# Digital Storytelling Series with PBS Western Reserve

- Community partners, members, and individuals can learn the tools in creating digital content for effective digital storytelling.

- You will learn about digital content creation through website creation, video, audio podcasting, content strategy, and more.

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**Questions:**

Feel free to submit any questions or comments in the chat box during the presentation.

# Topics

- Stats on how people read and scan online content
- Content navigation behaviors and patterns of online use
- How people read mobile content
- How people use phones for different content
- Distractions and Multitasking
- Writing Tips/ Inverted Pyramid
- Platforms

# Understand the patterns and behaviors of online reading

# How People Read Mobile Content

**Question:**

# How long is the average attention span according to Microsoft?

https://www.bostondigital.com/insights/shrinking-attention-span-what-it-means-marketers

**Question:**

# 8 secs.

# Reading on the Web (Mobile)

- Initially, people do not read but scan content
- People scan 16% - 20% of written online content
- People scan for what catches their attention
  - Headlines, the amount of text, keywords, links
- People scan like ...
  - They scroll through social media
  - They are looking for specific information
  - A specific piece of information and need it quickly

# Reading on the Web (Mobile)

- *You have 8-12 seconds to catch their interest*
- *55% of all page views get less than 15 seconds of attention.*
- 2-3 letter words are skipped 75% of the time, while 8 letter words are focused on (keywords)
- People scan for what catches their attention
  - Headlines, keywords, length of text
  - Videos, photos

# Reading on the Web (Mobile)

- People scan for clear and concise messages
- The more words on a page the less they will read
  - People scan the length of an article before reading
  - Long paragraphs deter actual reading
- People do not read like *you think you do*

Mobile phone users navigate content with their fingers in different ways

# Mobile Phone Use

- Smartphone interruptions
  - Calls and Message notifications
  - Social media badges and alerts
  - Music Apps/Videos, Gaming
- How you use hold your smartphone can effect the reading or scanning of content

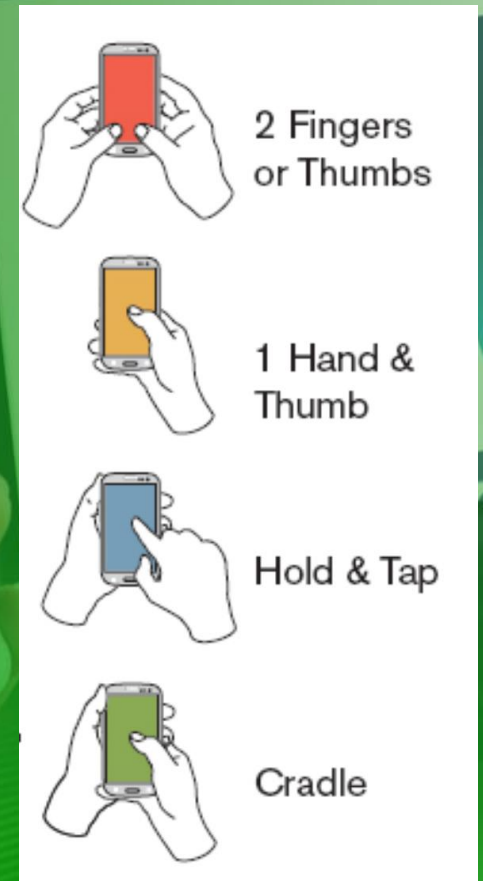PBS WESTERN RESERVE
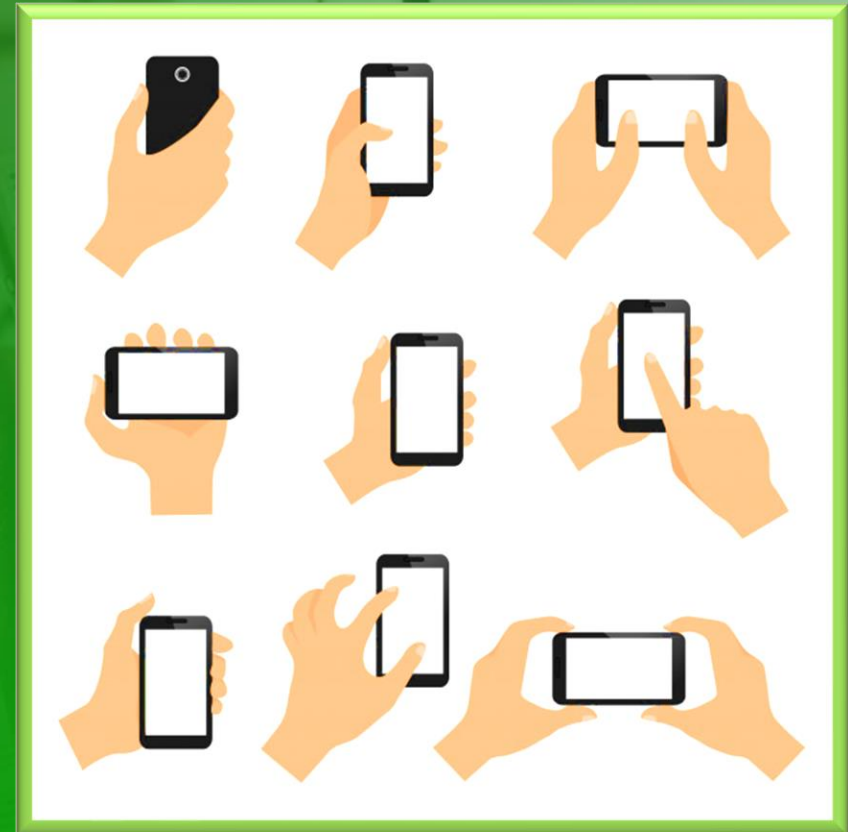
# Mobile Phone Use

- Different tasks, in this multitasking era, may change the physical interaction with the phone

- Basic ways of phone usage
  - One handed
  - Cradled
  - two handed
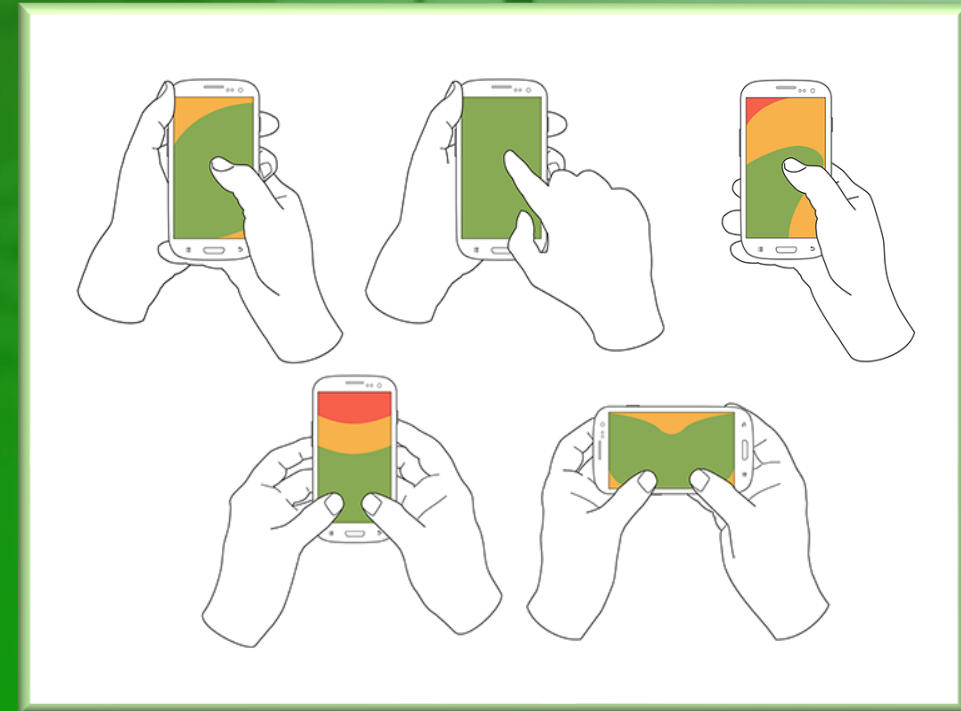
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# Mobile Phone Use by context
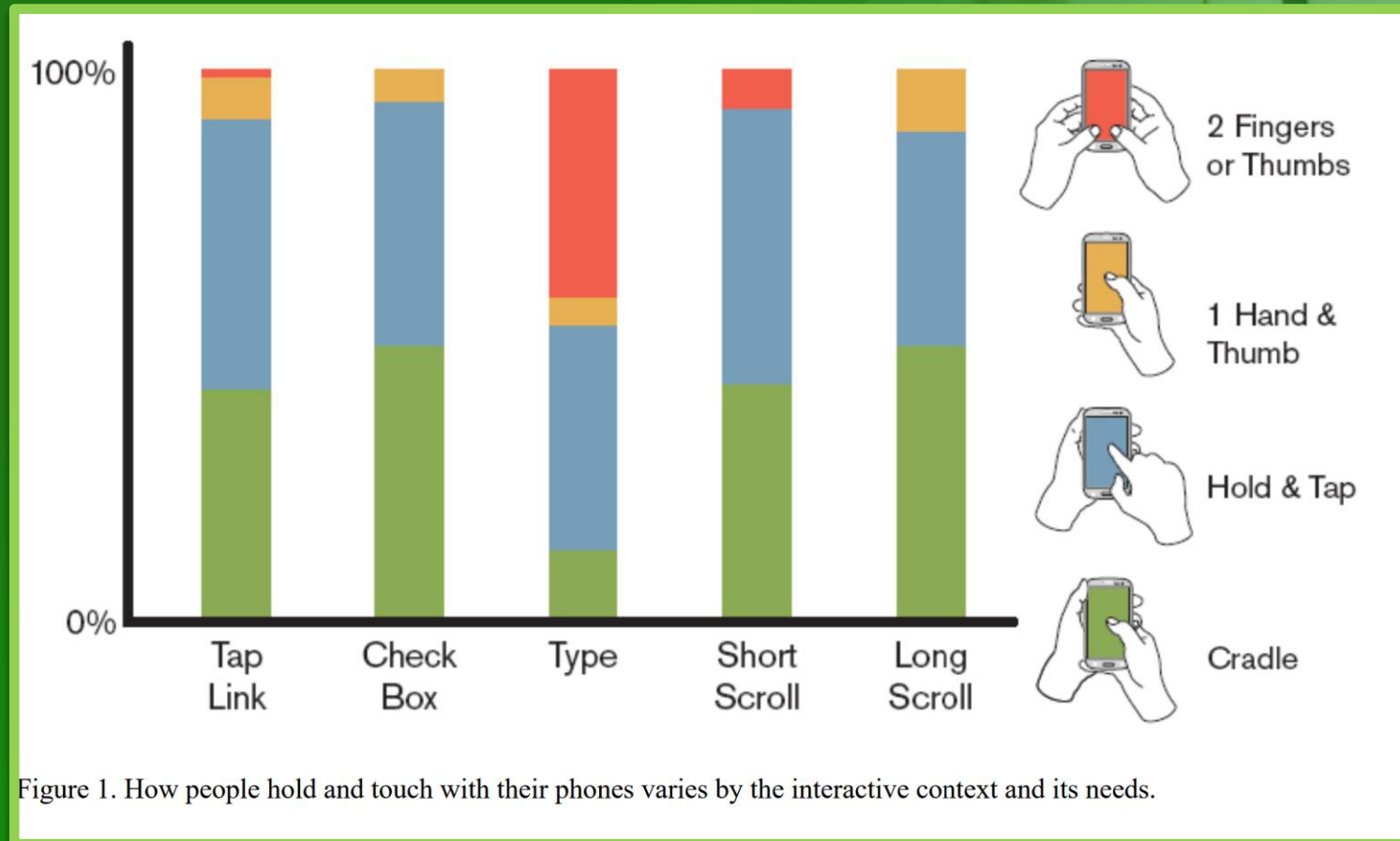


Figure 1. How people hold and touch with their phones varies by the interactive context and its needs.

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# What is the average reading level of Americans?

https://www.bostondigital.com/insights/shrinking-attention-span-what-it-means-marketers

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Question:
7-8<sup>th</sup> grade

# Readability

"The average American reads at the 7th- to 8th-grade level."

— The Literacy Project

# Readability

"The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that 50 percent of U.S. adults can't read a book written at an eighth-grade level."

-The Washington Post (2016)

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# Readability

- Readability is the ease with which text can be read and understood

- Knowing the reading level of your text can give you a general idea how many people may be able to read it.

- Text intended for readership by the general public should aim for a grade level of around 8, schooling age 13 to 14.

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# Readability

- Having a readable website with engaging content is a boost for any organization and increases engagement.

- Content with high engagement has many benefits, including:
  - Decreasing bounce rate and Increasing time on site
  - Readers want to share your content
  - Readers go further into your site

Having a readable website with engaging content is a boost for any business or organization.
https://readable.com/blog/the-flesch-reading-ease-and-flesch-kincaid-grade-level/

# Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test

- The Flesch Kincaid Readability Test is a widely used readability formula which determines the reading grade level of a text. It is effective for
  - Writing copy for your website
  - Advertising your product
  - Boosting your SEO performance
- Used by marketers, research communicators and others to measure the readability of text.

https://readable.com/blog/the-flesch-reading-ease-and-flesch-kincaid-grade-level/

# Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test Key Factors

- The Flesch Kincaid Readability Test scores are based on:
  - Sentence length or the average number of words in a sentence
  - Word length or the average number of syllables in a word
- The average length of a sentence has decreased with time, as well as our attention span

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# Distractions and Multitasking

# Distractions and Multitasking

- Videos and photos are more popular among mobile-phone users
- More likely to be interrupted by text messages, facetime requests, social media alerts, and phone alerts
- Users could be in different environments or on the move
  - Locations present emotional distractions
    - Doctors offices, in automobiles, airport, and more

# Distractions and Multitasking

- Smartphones are connected to the lives of many
  - Morning routines from checking news and more
  - Checking reminders, to-do lists, calendars
  - Divided attention

# Writing Tips

# Writing Tips Before The First Keystroke

- ## Know your audience
  - Before you start writing ask the following questions:
  - Who is my primary audience?
  - What about a secondary audience?
  - Why is your content important to your audience?
  - What keywords would you use in sharing your information?
  - What would get them to share the content?

# How many times have you shared an article just from reading the first few lines?

# Inverted Pyramid

# Inverted Pyramid

- Write your content like an upside-down pyramid
- Start with your conclusion or the most important information
  - Two to three sentences or short paragraph
- Rank your secondary information that explains or supports your main point.
- Web readers have short attention spans and will determine their interest in seconds.

# Inverted Pyramid Benefits

- Readers can determine if they want to read your entire article.

- Readers can stop reading at any point and still get the intended information.

- Reduces need for longer text and read time

- Encourages scrolling.

- Gets to the point and supports all types of readers.

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# Inverted Pyramid: Lead (Lede)

## The Lead
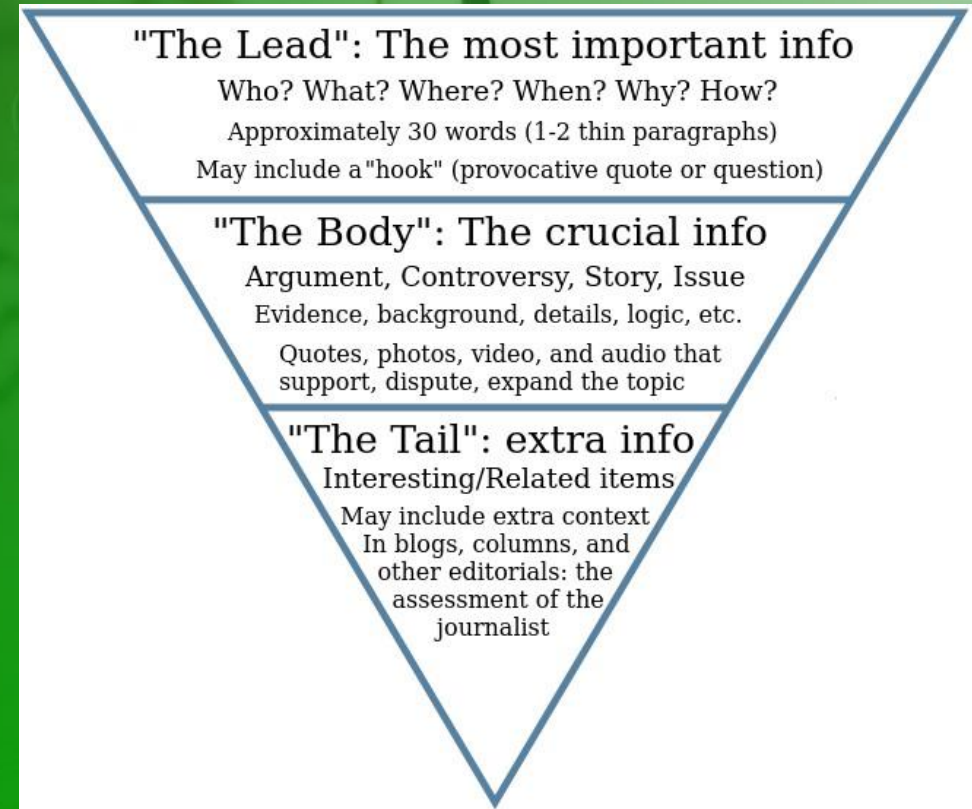
- This is the what, where, when, how and who of the story.

- This is the hook to get the audience to keep reading.



"The Lead": The most important info
Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
Approximately 30 words (1-2 thin paragraphs)
May include a "hook" (provocative quote or question)

"The Body": The crucial info
Argument, Controversy, Story, Issue
Evidence, background, details, logic, etc.
Quotes, photos, video, and audio that support, dispute, expand the topic

"The Tail": extra info
Interesting/Related items
May include extra context
In blogs, columns, and other editorials: the assessment of the journalist

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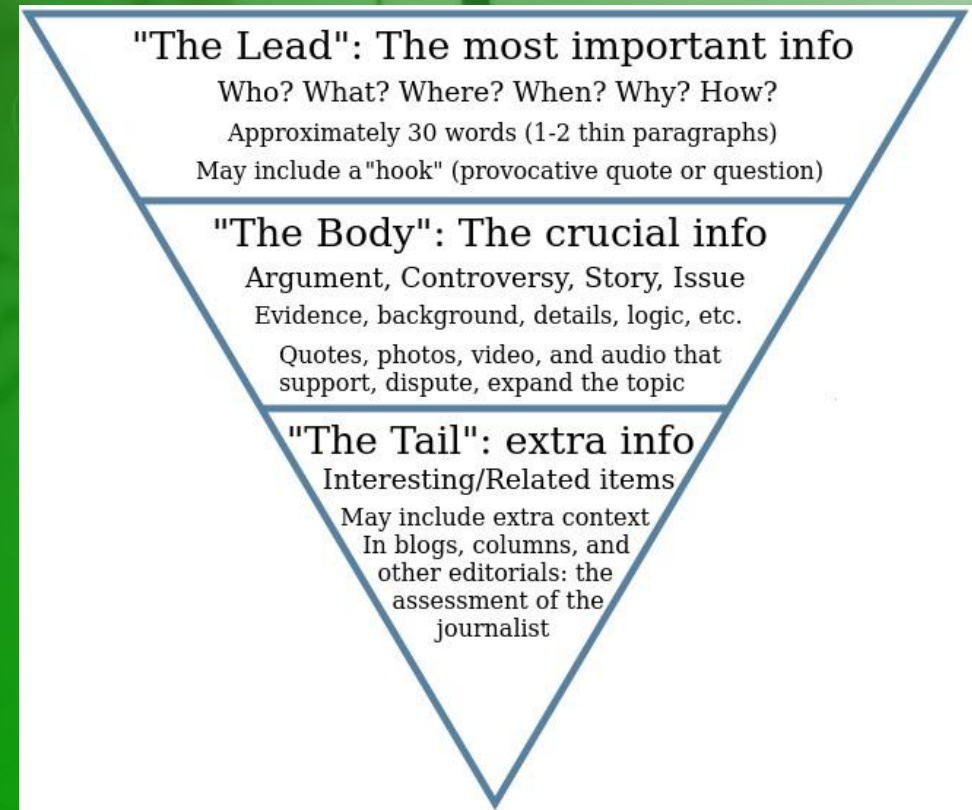
# Inverted Pyramid: Body

## The Body

- This is the supporting information of the lead backed with more detail.

- Includes photos, video, or audio to enhance written text and engagement



"The Lead": The most important info
Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
Approximately 30 words (1-2 thin paragraphs)
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# Inverted Pyramid: Tail

## The Tail

- This is any additional information or extra content such as links to other sources, urging readers to share, or any other call-to-actions



"The Lead": The most important info
Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
Approximately 30 words (1-2 thin paragraphs)
May include a "hook" (provocative quote or question)

"The Body": The crucial info
Argument, Controversy, Story, Issue
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"The Tail": extra info
Interesting/Related items
May include extra context
In blogs, columns, and other editorials: the assessment of the journalist

# Keep It Simple

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# Writing Tips: Keep It Simple

- Keep written content clear and simple
  - Use active voice and common language
  - strong, direct, and clear tone
  - use the same words and phrases your audience does.
    - Use these words as keywords for SEO – Search Engine Optimization
- Avoid abbreviations
- Avoid repetition

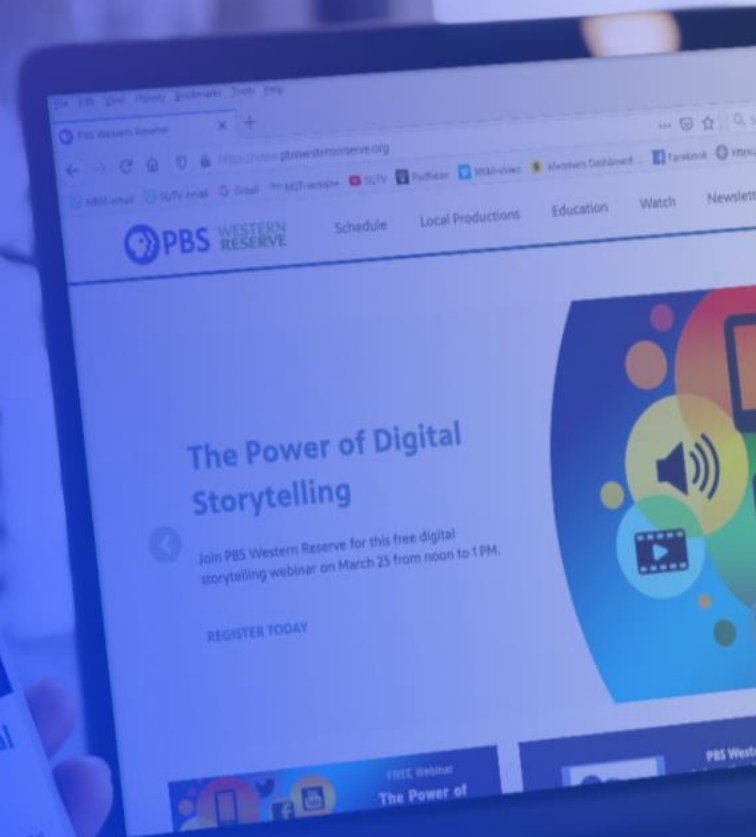Paragraphs, Sentences, & Lists

# Writing Tips: Paragraphs, Sentences, Lists

- Put the most important content in the first paragraph
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short
  - 2-3 sentences per paragraph
  - A paragraph should consist of 70 words or less.
- Choose lists over long paragraphs
- Use lists to make your content easier to scan

# Headlines

# Writing Tips - Headlines

- Headlines should communicate what the article is about.

- Headings and subheadlines allow readers to navigate content.

- Choose a word or phrase from the paragraphs that will make the reader want to keep reading.

# Writing Tips - Headlines

- Use short and direct headlines and subheadlines

- Use subheadlines to clearly describe the content in each paragraph.

- Helps divide long text into shorter text blocks

# Suggested Word Count
# In Writing For Web

| | |
|---|---|
| **Headlines:** | **8-10 words or less** |
| **Sentences:** | **15-20 words** |
| **Paragraphs:** | **40-70 words** |

# Formatting

# Writing Tips: Formatting

- Don't bold, italicize, or indents *unnecessarily.*
  - They can hinder scanning.
- Don't underline
  - Underlined content is reserved for hyperlinked text.
- Use proper font size, lists, and subheadlines.
- Don't use colors
- AVOID ALL CAPS
- Avoid multiple punctuation marks!!!???

# Platforms
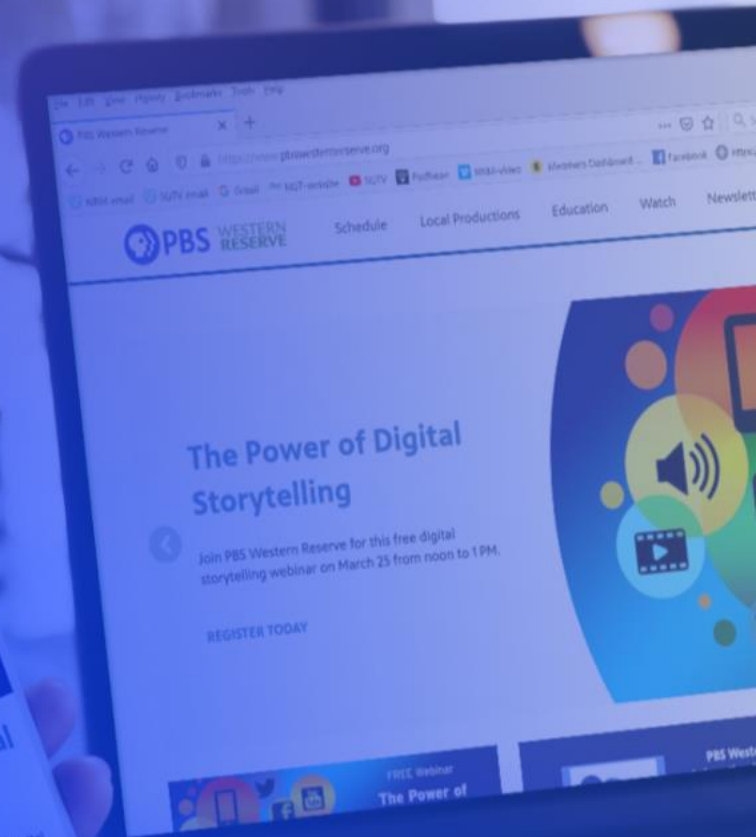
# Platforms

- ## WordPress (hosted)
  - Most customizable blog platform
- ## Medium
  - Best for building an audience
- ## LinkedIn
  - Best for attracting B2B projects
- ## SqaureSpace.com/Weebly
  - Good for small businesses
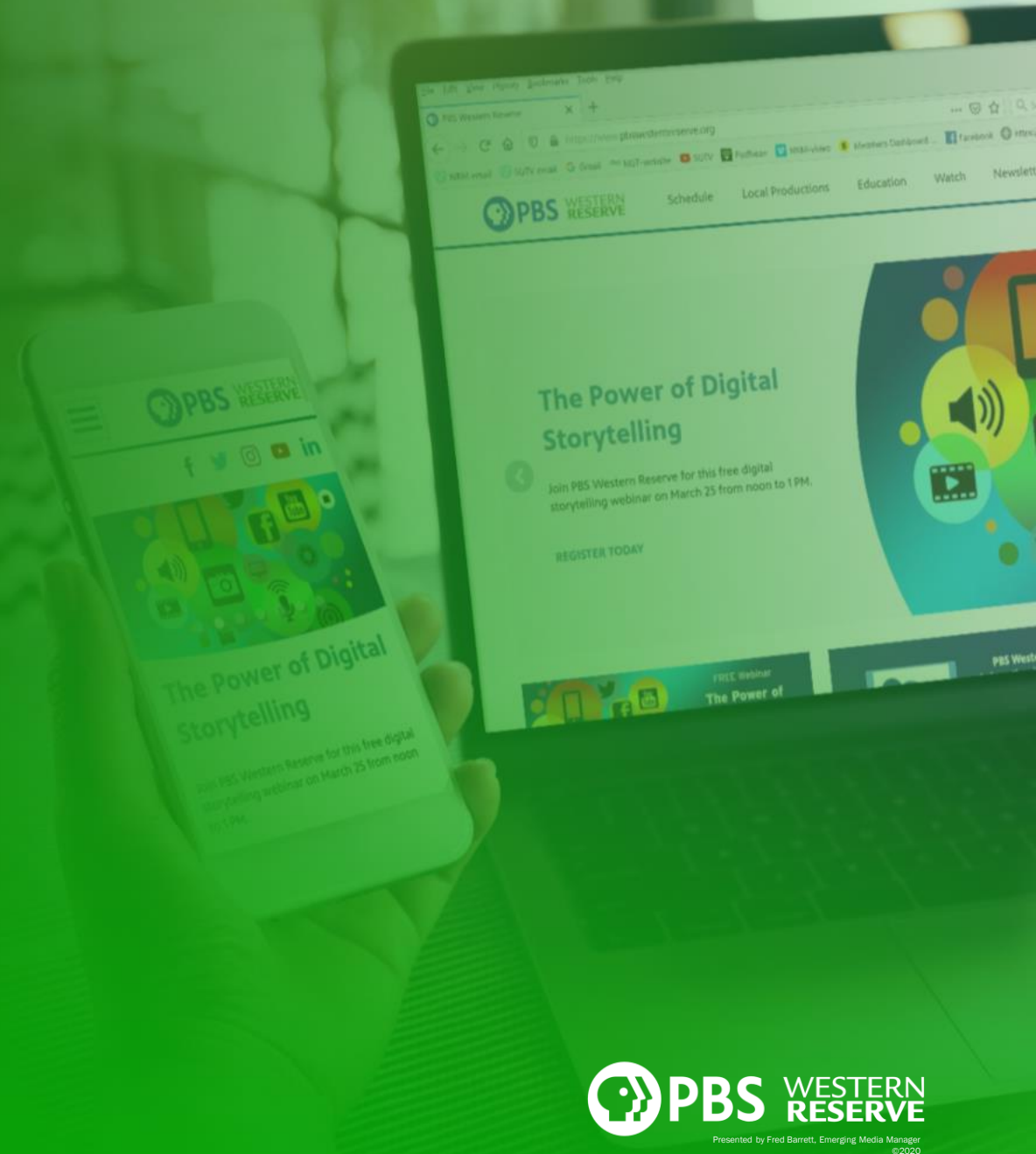
Join The Next
Power of Digital Storytelling Webinar!

Topic:
Graphic and Photo Basics
When:
Wednesday, April 28
12:00-1:00pm
(US and Canada)

Register in advance for this webinar:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4J-IrrtNTSayGt8jQfLGMA

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

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