



CASE

STORYTELLER

“**Integrating Vertical Video:** Redesigning the Website for Mobile Audiences

STUDY

IN SHORT

Storyteller's new project aims to redesign its website to better connect with younger audiences and make it more engaging. Simultaneously, the outlet has introduced new vertical-video stories specifically for mobile users to provide something more fast-paced than its usual slow, narrative, solution-based journalism.

ABOUT THE NEWS OUTLET

Storyteller is a bilingual (Serbian and Slovak) media outlet based in Vojvodina, Serbia, founded in 2017. It focuses on serving the local Slovak minority and the broader Serbian public. In particular, Storyteller provides stories that are solution-oriented and have deep context, containing narrative depth.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To modernize Storyteller's platform by improving mobile design, adding a vertical-video section, and testing new visual formats to better engage younger audiences.



IMPLEMENTED SOLUTIONS

Working with a freelance designer, Storyteller redesigned its site and launched a new “Video Story” section. Based on audience feedback, the team created a mobile-friendly layout and published short vertical videos directly on the website.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

The Storyteller team realized that their website was no longer reflecting the direction in which the editorial team was moving — from slow, solutions-oriented stories to more engaging, mobile-first, visual, and community-oriented journalism. Hence, a renovation of the platform was required, more aligned with how younger audiences consume media. Thus, Storyteller decided to test a new format, notably including vertical-video stories made specifically for mobile users, available exclusively on their website.

HOW DID APPLYING DESIGN THINKING PRINCIPLES HELP?

Design thinking was key to the team's approach. The team talked with their audience through direct conversation and short online surveys, asking them a variety of questions about their consumption habits, preferences and frustrations. This helped the Storyteller team to redesign their priorities and shape the new vertical-videos section. Furthermore, it provided information on the kind of language and visual tone required to maximize audience engagement.

DID STORYTELLER'S APPROACH CHANGE ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS AUDIENCE IN ANY WAY?

The final visual product is still in progress. However, the Storyteller team noticed that introducing the "Video Story" section sparked curiosity among regular readers. The platform's audience began to spend more time on the landing page, and several reached out directly to Storyteller to express their appreciation.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID STORYTELLER ENCOUNTER AND HOW DID IT ADDRESS THEM?

The biggest challenge the Storyteller team faced was working with a freelance web designer who, unfortunately, delayed parts of the implementation. Consequently, the team's timeline was postponed, and some of the renovated platform's design elements were not as polished as initially intended. Thus, compromises had to be made on specific features. Nevertheless, the Storyteller team used this as an opportunity to reflect on what can be achieved with minimal resources.

HOW WAS STORYTELLER'S PROJECT RECEIVED BY ITS AUDIENCE?

The team noted that while the reception to the new platform was modest, it was encouraging. Given the fact that Storyteller is a small, community-based outlet, changes to the site did not go unnoticed. Although not all users provided feedback, those who did were excited about the fresh layout and particularly appreciated the new video stories that didn't rely on social-media algorithms to be seen. Some users felt that the content was "made for them" on their terms, not just optimized for clicks.

WHAT INSIGHTS OR LESSONS DID STORYTELLER GAIN FROM THIS PROJECT?

The team learned that even small changes can significantly improve how media is perceived and used, especially if it is driven by real audience needs. Additionally, they realized the importance of audience involvement early on, not just at the end. Overall, the team emerged from the project more iterative, testing ideas before committing and accepting that "perfect" is the enemy of "done and functional".

WHAT DOES STORYTELLER PLAN ON DOING NEXT?

Storyteller is now rethinking the Video Story concept as a space for very slow, narrative-driven, and solutions-oriented storytelling. Instead of one-off videos, the team is exploring the idea of creating short, thematic miniseries in vertical format. These would have the feel of a documentary, driven by local voices and underreported perspectives. Audio formats such as short podcasts are also being considered as an extension of the outlet's editorial mission.

To achieve this meaningfully, the team plans to reapply design-thinking principles, with a focus on defining clear audience journeys, testing content prototypes, and involving the community in shaping these new formats. However, the team is realistic about the fact that this will not be easy. Thus, they see great value in having structured guidance, mentorship, or even peer exchange along the way — so that the next iteration of their work is as intentional and audience-centered as possible.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD STORYTELLER GIVE TO OTHER JOURNALISTS OR ORGANISATIONS CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PATH?

The Storyteller team's key piece of advice is starting with your audience, "Don't assume, ask." Even short informal interviews or polls may lead to surprising insights. Applying design principles does not require big budgets; it only needs empathy, structure, and iteration. Transparency about changes is vital, and embracing the messiness of the process helps in accepting that things may not turn out exactly as planned.
