometimes forget the latter.

Sure, you're going to place keywords and phrases in the page title tag, headline and maybe a few more places. But don't "optimize" your release until you've rendered it unreadable to your intended audience — the people you hope will find your information through a search in the first place. **T**

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Ann Wylie works with communicators who want to reach more readers and with organizations that want to get the word out. To learn more about her training, consulting or writing and editing services, contact her at Ann@WylieComm.com.