



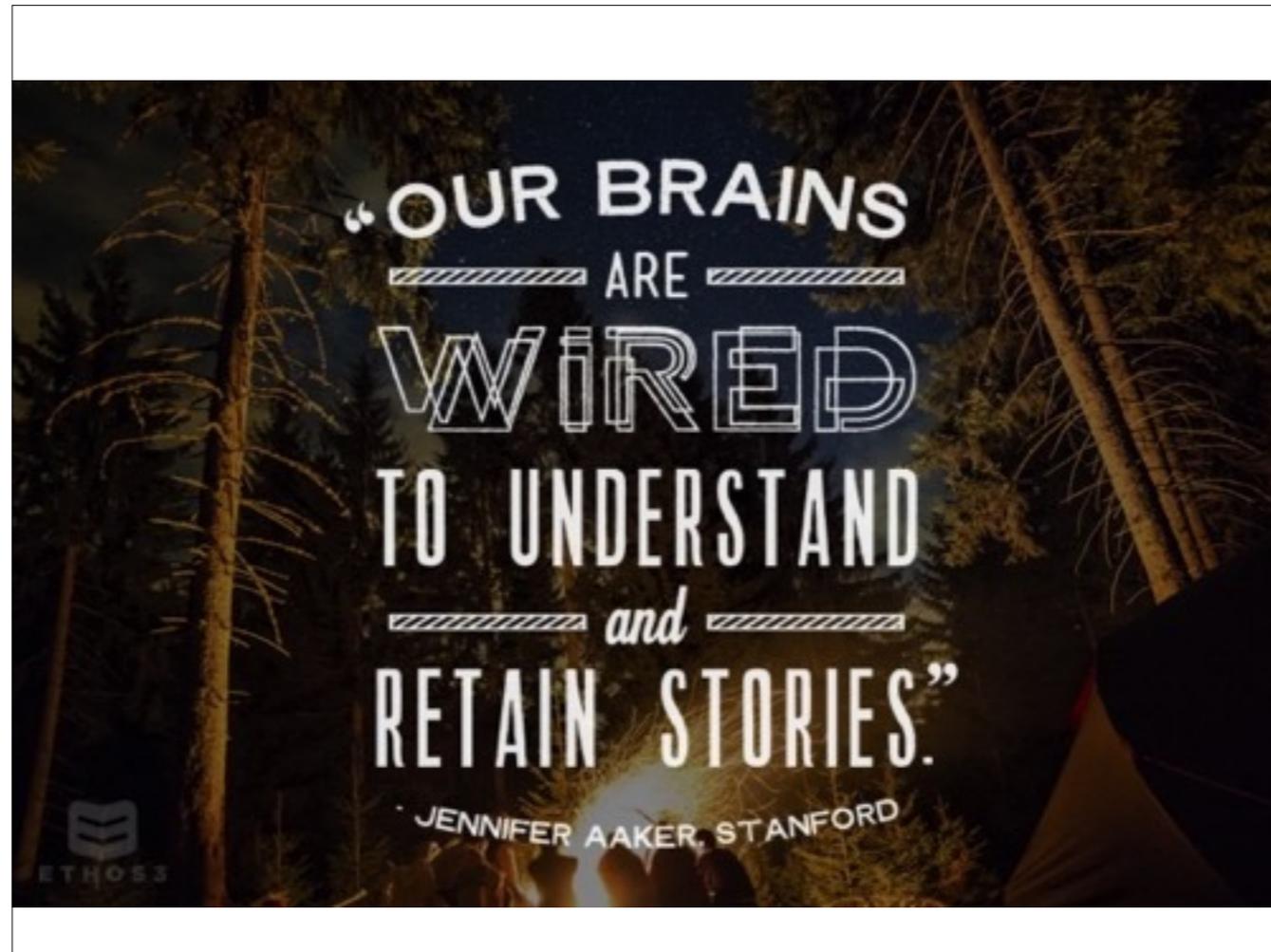
# Story, People & Content: Connecting the Dots

**Margaret Enloe | CBP Communications Director**

*Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay*

The brain, it seems, does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life; in each case, the same neurological regions are stimulated.

*-- Annie Murphy Paul in NY Times*



Neuroscientists have researched different areas of the brain and how they respond to information.

- When we are presented with facts, our brains decode the words into meaning and essentially acknowledge that the info was rec'd. BUT nothing else happens
- Research shows that when people are engaged in a story, the sensory cortex lights up.
  - *Our brains are wired to understand and retain stories. A story is a journey that moves the listener, and when the listener goes on that journey they feel different and the result is persuasion and sometimes action.*

To reach someone through the heart  
is other than reaching them through words.  
Besides words, allusions and arguments  
the heart knows a hundred thousand ways to speak.

*Rumi – 13c. Persian poet*







ABOUT 40,000 YEARS AGO,  
THE TRADITION OF STORYTELLING  
BEGAN WITH CAVE PAINTINGS.

- By engaging our imagination, we become participants in a narrative based in shared values (not info).

-We can step out of our own shoes, see differently, and increase our [empathy](#) for others.

-Through imagination, we tap into [creativity](#) that is the foundation of innovation, self-discovery and change. This is the basis for cultural and social change.



An engaging story  
builds a bridge.

The main “story” in  
your work gives your  
audience  
a familiar way in,  
an invitation  
to connect to you  
and your message

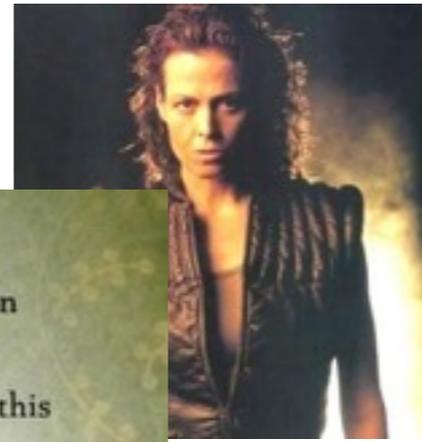
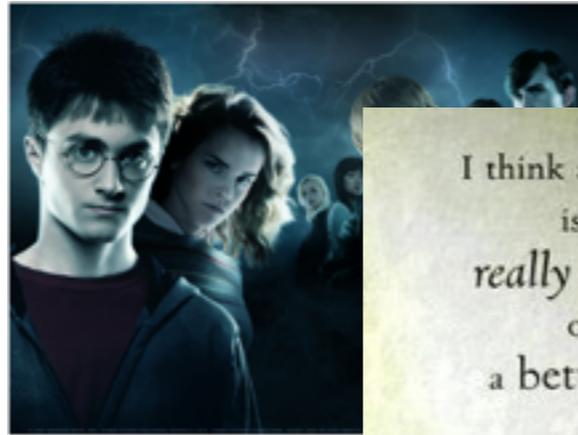


- When organizations, causes, brands or individuals identify and develop a core story, they...

- Create and display authentic meaning and purpose that... Others can believe in, participate with and share.



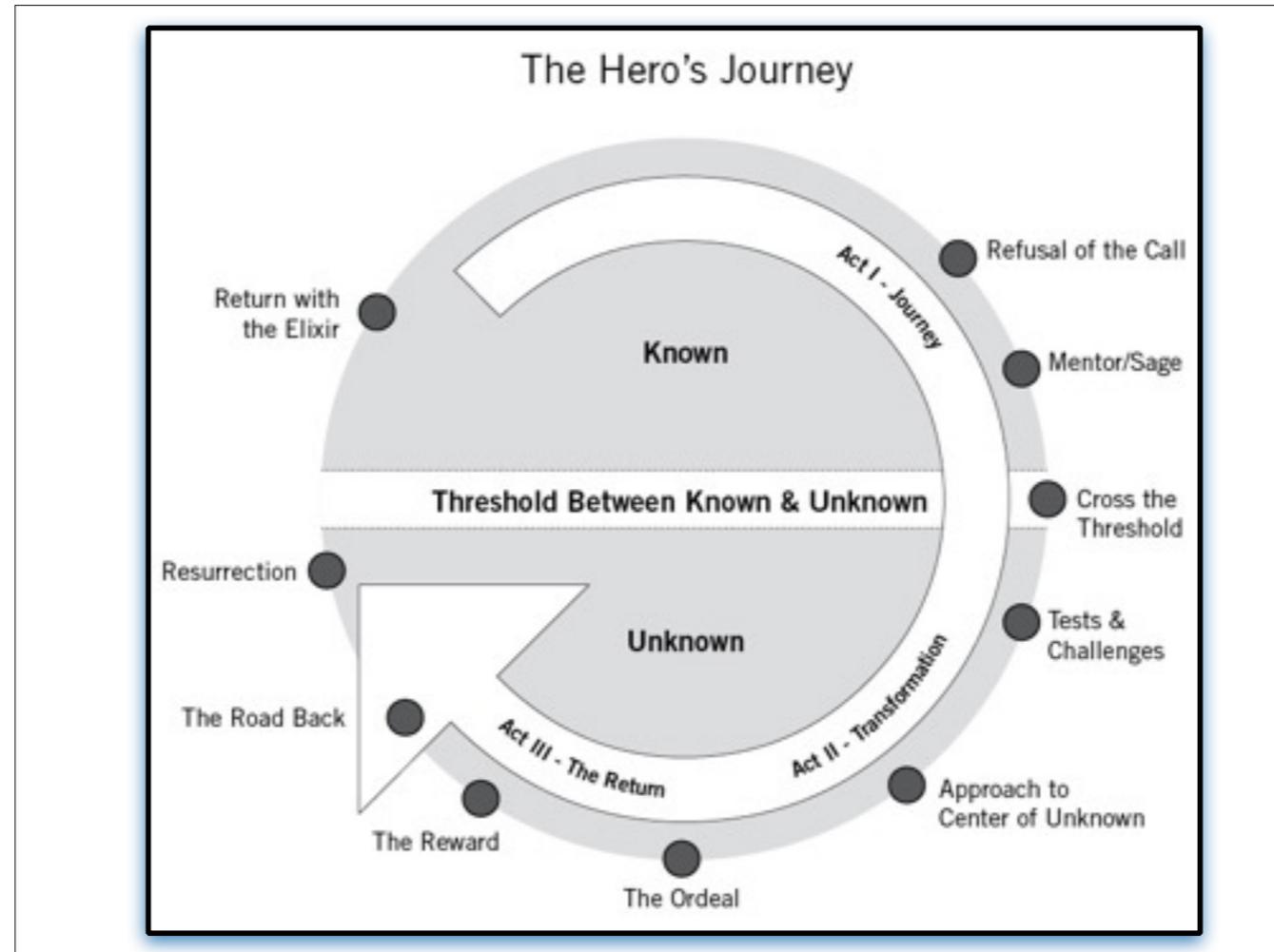
# Hero's Journey – THE story



I think a hero  
is any person  
*really intent*  
on making this  
a better place  
for all people.

MAYA ANGELOU

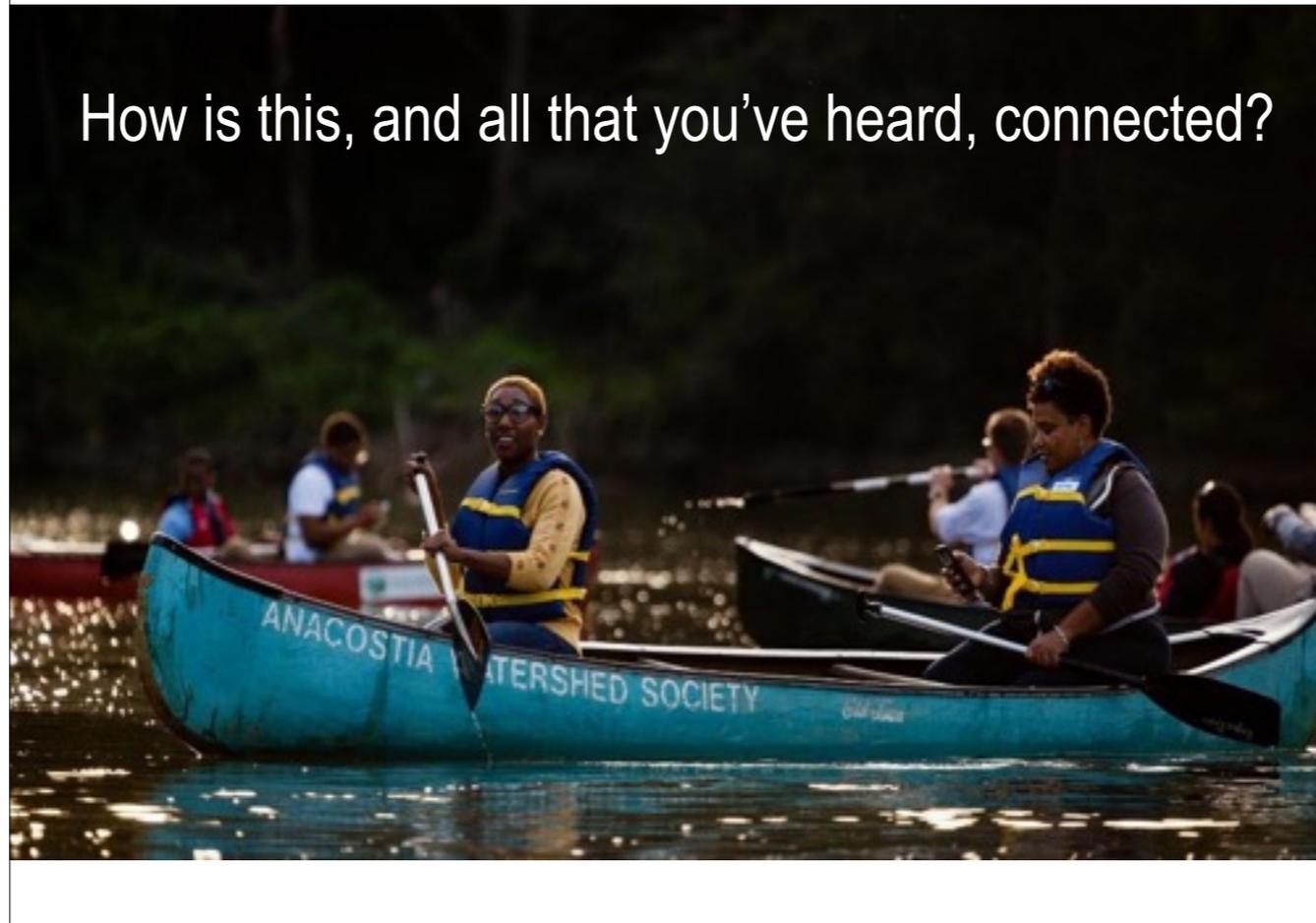




Hero's journey could be considered a cycle, with key events  
 The quest begins in the ordinary world, with an ordinary person.  
 But it progresses and passes through a 'special world' with many stages along the way.

2. Assistance from someone older/wiser
3. Departure – she's off
4. Trials – being a hero is hard work – slaying dragons, overcoming challenges, battles (both inner and outer)
5. Approach -

How is this, and all that you've heard, connected?



## Our Communications Goal:

To educate the interested public about the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and engage them in the work of protecting & restoring it.



Because public knowledge and engagement are critical components of environmental stewardship. And without environmental stewardship, restoration is not possible.



It all revolves around CONTENT --- using / improving our storytelling & engagement to improve the delivery thereof.

**•Content & strategy**

- Because "content" is every single piece of information you share with your audience.
- Term content is specific to digital, web-based h'ever, you can think of everything that **supports our brand** as part of our content, too - printed reports, fact sheets.

And not just any content.....



- This includes narrative stories, video & photo content, social media engagement
- While meeting audience's needs



**Content**

- that people truly WANT, -----DISCOVERY” & USER TESTING

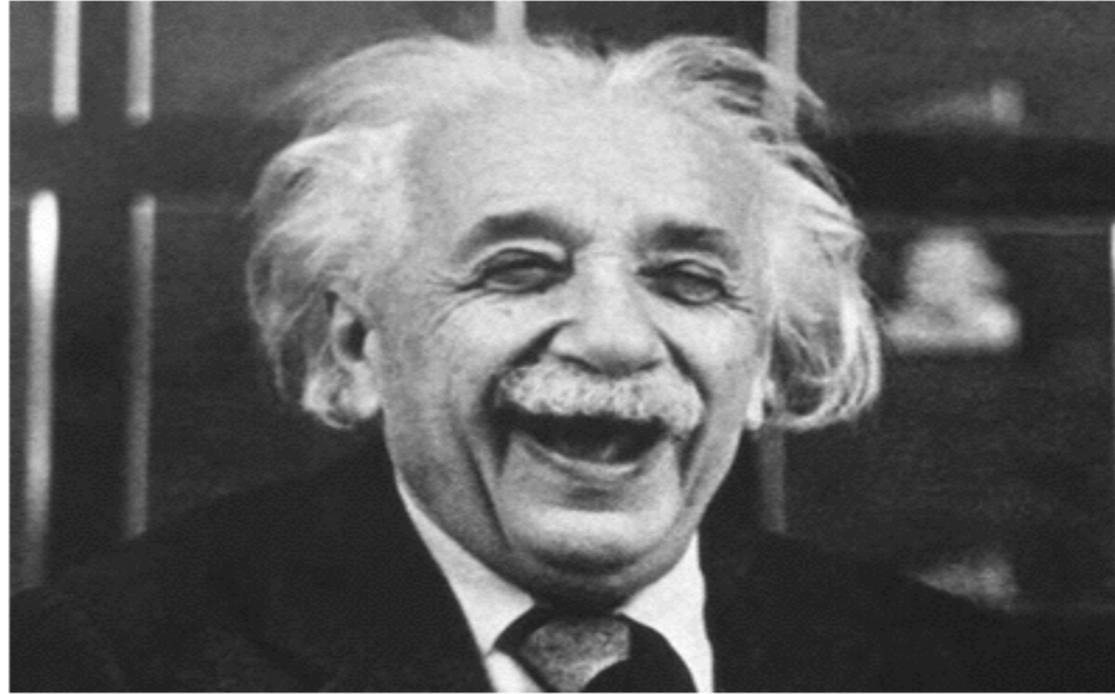
presented in ways they that are ACCESSIBLE, --- “

**Determining audience is one of THE most imp't steps to successfully delivering your message**

Who is listening? Who do you want to listen? Who are you trying to persuade? Who are they? (age, education, beliefs)

- External audiences & -Internal audiences

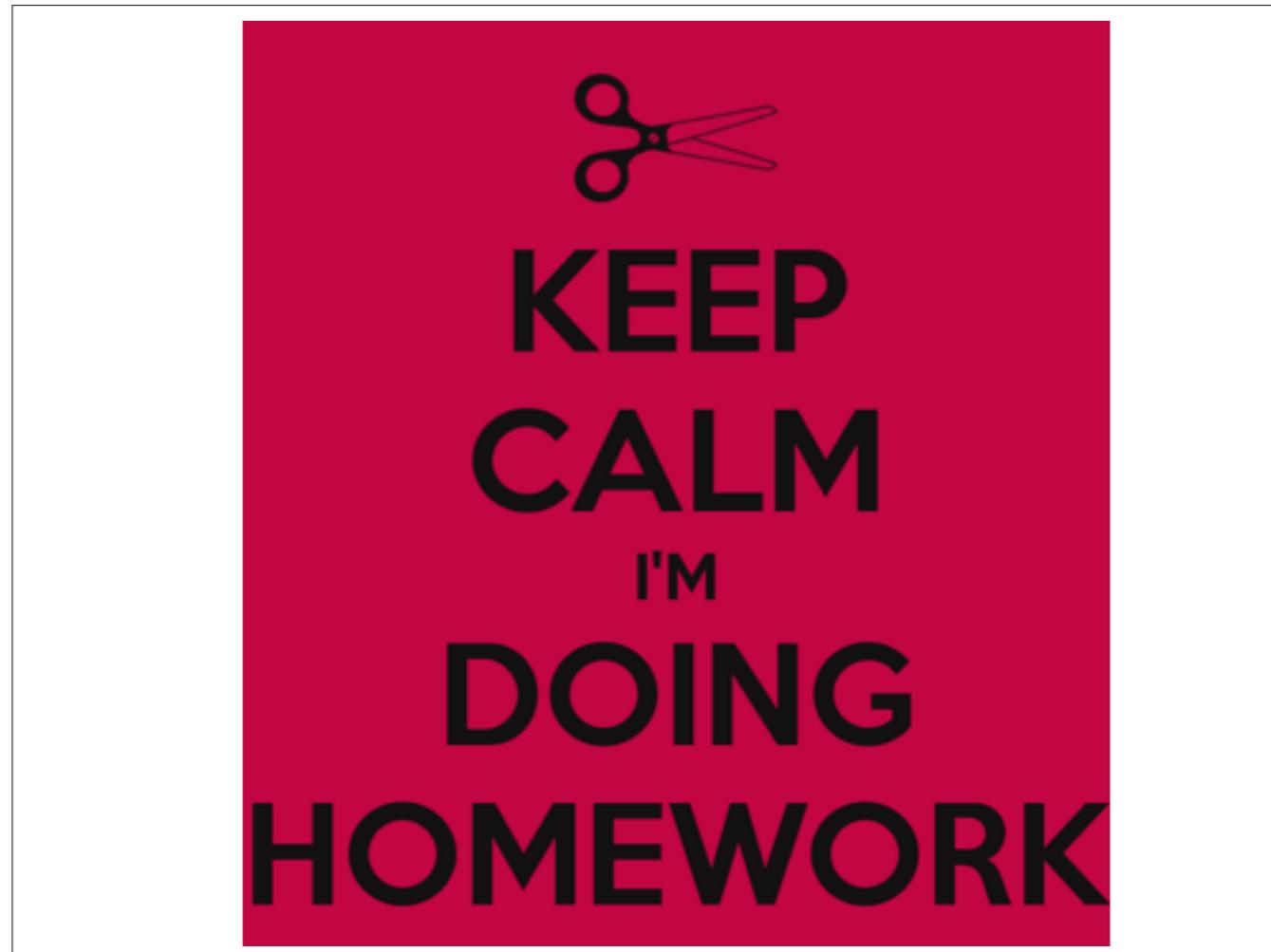
>>>>You MUST write/speak to THEM



**“Make everything as simple as possible,  
but not simpler.” – Albert Einstein**

-Do not “dumb down” - be clear, use everyday language and words - esp. active verbs and words that carry emotion  
- Using big words can backfire by alienating the person you’re talking to; You may feel more confident but the other person feels dumb - not engaged  
VIDEO: TEDEd - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz8E8UOBFJQ>

- Audience
- Messages & Clarity
- Consistency of tone, quality of writing/info



PLANNING - Content strategy is a relatively new field that:  
- guides how websites are created, managed and maintained.  
But content strategy isn't JUST for websites: it's a way of thinking that has a direct impact on how we do business.

And being strategic about creating, managing and maintaining this content will have a big impact on whether or not you're cultivating an online presence that is effective--for you and for your audience.

>> DISCOVERY & USER TESTING – user experience is key; and in end makes our products better



Create/Write for re-use so our content can be used in several ways – news post, press release, social media --- to reach and meet various audience's needs

The idea that one piece of content can appear on multiple platforms is nothing new: content strategists have called this kind of content "flexible," "nimble" and "adaptive." But it was not until mobile technologies became commonplace that the push to create this kind of content was felt. And the foundation of adaptive content is writing for reuse (or, as National Public Radio calls it, "Create Once, Publish Everywhere"). When you write for the chunk--the headline, the 140-character summary, the nut graf--and not for the page, you make sure your content keeps up with design and development.

# Follow us on Instagram!

@chesbayprogram



Decide where and how you will use your content.



It's important to think of content development as a cyclical rather than a linear process. You create content, you maintain content and you evaluate the effectiveness of this content. Then, you start the cycle again.

Breaking down these steps, assigning them to real people and putting certain tools to use--think editorial calendar, content inventory, maintenance checklist or measurement scorecard--can help you manage your workload. And making sure you complete the cycle's last step--evaluating the effectiveness of your content--will improve this cycle every time you do it.



- All stories/comment should align and support your BRAND / mission

## RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- [5 Elements of a Good Story](#)
- VIDEO: TEDEd - [What Makes a Hero?](#)
- VIDEO: TEDEd - [The Power of Simple Words](#)

### **CBP Stories**

- [Photo Essay: Following the Anacostia Water Trail](#)
- [From the Field: Linking Land & Water in Brook Trout Conservation](#)