

Creating Your Own Online Newspaper

Michael Devitt

In the February 9, 1998 issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, I reviewed three of the internet's most popular news-related websites and provided readers with a handful of links to other news pages. While it's great to be able to choose from a vast number of sources to receive the latest news, there can be a downside to having that many choices. With literally thousands of news and news-related online pages, how can you sift through all that information to find only the news you feel is really important?

That's where Crayon.net can help. Crayon stands for CReAtE Your Own Newspaper. It's a web-based service that allows you to customize the type of news you receive each day and delivers those stories to you in a newspaper-like format. All it takes is a few minutes to register at the site and choose what sources you'd like to receive news from. With just a few keystrokes and mouse clicks, you can have a personalized electronic newspaper available for viewing. Best of all, it's free!

Getting Started on Crayon

To begin building your own electronic news source, log on to Crayon's website (<http://www.crayon.net>) and click on the link that says "Create your own newspaper." Doing so will take you to Crayon's welcome page. Type in your e-mail address and a password in the required fields on that page. You will need this information later in case you want to modify or delete your newspaper's settings. Once you've entered the necessary information, click the OK button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. (Note: For Crayon.net to save your settings, your PC must be set up to accept cookies.)

Clicking the OK button will bring you to your newspaper's settings page. You can give the paper a title, a motto, and a choice of how the page and images will display (frames, no frames, or Java-based). You can also enter your zip code to receive local news and weather.

After customizing the settings to your liking, you have two further choices to make: "Quick Paper" gives you a sort of "instant" paper by choosing the most popular selections for each section of news, or the "Standard" option, which lets you browse through each section one at a time and add any sources you want.

For the basis of the next section of this article, I will assume you like to customize your news. As such, the "Standard" option will be discussed in the following few paragraphs. If you've chosen the "Quick Paper" option instead, you're welcome to skip ahead to the "Reading My Paper" section.

Setting Your Paper's "Standard"

After clicking on "Standard," users will immediately be sent to the "United States" section. This the first of 18 separate sections that allow you to customize the sources from which you'll receive the news.

Each section (such as Politics, Science and Sports) lists the most popular sources of news available. For example, the United States section lists news sources such as CNN, MSNBC and Time

magazine. Some news sections also have subsections that deal with a particular topic. Crayon's Sports section, for instance, has subsections for baseball, football, basketball, auto racing and a handful of other sports and activities.

To receive news from a particular source, click on the check box to the left of that source to add it to your list. Users can select as many sources as you want. If you'd like to receive news from a source not on Crayon's list, you can add a new source by typing in a title and web address and clicking the "Add" button.

At the bottom of each page is a list of all the sections that Crayon contains. Each section is in the form of a colored crayon that points from left to right. You can proceed from section to section in the order listed at the bottom of each page (e.g., U.S., Canada, Local, World), or skip to whatever section you prefer and choose the sources of interest.

Newspaper Creation and Publication

Once you've browsed through the sections and clicked on the news sources that appeal to you, press the button labeled "create my newspaper now." This will take you to the "section order" page. Here, you can arrange the different sections of news to display in the order you prefer. The more sections you chose sources from, the more options you have for customizing the news.

After arranging the news sections to appear in the order you like, click on the "publish my newspaper" button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. You will be brought to a page with the headline "You're all set!" and a personal website address below. Click on that web address, and you can begin reading your new customized newspaper.

It's a good idea to bookmark the front page of your newspaper the first time you have it published. This way, you can go directly to the newspaper each day without having to access Crayon's site and retyping any information.

Reading Your Paper

The frames version is divided into three sections. The top quarter of the page will contain your newspaper's name and motto. The left-hand column of the page will list each section of the newspaper, followed by the sources that you chose. The rest of the screen is filled up by the front page of the paper, which lists each section in order, followed by a number of headlines relating that day's top news stories.

The no-frames version is divided into only two sections. Like the frames version, the no-frames version displays the name and motto of the newspaper. Each section is listed below that, followed by the sources that you chose for each section. Clicking on a particular source will provide you a list of all the headlines and top stories available from that source.

The Java-based version resembles the no-frames version, but with one major difference. Instead of displaying each section of the paper in a column, sections and sources appear in a floating text box on screen. You can scroll down the box and choose a particular section. If you click on a section, it will appear on the monitor, along with the major headlines and sources from that day's news.

Making Changes to Crayon

If you'd like to alter the makeup of your personal newspaper, simply click on the "modify this paper" link which appears on various locations throughout the website. You can change the way the paper displays and create a new title and motto, for instance, and you can change the number

of headline articles that appear at a time. And by clicking on the crayons listed at the bottom of the paper's settings page, you are free to add, delete or alter sections and sources of news to your liking.

Eating Cookies

If there's a drawback to Crayon.net, it's a relatively minor one. To store certain information about your newspaper's settings, your PC's browser must be configured to accept cookies. Some people are wary about the data that cookies gather, but Crayon's privacy policy clearly states that they will not sell e-mail addresses to third parties, nor will it add your e-mail address to any mailing lists. When you take that into account, storing a tiny cookie on your computer's hard drive is a small price to pay for the amount of free information you can receive.

In our next issue, I'll review the basics of mailing lists and address books.

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