

# Looking for new ideas for your newspaper Web site?

## HERE are two



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## FamilyFeatures.com

Wendy MacDonald, with Family Features, has been after me for years to take a look at their products for newspapers. I've seen their booth at dozens of newspaper conferences over the past three or four years, and I've always been intrigued by the idea of free content for papers. However, it wasn't until yesterday that I took a close look at their offerings.

For those unfamiliar with Family Features, they provide free editorial content spanning a variety of themes. Materials are developed in conjunction with nationally recognized sponsors and can be used as provided or customized to meet your needs. Basically, they provide stories and other material related to food, lifestyle, gardening and other topics.

How do they make their money, you ask? They include names and products by sponsors including American Heart Association, Nestlé and General Mills, among others.

Obviously, their products aren't for every newspaper. I certainly understand that many papers wouldn't be comfortable with content that includes product promotion.

After researching FamilyFeatures.com on my own, I learned that their material can be found in a wide variety of print and online outlets including dailies, weeklies, newspapers and magazines, free and paid, suburban, metro

and regional. Over 6,000 editors have registered to use their materials.

Yesterday, I spent part of the afternoon on the phone discussing products being developed by Family Features. It seemed like the perfect opportunity to take a look at online content already available from this group. Here are just a few:

### Automatically Updated HTML

**Feed:** Imagine content that automatically updates itself on your Web site. You designate the area and page(s). This means you can create pages for this content with room for ads that you sell. You select content from three areas: Food & Recipes (my favorite), Home & Lifestyles and Lawn & Garden. After the initial setup, which takes just a few minutes, the only time you'll spend on these pages will be to get new recipes and upload your own ads. And, for those savvy designers, there is an XML version that gives you even greater flexibility.

**HTML Pages:** Family Features offers HTML versions of their content and recipes, which you can place on your own site. By having the material already saved in HTML format, you can create pages on your own Web site without spending hours on layout and design.

**Niche Newspaper Sites:** These are "camera ready" pages ready to place on your Web site. With your banner in its normal position at the top of the screen, it looks like your staff has spent days creating these attractive and informative sites. Related to the areas mentioned earlier (Food & Recipes, Home & Lifestyles and Lawn & Garden), you choose the

sites you want to use and place the material directly on your pages.

**Videos:** Videos are available that can be embedded directly onto your Web pages. They are hosted on servers at Family Features, so they don't take up valuable space on your server. By simply placing scripts on your pages (Don't worry. Your Web guru will know how to do this), you will have recipes and regular feature videos (The Blue Bunny Kitchen is a lot of fun) to use on your site. As an added bonus, most videos have print content that go with them. This means you can include a food column in your paper and point readers to your Web site to see a video related to a recipe in the column.

There is no cost for any of this. After a quick registration, you'll be downloading and using Family Feature's content in your newspaper and on your Web site. I think you'll have to see this to believe it for yourself. For more information, or to see samples for yourself, visit [editors.familyfeatures.com](http://editors.familyfeatures.com) and click on the link for *Web Solutions* on the left sidebar.

## Red, White & True Mysteries Video Series

I ran into Paul Niemann at a newspaper conference in Missouri a few months ago. It seems that Paul has made a living writing a series called "Red, White & True Mysteries" for newspapers in the Midwest region of the United States since 2003.

Primarily used in N.I.E. (Newspapers in Education) programs, these mysteries are based on famous Americans. Children can read the information about a famous historical figure, then try to guess who it is.

Earlier this year, Paul began creating high-quality videos for newspaper Web sites. Based on the materials from his printed mysteries, Paul dresses as a historical figure while the viewer tries to guess who he is. They are a lot of fun and very well done. I especially get a chuckle when he dresses up as Betsy Ross, Annie Oakley or some other famous American woman.

Paul has been selling these printed and video mysteries to



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newspapers through a revenue sharing model by helping newspapers in the Midwest find advertisers for his material. I convinced Paul he should offer his videos to newspapers outside that area and he agreed it was a good idea.

If you're interested in *Red, White & True Mysteries*, either in print, video or both, they are now available with a monthly subscription fee or through a revenue-share. To see a sample of one of Paul's videos, visit



Paul Niemann stars in this Red, White & True Mystery.

[kevinslimp.com](http://kevinslimp.com) and play the video in the right sidebar. To get more information about these products, visit [inventionmysteries.com/rwtru.html](http://inventionmysteries.com/rwtru.html).

Paul has created a new price structure for smaller papers. Contact Paul directly at [niemann7@aol.com](mailto:niemann7@aol.com) for more information concerning pricing for small newspapers.

## What does this guy do, anyway?

Kevin directs a training program for newspaper designers, publishers and I.T. related staff called the Institute of Newspaper Technology. The Institute takes place each October on campus at The University of Tennessee. In addition to his work with the Institute, Kevin speaks at dozens of conferences related to newspapers and publishing throughout the world each year. About twice a month, Kevin visits newspapers to provide training and advice. His webinar schedule can be found at [www.bizincast.biz](http://www.bizincast.biz).

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