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Bite, Snack, Meal: A Content Strategy to Get Your Message Across and Keep Audiences Engaged

Editor’s Note: The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) strives to provide up-to-date and relevant information on environmental health and to build partnerships in the profession. In pursuit of these goals, NEHA features this column on environmental health services from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in every issue of the *Journal*.

In these columns, authors from CDC’s Water, Food, and Environmental Health Services Branch, as well as guest authors, will share insights and information about environmental health programs, trends, issues, and resources. The conclusions in these columns are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of CDC.

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As environmental health professionals, we constantly strive to provide clear, plain language information to our audiences. Our goal is to provide relevant, easy-to-understand information so they can learn something new, remember important information, and possibly take some sort of action. Our audiences are hungry for information and we must deliver them content that satisfies their hunger.

- Everyone has, however, different appetites:
- Some people only want a little **bite**—they are looking for high-level information.
 - Some want more of a **snack**—maybe they took a bite and they are intrigued to learn more.
 - Some want a whole **meal**—they are hungry for all the details.

You can use a bite, snack, meal approach (Figure 1) to help lead your audience through your content, giving them the perfect portion to meet their information needs. Let’s look at the bite, snack, and meal a little more closely.

The Bite

A bite should take less than 30 seconds to digest. Bites should include only one main message and a call to action or way for people to get more information. Some examples of a bite are a billboard, social media message, or a public service announcement. When creating bites, you’re looking to capture someone’s attention. Bites are written in plain language, designed for a general audience, and should have enough information for people with larger appetites (and your target audience) to look for further information.

The Snack

A snack should take less than 5 minutes to digest. Some examples of snacks include an infographic, a visual abstract, a data visualization such as a map or chart (Figure 2), or a short video. Since snacks take a little longer to consume, they should be designed for your targeted or interested audience but should still be written in plain language. Snacks can

include multiple messages and should also include the bottom line or a call to action.

The Meal

A meal takes more than 5 minutes to digest. These can be full websites, data tools, reports, or research articles. Meals can have more technical, complex content. They typically include lots of supporting information and are designed for a highly targeted, possibly technical, audience.

Putting It All Together: Designing a Digestible Webpage

Webpages and websites are some of the most common ways of delivering environmental and public health information. A webpage can usually be an entire meal but it should be laid out in a way that makes information easy to digest (Figure 3). You can achieve this type of website by putting the bottom line at the top of the page and adding descriptive headers (bite) so people can quickly scan the page to find the information they need. Add a data visualization or infographic (snack) that helps convey the information in a different way. Try to limit your webpages to a few major key points and add links to other webpages for more information to help guide people through your content.

Develop Your Content Kitchen

To feed your audience’s appetites for information, you should serve your content mostly as bites and snacks, using multiple formats to align with different media or communication platforms. The content should cater to the health literacy level, interest level, and learning styles of your audience. When promoting a new data tool, website, or article (meal),

FIGURE 1

The Bite, Snack, Meal Approach



Note. Lead your audiences through your content using a bite, snack, meal approach.

you can develop an email campaign (snack), a sample data visualizations (snack), an infographic or video that highlights different features (snack), and a variety of social media messages (bite). When creating your bites, snacks, and meals, the key thing to remember is to keep your main message or bottom line consistent. Happy cooking!

Resources

Data Visualizations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (www.cdc.gov/ephttracking) has tools to help you create data visualizations for your bites, snacks, or meals.

- Data Explorer: Create custom maps, charts, and tables on over 500 environmental and health data measures on the Data Explorer. Use the Data Visualization Embed feature to get a custom HTML code to embed any visualization into your webpage.
- API: If you are a developer or have an application, you can use the Tracking Network's application program interface (API) to import publicly available data on the Data Explorer into your own application.

Social Media and Infographics

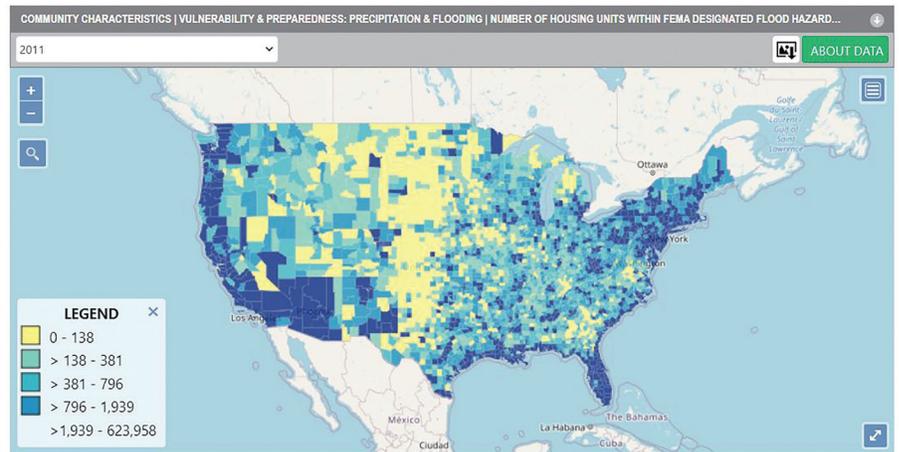
There are many other free or low-cost tools, such as Canva (www.canva.com) and Piktochart (www.piktochart.com), that you can use to create bites and snacks like social media content and infographics.

Visual Abstracts

A resource for developing visual abstracts for journal articles and other research is the Visual Abstract Open Source Primer (www.surgeryredesign.com/resources).

FIGURE 2

Example of a Snack



Note. You can create custom maps, charts, and tables to embed in your webpages using the Data Visualization Embed feature on the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network Data Explorer from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://ephttracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer>).

FIGURE 3

Example of a Website Using the Bite, Snack, Meal Approach

Climate Change



Climate change, together with other natural and human-made health stressors, can affect human health in several direct and indirect ways. Tracking data may be used to inform decision-making and policies that can help local communities assess vulnerabilities, estimate the burden, and build overall resilience against the effects of a changing climate.

Climate Change Data

The following datasets can be used to better understand how changes in temperature and precipitation and occurrence of heat waves, floods, droughts, and wildfires can influence human health. While all communities are vulnerable to health effects associated with climate change, not everyone is equally at risk. Important considerations include age, economic resources, and location.

Community Characteristics	+
Drought	+
Extreme Heat	+
Heat-related illness	+
Population Characteristics	+
Precipitation & Flooding	+
Vulnerabilities & Preparedness	+
Wildfires	+



Data Highlight



Tracking partnered with CDC's Climate & Health Program to develop the Heat and Health Tracker. This interactive data dashboard puts local heat information into the hands of decision makers, media, and the public for every county in the United States! See how extreme heat affects your county today.

More



Note. Formatting your websites using a bite, snack, meal approach can help people find relevant information quickly and stay engaged.

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