



Big thinking for big projects

Tips for developing special issues and themed content

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HORSES

TRAVELS

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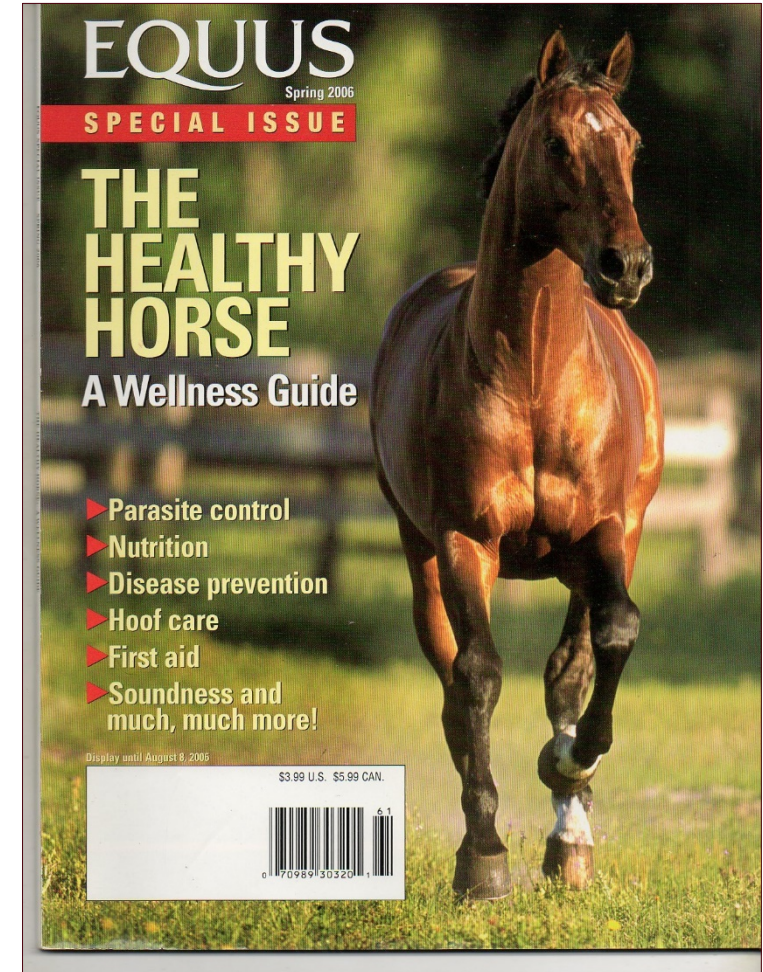
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What we're going to cover

- Steps to building a big series
- Walk through a recent project
- How to expand your work into live events or other revenue-generating partnerships that can attract readers
- Themed issues vs. ongoing stories on a single topic
- Brainstorm: What would work for your publication/outlet, or for your lineup of freelance assignments?

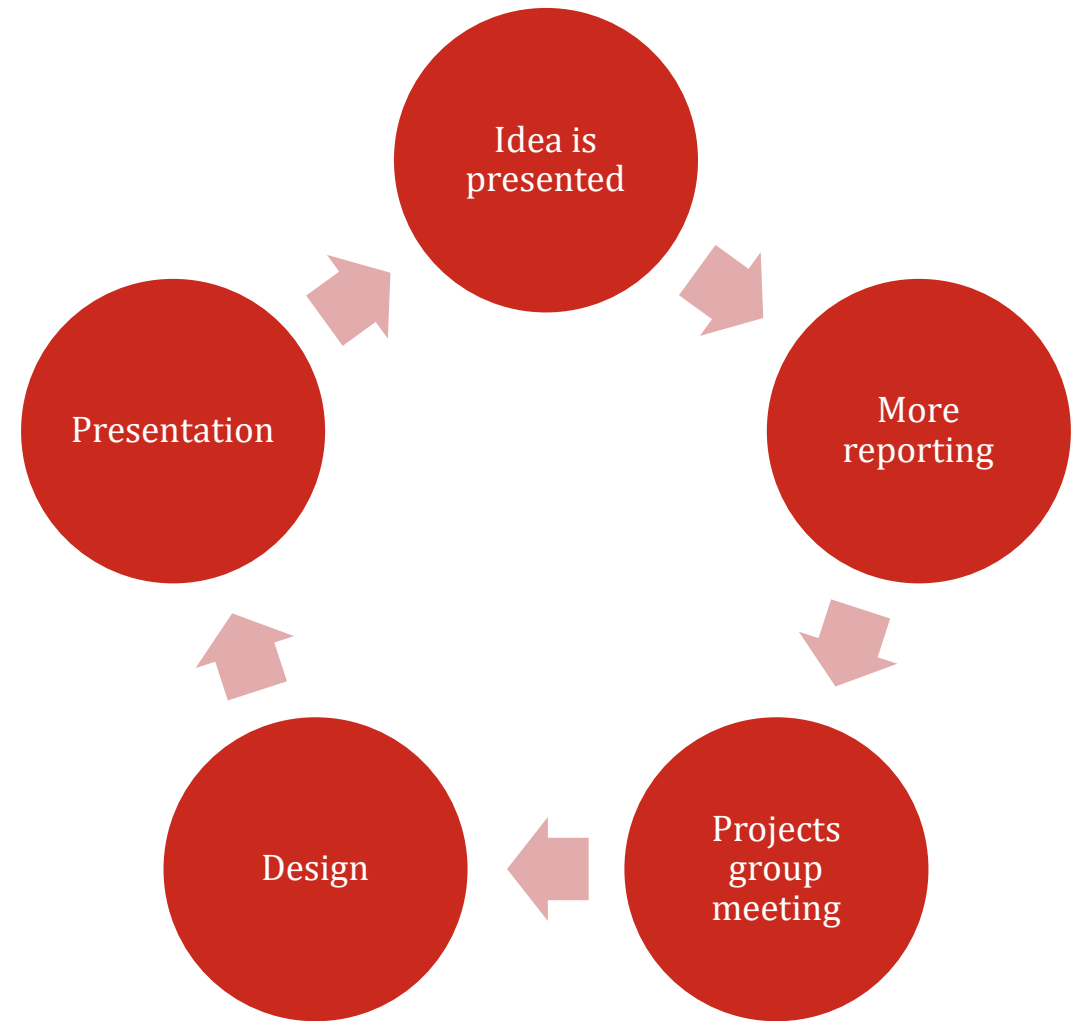


Why do a project or a series?

- Deeper reader engagement
- Lots of interest on a single topic
- Sell targeted advertising
- Connect with a sponsor
- Develop opportunities for partnerships
- You've got interesting data

Projects process

- Everything starts with an idea
- Ask: “What would it take to do...?”
- Push yourself to try something new
- Why do this now?
- Projects are often a team sport



Projects process, cont.

- Someone has an idea & talks with an editor
- More reporting
- Create a **project memo** that outlines the big picture, and all the steps you need to take
- Meet with a group for feedback. Get designers, managers, even interns in the room
- Think ahead about the presentation: photo galleries, podcast, alt story forms, quizzes, online chat, data viz?
- Create an audience-building checklist: What could you do post-publication to attract new audiences?



Projects process, cont.

- Check partnering/sponsoring opportunities
- Promotion checklist: Create a video trailer? Pre-write tweets and Facebook posts. Set up TV or radio?
- Check that interactive media is there, stories are drafted and edited, photos and videos are there
- Create an online production schedule
- Create/carry out the post-production plan



Lessons Lost

At many low-performing schools, kids can't get ahead because of a hidden problem nobody knows how to tackle:

Children don't stay put.

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
October 2018*

Click the headers to see how states track mobile students. Click each state for more information.

SCHOOL LEVEL DATA IS POSTED



The Journal Sentinel's analysis emphasizes states that openly published data on student mobility as of 2018. Some states track it, but only share it with the public if



LESSONS LOST | A JOURNAL SENTINEL SPECIAL REPORT

A Wisconsin city tackled school turnover like a health crisis. Things didn't go as planned.

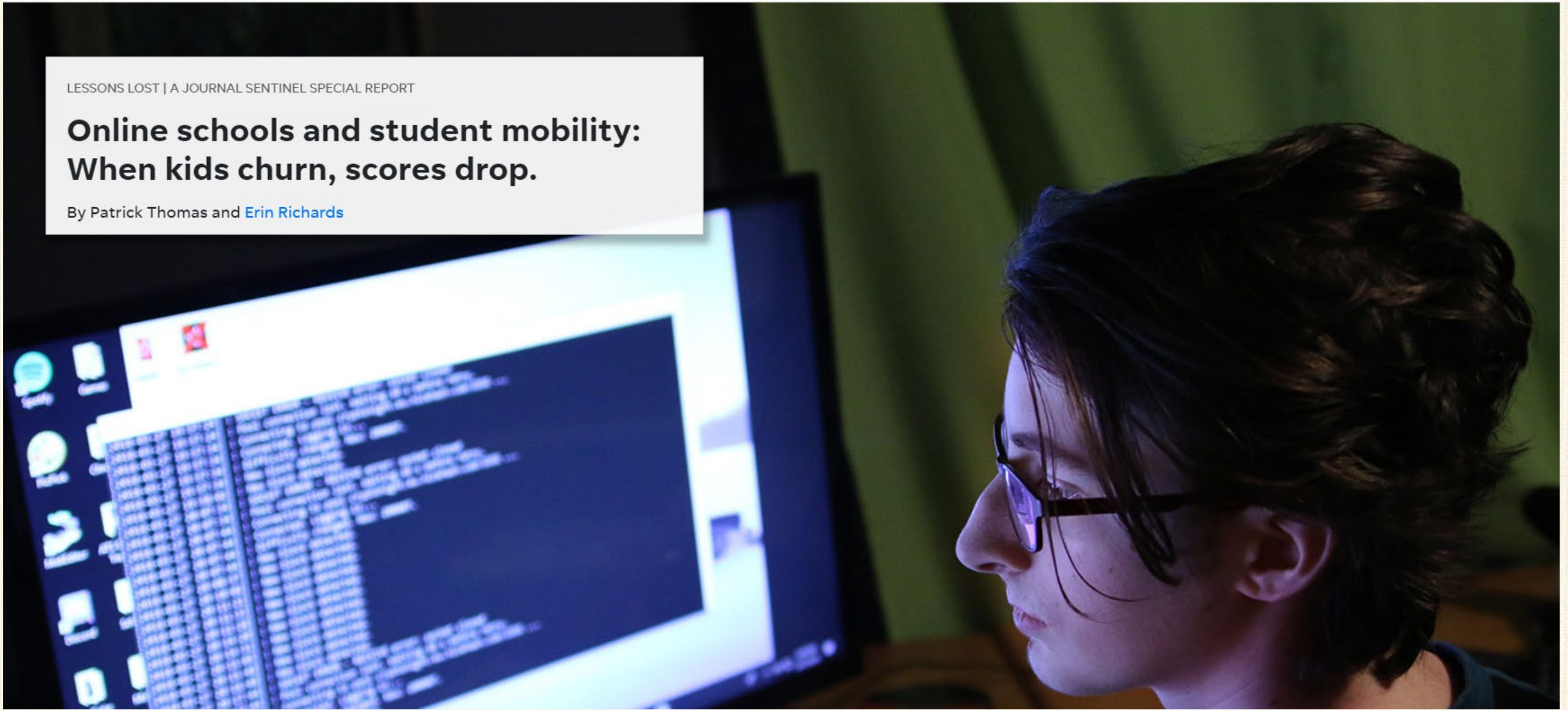
By [Erin Richards](#)

<http://jsonline.com/lessonslost>

LESSONS LOST | A JOURNAL SENTINEL SPECIAL REPORT

Online schools and student mobility: When kids churn, scores drop.

By Patrick Thomas and [Erin Richards](#)



<http://jsonline.com/lessonslost>



Getting a project to new audiences

- Connect with the arts community
- Put sources on the air with local radio
- Partner with a local PBS station
- Contact relevant researchers at local colleges
- Create your own live events. Or partner with other people already doing them.

Exercise:

What are you working on?

What do you want to be working on?

THEMED ISSUE

- The DIY / how-to issue
- The college issue

What would work for you/your readers?

STORIES ON A SINGLE TOPIC

- Racing deaths
- Equine travel destinations
- *What would work for you/your readers?*

To recap:

- What do you want? What do readers want?
- Set goals for the reporting
- Solicit feedback
- Make a plan for design, production, publication & post production
- Think about partnerships & sponsorships
- Spearhead a post-production plan. Event? Video? Promos from other outlets?



Thank you!

Questions?

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Link to videos that were used in
the presentation:

[https://www.jsonline.com/
news/education/](https://www.jsonline.com/news/education/)