Looking for some guidance when writing a Police Technical article? Not feeling like Hemingway? Read the attached letter I sent to Jeff Bickford earlier this month, then read his accompanying article: <http://policetechnical.com/2013/01/25/online-investigations-suspect-identification/> . Jeff nailed this process.

These articles are critical for the development of an audience for each of your classes…it’s a little bit of communication from you to the world about why it is good to take your class. Police Technical can market all day, but this personalized material from you will show you are knowledgeable and accessible.

First come up with a Problem somebody 2-5 years behind you in experience might have when doing your job.  Like “how to properly write a report on online UC activity…or whatever…just something you’d have to teach a new guy if he joined your unit today.  This is the bulk of your article.  Give me 3-5 areas which need to be addressed, and a short statement about how to address each area.  If you can weave in a real story (be brief) even better.  Then we’ll attach an introduction to it, and copy the same introduction to the end of it (formerly known as a conclusion)…and you’ll have an article.

Example

Issues with Online Investigations: Report Writing

Online Investigations are just like any investigation…only the descriptions to describe law enforcement activities online are different.  In this article, we’ll look at 3 areas which cause new investigators problems when writing reports about online UC activity

Area #1 – Laying the Foundation

Most personnel have a tendency to jump right in the facts of a case without providing sufficient support for when or where criminal activity took place.  One example; In a recent report from an agency in the Northwest an officer failed to address the actual section of a large website where child sexual enticement was occurring.  While the IP address and other information to locate the source of the enticement was listed the actual section name would have provide much better context for use in suspect interviews and for court room presentation.  To address this issue, personnel should always include…this thing, this thing and that thing when writing reports

Area #2

Another area which needs some attention is…

Area #3

Finally, while it is taught at the Academy and reinforced by field training many personnel seem to forget….

New Personnel often think that Online Investigations are radically from their real world counterparts when in fact they are not …only the descriptions to describe law enforcement activities online are different.  In this article, we looked at 3 areas when writing a report about online UC activity, area #1, area #2 and area #3.

I have friends who crank this stuff out for the internet all day long.  They are technical writers with no more training than what I have outlined above…decent enough guys…but it really isn’t that hard.

General thoughts
I want the articles to be “real”, but no names or real case details.  But they need to be informative without being too wordy.  They need to be helpful if I was actually the guy doing this stuff.

Never use “I” in writing articles for publication…it sounds as if you are grandstanding.  “And then I arrested the perp for solicitation” – NO.  “The suspect was later arrested for solicitation” – YES.  I know you arrested him, you know you did, and most of the audience will know it too, but it reads with more humility if you pass on the spotlight and focus on letting us know what happened for the benefit of the audience.