

PR News Writing Boot Camp – *The Press Release: Creating Content that Reporters Will Actually Read*

Presented by:

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Is It Press Worthy?

The cold hard truth. Here are a few questions to help you:

- **Timely**
- **Prominence**
- **Impact**
- **Proximity**
- **Human Interest**

If yes...

Press release, media advisory or pitch?

- **Press release** – Includes more details, facts and quotes.
- **Media advisory** – Who, what, where, when, why.
- **Pitch** – Shorter and more informal.



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Elizabeth Hillman, Discovery Education

DISCOVERY EDUCATION UNVEILS GROUND-BREAKING MATH TECHBOOK, THE LATEST ADDITION TO AWARD-WINNING DIGITAL TEXTBOOK SERIES

-- Emphasizing Real-World Connections and Encouraging Inquiry-Based Learning, Math Techbook Promotes Lasting Student Proficiency --

SILVER SPRING, Md., (January 8, 2015) – [Discovery Education](#), the leading provider of digital content and professional development for K-12 classrooms nationwide, today officially unveiled its comprehensive [Math Techbook™](#), a dynamic digital textbook designed to promote lasting student proficiency. [Math Techbook](#), the latest addition to the company's award-winning line of digital textbooks, transforms the way students and teachers experience math through engaging instructional strategies and real-world problems that motivate and excite students with diverse learning styles.

[Math Techbook](#) is designed to encourage inquiry-based learning. Through its Discover, Practice, Apply instructional approach, [Math Techbook](#) moves conceptual learning, procedural fluency and real-world problem application through a cycle that promotes greater student knowledge retention. [Math Techbook](#) supports middle school math (sixth, seventh and eighth grade), high school math (Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry), and Integrated Math (Math I, II and III) instruction.

To download hi-res images and b-roll footage of [Math Techbook](#), please visit <http://press.discovery.com/us/discovery-education/programs/discovery-education-math-techbook/>.

MEDIA ADVISORY

DISCOVERY EDUCATION HOSTS OFFICIAL LAUNCH EVENT FOR GROUND-BREAKING DIGITAL MATH TECHBOOK

-- Event Will Feature a Compelling Thought-Leadership Panel on Math Achievement and Model Lesson Delivered by Students and Educators --

WHAT:

On Thursday, January 8, [Discovery Education](#) will host the official launch event for the [Discovery Education Math Techbook series](#), a breakthrough, interactive digital textbook that fosters a deep understanding of math concepts and demonstrates to students the relevance of math in their everyday lives. The day's events will include a thought-leadership panel to discuss the wide-ranging implications of math achievement in the United States. Additionally, students and educators from D.C. Public Schools and Maryland's [Wicomico County Public Schools](#) will model sample lessons from [Math Techbook](#), demonstrating the digital textbook's innovative instructional method, interactive features, embedded tools and assessment resources to more than 50 guests from across the country. [Math Techbook](#) is the latest addition to the company's award-winning line of [digital textbooks](#), transforms the way students and teachers experience math through engaging instructional strategies and real-world problems that motivate and excite students with diverse learning styles.

WHO:

- Thought-leadership panel will be moderated by NBC News4 Today anchor Aaron Gilchrist and will feature:
 - Dr. Mark Edwards, Superintendent of the Mooresville Graded School District in Mooresville, N.C.
 - Dr. Francis "Skip" Fennell, Professor of Education at McDaniel College
 - Danica McKellar, Actress and Best-Selling Author
 - Michelle Westlander-Quaid, Chief Innovation Evangelist at Google
 - Portia Wu, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training
- U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez
- Students from District of Columbia Public Schools' Wheatley Education Campus
- Students from Wicomico County Schools' Bennett Middle School and Wicomico High School
- Bill Goodwyn, President and CEO, [Discovery Education](#)
- Kelli Campbell, Senior Vice President, [Discovery Education](#)
- Hall Davidson, Senior Director, [Discovery Education](#)
- Scott Kinney, Senior Vice President, [Discovery Education](#)
- Patrick [Yoneda](#), Director of Mathematics and lead content creator of [Math Techbook](#), [Discovery Education](#)

WHEN:

Thursday, January 8, 1-4 p.m. Highlights of the day include:

- 1:00 p.m. Kick-off with Hall Davidson
- 1:05 p.m. Remarks from U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez
- 1:15 p.m. Thought-leadership panel, *What Does It Mean to Win?*
- 2:30 p.m. [Math Techbook](#) Launch with Bill Goodwyn and Kelli Campbell
- 3:10 p.m. Student Experience with [Math Techbook](#)
- 3:20 p.m. Closing Remarks by Scott Kinney

WHERE:

[Discovery Education's](#) Global Headquarters, One [Discovery Place](#), Silver Spring, MD 20910
Livestream: <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/mathtechbooklaunch>

CONTACT:

Elizabeth Hillman, [Discovery Education](#)

About [Discovery Education](#)

[Discovery Education](#) is the global leader in standards-based digital content and professional development for K-12, transforming teaching and learning with award-winning digital textbooks, multimedia content that supports the implementation of Common Core, professional development, assessment tools, and the largest professional learning

Hi XXX,

[Elizabeth Hillman](#) [here from Discovery](#). I wanted to touch based with you after reading your article from earlier this week "Does Common Core really mean teachers should teach differently?" because we are hosting a thought-leadership event early next year (Jan 8) all about math education and thought you'd be interested in it. At the event, Math: What Does It Mean to Win?, we will unveil our latest digital textbook...[Math Techbook](#). What I thought would be of most interest is the thought-leadership panel that kick off the event. It will feature the following speakers with one more to come:

- Portia Wu, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training
- Dr. Francis "Skip" Fennell, an internationally renowned expert in mathematics education who developed the first graduate program for elementary mathematics teachers in Maryland as well as recently completed a 2-year term as President of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- Dr. Mark Edwards, Superintendent of the Mooresville Graded School District in Mooresville, N.C., who was named the 2013 National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators
- Aaron Gilchrist, anchor NBC4 Today will moderate

Throughout the day there will be a lot of great discussion around the state of Math education and I think you might be able to get some great story ideas from it. Below are more details. Do you think you'll be able to make it out to the event? Let me know and I'll make sure to add your name to the list. Let me know if you have any questions in the meantime.

Best,
Liz

dronan@buses.org @lizziewdc #PowerOfPR

Headline that grabs readers' attention

- Make a great first impression.
- The Subject and Headline of the Press Release is the first impression.
- It must catch their attention and be relevant.
- It must be factual.
- Don't even think about inflating the facts or the importance of your release in the subject line or the headline.

How to draw a reporter's attention

- Current

- Statistics →

The first module, available today, will be focused on cyber safety and teaches children ways to keep their devices and personal information safe. According to the McAfee “[2014 Teens and the Screen](#)” study conducted by Intel Security June 3, 2014, 14 percent of youth between the ages of 10 and 18 have posted their home address online, while only 61 percent have enabled privacy settings on their social profiles. It's more important than ever to educate children about online safety and why it's important not to overshare and to pay attention to settings and profiles.

- Timing

- Research your reporter

Powerful quotes

- Minimize boilerplate language.
- Quotes are like salt, pepper or 'Old Bay' on food. A proper amount improves the taste, too makes it uneatable.
- Stick to the company's top newsmakers in quotes.
- Reporters are very busy, and often stressed. Don't make their days worse.
- Which would you rather have? A press release that gets your company or product into a story, or a press release that is long, has too many quotes, and the reporter deletes it because it's deemed too long.
- Quotes are essential, but they add words and may take away from factual information that may be more important to the reporter.

Other helpful tips – from a journalist's perspective

- If sent more than once, let reporters know the release is a re-run.
- Be available on the day the release is issued in case a reporter contacts you.
- Always provide contact information in the press release.
- Try to avoid wall of text.
- <http://www.prnewsonline.com/featured/2015/03/23/pr-insider-the-write-stuff-telling-the-story/> Great PR News article with tips for press release writing and strategy.
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/maggie-quale/how-to-stop-pissing-off-r_b_5623991.html Advice to help PR people be more successful.



Managing the approval process

- Know your deadlines. If a release has a scheduled day to go out, make sure you can get it approved long before then, 24-48 hours.
- How many people need to approve? Anticipate delays.
- Take responsibility/ownership for your part of the process.
- Know in advance how long the release will be. Stick to that word count.
- Get the facts, get a great first draft with perfect spelling, grammar and strong writing. Be critical. Look for traps—you'll find them.
- Does the release need to be cleared by legal? Give them lots of time. Does the release make claims that could get your company sued?
- We are part of a process. Don't let your ego get engaged about ownership.

Supporting materials

- **Photos**
- **Video**
- **Logos** – Ensures outlets use current logo.
- **Hyperlinks** – To initiatives mentioned in the announcement.
- **Keywords** – Use two or three throughout your headline, subhead and first paragraph to ensure consistency of messaging and increased chances of search results.
- **Hashtags** – Include relevant hashtags when sharing releases on social media to allow for optimal exposure.



Timing

- Know best times for contacting reporters on deadline.
- TV newsrooms still have a morning and afternoon editorial meeting, usually at 9am and 1:30pm. Do not call or email when they're in meetings, make your pitch the night or morning before.
- Learn their schedules and remember the closer to a newscast, the more frantic the reporter will be. A call to a 'dayside' reporter at 5:50pm, 10 minutes until their live shot at 6pm won't be good.

Sending the document to the media

- Relationships matter. If you get a reporter on the phone, understand time is their biggest enemy.
- Before you call, email, text, use social media and have the material in their hands.
- Do not 'cold call' a reporter and expect a good outcome.
- Know who you are talking with, what stories they usually cover.
- If you want a good outcome and coverage, preparation is critical.
- Expect your pitches will be rejected more than they are acted upon.
- Reporters are not there to make you look good, they cover stories because they believe the content is interesting and the public needs to know.

Utilize other platforms

- Use every platform you have to amplify your message.
- **Social channels** – Include relevant hashtags when sharing releases to allow for optimal exposure.
- **Company blogs** – Effectively increase awareness and position news beyond the release.
- **Internal networks** – Share news with internal employees.



Discovery Education Makes an Impact at 2015 SXSWedu

MARCH 19, 2015 | BY LISTEWARD

While the folks over at Animal Planet were busy **rocking out** to 80s cover band "The Spazomatics" at the network's third annual cat party, the **Discovery Education** team was celebrating another type of rock stars: educators!

During the 2015 **SXSWedu** conference in Austin, TX, Discovery Education hosted and participated in a number of engaging sessions around the role of the business community in education, the power of virtual field trips to improve student engagement, how to empower educators to lead the digital transition and the growing educational technology industry in Europe. The annual SXSWedu Festival fosters innovation in learning by hosting a diverse and energetic community of stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds in education.

On Tuesday, Discovery Education's senior vice president Kelli Campbell gave insights into how to be successful in the European ed tech industry alongside executives from TES Global, IBIS Capital and EdTech Europe. Also that day, Discovery Education's president and CEO Bill Goodwyn discussed how the business community plays a significant and positive role in schools along with moderator Brian Lewis, CEO of ISTE and fellow panelists Esra Ozer, president of the Alcoa Foundation and John Galvin, vice president of sales and general manager at Intel Education.

On Wednesday, Discovery Education's Superintendent in Residence, Dwight Jones, presented alongside district leaders from Houston Independent School District and Wake County School System on how to build teacher leaders in the digital age. Wrapping up the week, *Mythbusters'* Kari Byron hosted an exciting panel on the power of virtual field trips with panelists including Discovery Education's Kyle Schutt, Google Doodle's Liat Ben Rafael, and Durham Public Schools' Dacia Jones. Dacia Jones is the District Science Specialist with Durham Public Schools and works on bringing virtual field trips to all students throughout the district on a weekly basis.



From left to right, Discovery Education's Kyle Schutt, Kari Byron, Durham Public Schools' Dacia Jones, and Google Doodle's Liat Ben-Rafael.

Discovery Education Makes an Impact at 2015 SXSWedu



Last week, Discovery Education visited the Live Music Capital of the World to participate in a conference celebrating society's true rock stars: educators!

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Key takeaways..

- Develop your own media lists of contacts.
- Keep it current.
- Be persistent, but professional. No one likes rudeness or pushy PR people.
- Be credible and honest, guard and protect your professional reputation.
- If you're turned down on a story, thank the reporter and if possible ask them why they passed.
- Reporters are always looking for a good story. A 'no' from one reporter doesn't mean everyone will say no. Try someone else.