

How to pitch Torontoverse

Thanks for your interest in Torontoverse! This is a guide to what we're looking for, what we pay, and what we generally expect from our freelancers.

Torontoverse is the first venture from a new digital publishing technology company called Geomoldulus. It's a new, vibrant way of looking at Toronto. Our design eschews static webpages with individual articles in favour of a dynamic map of the city that feeds into live data feeds. Our goal is to invent new ways of presenting information beyond the standard text-and-photo article format. We have a team of developers who are continuously building that technical side of things; we're looking for freelancers to supply them with ideas and content they can work with. We're most excited about interactive city-wide and neighbourhood-specific stories, including data-driven journalism of all types and lifestyle content with an engaging visual component.

We're currently in our beta launch — so it's early days. That means we're prioritizing some stories over others while we build capacity to do everything, but it also means that we're nimble enough to try new article formats. We'd love it if you challenged us to design something new for you.

It is important to us that we treat our freelancers fairly from the get go. That's why we've committed to a transparent fee scale and two-day payment by e-transfer.

Torontoverse should reflect the diversity of its city. We encourage pitches from creators whose identities are underrepresented in media, including women, racialized and Indigenous creators, creators who are members of the LGBTQ+ community, and creators with disabilities.

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What we're looking for

We are currently building a catalog of evergreen (i.e. interesting outside the news cycle) content of 250 to 1,000 words across five areas:

News. We're looking for newsy content that isn't pegged to current events. Eg, this [map of bike thefts in Toronto](#) or this [deep dive into cooling systems](#) using Lake Ontario water.

Sports. Being evergreen is often more difficult for sports stories, but certainly preferred. Articles might take the form of [retrospectives](#) or [forward-looking analyses](#).

Transit. We're interested in reporting and visualizations that make the city's transit network easier to understand, like this [visualization of the Ontario Line](#) or our [map of bike lanes](#).

Arts. We're eager to assign more arts and culture content. We don't have hard limits on what this looks like for us — so far our arts coverage has mostly been [retrospective](#) or used our [mapping capabilities](#) — so hit us with your best ideas!

Fun. This is our umbrella term for all the miscellaneous ideas that don't fit into other categories but do offer something of interest, like our [GTHA trivia quiz](#).

While much of our content so far has used data, we're not expecting freelancers to incorporate data into every pitch. It will help but is not necessary. And if your pitch does involve data, you don't need to have fully fleshed out ideas about how it should be used.

Our goal is to provide a set of tools for content creators to use in new, exciting ways. If you come to us with an idea, we'll see what we can do for you.

But we're also interested in stories with repeatable formats, such as:

- **Mappable lists:** Round-ups of places and businesses in the GTHA that we can map for readers to interact with.
- **Mini profiles:** Short stories about Toronto artists, entrepreneurs, and businesses with a geolocated centrepiece we can pin to the Torontoverse map.
- **Event previews:** Short stories about unique events in the city. These are less evergreen, so we aim for a longer shelf life. If you're planning to pitch something for this, please provide adequate lead time.

How to pitch

Some guidelines:

- Pitch by email to editorial director Craig Battle [cbattle@geomodul.us] with the word “Pitch” in your subject line. If you do that, an email filter will move your pitch over to a priority queue.
- Two or three paragraphs outlining your idea is sufficient, but please aim for detail! If this is a data project, where is the data coming from and what does it show? If reporting is involved, who would you speak to and why? Have you already spoken to them? (For examples, you can consult [this guide](#) from *The New York Times*’ Tim Herrera and this [database of successful pitches](#).)
- A potential headline is not essential, but your pitch should naturally suggest one. If it doesn’t, that often indicates your idea needs a narrower scope.
- Please include a prospective word count, preferably between 500 and 750 words and up to 1,000 words. If there’s a photo/video/audio element to your pitch that you want to produce yourself, tell us how you would produce that.
- Relevant clips are welcome but not required. The depth of research and quality of your prose displayed in your pitch can easily outweigh your prior work, one way or another. That said, sometimes the best pitches are a little rough around the edges, so if you believe you have an excellent idea that still needs work, don’t hesitate to pitch us. We’ll workshop it with you.
- If you’re writing about a marginalized community you belong to, please inform us. We believe that first-hand lived experience brings essential accuracy and insight to the reporting process. If that applies to you, we’ll take it into consideration.

What we’re not looking for

At this time, we’re not looking for content with a shelf life of only a few days, including hard news about up-to-the-minute municipal affairs. If a pitch only matters in the context of the present news cycle, it’s likely not for us. (Sports pitches are somewhat of an exception. We’re making decisions about them on a case-by-case basis.)

We are also not the place for longer feature pitches (more than 1,000 words). We may entertain the occasional feature pitch if it’s particularly strong, but we encourage you to keep your pitch narrow in scope to fit within our guidelines.

What we pay

We pay fixed rates for three types of articles:

1. \$250 for brief stories under 500 words
2. \$500 for mappable-list articles, as well as analysis and explainer pieces that don't require interviews. We aim for 500–750 words, and up to 1,000.
3. \$750 for larger data visualizations, and reported stories with multiple interviews and sources. We aim for 750–1,000 words.

All freelancers can negotiate these rates if desired.

Additionally, there is some flexibility for articles with non-textual elements.

If your pitch relies substantially on non-textual elements, please suggest your preferred rate. We want freelancers to be honest with us about what compensation they find fair.

We are open to compensating you for reporting costs, depending on our budget and how necessary they are to your pitch. Please include an estimate in your pitch email.

We pay within 30 days by e-transfer. We do not exclude a portion of your invoice for tax purposes; you will have to do that yourself.

Other housekeeping

We are only looking for original work at this time and are not accepting reprints.

Simultaneous submissions are fine — just let us know you're sending your pitch around when you email.