

CATCHING WESTSIDE READERS WITH A NET

Category: Hub Articles

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THE GAZETTE

YourHub

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WITH A NET

BY DAVE HUGHES

YOUR HUB CONTRIBUTOR

Catching west-side readers with a net Holy Cow! So The Gazette has extended a print version of YourHub to every community West of Interstate 25! It will cover the west side of Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, Cascade, Green Mountain Falls, and Woodland Park. I don't know whether it should be praised or pitied. The Gray Old Lady Gazette, which has put out a sedate newspaper for 125 years now — ever since General Palmer made Colorado Springs a teetotaler place while Colorado City was still a wild frontier town, with its own paper — is showing its age, as are print-only newspapers all over the world. So the Gazette is trying a facelift by joining the Internet Revolution. The net is where people increasingly get their news, talk to each other, and gather around their virtual community blogs more than they access print publications across their home-towns. It's an era where people know people across the world better than they know their next door neighbor. I know the feeling — one of my close friends I frequently chat with over the Internet is a Sherpa on Mount Everest. So I guess The Gazette's publisher and editors have tried to take a swig from the Electronic Fountain of Youth and hope to take their green eye shade journalism from the Gutenberg-only past and launch it into the digital, as well as hybrid-print, future. Now, I think I understand what they're trying to do. They started with their online hubs, each tailored.

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Dave Hughes Hughes is a West Point graduate, west-side resident and an internet pioneer "The net is where people increasingly get their news, talk to each other. and gather around their virtual community blogs more than they access print publications across their hometowns." to different neighborhoods across sprawling Colorado Springs. They made it so anyone with a computer and Internet connection could post illustrated stories, start blogs, announce events, and get feedback comments.

Community reporters. I have tried putting Old Town history in the YourHub subsection called Old Colorado City. Other 'neighborhood' reporters have posted things that interest them, and they hope, other locals. It's an interesting experiment, even though they have a ways to go. As one who was online long before most local people — including The Gazette — even knew the Internet existed, I have seen many efforts come and go. It's a long way from the day when I put up the first dial-up computer bulletin board and served as the 'Electronic Bartender' in 1980 in Roger's Bar where we discussed local political issues via telephone modem on Radio Shack computers. Your Hub attempting to wirelessly stimulate Internet community reporting is a very interesting experiment. I hope people don't end up talking to themselves. Now this paper version of YourHub will be even more interesting to watch, because it covers some of the most diverse 'neighborhoods' imaginable. The west side is not Manitou Springs, Green Mountain Falls or Cascade. The inhabitants of Ute Pass are not too much like growing Woodland Park with its head in the clouds. Can neighborhood reporters post online stories that are interesting enough to read in the print edition by their neighbors, even ones without computers? Can the hubs flourish and eventually even make money for the newspaper; which is certainly one of its goals? There's no free lunch in this publications business. Either on or offline. Let's wish them well and give it a try. But remind them that The Gazette was not always friendly to the west side. It looked down its nose at our blue-collar folks, from hard drinking railroad workmen to Minnie the Gambler in the Oxford Club. It's somewhat ironic that parts of the west side and the people up Ute Pass are now technically way ahead of traditional downtown Colorado Springs folks. Maybe we can help teach those old dogs new tricks.