

HEADLINES

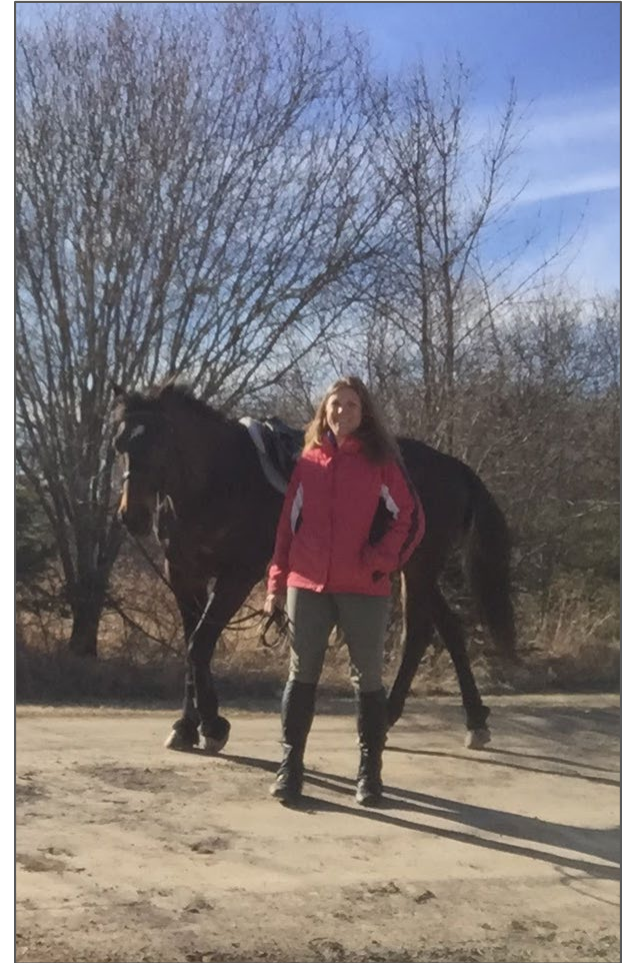
They're not just for editors anymore.



Erin Richards, USA Today
2019 AHP High Desert Media Roundup

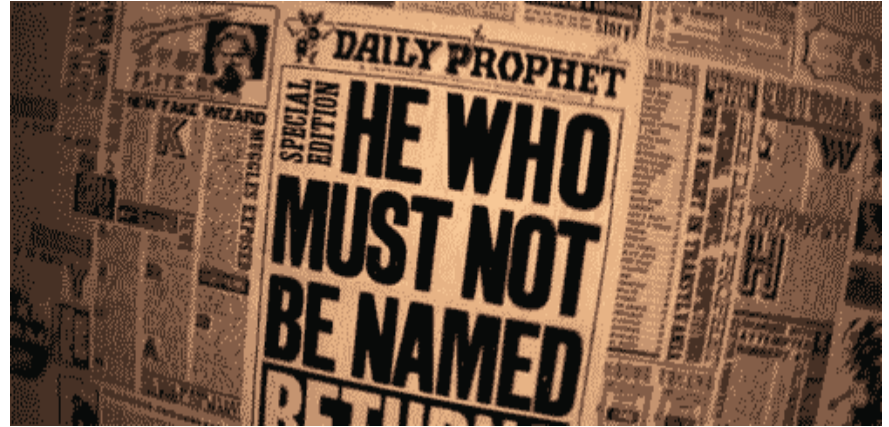
Introductions

- News reporter, USA Today
- Reporter and editor, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
- Longtime hunter/jumper and dressage rider
- Former trainer
- Former freelancer



What is the purpose of a headline?

- Give readers context
- Signal why they should care about the story
- Draw readers in
- **The headline is often the reader's only entry point into a story**



**not a great headline tbh*

Headlines should NOT:

- Tell readers what you did today
- Show off your wordplay/puns
- Use few words to tease tale



Good headlines include:

- A conversational tone
 - How would you describe the story to a friend?
 - Don't forget articles — “an” “a” “the”
 - What stands out the most?
- Verbs
 - Strong verbs if possible, but “is” and “are” paired with details and description are better than vague verbs (“celebrates”)
 - Look for vivid or unusual verbs.
 - “Reverberating,” “Thunders,” “Catapults,” “Trickles”

Good headlines include:

- The why/how — not just the “who” and the “what”
 - How did they do it? What’s interesting?
 - Why should I read about it? Does it affect me?
- Details
 - The “why” or “how” of the story
- Quotes (interesting, compelling ones)
- Emotion
- “Curiosity gap” — enough information that readers “get it” but still want to know more (and won’t be disappointed)

This story has a terrible headline.



Where the Horses Neigh With Accents: *Why You Should Study (and Ride) Abroad*

BY ERIN RICHARDS

Exotic landscapes. Strange accents. Architecture created thousands of years before America was even discovered. Without hesitation, many college students who have studied abroad say it was the best experience of their lives.

But for the collegiate rider, experiencing the thrills of studying overseas often means foregoing that fundamental passion that makes us tick. Not that you can't have a blast studying overseas for a year or semester without your riding boots and daily dose of horse manure, but what if you could do both?

Luckily, you can, and now it's easier than ever. As colleges and universities across the nation continue encouraging students to reap the educational and social rewards of studying abroad, administrators and faculty are catering to individual students' interests. Take Murray State University, a mid-sized public institution in Western Kentucky with a small equine program, where an increasing number of students are

Melanie McCallon about programs beyond the scope of the university's established exchanges.

"Students are coming to me more and more about how they can pursue their own program at an overseas institution," McCallon says. "We encourage it. We don't want them going abroad on one of our exchanges just because it's already established."

What this means for the collegiate equestrian is not only are there more opportunities than ever to combine a study abroad program with equine academics and international riding instruction, but American schools are willing to recognize credit for it.

The Preparation Diary Entry—Jan. 27, 2003

I can't believe I'm finally here—alone. The reality of traveling by myself to study horses for a semester at Hartpury College in England didn't sink in until last week when the international director e-mailed the final details. After reading it, I ran to the barn,

want to go. "You've been planning this for months," she said, putting aside the pitchfork to give me a hug. "You'll be fine."

So one week and a six-hour time difference later I'm here, outside the city of Gloucester, peering into my RV-sized bathroom, where the shower only becomes a "shower" when you pull the curtain across the track around the toilet. Water pressure? Trickling. Heat? Tepid. Yet curiously, the toilet flushes with the force of Niagara Falls.

At least I can see the "yard" from my window. The facilities include numerous barns, several indoor and outdoor schools, the therapy center, where veterinarians were galloping a horse on the treadmill when we walked by today and a surgery center where students can observe operations. I'm pleased the polished exteriors haven't extinguished that familiar musty horse scent; it's the only smell that makes me feel at home.

From public universities to private colleges, nearly every school employs a study abroad professional with whom you can discuss pursuing an equine pro-

I tried to
improve it.

The best + most flexible
university

Study Abroad: ~~for~~ collegiate equestrians,
these colleges

Study Abroad: How to complete your
degree at an equestrian-focused
college

Study Abroad: Equestrian experiences
can be affordable, productive +
enlightening

Study Abroad: Equestrian-focused
universities offer can ~~allow~~ collegiate riders
offer advice?

Bad read for study abroad:

Study Abroad: Riding Schools ~~in~~
How to ride + work

Complete your degree while riding
abroad

Study Abroad: How to design an
equestrian experience

The winner?

Study Abroad: collegiate equestrians
can earn credits at these top
equestrian schools

★ ★

★ Study Abroad: These ~~top~~ universities
are waving ~~at~~ America's collegiate
equestrians.


★ Study Abroad: complete your degree
at these top equestrian colleges

This is awful, too:

SPARKS Is The Shining Light For Cleveland Bays

By: Erin Richards

Feb 24, 2005 - 10:00 PM

 Print

Nestled within the rolling hills of south central England, a pasture within Henry Edmunds' Cholderton Stud farm makes most Cleveland Bay owners gasp the first time they visit. Edmunds' family has been breeding Cleveland Bays for more than 100 years, and in one of the pastures, 13 purebreds stand together in what is nearly as breathtaking a sight as the ancient monuments just a few miles away at Stonehenge.

Right now, it's the only pasture in the world where you can see this many purebred Cleveland Bays together in one herd.

But supporters of the critically endangered equine are trumpeting a new breeding management tool that may have the power to make herds like Edmunds' less of an anomaly.

Known as SPARKS, or the Single Population Animal Records Keeping System, the new acronym circulating around Cleveland Bay circles right now is a computer database that works with a genetic

Other things that can help headlines:

- Numbers
 - Data show that odd numbers do better.
 - Help illustrate magnitude of a big win, new tips, etc.
- Demonstrative pronouns like “these” and “this”
- Interrogatives like “what” and “when”
- Superlatives — “best” and “worst” and “most”
- Adjectives
- Questions (make sure it can’t be answered with “no.”)

Good headlines do not include:

- Overly long descriptions for simple things
- Jargon
- Acronyms
- Names of people who aren't household names
- Words that get in the way of the information (puns)
- Description of how news is not happening
 - *Few in Wisconsin have tasted sturgeon*
 - *Government shutdown not having big effect in Albuquerque*

Which headline won?

- Trump farm payments won't cover massive losses
- Trump farm bailout checks coming to Wisconsin farmers vary from thousands to a few dollars
- Wisconsin farmers will get an average of \$2,390 from Trump bailout
- Wisconsin farmers will get an average of \$2,390 from Trump bailout

Which headline won?

- Baraboo and the 1st Amendment: 5 things to know
- Does the First Amendment prevent schools from punishing students for free speech?
- Why did Baraboo not punish students involved in Nazi salute photo?
 - Why did Baraboo not punish students involved in Nazi salute photo?

Which headline won?

- The Bucks want to put everyone in a Giannis jersey
- Milwaukee Bucks Pro Shops are everywhere at the new Fiserv Forum
- Fans can buy Bucks gear every day at Bucks Pro Shops
- The Bucks want to put everyone in a Giannis jersey

Which headline won?

- Doctors who surrender license in one state can practice in another — and you might never know
- He removed the wrong body parts twice. And he's still a doctor.
- Bad doctors can practice in other states, despite losing credentials
- He removed the wrong body parts twice. And he's still a doctor.

Which headline won?

- Reckless shooters leave children vulnerable
- 'Everybody has a Glock': Why kids keep getting shot
- Kids killed in shootings even as homicides go down
- Kids often the unintended victims of fatal gunfire
- 'Everybody has a Glock': Why kids keep getting shot

Which headline won?

- Beavers return to Milwaukee River in downtown
- After nearly 200 years, beavers return to downtown Milwaukee
- Beavers return to Milwaukee River downtown for first time in 180 years
 - Beavers return to Milwaukee River downtown for first time in 180 years

Tips for thinking about a headline:

- My story is straightforward, but highly interesting
 - Write a straightforward headline but think about a “why?”
- My item is straightforward, but it’s something we produce every month for the same part of the magazine
 - For your readers, consistency may be key
 - If you need to mix it up, look for the “why”
- My story is ... complicated but highly interesting!
 - Look for the details
 - Look for a quote that hints at the mood/emotion of story

Headlines as an organizational tool

- Brainstorm early
 - Start when your story is just an idea
 - Find what's creative/interesting in 70 words
 - Use a Google doc or a notebook
 - Group brainstorm
- Turn your headline into a well-crafted pitch
 - Make it easy for your editor!
- Don't forget sub-heads
 - Break up your reporting with subheads that pop







Editors: Bonus tips for strong headlines

- What got you hooked?
 - Is there a key quote?
 - What's happening in the photo?
 - Challenge yourself to use stronger verbs
 - Power of the group: Headline Slack channel?
Email solicitations?
 - Don't be overly clever
 - Does the story's essence match the headline?

How would you make this headline stronger?

Equestrian professor celebrated for 50-year legacy in her field

- Gayle Lampe, 72, is an emeritus professor at William Woods University in Fulton, MO.
- She was chair of the dept & saddle seat program
- Lampe is about to be inducted into the International Saddlebred Hall of Fame

Write a headline for a story with these details:

- Wellington, Florida becomes the horse capital of the world during the annual Winter Equestrian Festival from January through April
- Children of billionaires like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates show up to compete
- 3,000 horses
- 12 show rings
- Mecca for luxury goods sales (Hermes, Louis Vitton)

What did you come up with?

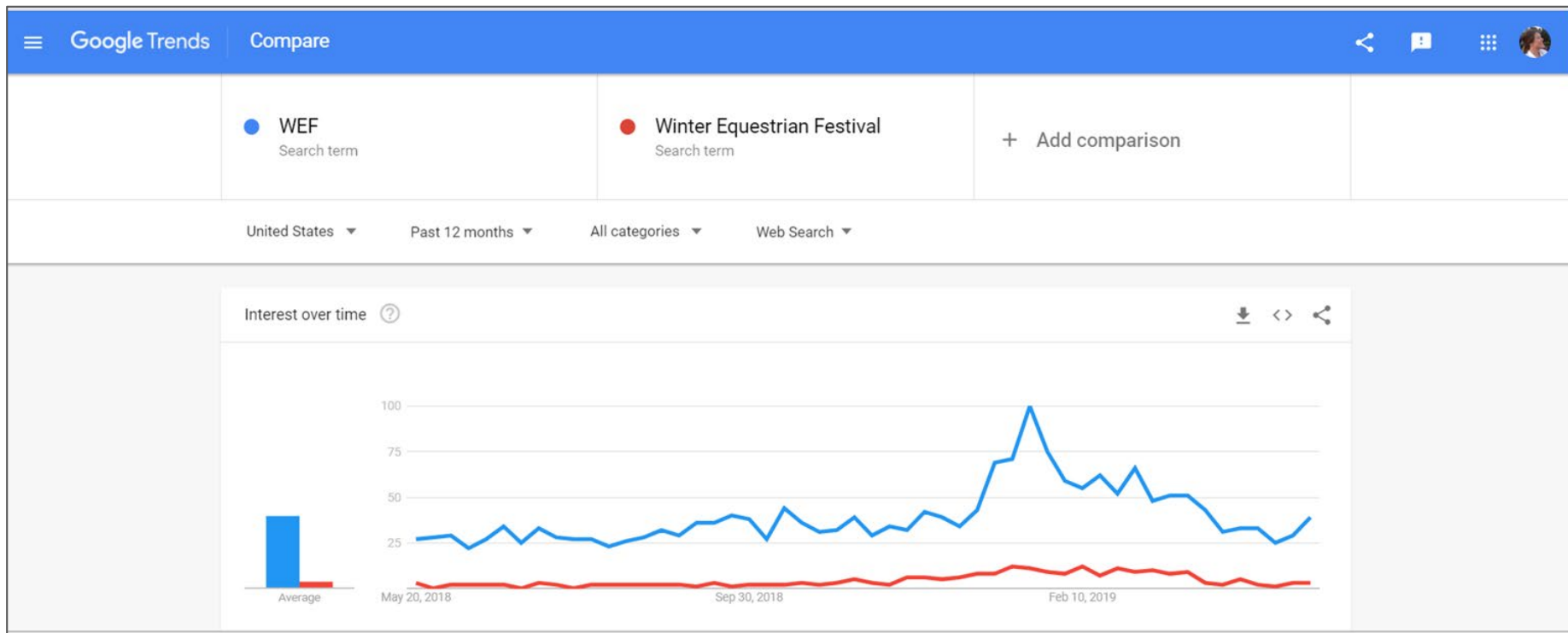
Actual headline in Business Insider:

This relatively unknown town in Florida has become a horse 'Disneyland' for the richest of the rich, including Bill Gates' and Steve Jobs' offspring

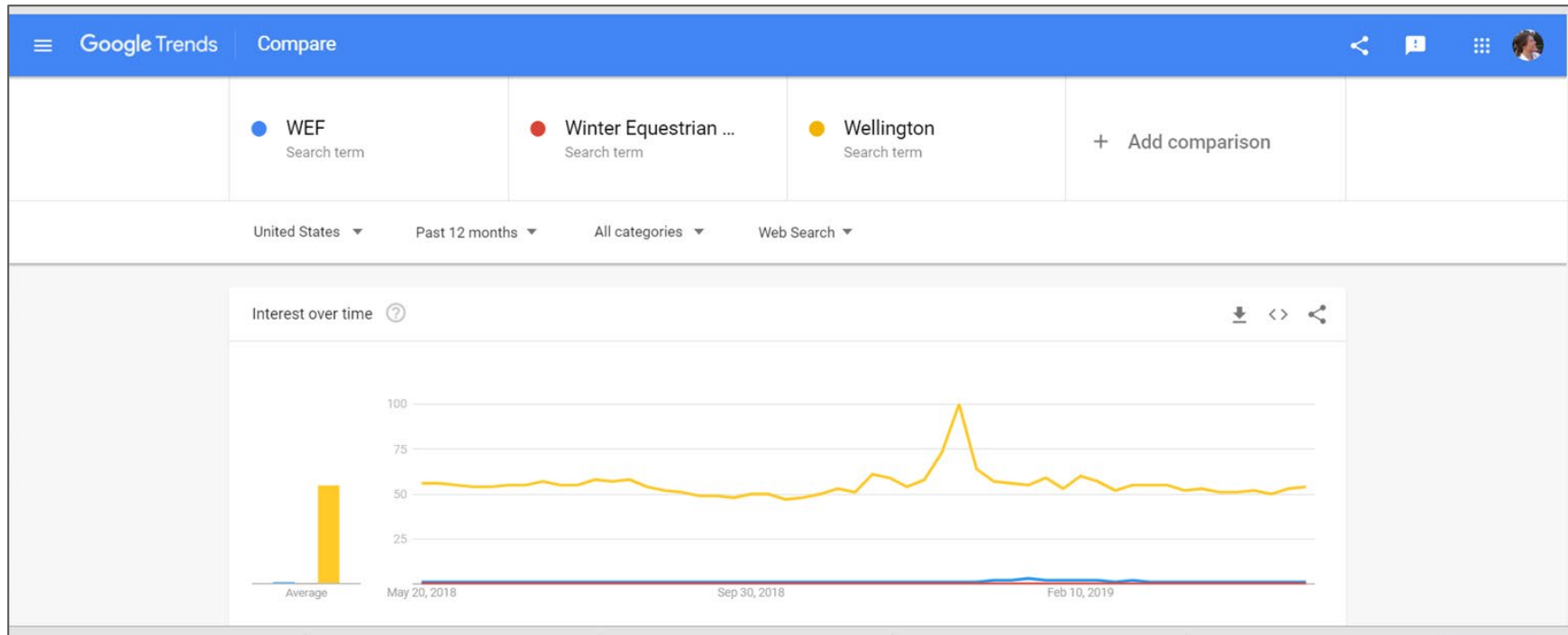
SEO tactics for headlines

- Use Google Trends
- Use stronger keywords earlier in the headline
- If necessary, alter the URL to match the headline. If someone sees the URL, would they know what the story is about?
- Use proper names

“WEF” vs. “Winter Equestrian Festival”



But, “Wellington” is probably better.



Exercise:

Write down a story you're
working on and brainstorm
some headlines for a few
minutes

Conversation and questions

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