

Multimedia Journalist of the Year Submission 2022-2023

Grace Hamilton

As a freshman, the “Beginning Journalism” class appealed to me merely because, on its surface, it presented an opportunity to churn out myriad forms of writing. My first year as a reporter, I published a range of articles: op-eds on student mental health, features stories on teachers’ alternative passions, news coverage of school dances. Putting a pen to paper contained the magic of journalism.

Or so I thought. My first year as an editor, I read a Guardian article divulging that 97% of women in the U.K. have been sexually harassed in public areas and was outraged. An in-depth, investigative feature was born. Shortly into my reporting, I realized the words on the page carried substantial weight, but multimedia would help the story reside in the reader’s mind far beyond the moment they finished reading the kicker. The story, thus, was propped up by various elements including feature photography, interactive bar charts, glossaries, and an “in their words” slideshow. My deep-dive into sexual harassment served as an introduction to the power of multimedia, and ever since, each story I have published online for The Standard has included some alternative form of storytelling.

This past year, as Editor-in-Chief of The Standard, my number one priority – in both my stories and those produced by my staff – has been multimedia. Whether including audio interview clips, alternative graphic forms or extended articles, I fundamentally believed multimedia brought stories to life and deserved ample attention. Each time a reporter would pitch a story, I encouraged the respective editor to provide suggestions for accompanying multimedia. At the beginning of the year, I even shared a [multimedia inspiration guide](#), complete with a range of multimedia options dependent on the type of story and intention to convey, with my staff to make multimedia creation precedence and kickstart multimedia story generation from the get-go.

Later in the year, during a discussion with our school’s Social Justice Council and Sustainability Council around the intersection between climate change and social justice, a coverage idea sparked. Climate change will arguably be the greatest humanitarian crisis my generation faces, and as a student journalist, reporting is the most effective means to combat it. The next day, I sat down with my fellow managing editors to organize deadlines for a multimedia climate change package – a range of 16 multimedia stories bringing the climate crisis to life in a tangible, digestible and actionable way. Multimedia packages most effectively serve as an impetus for action, and climate change is an issue I felt most needed that action.

Journalists are storytellers, and to effectively convey a story in this modern era, we must embrace multimedia to maximize the impact of our stories. Multimedia is the path forward. Without harnessing visual storytelling alongside the ancient power of written word, the potential of journalism on the digital landscape cannot be reached. I hope I have instilled a love and passion for alternative storytelling in each and every one of the staff members I have mentored.

1. [Rebuilding: Syrian refugee girls pursue education](#) – This February, I spent a week at the Azraq refugee camp in Jordan, during which I got to know a few of the girls supported by the CARE program, many of whom pursued their education. I interviewed a few of them, and later wrote a piece sharing their experiences – with 10 forms of multimedia alongside it – to raise awareness for refugee girls’ education and bolster support in my community. I felt that these girls’ stories deserved varying mediums to convey their serious emotion and heavy truths.

2. [Wage gap epitomizes stagnation in gender equality efforts](#) – Writing about the gender wage gap lends itself well to infographics explaining the facts that make up the harsh reality about wage inequality. As such, I developed two key infographics that supplement the op-ed. The first, “Over the years: Gender pay gap,” offers an essential historical record to the reader that provides useful context for my opinion itself, while the second, “Gender pay gap: By the numbers” presents a ladder with various wage gap statistics to convey the additional rungs women must climb to earn the same wages as men.

3. [Epoch BioDesign founder Jacob Nathan tackles plastic waste](#) – As part of the multimedia climate change package I spearheaded, this story makes use of myriad multimedia elements. For example, I embedded an Instagram profile that our school posted about Nathan Jacob as well as a podcast in which he and his company are featured. Furthermore, the courtesy photography scattered throughout the webpage helps break up the text and leaves the reader with a helpful visual of Nathan and his work. However, the most important point of multimedia to this story is the original timeline at the end. I wanted to represent Nathan’s progression from a student at ASL, which many current students knew him, to the fascinating work he does today. Alumni stories are often captivating to current students as a projection of what life might be like for them after leaving the school. This graphic targets that very sentiment.

4. [Women’s History Month: The Standard editors celebrate women in their life](#) – Recently, I created an Adobe Express story celebrating Women’s History Month. The story took form in a “glideshow,” an interactive sliding photo gallery with quotes and images of women to which our editorial board is grateful. I knew that I needed to feature these inspiring women prominently to do justice to the story’s purpose. Hence, the glideshow frames the photos of the women nice and large, which bolsters the emotion and significance of the Women’s History Month story.

5. [Students participate in Aequitas workshops](#) – Aequitas Week is a key date on the calendar in our High School. All students participate in social justice workshops and events all week. Needless to say, it’s extremely important. Traditionally, our coverage has involved an article or possibly a photo gallery. Both effectively cover the events of the week, but for the first time, I decided to film. I am very happy with the resulting product, especially since this is a unique learning experience away from the typical classroom environment, which lends nicely to a video format.