

WHAT THEY LIKE | WEBSITE



NILES WEST NEWS | Niles West High School (Skokie, Ill.)

Evelyn Lauer, CJE, adviser | We know our audience well — and we find ways to interact with it. For a high school website, our page views are high. We average 40,000 a month. Also, our readers comment on our site often. Social media and comment contests help us stimulate participation.

Promote your own work. Social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are essential. Use them to drive traffic to your site and to let your readers know you are there. But you need to give readers something in return: contests. Offer ways to win T-shirts or gift cards. Our most successful contest is our annual Cutest Pet contest.

Content is king, but once you have good content and you can update daily, you need to think beyond the information. Give readers a reason to visit your site: Interactivity matters. If the only thing to do on your site is read, visitors will click off quickly.

Gabby Abesamis, editor | Our stories and pictures are probably our strengths. People love reading about controversy, reading about their peers and seeing their peers.

Relevance to readers is important. Being consistent with current affairs is key because it pushes readers to make it a habit to check the site. Another important detail to consider is accessories to the stories. Whenever a story is being written, there is always at least one more thing you can add to it: polls, galleries, audio, video and Storify.

Other schools need to make sure they are updated on social media. Most of our readers visit our site through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

