Live Blogging 101

Interactive News - JR 408

Emerson College

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What is a live blog?

Live blog

A continuously updated blog that provides coverage, analysis and/or commentary on an ongoing event.

Basics

- Similar to a blog, a live blog is ordered in reverse chronological order.

- Posts are time stamped, either by the author or by live blogging software.

Basics

- Live blogging is comparable to the coverage provided by a live broadcast of an event.

- Live blogging is often done for larger events. They are not usually a part of day-to-day reporting.
  - Sporting events are becoming an exception.

Basics

- Live blogs should be held to the same standards as traditional blogs.
  - AP style.
  - Correct spelling and grammar.
  - Correct names of place, people, position titles, etc.

- The most effective live blogs traditionally include play-by-play and analysis.

- Not all events lend themselves to being live blogged.

Basics

- Posts should be updated regularly throughout the event, but don't overwhelm your audience with posts.

- If you are live blogging on-site, include additional reporting and color to give your audience additional information.

Basics

- Make sure you are giving your audience enough information that your blog can be the only source users are following on this story/event.

- Live blogs may have more than one author.

Ethics

- Despite a quicker pace, live blogs are held to the same standards as other blogs and traditional media.
    - Fact checking.
    - Sourcing.
    - Citing information.

Tone

- There is often room for the author's voice to come through in a live blog -- either as the primary voice or when providing commentary/analysis.
  - Make sure your tone is appropriate for the event/occasion you are live blogging.

Multimedia

- Live blogs should still include links.

- Live blogs can include other forms of multimedia (photo, video, audio, community, polls, etc.)
  - Certain live blogging software programs are more multimedia friendly than others.

Tips

- Prepare beforehand.

Prepare

- Make sure you have the correct spellings and titles/positions of persons expected to be involved.

- Have numbers, facts and data that might be useful. Pull out interesting numbers/facts that you might be able to use in your piece ahead of time.

Prepare

- Do your research.
  - Know what might happen.
  - What would constitute significant news from this event.

- You can write some evergreen posts that you can have ready beforehand and can insert as post during the event.

Tips

- Prepare beforehand.

- Be flexible.

Flexible

- News does not always go as you anticipate.

- Be ready to shift direction.

- Don't get flustered.

Tips

- Prepare beforehand.

- Be flexible.

- Focus on key points.

Key points

- Do not try to do a complete play-by-play.

- Focus on the key moments.

- Don't try to provide a transcript.

- Summarize.

Tips

- Prepare beforehand.

- Be flexible.

- Focus on key points.

- Practice.

Practice

- Have an idea of how the software works in advance.

- Live blogging will get easier the more you do it.