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Building Better News Graphics

Homework assignments

Week 1 (total 35 points available)

Exercise 1 (due before second class, maximum 15 points)

After dividing into three groups of four, students will conceptualize at least three complementary graphics ideas for one of these three imaginary news leads. Students will develop a consensus and detail their ideas in a short budget note to the class.

Hypotheticals
1. Vaughn College recently outlined plans for the use of a $20 million classroom soundproofing grant from federal and state sources.
2. College students are voting at alarmingly low rates. Can we gauge the degree of interest in participatory democracy among Vaughn students?
3. Vaughn has had years to craft a better campus parking policy. Why with $60 million in campus upgrades planned over the next 10 years, has there been no movement toward construction of a student parking area?

Exercise 2 (group presentation to be given during second class, maximum 10 points)

From their chosen newspaper or news website, student groups will analyze one graphic they believed was particularly compelling. In a short presentation to the class (PowerPoint preferred) they will describe its effectiveness at complementing its accompanying story package. Identify at least two means of effectiveness.

Exercise 3 (10-question quiz by each student to be presented before second class; 1 point per correct answer for a maximum of 10 points)

Quiz is attached and also downloadable at my blog, www.jssmusingsonmedia.com.

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Week 2 (total 25 points available, possible 5 extra points available)

Exercise 1 (due one week after second class)

From the second week's assignments, student groups will …

1. Build on at least one of their graphics ideas as articulated in exercise 1 from the opening week through enhanced use of data and sourcing. Identify sources and their potential usefulness.
2. Articulate in a short budget line how the graphics ideas will enhance the overall telling of the story. (Sell it as you would be required to at a news meeting.)
3. Draft a working model or storyboard of what one of these graphics could look like.
4. Extra credit for those daring enough to attempt to create the graphic in Illustrator.