

INFORMER

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Time-Saving Design Tools

Tools that save time while increasing the appeal of your designs



by Kevin Slimp
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My experience as a professional designer goes back quite a while. I suspect many folks who read my columns were yet to be born when I picked up a box containing Version 1.0 of PageMaker from my desk in Lakeland, Florida, leaving me to wonder what was inside. My office adjoined the campus of Florida Southern College, and it seems the Computer Science Department wasn't sure what to do with this "program" and had it sent to me. I suppose I had a reputation for pushing the limits of those early desktop computers.

I didn't sleep that night. I carried the box home with me, staying up till morning to figure out how to lay out a page in PageMaker. It was a slow process. At the time, Aldus (the creator of PageMaker) released all its applications first on the PC platform, then Mac. Microsoft Windows wasn't commercially available at the time, so PageMaker ran on something called "Run-Time Windows," which was built into the application. To design a letter-size page took approximately eight hours in those early days due to the slowness

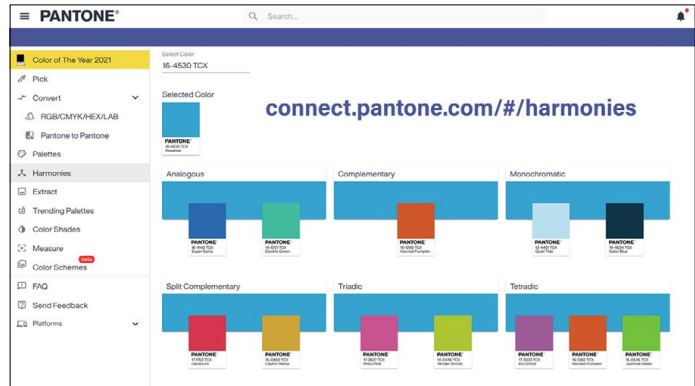
of those desktop computers. After purchasing my first laser printer, an HP-Laserjet, I could print a page in approximately two hours.

Once I learned how to design pages in PageMaker, then learned enough about the Postscript programming language to create vector-based logos and illustrations, I was a hot commodity as a designer. I soon moved on to other applications like QuarkXpress, Illustrator, CorelDraw, Ventura Publisher, and Adobe PhotoStyler. Years later, after Adobe purchased Photoshop from Aldus, combining many of the tools from Photoshop with those from PhotoStyler, I learned, then began teaching, Photoshop to audiences that filled auditoriums.

Moving on, I opened an ad agency, which led to my work with Adobe and PDF files (I was looking for a less expensive way to get proofs to clients). Before long, I was receiving calls from newspapers internationally for help with design and technology.

Skip ahead a few decades to 2021, and quite surprisingly, I find myself doing more design work than ever. Between book covers, marketing materials, and even the occasional newspaper redesign, I generally sit in front of my screen 12 or more hours most days. So, when I find something that saves time in the design process, I'm quick to add it to my toolbox.

I'd like to share two websites that have become daily destinations in my design work. I use both to assist in the selection of colors used when designing book covers and marketing materials. Not only do these tools save time, but they've also made the quality of my work increase significantly.



The first is Design Wizard (designwizard.com). The actual URL you will want to visit for selecting color combinations is:

designwizard.com/blog/design-trends/colour-combination

As you scroll down the page of Design Wizard, you'll find a section titled, "Color Combos That Use Two Colors." I've started using this material in most of my design work. Design Wizard features popular color combinations that work well together. For instance, I would have never thought to use Turquoise and Warm Sand together on a book cover. But with the help of Design Wizard, I did, and the result was a beautiful color combination.

Further down the Design Wizard page, you'll find a section titled "Color Matching with Three Colors." If you are like me, you'll find this information invaluable when designing ads and illustrations.

The second website I would recommend is Pantone Harmonies, found at:

connect.pantone.com/#/harmonies

Be sure to enter the URL address precisely that way. Otherwise, it's tricky to find the right page.

Simply, Pantone Harmonies allows the user to enter a color, then suggests complementary colors.

I'm currently designing covers for 23 books in a series. Each has a similar design but uses its own unique color combination, different from the colors of the other book covers. You might imagine how difficult it was to find 23 different combinations that looked modern and appealing. Pantone Harmonies has been a lifesaver. I simply enter a color. If I enter something generic, like "green," the website will list all the various Pantone colors in the green family. After selecting the green I want to use, Pantone Harmonies lists color combinations, most of which I would have never imagined on my own.

If you don't deal with colors or design at your publication, send this column to someone who does. There's a good chance they will thank you for it later.



Kevin's Upcoming Webinars at:
newspaperacademy.com

- Sept 9 • Advance InDesign
- Oct 7 • Photoshop Tools
- Oct 22 • Affinity Publisher
- Nov 12 • Adobe Illustrator



By Bob Berting
Berting Communications

Creative Thoughts For Savvy Publications

In today's newspaper work place, expanding opportunities and challenges are good for creativity. In truth, great ideas are universal—and in most cases, the greater the idea, the more universal it could be.

The Size Of The Publication

Does the size of the publication have much to do with the size of the idea? Not much! After all, many times we know the greatest ideas are created by just 2 people working together—the advertising salesperson and the graphic artist. The large publication can provide more resources for people, but size can also mean bureaucracy. For example, many newspaper ad departments are largely open and free with no elaborate offices. The idea is to build your publication without sacrificing your freedom.

The Creative Outlook

Graphic artists at publications should have the right attitude, not a style. This attitude should be a combination of curiosity and sensitivity. In other words, there must be

an instinctive interest and curiosity in the business world as it is....and the sensitivity to reflect the world as it is—in their work.

Presentation Prospects

Most advertising sales presentations are heavy with newspaper industry jargon... and sometimes out of date. If the prospective client finds themselves listening to a 30-minute opening, before the actual campaign presentation, they might wish they were listening to another competitor. This opening could involve extensive interviewing of the prospect and asking a laundry list of questions, which is bad, because most companies have a website which will provide most of the information needed.

The critical element of creative advertising Whether a movie turns out to be good or bad, depends on the director, the cast, the story, the music, and editing. Successful ad campaigns are strategy, execution, marketing, creativity, graphic art, and copy.... everything is critical. One slip up, one second rate element, and a planned

campaign can turn into a probable disappointing flop.

Today's Newspaper Advertiser

Today's advertisers are very knowledgeable. They know advertising, inside and out. They study it in books. They get on the internet constantly and attend seminars by leading advertising experts. With knowledge comes cynicism. For this reason, campaigns which are designed for the creative satisfaction of the newspaper graphic artist many times do not work...as are campaigns designed to win awards. The customer is looking for results, not overly designed ads.

The Bottom Line

It's not easy to be trusted anymore...you have to get things right, time after time, time after time. In the customer's eyes, you have to be a trusted advisor that tells the story of their business. The reality is that you must be absolutely trusted and absolutely believable.

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Ryan Dohrn

President/Founder,
Brain Swell Media LLC

Think Like a Doctor Not a Salesperson

*Providing real-world remedies to the
pains your advertisers face*

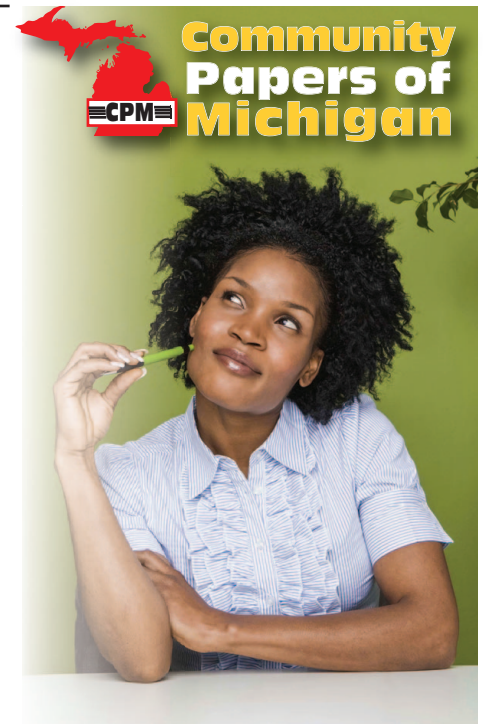
Every single sales call with an advertiser is valuable. So valuable that you do not want to waste time asking questions that will not help you close the deal. After 30 years of selling and marketing media, I find that you have three to five questions, and that is about it, on every sales call. More than that and you might as well turn on a bright light and point it into your advertiser's eyes and take the interrogation to the next level. I am kidding, of course. The issue is that many media sales warriors have been misled to ask the wrong questions. When you first start your training as a salesperson, there is usually a conversation about asking the three critical sales questions that are core to your success. Those three questions normally include the following: Are they the person that can make advertising decisions? What marketing are you currently doing? What is your budget for marketing? But what if I told you that I deeply believe that these are not the best questions to ask on a media sales call? Would you read on? Or would you roll your eyes? Well, thanks for reading on because I feel we need to sell differently, now more than ever before. In previous blogs I have stated that if we keep selling traditional media in traditional ways, we are destined to get traditional results. So, what can we do to be bigger, badder, and better in the media ad sales business? I believe it starts with reformatting the questions we ask. I

deeply feel that we all need to think like a doctor and not like a salesperson.

Consider this: you go to the doctor looking for relief from some type of ailment. They will normally ask you these three questions. What is causing you pain? How long has this been a problem? What have you done so far to fix the pain? If we can be in the business of removing pain, like a doctor, we have a repeatable pattern for ad sales success. Let's start with the old questions and move to the prescription for success.

Do we need to know if the person is the decision maker? Of course. But, if we only meet with decision makers, we will not have enough meetings to get to our sales goal. In addition, in the media business, we are working with a different buying structure compared to "normal" companies. Unlike a copier salesperson, we are working with marketing directors or business owners. Both are in a unique position, unlike an acquisition clerk at a standard company, to make decisions or highly influence decisions. There are normally not many layers to get to a marketing decision. So I suggest that we swap this question out for a new one. Keep reading, it is coming up.

Do we need to know what marketing they are currently doing? Of course. That helps



immensely. But, this question leads the advertiser to hijack your sales call and talk about the other things they are doing. You have just invited them to talk about your competition on your sales call. There is a better way to handle this question and get the answer that you need to move your ball down the field towards a touchdown. We need this answer, but we should ask it in a different way. So, I suggest that we swap out this question for a new one. Keep reading, it is coming up.

Do we need to know their budget? Of course. But how many times have you been given an accurate answer? How many times have you been told, there is no budget? Asking an advertiser their budget forces you to live in their often unrealistic reality of what it takes to market their product or service to your readers. You are asking them to force you into their reality instead of guiding them to the actual reality of what it takes to have a presence, be competitive, or dominate the pages of your publication or website. Asking for budget without showing them the reality of marketing is a waste of a question. Again, we need this answer. But I suggest that we swap out this question for a new one. Keep reading, it is coming up. (Continued on page 5.)

Think Like A Doctor, Not a Salesperson

by Ryan Dohrn Continued from page 4

When it comes times to asking questions of an advertiser, I have a proven three-step process that has worked over and over again. I truly feel it is the prescription for getting the answers we need and for closing deals. It will probably sound like just what the doctor ordered. So, what is your biggest problem or pain point? How long has that problem been painful? And, what have you done to fix that problem or alleviate that pain? Let's expand on this three-step process of questions, right now.

Question #1: I like to ask, when you agreed to meet with me today, what is the one business challenge or point of pain that you think I can help you solve? This helps the advertiser get specific with you. It allows you to provide them with specific solutions to specific problems. This helps you get clear on their points of pain. They may have one or they may have five. Ask them to get clear with you, and take notes. Sympathize with them. Tell them they are not alone. Reference that you have heard this pain point before and have some ideas to help. Once you know their pain, now you want to enhance the pain ... just a touch.

Question #2: Pain is a real motivator in problem-solving and customer relations. If you can be seen as the person or company that removes the pain points a business owner is facing, your secret media elixir will sell like wildfire. After I ask and identify their pain points, I will ask this simple question: "How long has this been a problem?" Normally, the answer surprises me. I am trying to enhance the pain. I want to make it very real for them, especially if they have been advertising with a competitor for years. I want them to subtly realize that they have been

advertising elsewhere and this darn problem still exists. I am not looking to make them feel dumb, however. I just want them to see that they still have the pain point and they do not like the pain. Once the pain is real, I dig just a bit deeper by asking my third question.

Question #3: What have you done to fix this problem? I might even ask how much money they have spent to try and fix the issue. Oh wait, did I just ask their budget? Well ... sort of. I want to enhance the fact that they have spent money and time and the problem still exists. Again, sympathize with them. Tell them they are not alone. Reference that you have heard this pain before and have some ideas to help.

Your doctor does the same thing when you come to their office. Right? What is the problem? How long has this been a problem? What have you done so far to fix the pain? If we can be in the business of removing pain, we have a repeatable pattern for ad sales success.

Now, I am not suggesting that these are the only questions you should ask. If you read this blog often, you know that there are many other questions to ask. I am simply suggesting that we have limited time on that single valuable sales call, and we want to ask the best questions to get the best results. The other thing is that there are so many age-old sales questions that make us sound like every other media salesperson. In most markets, the questions that you ask will set you apart from the other salespeople that are calling on your same clients. Do you believe that questions separate you from others? The answer is yes.

Two final points. If we keep selling traditional media in traditional ways, we are destined to get traditional results. So let's change a bit. And remember, if ad sales was an easy job, everyone would be doing it. We are the chosen few. Let's always be looking to improve our media sales game.

Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning ad sales training coach, a nationally recognized internet sales consultant, and an international motivational speaker. He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, *Selling Backwards*. Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique ad sales training and sales coaching firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of *Sales Training World*.





By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Ad-Libs

Give Your Advertising Some Personality

Kirk likes to work directly with his ad clients on their creative strategies. “Making a sale is just the first step in the journey,” he said. “It’s a big part of my job to make sure my clients stand out from their competitors on the page and on the screen. When I work with several advertisers who are in the same type of business, it’s a special challenge to create a different ad personality for each one of them.”

Generally speaking, there are two types of advertising. There are image ads that are designed to give consumers a good feeling about the advertiser (for example, “Your safety is our biggest concern”). And there are response ads that are designed to move readers to take action (“Buy one, get one free”).

Kirk is on target in his comments about personality. Whether image or response – whether print or digital – every ad has some kind of personality. Instead of leaving that important advertising ingredient to chance, he is determined to help them develop ad personalities that appeal to their respective target audiences.

Let’s take a look at a few of the tools which can contribute to an ad’s personality – the type of personality that a client wants to project:

1. Typography. When we speak, it’s not just what we say, it’s how we say it that communicates a message. It’s the same

on the newspaper page or the digital screen, so much so that typography has been called “the voice of print.”

From a bold, sans serif headline for a construction equipment distributor to a lighter serif headline for an upscale clothing store, type fonts can create important first impressions.

number of choices, including pen and ink, gray tones, charcoal, watercolors and cartoons.

3. Products vs. people. Three possible options are: products by themselves, people by themselves or people using the products. In other words, an ad can depict a widget, people (in posed or candid shots), or a person using a widget.



4. Copy style. Some advertisers present information in a straight-forward pattern that reads something like this: “(1) feature-benefit, (2) feature-benefit, (3) feature-benefit, (4) buy today.” Others like to tell – or imply – a story. For example: “Imagine getting yard work done quickly, so you’ll have the rest of the day for fun.”

“There are lots of creative options and combinations that give us ways to customize ads for our clients,” Kirk said. “Even if they sell the best products in the world, nobody will read their ads unless they attract

attention on the page. That’s why the sale is only the beginning of the process.”

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

2. Photographs vs. Illustrations. To depict realism, use a photograph. Photos are usually more true-to-life than drawings. Even if a photo has been touched up, consumers are willing to accept it as a reasonable representation of the subject matter.

Although some illustrations can be as realistic as photographs (consider close-cropped, photo-like depictions of tires), most illustrations leave more to the imagination than that. There are a

I'm always talking about small space ads. I can't help it, that was what I did the most, and face it, small space ads are way easier for me to discuss and demonstrate on these pages. However, here are a few...

Full Page Ads

Ad Talk with Ellen Hanrahan

Before I get on with this month's article, I apologize for some "smudges" that occurred on last month's page. It never showed up in my PDF, yet there it was, in all its "smudginess," on the right side of the page. No explanation for what happened, however, I think it may have been from an old PDF format of the "Pure Enerchi" business card.

I have a printing background, so I lay out the business cards 4-up. Rather than fix my 4-up PDF, I just placed it on the page and duly sized my frame so only the one business card showed (rather than take the time to fix the original PDF). I have done this same procedure on a number of different placed PDFs with no problem, but this time something went awry.

So I am not 100% sure, but I think that is where the "smudge" came from (they are actually screened flowers). But, if nothing else, I have learned that sometimes a shortcut can undermine the effect you are going for. Lesson learned.

A Full Page Ad-Not Always Easier

These ads would also look very good in color, however, different colors could be a distraction for this discussion, so black and white it is. They've also been reduced to 24% of their original size for obvious reasons. If you would like the full size ad, drop me a line.

In all three ads, I've used a "grid" approach. I haven't discussed grids very much because, while extremely useful, they can be a little dull to read about. Maybe I will try to put together a simple version in the future.

OK, grids are blocks of similar information in their own specific areas. The type of ad, amount of info and graphics will dictate how I will divide the space (grid).

I chose a more flexible grid layout for the "Thank You" ad to accommodate all the names and to be able to let them "flow" into columns of different lengths—which allowed a comfortable fit for all the names—and there were a lot of names.

The "Fire Prevention" ad is a more obvious grid. The tall, vertical photo ties the information together and separates it from the rectangular sponsorships at the bottom of the page. You will notice that "Fire" and "Week" are in a larger appearing type. They do a "double duty" by creating a secondary headline that is easier to skim. The artwork is dominant and supports content, while the schedule of events and other info are in a confined, yet very organized area.

The "Maxwell Street" ad is also broken into specific areas. When you work with a full page, you have access to a lot of real estate. In small ads, I shy away from too many separations, however, when you have the entire page, you also have the freedom to define specific areas of information, so it is easier to "breakup" and make it easier for the reader to "skim" the ad for the info they are looking for. Just remember to allow "breathing room" between bits of info.

All these ads have used contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity to organize the content for greater readability. A grid system was used as an underlying structure to help in alignment and proximity.

By the way, page layout software uses a grid system.

Thank You Ads can be very cumbersome, since they contain names of donors/sponsors and usually there are a lot of them. The idea is to treat the names as elements in the ad. In this case, I considered them as lines of varying lengths. Using soft screens in the background also helped to breakup the columns without setting them apart and adding a graphic dingbat also helped to highlight other areas as well as adding "markers" for ease in reading through all the names, especially since the list was sent to us in non-alphabetical order.

Indents were also used to keep long names of people or organizations together and to make the readability easier. It now seems less daunting to read the names because they are in more visually "digestible" chunks.

Thank You! To all who gave to Adult Day Services. Forgive me for not the Adult Day Center holding...

WASHINGTON COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION INVITES ALL AREA RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL ACTIVITIES DURING FIRE PREVENTION WEEK OCTOBER 7-13. THIS YEAR'S THEME IS PRACTICE YOUR ESCAPE PLAN...

Sponsorship Ads should have clear boundaries between sponsors and information. Each defined area has a purpose to help the reader make sense of all the info that is being presented. Do not make a reader "hunt" for the details.

HARTFORD'S Maxwell Street Day Wednesday, July 11th 8am-8pm. Park your car and ride the bus! Free Shuttle Bus sponsored by EXPRESS NEWS...

Event Ads can contain a lot of dissimilar info regarding people, places, times and anything else that goes on during a large gathering. Keeping like information together (proximity) goes a long way in presenting the data in an organized and cohesive manner while unifying the entire event. Again, the artwork helps to breakup the space while supporting the content.

Until next month... I was a student, an art teacher, a graphic designer, a writer and again a student. For info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas or comments, e-mail: hanrahan.in@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2021



Michael Angelo Caruso

Sales Advice From a 13-Year-Old



The rules for selling are the same no matter where you live, what you sell or even how old you are.

Hayli Martenez lives in Kankakee, Illinois where she sells lemonade. The 13-year-old entrepreneur is already on her way to mastering the sales trade. Hayli's business practices have been well-profiled in the media (see video) and even written into law. Just click Skip Ads when they appear.

Here's how Hayli crushes the competition in her neighborhood and how you can increase market share in your industry:

1. Offer choices. Hayli sells 50 flavors of lemonade so there's something for everyone. You can purchase \$1 cups and \$2 cups. If you're purchasing one serving, that's over 100 choices available from Ms. Martenez's little lemonade stand.

2. Create atmosphere. Hayli makes sure that her display is clean and neat and that signage is easily understood. She plays music that gives her "energy" and helps customers feel welcome.

3. Weave approval into the sales process. "Grab-and-go" is discouraged at Hayli's lemonade stand. Customers are asked to sample the lemonade before walking

away. This all but assures positive feedback and a feel good moment for all.

4. Ask "yes" questions. The easiest way to improve sales is to ask binary questions that are likely to end in a "yes." If customers sip Hayli's beverage and like it, the business owner offers them a gallon for \$15. This allows customers to get more value and the seller to make a bigger sale.

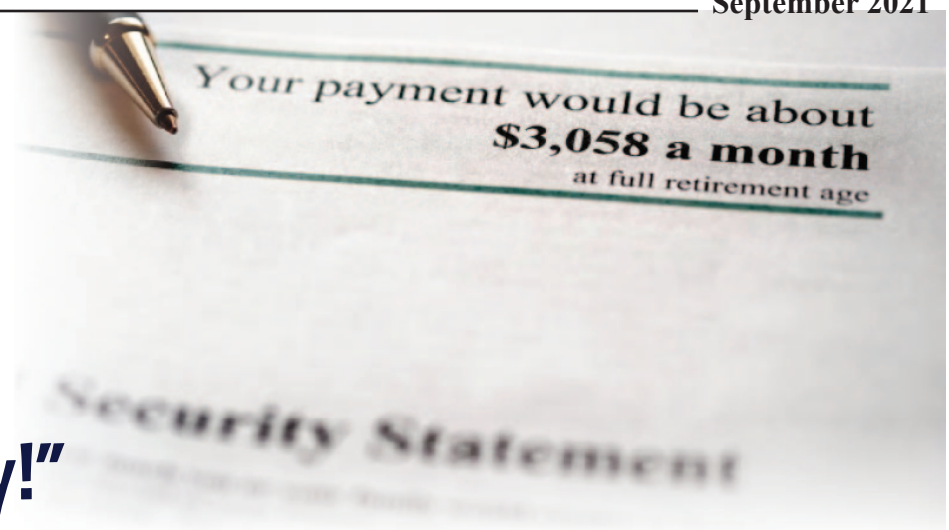
More on asking "yes" questions in the [video](#).

5. Have sales goals.

Young Hayli has a sales goal of \$100 per day. Every aspect of her business, including hours of operation and her uniform, is geared around achieving that goal. See [Hayli's story](#).

Michael Angelo Caruso is one of America's premier keynote speakers. He is known as "the speakers' speaker." Mr. Caruso teaches presentation skills and is in demand for conventions, conferences, and annual events of all kinds. Michael specializes in working with leaders, salespeople, and the customer service industry. Mr. Caruso has spoken in South America, Africa, Australia, Asia, the Middle East, and 49 of the 50 states. He spends lots of time working and playing in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Contact Michael, Edison House, 333 E. Parent Ave, #4, Royal Oak, MI 48067, Phone: (248) 224-9667





Annual Paper Statements Will Ensure You “Know Your Social Security!”

By Jim Haigh, *Keep Me Posted*

Nearly 180 million American workers currently pay into the Social Security system. But upwards of 150 million of them have not recently viewed an accounting of what they've contributed, what Social Security income they can anticipate for retirement and other vital details. This because most stopped receiving an annual paper statement in the mail years ago. And the overwhelming majority cannot or do not access this information online.

The data makes clear that most wage earners do not have essential knowledge about their personal Social Security benefits, which for many will be their primary or significant source of income in their later years.

Fortunately, the solution is simple: direct the Social Security Administration (SSA) to mail all workers aged 25 and older an annual paper statement, just like they did up until 2010. This is precisely what bipartisan legislation recently reintroduced in the U.S. Congress would do. Appropriately named the “Know Your Social Security Act,” the measure has strong support from citizens, consumer groups, advocates for seniors, cybersecurity experts and financial planners.

“AARP believes strongly that all Americans, unless they choose

otherwise, should have access to their Social Security statements via mail,” said Bill Sweeney, senior vice president for government affairs at AARP, via letter to the chairs of the House Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Social Security. “This bipartisan bill would once again place vital paper Social Security statements in the hands of millions of Americans to help them more effectively plan for retirement, identify fraud, correct earnings records and better understand their stake in Social Security.”

The SSA's failure to treat annual paper statements as essential public notices and its assumption that wage earners under 60 will hunt for statements online ignores the stubborn realities of the digital divide. Even the SSA's own Inspector General concluded that overall access to crucial information fell off a cliff since the primarily online-only policy took effect.

“Compared to 2010 when 155 million Social Security statements were mailed to U.S. wage earners, the Inspector General's report shows that just 31 million Americans received a statement in 2018 – either online or by mail,” observed Consumer Action Director of National Priorities Linda Sherry at the time the report was released. “In other words, well over

149 million wage earners are missing this essential foundation to their retirement security.”

Problem is, the number of those digitally disenfranchised by the SSA has continued to grow, with only 14.6 million of the nearly 180 million workers eligible to receive a paper statement getting one each year in their mailbox. And only 16.7 million are accessing their statements online according to the latest data provided by sponsors of this important legislation. The SSA has ignored the lack of reliable or affordable internet service for tens of millions of Americans as well as their reasonable cybersecurity fears related to sharing sensitive personal information such as Social Security numbers online.

The bottom line need for the Know Your Social Security Act says Sherry, is this: “All evidence indicates that the vast majority of Americans simply do not receive their statements at all – online or otherwise.” The Know Your Social Security Act would finally restore full access to every worker aged 25 and older to how much they earned in a given year, their total contributions to both Social Security and Medicare, an estimate of their Social Security benefit at full retirement age and the benefit their family would receive when they pass away.



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