# WJEA
# Website Critique 2018

## Evaluation Guide

This guide is designed to be an education device to improve the quality of your website. Many thanks to the Colorado Student Media Association, whose own evaluation guide is the basis for the format of this document.

This guide is intended to not only identify positive aspects of your website but also possible areas for improvement.

Judging comments are designed as suggestions for improvement. Keep in mind that these comments represent one person's opinion. Judges comments may not apply to all school situations. Comments should represent current trends in website production.

Each of the sections contained in this guide has an overall evaluation where the judge must rate the section according to an overall set of criteria. The final evaluation is based on a holistic assessment of the entire website.

Each section calls for specific ranking with a **(3)** for *strong work* in the area; a **(2)** for being *adequate*, a **(1)** for *needing improvement* and an (NA) for *not applicable*.

All sections will conclude with a holistic narrative critique, an opportunity for judges to specifically note positives and suggestions for improvements.

Website Title: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

City & ZIP Code: _____

Adviser: _____

Adviser E-mail: _____

School Actual Enrollment: _____

Website's URL: _____

Judge: _____

## coverage criteria

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Is coverage comprehensive, focusing on several aspects of the high school community it serves, including academics, sports, co-curricular clubs and organizations? |
| 1 | Does the site include Web-exclusive content, such as blogs, interactive elements, video, audio and breaking news? |
| 3 | Is news the heart of the website's content? |
| 3 | Does coverage reflect the diversity of the school population, and does it strive to include all voices of that population? |
| 3 | Does the site successfully use different media to contribute different parts of the story, avoiding repetition of information? |
| 3 | Are stories thoroughly reported, with multiple points of view represented? |
| 3 | Is coverage accurate and fair? |
| 3 | Does writing get to the point quickly, the "why" and "how" of the story, while engaging and informing readers? |
| 3 | Are all issues covered from a student perspective? |
| 3 | Is content coordinated to package related news, pictures, video and audio? |
| n/a | Are stories--except for editorials, opinion columns, and blogs--free of the writer's opinions? |
| 3 | Are opinion pieces well researched and well argued, citing factual evidence to support views expressed? |
| 3 | Is sports coverage current and comprehensive, including scores, statistics, records and game highlights? |
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## coverage evaluation

☐ **Superior:**
Coverage is complete, accurate and thorough while maximizing the capabilities of the Web and emphasizing breaking news. Staff indicates an obvious awareness of the interest of its readers, and consistently takes risks in presenting and packaging video, audio and multimedia content.

☐ **Excellent:**
Coverage is generally complete and includes some breaking news. Staff makes good use of interactive elements, including video and audio, and takes some risk in engaging its readers. Content is well planned and informative.

☐ **Honorable Mention:**
Coverage tends to be a bit shallow and lacks that necessary creative spark to entice the readership. Staff needs to place more emphasis on breaking news and making better use of the Web's interactive elements.

Judge's narrative comments on coverage:

## interactivity & community criteria

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Are readers able to interact with the website in numerous ways, such as social media links, discussion boards, and polls? |
| 3 | Are links to other information used to empower the reader? |
| 3 | Are games, polls, quizzes, interactive maps and other interactive tools used to draw readers into the news? |
| 3 | Are readers invited to submit story ideas or offer comments, and are they given a way (story submission form or e-mail address) to do so? |
| 3 | Is contact information readily available to readers who want to write a letter to the editor, buy an ad or contact the adviser and staff? |
| 3 | Does the publication make use of reader-generated content, which might include stories, photos and videos? |
| 3 | Do story links lead to other useful and credible information? |



## interactivity & community evaluation

☐ **Superior:**
Staff consistently empowers its readers with a rich menu of interactive tools, including social media links, polls, and discussion boards. Interactive features make it easy for readers to submit ideas, make comments or contact editors, and multiple story links enhance the site's richness of content.

☐ **Excellent:**
Consistently contains some interactive tools, including social media links, polls, and discussion boards. Other interactive features give readers the ability to contact editors and submit story ideas. Story links are inconsistently used, sometimes producing a lack of depth in coverage.

☐ **Honorable Mention:**
Interactive tools are sometimes used, and the staff is obviously making an effort to engage its readers, yet community involvement is hampered by a lack of interactive features allowing readers to submit content or ideas. Story links to useful and credible information would enhance coverage.

Judge's narrative comments on interactivity & community:

## breaking news criteria

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Is the site updated regularly, even daily? |
| 3 | Are important news events and sports reported in a timely way? |
| 3 | Are photos, graphics, text, audio, video and interactive elements used to support breaking news events? |
| 3 | Is breaking news updated as stories develop? |
| 3 | Is the information presented accurate, even if incomplete? |
| 3 | Is news covered with a fair and balanced approach? |
| 3 | Does coverage include useful information for readers, such as notification of school closure in the event of bad weather or an emergency? |
| 3 | Is coverage of national or international news obviously related to the school and surrounding community? |



## breaking news evaluation

☐ **Superior:**
A focus on breaking news and daily updates encourages reader involvement and enhances website content. Content is accurate and balanced, and editors consistently provide access to useful information. Larger national stories are localized to enhance community awareness.

☐ **Excellent:**
Comprehensive coverage sometimes includes breaking news. The site is regularly updated (two to three times a week), and content is accurate and balanced. Editors make obvious effort to provide useful information to readers, and sometimes link local news to national events.

☐ **Honorable Mention:**
Staff does an adequate job of presenting stories that are important to its readers, but breaking news does not seem to be a focus. Story updates are inconsistent, and most content appears to be recycled from print publications.

Judge's narrative comments on breaking news:

## design & navigation criteria

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Does the site draw readers into stories with visually appealing design and graphics? |
| 3 | Is navigation easy? Can readers quickly find what they're looking for? |
| 3 | Is the home page simple and uncluttered? |
| 3 | Does the site provide links to relevant resources, such as the high school website? |
| 3 | Does a dominant piece of art, at least twice as big as anything else, anchor each page? |
| 3 | Are visual elements, such as photos and graphics, used to enhance content, and not as decorations? |
| 3 | Are readers clearly directed to different sections of the publication, such as news, sports, student life and opinion? |
| 3 | Are multiple elements of a story packaged together to enhance content? |
| 3 | Are bullets, fonts, boxes and other design elements used to facilitate reading and navigation? |
| 3 | Are ample links provided to provide access to related content on the site? |



## design & navigation evaluation

☐ **Superior:**
Staff has created a visually appealing site with a simple, easy-to-navigate design. Numerous photos and graphics enhance content, and an obvious hierarchy of stories is presented with clearly marked categories. Story packaging and multiple links thoughtfully extend reader engagement.

☐ **Excellent:**
Site is well organized and easy to use, and makes adequate use of photos and graphics to enhance content. Content is comprehensive, yet could be enhanced by better packaging of various story elements.

☐ **Honorable mention:**
Site offers interesting content, but might be difficult to navigate because of cluttered design or confusing design elements. Presenting key or breaking stories in a clear order of importance and in categories will enhance ease of readership.

Judge's narrative comments on design & navigation:

## multimedia & creativity criteria

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Does the site use a variety of media, which might include audio, video, slide shows, podcast and graphics? |
| 3 | Are these media used to enhance content, rather than to dress up the site? |
| 3 | Does each media element tell a story? |
| 3 | Are photos and video adequately lit and well composed? |
| 3 | Are photo illustrations clearly labeled? |
| 3 | Are a variety of shots used in photo and video reports--action, candids, long shots, close-ups and detail shots? |
| 3 | Is sound quality clear in audio and video reports? |
| 3 | Do audio reports make use of ambient and natural sound as well as interviews? |
| 3 | Are graphics simple and informative? |
| 3 | Are special projects and packages well organized and easy to navigate? |
| 3 | Are copyright laws understood and respected, with only original content or copyright-free material is used, including music, photos and video? |



## multimedia & creativity evaluation

☐ **Superior:**
Staff has successfully used a variety of media to enhance content. Media elements tell individual stories; and photo, video and sound qualities are excellent. An abundance of original content adds to the richness of reader experience, and well-considered packaging of media elements adds creative interest.

☐ **Excellent:**
Staff uses a variety of media to enhance content. Photo, video and sound qualities are consistently good, and packaging of media elements is developing.

☐ **Honorable mention:**
Staff is experimenting with photo, video and sound to enhance its content. Media quality might be inconsistent, but shows promise in engaging readers.

Judge's narrative comments on multimedia & creativity:

## Overall final evaluation

☐ **Superior:**

This is a quality website program that would compete well at any level. Staff demonstrates a solid understanding of journalistic websites and their place in the curriculum. The site features solid reporting and writing skills, a solid grounding in telling great stories, a great mix of multimedia reporting, and the technical expertise to appeal to a broad audience. The balance of breaking news and innovative feature coverage helps the audience better understand your unique school community.

☐ **Excellent:**

This website program represents a work in progress. Staff members indicate an awareness of what a quality website should include but fail to consistently carry out that mission. There are flashes of brilliance in all areas of your website but some stories and technical aspects lack a necessary consistency, in reporting or in presentation, to be truly effective.

☐ **Honorable mention:**

Too many flaws keep this website program from reaching the higher levels of recognition. Staff and adviser should concentrate on basic web concepts. This website has obviously bee produced as a "labor of love.' There are certainly flashes of brilliance and professionalism, but the site tends to be inconsistent in all areas we assessed.

Judge's Final Thoughts: