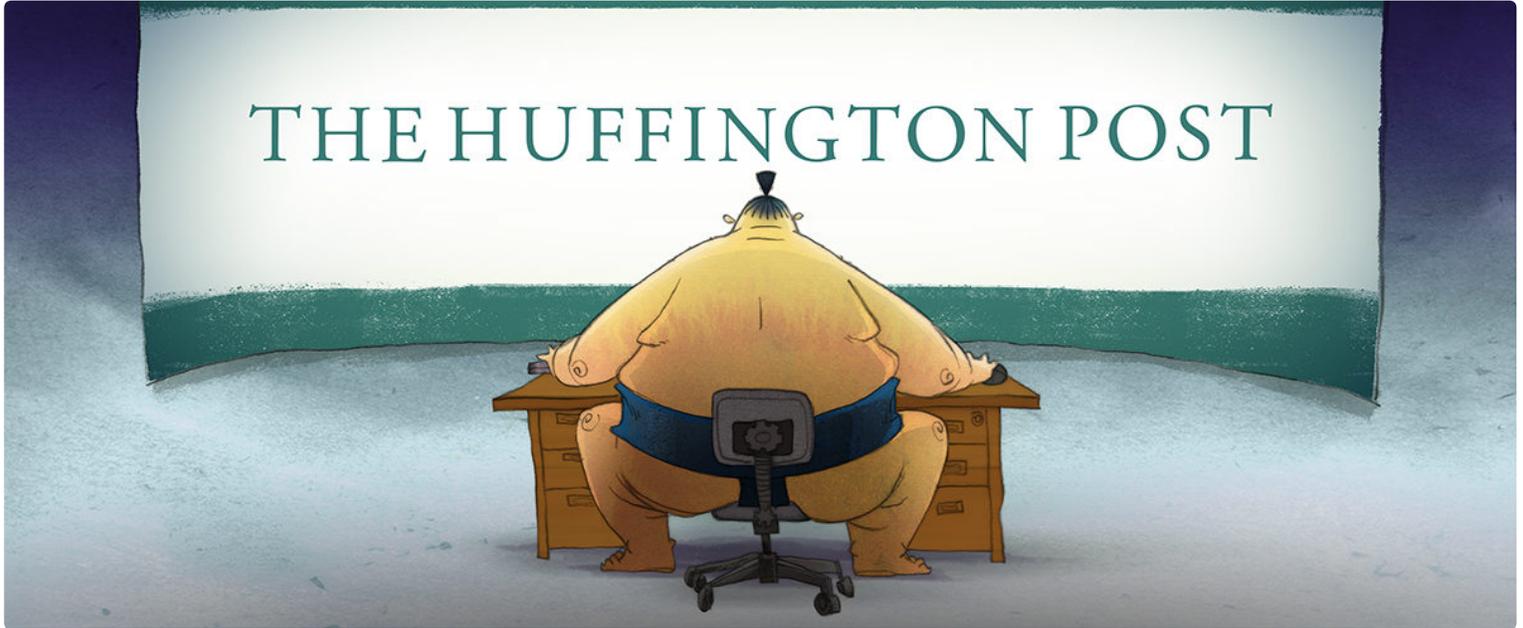




Top 30 Huffington Post Most Shared Headlines & Why They Went Viral (/blog/top-30-huffington-post-most-shared-headlines-why-they-went-viral/)

By Julia McCoy (<http://buzzsumo.com/blog/author/julia/>) on April 24, 2017



We've all heard the saying, "you can't judge a book by its cover."

What's funny is that you almost only hear that adage in reference to people: you shouldn't judge people based off how they look.

Yet, when it comes to books, you can actually tell a lot about them by their covers.

That's why publishers spend so much money on them.

This principle applies to the headlines of your blog posts, as well. While you can't learn everything about the post from one simple line, headlines are clearly very important; it will either pull a reader in or keep them scrolling.

Last year, Steve Rayson at BuzzSumo wrote the definitive post on viral headlines (<http://buzzsumo.com/blog/5-ways-create-amazing-viral-headlines/>). Once you read it, you won't be able to look at headlines the same way.

To put his many great points into context, I used BuzzSumo to find Huffington Post's most-shared article headlines of the past three years. I'm also notating right under the posts what kind of headline category these fall into: Tips & Advice, Opinion/View, Political, Trending, and News.

Let's talk about why they worked so well. Ready?

A Study of The Top 30 Huffington Post Most Shared Headlines

30. The One Thing Christians Should Stop Saying (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/scott-dannemiller/christians-should-stop-saying_b_4868963.html)

THE BLOG 02/27/2014 03:44 pm ET | Updated Apr 29, 2014

The One Thing Christians Should Stop Saying



By Scott Dannemiller

I was on the phone with a good friend the other day. After covering important topics, like disparaging each other's mothers and retelling semi-factual tales from our college days, our conversation turned to the mundane.

"So, how's work going?" he asked.

Headline Type: Tips & Advice

Throughout this list, you'll see a number of headlines that mention tips and advice. This headline falls into that category, but it also riles up emotion, something else that is great for getting shares.

People take their faiths very seriously, so referring to any religion in your headline is going to draw eyes to it. However, this one also has the scent of controversy to it. You might agree with the author 100% or you may be clicking on that headline simply because you want to make sure it's not going to mischaracterize or misinterpret something so important.

29. **5 Minutes In A Mom's Head** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bunmi-laditan/5-minutes-in-a-moms-head_b_5445948.html)

THE BLOG 06/09/2014 11:51 am ET | Updated Dec 31, 2014

5 Minutes in a Mom's Head



By Bunmi Laditan



Headline Type: Opinion/View

The most prevalent audience type on this entire list is parents. This makes sense, of course. Everyone wants to be a good parent, so anything that might help them is going to receive attention.

One thing Rayson found in his research is that alluding to some kind of secret in a headline tends to do particularly well. No one likes to be left in the dark, especially when it comes to being a good parent.

This headline leverages both tactics and has the numbers to prove it...

28. **There's Nothing Selfish About Suicide** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/katie-hurley/theres-nothing-selfish-about-suicide_b_5672519.html)

THE BLOG 08/12/2014 03:00 pm ET | Updated Oct 12, 2014

There's Nothing Selfish About Suicide



By Katie Hurley

Headline Type: Opinion/View

Here's another piece that's using emotion in the headline. It's tough to think of a more emotionally-charged topic than suicide, too.

On top of that, a lot of people have the polar opposite view to the one being expressed here, which adds even more emotion to the topic.

27. **Instead of Trump's Wall, Let's Build A Border of Solar Panels** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/solar-panels-us-mexico_us_5857fa6be4b0390447097e56)

Instead Of Trump's Wall, Let's Build A Border Of Solar Panels

It would create jobs for would-be immigrants and a climate of civility between nations.

12/19/2016 11:39 am ET | Updated Dec 19, 2016



Headline Type: Political

Trump will continue showing up on this list. Amongst other things, the President triggers all kinds of emotions in people across the political spectrum.

There's also the fact that Trump has remained a trending topic for well over a year now. Any time you can mention a trending topic in your headline, you'll automatically set yourself up for more clicks.

26. **To Anyone Who Thinks They're Falling Behind In Life** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-varon/to-anyone-who-thinks-theyre-falling-behind_b_9190758.html)

THE BLOG 02/09/2016 11:22 am ET | Updated Feb 09, 2017

To Anyone Who Thinks They're Falling Behind In Life



By Jamie Varon

Headline Type: Tips & Advice

We find another emotional subject in this headline. It also hints at the promise of advice. Presumably, the author isn't going to tell the reader, "It's too late. There's nothing you can do."

Promises are another feature of viral headlines I'm going to bring up numerous times in this piece. Prospective readers should feel a sense of certainty that taking the time to read your post will be worth it. Make this clear in the headline.

25. 9 Truths 'Moms of Boys Only' Need To Know (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/abby-rodman-licsw/9-truths-moms-of-boys-only_b_6254026.html)

Headline Type: Tips & Advice

9 Truths 'Moms of Boys Only' Need to Know



By Abby Rodman, LICSW



ABBY RODMAN

Here we have another article about parenting. It's also our first listicle, which is the most shared format type Rayson found when doing his research.

Listicles work for a couple important reasons.

First, they make clear the format of the post. This example lets you know there are 9 sections to this piece.

Second, that also tells you about how it will be organized; you can rightfully anticipate that it will be pretty easy to scan through and make a decision about whether or not you're going to commit to reading it.

24. Real Love Is a Choice (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/seth-adam-smith/real-love-is-a-choice_b_6039412.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

Real Love Is a Choice



By Seth Adam Smith



CAVAN IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

Love is another subject with plenty of emotion surrounding it.

It also sounds like the author may be taking a controversial stand. Is true love something you can really control? If you fall out of love with someone, is that a choice, too?

These and other questions come up just from reading the headline and probably contributed to its 1.2 million shares.

23. Ballet Dancer Sergei Polunin Simply Slays Hozier's "Take Me to Church" (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/10/sergei-polunin-hozier_n_6655920.html)

Headline Type: Trending

ARTS & CULTURE

Ballet Dancer Sergei Polunin Simply Slays Hozier's 'Take Me To Church'

By Priscilla Frank

02/10/2015 05:16 pm ET | Updated Feb 11, 2015

What happens when you combine the talents of Russia's ballet bad boy Sergei Polunin, Irish gospel luminary Hozier and photography pop wizard David LaChapelle? Apparently, a whole lot of angsty, sexy, beautiful dancing ensues.

"Take Me to Church" piqued in December 2014, but it was still very popular just two months later when this article was published. Therefore, at this point, it would have been trendy, but this headline also boasts a new take on it.

22. Red Cross Built Exactly 6 Homes for Haiti With Nearly Half A Billion Dollars In Donation (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/04/red-cross-haiti-report_n_7511080.html)

Headline Type: News

Red Cross Built Exactly 6 Homes For Haiti With Nearly Half A Billion Dollars In Donations

Justin Elliott and Laura Sullivan ProPublica



MIAMI ARIANO FOR PROPUBLICA

As you may remember, in 2010, Haiti was hit by a devastating earthquake that made headlines all over the world. The following year, the Red Cross began a multimillion-dollar campaign to help the country recover.

While this wouldn't have been a "trending" topic at the time, this headline definitely inspires emotions like shock and disgust. Therefore, according to Rayson's research, it also inspires clicks.

21. Why Women Need Their Girlfriends (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kari-kubiszyn-kampakis/why-women-need-their-girlfriends_b_5539150.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

PARENTS 07/01/2014 03:07 pm ET | Updated Feb 23, 2016

Why Women Need Their Girlfriends



By Kari Kubiszyn Kampakis



KARI KUBISZYN KAMPAKIS

Though it's definitely a simple headline, the promise of information in this title is probably what made it such an attractive one.

That's not to say it delivered on some huge promise, but there's an important lesson here. Your headline doesn't always need to be about some grandiose secret. It can be as simple as explaining to people why their everyday relationships are so important.

20. Coloring Isn't Just for Kids. It Can Actually Help Adults Combat Stress. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/13/coloring-for-stress_n_5975832.html)

Headline Type: Tips & Advice



You may remember that a year or two ago, coloring books for adults were taking off in popularity. Therefore, this headline was about a trendy topic.

However, this one also succeeds because it promises helpful information that you could use to combat stress – something we would love all to do.

19. 10 Ways Introverts Interact Differently with the World (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/07/physical-behavior-of-introverts_n_6069438.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

10 Ways Introverts Interact Differently With The World

 By Alena Hall



OLIVIA BELL PHOTOGRAPHY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Here we have another listicle. This one I like because it speaks to two different types of people.

If you're an introvert, you're most likely going to click this headline. Wouldn't you like to make sure you know all the different ways you interact with the world?

However, you might click even if you aren't an introvert because somebody you know is and, thus, this information would help you understand them better.

18. Why The New Child Rape Case Filed Against Donald Trump Should Not Be Ignored (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lisa-bloom/why-the-new-child-rape-ca_b_10619944.html)

Headline Type: Political

Why The New Child Rape Case Filed Against Donald Trump Should Not Be Ignored

 By Lisa Bloom



As we mentioned before, choosing a trending topic is always going to improve your headline's chances.

During the campaign, few topics were trending more than Trump. In fact, when Rayson was putting together this article, "Trump" was the most common word found in viral Facebook posts.

In this case, Lisa Bloom's article benefited from the shareability of the name, but there's also a very emotional element. This piece is obviously about an accusation that shocks and disgusts people.

17. I'm Done Making My Kid's Childhood Magical (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/16/i-am-adam-lanzas-mother-mental-illness-conversation_n_2311009.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

THE BLOG 03/31/2014 12:25 pm ET | Updated Mar 25, 2016

I'm Done Making My Kid's Childhood Magical

By Bunmi Laditan



Speaking of emotion, as I mentioned before, the topic of parenting is always going to be near the top of the list. Aside from the fact that everyone wants to be a good parent, most people are also keen to think about the type of job other parents are doing, too.

Bunmi Laditan's headline definitely grabbed people's emotions, but it also promises some kind of exclusive information.

Why would a parent actually choose to do the exact opposite of what so many strive for? The only way you can find out is by clicking the headline.

16. **16 Habits of Highly Sensitive People** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/26/highly-sensitive-people-signs-habits_n_4810794.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

HEALTHY LIVING 02/26/2014 08:46 am ET | Updated Jun 27, 2014

16 Habits Of Highly Sensitive People

By Amanda L. Chan



HERO IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

By now, it should be clear that viral headlines usually combine at least two elements from Rayson's article.

In this piece, we have the ever-popular listicle and the guarantee of some very interesting information.

Most of us don't associate being sensitive with having a set of habits, much less 16 of them. If you know you're sensitive, you're probably also going to be curious about what else that means for your day-to-day life.

15. 5 Reasons Modern-Day Parenting Is in Crisis, According to a British Nanny (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/emma-jenner/modern-day-parenting-in-c_b_5552527.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

5 Reasons Modern-Day Parenting Is in Crisis, According to a British Nanny

 By Emma Jenner



HUNTSFOOK VIA GETTY IMAGES

While being a listicle would have helped all on its own, this headline took things further. The information being covered is clearly important if you're a parent.

Why?

Not because you might be doing something wrong but because the entire concept *is in crisis!* You might be doing *everything* wrong! If you're not yet a parent, this article might give you some insights to consider before making such a big decision.

14. Dad Films 6 Minutes Of Students Slipping On Ice With Running Commentary (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/19/alan-andersen-bacontfm-ice-slip_n_4816325.html)

Headline Type: Trending

Dad Films 6 Minutes Of Students Slipping On Ice With Running Commentary

By William Goodman



You already clicked on this one, didn't you?

Of course, you did!

Sometimes, the promise is all you need. *Everyone* wants to watch people fall on the ice. I'm not sure what that says about human nature, but it's true. You don't need to add anything else to that headline to get clicks.

13. **The Real Reason White People Say "All Lives Matter"** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-halstead/dear-fellow-white-people-_b_11109842.html)

Headline Type: News

The Real Reason White People Say 'All Lives Matter'

By John Halstead



WGMH VIA GETTY IMAGES

The controversy surrounding people saying "all lives matter" was trending in the summer of 2016, something this headline would have benefited from.

Then, there was the “real reason” part. This line has the same effect as claiming you know a secret that others don’t. Whichever side of the controversy you’re on, you’re probably curious to find out what John Halstead thinks the “real reason” is.

12. **“Super Troopers 2” Is Officially Happening (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/05/super-troopers-2_n_5934874.html)**

Headline Type: Trending

‘Super Troopers 2’ Is Officially Happening And The ‘Staches Will Be Back

 By Erin Whitney



FOR SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

You know exactly what you’re getting if you click on this title. That’s a promise.

This also benefits from a trending topic: the release of a new movie.

The combination of these those two ingredients was all it took to make this one of The Huffington Post’s most shared pieces of the last three years.

11. **300 Plumbers Poured into Flint, Michigan, To Install Water Filters For Free (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/300-union-plumbers-flint_us_56b0e3c3e4b0a1b96203ce9e)**

Headline Type: News

300 Plumbers Poured Into Flint, Michigan, To Install Water Filters For Free

"We certainly can help correct the damage that has been done!"



By Elyse Wanshel



ThinkProgress
@thinkprogress

Follow

300 Union Plumbers Spent The Weekend Installing Water Filters For Flint Residents For Free thkpr.gs/3744770

4:30 PM - 1 Feb 2016

478 503

As you probably know, Flint, Michigan has been in the news for about a year at this point because their water quality is so abysmal it can't be consumed.

Therefore, this headline received a big boost for covering a topic that has been in the news so much.

At the same time, there's obviously an emotional aspect to it, too. Rayson specifically points to "heartwarming" as an emotion that contributes to a headline's chances of going viral. I think you'll agree that such a show of support from so many people definitely warms the heart.

10. 10 Things Your Mom Never Told You (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/natasha-craig/10-things-your-mom-never-told-you_b_6096764.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

10 Things Your Mom Never Told You



By Natasha Craig



NATASHA CRAIG

Two important elements that should be immediately obvious about this headline right now are that it's a listicle and it involves a secret: your mom's been holding out on you! Don't you want to know what she has been sitting on all these years?

As this piece is directed at new and expecting mothers, though, it also shows signs of potentially very important information. I've already talked about how any subject related to parenting is going to involve some hot-button emotions, but you can bet they run especially high when the headline is aimed at new and expecting mothers.

9. This Billionaire Governor Taxed the Rich and Increased the Minimum Wage – Now, His State's Economy Is One of the Best in the Country (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carl-gibson/mark-dayton-minnesota-economy_b_6737786.html)

Headline Type: Political

This Billionaire Governor Taxed the Rich and Increased the Minimum Wage – Now, His State's Economy Is One of the Best in the Country



By C. Robert Gibson



CHRISTOPHER SOMMODEVILLA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Wouldn't you like to know how your state's economy could be one of the best in the country?

Most people would. “How This Governor Made His State’s Economy One of the Best in the Country” probably would have worked really well for that reason, too.

The title for Gibson’s piece caught fire, though, because it also plays on emotion. Many people would be shocked or surprised to learn that higher taxes and minimum wage could actually benefit the economy. They might even want to argue the point, something they can only do *after* they click and read the article.

8. Same-Sex Couples Can Now Adopt Children in All 50 States (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mississippi-same-sex-adoption_us_56fdb1a3e4b083f5c607567f)

Headline Type: News

Same-Sex Couples Can Now Adopt Children In All 50 States

A federal judge ruled Mississippi’s ban on same-sex adoption is unconstitutional.



A federal judge ruled Thursday that Mississippi’s ban on same-sex couples adopting children is unconstitutional, making gay adoption legal in all 50 states.

U.S. District Judge Daniel Jordan issued a preliminary injunction against the ban, citing the Supreme Court’s decision legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide last summer. The injunction blocks Mississippi from enforcing its 16-year-old anti-gay adoption law.

This headline definitely hit on a trending topic at the time, but many people would find this heartwarming and inspiring, as well. Again, as Rayson pointed out, grab people by the emotions and they’ll most likely give your piece a look.

7. Senate Confirms First-Ever Native American Woman As Federal Judge (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/15/native-american-judge_n_5330273.html)

Headline Type: News

Senate Confirms First-Ever Native American Woman As Federal Judge

 By Jennifer Bendery



WASHINGTON — The Senate quietly made history on Wednesday night when it confirmed Diane Humetewa as a federal judge — the first Native American woman to ever hold such a post.

Was this a trending story at the time? You bet!

Did plenty of people find this inspiring, too? Of course!

Still, let's take a minute to look at two especially important words in this headline: "First-Ever."

A lot of people may have been unaware of what this decision was so important. With just two words, this post becomes immediately more eye-catching.

Be careful that you never assume what is important to you about a story will be clear to your readers – even if it's something in the news. Unless it's incredibly obvious, use a word or two to tell prospective readers: "This is a big deal!"

6. 5 Reasons You Should Have Sex With Your Husband Every Night (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/meg-conley/five-reasons-you-should-h_b_5647291.html)

Headline Type: Tips & Advice

THE BLOG 08/04/2014 08:55 am ET | Updated Nov 06, 2014

5 Reasons You Should Have Sex With Your Husband Every Night

 By Meg Conley

Everyone knows "sex sells", but it's interesting that such an apparently popular topic is only on this list once.

Obviously, a lot about the subject is still considered taboo, which means it's less likely to get shared on social sites.

So what did this one do, right?

It's a listicle, but it also covers an important topic that would interest two different groups of people. If you're a husband who would like to have sex more often, you're going to want to click on this article.

On the other hand, if you're not having sex with your husband every night, you're probably going to be curious about the five reasons you might be making a big mistake.

5. The Top 50 Cities To See in Your Lifetime (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/minube/the-top-50-cities-to-see_b_5547308.html)

Headline Type: Opinion/View

The Top 50 Cities To See In Your Lifetime

 By minube



Take a look at how well this post did on Twitter: 14.6k shares. That's the second highest on our entire list.

Why?

Rayson pointed out that tips and facts tend to do really well on Twitter. This post is definitely packed full of the former.

Another great thing about this kind of post is that people are going to be naturally curious to see how many of these cities they've already seen *and* share this post if their number is particularly high or they just want to add their own recommendations.

4. An Open Letter to My Friends Who Support Donald Trump (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeremy-nix/an-open-letter-to-my-frie_2_b_9293694.html)

Headline Type: Political

An Open Letter to My Friends Who Support Donald Trump

By Jeremy Nix



MICHAEL VADONFLICER

The President makes our list one last time. This particular post received significantly more shares than the others, though.

It's not because we were any closer to the election, so it's not that Trump had become more trend-worthy.

Instead, I think it's because the format of this post is immediately clear: it's an open letter. As I mentioned earlier, the format of your post is important, but you also want to communicate what it's going to be in your headline whenever possible (e.g. "X Ways...", "How to...", etc.).

Being an open letter, this post also lent itself to shareability because people could simply pass it on to friends of theirs voting for Trump – or just share it.

3. 109-Year Old Woman Said Secret To Long Life Is Avoiding Men (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/20/secret-to-long-life-avoiding-men_n_6508870.html)

Headline Type: Tips & Advice

109-Year-Old Woman Said Secret To Long Life Is Avoiding Men

By Ann Brenoff

This one has just about everything.

You most likely chuckled a bit when you read it, which doesn't hurt.

However, you probably noticed "secret" right away, too. This is no small secret, either. It's a secret that could help you live more than 100 years and it comes from a reliable source. This is also a secret that applies to everyone. Who doesn't want to live a long life?

2. The Likely Cause of Addiction Has Been Discovered, and It Is Not What You Think (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johann-hari/the-real-cause-of-addicti_b_6506936.html)

Headline Type: News

The Likely Cause of Addiction Has Been Discovered, and It Is Not What You Think



By Johann Hari

Again, addiction is something that affects almost everyone. If you haven't experienced addiction first hand, you most likely know someone who has.

Not only does this title not tell you what the cause of addiction is – you'll have to click it – it also makes clear that your assumptions about the subject are wrong. You may not have been too interested in the topic before, but don't you kind of want to see if your theory was really wrong now?

1. 10 Reasons Why Handheld Devices Should Be Banned for Children Under the Age of 12 (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cris-rowan/10-reasons-why-handheld-devices-should-be-banned_b_4899218.html)

Headline Type: Tips & Advice

10 Reasons Why Handheld Devices Should Be Banned for Children Under the Age of 12



By Cris Rowan

Lastly, the Huffington Post Heavyweight Champion for most shared headlines goes to this one from Cris Rowan.

Of course, at this point, it should be no surprise that this headline is so high up on our list.

This piece is clearly aimed at parents, an audience I've already mentioned is always going to be a good source for clicks.

It's a listicle, too.

There's also some great emotional triggers here. Rowan isn't saying you *shouldn't* buy your child a handheld device. You're not going to receive tips to learn how to keep your kids from using their devices too much.

No, Rowan is saying they should be *banned*. This sort of emotionally-charged language always grabs attention, especially when you choose a topic like this one.

There you have it: the 30 most shared Huffington Post headlines from the last three years. While I can't recommend Steve Rayson's article to you enough, I also hope you learned something from seeing so much of his advice in action.

Going forward, take notice when you see his research holding true in posts that get shared and you'll have an easier time creating the types of headlines that help accomplish the same.

(<https://app.buzzsumo.com/account/plans>)

5 Comments

BuzzSumo

TaJuan Teej Realit... ▾

Recommend

Share

Sort by Best ▾

BuzzSumo requires you to verify your email address before posting. Send verification email to wanhawkpost@yahoo.com ✕



Join the discussion...

TecCrowd · 2 months ago

This 30 post Head line are awesome. Most Attractive, thats why they are viral

2 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

TecCrowd · 3 months ago

Title is very important for a Article. Fist people impressed by title.

2 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

Aisha · 4 months ago

Titles do play a crucial role. Amazing article!

1 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

Will Chou · 4 months ago

Interesting article, thanks

1 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

FansGain · a month ago

Noticed something interesting,

Most (80%) headlines talking about people & emotions related to people (not business or money...)

Emotional touch = Traffic

^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

✉ Subscribe **D** Add Disqus to your siteAdd DisqusAdd Privacy

Looking for something?

Webinars (<http://webinars.buzzsumo.com>)

Presentations (<http://buzzsumo.com/buzzsumo-slide-decks/>)

Blog (<http://buzzsumo.com/blog/>)

Knowledge Base (<http://buzzsumo.com/knowledge-base/>)

API (<http://buzzsumo.com/api>)

Nonprofits (<http://buzzsumo.com/nonprofits>)

Contact Us (<mailto:help@buzzsumo.com>)

Copyright © BuzzSumo 2017

Terms & Conditions (<http://buzzsumo.com/terms-conditions/>) · Privacy Policy (<http://buzzsumo.com/privacy-policy/>)
Twitter (<https://twitter.com/BuzzSumo>) · Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/buzzsumo?ref=buzzsumo.com>) · LinkedIn
(<https://www.linkedin.com/company/buzzsumo>)

