

Public Abstract

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Title:THE SSORTR CONTENT MANAGEMENT TOOL AS A COMPASS FOR THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE EDITOR

The purpose of this research is to develop a content management tool that can assist college and university alumni magazine editors in discerning the types of stories that resonate with the various audiences their publications serve. This tool is designed to help editors and administrators make public relations decisions with their university's largest print communications vehicle. The SSORTR tool seeks to assess any university magazine feature story on six factors and produce scores that will help editors better determine content mix. To test SSORTR, alumni magazine editors were asked to independently use the tool to rate a group of 10 stories from past issues of a public Midwestern university's alumni publication. The results were promising in that there was consensus in how editors rated the majority of factors, and there were relatively few scoring disparities. As university resources and budgets continue to tighten, editors will face increasing competition for a shrinking news/feature hole in their publications as well as pressure to show the value of the investment in their magazines. To be able to demonstrate, for example, that articles with particular SSORTR score are popular with readers or lead to certain reader actions would be tremendously advantageous in making difficult decisions about content and in effectively designing the magazine's overall communications strategy.