


Strong pitch (Science + Technology)

Story: How accessible are UI/UX design tools? Not very. People with vision impairments could contribute to and improve technology design, but popular design tools aren't currently accessible to them through their screen readers. As accessibility researchers, we'll break down the prototyping tool landscape and discuss ways to improve it.

Significance: Few technology designers are blind/low vision. Lack of representation is problematic, when many user interfaces (smartphone apps) already aren't accessible to blind people. Designers use UI/UX prototyping tools to create mock-ups of digital interface designs, to test before coding. However, these tools are inaccessible by screen reader technologies used by blind people to access screen elements.

Key points: We'll evaluate 4 popular prototyping tools and how they work with 2 screen readers. We have comparison charts. We'll identify which tools are most inaccessible and where to make improvements. Inaccessible UI/UX prototyping leads to inaccessible design. Making these tools accessible could empower blind technology designers.



← Interesting question that identifies a problem

← Simple explanation shows that scholars can write for a lay audience

← States their expertise and clear explanation of the story

← Helpful context

← Clear explanation of why it matters

Strong pitch (Politics + Society)


Story: My story explores what happened to the Denver unhoused community through the year 2020 as COVID-19 hit. I explore the locational strategies and spatial patterns of the community in relation to the resources of the city core.

Significance: The population experiencing homelessness in Denver increased by nearly 15% from 2018 to 2019. This trend, combined with the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic of 2020, led to a distinct crisis for unhoused communities.


Previous research addressed several aspects of COVID-19 and homelessness: (1) Unhoused individuals are more vulnerable to pandemics, (2) encampments may be safer than shelters in terms of COVID-19 spread, and (3) displacement of encampments has significant impacts upon the health of unhoused individuals. However, existing literature does not include GIS data of encampments, shelters, services, and geographic movement.

Key Points


I have spent the last seven months on this research, and Denver has continued to enforce inhumane homeless legislation. If this research were more widespread, it could contribute to a change in policy.



Clear, succinct explanation of proposed story



Why it matters



Interesting research that addresses what's missing in the conversation



Scholar's expertise

Strong pitch (Arts + Culture)

Story: Ansel Adams is famous for his black-and-white photographs of America's wilderness. His signature style is revered and often imitated. How did he learn that style? Adams dropped out of conventional schooling as a child and was a self-taught photographer, but his work as a commercial photographer informed his famous style.

Interesting question about a well-known figure

Significance: We assume that talented people are just innately talented, but Adams leveraged his experiences into future success, building from a childhood amateur (making snapshots in Yosemite Valley on vacation with his parents) into one of the most recognizable photographers of the 20th century. He not only learned from other art undertakings; his experience as a commercial photographer changed the way he approached the medium and allowed him to be more effective in his artwork. This ability to transfer experience, skills and knowledge seems widely applicable to how Americans think about their own lives, skills and careers.

Surprising finding based in her research

Why readers will care

Key Points: I am about to publish a book on Adams, presenting new research. Adams has a controlling trust, which means little research about him is published (the last scholarly book came out in 2002). For such a beloved, familiar and accessible cultural icon, there is remarkably little available. I am the chief curator at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, and Adams's archive is here. In addition to the release of my book (Feb. 2020), there is the anniversary of his birth (February 20, 1902).

Why scholar is *the* expert to write this piece

Clear news peg

Strong pitch (Health + Medicine)

Story: What is the potential side effect of the J&J vaccine for COVID-19? The side effect is a blood clot in the veins that drain blood from the brain. It is called central venous sinus thrombosis (CVST).

Significance: How would I suspect that I have this? The CDC and FDA are recommending that people who have received the J&J vaccine within the last 3 weeks who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath should contact their health care provider.

Key Points: A similar and rare problem of blood clotting with low platelets in the cerebral venous sinus and also in the abdominal veins and arteries has been seen with the use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine used in Europe (182 cases in 190 million doses). The European Medicines Agency (EMA) investigated this and concluded that CVST with low platelets be listed as a possible "very rare side effect" of the vaccine.



Clear news peg



Anticipates question readers will have



Why it matters



Interesting comparison and context that will add further insight

Strong pitch (Environment + Energy)

Story: Llamas have gotten recent press as potentially contributing antibodies for COVID-19 cures and also for becoming the most popular animal items at toy conventions. What this new media coverage leaves out is the history of how Andean peoples have domesticated, used and remade the llama over centuries.

Significance: Writing the cultural contributions of Andean people out of the story of llama's popularity and utility greatly diminishes the contributions South Americans have made to modern science, technology and culture. By contrast, recognizing and celebrating the long and intertwined history of llamas and their kin provides insight into the boundaries between wild and domesticated species.

Key points: Two [New York Times](#) articles in under a month indicate editorial and popular interest. I've published on the wild llama cousin, the vicuna, and have an animal history project underway on the "[Llama Diaspora](#)."

Author Details: Professor of History and Director of Environmental Studies Program



News peg

Interesting, surprising idea and clear explanation of story

How the story will address what's missing from the conversation and add new insight

News peg

Expertise

Pitch that needs work

Story

Is racial equity a conservative or a liberal concern?


Significance

Although conservatives and liberals disagree about racial inequity, they should agree on five important truths.


Timeliness: Timeless

Key Points


Racial inequity is in the news but is an ongoing concern. I taught a course titled "Race and Justice." The article is written: 2968 words




Too broad, unfocused



No details about the five truths or indication of research; reads like opinion



No demonstration of expertise beyond course



Already written, plus much longer than our pieces (~800-1,000 words)

Pitch that needs work

Story: Ranking of people, schools, products, countries and just about everything else is part of our daily life. We are in a paradoxical relationship with ranking: "Ranking is good because it is informative and objective; ranking is bad because it is biased and subjective, and occasionally, even manipulated."

← Too broad, general; not sure what proposed story is

Significance: Everybody with whom I have talked in the last several years has seemed to agree that the topic of ranking is hot. A ranking procedure may reflect either the reality or the illusion of objectivity. In addition, ranking might be the subject of manipulation.

← Anecdotal, no research mentioned

Objectivity attempts to represent the outside world without bias or presuppositions, while subjectivity results from personal cognition or preferences. While making objective rankings sounds like an appealing goal, there are at least two different reasons why we may not have objectivity: ignorance and manipulation. We should learn how to navigate between objectivity and subjectivity.

← Too broad; not new or surprising; reads like opinion

Key Points: Recently a dozen of articles in The Conversation discussed ranking, the social game we all play. Stories about the problems of ranking of colleges and universities, political candidates, livable cities, artists and tennis players were given. In this article, I will reanalyze these stories from the perspective of my recent book.

← Not something we do in our model


Pitch that needs work

Story

The Passion of Britney Spears. From Southern Baptist to Kabbalah to possibly Catholicism, Britney Spears' religious life speaks to her struggles, her faith, and her fandom.

Significance

Two weeks ago, she caused a social media firestorm when she announced she was converting to Catholicism (in a now-deleted post). This inspired me to look into her religious biography, and I wrote a piece tracing her story from Southern Baptist to modern Kabbalah, to even looking into Hinduism, and now maybe Catholicism. It covers the moral panic around her performative sexuality, but also the praise she got for being a virgin.



← No indication that this is research-based

← News peg has passed

← Already written

← Interesting idea, but no mention of research


Pitch that needs work

Story

It turns out "Yoopers" will save money if Line 5 closes down if they invest in heat pumps, rather than freeze to death as alarmists claim. A new study shows that solar photovoltaics and heat pumps provide lower cost heat to Michigan's Upper Peninsula (the UP) than propane currently provides.

Significance

Many Yoopers fear catastrophic heating prices if Line 5 closes. Line 5 is a pipeline system carrying propane from Canada across Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas. The pipeline crosses the Straits of Mackinac, leading to concerns about a potential oil spill from the 65-year-old pipeline. Currently, there is a huge debate about Michigan's attempt to close Line 5 permanently. Shutting down the pipeline could have significant impacts on those living in the UP - that often are remote and use propane for heating. The Michigan government is considering subsidies for propane transport by train/truck as potential solutions.



← Too regional/specific to Michigan

← Does not indicate that this is reflective of trends elsewhere or that it would be broadened to a national audience


Pitch that needs work

Story: This pitch explains Thucydides' Trap and argues that there are at least two ways to avoid Sino-American war.

Significance: Graham Allison has made the point that China's rise is a story affecting our individual fates because in the end the question of whether a new world order will be born or the status quo preserved is less important than the question of whether the outcome will be determined peacefully or whether China and America are destined for war.

Timeliness: Timeless

Key Points: First, based on the diplomacy and leadership of the US and China, Kevin Rudd's "constructive realism" and Jin Canrong's "Chess war" might be a solution to avoid military conflict. Second, the institutional "Soft Balancing" of a third party to the U.S. or China is another.



← No indication that this is for a general reader

← What is the research? Are these people we should know?

← Jargon, which is more evidence that this is not for our general audience