

# Digital Journalism



*Or Writing for the Web*



Differentiation is



*the key for digital journalism*



# The future of journalism

- ❖ The advantages of writing for a Website.
- ❖ How is it different from traditional print and television journalism?



# Key benefits

- ❖ No constraint of time, you can write a short report the moment the story breaks and update it as a developing for as long as it remains relevant.
- ❖ Digital is not limited to text, you can supplement your stories with pictures and videos.
- ❖ You can do stories without relying on text and have photo essays or independent video stories
- ❖ One more big advantage



# Web Archive

- ❖ **SEARCH:** Unlike newspapers and magazines and to some extent TV, stories on a Website can easily be searched and your stories are always present as a digital archive on the Web.
- ❖ This is the most powerful aspect of the medium and has multiple benefits



# URL

- ❖ The uniform resource locator, URL, is the address of a resource on the Internet.
- ❖ Every story has a unique URL, which has
  - ❖ □The protocol used to access the resource
    - The location of the server (whether by IP address or domain name)
    - The port number on the server (optional)
    - The location of the resource in the directory structure of the server
- ❖ The URLs are complex structures and no one can remember them as it is for the technology side and cannot be used for search

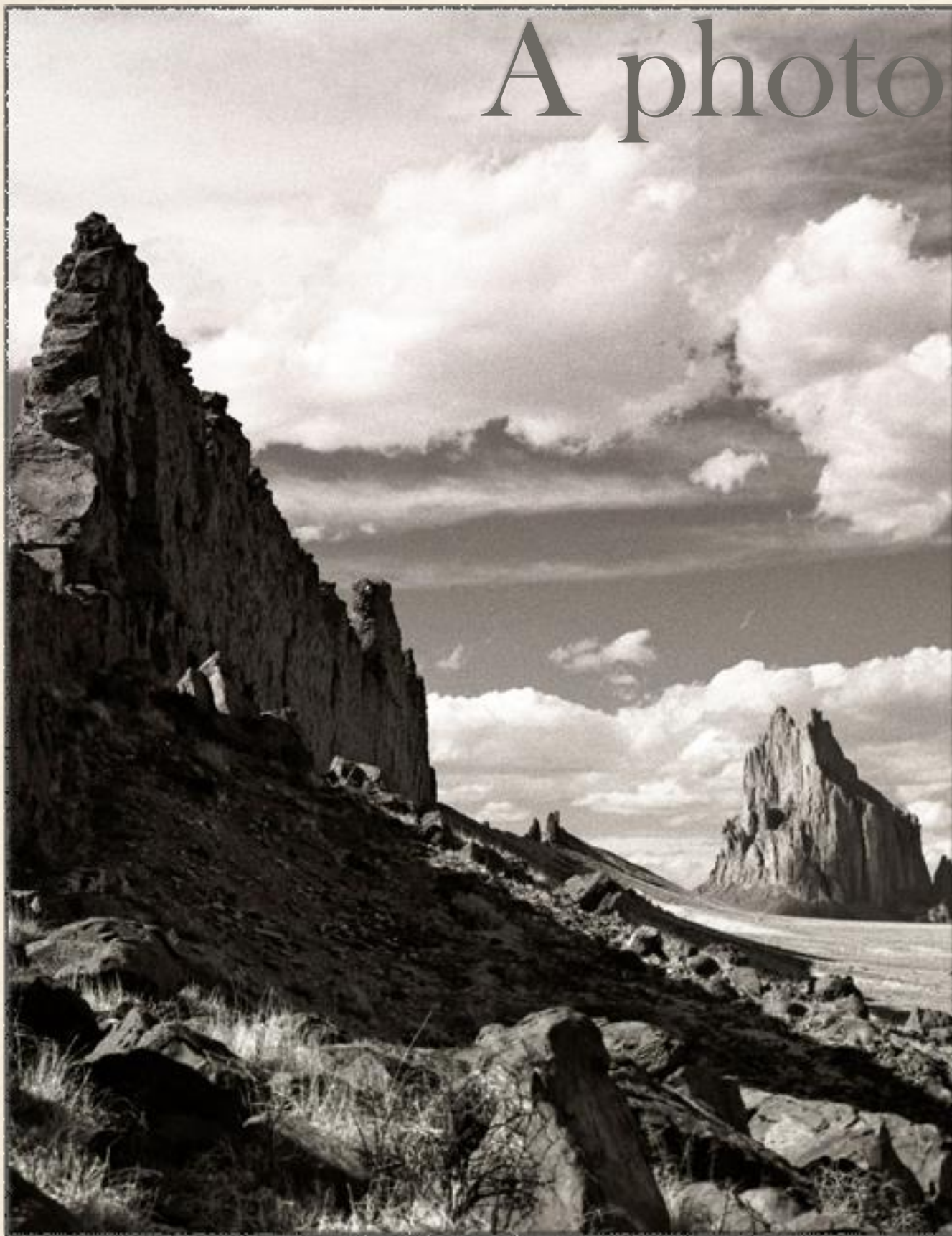


# Keywords

- ❖ Before a story is made live on a website, many fields are filled in the backend. They include category, author, sub-category, place, summary and keywords
- ❖ Keywords play an essential role in searching the story via a search engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing etc)
- ❖ Keywords should be intuitive, the best way to give them is to think what what you type if you had to search the story. Search can also be done by typing the name of the author and his place of work



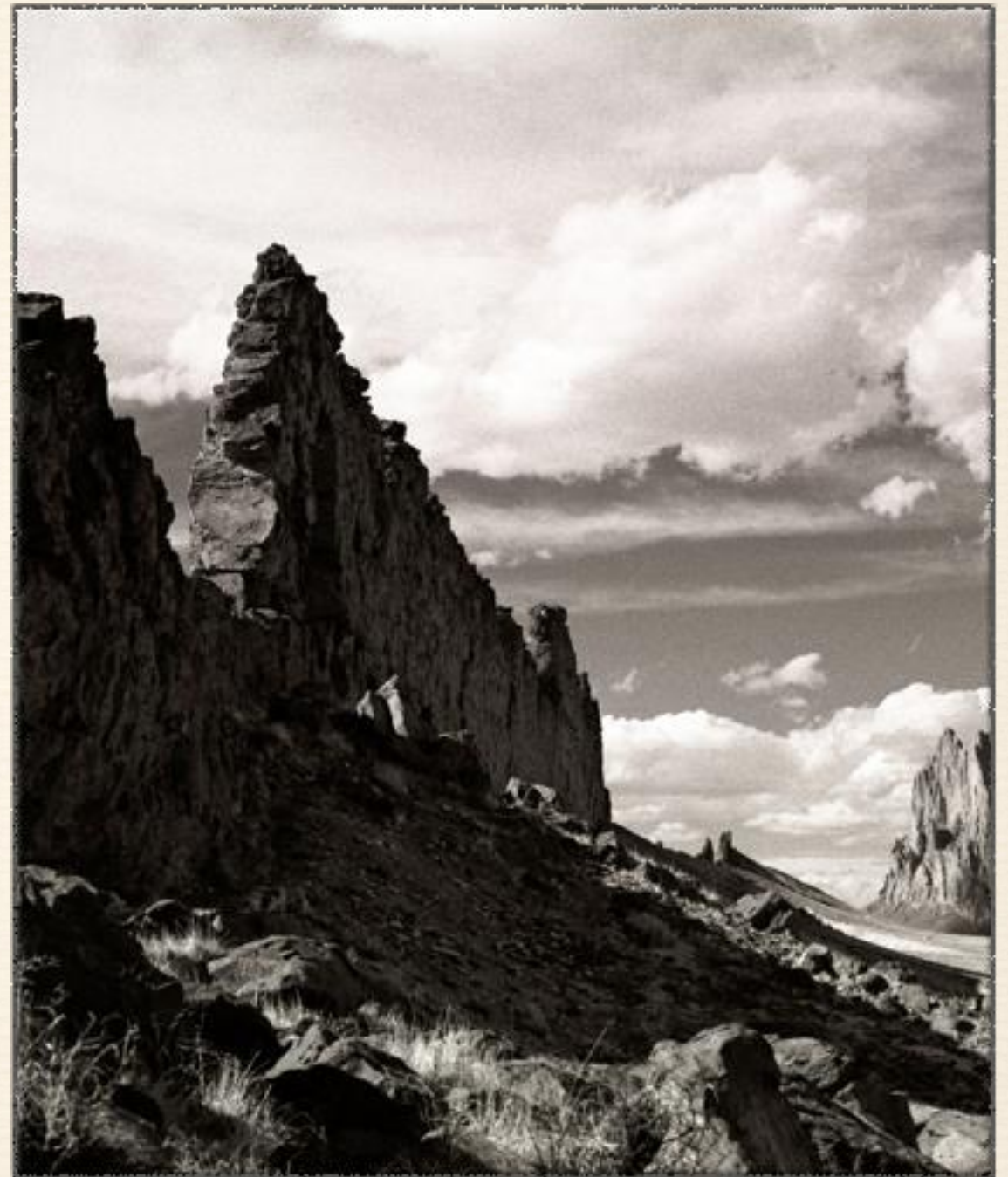
# A photo story





# Text and image

- ❖ The most popular format of stories on the web have text accompanied by a photograph.





# Credibility and hyperlink

- ❖ This is the biggest advantage of writing a story for a Website. Wherever you need to give a reference that adds credibility to your story you can link it to another story by using a hyperlink (the URL of any story can be used in your story) that can be your previous story or anyone else's or of a government website, a [Supreme Court](#) order, basically any other credible page on the World Wide Web. One story can have multiple hyperlinks



# Category link examples

- ❖ 1. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/diary-of-srinagar-lockdown/cid/1696258>
- ❖ 2. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/author/mukul-kesavan/180>
- ❖ 3. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/>
- ❖ 4. <https://deepanjoshi.wordpress.com/2011/03/01/the-vile-assassination-of-milan-kundera/>



- ❖ 1. Writing a news copy for the web is not much different from a good copy for a newspaper or a magazine except that you can use photo galleries, podcasts, videos, and hyperlinks. Keeping keywords and keyword density in mind is the only extra thing.
- ❖ 2. In a news copy, the first thing is to determine the key pieces of information. Failing to include the most important facts, or including too many facts together, kills the copy and is a disservice to the reader.





1. Asking what is the story is the best way to grasp the theme of a story. The theme can be simplified as having two elements: the what and why, or sometimes the what and so what.

2. When it's clear to the writer what the story is then it becomes easier to tell it. Before that the story must pass the test of accuracy because if it isn't true then it isn't news.

3. With that in mind, the publication must tell the reader how it knows what it knows. The strength of a story depends upon the preciseness of the attribution.



1. Sometimes the implication of the theme 'the so what' is more newsworthy and should take precedence. For instance, in any calamity the why is not as important as the so what. The number of people hit by a disaster is more important than why the disaster happened.

2. As a thumb rule a story must always look at the human cost and address the question of why people should care about it. The best leads in addition to the news let the readers know why they should care about the story.

3. Once a story has been clearly established the writer can provide other pieces of information to develop it further. The copy can be relatively-flexible in how to present the details of the story and where to add context and perspective.



1. The modern reader is in the middle of a mind-boggling bombardment of information and as a result of it what to leave out is as important a decision as what to carry. Irrelevant details and details put in the wrong place can destroy the story.

2. Within the first few paragraphs of the copy a quote supporting the story's key element adds credibility. A simple sentence does it nicely.

3. News is what people don't know and the story must begin with it and then develop it further.



1. If there is a conflict of interest the reporter should make sure to get the other side of the story.

2. Comparisons and historical references go well with certain stories. It gives the reader a sense of how the present story will play out. It is always a good practice to give a frame of reference so that the reader, for instance, knows what impact inflation has had on the value of his savings. When a company reports earnings the best way to serve the readership that has maximum interest (shareholders) in the story is to tell them the earnings per share. This is what drives the price of the stock.



1. Names make news and nothing sets the story more effectively than beginning with them. People want to read about other people and the bigger the name the larger is the appetite for the story.

2. A prevalent error in the copy is having the source before the news. For instance, Climate change scientists say global temperature would rise further. The news should come before the source. The exception is when the source is what makes the news; like Obama willing to send more troops to Afghanistan. The words of the Guardian's legendary editor C.P. Scott should be a journalist's small handy prayer: Comment is free but facts are sacred.



1. Try and find out if the story can be described in one sentence. On most occasions when that can be done the reporter/sub-editor understands the story and conversely if it takes five minutes to just explain the theme of the story the chances are that the storyline is unclear.



The substance of this piece can be condensed in a paragraph. First tell what is the story and then explain the why or the so what of the story. Do it as simply as possible and avoid complex sentences. Do not complicate the beginning by cramming too many facts and figures in the lead. Give the reader more of the what and the why if it is required. Provide the details that establish the story and tell the reader the source of the information. Provide at least one quote backing the theme by a person relevant to the story as this is the flesh and blood of the story. Back your story with details that support the narrative while taking care to distinguish between what to publish and what to leave out. Double check the facts of the story; the names, the ages, the introduction of the people in the story and other facts. Go beyond the obvious and try to answer what is behind the apparent. Check the veracity of your documents and try and get people on record. Identify any conflict of interest and always get the other side of the story. Build logical arguments around your facts but avoid conjecture and interpretation in a news story.



The last thing is the writing. Trust yourself and write the story in your own words rather than taking refuge in clichés. Even if you are just a beginner the story would have more life if you write it with your own words and understanding. A reporter who diligently devotes time to understand his subject would have more authority in his writing and would not rely much on modifiers or adjectives. Always keep the desk person in mind and give him a decent copy as he is not a magician who can create a beautiful garden in deadline pressure out of lifeless plants.



*Thank you for your time*

*-Deepan Joshi, Associate Editor, Down To Earth*