

Writing for publications

Part 3: Audiences and Editors



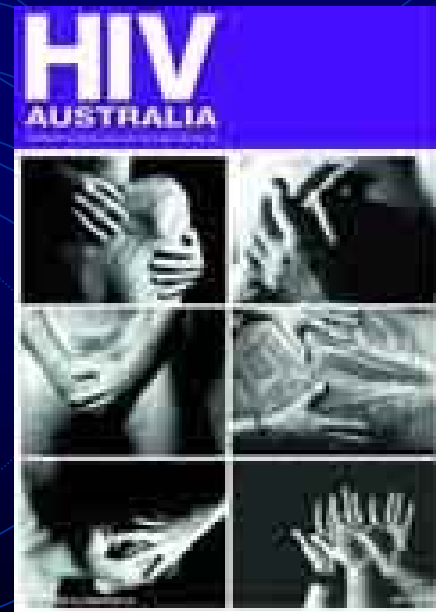
Educator's conference 2004

Audiences

- Different publications, different target audiences
- Different audiences, different...
 - Subject matter
 - Language
 - Assumed knowledge
 - Levels of literacy
 - ‘Presentational language’

Audiences

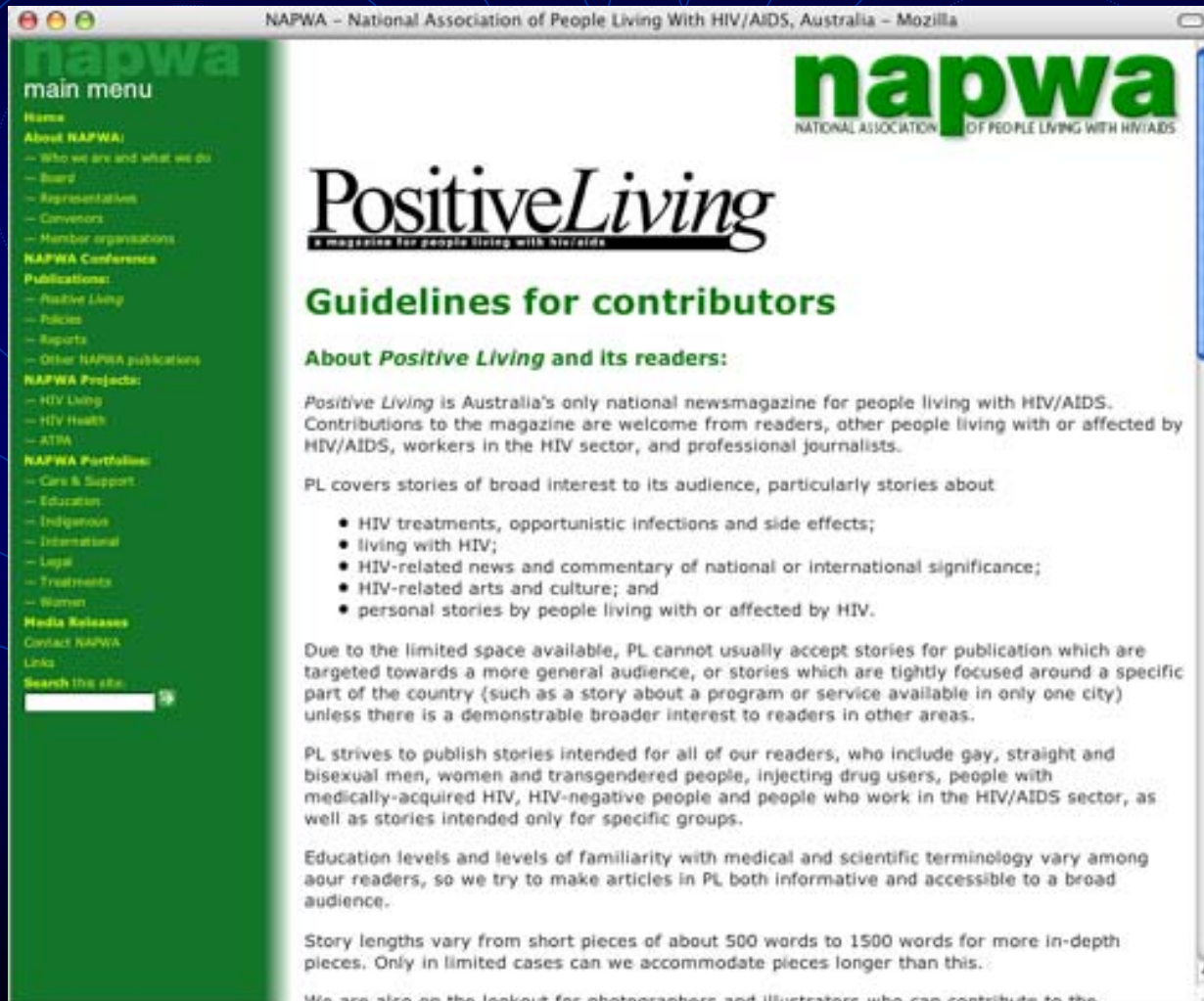
- What sorts of people read these publications?



Audiences

- Many publications have
 - editorial statements
 - contributors' guides
 - evaluation reportswhich answer these questions.

Contributors' guidelines



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "NAPWA - National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS, Australia - Mozilla". The page features the NAPWA logo in green and white, and the "PositiveLiving" magazine logo in a stylized font. The main content is titled "Guidelines for contributors" and includes sections for "About Positive Living and its readers:", a list of topics covered, and information about the magazine's focus and audience.

napwa
main menu

Home
About NAPWA:
— Who we are and what we do
— Board
— Representatives
— Convenors
— Member organisations
NAPWA Conference
Publications:
— Positive Living
— Policies
— Reports
— Other NAPWA publications
NAPWA Projects:
— HIV Living
— HIV Health
— ATPA
NAPWA Portfolios:
— Care & Support
— Education
— Indigenous
— International
— Legal
— Treatments
— Women
Media Releases
Contact NAPWA
Links
Search this site:

napwa
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

PositiveLiving

a magazine for people living with hiv/aids

Guidelines for contributors

About *Positive Living* and its readers:

Positive Living is Australia's only national newsmagazine for people living with HIV/AIDS. Contributions to the magazine are welcome from readers, other people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, workers in the HIV sector, and professional journalists.

PL covers stories of broad interest to its audience, particularly stories about

- HIV treatments, opportunistic infections and side effects;
- living with HIV;
- HIV-related news and commentary of national or international significance;
- HIV-related arts and culture; and
- personal stories by people living with or affected by HIV.

Due to the limited space available, PL cannot usually accept stories for publication which are targeted towards a more general audience, or stories which are tightly focused around a specific part of the country (such as a story about a program or service available in only one city) unless there is a demonstrable broader interest to readers in other areas.

PL strives to publish stories intended for all of our readers, who include gay, straight and bisexual men, women and transgendered people, injecting drug users, people with medically-acquired HIV, HIV-negative people and people who work in the HIV/AIDS sector, as well as stories intended only for specific groups.

Education levels and levels of familiarity with medical and scientific terminology vary among our readers, so we try to make articles in PL both informative and accessible to a broad audience.

Story lengths vary from short pieces of about 500 words to 1500 words for more in-depth pieces. Only in limited cases can we accommodate pieces longer than this.

We are also on the lookout for photographers and illustrators who can contribute to the

Choosing your publication

- **Who** do I want to reach?
- **Where** will I find them?
 - (Is my story local? National? International?)
- **How** can I best convey my message?
 - (What style of writing does this suggest?)
- **What** prior knowledge do my readers need?

Choosing your publication

- Has my subject been covered in this publication recently?
 - ➔ **No? Great!**
 - As long as it's relevant, a story on a new or neglected subject is ideal.
 - ➔ **Yes? Don't despair...**
 - If your chosen publication has already covered the subject, can you think of ways to change the viewpoint or freshen it?

Tailoring your story

- Almost any story can be tailored to fit almost any publication.
 - Change viewpoint (angle)
 - Choose a different feature style
 - Pitch the story at a different level
- How might you change your approach to make the story appropriate for a different outlet?

Getting published

Two approaches to getting published

```
graph TD; A[Two approaches to getting published] --> B[Story done 'on spec']; A --> C[Pitching an idea]
```

Story done 'on spec'

Pitching an idea

The 'spec' piece

- Quite a common approach (in our sector)
- Straightforward (for editors)
- May be easier when dealing with someone you don't know
- Risky ('take it or leave it')

Pitched ideas

- Relatively few stories come via this approach
- Opportunities for dialogue between editor and writer
- Usually produces better results
- ***Recommended!***

Pitching

Your story pitch should tell the editor:

1. What your story will be about
2. Why it will be interesting to readers
3. Why you're the right person to write it

The pitch

- Keep it **brief** – don't tell the whole story
- Grab the ed's **attention**
- What's **new** or **different** about this story?
- Who have you spoken to? What **sources** will you use?
- What's the **angle**?

Five-minute Exercise

- Prepare a verbal pitch for your story
 - **Make it short** (no more than one minute)
 - **Make it catchy** (remember you want to generate interest, not tell all)
 - **Sell it!** (what's new/different/special?)

When you get the go-ahead

- Get clear info about ...
 - Deadline
 - Word count
- Think about ...
 - Photographs
 - Other presentational elements (charts, sidebars...)
 - Ethics/confidentiality
- Get to work!

Dealing with editors

- **Stay in touch** (eds love this)
- **Write to length** (up to 10% over is usually OK)
- **Deliver clean copy** (spelling, grammar, style)
- **Deliver to deadline**
- **Follow up**

The editorial process

- Work is edited before publication for
 - Length
 - Style
 - Appropriate language
 - Consistency
 - Legal and ethical reasons

The editorial process

- If you don't want your carefully-crafted words messed with:
 - Deliver clean copy
 - Write in inverted pyramid style (allows trimming for length from the bottom)
 - Deliver early and ask to sight the edited version (but few eds will do this)

Finally...

“In writing and politicking,
it’s best not to think about
it. Just do it.”

—Gore Vidal

Got a great story?

Paul Kidd

Editor, *Positive Living*

paul@napwa.org.au

Brad Johnston

Acting Editor, HIV Australia

bradjohnston1@bigpond.com