



Internship Program

About BubbleLife Internship Program

BubbleLife Media begins its Internship Program at the start of each school semester. We seek self-motivated, enthusiastic interns who are interested in growing with the modern media industry. During the eight-week program, interns are required to complete eight articles covering specific topics. Interns are expected to write four additional articles on topics of their choosing to post to any of the 60 neighborhoods on BubbleLife.

Through the Internship Program, we strive to mold our interns as more than writers and interviewers. We provide insight in new media and teach them to brand themselves in an evolving industry. The intern program curriculum includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Headline writing geared toward increased readership
- Lede writing focusing on brevity for online audience
- Expanding on basic photography skills
- Capitalizing on Search Engine Optimization to grow readership
- Using link tracking on the site and social media platforms
- Working with Content Management Systems to post and edit articles
- Effectively using social media to promote content
- Developing and growing your own tone and brand through online promotion
- Defining and manipulating your own brand's image
- Developing your online portfolio to show range of skills
- Learning to expand story life cycle with effective headlines and keywords
- Spreading content through Gmail distribution
- Understanding content view tracking and clear gifs as analytics resource
- Incorporating surveys and crowdsourcing in online articles
- Learning to use RSS feeds in journalism practice
- Using WordPress to create a website and add RSS feeds
- Fully understanding the ins and outs of BubbleLife.com
- Creating and establishing presence through your BubbleLife Connect site
- Following Federal Trade Commission's legal guidelines



Weekly Syllabus

As a BubbleLife intern, we expect you to come to the program with knowledge of AP Style and journalism ethics and standards. Through this program, we will foster growth in a range of editorial writing and teach you to thrive in new media.

Week 1: Article Rewrite

The intern will find a topical news article, rewrite the story and include a link to the original content. This practice will focus on headline writing, lede writing, link shortening and tracking and CMS.

Week 2: Event Coverage And Entry

The intern will cover a local or school event. This practice will focus on improving photography skills and understanding BubbleLife's event calendar. This week the intern will also learn about using RSS feeds in practical journalism.

Week 3: Interview Feature

The intern will interview a local or school official and write an article. This practice will focus on developing the writer's tone and brand, as well as social media promotion. By this week of the program, interns are expected to fully understand BubbleLife Connect and create a website on wordpress.com.

Week 4: Business Feature

The intern will write an article discussing a local business. This practice will focus on promoting a business from a marketing standpoint. By this week of the program, interns are expected to understand using SEO in journalism.

Weekly Syllabus

Week 5: Food Review

The intern will author an article about a restaurant or specific dish. This practice will focus on establishing presence on BubbleLife Connect and manipulating brand image.

Week 6: News Story

The intern will write a news article discussing breaking news or a topical event. This practice will focus on expanding a story's life cycle.

Week 7: Public Survey

The intern will write an article that includes a public survey. This practice will focus on crowdsourcing.

Week 8: Follow-up Article

The intern will author a follow-up story from one of his previous stories. This practice will incorporate all skills learned to showcase an understanding of new media.

To graduate from the Internship Program, participants are expected to complete these eight articles as well as four stories on the topics they choose. For story ideas, go to bubblelife.com, click "Internship," then click on the list at the bottom of the page.

Program Lesson Plan

Week 1

Prior to the beginning of your internship, click on the "BubbleLife Local News" tab at the bottom of BubbleLife's home page. This will be your preliminary reading to educate you on our theory.

Next, sign up at bubblelife.com in your neighborhood. Then sign up for BubbleLife Connect to create your own site. Follow these instructions.

1. Click "Post Article" under the "PR and Content" heading on the left side.
2. Type in the text for your article, upload your photo, etc.
3. Click "Publish" and you'll be directed to a page that says at the top "You still need to distribute your post." Click the tab that says "Send to BubbleLife.com" and make sure the button changes to say "Shared" in green letters. You also have the option to send the story to multiple neighborhoods if it's relevant.
4. Then scroll to the bottom box and check it where it says "I've completed all the distribution steps above" and click continue. That means you're finished, and that the story is on its way to the editorial team. You will receive an email notification when the post has been approved.

You've just learned how to post news on the Content Management System.

This week you will be required to find a news story and write a summary with a link to the original content. Go to dallasnews.com and search for a news article in your neighborhood. For instance, if you live in Allen, go to allenblog.dallasnews.com. Once you've selected an article, write a brief summary and include a link to the original story.

To include a link, highlight a phrase and select the icon that looks like a chain. Type the link URL leading to the original story. Select "Target" and click on "Open in New Window (_blank)" to ensure you won't lose the reader when he clicks on the link.

Note: It's important that you also understand how to shorten and track a link. To shorten a link, (a common practice for Twitter because it allows a limited number of characters) go to "Tools" on your Connect site. Click "Shorten a URL" under "Link Tracking" on the "PR & Content" column. Copy and paste the link to your published article. This will shorten your link and provide tracking to see how many views the article receives.

For this article, the headline is crucial. Think of a headline as your one shot to gain a reader. Of course, follow journalism headline rules. BubbleLife headlines use all capitalized words. (Ex: BubbleLife Changes Neighborhood News)

Writing a good headline requires balance. You want to engage the reader by providing enough information, but not so much that he can just skim the headline. Make the reader feel compelled to click on the article, but avoid sensationalism.

This exercise also practices lede writing. Make your opening sentence brief but informative. Tell the reader why to read the article. Consider the attention span of today's online readers and seize their attention in the first few words.

Drag your picture to the bottom of the page under "Image & Attachments." If you are uploading a photo, make sure you have permission to do so. When possible, take the photo yourself with a digital camera or iPhone.

Once you've filled in all of the blanks in the "Post an Article" page, you are ready to distribute. Be sure you select your name as the person this article was posted from.

Click "Publish." Distribute to your selected community and share on Facebook. Feel free to share the page on your personal Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus.

Program Lesson Plan

Week 2

This week, choose an upcoming event (Ex: football game, city parade, school council meeting) to cover for BubbleLife. With your BubbleLife Connect account, you can post events as well as articles. Under "PR & Content," click on "Post Event." Before the event takes place, add the event to the calendar, then attend the event and take photos.

Write an article about the event focusing on what happened and what readers should take away from the event. Think about it this way. When you write an article about an event, you start the conversation. If your neighbor missed the event but reads your article, he will know what to talk about the next day at the water cooler.

This exercise focuses on managing BubbleLife's event calendar. When you post the event, it will appear in the email newsletter. BubbleLife readers will see the event because you posted it.

You'll also develop your photography skills. For event coverage, take pictures of people when possible. Readers want to see photos of people because this will make them feel like they were at the event. You're generating an experience for readers by writing an article and including an engaging photo.

When you take the photo, be sure to ask for people's names and ensure they are spelled correctly in your notes. Once you upload the picture, add a caption in the blank beneath the photo. A strong caption is brief, informative and free of errors.

By this point, you should have a familiarity with BubbleLife and how the site works. To fully understand how BubbleLife operates as a news aggregator, you must have a knowledge of RSS feeds, a web feed format that publishes frequently updated information.

BubbleLife uses RSS feeds to pull in content from other publications. For instance, when dallasnews.com publishes new content about Plano, BubbleLife updates the Plano site with the article. This way, BubbleLife can stay on the cutting edge of neighborhood news and events in all 60 communities.

BubbleLife editors have searched for the best news sources to add to each website's RSS feed. From local newspapers to school bulletins, we are constantly pulling in new content by subscribing to RSS feeds.

This familiarity with RSS feeds will help in Week 3 when you create a WordPress account.

Program Lesson Plan

Week 3

For the interview feature, choose an interesting local or school official to interview. Ideally, this person will relate to a topical event or news. (Ex: The dance team will perform next week, so interview the dance director.)

With this article, use your natural tone as a writer. Don't make the article too conversational, but show more personality because this is a feature story. This is the time to "brand yourself" as a writer. You have the opportunity to identify yourself as a journalist, especially when writing long-form stories. Establish an identifiable voice, "a brand," that will attract readers.

After you've posted the article, promote your own brand by pushing the content to all social media platforms. Outside of journalism, this type of self-promotion may seem strange. Within the industry, it's expected.

Establish an online presence for your own brand by creating an account on wordpress.com. Not only will a personal blog further your brand, it serves as a place for your online work. Before you create an account, check out other blogs on WordPress. After some research, it's time to set up an account.

1. Go to wordpress.com and click "Get Started."
2. Fill out the form and name your blog. This can be as simple and identifiable as your name.
3. Choose a free account unless you would like to buy the domain. For this practice, a free account is acceptable.
4. Choose a theme for your blog. This sets the tone of your site, so choose carefully. Of course, you can change the theme at any time.
5. Go to the "Dashboard" and arrange your site.

Once you've set up a WordPress site, you can add a header, menu, pages, posts and media. Play around with the features until you're happy with your blog and you feel like it represents you well.

Now that you (and your brand) have your own website, you can integrate your BubbleLife Connect site into your blog by using an RSS feed. To find the RSS feed for your Connect account:

1. Go to your Connect site (not the "Tools" page, but the site viewed by the public. Click "View" to see this site at any time.
2. Scroll to the bottom of the page and look for an orange RSS icon on the lower right side of the page.
3. Click on the RSS icon to display a list of RSS feeds for your Connect site.
4. Copy the link for the "All Posts" RSS feed.
5. On your WordPress site, use the link from the above step to retrieve your articles. Add an RSS feed under the "Widgets" tab.

Program Lesson Plan

Week 4

Choose a local business to cover for BubbleLife. (Ex: new coffee shop, boutique, local restaurant) Avoid franchises and focus on your hometown. Write an article about the business from any of the following angles:

[How a new business started](#)

[How an established business is staying relevant](#)

[How a local business stays involved in the community](#)

[What makes this business unique or special](#)

For this exercise, consider the local business as a client. When writing the article, think about the audience interested in this business. For instance, for a trendy coffee shop, write to an audience interested in coffee and new trends. As the business' marketing writer, you are establishing its market.

When you write the headline and copy for the article, think about Search Engine Optimization. This is particularly important when writing about a business because the company will care about how many views your article, and thereby its business name, receives.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) seeks to affect the visibility of the web page (your article) when someone uses a search engine. Think of SEO as a marketing strategy to optimize readership by including keywords and relevant topics.

Using effective SEO benefits the business, as well as you as the marketing writer.

Week 5

Now that you've immersed yourself in the technical side of journalism, we invite you to have a bit of fun in your writing. One of the most coveted jobs in journalism is that of a food writer, and that's what you'll be this week.

Find a local restaurant, or homemade recipe, to cover for BubbleLife. The next step is fun and easy: eat a meal at the restaurant and write about your experience. Or, find a recipe, cook a dish or bake a treat and write about your experience.

This is the perfect opportunity to grow your brand as a journalist. You're using your tastebuds and your palette, so create a voice, a tone, that is all your own. Food writers are some of the most successful "brand journalists" because readers come to recognize their tone and seek their opinions.

Week 6

This week, you will explore a realm of journalism that attracts the adventurous types: breaking news. If there isn't a breaking news story in your neighborhood, write about something that readers would want to know immediately. (Ex: a winning football game)

With this exercise, you will witness the life cycle of a news article. In the years of print journalism, the life span of a news article was 24 hours. You've probably heard the phrase "yesterday's news" reflecting this sentiment. With online media, breaking news story can have a shorter span or longer span, depending on the article and the medium. Using keywords will expand your article's life span.

Program Lesson Plan

Week 7

For this article, write about a topic that can include a survey question at the bottom of the page. For instance, write an article about an upcoming musical festival, then include a question at the bottom like: "Which band are you most excited to see during this concert?"

At the bottom of "Post an Article" on your Connect site, you will see a tab for "Surveys." Fill in the blanks with the question and possible answers. (Ex: What is your favorite Sprinkles cupcake? Possible responses: Red Velvet, Carrot, Milk Chocolate)

This practice will focus on crowdsourcing, a tool for soliciting feedback from large amounts of readers. In successful modern media, crowdsourcing is crucial because it keeps readers engaged. To gain more feedback, ask readers to comment and share on Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus. Social media platforms are the perfect opportunity for crowdsourcing and generating more interest among readers.

Week 8

For the final required assignment, you will write a follow-up article to a previously published story. Choose a story that leaves the reader asking questions and seek to answer them in the follow-up article. For instance, if you wrote about a new boutique in town, your follow-up could discuss spring trends in the store. Or, if you wrote about a football game, publish another article about the team's season after this game.

This exercise should be a culmination of the skills you've gained throughout the program. Incorporate all of the lessons you've learned, such as writing a strong lede, embedding a link, cementing your brand as a writer, using SEO and promoting through social media.



After the eight-week program, it is our hope that you will have the tools and confidence to thrive in new media.

<http://www.bubblelife.com>