

Guidelines for a good news article

12-3-2014, M. Holleman, SCM

General:

The target audience is the external public, so remember:

- To introduce people (say what their job is)
- Avoid jargon, too formal language and passive constructions
- Write from the perspective of the reader rather than the organisation
- Focus on the news fact

Headings:

- Short, strong headings (preferably one line, 70-120 characters)
- Heading is separate from the article (the text of the heading doesn't run on into the intro)

Intro:

- Short intro: 25-30 words
- Intro can be read as separate from the article (heading text doesn't run on into the intro)
- No links in intro
- Always include the intro/abstract at the start of the article
- Texts should be 'timeless' (avoid time indications, like 'yesterday', 'last Tuesday')

Article:

- Not too long : total number of words (including the intro): max 450
- Use meaningful sub-headings
- Short paragraphs (not more than 100 words)

Photos:

- Photos should be attractive, in sharp focus (especially the first photo, that appears on the homepages and in newsletters). No suitable photo available? SCM has an Istock account and can if necessary buy photos, Maaïke de Jong (Mon. – Wed., extn. 4594, m.h.de.jong@bb.leidenuniv.nl)

Links:

- Meaningful links under the article, not the full http address, but 1 or 2 words.
- PhD defence: include the link to the defence in the university calendar of events

See also: <http://communicatie.leidenuniv.nl/website/webredactie-richtlijnen/> (in dutch)