



# Critiquing your website for awards

Web

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## Homepage

Is the **name** of the publication prominent?

Are there links to your **policies** somewhere?

Can you **search** your site?

Can the readers **contact** you?

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## Homepage

Are the **design elements** consistent (headlines, spacing, and color)?

Are you using appropriate amounts of white space to **separate content visually**.

Especially with WordPress - are your widgets organized to **avoid trapped space** in your design?

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## Highlight your best stuff

Have a spot for your **best** content to be prominently on display on your site!

Make it easy to find from your homepage!

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## Navigation

Category names should make sense to readers (**avoid jargon**-type of titles).

Avoid deep-level accordion navigation (makes it hard on mobile!)

**Purge** “dead” sections from navigation - if you don’t post there anymore, why have it on your homepage?

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## Social Media

Are there **links** (or embeds) of your social media?

Is there a mechanism to **SHARE** content from your site to social media easily for readers?

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## Consistency

As you browse through the site, does it feel like everything is **related**, or does each page feel like something from a different news organization?

Keep **design elements** consistent:

- Headlines
- Fonts
- Font Sizes
- Staff Bylines and Bytitles

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## Story Page Design

How do they look? Have you put effort into the visual impact of each story?

Consider the following style techniques:

- Pull Quotes
- Photos inside of story
- Graphics
- Sidebars
- Subheads

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## Hyperlinks

This is an absolute must.

If you say “According to Pew Research...” why not **hyperlink** the actual study, so the readers can go there, too?

Aim for at least three links per story

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## Content content content

The most important element of website design is not the design.

**Content is king.** The quality of the written **words**, the headlines, and the **art** are paramount.

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## Content content content

**Update** your content frequently - if the most prominent story on your site is two months old, people will wonder if the site is still being updated.

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## Keep them on your site

What happens when a reader gets to the end of an article?

Have “**Related Stories**” and/or **Tags**, so readers have somewhere else to go on your website!

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## Photos - Mug Shots

If you mention someone prominently in your story, include at least a “**mugshot**”

Include mugshots in your pull quotes!

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## Photos - Slideshows

Slideshows are not a dump of your SD Card or Camera Roll.

Use them to **tell a story**. Show a variety of different shots (wide, medium, close up).

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## Multimedia

Do you have **interactive content** for your readers?

They want to click on things and manipulate!

Do you have **video** on your website?

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## Mobile

What does the website look like on a phone?

On a tablet?

- Is it a good experience?
- Is the menu usable?
- How is the navigation?
- Does your multimedia work?

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