

Why Your Library Website Should Include a Press Room

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How Your Library Can Benefit From Having a Press Room on Its Website

You'll be prepared for coverage!
You won't need to scramble, sound disorganized, or delay in answering reporters.
You'll have what reporters need when they're on deadline.
You're more likely to get coverage in the first place.
Proves you're media-savvy—many libraries aren't.
It helps you build relationships and become a trusted source for reporters.
You'll be ready even if you don't have a dedicated press person.

Why Do Members of the Media Want You to Have a Press Room?

It makes their jobs easier, especially when working on tight deadlines.
They may be working when the library is closed.
A press room puts basic facts & photos at their fingertips.
Offering self-service info may keep them from having to make a phone call or send an email.
The content will give them a sense of your organization.
Providing this info shows them you're savvy & willing to work with them, that you welcome & encourage coverage.

Tips for Setting Up Your Press Room

Make it as easy to find as possible.
Ensure search engine optimization (SEO).
Add "Quick Links for the Press" to point to other sections of your site:

- ✓ About
- ✓ History
- ✓ Meeting minutes
- ✓ Annual reports
- ✓ Strategic plans
- ✓ Social media pages

What to Include in Your Press Room

Contact Info

- ✓ Contact info of PR person / spokesperson, Director / admins, Board chair / members

News

- ✓ All of your press releases
- ✓ Links to past news coverage, including titles & dates

Background Info

- ✓ About the Library
- ✓ Full mailing and GPS address(es) for each branch
- ✓ Basic statistics (budget, holdings, circulation, # of computers, # of staff, etc.)
- ✓ Interesting stats ("All the people who visit each month could fill a football stadium.")
- ✓ Annual reports
- ✓ Director / administrators' photos and biographies
- ✓ Library history
- ✓ Mission & Vision statements

Images & Artwork

- ✓ Photos of your library: General building shots, approved "stock" pictures of activities, with credits, captions, & usage permission / instructions
- ✓ Infographics
- ✓ Print-quality, downloadable logo with usage standards
- ✓ Brand standards / guidelines

Bonus Content

- ✓ Directory of all staff with photos & contact info
- ✓ Pithy quotes (from director, staff, non-employees, general library quotes)
- ✓ Testimonials
- ✓ How to get to / park at / enter the library
- ✓ Press guidelines: credentials, photo policies, public information requests, etc.

10 Steps for Building Media Relationships

- 1) If you want them to get to know you, then make an effort to get to know them.
- 2) Find out who covers libraries, tech, social / community news, education. Call them or meet for coffee.
- 3) Tell them what sorts of things you'd like to have covered; suggest angles worth covering.
- 4) Find out exactly how they prefer to receive PRs: In email vs. attached? Newswires? Follow-up calls?
- 5) Find out what the deadlines are for each medium, and stick to them!
- 6) Show off your Press Room by emailing a link to a video tour, or click around together on your laptop when you have that coffee. Ask for reporters' / editors' opinions & input.
- 7) Ask if the media offers in-kind advertising opportunities to local nonprofits (like you!).
- 8) Make sure they know how to contact you for research assistance for their other stories.
- 9) Introduce them to research databases and demonstrate how they can log in from anywhere (with a library card of course). Sell them on the benefits of using library tools in their work.
- 10) Partner with them to combat fake news and prove that librarians are information literacy experts. Members of your local media can be powerful advocates.