

HOW TO WRITE A WEB STORY AT KOMU

FIRST THINGS FIRST:

- A KOMU faculty or staff member will probably have to give you a CMS log in if you do a story on your own at KOMU. That way, you can sign into <http://www1.komu.com/secure> with your email address and a password that brings you to the main page on KOMU's admin website.
- Make sure that if you ARE going out alone to take photographs for a web story that you're also speaking with people. A web story with no quotes from people who attended the rally, the meeting, the event or whatever else you may be reporting on is NOT interesting. Think of it as writing a newspaper article—get stats about how many people attended, why they were there, what was decided, how it's going to impact the community and just simply important information about what you're reporting on.

Here's the process:

- Return to the station and write your web story first. The faculty is very strict about this. Thousands of eyes scan KOMU.com every day so it's important to have web-ready information as quickly as possible. This means you can write your web story as you're waiting for your photos to download to Photoshop on your computer.
- Go to www1.komu.com/secure and log in with your username and password. If you don't get one before your shift, ask the Tiger Chair what you should do. You may just ask another reporter to log you into CMS for that one shift, but make sure that's what the Tiger Chair wants that day.
- Once you're logged in, you will select **NEWS** and then **NEW NEWS** in the top right corner.
- Then you have a blank template for a story.
 - o Put in the **TITLE** (really should be called a "headline"). When you write your headline, be sure it has a verb in it. That tells the reader something happened--the very definition of news. So a headline like this: "MoDOT Cuts Jobs in Columbia" is far superior to "MoDOT Job Cuts" where there is no action.
 - o **BYLINE** (your name, of course)
 - o Choose sites: **www1.komu.com**
 - o Choose categories: **NEWS** and **CONTINUOUS NEWS**
 - o Default category: **NEWS**
 - o Display page: **VIEW NEWS.**
- Have your first image ready to go. Make sure it is cropped and correctly sized

for the web. **Your photo should be no bigger than 900 pixels wide, 600 pixels tall.**

- Here's the tricky part. An image is required on every web story so it's important that you find your best image that described your story you went to and you put it BROADCAST FILES on a KOMU computer.

- o It is the main server at KOMU that can be found on any KOMU computer in the newsroom. Go to computer—broadcast files – all news—month (February or whatever month it is)—date (14) and save your image in there as LASTNAME_SLUG (for example LEARY_PONIES)

- o Go back to your web story and click BROWSE NEWS IMAGE and UPLOAD. Then, you guessed it, upload the photo from broadcast files from the date you saved it under.

- After you have an image, you write your web story right underneath it. Here are some tips for that:

- o Use AP Style with dates, locations, titles and everything you have learned.

- o Put a dateline at the beginning of the story. The dateline format is to have the city where the story took place in caps, followed by one space, followed by one hyphen, followed by one space--all before the story. So it should look like this: COLUMBIA - Police said Monday... and not COLUMBIA-Police said Monday... or Columbia - Police said Monday...

- o Write a lead sentence that tells me what happened today. This tells the reader the news right at the top. Be careful not to start with background ("Columbia has a lot of potholes left over from winter weather"). Instead, give me the news first (Public works crews hit the streets Monday to begin filling potholes left over from this winter.)

- o Use the day of the week, not "today." Unlike stories we write for air, we don't use the words "today," "tonight," "yesterday," or any other word dependent on when you are reading the story. Instead of these words, use the day of the week (e.g. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.).

- o Use "said" not "says." AP style calls for us to use the past tense form of the verb in web stories. So all references to quotes and sources should use "said" and not "says" as we would use in TV copy.

- o Use quotes from people you talked to.

- o Please capitalize properly. Your headline should be in headline case—

first word capitalized as well as all others except articles and prepositions. The dateline, as noted above, is in all caps. The rest of the story should have regular sentence case. Capitalize the first word in each sentence and proper nouns ONLY. Too often, reporters come with random capitalization all through the story. Titles and job descriptions are often wrong. Check these before you come to the Tiger Chair.

o If possible, link to other websites for more information. For example, a city council agenda. Or perhaps a link on how to best prepare children for an earthquake.

o Think of it as a simple web story for any story you would write for a convergence story you are working on for 4804. Check out KOMU.com for some examples before your next shift.

• So, your story is written. Now what?

o First of all, SAVE.

o Then, click on the tab “meta tags” at the top of the web story. Here’s what you enter there:

§ META Keywords: This box should contain every word that is relevant to your story, separated by commas (but no spaces). Be sure to put all the names, places, and major nouns from your story in this box. You should put enough words to fill the box if possible.

§ META Description: This box should contain two sentences or so that encompass as many of the ideas of your story as possible. Pack the sentences as full of the important words in your story as possible, but keep them in a well-written form as some search engines will display them to the public. Limit this to 150 characters.

§ META Author: This is the simplest task of all. Put your first and last name in here.

• Now you can SAVE and head to Tiger Chair but DO NOT FORGET TO SAVE AND CLOSE OUT OF YOUR STORY. That happens a lot at KOMU and then the tiger chair will save the edited version at his/her desk and then you go back and accidentally hit save without thinking and guess what? All of the edits they just made are no longer there. The Tiger Chair will click APPROVE once they’re happy with the story.

• Now go crop/toner your Photoshop images, put them on Flickr and send them to

the KOMU TA for Convergence using their preferred email address (specified in the KOMU workflow checklist).