

FISHBOWLDC®

The Washington Times Editor Lays Out a 'Vision' - Tom McDevitt

Betsy Rothstein
January 2, 2013



Last month *TWT*'s new Executive Editor **David Jackson** announced to his newsroom that the publication would be taking things in a new, brighter direction that would involve reorganization and layoffs. Today he releases another letter, this time, a "vision" for what's to come. In it, no word as to which members of the newsroom will soon be let go.

The vision doesn't sound much different than any other online publication out there. They will be "digital first" (sounds like *National Journal*, *Politico*, *The Hill*, *CQ Roll Call*, *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *WaPo*, *The Daily Caller* and more), they will use social media (we suspect this sounds like EVERYONE), they will keep in touch with what their audience likes through research (*Roll Call* anyone?), they will create a mobile site (yes, yes, others have done it) and finally, his dramatic last few lines: "We will be a news organization that can be trusted to report important stories that others won't. We will be *The Washington Times 3.0*."

The full vision statement:

Subject: From the Editor
Date: January 2, 2013 12:12:14 PM EST
To: twteveryone@washingtontimes.com

Last month I told you about our goal of re-organizing our company so that we could be as competitive as possible in today's dynamic news environment. To that end, I've drawn up a set of guidelines – a vision statement – that I would like to share, first with you, and then with our readers. This statement is meant to not only say who we are and what we will be, but also to help shape our decisions as we move forward.

As I noted earlier, we are certainly not alone in entering a period of transition. But our plans will be uniquely our own, designed to fit our specific strengths and positioning as a source of distinctive news and opinion from our nation's capital.

– David

Vision statement

We will be a digital-first news organization. We will continue to print *The Washington Times* newspaper, but our Internet and online audiences will become our first thought in all story coverage and planning, and we will make the personnel, scheduling, and assignment changes required so that we can reach these fast-growing audiences quickly and creatively.

As part of this transition, we will launch a re-designed *washingtontimes.com* website that will feature blogs and other tools that help us get breaking news stories to our audience faster. We will be alert for ways to use interactive charts and graphics to make news and information easy to understand.

We will be attuned to our audience's interests. We will focus on political issues and other subjects that we know our audience is interested in, and we will look for compelling ways to give them important news and information that they cannot get anywhere else. We will stay in touch with our audience's interests

not only through their feedback, but also through research. Because we know our audience believes in personal freedom, free markets, limited government, and traditional values, we will closely cover stories about those subjects. We will also specialize in stories about national security and defense, cybersecurity, diplomacy, energy, and international developments such as the threat of terrorism and the rise of China.

We will make our Commentary section a must-read source of insightful and informative opinion from a conservative perspective. We will offer solutions rather than complaints, and they will be timely and pertinent to the subjects that people are talking about.

We will develop columns devoted to Libertarian viewpoints, tea party opinions, the latest think tank research, and what young conservatives (particularly those on college campuses) are talking about. We will also add blogger voices to provide online commentary.

We will devote our resources to areas where we can stand out and add value. In addition to covering national political and social issues, we will continue our distinctive coverage of football, baseball, hockey, and other sports that are popular with our readers. In our local coverage, we will favor stories about local issues put in a national context, so that our online audience from California to Florida will also find them informative and useful.

We will offer a mobile site that loads quickly, is simple and easy-to-read, and includes our most exclusive and important stories. It will be continuously updated throughout the day, and provide the content most people expect on smartphones: quick, brief updates on what's happening in the news, and a portal into additional content.

We will also create a tablet app that is rich in content and features.

We will welcome and encourage audience feedback by spotlighting it when comments reach high levels. Sometimes stories become a forum for debates that are as interesting as our stories. We will show our readers that we appreciate feedback.

We will support and encourage reader-generated content. Our popular *Communities* section is a great example of how we can provide a home for audiences with like-minded interests. We will look for opportunities to create more such homes.

We will utilize social media to promote and distribute our content and *The Washington Times* brand. Our best stories will be aggressively promoted via social media tools, and we will be alert to new technologies and adjust as necessary to the dynamic environment in which we're competing. We will continuously improve.

We will promote *The Times*' expertise through our reporters, columnists, and editors on television, radio, and online. We will encourage our staff to develop their own online brands along with ours. We will grow our own stars.

In a media environment in which trust in the news media has never been lower, we will be a news organization that can be trusted to report important stories that others won't. We will be *The Washington Times* 3.0.