

# Instructions for Preparing Entries & FAQs

## Please submit all entries online unless otherwise noted.

Categories that must be mailed to MDDC as a hard copy are:

- Special Section (Editorial & Advertising)
- The James S. Keat Freedom of Information Award (Editorial)
- Special Section, Vendor Supported (Advertising)
- Niche Publication (Advertising)

All entries must be full-page tear sheets and unaltered in any way. The date each entry was published must appear on the tear sheet.

**NOTE: The BNC website is compatible with Internet Explorer (6+) and Firefox (2+) on the PC, and Firefox (2+) on the Macintosh.**

## How will electronic files be submitted?

You'll submit electronic entries by uploading the files from within the online contest registration system at [betterbnc.com](http://betterbnc.com). You will not submit them separately (e.g., via email or on a CD). The online contest registration system for MDDC's contests is hosted on the web servers of SmallTownPapers in Washington.

You must submit files of complete newspaper pages, even if the entry-related content doesn't fill the page.

### Requirements:

1. Only submit pages that contain entry-related content. Many categories require more than one item per entry. For example, a single entry in the "Investigative Reporting" category may include more than one story. For each example the entire page(s) must be included for judging.
2. Make PDF files as small as possible. (See below for specific instructions.) Each file **must** be under **15 MB** to be accepted by the system. Fewer files and smaller files mean judges aren't waiting around to download your entries. When possible merge multiple pages into one file. Also when art isn't primary to what is being judged; lower the dpi resolution of the PDFs. They will be viewed on computer monitors with resolutions around 72 dpi.

## What file formats are accepted for uploading?

File types are PDF, JPG, GIF, and PNG — so, if for some reason, you don't have a PDF of the tear sheet you wish to submit, it would be easy to snap a photo and submit the resulting photo file.

## How can I make my PDF files smaller?

Most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution (200-300 dpi) grayscale or CMYK images for printing. However, PDF contest entries will be viewed and judged on a computer monitor; which displays at low resolution (72-96 dpi) in RGB color: Changes in the resolution and color mode of images are the most effective ways to reduce size without sacrificing quality.

1. **Resolution.** In PDFs, text is always clear regardless of resolution. Resolution relates only to photos and rasterized graphics. Reducing resolution by half reduces image file size by 75%. The recommended maximum resolution of 96 dpi can be enforced by Distiller settings.
2. **Color mode.** Converting from CMYK to RGB color will reduce image file size by another 25%. This color conversion can again be enforced by Distiller settings. If you reduce image resolution and/or convert color mode in your entry PDFs with a PDF editor (e.g. Enfocus, Pitstop or Quite A Box of Tricks) or use the native profiling/editing tools in Acrobat 6 or later, YOU WILL NOT GAIN THE EXPECTED REDUCTION IN FILE SIZE unless you redistill the PDF afterward.

# Instructions for Preparing Entries & FAQs (continued)

## What is the most efficient way to collect entry files?

Collect copies of all PDF files that contain entry-related pages into one place. These may be full-issue, full-section, or individual-page PDFs that you sent to your printer or that you saved from your page layout program for other reasons. The sizes, resolutions, color modes, and other characteristics of those PDF files can be ignored at this point.

Extract entry-related pages from any multi-page PDFs, or delete non-entry pages. Give each resulting file a clearly descriptive name. Combine into a single PDF file pages that comprise each entry. Instructions for extracting and combining PDFs are provided below. Distill. Once you've created all your entry PDFs, re-distill each one as explained above to reduce it to the smallest practical size. It's not productive to try to reduce the sizes of individual files before combining them into complete entries. Like all changes, combining pages can increase file size.

## How do I extract pages from a full-issue or full section PDF?

In Acrobat, open the PDF file, then choose "Extract Pages..." from the Document menu and follow the instructions. This will allow you to save individual or sequential pages in separate files anywhere on your system.



# Instructions for Preparing Entries & FAQs (continued)

## How do I combine PDF pages or files into a single entry?

Open the PDF file that is to appear first in the entry, choose "Save As..." from the File menu, and save that file with the name you'd like to give the final PDF entry. Choose "Insert Pages..." from the Document menu, choose the file that is to appear next in the entry, then specify where that file should be inserted. When all insertions have been made, save and close the PDF file. You'll need to redistill the final PDFs.

## How will MDDC prevent fraud?

We prefer to trust our member publishers not to submit embellished or edited entries. It is true that ads and articles can be re-edited, photos can be retouched or replaced, and page layouts can be changed. However, major deception probably would be noticed, if only because winning PDFs will be available to the public and MDDC members on the MDDC website. If fraud is suspected with any entries, a full investigation will follow.

## How do I submit payment?

MDDC accepts payment by check or credit card. Credit card payments can be made on MDDC's website after submitting your entries. Checks should be made payable to MDDC Press Association and sent along with a copy of your Summary of Entries Form and any mailed entries by **January 18, 2012, for Advertising contest and January 25, 2012, for Editorial contest** to:

MDDC Press Association  
Capital-Gazette Building  
2000 Capital Drive  
Annapolis, MD 21401

## What if my info is wrong or my paper is not listed?

We have worked very hard to make sure the division for each member are as accurate as possible, however if you note that your division is listed incorrectly, please contact MDDC at 855-721-6332 x 2 or [jthornberry@mddcpress.com](mailto:jthornberry@mddcpress.com) and it will be fixed ASAP!

## Where can I get more help for anything I can't find here?

Call MDDC at 855-721-6332 x2 or email [jthornberry@mddcpress.com](mailto:jthornberry@mddcpress.com).

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That's it. (That's enough, don't you think?)  
You have everything you need to enter the Editorial Contest.

Ready? Set... **GO!**