



## Planting New Ideas:

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### What do you think?

MPA staff has been publishing Planting New Ideas for some time now, and we'd like to find out from our members how it's working.

Please e-mail us at [readership@michiganpress.org](mailto:readership@michiganpress.org) and let us know what you think. What were some of the good ideas? What ideas could you have lived without?

We are also looking for other ideas to help newspapers all over the state grow their readership. If you've seen anything interesting in your travels, or have been doing something innovative at your paper, forward the idea to us and we'll get the word out.


Don't forget to visit our Web site [MichiganPress.org](http://MichiganPress.org) to find out what's new at Michigan's newspapers.

## Newspapers that Twitter

From [GraphicDesignr.net](http://GraphicDesignr.net)

Most reporters, editors, etc., who use Twitter have discovered it can be a great reporting tool. Anchors at CNN are finding that to be true too: [ricksanchezcnn](#) joined Twitter in August. He began to promote social networking when he was on the air, also including Facebook and MySpace. He now has more than 6,000 followers on Twitter, and is following more than 4,500 people. He often mentions and shows Twitter and Facebook posts on the air, and answers questions that followers ask.

(Sanchez also says a "Twitter show" will debut Monday.) His colleague [@donlemoncnn](#) joined Twitter on Sept. 3, and within a couple of hours has more than 400 followers and is following more than 300 people. Other cable news anchors and reporters are sure to follow. (Dear [@andersoncooper](#): Stop using Twitterfeed and actually post things, and your numbers will skyrocket, too.)



**All of this re-affirms four things:**

1. Newspapers can and should participate in social media.
2. Participating means not just throwing headlines at your readers, but following them and listening to what's going on.
3. With Twitter, newspapers can make and break news just as quick — if not quicker — as the competition.
4. Twitter can drive traffic to your site.



But TV—especially 24-hour TV—allows for a more immediate reaction than newspapers can provide, right? Wrong. Evidently you're not following [@coloneltribune](#) (*Chicago Tribune*) and [@statesman](#) (Austin American-Statesman). [@coloneltribune](#) recently picked up a tip from a Twitter follower about a bomb threat, and was able to share information through Twitter and the Tribune's Web site.

When Hurricane Gustav was heading toward New Orleans, the [@gustavreporter](#) (*Chicago Tribune*) and [@trackinggustav](#) (*Statesman*) were on top of it. With hurricane-specific accounts and reports from Louisiana. (Notice a trend? Those papers get it.) Statesman Internet editor Robert Quigley said [@trackinggustav](#) received 6,500@ page views directly related to his Twitter posts.



# Finding a niche for your community

Excerpts from McClatchy.com

Are you in the middle of a political hot bed? Is your community made up of a lot of college students? Are you in an affluent area? The answer to this question could help you create a dynamic new niche product to pull in new readers.

As newspapers everywhere search for ways to increase readership and revenue, they have discovered one of the most successful vehicles for reaching new readers and advertisers: niche products.

This is certainly true at McClatchy, where niche products are part of the second-fastest growing area of revenue—direct marketing. These publications help reach a new audience, one that is often much more targeted, and to fill a need for an often different set of advertising clients as readers.

The *Fresno Bee* uses *Imagine Magazine* to lure upscale readers in their community. This format has worked well for them in several communities and serves a certain reader as well as a different kind of advertiser. They include upscale home decorating ideas, recipes and profiles of important people in the community. To see a copy of this publication to: Adserver1.harvestadsdepot.com/fresnob/ss/imagine.

The *Centre Daily Times* woos college

kids at Penn State with their niche publication *Blue Weekly*. Content includes a mix of news, entertainment, sports and “Cheap Eats” and “Beer Geek” columns written by about 20 freelancers under the direction of editor Kelli Brown. Topics range outside of what’s covered in the core newspaper to appeal to younger readers and keep them in the newspaper market. There is also an online component of the publication which can be viewed at: [centredaily.com](http://centredaily.com).

The *Capitol Alert* is an electronic niche product launched by the *Sacramento Bee* that focuses on politics and policy in California. Content includes original columns “insider stuff,” a daily summary of political news, a legislator search engine, a daily Capitol calendar, early access to the next day’s political content from the print edition of the newspaper and breaking news via e-mail alerts. This publication can be found at: [sacbee.com/static/weblogs/capitolalertlatest](http://sacbee.com/static/weblogs/capitolalertlatest).

All of the above products are great examples of targeting an audience and showing them the advantages of newspaper readership. Looking at the demographics of your community and developing products to draw in a different audience is a great way for you to pull in new readers.

## Michigan Ideas:

Interested in reporting how the military recruiting rates in your market compare to those around the state or across the country?

The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* reviewed DOD data for every active duty, Reserve and National Guard recruit in the country and placed results on a searchable database, according to *The Rural Blog*. To check the database, searchable by state, then county, go to [stltoday.com/recruits](http://stltoday.com/recruits).

Editorial page editors from across the country showcase “connecting with readers” best practices. Read more: [ojr.org/ojr/stories/080306wayne](http://ojr.org/ojr/stories/080306wayne).

## AP appeals to iPhone users

From [cnet.news.com](http://cnet.news.com)



The Associated Press has created a news aggregation Web application called the Mobile News Network for the Apple iPhone.

The new mobile Web site is targeted at people who want access to international, national, and local news all the time. It aggregates news from more than 100 news publishers and offers text plus multimedia coverage including, photo galleries of sports events, and video coverage of the presidential campaign. The Web application is currently optimized for the iPhone, but the news service plans to add support for other smartphones in the future.

It can be accessed directly on the AP news Web site or via the iPhone Web application pages at [iphone.com/webapps](http://iphone.com/webapps).

“With a new generation of mobile devices on the market, like the iPhone, the time is right for AP to introduce a product that brings together our members’ local news brands with AP’s unrivaled coverage of international and national events,” Jane Seagrave, AP’s senior vice president of global product development said in a statement.

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