HuffPost Gay Voices Debuts

September 29, 2011 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The Huffington Post has launched Gay Voices, another "vertical" (their term for a specific section of the site) in their seemingly ever-growing list (Black Voices, Latino Voices, etc.) serving content by user demographics.

In his inaugural post welcoming readers, Gay Voices editor Noah Michelson addresses the rationale for the site and its name:

While the Huffington Post has done an incredible job of covering queer stories in the past, Gay Voices will provide a place for all of those stories to "live" together, thereby making it much easier for readers to find, share and discuss queer topics ... The Huffington Post will be able to delve deeper into the issues that matter to queer people and that can't be addressed by other verticals due to time or the specificity of the issue ... When it came time to name the vertical, we considered a bunch of possibilities, including HuffPost Pride, HuffPost LGBT Voices and HuffPost Queer Voices ... I personally prefer the word "queer" ... However, it's still a controversial term and many people (including those

with marginalized sexual identities) find it problematic and/or offensive, and so we didn't think it was appropriate for use as the vertical's primary identifying term ...

Which brings us to the term "gay" and why we chose the name Gay Voices ... While it most often describes a "male homosexual," "gay" has been and can be used by (and to refer to) those with other marginalized sexual identities.

I fully concede the term may not be one everyone feels comfortable claiming or wants to be associated with (especially when it comes to issues of gender rather than sexuality), but after realizing that there was never going to be the perfect term for us to use, we felt that "gay" packs the most instantaneous punch and immediately identifies the content on this vertical as dealing with these types of issues and events.

The argument that "gay" is still the closest we have to a universally acceptable word to describe LGBT people is not new. The question I have from the above rationale is: Has the word "gay" really come full circle? Well, Gay Voices seems to think so.

Considering that the site just launched, the mix of the content so far seems to be covering all the bases. Not sure if that will continue, but the main article today on the Gay Voices homepage about HIV gave me some hope.

I understand that not every LGBT story is an HIV/AIDS story and vice versa. However, there is often a lot of overlap. I would even argue that most HIV/AIDS stories are LGBT stories, but not vice versa.

Although many LGBT outlets do a good job covering HIV/AIDS, I believe I’m safe in saying that LGBT media--and certainly mainstream media--could do more HIV/AIDS coverage. Let’s hope Gay Voices keeps HIV/AIDS stories high in the mix.

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